


## Can ChatGPT Facilitate the Implementation of Personal Learning Environments in Tertiary Education: Benefits and Risks


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**Abstract:** The integration of ChatGPT in Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) has emerged as a promising approach to personalized learning in tertiary education. ChatGPT is believed to have the potential to transform traditional higher education into a more personalized, quality-driven, and student-centered learning experience that fosters critical thinking, self-regulated learning, and creativity. While recent studies have highlighted the potential benefits of ChatGPT in enhancing personalized learning experiences, there are several risks and challenges that need to be addressed. This paper reviews relevant literature on ChatGPT and PLEs and identifies key risks and challenges associated with their integration, including ethical concerns, data privacy, technical issues, and user acceptance. Meanwhile, the paper also proposes ways and thoughts for the future implementation of ChatGPT in PLEs. The paper concludes that ChatGPT has significant potential to facilitate a new round of educational revolution which pushes educators to reconsider why to teach, how to teach, and what to teach.

**Keywords:** Chatgpt, Chatbot, Personalized Learning, Personal Learning Environment, Higher Education, Benefit And Risk

**Citation:** Xu, X., Wang, X., Zhang, Y., & Ma, W. (2023). Can ChatGPT Facilitate the Implementation of Personal Learning Environments in Tertiary Education: Benefits and Risks. In M. Koc, O. T. Ozturk & M. L. Ciddi (Eds.), *Proceedings of ICRES 2023-- International Conference on Research in Education and Science*

(pp. 1113-1123), Cappadocia, Turkiye. ISTES Organization.

## Introduction

Personalized Learning Environments (PLEs) have emerged as a promising approach to improving the quality of higher education. By leveraging the power of technology, PLEs enable students to take control of their learning experiences and tailor them to their individual needs and preferences. One technology that has shown great potential in this regard is ChatGPT. ChatGPT is a state-of-the-art language model developed by OpenAI that has gained significant attention and popularity in recent years. As a large language model, ChatGPT is capable of generating human-like responses to a wide range of natural language input, making it a valuable tool for various applications, including educational ones.

The first principle of ChatGPT is the use of transformer-based language models that rely on self-attention mechanisms to generate coherent and relevant responses. These models, such as GPT-3, are designed to learn from large amounts of data and leverage the power of deep neural networks to generate natural language that mimics human communication. Floridi and Chiriatti (2020) argue that GPT-3 represents a significant breakthrough in the field of AI, allowing for more efficient and effective natural language processing. Zhang and Li (2021) suggest that GPT-3 has the potential to revolutionize industries such as education and customer service. However, Dale (2021) cautions that while GPT-3 is impressive, it is not a substitute for human intelligence and is limited by its training data. Radford et al. (2021) propose that GPT-3 can be enhanced by incorporating visual cues to improve its understanding of the world, while Vaswani et al. (2017) highlight the importance of attention mechanisms in transformer-based models like GPT-3. Moreover, the GPT model is capable of adapting to user preferences and behaviors over time, further enhancing its ability to generate high-quality responses.

Despite the primary purpose of a chatbot being to imitate human conversation, ChatGPT stands out for its versatility in various applications. Notably, it has been reported to have the capability to generate and debug computer programs Tung (2023), compose a wide range of creative works such as music, fairy tales, teleplays, and essays, as well as provide answers to test questions at a level that can surpass that of an average human test-taker Heilweil (2022). It can also generate poetry and song lyrics Reich (2022), emulate a Linux system, simulate an entire chat room, play games like tic-tac-toe, and simulate an ATM Edwards (2022). The training data used for ChatGPT's development includes information on internet phenomena, programming languages, and man pages, such as those of bulletin board systems and the Python programming language Edwards (2022). ChatGPT is an advanced chatbot that is being increasingly used in the education sector to provide personalized learning experiences to students. One of the essential features of educational chatbots is their ability to personalize learning. The integration of AI-powered chatbots with e-learning platforms can also personalize the e-learning process Davies et al. (2020). In this paper, we explore the potential ways, benefits, and risks of applying ChatGPT in the development and implementation of PLEs in higher education.

### **The impact of ChatGPT on human life and education**

ChatGPT was first introduced in June 2018 by OpenAI, a research organization dedicated to advancing artificial intelligence in a safe and beneficial way Radford et al. (2018). ChatGPT is an extension of the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) family of models, which are designed to generate natural language text in a wide range of tasks, including language translation, question answering, and text summarization. ChatGPT is trained on a massive dataset of text from the internet, allowing it to generate human-like responses to a wide range of natural language inputs.

