USING AI IN TEACHING THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES: A PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE

by:
Marites Q. Garcia
Teacher I, Happy Valley Elementary School

Teaching in the intermediate grades in the Philippines has always been both rewarding and challenging. Teachers in Grades 4 to 6 handle learners who are beginning to think critically, explore abstract ideas, and prepare for the transition to high school. With the rollout of the MATATAG curriculum and the government's push to strengthen foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and values, educators are constantly searching for ways to make teaching more efficient without losing the personal connection that defines classroom life. One of the emerging tools in this effort is artificial intelligence (AI).

In practice, AI does not replace teachers but rather helps lighten the load by assisting in lesson preparation, assessment, and even in offering individualized support. For example, when teachers need varied sets of exercises on adding fractions or solving word problems, AI-powered platforms can instantly generate questions at different levels of difficulty. This means that teachers can spend less time preparing drills and more time guiding struggling learners through small group activities. In reading and language classes, AI can be used to suggest vocabulary support, check pronunciation, or simplify complex texts for learners who need more scaffolding. In classrooms where mother tongue-based instruction is required, AI can even provide quick translations of science or social studies passages, which teachers can then refine to fit the cultural and linguistic context of their pupils.

AI also has great potential in formative assessment. Instead of spending long hours checking quizzes and writing rubrics, teachers can ask AI to sort sample answers, identify common errors, or draft performance criteria. Of course, the teacher remains in control

by validating these results and ensuring alignment with DepEd's learning competencies. In project-based learning, AI can serve as a brainstorming partner by suggesting community-centered activities such as creating infographics on disaster preparedness, charting daily market prices, or interviewing elders about local traditions. These outputs keep lessons meaningful while helping learners see the connection between classroom knowledge and real-life applications.

However, integrating AI into teaching in the Philippines also comes with responsibilities. Teachers must be careful not to upload personal information, learner names, or sensitive data into public AI platforms. The Data Privacy Act of 2012 reminds us to safeguard our pupils' identities and learning records. Likewise, DepEd's Child Protection Policy applies in digital spaces, which means teachers must ensure that AI tools promote safe, respectful, and inclusive use. Beyond compliance, it is also part of modeling good digital citizenship, especially for learners who will grow up in a society where AI will be a common presence.

Another crucial step is teaching AI literacy itself. At the intermediate level, pupils can already grasp the idea that AI is a tool that predicts and suggests, but not a perfect source of truth. Teachers can encourage students to cross-check AI-generated information with textbooks or credible references, thereby cultivating critical thinking. They can also explain the risks of overreliance, the importance of originality in schoolwork, and the ethical use of technology. By doing so, the classroom not only benefits from AI as a support tool but also prepares learners to use it responsibly in the future.

Ultimately, using AI in the intermediate grades is not about replacing the warmth, creativity, and guidance of Filipino teachers. It is about allowing teachers to spend more time where they are most needed—coaching struggling readers, mentoring curious minds, and nurturing the values that technology cannot teach. When used responsibly, AI can be a quiet partner that helps lighten paperwork, streamline tasks, and create more space for authentic learning experiences. In a country where teachers often work with

26 August 2025

limited resources and large class sizes, this balance between technology and human touch may just be the key to making education more responsive to the needs of today's learners.

References:

Commission on Higher Education. (2021). National AI Strategy Roadmap: Harnessing AI for Inclusive National Growth. Retrieved from https://ched.gov.ph

Department of Education. (2012). DepEd Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012). Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph

Department of Education. (2023). MATATAG K to 10 Curriculum Guide. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph

Republic Act No. 10173. (2012). Data Privacy Act of 2012. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. Retrieved from https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph