Kaleidoscope

Various hues of Deepanam ◆ Sept Issue #74

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My First Term at Deepanam

Hello! I am new to Deepanam, and this is my first year at the school. So far, it has been going amazing! When I first arrived at school, I was quite nervous about how the day would go, but at the same time I was also really excited to be with my friends and experience my new school.

My first day was very fun, and I really enjoyed the classes we had. Everyone was super friendly, and we did lots of fun things. I went home super happy with how my first day at Deepanam had gone.

One thing that surprised me about the school was the Interconnectedness project that we did during the whole first week. I really liked the project, and it helped me fit into the new school and get to know people.
One of the classes that surprised me the most was Math. I don't generally like math, but since I joined Deepanam, I have started to really enjoy doing it. I learn something new in the classes, and I actually look forward to doing math.

So, my first term at Deepanam has been going really well. I have made new friends, enjoyed my classes, and experienced many new things. I am really enjoying my new school and I am excited to see what happens next!

-NINA

I am Manish, and this is my first term at Deepanam. I have enjoyed my time here, and I would like to spend the rest of the year with my lovely classmates. The education here is very good compared to my previous school. The reason I came to Deepanam was my mother, who works as a teacher in a class called STEM or STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

The only person I didn't know was Uday because he was someone I had never seen in Auroville. My favourite classes were Maths and Science, and the teaching methods here are very different from what I experienced at other schools.

I feel that this school is pretty nice and I wish to continue here for the rest of the year.

_MANISH

AI in Education – Pros and Cons

ROMAYA

Pros of having AI educate schools:

I think AI in schools could help in some ways. Like kids could work at their own pace and still have structure they also probably have a wide range of subjects that they can grow from which I think would be pretty cool so that's my opinion on the pros of AI in education.

Cons of having AI educate schools:

Well I feel like as people it's easier to look for the negatives than positives in a situation but I'll try and make it even. Ai can't really settle an argument or help with medical attention but other than fiscal responsibility, what if the AI server goes down or doesn't work properly what would the students do then ?

That's my opinion on AI in education

AI in Education: A Closer Look

MILA

The Good

The good thing about AI is that it can give you hints, ideas on arts and crafts, such as crochet, solving, poetry, building natural ponds, natural farming, food harvesting, cooking, clothing, and fashion, research on science, books, grammar, music, dance, economy and mistakes, literature, website, music, dance, economy and finances, people and animal well being, helping in searching perticular websites, and basically AI can offer lots of information on many aspects of human life.

The Bad

The bad thing about AI is that sometimes it can make some mistakes and you need to give it specific information so it can understand other points of view. So basically it takes information from you. Also, AI needs a lot of water to cool down the servers. It also tracks your location, your phone, your videos and screenshots.

Conclusion

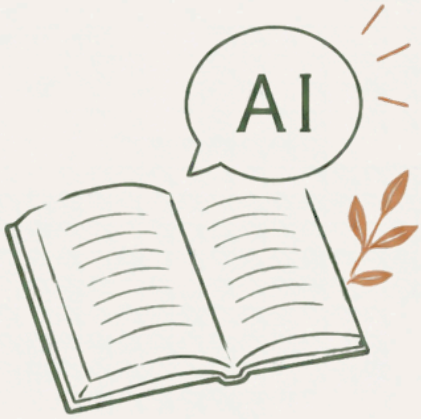
In conclusion, AI can be very helpful in education and self-education, but you must be careful with all of the information it provides and use discernment and additional resources of information. It will be very beneficial if people find alternative ways of cooling systems for AI servers instead of using excess amount of water.

_MILA

A Real Guide

POEM BY SALVADOR

If AI replaces our teachers one day,
We would feel like learning in an empty way.
Would school be the same?
No, because AI doesn't have the emotions,
Neither the sensitivity and precautions
Of understanding the virtue of learning something new
Out of its unnatural womb.
It may give us answers like its an easy tool...
But if You think about it, how much Will You consume?
AI can stare real facs, but at this point of life, what we need is a real guide.



