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Schools explore AI as subject and teaching tool

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Calcutta: Several schools are incorporating AI (artificial intelligence) into their curricula and academic calendars.

Physics lessons in Class V of an international school are being conducted using AI-generated text.

Two more schools — one ICSE and the other CBSE — are offering AI as a subject in Class IX.

AI has made inroads everywhere, we have to accept and incorporate it, the principals said.

The Cambridge School has been using AI to teach physics to Class V students. It is a pilot experiment that the school has introduced to assess the learning outcomes among students with varying levels of academic strength.

"We introduced AI for physics in Class V to see if the learning outcomes improve. We are replacing the textbooks with AI-generated, human-curated texts. It is an experiment," said Sarojesh Mukerjee, director, The Cambridge School.

"These texts have a flexibility that the traditional textbooks don't, which is that they can be aimed at three different kinds of students: the academically weak, average, and those who are academically strong," said Mukerjee.

The AI-generated human-curated text can produce differentiated content for both the "advanced and struggling learner". It can also factor in local context and recent news, a school official said.

The school is collaborating with a US-based consultant for the pilot project.

"I aim to collect real classroom data through collaboration with teachers to demonstrate that this model can meaningfully improve learning outcomes. One key strength of this approach is that the model can be easily adapted to different contexts and languages. For example, a French classroom should experience the same positive effect as yours," said the consultant.

Both Sri Sri Academy (ICSE) and The Newtown School (CBSE) are offering AI as a subject in Class IX.

Sri Sri Academy introduced AI and robotics from this academic year.

"Last year, three students wanted the subject, but this year there are about 10 of them. AI is here to stay, and we as a school must teach students to use AI judiciously. It should become a tool to enhance their creativity," said Gargi Banerjee, principal, Sri Sri Academy.

AI enters schools

Across schools, teachers face the challenge of students coming up with AI-generated text school programmes.

"We can easily identify the AI-generated text. We make students sit in the school and write them," said Banerjee.

The school has an AI and robotics lab, which is compulsory for every student from Classes III to VIII to attend. The school gives them a remark on their learning level under the co-scholastic category in the report card.

The Newtown School is offering AI instead of IT in Class IX. In other classes, teachers use AI to create content when they need to gather resources.

"AI is here to stay. It's best to make the most of it in a manner that would be advantageous to both students and teachers," said Satabdi Bhattacharjee, principal, The Newtown School.