

AI IN THE CLASSROOM: Risks, Considerations, and Guidance for Educators

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have a wide range of applications in education. When adopting these tools, it is important to carefully evaluate any specific use case, particularly if confidential data is being collected or produced. Many educational tools rely on Predictive AI, Generative AI (Gen AI), or a combination of both. Additional considerations should include whether confidential information will be used to train the model and whether the process for generating the resulting information can be clearly explained.

Generative AI (Gen AI) is frequently described as a "black box" because, while we see the input and output, the complex internal processes behind its results are largely hidden. It relies on vast datasets and intricate algorithms, making its operations difficult to interpret, even for experts. This lack of transparency poses challenges for schools, raising questions about the ability to ensure fairness, and accountability. Without a clear understanding of how decisions are made, ensuring alignment with ethical and educational standards—especially regarding student privacy—becomes difficult. For this reason, AI systems in schools require close monitoring and well-defined guidelines to support responsible and effective use.



RISKS



BIAS

Biased data or algorithms can impact fairness, and trust in decision-making and personalized learning.



HALLUCINATIONS

Hallucinations occur when generative AI produces false, nonsensical, or contextually inaccurate results. This happens because the AI generates responses based on patterns in its training data rather than verified facts.



SENSITIVE INFORMATION LEAKAGE

Sensitive information leakage can occur if generative AI inadvertently reveals confidential or private data.

CONSIDERATIONS

BIAS AUDITS AND TESTING

Regularly test AI systems to ensure they are fit for their intended purpose and assessed for discriminatory bias, using inclusive data sets in testing.

TRAIN EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Conduct training on AI's capabilities, limitations, and risks to foster informed and critical use.

ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY

Establish clear accountability for decisions influenced by AI.

AI SYSTEM AUDITS

Regularly audit AI systems to identify and correct errors, biases, or performance issues.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT EVALUATION

Conduct impact assessments to evaluate potential risks and consequences of using AI for high-stakes decisions. Engage stakeholders in evaluating AI's effectiveness and fairness.

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIVACY LAWS

Ensure compliance with FERPA, COPPA, and other relevant data protection regulations. Minimize the collection of personal or sensitive student data when training or using AI models.



TRANSPARENCY AND EXPLAINABILITY

Use AI systems that can explain how decisions are made. Clearly communicate to stakeholders (students, parents, staff) how AI is being used and its limitations.

DIVERSE VOICES

Include diverse voices—teachers, parents, students, and experts—in the design, adoption and implementation process to identify potential risks.

GUIDES AND GUARDRAILS

AI Policies



DATA GOVERNANCE

Develop and enforce clear policies on acceptable uses of AI, prioritizing fairness and student privacy.



TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensure that AI decisions can be explained and understood, providing insight into the system's workings.



HUMAN IN THE LOOP

For consequential and high-risk decisions like admissions, special education, and discipline, trained staff should review AI outputs to identify biases and ensure fairness, accuracy, and compliance.