Melissa: Hi, everyone. Welcome to the latest episode of the Collaborative for Inclusive Education's podcast: EdVenture. I'm your host this season, Melissa Katz. I have the honor of hosting as well as leading the collaborative. And I am joined today by a very exciting guest, Frederic Lim. Welcome, Frederic.

Frederic: Hello, Melissa. I'm glad to be here.

Melissa: Yes. We have a couple of trainings coming up this month with you. So I wanted to ask you about them. You know, I think when we were trying to think of what would be feeling relevant to practitioners as we were planning our fall calendar, you know, all that magic happens behind the scenes during the summer. And a really hot topic was AI and, for example, chatGPT. And we thought, you know, this is something that people are talking about and I think a little fearful of. So let's get, let's bring opportunities for our practitioners to come and learn and experiment in a safe space. So can you tell us a little bit more about the two sessions you have coming up?

Frederic: Yeah, sure. Certainly. And yeah, thank you again for this invitation to speak with my fellow teachers in New York City. Well, the upcoming webinar will explore the strategies and resources to help the new teachers of ELLs navigate this new tool as they face the challenges of the school year. So it's very appropriate that it's happening now. We'll be discussing how to level ELLs and selecting materials and incorporating that AI, that artificial intelligence, into the teacher's teaching toolkit, and specifically the chatGPT, which is a type of AI.

Melissa: What got you interested in chat GPT?

Frederic: Well, it's the tool that happened after I left New York. The tool that I wish I had when I was teaching all those years at the middle school, you know, because there's all these ELL's, all these teachers, all the grades, all the curriculum. And I found that, yeah, I want to serve the best I could, but wow, where's the tool to do this? I finally left, and then suddenly there was a tool. And now I'm using it again here as I teach a middle school in Taipei. I wanted to do the assignment here because I wanted to test it out. It's like, oh, okay, back in the classroom, even though I'm training teachers, back in the classroom to see if this really works and it does. I've been here a month and I'm really excited about using it because for all teachers, it gives you more time to do more interesting things. Let's put it that way.

Melissa: And can I ask, I think we've seen some, it's in pockets, right? I think some people embracing this new emerging tech, but I think there's also some fears out there. Can you speak a little bit to, you know, a teacher might be listening, thinking, "am I really gonna attend that session? You know, cause I'm feeling a little fearful." What would you say to them?

Frederic: Well, yeah, that is a really valid concern, Melissa. It's essential to remember though, that AI is a tool, you know, like Google Classroom is a tool. It didn't take over everything. We use it as a tool and we can just interchange our technology whenever we want to. But I'd like to caution teachers to think about AI and chatGPT not as a replacement for good teaching. Good

means experienced and trained. And I know that teachers that are new to teaching might be scared of teaching and not even talking about technology, just scared of teaching. Well, this tool can help you, but don't think it's like the oracle for you. Don't think it's going to solve all your problems. You need to be vigilant and have a brain to think, is this good for my student or not? Because chatGPT just spits out what you put in as a prompt, and I'll show you how to do that in the webinar. But then you have to ultimately decide, OK, is this really good for my students? And you get better at deciding that as you get more experience, and also learning from other teachers who are in the building, or from books, or from anything, from your professors. So you have to be that human, ultimately, to decide what's good for your students.

Melissa: I love that point. I think the fear is maybe AI will replace humans. And you're saying absolutely not.

