

To AI or not to AI?

AI tools, by themselves, do not have the power to enhance or diminish our originality and creativity. It all depends on how we use them.

Albert P' Rayan

The use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has recently sparked widespread discussion and debate about its impact on student learning.

AI tools are now commonly used by students at both the secondary and tertiary levels for several academic purposes. While many educators view this development positively, others express concerns that it may lead to plagiarism, hinder creativity, and reduce originality.

How authentic?
It is true that AI cannot create in the same way humans can because it lacks intrinsic creativity. Humans possess immense creative potential that machines cannot match. For example, the music of renowned musicians and the writing style of creative authors are unique. In fantasy and sci-fi author Joanna Maciejewska's words "I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so that I can do my art and writing..." No

fan of JK Rowling expects her to use AI to write a novel, just as no fan of AR Rahman expects him to compose music with the help of AI. Artificial is synthetic, while natural is authentic.

This statement should not be interpreted to mean that AI cannot be used for creative or productive purposes. The purposes for which creative artists use AI tools are quite different from those for which students and teachers use them.

Noam Chomsky provocatively described AI as "plagiarism software". While some critics argue that AI merely copies and modifies existing words and phrases, generative models do not simply reproduce content. Instead, they synthesize new combinations and generate novel outputs based on the data they are trained on. However, using AI-generated content uncritically reflects a lack of originality, creativity, and critical thinking.

Those who view AI as a threat to academic integrity (honesty, fairness, and



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responsibility) often fail to see its educational potential. This raises the question of whether AI tools should be banned, restricted, or promoted in educational institutions.

New York City public schools, which had previously restricted access to ChatGPT on school computers and networks, have recently lifted the ban. Rather than thinking of banning AI tools, schools should teach students how to use them appropriately. This proactive approach can enhance students' understanding of the technology and could prove to be a valuable workplace skill. It is crucial for education boards to implement thoughtful and reasonable AI policies.

Good or bad mentor

In a discussion on the role of AI in education, one teacher remarked that AI acts as a mentor for students. I asked whether he considered it a good or bad one. The reality is that AI can be either, depending on how we choose to use it. The prompts we provide reflect our intentions, and AI responds accordingly.

AI, as a good mentor or an educational tool, can instil confidence in learners, arouse their curiosity, empower them to critically evaluate generated content, spark creativity, synthesize information, edit or translate content into any language, help them improve their language skills, organise study materials, develop learner auto-

nomy, and enhance personalized learning by making it more effective and enjoyable.

On the other hand, as a bad mentor, AI can do everything for the student: generate ideas for homework, complete assignments, prepare presentation slides, and even give the impression that the user is the original author of essays, presentations, and reports it has created.

AI has empowered many academics, researchers, and students who now feel that language should no longer be a barrier to expressing their novel ideas and research findings, as AI tools assist with language-related tasks.

In other words, thanks

gism and emphasise the importance of adhering to AI policies.

AI tools, by themselves, do not have the power to enhance or diminish our originality and creativity—it all depends on how we use them. When applied thoughtfully, rather than as a crutch, they can assist with idea generation, help overcome mental blocks, and refine texts, thereby expanding creative capabilities. However, over-reliance on AI can develop cognitive laziness or men-

tal inertia, weaken problem-solving abilities, reduce independent thinking, and lead us to bypass imaginative processes. Since AI-generated content often reflects patterns from its training data, excessive dependence on it can further restrict originality. Will we make AI our creative assistant or allow it to become a crutch? The ball is in our court. Let's make the right play.

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