AI in Education

AI can explain a math problem, or even write one for you, but is it actually helping us learn or is it just doing the work for us?
For example, what's the difference between taking help from AI and cheating?
Taking help is different from cheating because you ask AI to help you solve the problem and explain it so you can understand it better, and you can ask it to slow down and break down the question. Meanwhile if you use AI for cheating it just gives you the answer, you don't learn anything about solving the problem and figuring it out, and you just break the concept of learning.

Also suppose in a class you ask the teacher to explain the question, but you don't get it the first time they explain or the second, and you don't want to ask again because you don't want them to get annoyed at you. And also, you don't want to ask the teacher again because you don't want your classmates to make fun of you. But if you ask AI to explain the question again and again AI won't get mad because AI is, well, AI.

Now how do you know if AI has answered something incorrectly? Well, that depends on the question, you can ask AI to explain a math problem, and if you doubt the solution, you can always double check it yourself or you can ask a friend or teacher to help correct it.

And what if you can ask if milk is good for your health? There can be many answers that for since AI collects its answers from different websites. Some websites can say it's bad for you, some can say it's good but it really depends on your body and how it reacts to milk. So, you have to use your own judgement.

- Chhavi

"AI won't get mad if you ask again and again"

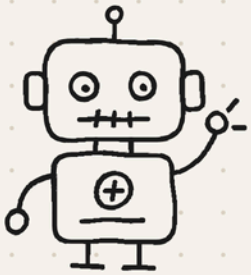
I would say AI can be a teacher in some ways because of several reasons. Firstly, it will not get angry if you ask the same question again and again. It will give different explanations and help you understand. Secondly, if you have a phone or laptop, you can learn anywhere and anytime. There is no time limit. Even when we are sick or get hurt, we can still learn from home.

Furthermore, AI can give us many ideas which can help us learn. But at the same time, I think teachers are equally important because they take care of us, understand our emotions and guide us in the right way. They encourage us to progress.

- Shanjanaa

> *"I think AI can help us learn, but it cannot completely replace a real teacher."*

Growing Up in the Age of AI: *An Inquiry*



Faith and Hope discussed in their inquiry session about what does AI mean for their future?

What AI does well?

About AI's strengths – fast calculations, finding patterns, summarizing, translating, and even helping decode whale songs.

Several noted AI's patience: "If I ask AI 1,000 times, it will answer me peacefully, but I don't think humans could explain it to us 100 times."

What they believe AI can't do:

Here, the answers turned personal and specific. Swimming, flying a plane, playing football with real understanding of the game – but more than anything, students returned again and again to feelings, creativity, and human connection. "It can never show emotions." "They can't be creative because they're coded in one way."

One student put it simply: AI is "good at ruining everything... instead of using it to help people."

The one skill worth mastering:

Asked what single skill they'd want by the time they finish school, answers ranged widely – public speaking, design, music, basketball, software – but a recurring thread was deeply human: understanding, patience, listening to others, and the courage to become a teacher.

Will "get a degree, get a job" still work?

This question produced the most divided, thoughtful responses. Some held firmly to the traditional path: "Go to college, get a degree, and get a good job." Others pushed back: "No degrees are most always needed, only passion, interest, and talent." Many landed somewhere in between – recognizing that a degree still opens doors, but worrying aloud about what happens if people lean on AI instead of developing their own skills.

What this inquiry revealed: Students aren't naive about AI, nor are they afraid of it. They see its speed and usefulness clearly, but they also sense – often before being told – that patience, creativity, emotional understanding, and the willingness to keep learning are exactly the things no machine can do for them.

"As one student reflected, the real work ahead isn't competing with AI, but becoming more fully human than it ever could be.

A DREAM OF A SPIRIT

It was supposed to be a normal Wednesday afternoon. I came back from school, had the usual snack, and was just thinking in my head about what I did at school and what homework I had...

And yet, here I was, sitting in front of the so-called "mysterious spirit," telling me something in a language I didn't understand. At first, I was like, "Haha, real funny. Must be hallucinating after a whole day of math, English, and so on." But no, after about an hour, it started vibrating like my washing machine when it had too many clothes. So, like anyone else, I went and touched it—.

