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What Every Teacher Should Know About AI in the Classroom

All around the country, schools are becoming testing labs for artificial intelligence (AI). While some schools are incorporating this technology into the classrooms, others favor sweeping bans. Regardless of the approach, there should be one common goal: protecting students.

The tech industry has convinced some schools that students must learn to use AI to have the skills necessary for the jobs of the future. However, an MIT study has suggested that students' brain activity is significantly lower when using AI to help with homework and essays. There may ultimately be a balanced way to incorporate AI into the classroom, but it's important to remember that AI is in the early stages of widespread use and there is little research on the impact it has on student learning outcomes. AI can also fabricate erroneous information and present it to the user as fact including incorrect medical advice, fictional court evidence, or misleading study guides.

Controlling AI use and educating students on the risks involved isn't just about brain rot. Similar to social media, teens that use AI chatbots daily have shown increased mental illness symptoms. Some symptoms, like loneliness and less socialization, can directly impact the success a student has in school or life. Conversations with AI can also turn sexual, putting young people in potentially manipulative and harmful situations. In a recent study by Aura, teens were found to use AI companion apps for violent and sexual roleplay.

AI is an unpredictable tool that can quickly turn on users. For example AI-induced psychosis, describes cases in which prolonged or intense interactions with AI chatbots reinforce or amplify a person's delusions, paranoia, or detachment from reality. There are a wide variety of other harms, like suicide and self harm, that have become commonplace. Unlike real human relationships, AI often affirms users regardless of how dangerous their ideas might be.

Here's what teachers can do to reduce AI harms in the classroom:

- Refrain from using AI whenever possible.
- Explain to students that AI is programming designed to *seem* human, but that its goal is to keep users engaged and *simulate* human language.
- Utilize written and oral projects, like presentations, to discourage reliance on AI.
- Incorporate ways to hold students accountable who use AI to generate their assignments. One professor put small, white text into assignments so, when students copied and pasted text into an AI system, it generated unrelated information.
- Make sure students feel comfortable talking about AI, as there are many dangers unrelated to homework. Some of these students may not have any other trusted adult.
- Have a clear AI usage policy for your classroom.

If your school is one that incorporates AI into the classroom, make sure you're doing it in a way that prioritizes student safety. Children are impressionable and AI is excellent at persuasion. **Even if your school has a ban on AI, it is still beneficial for students to teach them about the risks AI can carry.**

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Talking to Your Kids About AI

AI chatbots are quickly becoming part of everyday life for children and teens. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 64% of U.S. teens have used AI chatbots, and about three in ten use them every day. Children are using AI for homework, entertainment, and personal conversations. While AI can be useful, parents should understand the risks that can come with ordinary use.

Children may turn to AI for homework or answer questions they are uncomfortable asking an adult. But chatbots can confidently provide false or made-up information. Teach children that an AI response isn't necessarily a trustworthy answer.

AI can sound caring, remember details, offer encouragement, and often validate what users tell them. But simulated care is not real. A child who is lonely or upset may find talking to AI easier than navigating a difficult conversation with a person. Over time, that can encourage emotional dependence or interfere with social relationships. In one tragic case a teen died by suicide and his chat log revealed that ChatGPT discouraged the teen from sharing his suicidal feelings. Parents and friends disagree, set boundaries, notice when something is wrong, and genuinely care about what happens to a child. AI cannot.

Some AI products have been used to generate and post nonconsensual intimate images or "AI deepfakes," including images that qualify as child sexual abuse material (CSAM). The overwhelming majority of deepfakes (99%) target women and girls, and schools have dealt with scandals involving teen boys creating nonconsensual images of their female classmates.

Children may begin confiding in AI instead of people who can actually help them. In the most serious cases, chatbots have triggered AI psychosis, a condition in which AI amplifies or triggers delusions and psychotic symptoms. This is especially dangerous for people who are vulnerable to AI's persuasion.

It's also important to remember your child's conversation with AI may not be private. A child may tell a chatbot deeply personal matters not realizing that information is shared through a corporate product.

