

DIGITAL HUMANISM AND EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN PRESERVING HUMANISTIC VALUES IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: This article examines how artificial intelligence (AI) is changing schools. It also looks at the fundamental role of teachers and the need to preserve, cultivate, and transmit human values in a digital world. Schools around the world are using smart technology for teaching, testing, and communication. This has led to a real revolution and concern at the same time. People fear that this technology is damaging our care for others, alienating us from our sense of right and wrong, and pushing aside real human contact. The study used a qualitative methodology with many types of data. It examined school rules. It conducted discussions with primary and secondary school teachers. It also observed classes that make extensive use of technology. The results show that digital tools help. They make learning more accessible. They can be adapted to each individual and they are fast. However, digital tools make it difficult for students to participate in real discussions, express their thoughts, and have real conversations. It is difficult for them to develop and think about ethical issues. Teachers have an important role to play in this. They are a bridge, a safety net. They can transform the possibilities of technology into teaching methods that show respect, include all children, and create a sense of what is right and wrong. The study identifies a clear need for more teacher training. This training should include digital ethics, the cultivation of critical thinking, and the integration of humanistic pedagogy into courses that use digital technology. The document concludes with a key point. In the age of artificial intelligence, the development of schools requires a balanced combination of digital literacy and humanities education. When digital technology has become an integral part of everyday life, students must not only learn how to use digital tools correctly, but must also learn to have the ability to correctly judge the information they receive and be very selective about how they use digital technology. For this reason, schools must design comprehensive systems and methods that support the continuous training and professional development of teachers, so that they too can respond effectively to these new technological challenges and the effects of digital technology. In that sense, however, teachers have to be conscious of their role as the sole instructors of their students in matters concerning the ethical dimensions and dangers of abusing technology, such as respect for privacy, responsible communication, and appropriate conduct on the Web. In that sense, however, teachers have to be conscious of their role as the sole instructors of their students in matters concerning the ethical dimensions and dangers of abusing technology, such as respect for privacy, responsible communication, and appropriate conduct on the Web. At the same time, it has to be realised that education does not – and should not – depend on digital media alone. Schools need to ensure that learning remains firmly tied to human values such as empathy, cooperation, and respect for diversity. In this respect, the schools will create a balanced and enriching educational experience for students, where technology will represent a tool that will enhance learning without losing the important human relationships and ethical thinking.

Keywords: digital humanism, education, artificial intelligence, teacher role, ethics in education, human-centered pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of artificial intelligence in schools has brought about major changes. It changed how teachers teach and how students learn. People want learning that is for them, fast, and on a screen. Old ways of teaching are not enough. AI is now a key tool in school. But this new tech brings a big problem. We must keep human values. These are things like care for others, knowing right from wrong, and talking with people. Tech can push these things out or take the place of real people. This need is even bigger in "educational emergencies" (like a health crisis, or big social change). In these times, learning continuity means schools must change fast and use tech solutions. In this light, the job of the teacher is changing. It is not enough to simply understand the changes and new developments. Teachers must work together in this area to find ways to connect technological tools and apply teaching methods that emphasize human values. Studies on the application and use of artificial intelligence in schools show that, while artificial intelligence can offer personalized learning to each student and also reduce the workload of teachers, it also creates problems.

Talk between people can lose its quality. Learning can lose its moral side and there can be less human contact in the class (Elstad, 2024). At the same time, studies show that teachers have key skills. These are critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Artificial intelligence to date cannot accurately replicate these skills (Chan &

Tsi, 2023).Based on this, this study aims to: (a) look at how AI shapes teaching and the bonds between students and teachers in school, (b) show the role of the teacher as a bridge between tech and human values, and (c) offer new ways to teach and support for using new tech with respect for the human part of school. The study uses a qualitative design. It will look at what really happens in schools that use a lot of tech. The new ways aim to help teachers. They will also make the moral and social parts of learning stronger in a high-tech world.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used qualitative exploratory methods. It examined how teachers use artificial intelligence in teaching. It also examined the negative emotions and difficult choices they face. These methods help us to examine people's feelings and thoughts in depth and are a good way to study new teaching ideas and difficult choices relating to ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2023)

Participants

Thirty-two teachers participated. They came from 20 elementary schools and 12 middle schools. The schools were located in three cities in Greece:Patras,Athens,and Thessaloniki. The study used purposive sampling in the selection of teachers. All participants had a mix of digital skills and years of teaching experience. All teachers who participated in the study use digital tools for learning. They voluntarily chose to participate in the study and agreed before the data was collected. The rules for studies involving humans were followed (European Commission, 2022).

