What is AI in Education?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and understanding natural language. **AI has the capacity to revolutionize teaching and learning, offering personalized experiences, adaptive learning systems, and innovative solutions to age-old challenges**. However, ethical concerns, data privacy, and the potential for bias in AI systems necessitate vigilant oversight.

As we embrace the potential benefits of AI in schools, it is crucial to ensure that its implementation aligns with educational goals and values. Schools and school districts must invest in robust professional development programs to equip educators with the skills needed to harness AI effectively in the classroom. Additionally, policymakers should formulate clear and equitable AI policies that guide its responsible integration into education. Striking a balance between the transformative power of AI and safeguarding the principles of fairness, inclusivity and privacy will be key to unlocking its full potential in shaping the future of education.
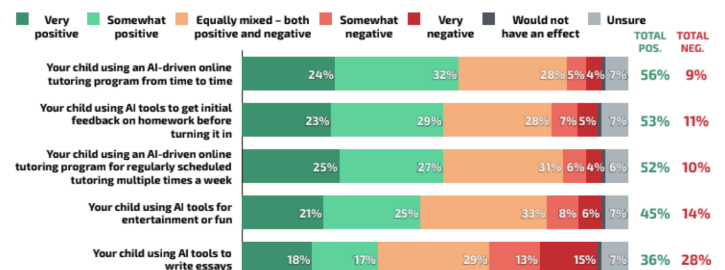
PARENTS SEE POTENTIAL OF AI TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Overall, only **a small percentage (16%) of parents surveyed feel as though they have a detailed understanding of AI**. A third of parents report knowing a lot of general information about AI, but not much about the details. 41% say they know a little general information about AI and 10% feel as though they do not know anything about AI.

When it comes to the use of AI tools and how they can be applied in education, 62% of parents say they have heard little or nothing at all about this. **More than two-thirds of parents agree that the potential benefits of using AI in K-12 education either outweigh or are equal to the potential downsides.** Only 16% believe the downsides outweigh the benefits and 17% are unsure.

When asked about ways their child could use AI, most thought occasionally using an AI-driven tutoring program would have a positive effect

Source: National Parents Union Survey. 2023

Among the benefits of AI on a child's education, 56% of parents view an AI-driven online tutoring program as having the most positive potential effect. More than half (53%) see upside in their child using AI tools to get initial feedback on homework before turning it in. On the flip side, just 36% of parents see a positive effect of their child using AI tools to help write essays.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Biden Blueprint for Responsible AI: The Biden Administration has released a blueprint for regulating AI with a focus on protecting democratic values and civil rights. It emphasizes the potential harm caused by the misuse of technology, data, and automated systems, citing instances of bias, discrimination, and threats to privacy. To address these challenges, the blueprint proposes five guiding principles:

1. **Safe and Effective Systems**: Ensuring that automated systems are reliable, secure, and do not pose risks to individuals or society.
2. **Algorithmic Discrimination Protections**: Guarding against biases and discrimination in algorithms used for hiring, decisions about school enrollment, and recommendation into a special education or gifted and talented program.
3. **Data Privacy**: Protecting individuals from unwarranted data collection and ensuring their privacy rights are respected.
4. **Notice and Explanation**: Providing transparency by notifying individuals about the use of automated systems and explaining how decisions affecting them are made.
5. **Human Alternatives, Consideration, and Fallback**: Incorporating human-centric approaches, considering alternatives, and establishing fallback mechanisms in case of system failures or unintended consequences.

EMERGING POLICY TRENDS

- **Media and AI Literacy Standards:** Policymakers are focusing on adding media and AI literacy to education standards, aiming to teach students critical thinking skills to navigate digital information and AI.

- **State-Resourced Professional Development:** There is a push to provide teachers with AI training to help them integrate it into their teaching, ensuring students engage with AI responsibly.

- **AI Tool Development and Research:** Policymakers support creating AI education tools and advancing research to better understand AI's impact on classrooms.

- **Accountability for Foundational Skills:** AI can help monitor and personalize learning in foundational subjects, but there's a focus on avoiding over-reliance and ensuring students develop essential academic skills.

- **Digital Consumer Protection Commission:** The proposed Digital Consumer Protection Commission Act* aims to regulate tech companies and protect consumers from disinformation, privacy breaches, and discrimination, supported by the National Parents Union.

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