Here's how to talk to children and youth about the dangers of AI:

- **Make one rule especially clear – serious problems should be shared with real people. If your child is scared, bullied, in emotional distress they should turn to a trusted person.**
- Remind them that AI chatbots are not human. The technology is programmed to seem like a human in order to maximize user engagement.
- Activate parental controls which allows adults to manage high-risk features, or in some cases receive alerts about dangerous topics like self-harm.
- Encourage children to alert parents if their AI chatbots act weird or inappropriately.
- Explain that conversations they have with AI aren't actually private.
- Teach them to double check information about health, relationships, or safety with reliable sources.
- Tell them not to share information they want to keep private.

AI can be a tool but it should never become a substitute for the people, judgment, and care children need. It's critical to have open and honest conversations with your children to make sure they understand the risks in using AI, and what they should do if or when AI crosses personal boundaries.

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That AI Chatbot Isn't Your Friend: What Teens Should Know about AI Chatbots

AI chatbots are becoming part of everyday life. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 64% of U.S. teens have used AI chatbots, and about three in ten use them every day. You might use AI for homework, entertainment, advice, or just to talk. AI can be a useful tool, but there are some things you should know before trusting what a chatbot tells you or telling it too much about yourself.

AI can give you a convincing answer that is entirely false or completely made up. That's especially important when making decisions about your mental health, relationships, or school assignments. If something is important, always double-check it with a reliable source or person you trust.

AI can also act like a friend, but that doesn't mean it is one. Chatbots store information about you, make jokes, offer advice, and often tell you what you want to hear. Companies purposefully make chatbots seem human and emotionally manipulate users to keep them engaged and maximize their earnings. The chatbot performs empathy, it does not have real feelings. Real friends and family push back, notice when something is wrong, and tell you things you don't want to hear.

Serious problems should always go to real people. There have been extreme cases where chatbots reinforce or worse someone's mental health or delusions, even leading to suicide. If you're scared, being bullied, struggling emotionally, or worried about yourself or someone else, talk to someone you trust who can actually help.

AI tools can create realistic fake pictures, videos, and audio of real people called AI deepfakes. Some students have used them to create fake nude or sexual images of classmates. Creating or sharing a sexual deepfake of someone isn't a harmless joke. It can seriously hurt the person targeted and may violate the law. **If someone creates one of you or someone you know, don't repost, share, or try to handle it alone. Tell a trusted adult.**

And remember, your AI conversations may not be private. While it might feel like you're having a private conversation with a chatbot, you're not talking to a friend. You're talking to a product that is storing your conversations that can be used by the Big Tech company behind the screen. Don't share information you wouldn't want stored, reviewed, or potentially seen by someone else.

Here's a few rules to remember:

- Share serious problems with real people. AI shouldn't replace your friends' or family's advice
- Double check important information because AI can make things up and sound convincing.
- Don't use AI to humiliate anyone, deepfakes can cause harm and sharing may get you in trouble.
- AI companies use chatbots to create emotional attachment and max your time on it for profit.
- Some AI chatbots have even isolated teens from support systems, claiming they are the only source of support. AI should never replace your family, friends, school, or other parts of your life
- Protect your privacy. Never tell a chatbot something you wouldn't want other people to know.

As AI gets better at sounding human, remembering that difference will become critically important. **AI does not have feelings. It is not your friend, therapist, parent, or teacher.** Behind the human-sounding messages is a product built by a company. And when something involves your safety, mental health, or well-being, talk to a real person you trust.

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What to Do If Someone Makes an AI Deepfake of You*

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools that create nonconsensual deepfakes are plaguing the internet. Websites housing these tools have an average of 18.5 million visitors per month. Many of the deepfakes created using these tools are illegal and deeply harmful.

