

# Principles for AI in Education



**Talal Abu-Ghazaleh**

As generative AI starts to take hold across the world, the education sector is probably one that needs urgent modernization to deal with this new development. Unfortunately, the education sector has been lagging far behind, unable to adequately deal with the presence of technologies that empower students to take charge of their learning.

With the ubiquitous nature of the Internet available around the clock through smartphone and other devices, students are more likely to be up to date with facts and figures than their teachers. I have been saying for many decades now that the role of our educators needs to move from traditional teachers to becoming technology mentors, in order to equip our future generations with the skills to use these technologies to their advantage.

The traditional education system was designed for an economic environment that has long gone, and while it possesses many good elements, it must be modernized to take stock of the new technological innovations so that our students are transformed into knowledge workers with the digital skills sought in the workplace. We need to fill the digital skills gap and empower our youngsters with valuable digital know how, and if we don't, we will find them being rather quickly superseded by workers that do.

Acquisition of these skills must begin in our education sector which has to modernize and must be enabled to adequately assess them in ways that do not undermine the education process. If our current assessment methods are inadequate, we should not place the blame on students when they use such technologies to their advantage to

complete their school work. Rather, we should be introspective and develop assessment methods that work in modern times.

There is some light at the end of the tunnel and I would like to share how a collection of top universities in the UK called the Russell Group are addressing this matter, which is encouraging and is a move in the right direction. Rather than banning this technology which would prove to be futile, they have developed some guidelines for the use of AI in education so that it becomes part of the learning process in a safe and ethical way. The guidelines cover five principles which are:

- Support students and staff to become AI literate
- Equip staff to support students in using generative AI tools
- Adapt teaching and assessment to incorporate the ethical use of generative AI and ensure equal access
- Ensure academic rigor and integrity
- Work collaboratively to share best practice as the technology evolves.

This is very timely as Ministries of Education across the world grapple with how to deal with AI in academia. The UK model may not be perfect, but it is certainly a positive step in the right direction.

Having been Chair of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UNGAID), I see this as an opportunity for us to rethink how we assess students and use it to improve their learning as well as impart valuable AI skills to them and help them take charge of their learning. For some time now, there has been a widening gap between the skills being taught and those required in the workplace. With AI, this gap is set to get wider.

Through reskilling teachers as well as providing training and early AI education to students, we can prepare future generations with a well-rounded education to become a dynamic workforce that is empowered to meet future challenges, and to contribute to society and to their workplaces with a modern set of AI skills.

This is a moment in time we must capitalize on and a future we need to embrace. It presents an opportunity to build resilient education systems that will help to develop future economies that are modern and prosperous.