Emerging Roles of AI in Education

Artificial intelligence is the now and future engine of education.

By Ray Schroeder

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Don't get me wrong, human beings are now and will be in the future at the core of our field -- administering education, teaching and learning. But if we are the bus designers, bus drivers and bus riders, artificial intelligence is the engine of the vehicle that we are using and will be using more often in the education field. It will design, drive and assess our efforts in teaching and learning.

Nothing is infallible, especially emerging technology. So there will be mistakes, failures and glitches along the way. But even today, AI is improving our field in dozens of ways. In language learning, adaptive learning, math and technical field learning, and dozens of other areas, AI is engaged in making our teaching and learning better than ever before.

There is no doubt that AI is changing the way we conduct recruitment, admissions and retention of students. Over all, Wiley Education Services says that a college's bottom line and reputational value will improve through the use of artificial intelligence tools to enhance the marketing, assessment of applicants and monitoring success of students.

As we move forward, the algorithms will become ever more sophisticated, predictive and autonomous. As next steps, the RAND Corporation reports, "AI has so far found a perch in three 'core challenges' of teaching: intelligent tutoring systems, automated essay scoring and early warning systems to identify struggling students who may be at risk of not graduating."

Artificial intelligence is becoming so entrenched in societies around the world that there is a worldwide competition shaping up to see which countries, societies and cultures will control the future of commerce, education, entertainment and more. We are challenged to take the lead in providing the best educational opportunities to build a work force of AI developers. The Brookings Institution reports,

Control over the research and development of AI will become increasingly vital, and the winners of this upcoming AI-defined era in human history will be the countries and companies that can create the most powerful algorithms, assemble the most talent, collect the most data and marshal the most computing power. This is the next great technology race of our generation and the stakes are high, particularly for the United States. If American society is to embrace the full range of social and political changes that these technologies will introduce, then it is the education and training we provide our youth and workers that will fuel the engines of future AI, and therefore geopolitical success.

Forbes's Bernard Marr suggests that personalized learning, universal access and smart tutoring are among the leading developments in education that we will see implemented in the near future. These will lead the way in an ever-expanding and more sophisticated suite of AI-driven tools to enhance the learning experience. TeachThought goes even further to point to AI tools for education that may well change the role of teachers, give students the freedom to fail and try again, and change where students learn, who teaches them and how they acquire skills.

As we retool with AI algorithms, making the right choices and implementing them as soon as they are reliable and ready will be key to keeping a competitive advantage. That will be art and science of effective use of this most powerful technology -- applying it to the right tasks, assessing effectiveness and continuing the cycle of improvement.

All across the spectrum of higher education, we will see artificial intelligence emerge. From educating the work force to applying the technology to advancing the efficiency and quality of our core business of recruiting, teaching and certifying learning, AI will be our new partner in education. Prepare for this partnership by closely following the field and including AI in discussions and planning for the future of your students, your departments and your university.

Read more by Ray Schroeder

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