

AI's Recent History

The Skinny on AI for Education, February 2024

AI Awareness in Schools and Events & Conferences

Over the past 6 months the team at EDUCATE Ventures Research has collected data from over 1217 respondents from across the world. The data was collected as part of workshops and presentations at schools and different events and conferences. We asked the respondents, primarily educators, to rate themselves on a 5 point Likert scale (from 0 – 5, with 0 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree) on 8 questions:

1. I understand the general concepts of AI;
2. I have a good understanding of how AI can be used in schools;
3. I use AI tools to reduce my workload;
4. I use AI in my teaching to personalise learning;
5. I am confident using AI in the classroom;
6. I create resources and materials with AI tools;
7. I understand the potential threats of AI systems;
8. I understand how to safeguard against potential threats of AI;

The consolidated results are illustrated in the graph below and demonstrate some interesting insights:

- Most respondents feel that they understand the general concepts of AI (average score 3.54), and that they also have an understanding of the potential threats posed by AI systems in an educational setting (average score 3.28).
- However, at the same time, they are unsure of how to safeguard against these potential threats (average score 2.31) and unsure of how to use the technology in the classroom (average score 2.36).
- The respondents who participated as a part of an event or conference, generally scored themselves higher on all the questions. The difference was statistically significant for questions 2, 3, 6 and 7.
- This is possibly because of the nature of the audience. The respondents who attended as part of a school workshop were primarily teachers or school heads from the UK, while the attendees at conferences belonged to a more international audience with a higher representation of experts in the field. Overall though, the general 'shape' of the graph remains the same for both.
- Interestingly, the standard deviation is higher for the school group (0.52) compared to the events group (0.41)
- The correlations between the eight questions are generally positive, but there are some interesting exceptions – for example the correlation between question 1 (understanding general AI concepts) and question 8 (understanding how to safeguard against threats) is 0.49, and even lower for question 5 (confident in using AI in the classroom) at 0.4.

What is clear is that the uncertainty around how to safeguard against AI threats is common across all stakeholders, from teachers and school leaders (from primary, secondary and higher ed) to builders of EdTech products and parents. And unless we address the risks associated with AI in education, we not only miss out on its immense potential benefits but also risk causing serious harm.

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