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The role of artificial intelligence as a teacher's ally

El papel de la inteligencia artificial como aliada del docente

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Abstract

Lesson planning, content creation, grading, and tutoring are some of the activities that teachers deal with everyday. This can leave little time to prepare a class with varied activities; representing a heavy workload for teachers, especially if teachers have a large group of students. In this context, Artificial intelligence can help teachers with different activities without increasing work hours in teaching and learning. A literature review of Scopus, DOAJ, Scielo, Latindex, Google Scholar was performed to gain a comprehensive understanding of existing research and scholarly debates related to ways artificial intelligence can help educators. Not only can AI help teachers with different activities in the planning and content of a class, but it can also help improve the teaching approach and keep students focused. In this context, a sample of 214 students was surveyed to gather information about their experiences with different aspects of the teaching approach used in the classroom and how AI can help. Also, an interview with students was conducted to gather more profound information about their perception of the use of AI in the classroom. The findings revealed that the use of a traditional approach, dissertation of teachers with little intervention of students, makes it hard to keep focused in class. However, other approaches may require more investment of time; this is where AI becomes an ally of a teacher allowing them to spend less time on teacher daily activities and concentrate more on individualized learning and deepening a topic. In this way, the classroom is transformed into an environment where students can increase the development of their skills and expand their knowledge.

Keywords: activities, diversity, teachers, ally, artificial intelligence

Resumen

La planificación de clases, la creación de contenido, la calificación y la tutoría son algunas de las actividades que los docentes realizan a diario. Esto puede dejar poco tiempo para preparar una clase con actividades variadas, lo que representa una gran carga de trabajo para los docentes, especialmente si tienen un grupo numeroso de estudiantes. En este contexto, la inteligencia artificial puede ayudar a los docentes con diferentes actividades sin aumentar las horas de trabajo en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica en Scopus, DOAJ, Scielo, Latindex y Google Scholar para comprender a fondo la investigación existente y los debates académicos

relacionados con las formas en que la inteligencia artificial puede ayudar a los educadores. La IA no solo puede ayudar a los docentes con diferentes actividades en la planificación y el contenido de una clase, sino que también puede ayudar a mejorar el enfoque de enseñanza y a mantener la concentración de los estudiantes. En este contexto, se encuestó a una muestra de 214 estudiantes para recopilar información sobre sus experiencias con diferentes aspectos del enfoque de enseñanza utilizado en el aula y cómo la IA puede ayudar. Además, se realizó una entrevista con los estudiantes para recopilar información más profunda sobre su percepción del uso de la IA en el aula. Los hallazgos revelaron que el uso de un enfoque tradicional, con la disertación de los profesores y poca intervención de los estudiantes, dificulta mantener la concentración en clase. Sin embargo, otros enfoques pueden requerir una mayor inversión de tiempo; aquí es donde la IA se convierte en un aliado del profesor, permitiéndole dedicar menos tiempo a las actividades diarias del profesor y concentrarse más en el aprendizaje individualizado y la profundización de un tema. De esta manera, el aula se transforma en un entorno donde los estudiantes pueden aumentar el desarrollo de sus habilidades y ampliar sus conocimientos.

Palabras clave: actividades, diversidad, maestros, aliado, inteligencia artificial

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers have the objective of ensuring students' learning. A lot has been written about how to foster students' learning by making a class engaging and interesting; however, all of this can be time consuming for teachers. On the other hand, classes that only depend on old techniques fail to link learning to students' interests or real-life situations. Research indicates that this approach results in low retention of knowledge and feelings of boredom. To tackle these challenges, it's necessary to use a different approach in which technology and artificial intelligence can play a crucial role. Artificial Intelligence, if managed properly, can become an ally of teachers to have a more interactive and productive class (Myers, 2020).

While some may view AI as a threat to traditional teaching roles, it can be used both to enhance teaching and learning. AI can aid teachers with many activities that are time consuming; it can also help them with creative content creation, quizzes, games, and tutoring; thus, improving the approach their use. On the other hand, students will benefit from a more tailored approach and increase their focus spans, allowing their learning to excel (Bikic, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was utilized for this study. First, literature review was performed using various academic databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, Scielo, Latindex and Google Scholar to understand how artificial intelligence can be used by a teacher in and out of the classroom. Also, a survey of 214 ages 18 to 22 was carried out to understand how technology and artificial intelligence are being used nowadays and how it can help with the teaching approach used in class. In addition, interviews with students were conducted to gather more profound data about how they perceive the use of AI in the classroom.

