How to appropriately use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Further Education (FE) curriculum?

Action Research

Dafydd Jones

Introduction

Problem

- Students over relying on AI to produce their work.
- Multiple assignments handed in which are over 90% AI generated.
- Concerning and damaging for the students' learning, knowledge, development and future.
- Students rely on AI to do the work and answer every question.
- AI isn't accurate with every answer, which negatively affects the students' knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Aim

- Identify how to appropriately use artificial intelligence (AI) in the further education (FE) curriculum.
- I want to research to further my understanding of practice, further my understanding of AI and how it can be used or monitored appropriately in the FE curriculum and improve the situation where practice takes place.

Objectives

1. Secondary research (Research what's already been done)
2. Compare the secondary research with my experiences on placement
3. Discuss the findings
4. Conclude what the findings suggest
5. What's the best? What to avoid? What's most effective? Is there a distinctive answer?

Literature Review

ChatGPT

Invented

- 1956 - McCarthy developed the LISP programming language for symbolic reasoning, and invented concepts like computer time-sharing and commonsense reasoning.
- McCarthy (2011) created the first ever AI laboratory where he was developing a self-driving car.
- The first known conversational AI was invented in 1966 which was called ‘ELIZA’ by Joseph Weizenbaum.
- 1972 ‘PARRY’ was developed by Kenneth Colby
- 1977 ‘Jabberwocky’ introduced learning from user interaction.
- 2016 AI bots began appearing on platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat.
- 2022 ‘ChatGPT’ was introduced and is the largest generative AI chatbot based on a variety of languages and modules.

Others include

- Grammarly
- Quillbot
- Wordtune

Literature Review

To summarise

- AI has been increasingly put in higher and further education as it gives technical support to practical teaching.
- AI is increasingly influencing teaching and learning within the further and post-compulsory education sector.

Benefits

- Current AI applications used within FE: writing support tools, adaptive learning systems, suggest significant potential to enhance personalisation, improve feedback processes, and support student motivation and engagement.
- Personalised learning pathways, innovative behaviour, well-being, professional development and real-time evaluation of teaching practice.

Negatives

- Academic integrity, reliability of information, over-reliance on technology, and insufficient staff training.
- Long-term motivation and achievement is not yet comprehensively understood.

Considerable potential to enhance the FE curriculum when implemented thoughtfully, ethically, and with clear pedagogical guidance.

Methodology

Action research

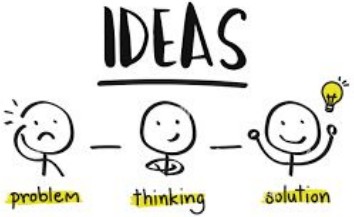
- Combining theory and practice.
- Solve real-world problems.
- Identify issues, implementing changes, and reflecting on outcomes to improve practice.
- Planning, observing, researching and reflecting to develop practical, specific real-life solutions to increase and develop knowledge

I will be using the secondary research approach and own teaching experience to increase my understanding of AI. The author would have liked to use primary research, however due to the time scale of the project and the time it takes to get the ethical process completed it was not realistically possible.

Data collected was:-

- Discussed
- Analysed
- Evaluated

Discussion



Reflecting on practice

- Students using AI is not the problem as AI will be here to stay.
- Students must get an understanding.
- Difficult to monitor AI.
- Parents have started to question the grades and marks given by teachers
- Increase the pressure on teachers
- Might influence the way they mark assignments.

Ideas moving forward

- Including more presentation assessments and tasks
- Holding more one-on-one sessions with students
- Limiting the amount of tasks and assessments using electronic devices.

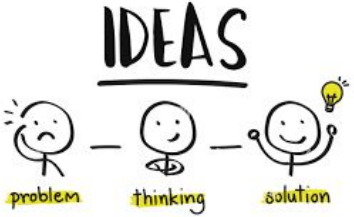
The findings

- FE teachers should focus on developing clear structure for its best use.
- Including digital literacy within the sector
- Developing assessment methods that require explanation, discussion and reflection.

Limitation of this action research project

- Findings are from a single teaching placement, single teaching module and with a small group of Level 3 BTEC students.
- Not be fully transferable to other FE colleges or subject areas.
- Much of the existing research focuses on Higher Education (HE) settings.
- Sustainability of some findings to FE environments.

Conclusion



This action research project highlights how artificial intelligence can be appropriately integrated into the Further Education curriculum while maintaining academic integrity and supporting effective student learning.

Results

- AI tools are increasingly transforming educational environments, particularly following the emergence of AI tools such as ChatGPT.
- AI offers significant opportunities to enhance learning through increased accessibility to information, personalised support and improved engagement
- Present challenges related to academic honesty, over-reliance on automated tools and potential impacts on students' critical thinking and independent learning.

- Students appear to use AI tools to support coursework while simultaneously recognising that excessive reliance may be considered academically dishonest.
- Highlights the need for clearer institutional policies and improved digital literacy among both students and educators.

To Conclude

- Artificial intelligence should not be viewed as a threat to education but rather as a tool that can support learning when correctly implemented with pedagogical strategies.
- Balance the benefits of emerging AI tools with the need to maintain academic integrity and develop students' independent thinking.
- Requiring clear institutional guidance, ongoing professional development for teachers, clear rules and guidelines for students to follow and the continued adaptation of assessment practices to reflect the evolving digital learning society.

Thank you!

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Do you have any questions?

By Dafydd Jones

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