

A futurist's perspective on generative AI in the classroom

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While many educational institutions fear the onset of generative AI in classrooms, business guru and former educator Daniel Burrus says, "Thank God."

It's no secret teachers are [skeptical](#)—fearful, even—about the explosion of generative AI like ChatGPT and its influence over the classroom. But futurist, business guru, and FETC 2023 keynote speaker Daniel Burrus believes these transformative times must be embraced.

Microsoft has recently [pledged \\$10 billion](#) toward OpenAI, a generative AI company, signifying that there are no signs of this technology slowing down. Burrus would refer to this development as a "hard trend," a life development that can be confidently predicted with very little risk. And with healthy risk, he believes, comes opportunity.

"Something that gets more powerful, I don't want it to be my enemy. I want it to be my friend. So as a teacher, I want to be asking myself, how can I use this to create more engagement in the classroom?"

One way he believes generative AI will allow educators to optimize their curriculum is to focus more on critical thinking and analysis.

"With AI, we can automate the lower end of the cognitive domain, and I say, 'Thank GOD,'" he says. "We're going to free teachers to teach the stuff they wanted to get to in the first place—the higher levels of the cognitive domain. There's room for us all. This is the time for a revolution."

ChatGPT has shown the capability to turn in [B- and C-quality graded assignments](#), which teachers fear students will use to cheat, but Burrus

believes “passable” isn’t good enough anymore. Students can now dedicate more time to analyzing sources and writing with values that the technology currently lacks: empathy, passion, and an understanding of its audience.

More from UB: [An op-ed about ChatGPT’s impact on education... written by ChatGPT?](#)

“As a teacher I would say, ChatGPT can help you write a pretty good article. We’re not here to be pretty good. My goal as a teacher is to help you be the best you can be.”

Moreover, as AI can deliver us the fast facts and figures—the tedious legwork—it will grant teachers the time to focus on their lessons’ real-world applications... the *why*.

“Teachers are too busy trying to teach you what an adverb is instead of teaching you how to write something someone else would want to read,” he said. “They’re too busy teaching you how to multiply and divide that they never get to show you what to do with it.”

As the technology progresses, administrators and teachers will have to adapt once again. He knows how much school officials already have endured, noting that if the CEOs of the Fortune 50, 100, and 500 companies he’s advised had to put up with what they have, “they would have been on the floor in the fetal position sucking their thumbs.”

But Burrus says that the alternative is much worse. Classrooms that refuse to welcome hard trends can be guiding them toward “a world that is ceasing to exist.”

“We are in a game of relevancy. Relevancy to our students, relevancy to our principals, relevancy to our school districts and parents. Relevancy to the future,” he said. “And right now, you’re either going to be more relevant or

less. There is no middle. The middle is gone."

Daniel Burrus is a technology futurist, serial entrepreneur, author of seven books including *The New York Times* best seller *Flash Foresight* and *The Anticipatory Organization*, strategic adviser, and former educator who has spent his life analyzing innovative technological trends that disrupt the status quo and change the way humans live.