With its fast development, there are many concerns about the implementation of ChatGPT in all fields of human life, including education. Is ChatGPT an angel or a devil? ChatGPT has the potential to revolutionize education in a way that is similar to how previous technological inventions such as printers, calculators, computers, and information and communication technologies (ICT) have impacted human life and education. The human development index (HDI) considers technological advancements as one of the three key dimensions of human development, along with income and health United Nations Development Program (2020). These technologies have made information and knowledge more accessible, contributing to the spread of education worldwide. The computer, for example, has revolutionized the way education is delivered. It has enabled distance learning and the use of multimedia resources, allowing students to learn at their own pace and in their preferred environment Bates & Poole (2003). Similarly, the telephone has facilitated communication between teachers and students, making it possible for them to discuss academic matters and seek assistance remotely. The printer, on the other hand, has made it easier for students to produce high-quality written work. It has also allowed for the mass production of educational materials such as textbooks, increasing their accessibility and affordability Bates & Sangra (2011).

Like the previous revolutionary inventories, ChatGPT has the potential to significantly impact the value and pedagogy of modern higher education by transforming traditional knowledge-push education to personalized upper-level mind development. According to Benedetto et al. (2019), Chatbots can serve as virtual teaching assistants, supporting personalized learning by providing instant feedback, answering questions, and offering relevant learning resources. This personalization of education has the potential to improve the quality of education by catering to the individual learning needs of each student Davies et al. (2020).

Moreover, ChatGPT can promote critical thinking and self-regulated learning by encouraging students to think deeply about the questions asked by the chatbot and take charge of their learning process Holotescu (2016). Additionally, the use of ChatGPT can enhance creativity and imagination by encouraging students to think outside the box and explore new ideas and perspectives Haristiani & Rifa'i (2020). Furthermore, ChatGPT can promote global competence development by providing students with access to information and perspectives from all around the world Sharef et al. (2021). It can also help students develop emotional intelligence (EQ) by providing them with a safe space to express their feelings and practice empathy Pataranutaporn et al. (2021).

In terms of the impact of ChatGPT on teachers and teaching, the emergence of ChatGPT is expected to bring significant changes to the role of teachers in higher education. Traditional methods of teaching, where teachers were the primary source of knowledge, will no longer be sufficient in the era of personalized learning. With the help of ChatGPT, learners can access personalized learning experiences and content that cater to their unique needs and interests. This shift in pedagogy requires teachers to adopt new roles, such as facilitators, mentors, and coaches, who guide and support learners in their self-directed learning journeys.

Moreover, the traditional system of evaluating teachers based on their knowledge and expertise will need to evolve. Teachers will be evaluated based on their ability to facilitate personalized learning experiences, inspire learners, and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The focus will be on the impact of teaching and learning rather than just the transmission of knowledge. This change in evaluation methods will encourage teachers to adopt more innovative and personalized teaching approaches that better engage and motivate learners.

In summary, ChatGPT has the potential to transform traditional higher education into a more personalized, quality-driven, and student-centered learning experience that fosters critical thinking, self-regulated learning, creativity, imagination, global competence development, and EQ.

### **A brief introduction to PLEs**

Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) is a concept that refers to a system of tools, resources, and social connections that support individual learning goals and strategies. PLEs are becoming increasingly popular in higher education as they allow learners to take control of their own learning experiences and create a personalized and flexible approach to learning Buchem (2014). PLEs can encompass a variety of technologies such as blogs, wikis, social media, and mobile devices, among others Attwel (2007). The effectiveness of PLEs in meeting established learning objectives has been explored in various studies (Fiedler & Våljataga, 2013). PLEs can enhance learners' engagement, motivation, and satisfaction with the learning process, as well as provide opportunities for collaborative and peer-to-peer learning Johnson & Liber (2008).

The use of PLEs can provide opportunities for undergraduate research experiences National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017), personalized learning Pane et al. (2017), and the digital transformation of teaching and learning in higher education UNESCO & Tsinghua University (2022). The ontology-driven conceptual model proposed by Nan Censka et al. (2022) further emphasizes the importance of PLEs as a framework for lifelong learning. However, the implementation of PLEs also presents challenges, such as the need for learner control and the development of the instructional design that supports learner autonomy Våljataga & Laanpere (2010). Despite these challenges, PLEs have the potential to transform traditional teaching and learning practices in higher education Shavelson (2010), as evidenced by their successful implementation in English for Specific Purposes Xu et al. (2020).

### **Potential ways to apply ChatGPT in PLEs development**

ChatGPT can play a significant role in the development and implementation of PLEs in tertiary education. ChatGPT's ability to generate natural language responses can facilitate communication between learners and their PLEs, allowing learners to interact with their PLEs in a more natural and intuitive way. ChatGPT can collect and analyze data on a student's learning patterns, preferences, and performance to create a customized learning experience. Haristiani and Rifa'i (2020) found that ChatGPT can be combined with social media to enhance the Personal Learning Environments of students.