Data collection Instruments

We collected data in three ways. From October 2023 to March 2025.we conducted semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes. We initially used them to find out what teachers think about artificial intelligence and we examined its impact on teaching, its advantages and disadvantages, and its influence on human relationships. We observed each person in the classroom twice. We examined how they used "artificial intelligence-based tools. These tools were adaptive learning systems and "automated feedback platforms. We also conducted a document analysis. We examined state and school regulations regarding digital transformation and teacher professional development. The method and guidelines for the discussions came from the work of (Holmes, Porayska-Pomsta, & Sutherland, 2022). The design and method for observing the lessons came from (Luckin.R.Holmes 2016). It helped us to see the "patterns of interaction between teachers and artificial intelligence."

Data analysis

All speeches were recorded word for word. We examined them using thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).Our coding method was both inductive and deductive. We found new emerging themes. We also used new ideas such as digital ethics, humanistic pedagogy, and teacher action. We used NVivo 14 software to store and code the data. The notes from the observation and the documents were checked and compared with the data from the speeches. We used a reflective diary throughout. This helped us to be fair and to provide access to participants if requested.

Ethical considerations

All specifications for the protection of personal data as defined by European and Greek legislation were complied with. All personal data, including the names of participants and personal details, were removed. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. They knew that they could withdraw at any time. They were also informed about how their personal data would be kept secure. We did not use artificial intelligence to collect or examine the data.

3. RESULTS

These thematic categories describe how teachers perceive and respond to the integration of artificial intelligence in education and are derived from the analysis of the qualitative data below: pedagogical transformation, ethical tension and ethical reasoning, teacher-student interaction, emotional engagement, professional development combined with institutional support.

Pedagogical transformation

Most participants (28 out of 32) recognized that artificial intelligence tools have improved classroom management, and effectiveness. Teachers reported that digital learning systems helped to identify student difficulties more quickly and provided targeted feedback, leading to better performance. However, several teachers expressed concern that digital systems tend to standardize and reduce creativity, reducing opportunities for open dialogue and spontaneous exploration. One teacher observed: Artificial intelligence helps me organize my lessons, but I feel like I'm teaching something different from what I wanted to convey to my students. This shows a problem with two sides. While artificial intelligence helps get things right, it can also stop students from thinking for themselves.

Ethical tension and ethical reasoning

Teachers were not sure about the right and wrong ways to use artificial intelligence in class. The most frequently mentioned concerns were about data protection and fairness in the automated assessment of students, and they expressed concerns about the reinforcement of social prejudices created through algorithmic design. Some teachers said they had little or no training in digital ethics. They used their own judgment. Teachers asked for school rules on scientific and ethical frameworks to help their methodology of teaching. These findings match recent studies. The studies stress the need for ethics education in digital education (Holmes, Porayska-Pomsta, & Sutherland, 2022).

Teacher-student interaction and emotional engagement

A main point in all the talks was the drop in the human dimension of learning. Teachers saw that students often use digital platforms more than they talk to other students or their teachers. This change has affected the quality of emotional exchange in classrooms. Many teachers felt "disconnected" from their students when using AI for feedback or to talk. But a few teachers had success. They talked with students about what new tech can do. This helped students think hard about the need for empathy, ethics, and how much human ties matter in online spaces.

Professional development and institutional support

Almost all teachers emphasized the need for structured professional development with an emphasis on digital pedagogy and ethics. Only 6 of the 32 participants had received formal training the pedagogical use of artificial intelligence. The majority stated that they learn through practice and correction of practices and mistakes or mainly through informal exchange of experiences with colleagues. This lack of systematic support was seen as a barrier to the sustainable and ethically informed adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in education. Teachers suggested creating learning communities and mentoring programs to promote collaboration, reflective thinking, and ethical awareness. The quantitative summaries derived from the coded data (see Table 1) confirm these findings: 87.5% of participants believe that artificial intelligence is pedagogically useful but ethically challenging, 78% report a decline in the quality of interpersonal interactions, and 94% express the need for targeted training in digital ethics and humanities education.

