

If someone had told me several years ago that Artificial Intelligence—also referred to as AI—could replace my future career interests, I would have been in a state of disbelief. I have always been interested in human connection, and the ways in which I can use these connections to inspire change and make a difference. Although human connection may never be able to fully be replaced by AI, there are other ways where AI could make a more efficient and effective difference than I could on my own.

I envision my future work place to be a classroom, teaching to young children. For years, I have sought opportunities to work, teach and tutor in classrooms here in the United States at a local underserved preschool, and abroad in Chiang Mai, Thailand and Seville, Spain. My teaching experiences over the past several years have been innovative and inspiring, thereby strengthening my desire to teach. I believe that the job of an educator extends beyond simply teaching students a set curriculum—they must observe and get to know their students in order to individualize educational plans, they must constantly reflect on ways to better their teaching, and they must inspire their students to be the best versions of themselves.

As AI continues to prove itself more effective than humans it will spread vastly to all other industries. Already, educators are experimentally utilizing AI to help with routine tasks such as answering easy questions in an efficient manner and picking up on reading comprehension cues. I see AI being an enormously beneficial supplement to my future classroom. First, AI can be used to provide a strong, comprehensive foundation for fundamental skills, such as mathematical equations and vocabulary lessons. While AI focuses on distributing the information to the students, teachers can observe students who are struggling and designate more time to them. Additionally, I see AI being used for necessary tasks such as answering questions, grading assignments, assessing lesson comprehension by asking students practice

questions, and tutoring students through reinforcement of certain concepts. This would be an asset to classrooms, as teachers could focus their attention to establishing human connection, individualizing lesson plans with the AI, inspiring their students and assisting with concepts that involve higher level thinking.

Beyond my own classroom, I believe AI could provide a strong basis for educational equality around the world. According to Todd Leopold, close to 800 million people worldwide are functionally illiterate. Due to its ability to efficiently transmit knowledge across large groups of people, fewer teachers may be needed in some schools. Districts that lack funding to hire extra teachers and aides can greatly benefit from this, as it would reduce the number of teachers needed in those districts. This could be an opportunity to give students everywhere access to equal education.

Although AI can replicate many of the same skills as human educators, live teaching will still be very necessary, according to professor Winnie Tang. Students will always need a human teacher who can inspire them, be a role model, observe their learning and individualize their education plans. However, as AI evolves, the need for educators to learn how to best utilize and supplement AI will also grow. SMU must take the initiative to shape future educators to recognize which tasks will be more effective and efficient with AI. It will also be important to train educators to discern which tasks will require a human component, such as creating and individualizing lesson plans for AI to use. SMU is already innovative, as it uses virtual classrooms to prepare future educators for situations they may face with real life students. As a continuation of its innovation, SMU could allow its students to work with virtual reality and simulate classroom situations in which they supplement their own teaching with AI. Additionally, it would be beneficial for SMU to apply for grant funding to study efficacy of

applicable measures coordinating AI with human educators. World changers are shaped at SMU and in order for educators to continue changing the world of education, they must be able to integrate AI with traditional teaching methods.