Sharef et al. (2021) also proposed a personalized learning approach based on learning analytics and chatbot technology. ChatGPT is also being used in research to create intelligent and interactive chatbots for personalized learning experiences Yao & Wu (2022); Benedetto et al. (2019). Furthermore, Ashok et al. (2021) conducted a systematic survey of cognitive chatbots in a personalized learning framework and concluded that chatbots can be used to deliver personalized learning to students. Finally, Pataranutaporn et al. (2021) developed AI-generated characters that can support personalized learning and well-being.

ChatGPT can be leveraged in a number of ways to enhance the development and implementation of PLEs in higher education. Some potential ways include:

- 1) **Personalized Tutoring:** ChatGPT can serve as a virtual tutor, providing personalized support to students. It can interact with students, answering their questions and providing feedback on their work in real time.
- 2) **Adaptive Learning:** ChatGPT can adapt to the needs of individual learners, providing customized learning experiences based on their interests, abilities, and learning styles.
- 3) **Content Creation:** ChatGPT can be used to generate content, such as quizzes, assignments, and study materials, that is tailored to individual students' needs.
- 4) **Social Learning:** ChatGPT can facilitate social learning by enabling students to interact with each other and with instructors in real time. It can be used to create discussion forums, chat groups, and other interactive learning environments.

As technology continues to advance, it is likely that personalized ChatGPT programs will become more commonplace in education. This could allow learners to tailor their own ChatGPT experience, building their own database with specific data, language structure, preferred language style, and other preferences. Learners could choose to focus on specific subject areas or language skills, or even develop their own unique ChatGPT persona with a particular tone or style. Additionally, personalized ChatGPT programs could be designed to support learners with specific learning challenges or preferences, such as those with dyslexia or ADHD. The potential for personalized ChatGPT programs is vast and could revolutionize the way learners interact with and learn from AI language models.

### **Benefits of applying ChatGPT in PLEs**

Applying ChatGPT in Personal Learning Environments has several benefits. Firstly, it facilitates personalized learning, which is critical for modern education. Chatbots, powered by AI, can assess a student's level of knowledge and provide tailored learning materials based on the student's unique learning pace, style, and preference. This helps students to grasp concepts quickly and effectively, enhancing their learning outcomes. Secondly, chatbots can provide round-the-clock assistance to students, answering their questions promptly and providing guidance on assignments and projects. This frees up the teacher's time to focus on more important tasks, such as inspiring students and facilitating their self-actualization. Thirdly, chatbots can help to monitor the progress of students and provide relevant feedback, allowing them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and make necessary adjustments to their learning strategy.

The following part listed some of the numerous benefits, including:

- 1) **Improved Engagement:** ChatGPT can help increase student engagement by providing interactive learning experiences and personalized support.
- 2) **Facilitation of self-regulated learning:** ChatGPT can provide personalized and adaptive learning experiences, helping learners to develop self-regulated learning skills.
- 3) **Enhanced learning motivation:** By providing engaging and interactive conversations, ChatGPT can increase learners' motivation and interest in the learning process.
- 4) **Personalization and customization of learning experiences:** ChatGPT can personalize the learning experience by adapting to the learner's needs and preferences, making learning more relevant and effective.
- 5) **Improvement of critical thinking skills:** ChatGPT can stimulate critical thinking skills by providing opportunities for learners to engage in complex problem-solving tasks and discussions.
- 6) **Accessibility:** ChatGPT can help make education more accessible to students with disabilities or other challenges that may make traditional learning environments difficult.
- 7) **Time and cost-effectiveness:** ChatGPT can be used to deliver learning materials and support at a relatively low cost, and learners can access the system at any time and from any location.

### **Risks and challenges of applying ChatGPT in PLEs**

This integration also presents several risks and challenges that must be considered. Some of the critical issues include the need for effective dialogue management, ensuring the reliability and validity of the chatbot's responses, privacy and security concerns, and the need for ongoing maintenance and support. Additionally, the successful integration of ChatGPT in PLEs requires a robust understanding of the pedagogical objectives, student needs, and learning outcomes. The following part describes some risks that need to be considered, including:

- 1) **Privacy Concerns:** ChatGPT relies on access to large amounts of data, which raises concerns about privacy and security.
- 2) **Academic ethical concerns:** Using an AI model to complete assignments or write papers may raise

concerns about academic integrity, plagiarism, and originality.

- 3) Quality of work: While ChatGPT can generate responses quickly, the quality of the work may vary, and it may not meet the same standards as work produced by a human.
- 4) Bias and accuracy: AI models are trained on large datasets, which may have inherent biases that can influence the generated output. This can be a concern in academic work, where accuracy and impartiality are critical.
- 5) Legal issues: The use of AI in education raises potential legal issues around privacy, data protection, and intellectual property rights.
- 6) Technical issues: The reliability and stability of the technology behind ChatGPT may be a concern, as technical issues can lead to lost work, missed deadlines, or other problems.
- 7) Psychological effects: Overreliance on ChatGPT may lead to a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and can also cause anxiety and stress, particularly if the technology is not working as expected or generates unsatisfactory results.

