



Is AI Making Teachers Lazy or More Strategic?

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Technology is reshaping the landscape of education in the Philippines. With the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, from ChatGPT to Microsoft Copilot, teachers now have new ways to manage their workload, design lessons, and engage students. These tools promise efficiency but also raise a critical question: are educators becoming complacent, or are they using AI to teach more strategically?

Evidence from DepEd's AI immersion program with Microsoft shows promising results. Teachers across multiple regions reported saving up to nine hours a week—some even up to twenty hours—by using Microsoft Copilot to handle administrative tasks like lesson planning, attendance tracking, and report generation (DepEd & Microsoft, 2025). By automating these routine duties, educators can spend more time on student interaction and tailored instruction. This shift suggests that AI has the potential to help teachers focus on higher-level teaching rather than paperwork.

A qualitative study by Mangubat and Paglinawan (2025) explored science teachers' experiences integrating AI tools like ChatGPT, Scite, and Litmaps for science research instruction in regional high schools. The teachers recognized these tools' potential for enhancing instructional efficiency and personalizing learning. However, they also raised concerns about limited training, infrastructure gaps, and ethical issues such as plagiarism. To address these issues, educators adopted peer learning and professional development strategies to guide responsible AI use.

Broader research by Sibug and colleagues (2024) found that Filipino teachers generally have a positive attitude toward AI integration, expressing readiness and openness to using it alongside traditional methods. They saw AI as a support for individual student learning needs, as long as proper support exists at the institutional level.

At the same time, concerns remain. A national survey of vocational education institutions in the Philippines revealed that over half of educators worry AI might weaken creativity and critical thinking skills. While many staff use AI for lesson planning and grading, they also caution about overreliance and loss of deep thinking among students (Inquirer, 2024).

Local education leaders are also preparing responses. The University of the Philippines Open University has issued formal guidelines on ethical AI use. These guidelines encourage teachers to declare how and when AI is allowed, to use it as a complement, and to support student development of critical thinking skills (UPOU, 2024).

Meanwhile, DepEd is crafting nationwide policies to regulate AI usage in schools: balancing its benefits with concerns about academic integrity and fairness (Philippine Star, 2024). These findings show that AI can make teachers more strategic, not lazy—but only when managed well. When AI takes over repetitive tasks, educators can focus on lesson design, student coaching, and critical pedagogy. Teachers in the Philippines report using AI to generate quizzes, outline lesson flow, and differentiate learning paths, thus becoming more efficient facilitators.



Still, the shift demands structure and support. Schools require reliable internet and devices, which remain unevenly available across the country. Without addressing this, AI may increase inequity rather than reduce workload (Xcitech, 2025). Effective training, ethical guidelines, and digital literacy are needed so educators use AI responsibly and strategically.

AI has the potential to transform teaching in the Philippines by reducing administrative load and enabling teachers to focus on deeper-level instruction. However, whether this shift leads to complacency or innovation depends on policy, training, and critical reflection. When used wisely, AI is not a crutch but a tool that empowers teachers to become more strategic, creative, and student-centered in an evolving digital landscape.

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