# The Ethical Issues Surrounding Artificial Intelligence-Powered Learning

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**Abstract**

Over the past three years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly transformed education, reshaping how students learn and how institutions deliver services. Ethical AI use requires enhancing learning while protecting dignity, privacy, and equity. Educators and developers must ensure AI tools promote inclusive, student-centered environments without reinforcing inequalities or compromising rights. This article also draws on the authors' Fulbright experiences in Thailand, where traditional face-to-face teaching still predominates, offering insights into AI's ethical integration.

**Keywords**: Artificial Intelligence • Education • eLearning • Ethics.

Since its inception in 2019, more than a dozen major companies have been developing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based innovations implemented as multiple products, services, apps, and bots. More recently a Chinese startup known as Hangzhou DeepSeek Artificial Intelligence (HDAI) Basic Technology Research Co., Ltd introduced a new variant of AI called DeepSeek which has rattled companies in the USA and elsewhere. Russia, UAE (Dubai), India, the UK, and other members of the EU are also developing their own AI models. Although companies are pouring billions of dollars into AI research, many myths and speculations about the dangers of AI have dominated the media. The abuse of AI by students has also made appalling headlines.

Many people in academia believe that AI will replace teachers, reduce creativity, or result in a one-size-fits-all approach to learning. The reality is that AI is a tool designed to enhance, not replace, the role of educators, offering personalized support and freeing up teachers to focus on more meaningful interactions with their students. Similarly, concerns about AI stifling creativity overlook its potential to inspire innovative teaching strategies and foster student engagement.

Another common myth in academia is that AI will promote plagiarism and hamper creativity. Similar claims have also been made about search engines, Turnitin, Grammarly and social media platforms. Another popular myth is that AI will hamper skill development. On the contrary, AI usage depends on the knowledge and skills of the users.

AI is rapidly transforming education, yet its adoption is often accompanied by misconceptions that hinder its full potential. Just like the internet and social media, AI is also prone to unethical use and abuse. Hence, training of its users is a key concern. Although there is always a possibility of abuse, it is important to consider AI's ethical implications in education, such as data privacy, bias, discrimination, autonomy, and surveillance.

## Data, Privacy and Power — Evolving Regulations for AI

The development of ethical principles, policies, and regulations for AI is a crucial area of focus in today's rapidly advancing technological landscape. Key issues like surveillance, privacy, autonomy, bias, discrimination are being addressed by several civic organizations, especially in law enforcement. For example, the development of the social credit system in China and the ban on facial recognition technology in San Francisco illustrate the divergent approaches taken in different regions toward the ethical use of AI and the balance between economic growth and personal privacy concerns.

International coordination for creating standards is necessary to address AI's unique ethical, legal, and philosophical challenges. Several international organizations, such as UNESCO, OECD, the IEEE, and the EU have developed AI ethical frameworks. These frameworks emphasize principles of human rights, accountability, transparency, and fairness.

Since 2006, traditional publishers, such as Pearson's MyLab, have combined in-class and online learning, providing simulations, videos, quizzes, and other resources to enrich the student experience. As of June 7, 2025, more than 125,000 studies listed by Google Scholar indicate AI's positive effects in education. A quick review of these papers indicates that regulation of ethical use of AI in education is rapidly evolving.

## Contextualizing AI in Thai Education

As an eLearning expert and Fulbright Fellow (2005), I have closely followed shifts in Thai education since the onset of COVID-19 in late 2019. The pandemic forced rapid adoption of online learning platforms like Moodle and Microsoft Teams, along with widespread use of Zoom, LINE, Skype, WhatsApp, and other social media tools. After the pandemic subsided in 2023, the system has largely reverted to traditional face-to-face (F2F) teaching. A recent study highlights critical challenges: outdated rote curricula, limited teacher training, low digital literacy, and poor STEM and English performance. These issues contribute to weak results in global assessments like PISA and TIMSS. An aging population has also led to declining student enrollment. Although the Ministry of Education's 2024 policy (No. 2-10) calls for integrating AI and enhancing digital and language skills, implementation remains limited. Despite significant education funding, questions persist about

its effectiveness. For AI to succeed in Thai education, the country must first tackle digital literacy gaps, ensure ethical use, and promote inclusive access. With the right policies, AI has the potential to transform learning for both students and educators.

## Conclusion – AI is here to stay

With the rapid rise of AI-powered solutions, there is growing concern that both teachers and students may become overly dependent on this new technology. Over time, such reliance could lead to significant mental and social challenges. Similar concerns about search engines and online learning have been raised, though such skepticism has sometimes hindered meaningful reform in the Thai education system.

It is becoming increasingly evident that AI will take over many of the routine tasks currently handled by educators. However, this does not diminish their role. On the contrary, it enhances their value. Students still need something AI cannot offer- genuine human connection.

Today, AI excels at managing personalized learning and skill development, and at providing adaptive diagnostics for tasks that once consumed a great deal of educators' time and energy. This shift allows instructors to evolve into "Guides" who do not merely deliver content, they lead, observe, and respond. They help students discover their potential, something AI cannot replicate, and likely never will. Therefore, educators must be trained not just to use AI, but to teach students how to engage with it purposefully, not as a shortcut, but as a tool. However, if we fail to leverage it during creative, analytical, or innovative tasks, we are missing valuable opportunities.

AI as co-pilot, the instructor as guide, and the student as leader, this is the future of education. AI will not replace teachers; it will replace the aspects of teaching that never truly required a human touch. What keeps great educators essential is not their ability to deliver content or grade assignments, it is their irreplaceable humanity. In today's world, that is exactly what students need most. Even Microsoft founder Bill Gates is optimistic about AI's potential to reshape learning. *"In the next five to ten years, AI-powered software will transform how we teach and learn,"* he predicts.

> ***"AI as co-pilot, the instructor as guide, and the student as leader – this is the future of education. AI will not replace teachers; it will replace the aspects of teaching that never truly required a human touch."***

## FURTHER READING


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### BIOGRAPHY

The author is retired faculty of Seattle Community College District (SCCD), WA, USA. He received the Fulbright Scholar Award in 2005 and the Dan Evans Award for Excellence in Teaching for his pioneering work in eLearning. He has written dozens of academic and research papers for IEEE-sponsored conferences and many highly indexed international journals. Some of them are listed in Academia.com, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Social Science Research Network (SSRN), where he is also listed among the top 10 authors. He has written two books about the history and evolution of eLearning. He specializes in eLearning, EdTech, Social Media, and Higher Education research.