

The Impact of AI on the Leaders of Tomorrow

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Artificial intelligence-related concerns have dominated recent headlines, including: “A new headache for honest students: Proving they didn’t use A.I.” (*The New York Times*),¹ “Everyone is cheating their way through college” (*New York Magazine*),² and “Is it me or ChatGPT? As generative AI grows smarter, I have a down-to-earth worry: My job” (*USA Today*).³ These headlines reflect student and employee uncertainty, prompting me to question the impact on students and young professionals as universities and businesses develop responsible AI policies. This article does not

¹ Holtermann, C. (2025, May 17). A new headache for honest students: Proving they didn’t use A.I. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/17/style/ai-chatgpt-turnitin-students-cheating.html>

² Walsh, J. (2025, May 7). Everyone is cheating their way through college. *New York Magazine*. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/openai-chatgpt-ai-cheating-education-college-students-school.html>

³ Jacques, I. (2025, August 15). Is it me or ChatGPT? As generative AI grows smarter, I have a down-to-earth worry: My job. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnist/2025/05/29/ai-chatgpt-jobs-robots/83876711007/>

seek to challenge the use or importance of generative AI in education or the workplace, but questions what the use and reliance on generative AI means for critical thinking, original thought, and the development of the leaders of tomorrow.

People have used artificial intelligence for years. I am using spell check to draft this article now, and spell check is a rudimentary form of artificial intelligence that we are all familiar with (and often appreciate). Still, even this form of AI is not infallible. If I spell “complaint” instead of “compliant”, my error is likely to go unnoticed, demonstrating the still-present necessity of a human to review to make sure the intent is clear. That assumes I know which word I intend to use and the proper meaning of that word in the context. The introduction of generative AI (often referred to as ChatGPT) has fundamentally shifted the applications of artificial intelligence. Instead of analyzing and processing existing data to perform specific tasks, generative AI models learn from existing data and use that knowledge to generate new, original content. Entire briefs, term papers, and even personal statements can be wholly AI-generated after only a few data inputs from the supposed "author." The existing and potential uses are mind-blowing.

There are countless stories of “hallucinations” using generative AI. A hallucination is when the generative AI tool creates outputs that are factually incorrect, nonsensical, or inconsistent with its training data or reality. In 2023, this was brought to light when attorneys for airline Avianca wrote a legal brief citing

cases supporting its position; however, when the judge looked up the cases, he found they did not exist.⁴ Many states now have court rules that address the use of generative AI in briefing, as the same misuses continue to happen. Grok, Elon Musk's generative AI technology, which is integrated directly into X, has been widely reported as responding to requests with false information. Recently, California Governor Gavin Newsom posted a photo, and when an X user asked Grok to verify its legitimacy, Grok repeatedly reported it as false or inaccurate; however, the images were later proven to be legitimate.⁵ Will young professionals know how (or spend the time) to check all sources, even the AI fact-checker? Is this immediate gratification shortcut impeding the ability to critically think, question accuracy, and generate solid work product?

One of the well-acknowledged best practices of "responsible AI" policies and procedures is maintaining human involvement and oversight in the review and drafting process. Without a strong educational foundation to know what you intend the outcome to be, how will the future of the human review principle be effective? As a lawyer, you cannot edit a legal brief as a partner without having the experience of having your brief edited as an associate. In other words, it is

⁴ Weiser, B. (2023, May 27). Here's what happens when your lawyer uses ChatGPT. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/nyregion/avianca-airline-lawsuit-chatgpt.html>

⁵ Doan, L., & Li, E. (2025, June 11). Fake videos and conspiracies fuel falsehoods about Los Angeles protests. *CBS News*.
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fake-videos-conspiracies-falsehoods-los-angeles-protests/>

often the DOING of the work that enables us to do it right.

People have told me that appropriate AI use is an art form, and that learning occurs when we create appropriate and thoughtful prompts for generative AI. While this might be the case, I still argue that you cannot prompt what you do not know. And do we want Generative AI to be "creating" our content? What is the value proposition of having generative AI create a new song in the style of Taylor Swift vs having Taylor Swift write her song? (*Not to mention the intellectual property considerations, but let's save that thought for another article*).

The Generative AI Pandora's box is open; it cannot be closed, and business demands would hardly tolerate any attempted step back. Still, as business leaders and academics, our task remains the same: how will we train the young people now to be the business leaders of tomorrow? Generative AI is rapidly evolving and changing, and we as leaders must also adapt and change with it. Still, we also have a responsibility to those coming behind us to prioritize how to enable them to be successful. As such, I advocate for three solutions that I currently adopt to address this question, both in the classroom and the workplace, to foster and develop critical, independent thinking for both my students and young professionals.

First, as leaders, we must find time to meet in person and mentor students and young professionals. In-person meetings can present a challenge in the post-COVID world. Remote work is increasingly popular,

making it more difficult to create these in-person connections organically, but we must be intentional. We know that businesses are currently using and relying on generative AI to create efficiencies and save money. But who or what will truly be in charge if we do not train the next generation of leaders? It is imperative that we, as educators and business leaders, prioritize this connection to help train and educate young talent. Find time to teach in person, have office hours, or connect with young professionals on a one-on-one basis. The AI might provide an answer (and not always the right one), but it cannot replace our understanding of the context of the question, the nuance, or the human development that we as mentors and leaders must be teaching.

Second, consider strategically removing technology from classrooms and business meetings. Without the reliance and/or distraction of technology, it forces the young professional to pay attention and to absorb what is happening around them. In the classrooms, I encourage professors to prohibit phones and laptops in class, where they can eliminate distractions and force a focus on the material. Young professionals should be required to create first drafts and use AI tools on the backend. The first draft may be a marketing email, a business deck, or a legal brief – take the time to build a solid foundation before just unthinkingly relying on AI. I am not advocating for the removal of technology; however, learning without the reliance on technology should be strategically employed as a tool to foster critical thinking.

Third, for educators, I implore you to go back to traditional closed-book, closed-note exams taken in person via a scantron and/or a blue book, where appropriate. Again, I am not advocating for the elimination of technology in the classroom. To the contrary, I am seeking to prepare students for the business world, and understanding when and how to use technology is key. I teach business law, a class that is not reliant on technology and seeks to test a student's ability to learn and apply new concepts. I am not interested in a student's ability to put a prompt into an AI tool to explain a case; I am interested in the process of the student learning the case and being able to apply the holdings to other situations. With the return to in-person learning, I have resumed using closed-book tests, administered in person, to assess students' critical thinking abilities. These tests are a more effective measure of students' understanding and ability to apply concepts to real-world scenarios in my classes.

These solutions aim to strike a delicate balance between embracing efficiencies and technology while fostering original thought, critical thinking, and new ideas. If we erode – or never develop – the critical thinking skills of our upcoming young professionals, what will be the result? Will we be able to identify the pitfalls or biases of technology without the foundation to understand shortcomings and the nuances of bias? Will we rely on the judgment of technology to make business decisions, rather than the culmination of human experience? We cannot skip steps. As we consider talent attraction and retention, we must first focus on talent development, establishing foundational skills that enable humans to

remain the "check" or the "control" on responsible uses of generative AI.

As I am still required to make sure “complaint” is not “compliant,” we must ensure that we are equipping tomorrow’s leaders to be effective captains of their ships, rather than mere passengers.