

Teachers, Teach Thyselves

Meet AI's challenges to traditional education
by dropping bits of that tradition

What happens when a powerful tool like AI meets the traditional teaching model? Anxiety, friction and litigation. An LLM student at OP Jindal University won a case against the institution, which had declared his work AI-generated, and failed him for plagiarism. While his own argument hinged on technicalities around the university's policies on plagiarism and copyright, such cases and complications are bound to pop up in classrooms and workplaces. As AI models are trained on large datasets, narrow claims of authorship and attribution are hard to establish. This tech is new and it destabilises certain formats of evaluation, like the periodic exam or essay. But there's no point being on a collision course with AI. Like



search engines and smartphones, AI tools will have to be assimilated, and harnessed.

Students have every incentive to use AI for shortcuts, to load it with grunt-work, use it to polish their prose and so on. It can be a learning aid to detangle jargon, or help those whose imperfect language skills distract from their grasp over a subject. Teachers will have to rethink their idea of academic/workplace integrity. They will have to test students' mastery of the hows and whys, not the whats.

AI is a burbler that can produce plausible answers. But education is about mind wrestling with study material. Teachers and students should know it's easy to game one's homework, but both self-respect and interest in a subject demand our actual attention. The poet Joseph Fasano responded to a student who used AI to write a poem, "I know your days are precious/on this earth./But what are you trying/to be free of?/The living? The miraculous/task of it?/Love is for the ones who love the work." Teachers, get it.