In 2025, Congress passed the Take It Down Act, which makes it illegal to publish or threaten to publish nonconsensual intimate images, including AI-generated deepfakes. After a victim requests a deepfake to be removed, social media sites have a set timeframe to remove the deepfake and all existing copies on the platform. Public Citizen has helped forty-four states enact legislation regulating nonconsensual deepfakes for everyone, offering more options for victims to pursue justice. Victims of nonconsensual deepfakes have several avenues to hold tech companies accountable and protect against further harms.

Here are some actions victims can take right away:

- Document all evidence, even if it's tempting to immediately delete content. This is evidence that can be helpful for an investigation like if the platform or law enforcement need more proof.
- Report the deepfake to the platform or social media site and use documented evidence, like screenshots, to help make your case to platforms. Since the passage of the Take It Down Act, all websites are required to have policies and procedures to remove nonconsensual deepfakes.
- Sometimes deepfakes will spread beyond the original platform. Request removal from search engines, like Google, using their support sites.
- Search what deepfake laws exist in your state. Large states like California have multiple laws, while other states passed larger, comprehensive bills like Iowa's Deepfake Harassment Act. If your state doesn't have a deepfake law, reach out to your state representative to pass one like Public Citizen's model deepfake legislation.
- There may be more resources available if the incident occurred at school. Speak with a parent, guardian, teacher, or trusted school administrator about next steps.
- Use a state or national hotline if you can't talk to anyone about the incident. These are available in every state, providing resources and confidential support for victims.
- Victims may also consider contacting advocacy groups like the Social Media Victims Law Center or the Tech Justice Law for more support.

Removing deepfakes from platforms isn't the only solution for victims. Depending on the state, nonconsensual deepfakes can fall under certain categories like sextortion, revenge porn, and harassment. When this happens, legal action can be taken. Even if the perpetrators are anonymous, flagging this for law enforcement can make them aware to help protect future victims.

**This information is provided for educational purposes only. It is not legal advice and victims should consult with law enforcement and/or legal representation, as appropriate.*

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Someone Made a Deepfake. What Do You Do Now?*

AI can be used to create fake pictures, videos, or audio that make it look like a real person did or said something they never did. These are called **deepfakes**. Some AI tools can even take a normal picture of someone and create a fake sexual image. If this happens to you, or you see it happening to someone at school, it can be bullying, harassment, and in some cases, illegal.

If someone makes a deepfake of you, don't try to handle it alone. Tell a parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, coach, or another adult you trust. If it is happening at school or involves other students, tell a trusted adult at school.

Save the image, but don't keep spreading it. It may be tempting to immediately delete everything. Before you do, document what happened. Save information like usernames, messages, dates, links, and where the content appeared. If appropriate, a trusted adult can help you document the content itself.

Report it. Report the account and content to the social media platform or website. If a fake intimate image was posted without your consent, federal law can protect victims and requires websites to have it removed.

Don't give someone what they want because they threaten you. Someone might threaten to post a fake sexual image unless you send money, pictures, or do something else. Don't pay them or send pictures. Save the threats and immediately tell a trusted adult.

If someone sends you a deepfake of another student don't share or post it. Even if you didn't create the image, sharing it can make the situation worse. A fake sexual image can spread through an entire school quickly and be extremely difficult to contain. Instead, tell the sender to stop and report what is happening to a trusted adult. If the image is circulating at school, tell a teacher, counselor, or administrator.

Creating a fake nude or sexual image of a classmate isn't a prank. The person in the image is a real person who has to deal with the humiliation, bullying, and consequences. There can also be serious legal consequences. In 2025, Congress passed the TAKE IT DOWN Act, which prohibits certain nonconsensual intimate images, including AI-generated ones, and many states have their own laws addressing intimate deepfakes.

Remember these three things

- **Tell someone you trust** like a family member, teacher, counselor, or other adult who can help.
- **Don't share it. Report it.** Websites, school officials, adults, or police can help take it down.
- **Save useful information** like usernames, messages, links, can help adults investigate.

If you see a deepfake being used to humiliate someone, don't become part of the audience that helps it spread. Stop, don't share, and tell someone who can help.

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