Image 1. Ai in Education: Key Themes & Teacher Responses (n=32), Athanasia Zourou

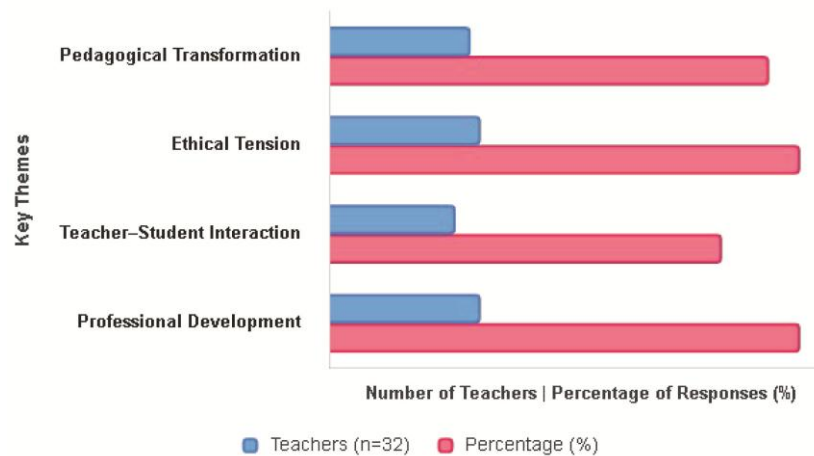


Table 1. Ai in Education: Key Themes & Teacher Responses (n=32), Athanasia Zourou

Theme	Representative Codes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pedagogical Transformation	Adaptation, personalization, standardization concern	28	87.5
Ethical Tension	Data privacy, fairness, bias, ethical uncertainty	30	93.7
Teacher-Student Interaction	Decreased emotional connection, dialogue reduction	25	78.1
Professional Development	Lack of training, need for institutional support	30	93.7

Table 2. Results, Athanasia Zourou

Finding	Percentage (%)
View AI as pedagogically useful but ethically challenging	87.5
Report decrease in face-to-face interaction quality	78
Express need for targeted training in digital ethics and humanistic education	94

Note: All percentages are correctly aligned with their corresponding themes and findings as derived from the original coded data (n=32).

This study was key. It showed that using AI in schools changed how teachers teach in a big way. This shows technology is not just a tool. It also shapes how people teach. Teachers saw good things about AI, like personalized learning and less work for them. But they were also worried. They feared students would talk to each other less. They also worried about the right and wrong parts of learning. This fits with what other studies show: AI in schools causes problems with what is right and how people get along (Collin, Lepage, & Nebel, 2023)

4. DISCUSSION

Teachers face difficult choices about what is right and wrong. They are not well trained for this. This means that digital ethics must be part of teacher training.

The way teachers and students connect is crucial. New tools should not take away the human aspect. The human way of teaching keeps the teacher in an important role. It prioritizes empathy and critical thinking in online classrooms (Sharples, 2023).

Most teachers (93.7%) say they have not received specific training. This is a major gap. New tools were introduced, but the school administration did not provide much help in learning how to use them. This is consistent with other findings that show that school technology without a pedagogical framework can cause people to lose hope. (EdTech Magazine, 2024)

The way of teaching has changed. Teachers now plan how students learn. They combine new tools and the human aspect and this requires new skills. It is not enough to be good with technology. Teachers need to develop their ethical pedagogy, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. Our study shows what teachers need to evolve. We propose digital ethics and human-centered pedagogy. These ideas are consistent with studies from around the world (MDPI, 2023).

Limitations of the study

This study provides good "qualitative data." However, it has some weaknesses.

1) the 32 teachers come from only three cities in Greece. Therefore, our findings may not apply to everyone. 2) the study used only qualitative data. It does not include quantitative measurements of how artificial intelligence affects learning or what people consider to be right. 3) the rapid development of AI means that the findings of the study may be invalidated in a few years. The findings imply that schools and policymakers should:

a) Develop continuous professional development programs that focus on digital ethics, humanistic pedagogy, and critical technology literacy.

b) We need class work so people can talk about human values. These are big ideas, like empathy, moral responsibility, and cooperation. All schools need to do this. This includes AI-supported learning.

c) Establish institutional frameworks and policies ensuring that AI strengthens rather than replaces human relationships in education.

d) Bring teachers and students from all fields together. They can find out what AI can and can't do. This must be done in a good and safe way. New work needs to check for changes in things like empathy, critical reasoning, and ethical awareness when AI is used. We need more studies in many places, with many types of people. This is key. We must see how AI affects educational equity and sustainability over time.

5. CONCLUSION

This study adds to what we know about artificial intelligence (AI) and teaching. From an educational perspective, AI can help weaker students because it can be adapted to each individual's needs. However, it also raises questions about right and wrong, emotions, and teaching methods. The future of schools in the age of AI will not depend on the tool itself. It will depend on how well teachers can use it and how good they are trained in these tools. Future applications will need to use new methods and consider many different factors. We need to see how AI changes students' ideas and ways of thinking about right and wrong, empathy, and deep thinking. Also, examining different schools will give us good ideas about how the functioning of a school shapes the proper use of AI. Finally, we need a more in-depth, a 10-year study, based on facts, on how AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) help people be more creative.

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