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<p style="text-align:center">The Classroom Needs Teachers, Not Chatbots</p>

Few innovations in history have spread as rapidly as artificial intelligence. Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is a set of computer systems that are capable of performing tasks that would normally need human intelligence. When Netflix launched, it took three and a half years to reach one million users. Facebook achieved that milestone in ten months. ChatGPT only took 5 days (Beuker). This absurd rate of growth illustrates the immense cultural and technological influence of AI. It has not only reshaped the way people work and communicate but has also begun to transform classrooms around the world. Yet, as AI becomes more connected with daily life, educators face a difficult question: to what extent should teachers and professors rely on AI in education? While AI should never replace teachers in grading or feedback, it can serve as a powerful teaching assistant by supporting learning, improving efficiency, and reducing the workload many teachers face.

When feedback is replaced by AI-generated responses, the relationship between student and teacher begins to erode. That relationship is built on trust, empathy, and the teacher's ability to recognize that each student has individual needs and potential. At its core, the responsibility of a teacher is to offer feedback that is thoughtful, meaningful, and distinctly human. Some teachers may argue that, while human grading can be prone to bias or inconsistency, AI offers a more objective way to assess student work (Goldenstein). Even so, while AI may appear more fair, its feedback often lacks the understanding and empathy that human teachers provide, which are

essential for meaningful learning. Chatbots, no matter how advanced, lack the empathy, creativity, and emotional intelligence that teachers bring to their classrooms (Agarwal). While AI can identify grammatical errors or suggest improvements, it cannot interpret the intention behind a student's words or understand the personal growth reflected in their work. Feedback, at its core, is more than a list of mistakes. When done well, it guides students through their struggles, acknowledges their progress, and inspires them to keep improving. When AI delivers that feedback, it often comes across as mechanical or detached, failing to convey the emotion that motivates students. In some cases, it can even damage the relationship between students and teachers. One student from Southern New Hampshire University discovered that her professor had used ChatGPT to generate feedback on her essay. The comments included leftover prompts to the chatbot, leading the student to feel as though "the professor didn't even read anything that [she] wrote" (Hill). For that student, the realization felt like a slap in the face. It signaled that her hard work had been judged not by an educator but by an algorithm, showing that the professor did not care for their students. Dr. Shovlin, an English professor, captured this sentiment when he said: "[t]he value that we add as instructors is the feedback that we're able to give students … it's the human connection that we bring as human beings who are reading their words and who are being impacted by them" (Hill). Teaching is not only about conveying information but also about forming relationships that help students grow intellectually and emotionally. When teachers delegate feedback to AI, they lose the opportunity to connect, to encourage, and to challenge students in meaningful ways. The student, in turn, loses the chance to be seen and understood by a real human being who values their effort. Thus, AI should never be used for grading or giving feedback. These tasks require human judgment, compassion, and authenticity – qualities that no algorithm can replicate.

However, this does not mean that AI has no place in education; when used responsibly, it can be a powerful tool that enhances teaching rather than replaces it. In particular, AI can handle "repetitive tasks and administrative duties … let[ting] teachers focus on what really matters: engaging and inspiring students while improving education quality" (Agarwal). By automating time-consuming responsibilities like formatting materials, creating practice questions, or summarizing key concepts, AI gives teachers the ability to interact with the students. In addition, AI can also serve as an assistant that helps students learn independently under teacher guidance. For example, Dr. Malan, a computer science professor, developed a curriculum-based chatbot designed to assist students without giving away full answers. The majority of his 500 students found the tool helpful and felt that it clarified their questions (Hill). By letting the chatbot handle the simpler help, Dr. Malan was able to dedicate his office hours to connecting with the students and creating a memorable experience with them. Similarly, a middle school history teacher "trained ChatGPT by feeding it dozens of pages of curriculum material he wrote over many years" (Goldenstein). This innovation allowed him to create interactive learning tools and assignments efficiently while still ensuring the materials reflected his values as an educator. In both cases, AI was used not as a replacement for teaching but as an extension, helping teachers manage their time better and allowing them to focus on what truly matters: student understanding and engagement. Critics sometimes argue that allowing teachers to use AI while banning students from doing so is hypocritical (Goldenstein). On the surface, this argument may seem valid. However, the difference lies in how and why AI is used. When teachers use AI, they do so to enhance instruction, whether that is by clarifying lessons, creating more opportunities for interaction and help, or improving learning. In contrast, when students use AI, it often replaces the learning process entirely. A teacher's goal in using AI is to teach better; a student's goal, in

some cases, may be to bypass effort. The key, then, is to find the balance that allows AI to support education without undermining the integrity of learning.

Ultimately, AI should be viewed as a supportive resource for educators, not as a substitute for human insight or empathy. The future of education depends on maintaining what makes teachers irreplaceable: their compassion, their ability to inspire curiosity, and their human connection to students. By integrating AI thoughtfully, educators can amplify their impact by teaching more effectively, managing time more efficiently, and meeting students' many different needs without giving up what makes teaching meaningful. Artificial intelligence can assist in the process of education, but it must never replace the humanity that gives education its purpose.

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