DEVELOPMENT

The losing of focus in class, an everyday challenge for a teacher

Students losing focus, the ability to absorb and retain new information, in class is a multifaceted issue that significantly impacts learning outcomes, cognitive development, and classroom dynamics. Various studies and educational leaders emphasize that lack of focus is among the top barriers to effective learning today (Unsworth, 2017)

Focus or attention span is the length of time an individual can concentrate on a task or stimulus without becoming distracted (Esterman, 2020). It reflects cognitive endurance and the ability to sustain focused mental effort, which is critical for learning, productivity, communication, and overall cognitive functioning (Allison, 2020). Focus span differs significantly based on age, the nature of the task, motivation, and personal characteristics (Ali, 2019).

Traditional methods, lectures and note-taking, of teaching fail to engage students to the topic being used. Students may not have a chance to engage with the material because this is not stimulating (Esterman, 2013). Usually, tasks that are fun or have intrinsic motivation are more likely to maintain attention for a longer time. Factors like tiredness, hunger, noise, and emotional strain can shorten focus span, as well (Fortenbaugh, 2015).

In addition, students' enthusiasm and curiosity about a topic play a significant role in how well they concentrate. If learners perceive the content as insignificant or too easy, they often tune out and become distracted. On the other hand, content that is appropriately challenging for students can help keep their attention and encourage more in-depth understanding (Lewis, 2017). The way material is taught is also crucial; teaching that is interactive, and visually engaging typically keeps students more

involved compared to standard lecture methods (Mak, 2018). Additionally, learners who feel a meaningful connection to the subject tend to pay more attention, while those who lack specific objectives are more likely to become distracted and less attentive (Bala, 2024).

Educators may have a hard time engaging their students because a tailored class with a modern approach needs time investment. Learners are unable to sustain their focus throughout a whole one- or two-hour lesson with a traditional approach (Esterman, 2014). However, tailored approaches can be attained with the help of AI nowadays, giving a educators a chance to concentrate on other aspects, such as individualized teaching and going beyond a topic (Allison, 2020).

Artificial intelligence in education

Artificial Intelligence has been playing an important role in education these last years, however, some teachers are still dubious about its use, and may view it as a threat, especially its use by students in the elaboration of different assignments. However, well managed AI can have great results. Teachers can use AI in different activities in the class and reduce workload and students should use it as an aid to get more profound information, different perspectives for the elaboration of different assignments (Cardona, 2023).

AI is capable of handling repetitive activities such as evaluating assignments, overseeing student records, and creating practice materials. AI-driven applications can also simplify administrative duties, including organizing schedules and generating reports, which enhances overall productivity of educators (Liu, 2024). All teachers should be knowledgeable on how to handle AI for these activities, adapting to these tools to keep up with advancements in digital literacy.

In addition, AI can help in recognizing learning difficulties and offer specific support for students with varying educational requirements. This can contribute to fostering a learning atmosphere that is more inclusive and fairer for every student. Experiences in virtual and augmented reality powered by AI are being designed to foster richer and more captivating educational settings. Chatbots that utilize AI can offer students instant information and assistance.

In summary, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing education by making it more effective. Although there are continuous debates regarding the ethical concerns and obstacles of incorporating AI into education, the advantages it offers are considerable, and AI is expected to become a more prominent factor in the future of learning (UNESCO, 2024). Incorporating AI-driven personalized learning tools can boost teaching approaches and learning at the same time, allowing students to have deeper learning.

However, careful management of data is needed. Also, managing screen usage alongside offline activities like mindfulness practices, physical exercise, or personal interests is essential to alleviate digital exhaustion and enhance overall concentration. In conclusion, a diverse strategy that integrates educational tools driven by AI, organized concentration methods, and a mix of offline engagements can effectively increase university students' attention span in classrooms (Kirk, 2017).

RESULTS

Quantitative findings

Table 1

Time Students can Keep Concentrated in Class by Gender

			Time range students can concentrate without getting distracted in class			
			Less than 20 min.	From 20 to 40 min.	More than 40 mn.	Total
Gender	Male	Count	20	60	32	112
		Percentage	17,9%	53,6%	28,6%	100,0%
	Female	Count	14	67	21	102
		Percentage	13,7%	65,7%	20,6%	100,0%
Total		Count	34	127	53	214
		Percentage	15,9%	59,3%	24,8%	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 1 shows the time range students can keep focused in class. According to the data, 59,3% of students can remain focused for a range of 20 to 40 min. After that, concentration levels start diminishing. Within this time range, a larger percentage of female, 65,7%, students can keep concentration levels stable compared to 53,6% of male students. This data reveals that most students will start losing their concentration levels after 40 min. A smaller percentage, 24,8%, can stay concentrated for longer which corresponds to older college students.