#### **Proposed Guiding Principles and Frameworks for integrating ChatGPT in PLEs**

- 1) Provide opportunities for self-directed learning through the use of ChatGPT to allow learners to explore their interests and personalize their learning experiences. Tapalova and Zhiyenbayeva (2022) indicated that AI can be used to enhance learner agency and self-directed learning, and emphasize the importance of sustainable evaluation to continuously improve the learning experience.
- 2) Foster a sense of belonging and community by encouraging learners to engage in collaborative learning activities through ChatGPT. Dunleavy & Burke (2019) pointed out that a sense of belonging is a crucial factor that can influence student engagement, satisfaction, and success. They suggested that this can be achieved by creating a supportive and inclusive online learning environment that encourages communication, collaboration, and active participation among students.
- 3) Use ChatGPT to provide timely feedback and support to learners, which can enhance their potential realization and motivation to learn. Weber and Ludwig (2020) found that users perceive chatbots and voice assistants as useful tools for learning and enhancing their skills. In addition, Jeon (2021) found that young learners had positive experiences and perspectives when using AI chatbots in the EFL classroom, as they provided timely feedback and support and increased their engagement and motivation to learn.
- 4) Use a variety of learning interactions in ChatGPT, including discussion forums, quizzes, and simulations, to promote active and meaningful learning experiences. Khan et al. (2017) found that students who engaged in active learning activities, such as discussions and group work, had higher course grades and were more satisfied with the course. Lamon et al. (2020) similarly found that active learning increased student engagement and satisfaction in an online postgraduate course. Rossi et al. (2021) demonstrated that the use of active learning tools, such as simulations and case studies, improved learning outcomes, scientific attitude, and critical thinking skills in higher education students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the references suggest that active learning can lead to more positive learning experiences and outcomes for students in online courses.



- 5) Implement sustainable evaluation methods in ChatGPT, such as formative assessment and peer assessment, to provide learners with ongoing feedback and promote continuous learning. Nguyen and Walker (2016) discussed the concept of sustainable assessment for lifelong learning, highlighting the importance of incorporating ongoing formative assessment and peer assessment in online learning to promote continuous learning and provide learners with meaningful feedback. Ben-Eliyahu (2021) emphasized the need for sustainable learning in education, which involves integrating social, environmental, and economic considerations into teaching and learning practices to prepare learners for a sustainable future. Caeiro et al. (2020) conducted a critical reflection on sustainability assessment and benchmarking in higher education institutions, emphasizing the importance of incorporating sustainability criteria into assessment practices to promote sustainable development in higher education.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, ChatGPT has the potential to revolutionize tertiary education by facilitating the development and implementation of personalized learning environments (PLEs). By providing students with personalized learning experiences, ChatGPT can enhance critical thinking, self-regulated learning, creativity, imagination, global competence development, EQ, and other important skills that are essential for success in today's world. Additionally, ChatGPT can help educators to shift their focus from being knowledge givers to inspiring, leading, and facilitating learners' self-actualization and personalized learning. This requires a change in the way that teaching is evaluated, moving from how knowledgeable a teacher is to a higher level of value of teaching, influencing teaching, and personalized teaching.

However, there are also potential challenges that need to be addressed when implementing ChatGPT in tertiary education. These include concerns about privacy and data security, the need for effective training and support for educators and learners, and the importance of maintaining a balance between technology and human interaction. Overall, the implementation of ChatGPT in tertiary education has the potential to create a more personalized and effective learning environment that can prepare students for the challenges of the modern world.

ChatGPT has the ability to comprehend and reorganize all human knowledge, and gradually develop consciousness. However, it has not yet reached the level of equivalence to humans. Humans have limited capacity for acceptance and expression, but our social lives are intentional and meaningful. In contrast, artificial intelligence lacks intentionality and meaning on its own. Therefore, our goals and those of AI are different. While ChatGPT has the potential to revolutionize education and communication, it is important to recognize its limitations and understand how it can complement and enhance human capabilities.

As ChatGPT continues to advance and develop a deeper understanding of human knowledge, it becomes increasingly clear that coexistence with this artificial intelligence is inevitable. However, simply banning its



development is not a viable solution, as technology monopolies and the competition for human resources will continue to drive progress. Therefore, efforts should be focused on catching up with AI rather than attempting to control it. It is important to recognize that AI lacks the intentionality that humans possess, making it necessary to break free from traditional human will and seek meaning in new social structures. Ultimately, as humans live and work alongside ChatGPT, it will be important to embrace the opportunities for collaboration and innovation that this new era of coexistence will bring.

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