

A MEMBERS' GUIDE TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI AND PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT



The goal of this resource is to empower members to thoughtfully explore the potential uses, risks and opportunities of AI in elementary education; engage in informed dialogue; and make decisions that protect and advocate for their professional integrity and support student learning.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to support teaching and learning, but its rapid growth also raises important considerations for planning, assessment, evaluation, and reporting. Above all, if we choose to integrate AI into our practice, it is critical that the central role of professional judgement be maintained in all aspects of our work.

PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT: A TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Professional judgement is at the core of effective teaching and learning. Since 2015, professional judgement has been defined in Section C2.5 of the *Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Agreement* as:

Judgement that is informed by professional knowledge or curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction.

Teachers have a professional responsibility to follow the *Education Act*, Ministry of Education policy/program memorandums (PPMs), ministry/school board policy, and the Ontario curriculum. When engaging in assessment and evaluation, this includes but is not limited to following *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, Policy and Program Memoranda 155 and 168*.

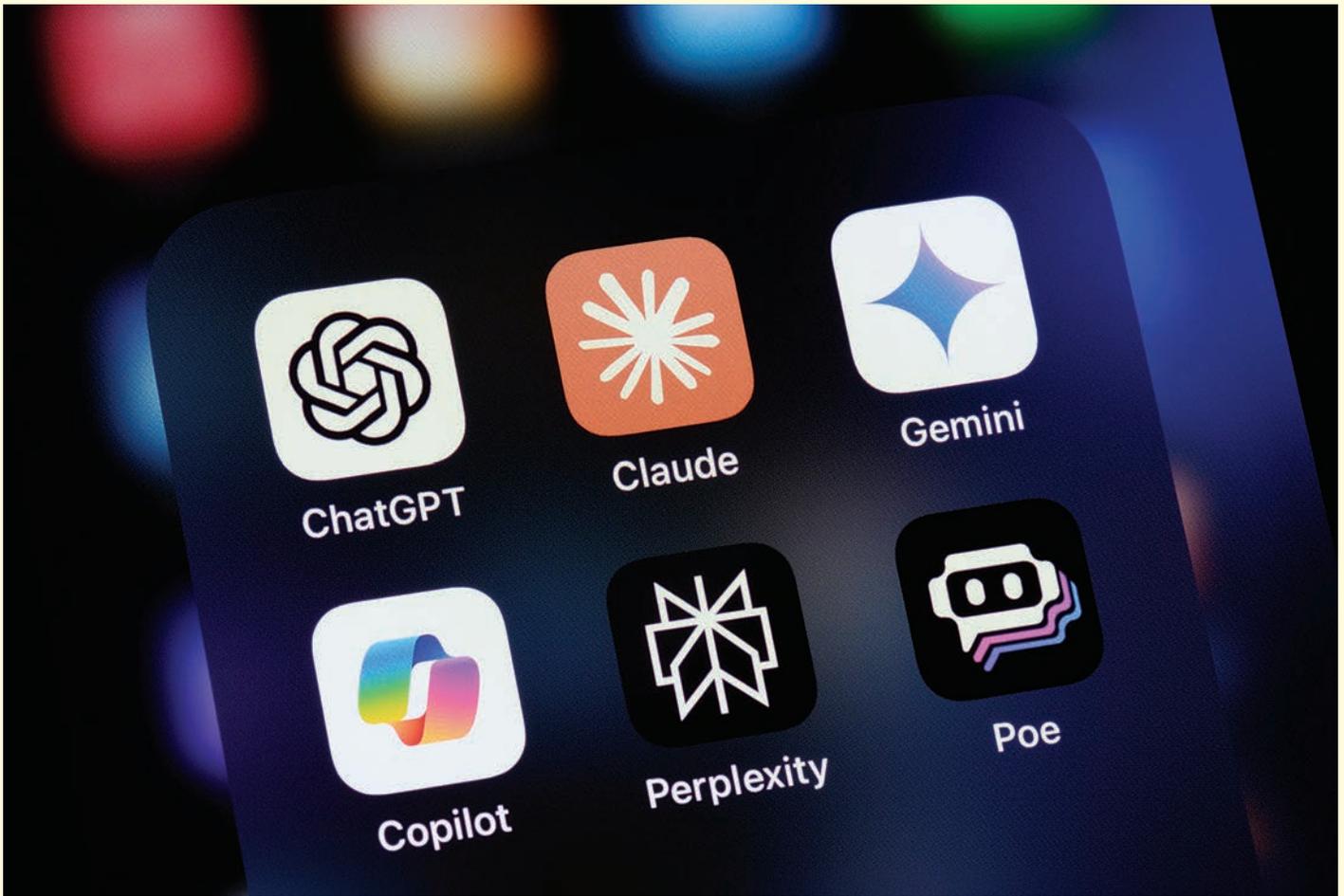
As teachers, our professional decisions must remain grounded in our expertise, relationships with students, and commitment to ethical, informed practice. AI may assist with some tasks, but it cannot replace the informed, reflective, and relational judgement of teachers.

Consider these questions before using AI tools:

- Am I following all district and provincial guidelines on planning, assessment, evaluation, and reporting?
- Am I using AI in a way that supports, rather than undermines, student learning?
- Have I ensured humane and ethical use of AI in all aspects of my practice?
- Am I seeking support or clarification from my ETFO local if I have questions about board policies and guidelines?

Use these questions to reflect on your practice:

- Am I using my professional knowledge of curriculum, assessment, and instruction to guide all decisions, regardless of AI input?
- Can I clearly explain the rationale for my instructional or assessment decisions, referencing curriculum, policies, and student context?
- Am I maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of student learning and progress to support communication and accountability?
- Am I ensuring that human interaction and relationships remain central to teaching and learning, even when AI tools are used?



ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Student assessment, evaluation, and reporting should remain a human process guided by professional judgement. AI can be used as a support tool but should never replace the teacher's role in understanding the whole child and making informed decisions about their learning.

Use these questions to reflect on your practice:

- Does my use of AI align with board policies, Ontario curriculum, and assessment guidelines?
- Am I using AI to complement, not replace, my professional judgement in assessment and evaluation?
- Have I considered recent evidence and the student's most consistent achievement level, as required by *Growing Success*?
- Are report card marks and comments based on my direct observations and evidence of student learning?

Note: Teachers are advised not to use AI for the creation of report card marks.

PLANNING: LONG-RANGE, UNIT, AND LESSON PLANS

Planning should be thoughtful, intentional, and rooted in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. AI tools can help organize or refine ideas but should not be used to automate the creation of long-range, unit, or lesson plans.

Use these questions to guide your planning decisions:

- Am I leading the planning process with my professional judgement to meet the needs of my students?
- Am I critically reviewing AI outputs for accuracy, bias, and relevance before using them?
- Have I ensured that all instructional decisions are responsive to student strengths, needs, and interests?
- Do the learning experiences I design align with expectations and achievement charts in *Growing Success* and the Ontario curriculum?

- Am I verifying that AI outputs align with the expectations and achievement charts in *Growing Success* and the Ontario curriculum?
- Am I using AI only for tasks like organizing curriculum expectations or refining goals, rather than generating full plans?

ADVICE FOR MEMBERS

As educators it is our responsibility to advocate for and defend our professional decisions. We must approach AI critically, ensuring its use enhances student learning, protects educator rights, and upholds collective agreements. AI tools should be used responsibly and ethically, with careful attention to accuracy, privacy, and ensuring alignment with board-approved tools, policies, and guidelines.

ETFO members should exercise caution when selecting and using AI tools and contact their local if they have questions about their school board's AI policies.

Visit members.etfo.ca for more information.