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AI IN CLASSROOMS: HUMAN-CENTRIC PLAN FOR SCHOOLS

AI is not just another classroom tool but a catalyst to rethink education. As knowledge becomes instantly accessible, schools must shift from delivering information to cultivating critical thinking, inquiry and real-world problem-solving. Used thoughtfully, AI can support teachers, encourage ethical questioning and reshape assessment to prioritise human reasoning over rote answers.

AUTHOR:

Mohan Sai Edara, Head – Makerspace,
Heritage Xperiential Schools

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For decades, technology has promised to transform education. From smart boards to learning management systems, Indian schools have adopted digital tools—often unevenly.

Artificial intelligence, however, represents a fundamentally different moment. Unlike earlier technologies tied to specific devices or platforms, AI is widely accessible, powerful and embedded in everyday life.

This raises a critical question: Is AI something we simply add to classrooms, or does it require us to rethink what classrooms are meant to do? Today, knowledge is instantly available.

Answers are immediate and content is limitless. Yet understanding emerges through engagement, and skills develop through application. In this context, classrooms must move beyond delivering information to cultivating deeper understanding and real capability.

The future of education will be shaped not by what students know, but by how they question, interpret, apply and reflect on knowledge. Used thoughtfully, AI can support this shift. Students are often introduced to AI through standalone lessons or tools. But if education itself is being re-imagined, the way AI is introduced must evolve. Rather than treating it as another subject, students should be encouraged to experiment with AI, question it and observe how it behaves. What influences an AI system's responses? Why does it produce certain outcomes? Where can it fail, and what ethical concerns arise? Inquiry-driven engagement strengthens curiosity and critical thinking. Students move from merely consuming AI-generated outputs to examining how intelligence is designed, trained and applied. AI is often perceived as something that exists only on screens. When students design projects that combine sensors, data and AI—such as air-quality monitors or responsive environmental systems—they see how intelligence operates beyond software interfaces. They learn how data is collected, patterns are identified and decisions are translated into action. Grounded in hands-on problem-solving, learning shifts from interacting with technology to shaping it, with AI becoming a medium to address real-world challenges. Discussions around AI in education frequently focus on efficiency. Its deeper value lies in supporting teachers rather than replacing them. By assisting with lesson planning, documentation and routine administrative tasks, AI can free teachers to focus on understanding student needs, addressing confusion, adapting explanations and building meaningful relationships. Teaching remains deeply human work; used responsibly, AI can enhance presence and professional judgment. As AI becomes capable of writing essays, solving problems and generating designs, assessment must evolve. Instead of evaluating final answers alone, schools should emphasise how students think, reason, collaborate, communicate and explain the why and how behind their ideas—human capabilities technology cannot replace.

The writer is Head - Maker space at Heritage Xperiential Schools