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<center>The Support of Sloth: Dangers of AI in Education</center>

In Greek mythology, Pandora opened a box that released horrors into the world. Some of these horrors were sorrow, strife, deceit, sloth, and greed. While most of these horrors directly affect us, sloth is more subtle. It convinces us to wish for ease over effort. In today's world, artificial intelligence is the newest enabler of sloth. It promises convenience and efficiency, allowing society to coast through life with only a couple of sentences and a powerful machine to do anything outside their comfort zone. Yet behind this appeal lies a hidden danger. While AI is addictive because of its help in simplifying our lives, it weakens both the user's cognitive and emotional capacities, making it harmful in society and particularly our education.

One of the most significant dangers of AI is its effect on a user's cognitive function. It diminishes the need for deep reflection, creativity, and perseverance. In the past, success came through hard work and dedication, but AI "offers a malevolent seduction: excellence without effort" (Brooks). Instead of strengthening our minds through struggle, we now leave that process to machines. As Brooks warns, "thinking hard strengthens your mental capacity," but AI takes all this thinking away, making our minds weaker. This erosion of intellectual effort is especially damaging in schools. Zeynep Tufekci suggests we allow students to use AI to "generate critically claimed building blocks of essays", but then they are not truly writing or thinking for themselves. Olivia Han echoes my concern, seeing that society's reliance on AI has "[taken] away from our

ability to challenge ourselves and develop ideas that are truly original." The result is an education system that produces students who may complete tasks quickly but no longer engage with ideas. No longer do we take pride in our writing because it is no longer truly ours. Everyone is willing to settle for the simple, quick path, and we have started to lose our talents. Like the citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*, a dystopian novel where books are erased, we risk overwhelming the balance between work and play, watching flashes of color instead of cultivating thought. If education is meant to expand the mind, AI undermines that mission entirely.

The impact of AI extends beyond the classroom to society itself. The convenience of automation threatens our personal motivation and social balance. Brooks sees AI as a shortcut that lets people rise without earning their place, while Tufekci envisions policies that pay people "even if their skills have been superseded." Though compassionate in theory, this could encourage widespread complacency. That will create a world that would make individuals strive for "more efficiency, less thinking" (Brooks). If individuals can claim redundancy and still receive support, what incentive remains to work, improve, or contribute? Society would stagnate, with fewer people willing to take on difficult or essential tasks. Such dependence on technology could create a deep divide between those who control AI and those replaced by it, leaving capable individuals trapped at the bottom without opportunity for advancement. What was a tool for progress could now become the harbinger of its destruction.

Beyond weakening thought and structure, AI also endangers emotional health. Since it is not specifically trained for any one type of information or advice, it does its best based on a brief search, which you could perform yourself, to provide what you need and keep you on the tool for as long as possible. But because it draws from the entire internet, it internalizes countless biases and inaccuracies in its data, which can mislead users. Tufekci explains how "on trickier topics or

more complicated concepts, ChatGPT sometimes gives highly plausible answers that are flat out wrong." When applied to matters of emotion or mental health, these errors become especially dangerous. A user of ChatGPT named Czyz, described feeling comforted while talking to ChatGPT and momentarily less alone. Czyz said that when she talked to ChatGPT that she felt like she was "being met where she was at," which helped her understand her emotions. Yet her real sense of connection only returned when she reestablished human relationships. AI can mimic empathy, but it cannot feel it. It produces comforting words without understanding the human experience behind them. For Han though, there is "something raw and unmistakably mine" about words created without AI. In our work, there is human authenticity that technology can never replicate. To trust an algorithm with one's emotions is to place one's well-being in the hands of billions of anonymous voices on the internet, none of whom care for you. This emotional detachment threatens our ability to relate meaningfully to others and to ourselves. We will become so buried in what it tells us that we will be unable to communicate with others without having it rephrased by artificial intelligence.

Even the convenience of AI is intoxicating to its users. Like alcohol or drugs, it offers a temporary relief from difficulty and discomfort, encouraging avoidance rather than growth. The use of it makes our struggles worse, putting students farther behind. Despite this, the ease of letting AI handle thinking, writing, or emotional processing is what makes it addictive. Most students do not mean to go straight to cheating. Students "start by using AI as a research tool, but then [they]'re harried and time pressured, and before long, AI is doing most of the work" (Brooks). In a world of immediacy and deadlines, we have prioritized getting as much done as possible over value of actions, and that causes people to turn to AI to keep up with standards they believe other students have set on their own. Over time, dependence on it dulls both mental

sharpness and emotional resilience. Han stated that when she used ChatGPT, "slowly, [its] voice started to replace [her] own, and she couldn't write a paragraph without wondering how [ChatGPT] would say it." It became so integral in her writing ability that, even for trivial things, she felt as if she was unable to express her own ideas in a competent way. If society continues down this path, we risk becoming passive consumers of technology rather than active creators of knowledge. The ability to think, feel, and struggle, which are qualities that define humanity, will fade.

So, while AI may promise efficiency and innovation, its usage cost is much greater. It weakens our minds, dulls our emotions, and tempts society into a life filled with complacency and thoughtlessness. It begins to hinder our advancement when we start to use it as a replacement for education, where the purpose is to cultivate independent thought and grow our understanding of the world. Like Pandora's box, AI has released enormous potential for its users, but also comes with many dangers. To preserve our intellect and our humanity, we must resist temptation and instead push ourselves into excellence with our own minds. If not, then we are nothing but ants working for the purpose of the hive mind.

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