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AI: Friend or Foe?

Generative AI has grown in popularity for the past three years, cementing itself in industries, jobs, and most importantly, education. But this isn't the first time the world has changed. With the advent of the internet, calculators, and even back to the invention of writing itself, the world has constantly adapted to new technology. So why should we be scared of AI today? Many educators fear the end of academic integrity with ChatGPT's role in student cheating. Yet, once upon a time, Plato declared that the invention of the alphabet was "the show of wisdom without the reality," and would ruin learning. Today, writing is essential to everything we do, and education has only improved with it. In the same way the education system has embraced changes in the past, it is essential we embrace new technology today, preparing students for the future whilst retaining human connection. It's true that some students may misuse AI, however, their poor choices will quickly be revealed on in-class assessments and lead to their own downfall. Thus, students should be given free reign to use generative AI for assignments outside of class but should be restricted during class to ensure authentic human learning.

Despite minor concerns with AI's misinformation, AI exists everywhere, and it is essential for students to not only learn how to use it, but also employ it as a personal tutor outside of school. Despite ChatGPT's release only a few years ago, generative AI has quickly advanced

to become an important part of the world. It is evident that generative AI will be here to stay. The primary purpose of AI is to prepare students for their future jobs. How can schools effectively achieve this goal if they restrict AI but expect students to interact with it once they are older? Kevin Roose, author of the article "Don't Ban ChatGPT in Schools. Teach With It," explains how generative AI is "now a fixture of our society" and will continue to be so (Roose). He believes that "schools should treat Chat GPT the way they treat calculators, assuming that students will likely use it unless explicitly told not to," which is perfectly okay (Roose). Students aren't penalized for using the resources available to them when studying, including calculators, notes, and formula sheets, and they shouldn't be for AI either. The benefit to using AI outside of school is that students essentially gain a free, 24/7 private tutor to work through problems with them. It can explain and re-explain concepts to students in any way they need, strengthening the ideas learned in school for them. For example, the popular learning app, Khan Academy, has recently integrated an AI bot into their platform. Natasha Singer interviews a student user who explains that, "It's very good at walking you through the problem step by step," (Singer). The Khan Academy founder adds that integrating AI will "enable every student in the United States, and eventually on the planet, to effectively have a world-class personal tutor," (Singer). A huge advantage of AI that Mr. Khan reveals is how AI can be used to give personal attention for students all over the world who may not have the money or access for private tutors. However, some organizations, such as the New York City public schools, argue against the "safety and accuracy of content" of AI (Roose). Yet, this problem is not unique to generative AI. The internet hosts endless amounts of misinformation. Just as students are taught to fact check what they find on the internet, they should be taught AI literacy, learning how to validate what ChatGPT says before using it. Another common fear with AI use is that students will use it only to find the

answers, without learning or understanding the concept. David Brooks writes about a study conducted at MIT, where participants wrote an essay with or without AI. He cites that "AI users [experienced brain connectivity] least of all" (Brooks). It's true that many students use AI to do their work for them, rather than using it as a research tool, and therefore making less connections and growth. This form of cheating, though, will be evident on in-class tests and essays, when students are unable to do well without the help of AI. From there teachers should be encouraged to modify the student's AI privileges on an individual basis, until they can prove to use it for learning purposes rather than cheating. Because students who choose this path will quickly be discovered on assessments, cheating with AI should not be as large of a fear as it is currently. Overall, it is clear that AI is here to stay, so students should be prepared to use and learn with it as a personalized tutor after school.

Despite the benefit of AI for students, the claims that it can diminish human learning are not entirely incorrect, which is why students should not use AI during the school day. Human interaction is fundamental to learning as it teaches social skills. Face to face interaction is imperative to a student's growth, especially in the younger grades. An experienced educator can help students in the emotional and real way that a machine never can. Some schools though, like the Alpha flagship disagree with this sentiment. Pooja Salhotra explains how "Alpha isn't using AI as a tutor or a supplement" but rather as the "primary educational driver" (Salhotra). At Alpha, students from K-12 learn from AI rather than a human teacher. At ages so young, students are susceptible to the misinformation of "untested" AI with "multiple, significant deficiencies" as the Pennsylvania Department of Education cites (Salhotra). Without a human teacher to reliably teach them the correct material, the students are fully dependent on AI and most likely will learn

something incorrect. Agarwal adds to this idea, stating that "AI will never replace the human touch that is so vital to education," (Source G). At Alpha, students are deprived of the most integral part of education: passion. Even when AI is not the sole source of education, when it replaces important human roles, students still suffer. In 2020, Texas used an AI System to automate "scoring of student writing." (Source B). AI, especially back in 2020, is prone to making mistakes. An unlucky student may be graded poorly by AI for a good essay whereas a human would not make that same mistake. Mr. Baron, the administrator in Washington, DC. says he wants the teachers to be "reading students' work and helping them become better writers," (Source B). It's evident that human teachers must fulfill educational roles for students before AI is used as a supplement. These things, "empathy, creativity, and passion" which only a human teacher can bring is why students should not be using AI while in school (Source G). Instead, they should focus on hands-on learning, interacting with peers, and learning from a passionate educator. The best way to foster student learning is by keeping school a place of human learning, without AI.

In all, integrating AI into the education system can feel like a big change to make, but embracing technology is how humanity has come this far. By allowing students to use AI outside of school, they learn how to best use it, validate it, and prompt it for better answers. This skill will be imperative when they become adults, since AI will only get stronger. Furthermore, AI can be used to help students with individual questions outside of school hours in the same way students have used the internet, and the library before that. ChatGPT is simply a technology better at retrieving information and personalizing it. Its misinformation can be fact-checked just like students already have to do with the internet. Meanwhile, by keeping schools a place solely

for human learning and interactions, students will grow soft skills. Especially important for younger students, human learning imparts a love for knowledge in students in the way machines can never recreate. With a balance of Al and human learning, the education system can once again improve to better prepare students for their future because after all, "the future belongs to those who are ready to evolve," (Source G).