

No. 1: AI In Education

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One of the biggest threats to the modern-day education system is the influence AI has on students' education. There are two fields of thought in this discussion, one from the perspective of the student and the other from the educator. The student would argue that AI programs such as ChatGPT eliminate much of the busy work that is present in the typical approach to education. One of the best arguments from the perspective of the educator comes from one of my own teachers. My senior-year philosophy teacher argued that AI threatens the next generation's ability to think critically. It is hard to argue against the fact that ChatGPT is a great tool, but it is just that, a tool. It should not be a substitute for a student's own thought process. A student may argue that they will never use calculus or that nobody cares about Shakespeare, but it isn't necessarily the content that matters. As Martin Luther King puts it, education should "train one for quick, resolute, and effective thinking." A student's use of AI for classwork hinders the development of critical thinking skills [1]. Think about it this way. When you first learn math, you are not handed a calculator. We were all taught how to do everything by hand first. Yes, using a calculator would be easier, but this approach ensures that students understand the thought process that comes with solving different types of problems. When students are finally handed a calculator, they understand where it can be helpful and where their own mental calculations and insight are better and more efficient. Just as the calculator is helpful to a student, so is AI. A student must learn that AI can be helpful in some situations, but there are also times when they must contribute their own ideas because it is more valuable and insightful than anything AI can produce. This approach acknowledges both sides of the conversation. There is a place for AI in education, but it should not be one that hinders a student's education but excels it.

There is a large movement to address this challenge, and the one thing I will say is that educators should not outright ban the use of AI. There are places where it is useful, for example, when students are formatting slideshows, reviewing for a test, and checking their grammar. However, there also can't be full acceptance of the technology to ensure that students get a proper education. ChatGPT shouldn't write papers for students because the student isn't contributing their own ideas to the discussion. To prevent this, teachers can either make papers reflective, since AI can't convincingly replicate a student's own thoughts about a topic, or monitor their progress for research papers. Of course, ChatGPT can do a student's Math homework, but by forcing students to show work on paper, they are forced to go through the thought process that leads them to the answer, even if it is guided by AI. Teachers also need to ensure that their lessons are engaging and interesting for their students so that they enjoy learning. School systems need to move away from the test-prep style of education to a system that engages students while preparing them for the test without them knowing. Educators will never be able to ban the use of AI; students will always find a way. A better approach is implementing measures that limit their impact on students' education. Human's ability to think critically is one of our most important attributes. AI is undoubtedly a great tool for students, but it cannot take over a student's thinking ability.

[1] M. L. King Jr., "The Purpose of Education," The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, May 03, 2017.
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/purpose-education>