Table 2

Focus Time Range by Age

			Time range you can focus without getting distracted in class				
			Less than 20 min.	From 20 to 40 min.	More than 40 min.	Total	
Age	Less than 18	Count	1	5	2	8	
		Percentage	12,5%	62,5%	25,0%	100,0%	
	18-20	Count	21	65	26	112	
		Percentage	18,8%	58,0%	23,2%	100,0%	
	20-22	Count	9	29	10	48	
		Percentage	18,8%	60,4%	20,8%	100,0%	
	More than 22	Count	3	28	15	46	
		Percentage	6,5%	60,9%	32,6%	100,0%	
	Total		Count	34	127	53	214
			Percentage	15,9%	59,3%	24,8%	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2 shows focus time ranges by age. Students in all age groups show higher percentages in the time range between 20 to 40 min. Students that are over 22 show the highest percentage, 60,9%, for this time range. This reveals that with age students might be able to stay concentrated for longer periods. Older college students can keep focus for more time.

Table 3

Reasons why students lose concentration in class by age

			Why do you lose concentration in class?			
			Class where mostly the professor intervenes	Insufficient utilization of different resources in class	Getting easily distracted	Total
AGE	Less than 18	Count	1	2	5	8
		Percentage	12,5%	25,0%	62,5%	100,0%
	18-20	Count	59	17	36	112
		Percentage	52,7%	15,2%	32,1%	100,0%
	20-22	Count	23	9	16	48
		Percentage	47,9%	18,8%	33,3%	100,0%
	More tan 22	Count	26	7	13	46
		Percentage	56,5%	15,2%	28,3%	100,0%
Total		Count	109	35	70	214
		Percentage	50,9%	16,4%	32,7%	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3 shows that younger students, under 18, lose concentration because they get easily distracted. This reveals that younger students have a hard time ignoring distractions (Mak, 2018). The data also reveals that students over 18 lose their concentration because of monotony in the class, when only the professor intervenes; the percentages are high for this reason. Older students can be more focused but still need diversity of activities in class.

Table 4

What can help you concentrate longer in class?

			A more interactive and interesting class	Use of different resources in class	Use of more technology in class	All	Total
AGE	Less than 18	Count	4	1	0	3	8
		Percentage	50,0%	12,5%	0,0%	37,5%	100,0%
	18-20	Count	64	5	10	33	112
		Percentage	57,1%	4,5%	8,9%	29,5%	100,0%
	20-22	Count	23	4	8	13	48
		Percentage	47,9%	8,3%	16,7%	27,1%	100,0%
	More than 22	Count	20	3	5	18	46
		Percentage	43,5%	6,5%	10,9%	39,1%	100,0%
Total		Count	111	13	23	67	214
		Percentage	51,9%	6,1%	10,7%	31,3%	100,0%

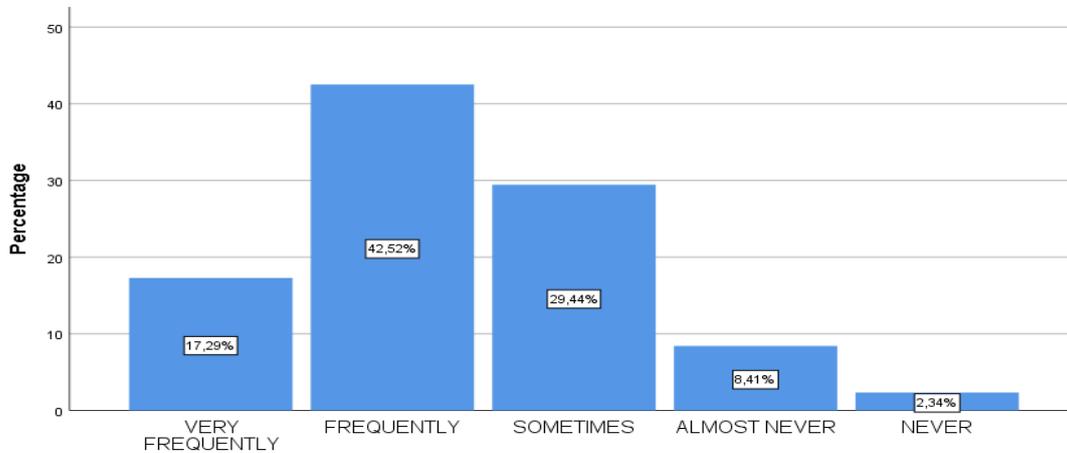
Source: own elaboration.