Whoa, let me back up. My name is Caius Vey, and I'm kind of that one kid who goes out of his way not to get noticed. Yeah, that's me. Laugh all you want. Okay, you done now? Back to the story.

Alright, let's go through this again. Here are my questions for you:

1. Who are you?
2. Why are you here?
3. Can you leave?

And his answers were something like:

1. 0#iwmo)&
2. je\wo)S;01
3. yoni

(Please don't ask me to translate; I'm having a hard time as it is.) So yeah, I was stuck with some alien spirit that spoke gibberish. Not my best day.

"Hi. Hello?"
"Ah!"
"Sorry, is this translator working?"
"Ye... yes."
"Good. Now, we don't have much time, so I'll tell you quickly. I'm Velmora. I come from planet b32h, and I have come to deliver a great, GREAT PROPHECY!"
"Woah there you need to calm down and answer my questions first"

"No you didn't"
"Look it doesn't matter all you need to do is help me to get in my CARTA and then—"
" What's a CARTA?"
"A Celestial Alien Reconnaissance And Transport Apparatus, duh"
So yeah at that point I was thinking "am I dreaming" cuz if an alien spirit of some sort came to your house asking you to get temporarily kidnapped you know its not a normal afternoon.

"--y hey HEY! You still with me?"

"Ok good now let's focus on what we can do"

-Wui

To be continued..

Biography of Anna May Wong

Anna May Wong was born in 1905 and lived until 1961. A life that, in just over five decades, would reshape what was possible for Asian American performers on screen.

Throughout her life and career, she appeared in more than sixty movies.

She was the first Chinese American film star in Hollywood, a title she earned not by luck, but by persistence, talent, and an unshakable belief in her own worth.

In addition to her roles in silent films, television, and stage, Wong landed a role in one of the first movies ever made in Technicolor, standing at the cutting edge of film history at a time when few people who looked like her were given that chance at all.

Internationally recognized, she became a global name. Her legacy continues to influence entertainers around the world, proof that when you do your work with excellence and courage, your impact can outlast your era.

But her path was never easy. Wong continued to audition for lead roles, yet she was always cast as a supporting character or typical "Asian characters." That's what makes her story so powerful. She fought for her career, refusing to give up on her dream even in the face of racism and being passed over for leading roles from the very beginning.

The obstacles weren't just personal. They were legal. Anti-miscegenation laws in the United States at the time prevented interracial marriages and even prevented interracial actors from kissing on-screen. This closed the door on Wong landing some leading roles in romantic movies, no matter how talented she was.

In March of 1924, she created her own production company, Anna May Wong Productions, so she could make her own films about her culture. It was a bold, entrepreneurial move.

A woman of color taking control of her own narrative when the industry refused to. However, the company closed after her business partner was caught using bad business practices, and the betrayal made her step away from her dream for a short time.

> *Her story reminds us that setbacks are not the end of the road*

But she later returned to acting, giving it another chance, and in doing so, sparked motivation for a whole generation of actresses and actors of color. Her story reminds us that setbacks are not the end of the road. They're just detours. Anna May Wong faced racism, legal barriers, and betrayal, and she still chose to come back.

-Leoni

Lakshmi and Keerthana in conversation with Priyatharsini

1. Tell something briefly about yourself.

My name is Priya, and my full name is Priyatharsini. I come from Karaikal, where I completed my schooling at Nirmala Rani Girl's' Higher Secondary School, a Cluny school and sister concern of Pondy Cluny. I completed my undergraduate degree in B.Pharmacy at E.G.S. Pillay College of Pharmacy in Nagapattinam. I also completed my MBA through correspondence at Alagappa University.

2. How do you think Auroville schools are different from other schools?

The main difference is that students in Auroville schools do not study just for marks or recognition. Unlike my own experience and that of my classmates, who faced intense pressure, comparison, and stress over exams, children here study for themselves.

