

Role of AI in Education

With AI expanding and becoming greater each day, it is playing greater and greater roles in our lives. Whether that be in day to day chores, school, or work, AI is becoming more integrated into our society. While something like AI ruling the world is unlikely to happen for a long, long time, it is serving as a disruption even today. In schools, AI is being used to cheat increasingly often, and in response, schools are placing tighter restrictions on it. But this is the wrong approach to dealing with AI in education. Just as the Internet has proved to be after its first release, AI too can become a useful tool. AI should not be banned from education, instead it should be allowed to serve a moderate role in it, allowing it to prove itself as a great assistant to students and professors alike.

Though having various harmful uses, when used skillfully and professionally, AI can serve to strengthen the quality and efficiency of work. As our society has progressed and made new technological advancements, we've always aimed to incorporate them into our lives. This is because these tools simply make our lives easier and "allow more people to live with dignity as a basic right, even if their skills have been superseded" (Source A). This should apply to AI tools like ChatGPT as well. Using these tools that make the information gathering process easier, students can "increase the quality and complexity of the argument" (Source A). These tools allow students to spend more of their time thinking about their arguments. If the end goal is to write a good argument, then why not use them? AI tools are so powerful and incredible assistants, they can even serve helpful to teachers and professors. For instance, Alex Baron, an administrator at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., said he has used AI to "analyze students' academic and

behavioral data, then split them into groups for targeted support” (Source B). AI can serve to help teachers customize and personalize their classes, aiding student learning. By banning AI, one would be depriving teachers of this valuable tool, and in turn, depriving students of learning. Now, that’s not to say AI can’t be harmful. If used incorrectly, it is a dangerous tool that can subject students to harmful behavior. For instance, in Dallas, school officials saw that “questions on state tests [that] were graded by software [had] scores... lower than district leaders expected” (Source B). When the district manually regraded 4,600 student writing samples, “2,000 received a higher score” (Source B). AI in its current state isn’t always right and can sometimes even be unreliable. To ensure students aren’t harmed by such unreliable behavior, AI should never be used in high stake scenarios. Answers given by AI should be thoroughly checked for validity to ensure no errors. AI should be used as a supplement, a tool; not as the solution itself. Olivia Han, a student, referring to ChatGPT, writes: “Your voice started to replace my own, and I couldn’t write a paragraph without wondering how you would say it” (Source C). In this case, Olivia offloaded all her thinking to ChatGPT, losing the ability to think for herself. AI should never be so heavily relied on as it takes away students’ critical thinking skills. Rather than going to the extremes by relying on AI or banning it, AI should be used in moderation in education, so students and faculty can reap the most benefits.

Though being a way to cheat, AI can easily serve to become a personalized tutor for motivated students and teachers, revealing a greater problem in the education system regarding student engagement. The truth is that every single person is different. Each person has their own preferred style of learning and teaching. Every person learns material

at different rates. And maybe more noticeably, every person has different circumstances. While some kids may have all the information and technology in the world at their fingertips, others don't. Many are struck by poverty or other poor circumstances that give them a disadvantage compared to other students. Robert Wong, Google's director of product management for learning and education, says tools like AI math tools are "invaluable for students whose parents cannot help them with math homework" (Source B). These tools cater to those without so much fortune, allowing them to learn at their own pace and check their answers. Now, while these tools can be helpful to those striving to learn, they can just as easily be used to cheat. While this is a good point, cheating has always been prevalent. Students will cheat whether AI's around or not. All that has changed is how students cheat. Rather than blaming AI for cheating, other factors should be considered. For instance, Wong says another likely factor is if "students [are] engaged in class" (Source B). Students who are not engaged in class are the ones that don't care about learning, just the grade, and so they will be the ones to cheat using AI. So rather than pinning cheating on AI, it should be pinned on student engagement. For those with proper engagement or want to improve, AI is a great help that will always be present. As Olivia Han says, referring to ChatGPT, "You never said no... You never rolled your eyes when I asked for 'one more time, make it simple and concise'" (Source C). For students scared of being judged, which is unfortunately an all-too-common experience in our education system, AI is a great place for them to get the help they need. The bot will never judge them and will always be there to help them, even if human mentors aren't. AI can also be used to give valuable feedback, even to teachers. Alex Baron, the administrator in Washington D.C.,

says “one company... pushed an AI product that watches video footage of teachers teaching, and offers feedback” (Source B). AI will always be willing to lend its time and advice. This allows people to not just learn about school subjects or hard skills, but soft skills as well. Even for teachers. AI should not be pinned as the problem for student cheating, rather student engagement should be, and AI should be used to help teach students, allowing it a moderate role in education.

The increasing use of AI in education highlights deeper, exploitative roots that prove a need for change in the education system. As of now, AI is seen as a tool to cheat. And mostly, that is because students use it to cheat. It is used by students, turning in “AI-produced essays without obtaining useful skills or really knowing what they have written” (Source A). In the graph by McGeehee, we see that as students progress to higher grades, they are more likely to use AI in their work (Source Z). Many would look at this and say that AI should be more heavily checked for and prohibited, but doesn’t this have a deeper meaning? If more students are prone to use AI more and more as they get further in their education, doesn’t that indicate a problem? If AI is being used increasingly by students, that means they must feel a need to get more help or just answers for their work. Isn’t it an issue if students feel they can’t handle their own work without the use of an outside source? The purpose of school is to teach and guide children, not stress them out, so why are they being thrust into course loads they can’t handle? This increasing statistic of the number of students using AI as they progress through grades shows a need for change in the education system. We can’t just keep giving them longer and longer assignments, taking all their free time and dignity. We must “value people as people, not just bundles of

skills” (Source A). We should be helping students grow and feel they can rely on themselves while making time for other activities. Otherwise, we are exploiting and only causing harm to them. Ultimately, students should feel that they don’t need to use AI to do their work, though that doesn’t mean it shouldn’t be used at all. On the teacher’s side, not to say there aren’t proper student uses, as Anant Agarwal, a professor at MIT says: “We can spot when a student is struggling and provide the support, they need in real time, long before they consider dropping out” (Source G). AI can be used to further provide students with support rather than answers, helping build the self-proficiency that should be valued in education. So, while AI has been used as a tool to cheat, it has exposed fundamental flaws of self-proficiency in the education system that should be fixed rather than the blind banning of AI.

Contrary to popular belief, the use of AI does not need to mean a lack of upholding excellence. Just because AI exists as a tool to use now doesn’t mean that students will become lazy or plagiarize if they do use it. Many schools have started to implement policies against AI and have already been doing so for plagiarism. For instance, New York University’s Academic Integrity Policy for Students says: “NYU expects and requires its students to adhere to the highest standards of scholarship, research and academic conduct” It also later talks about the prohibition of plagiarism (Source E). Now plagiarism is a crime and definitely should be. Stealing another person’s work, or AI’s, and claiming it as your own is terrible. But using AI does not need to mean plagiarism. In fact, using AI can and should be used properly in academic settings. It can be used to help students greatly rather than being something to copy and paste from. AI doesn’t need to mean the end of

high school education. AI should mean an increase in student help, but more importantly, student engagement. AI can prove to be such an essential tool in student learning. Thanks to it, we can foster passion in schools rather than ordinary, mundane busy work. Using AI, we can transform the way we learn and are taught for the better.