As shown on Table 4, a more interactive class is needed to help students keep focused. 51,9% of students surveyed agree that a more interactive environment would help them. Artificial Intelligence can help educators by making their class more interactive.

Graph 1

Do you use internet, Moodle in class?

Source: own elaboration.

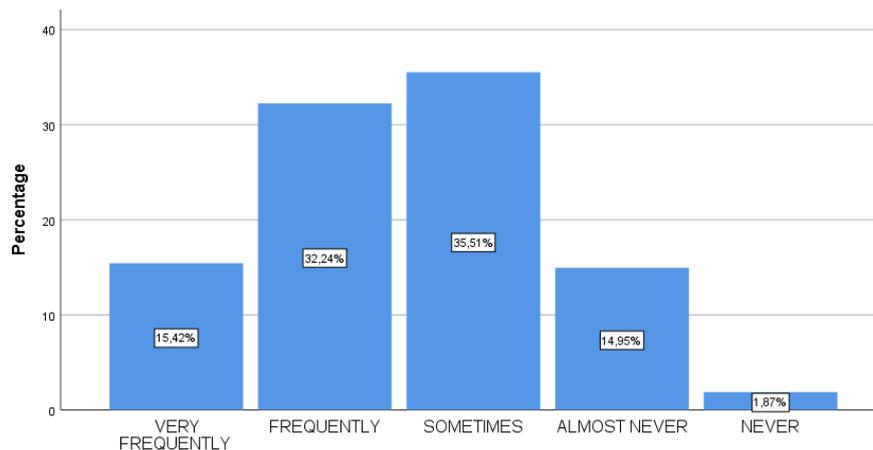


Students were also asked about their frequency in use of technological tools in the classroom. As shown on Graph 1, 45,52% of students use internet, Moodle and email frequently; and 29,44% use these tools sometimes. This reveals that technology is present in the classroom and that students are very familiar with these tools.

Graph 2

Do you use teams, google meet, or zoom in class?

Source: own elaboration.



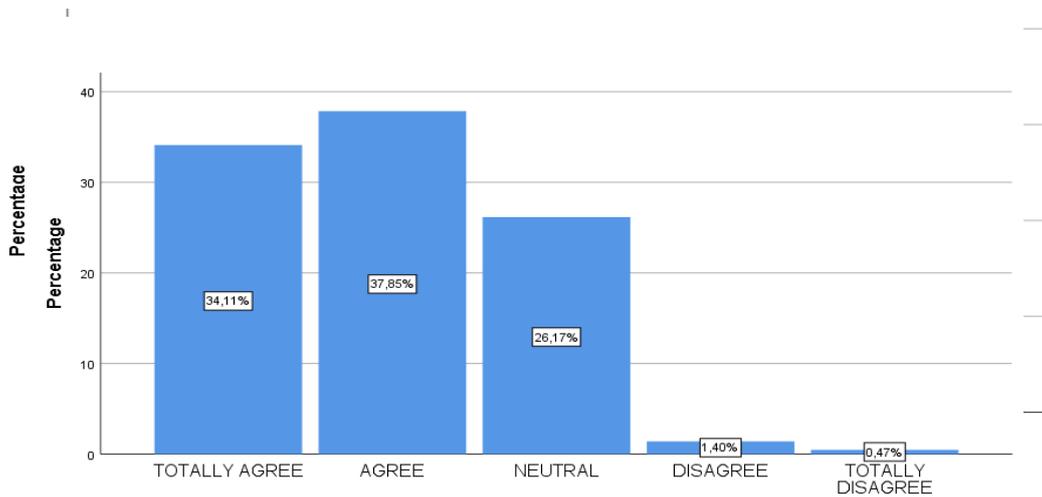
Graph 2 shows that a large percentage, 32,24% of students frequently use teams, google meet, and zoom, and 35,51% use these tools sometimes. This reveals that the use of this technology has diminished after the pandemic, but it's still present for hybrid learning or other types of group activities.