Frederic: Oh, no, no. You can think of AI as a helpful assistant to you that frees up your time. Time is so valuable. I mean, you can be so smart at everything, but ultimately you can't do everything because everyone has the same amount of time. So with this tool, it allows you to focus on inspiring and guiding your students. which is what you want to do anyway, and it's what they want. Anyone can give them a sheet to do, but it's up to you to create those games, those activities that are fun, projects. If I can give you some examples, I found it extremely helpful in providing more activities and learning materials in the classroom that took so much time for me to prepare before. For example, like word walls. I was telling the teachers in eighth grade, seventh grade, science. I remember it's like, oh, you should do more interactive word walls and things like that for your ELLs. And it looked at me and it's like, okay, if you're going to make all the material, you can help me with it. I did that as much as I could, but I always lack the time. But now with this AI tool, not only can I create materials faster, but I can create more targeted lessons for ELLs so they're not frustrated when something's out of their proximal zone of development, right? And I can also prepare posters or bulletin boards, which I hated to do because, again, it took so much time to prepare. Not so much with AI anymore, not ChatGPT, but Canva is really good. They have this AI component now, which makes creating posters and things just more intuitive. And they have more free materials for teachers as well. So I talked about the word wall, I talked about the bulletin boards that are surrounding you at school, but then when it comes down to lessons, I love this tool because the students' grade level is whatever it is, seventh, eighth, or ninth. But their language level is at like a second grade. So what do you do? It's always been the tough thing to do. Well, guess what? I teach English for Health as a subject following the national curriculum here in Taiwan for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, but their English level is like at the entering, emerging, so beginning, false beginning level, the A1 or A2 on the CEFR, Common European Framework for Reference level. So there's a big gap between what they're capable of language-wise and what they're supposed to be doing grade-wise. So I asked chatGPT to generate, for example, the top five words out of their unit self image, right? We're doing that for the ninth graders. And I get the words like perception, body image, self-worth, influence, ideal. And just those five words, you can get the idea of what the unit's going to be about, right? And I didn't spend hours thinking about it, maybe missing a word or whatever. It just came out in like two seconds. And so I focused on making more fun activities for them to do. And the last point I wanted to say that I started getting excited more

about joining the pastoral or after school clubs, which I was invited to do at the beginning of the school year, but then I hesitated to do because I thought, oh, you know, I'm new, and it might take a long time. But guess what? I asked chatGPT to plan out activities that would compare culturally interesting activities that compare the Taiwan culinary traditions with the Three Sisters Native American planting tradition. For me, as a teacher, that's fascinating because I love the plants, and I always had a plant club in New York. But it always took so much time. But this lesson plan, I created what in like half an hour, and I'm pretty satisfied with it. So those are like four examples I gave you of why I think teachers shouldn't be afraid of this new technology. You can just leverage it to a higher standard for your teaching, which I would have loved like the first day of teaching when I started like over 10 years ago. But then I don't regret having done that because, like I said before, whatever the chatGPT spits out at you, you have to decide whether it's good for your students. And you have control over what the output is because you're thinking about the prompts very intelligently. If you have that teaching background or if someone can help you with that, Then you can prompt the right way. If that makes sense.

Melissa: For sure. We did some experimentation. It was interesting when I gave it a, I also experimented with vocabulary. When I gave it certain prompts, it started really understanding what I was trying to get at. So certainly, yeah, I hear you there on what you're putting into it as a prompt requires some experimenting and the human brain and then evaluating, but it gets back to you even after it feels pretty polished, it's still something you're going to have to struggle with. So listeners, if this is intriguing to you, and I hope it is, I hope this idea of, you know, I think coming out of the pandemic or during the pandemic, there was an embrace of technology. And I think we were so thankful to get back to brick and mortar that we got away from it. So I'm hoping the pendulum is swinging back the other way, that we're going to see an embrace of technology again. And certainly chatGPT is one of those tools. And then we got a bonus plug as well for Canva in addition to chatGPT in podcast, which is wonderful for our listeners. And so we have in this podcast description a link to Frederic's two workshops. We're at time, but thank you so much for joining us, Frederic. I'm really excited for these sessions. Hopefully listeners, this is not a visual medium, but hopefully you register for the workshops and we get to see you in October. And last question, Frederic, because we're out of time, but we do, this is maybe even the most important question of the episode. What song would you like us to play as the outro?

Frederic: Well, I thought the song by Sara Bareilles, Brave.

Melissa: Oh, my gosh. Great song.

Frederic: It's a song that encourages students to speak up, be courageous in facing the challenges. You know, ELLS really need that.

Melissa: Yeah. And our teachers who are scared of AI, be brave.

Frederic: Of course.

Melissa: Come learn more.

Frederic: Yeah.

Melissa: Let's play that song. Thank you, Frederic.

Frederic: Sure. Thanks, Melissa. Thanks, everyone.

Melissa: Bye, everyone.