

## ARTIFICIAL ASSISTANCE OR ACADEMIC CRUTCH? ADDRESSING STUDENT OVER-RELIANCE ON AI

*by:*  
**Christabel H. Sapuyot**  
*General Lim Elementary School*

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a regular part of the modern classroom. Many students use tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and AI-based math solvers to improve their writing, correct grammar errors, and solve math problems for their school tasks. These tools offer benefits such as writing support, instant explanations, and improved access to information. According to UNESCO (2023), AI can promote inclusion and help bridge educational gaps when used appropriately. For instance, in countries like the Philippines, students face challenges such as limited learning resources and overcrowded classrooms.

However, the growing use of AI as a learning tool has raised concerns about students relying too much on it. In some classrooms, students use AI not to assist their learning, but to replace it. Instead of writing essays, some students simply copy AI-generated content. Others use it to solve problems without attempting them on their own. A study by Stanford University (2023) revealed that over 60% of surveyed students had employed AI to finish their school assignments, with a subset depending on it for much of their written work.

There are several reasons that cause this overdependence. Many students are victims of academic pressure paired with time constraints, making AI an attractive, easy shortcut. Furthermore, studies have shown a decline in learner motivation, behavior, and academic attitude over the recent years. Essentially demonstrating that as technology continues to advance, learner literacy and comprehension decline. Finally, some

individuals lack awareness of the ethical boundaries in using AI, and without adequate digital literacy, this curiosity can result in misuse.

When students over-rely on AI, important skills are put at risk. Practice and reflection are essential for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and clear communication skills. Relying on AI to do the thinking can prevent students from truly understanding the lessons. This reliance may also impact their confidence in their own abilities. Over time, this habit can weaken their sense of academic honesty, even if they do not intend to cheat.

Addressing this issue is imperative. Schools, educators, institutions, and other stakeholders must take an active role in educating students and promoting responsible AI use. It is important to emphasize that at the end of the day, AI is a tool that serves to assist, not to take over. For example, students may use it to help provide ideas or help with structure, but not to write full essays and give exact answers. According to UNESCO (2023), integrating AI in education should be done in ways that support human-centered learning, not replace it. This digital literacy will be the key to ensuring that learners will be able to utilize modern technology without sacrificing essential comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Educators can also create assessments that focus on the learning process. Assignments such as in-class writing, oral presentations, and personal reflections are instrumental in fostering students' independent thinking and analytical skills. Teachers play a crucial role in demonstrating to students the proper use of AI as a supportive tool, not a quick fix, to cultivate a deeper understanding of subjects and instill a sense of academic accountability.

In the end, AI is here to stay. It will continue to play a role in both education and the workplace. That is why students must be taught to use it with care and purpose. With the right guidance, AI can be a valuable aid in learning. But without it, it risks becoming

a crutch that limits growth. The goal is to empower students to think critically, analyze independently, make informed decisions, and use technology to enhance, not replace, their educational journey.

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