Graph 3

Do You Use Quizziz, Kahoot, and Educaplay in Class?

Source: own elaboration.

Graph 3 shows that online evaluation and games are part of the class, 35,98% of students utilize this type of technology frequently and 35,98% utilize it sometimes. This reveals that more professors are using this type of tool in class which generates more engagement with the topic (Myers, 2020).

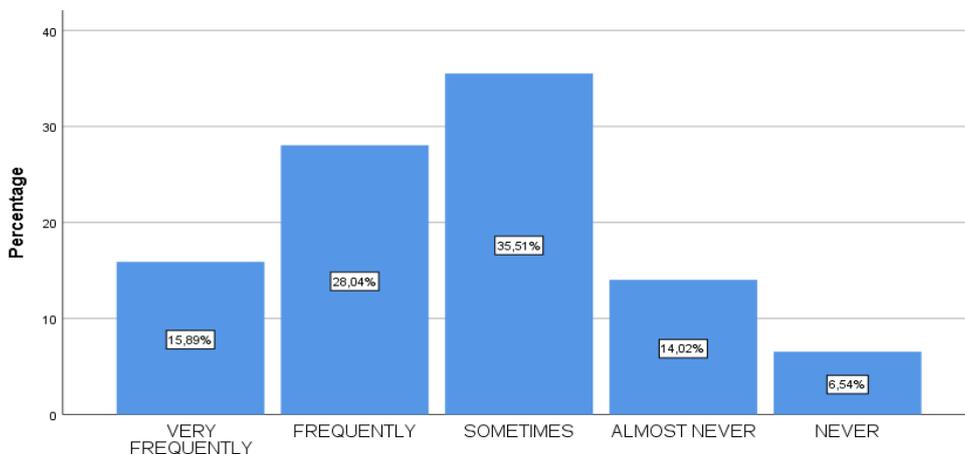


Graph 4

Multimedia

Source: own elaboration.

As shown on Graph 4, 35,51% of students use multimedia sometimes and 28,04% students use it frequently. This reveals that multimedia is a popular way to get students to get interested in a specific subject.



Graph 5

Would Varied Activities with the Help of Technology and AI Help You Keep Concentration in Class?

Source: own elaboration.

Graph 5 shows the perception of students regarding the diversity of activities in class. It could be inferred that even though technology is being used in the classroom, a variation of activities is lacking. It's not enough to use technology, more activities with a clear purpose are needed.

Ways teachers may use artificial intelligence

There are many ways teachers may use artificial intelligence, but AI can be very helpful in the following areas. This will allow teachers to have more time to reach higher levels of learning in students.

Lesson planning and content creation

Lesson planning is a procedure that a teacher uses to achieve learning goals. To support student learning, it considers the topic, instructional tactics, learning exercises, and evaluation techniques in a logical, cohesive, and efficient way. A lesson plan serves as a guide that specifies the content that students must learn, the way the instructor will present it, and the methods by which learning will be assessed. By considering the students' past knowledge, choosing relevant teaching resources, and organizing for student participation and any potential challenges throughout the lesson, it assists teachers in getting ready for the class. Good lesson planning increases instructor self-assurance, guarantees improved time management, and improves the standard of instruction and learning in general (Kirk, 2020).

Teachers can save a lot of time using AI for lesson planning and content creation. AI tools can create lesson plans based on subject, grade level, and learning objectives. Teachers only must include the key points, and the AI produces draft plans that can be customized to fit specific classroom needs. Many AI platforms ensure that lesson plans fit the curriculum standards, helping teachers meet educational requirements efficiently. In addition, AI can suggest engaging lesson hooks, activities, and assessments, spark creativity and save time on brainstorming enabling the creation of differentiated materials for various learning styles and abilities, ensuring all students are supported (Mohd, 2023).

The process of creating materials that complement the lesson plan and aid in student learning is known as content creation in the field of education. This entails developing or choosing educational resources that support the class objectives, such as worksheets, multimedia presentations, quizzes, exercises, and textbooks. The goal of content development is to address the various needs of learners by presenting knowledge in an interesting, approachable, and meaningful way. It frequently entails modifying resources to accommodate varying learning levels, adding interactive components, and making sure the information is pertinent and in line with curricular requirements. By offering rich learning experiences and a clear structure, content development, when combined with lesson planning, serves as the cornerstone of effective teaching.

