AI in Schools May Be Holding Back Real Learning

With artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly transforming many sectors, it's no surprise that education has also jumped on the AI bandwagon. Schools are increasingly turning to AI tools for grading, tutoring, and even monitoring student progress. But is this tech-driven approach really benefiting students, or is it depriving them of essential life skills they need for the future?

AI may bring efficiency, but when it comes to education, society should pause to consider whether it's actually improving students' learning experiences. For instance, AI can grade tests and assignments quickly, allowing teachers to focus on other tasks.

However, this comes at a price: automated grading often fails to capture the nuances of students' work. For example, AI lacks the ability to understand tone, creativity, or unique problem-solving approaches that don't fit a standard mold. Students lose out on personalized feedback that could help them grow, especially in subjects like english, art, or social studies, where subjective understanding is key.

AI is also being introduced as a personal tutor or study assistant for students, from apps that help with math homework to writing tools that suggest sentence structures. While this may seem convenient, it can actually hinder students from building critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Relying on AI to complete assignments can lead to a lack of engagement with the learning material, as students come to depend on automated solutions instead of actively working through problems.

This overreliance on AI shortcuts stunts intellectual growth and reduces students' capacity to analyze, reason, and persevere through challenges independently. In short, while AI may give quick answers, it doesn't teach students how to find answers independently—a skill they will need far beyond school.

Another drawback of AI in education is how it affects students' communication and social skills. Many school activities and projects require collaboration, where students learn teamwork, negotiation, and empathy by working with others.

Yet, as AI-driven platforms replace traditional classroom interactions, students miss out on opportunities to develop these essential life skills. When AI substitutes for discussion, group work, or teacher-led feedback, it deprives students of human connection and social learning.

Strong interpersonal skills are crucial for career success and personal well-being in today's world, and AI-driven learning doesn't provide the same social experiences as face-to-face education.

Additionally, AI is beginning to shape how students are taught and monitored. Schools increasingly use AI to track students' progress, attendance, and even behavior. While intended

to improve student outcomes, this constant monitoring can make students feel surveilled rather than supported, creating an environment where they are motivated by fear of penalties rather than genuine curiosity.

Learning in a monitored environment can suppress creativity, as students may hesitate to explore ideas or make mistakes, worrying that algorithms record and evaluate every action. Education should be a safe space for trial and error, but AI monitoring systems risk turning schools into high-stakes environments that discourage personal growth.

Outside the classroom, over-reliance on AI can harm students' development of other essential life skills, like financial management, time management, and independent research. AI-based tools that simplify budgeting, scheduling, and information gathering may be convenient, but they rob students of the chance to develop these skills on their own.

For example, budgeting apps powered by AI can handle financial planning but don't teach students how to make tough spending choices or understand the consequences of economic decisions.

Similarly, when AI helps manage a student's schedule, it can erode their ability to prioritize tasks, organize their time, and learn self-discipline—skills that become vital in college and beyond.

Perhaps most concerning is that an early reliance on AI might impact how students approach decision-making in their personal lives. AI simplifies complex tasks, but life is full of complexities that require deep, careful consideration.

If students are conditioned to take shortcuts with AI, they may struggle with decision-making in real-world situations that aren't neatly laid out for them. For example, relationships, career choices, and personal goals require thoughtful reflection, a skill that is diminished when students are used to relying on AI to provide quick, clear-cut answers.

Furthermore, when students rely on AI to complete or "enhance" their work, they may be missing out on important opportunities to build resilience.

Education is not just about the answers but about the journey of learning, including facing failures and developing grit. AI-driven shortcuts prevent students from experiencing the learning process fully, depriving them of the sense of accomplishment that comes from overcoming challenges independently.

Resilience, grit, and perseverance are crucial qualities that are not easily developed if AI is doing most of the thinking for them.

Finally, AI is contributing to a culture of instant gratification among students. When students can receive immediate answers, immediate corrections, and even instant grades, they lose patience for tasks that require time, effort, and persistence.

Life, however, doesn't work on an instant feedback loop. Many of the most valuable lessons require time, practice, and reflection. If students are conditioned to expect instant solutions, they may struggle in the long term when facing real-world problems that demand patience and endurance.

While AI may seem like an exciting tool for streamlining education, it ultimately risks stunting the development of the essential life skills students need to thrive. Learning is a deeply human endeavor, requiring trial and error, collaboration, personal growth, and the ability to make and learn from mistakes.

Schools should be cautious about introducing AI as a substitute for the rich, varied, and often challenging human learning journey. Instead of relying on machines, we should focus on empowering students to become independent, resilient, and socially adept individuals who are ready to face the complexities of the real world.