

AI in Classrooms: Good or Doomed?

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In high school, I was surprised to learn more than a few of my friends and classmates had admitted to using AI to help with homework and even essays. In the article “Not your parents’ Google: Why universities should embrace, not fear, ChatGPT and AI” from *USA Today*, Michael Fitts (2023) argues that the use of ChatGPT and AI in universities is beneficial, not bad, claiming that it “may be one of the best things that’s happened to universities in a long time.” He argues that using ChatGPT eliminates rote work, which allows students to focus on fresh ideas and multiply academic potential. He explains that ChatGPT gives students an opportunity to learn how artificial intelligence works and gain knowledge on critical reading. Fitts (2023) also includes some cons, acknowledging that students might not actually learn the material if they use AI, explaining that “speed could come at the cost of comprehensive understanding.” Fitts (2023) also explains that although students can use AI to write a paper, AI “can’t write a great one, because it can’t draw from human emotions or tell a personal story.” While I’ve never used AI to help with schoolwork, it is a rising issue in our society. After reviewing the article, I agree with Fitts (2023) that AI can be beneficial to students in some instances, like helping with a question a student is stuck on, but it can also give out unreliable information and be a biased source.

In the article, Fitts (2023) explains that AI can help students with critical reading and writing. While I agree with Fitts’s (2023) viewpoint that AI can help students with reading and writing, I believe AI can be an unreliable source. In an article about how students felt about AI from *Education Week*, Larry Ferlazzo (2023) explains in the beginning of his article that one of his students thinks AI can be unreliable. Ferlazzo (2023) uses an example where he used a chatbot to generate quotes from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and he found that “none of the quotes given were in the publication at all.” Ferlazzo (2023) explains that the “spreading of

misinformation done by these generative AIs just goes to show how unreliable they may be. Despite the help that they may bring to humans, their downsides prove them to be untrustworthy.” Giving a chatbot a prompt and then getting an unreliable answer is not what most people are looking for when using AI. I agree with Ferlazzo (2023) that chatbots can be helpful to humans, but that they also can give out unreliable and biased information, which can lead to the spread of misinformation, which is especially not desired in a classroom.

In addition, Fitts (2023) explains that AI can be helpful to students. While I agree with Fitts (2023) that it can be helpful, AI can also be a biased source. In the middle of his article, Ferlazzo (2023) explains that some of his students think that AI can be biased. Ferlazzo (2023) explains that he thinks that the “impact that generative AI might have on school is that it can narrow down the learning and perspectives that the students might have.” He mentions a study where when an AI engine is asked to give a picture of, for example, a CEO, it gave the user a picture of a white male. Ferlazzo (2023) explains that “if we keep on teaching kids these narrow-minded ideas and images, we will never see some try and show people that they can do a lot more and make a greater impact to the Earth without having to be a certain race or ethnicity.” When AI is given a prompt, studies show that it gives the user a biased answer. People and especially children can be impressionable, and if AI engines give impressionable people biased answers, it can lead to narrow-minded thoughts and ideas. Relating back to the study mentioned in Ferlazzo’s (2023) article, only showing an example of a certain race or gender when imputing leading roles like CEO can lead to people thinking that if someone doesn’t fit the image or description that the AI engine gave them, they won’t be able to do it as well.

Later in the article, Fitts (2023) explains that AI can multiply and help students with their academic potential, and I agree. In the beginning of an article about how students can use AI for

the better from US News, Sarah Beck and Sarah Levine (2023) who are both professors, explain that when students used AI for writing, they “treated ChatGPT not as a cheating resource, but as a writing partner or coach.” Beck and Levine (2023) also write that students using ChatGPT can “learn new words, clarify their own arguments, consider others’ perspectives, and maybe even change their own minds.” Beck and Levine (2023) also explain that if students acknowledge that they used ChatGPT to help with their work, they think it is not cheating. At the end of their article, Beck and Levine (2023) wrote the following:

ChatGPT can be a muse for students, offering endless examples of stories, songs, tweets and other texts that will help students build a broader understanding of structure and style — things that will help them become stronger writers. One teacher cannot play the role of muse for 30 or more students in a classroom. But AI can. [...] Many students found ChatGPT’s writing to be mechanical and uninspired, and in turn, they rejected its editing suggestions. One student said, “ChatGPT makes writing sound distant and robotic.” Another described its output as “too perfect.” [...] Will some students actually cheat with ChatGPT and other AI tools? Yes – and likely at higher rates than they did before ChatGPT. But as teachers and students learn to use AI strategically, we predict that more students will learn more about writing and maybe even read more than they did before ChatGPT.

Students can use AI to help with writing, arguments, and opening their minds to other perspectives. Beck and Levine admit that some students may cheat with the help of AI, but most will only use it as help, instead of cheating. I agree with Beck and Levine that if students acknowledge that they used AI to help with their assignments, it isn’t cheating, but it also depends on their teacher’s, professor’s, or school’s guidelines on the use of AI, as some may not

permit the use of it. I also think that if students use AI, their work should mostly be their own, with help from the AI engine.

Next, Fitts (2023) explains that AI can be beneficial to students, and I agree. In an article about a high school senior's thoughts on AI from *CNN*, Sidhi Dhanda (2023) explains how AI has helped them in their classes, writing that they were “struggling to understand pointers and nodes. [...] I was still confused, and I decided to reach out to ChatGPT for help. [...] It offered an explanation [...] and I had my lightbulb moment. This conceptual topic, which I had trouble understanding for days, finally clicked. Why should using ChatGPT to understand a challenging topic be frowned upon?” Later in the article, Dhanda (2023) explains that AI can offer feedback on an assignment. “The feedback I receive isn't better than (or even as good as) what a teacher could offer, but it does still help me learn more about writing. I don't have to worry about annoying chatbots or taking up too much of their time – unlike my teachers or friends.” Students can use AI to help them understand a topic they're struggling to understand and can receive feedback on an assignment while not feeling like they're bothering their teachers or friends. I've felt like I was bothering a teacher or friend when asking for help or feedback on an assignment, and AI can help eliminate the feeling.

The use of AI in classrooms has just recently been coined as an issue for the future of education. Schools and teachers are becoming worried about how students will use it to cheat and spread misinformation and bias while doing so, though the use of AI in classrooms isn't all negative, as it can help students flourish into the leaders of tomorrow. After doing research on using AI in classrooms, I've learned that it isn't just something students can use to cheat, but it helps students open their minds and get feedback and help on their work, although it isn't always

helpful. So, even though I have never used AI before to help with schoolwork, after doing research, I am more open to the idea.

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