A lot of content creation can be done with the use of Artificial Intelligence with no additional time investment.

Assessment and feedback

Assessment is the systematic, continuous, and purposeful gathering of information about students' knowledge, skills, and understanding to evaluate their learning progress. It can be formative and summative. Formative assessment conducted during the learning process helps both teachers and students identify areas in which students can improve and adjust the content.

Summative Assessment is conducted at the end of a unit or course, it evaluates what students have learned and is often graded. Assessments can take many forms, including tests, quizzes, projects,

presentations, and portfolios. The goal is not only to measure achievement but also to inform teaching strategies and support student growth.

One of the best things about AI in assessment is that it can grade tests, quizzes, projects and other types of assignments automatically, which saves teachers a lot of time on other activities that will make their class more productive. Also, teachers will also have more time to focus on individualized teaching which can foster students' learning in a great manner.

Real-time Classroom support with chatbots

Sometimes it's hard to continue with a topic when there are students that are having a difficult time with it, maybe because they have some weaknesses from previous learning. Chatbots can become tutors that can assist students in different ways. In addition, some teachers use AI chatbots for student counseling or to facilitate debates and discussions, providing immediate support and stimulating critical thinking.

Chatbots can also manage repetitive questions from students and parents concerning homework, deadlines, schedules, and course information, saving teachers time addressing the same questions over and over. This allows teachers to focus more on instruction and personal support; they can also provide fast responses to student inquiries and explanations, allowing students to study independently outside of class hours. This decreases the level of individual student help that teachers must deliver directly.

DISCUSSION

Lesson planning, content creation, grading, and tutoring can take a lot of time from a teacher. A teacher's time is very precious, and AI has the potential to support various educational approaches without the extra workload. These activities include interactive simulations, game-like learning experiences, and AI-supported brainstorming sessions that encourage curiosity and analytical thought. By integrating such diverse activities, teachers can address a range of learning styles and preferences, thereby enhancing learning and participation.

A traditional approach will not excel learning; it will have the opposite effect. The findings show that students have a hard time keeping focused in class because of the teaching approach that is being used. A significant number of students believe that subjects or classes deemed uninteresting or unrelated do not spark curiosity or emotional involvement, resulting in distracted minds and decreased focus. Traditional classes that depend primarily on lectures, especially those that are large and offer little interaction, can appear tiresome.

Students interviewed were also invited to share their thoughts about the incorporation of AI in their learning environment. They clearly recognize that when an educator uses AI proficiently, it can boost the involvement and excitement of a class. However, educators should employ a range of these resources to alleviate monotony in the classroom, but this also needs educational design that enhances participation, promotes understanding, reduces repetition, and encourages motivation (Hillman, 2008).

The analysis indicates that effectively utilizing AI should extend beyond mere access to digital platforms: it necessitates an instructional design that enhances engagement, supports understanding, reduces redundancy, and boosts motivation. This will enable technology to act as an active promoter of learning, rather than serving as a distraction or an obstacle. Strategies backed by applications that utilize AI to track and manage study periods, aid learners in organizing their study sessions efficiently by mixing concentrated work with brief rest periods. Moreover, AI can help reduce distractions by managing alerts or recommending the best places to study according to personal habits.

AI in the classroom, while potentially beneficial, can also lead to cognitive fatigue and low motivation if not handled properly by the professor. This reveals that technology must be used selectively and purposefully to acquire the desired results ensuring students are not overloaded

Combining non-digital activities with tech-based ones and AI and balancing their use is crucial. In addition, practices like mindfulness, physical exercise, and personal interactions enhance AI-supported learning by alleviating screen fatigue and boosting overall mental performance. This well-rounded strategy helps students avoid excessive dependence on screens, which can hinder their focus over time.

CONCLUSION

Educators can make AI an ally for different activities before, during and after a class period. This can alleviate all the work that involves the education field and deal with the challenge of students losing focus in class. Educators also must remember that teaching approaches that are engaging and stimulating have better results in the learning process. With the use of AI, instructors will not need to spend excessive time and will be more productive and concentrate on advancing into topics on a deeper level.

However, balance is necessary in the use of AI, other offline activities are needed as well. In addition, practices like mindfulness, exercise, and social engagement work in tandem with AI-facilitated education by alleviating screen fatigue and enhancing mental performance. This comprehensive method prevents students from becoming excessively dependent on digital devices, which may negatively affect their focus as time goes on.

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