3. Why did you choose to come to this school?

I chose Deepanam because it emphasizes activity-based learning rather than just reading and writing from books. For instance, in a science class with Monika, children were made to physically feel, see, and hear waves. Deppanam gives equal importance to all areas of education, including art, craft, and other fields, rather than focusing solely on English and mathematics.

4. What is one dream you had in your childhood for your future?

As a child, I dreamed of working in the aviation industry. I fulfilled that dream later, after my marriage, by working as ground duty staff for Jet Airways.

5. Is there a place you would love to visit one day?

There isn't just one specific place, but I wish to visit many places. I especially love visiting places focused on nature and sustainable living.

6. What is one thing you would like to achieve in the next few years?

I have always wanted to be a good person.

7. What is something you want to try that you have never tried?

I feel there is no such thing, because whenever I want to try something, I just do it. For example, when I recently wanted to try Aari work or crochet, I immediately started doing them without holding back.

8. What advice would you give children who have big dreams?

Just chase your dreams and do not worry about what will happen. Plan your work, follow the plan, and make sure you do not hurt others while achieving your goals. Do not give up on your dreams, just as I fulfilled my childhood dream despite once thinking I couldn't achieve it.

9. What is something you're proud of achieving in your life?

I am proud of fulfilling my childhood dream of working in the aviation industry without hurting anybody.

Courage and Resilience: A Visit from Gaurav

On Tuesday 8 of September, Gauranv, an officer from the navy, came to visit my class (peace group). He was in the army for more than ten years. His wife is a pilot for a Russian airline. He has a daughter, and recently they celebrated her birthday in Auroville beach.

He told us some stories. He gave a speech about courage and resilience.

He told us some main qualities he said we need to develop in our years:

Learning
Courage
Helping others
Resilience

A Story He Told Us

He told us about one time when he was in a helicopter and his supervisor told him and his team they have to jump off, no warning, just "you have to jump now." He was very scared but he did it. He landed safely and he got a badge forever jump, and he jumped 42 more times :) !

- Norah

Peace group with Gaurav

Grace group at CSR

Recycling Water: A Visit to the C.S.R. Water Treatment Plant

Think about all the water you are using. Even when you do something really simple, like washing your hands, ultimately all the water goes down the drain. But what if there was something that could recycle the water? We learnt all about it when we visited C.S.R. water treatment plant.

Over there, we discovered that the waste water goes through chambers and by the time it finally reaches the storage tanks it is 95% clean! Let me explain. There are five steps:

Screening and settling: The waste water enters into the first chamber, which separates the large debris from the water.
Biological treatment: Next it travels to another chamber, where all the sludge settles.
Anaerobic chamber: Then it moves to a chamber called Anaerobic. Inside, you will find big rocks made out of cinder that help filter the water.
The vortex: And last but not least, the vortex! The vortex uses pressure to create something like a tornado, but underwater, which puts oxygen in the water so that it does not stink.
Storage: After that all the water gets stored in a tank, ready to use for irrigation and other purposes.
-Vibha

BOOK REVIEW

The Sun is also a Star

The Sun Is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon is a young adult romance novel about two teenagers who fall in love in a day. (now please don't turn this page because I said romance, its not the cheesy kind and if your still not convinced at least finish reading this) I know it's crazy, and you might be like, is that even possible, to fall in love in a day with a complete stranger or you could be like me and not really believe in love at first sight, or love at all. But this book really makes you rethink your belief in fate, destiny and well, love at first sight.

The book is about Natasha Kingsley, a practical, science-minded Jamaican immigrant whose family is scheduled to be deported back to Jamaica in less than 24 hours. She spends her day desperately trying to find a legal way to stay, while she struggles to do this she runs into Daniel Bae a romantic, poetry-loving Korean-American teen who is pressured by his parents to be the "good son" and attend a Yale admissions interview, even though he dreams of writing poetry.

Now the book does talk about some heavy real-world issues like immigration, racism, and family expectations and some people might find the "love-at-first-sight" dynamic a bit predictable or fast-paced, but I will say none of this affected me and it's an amazing read if you want to read a love story that is also realistic and talks about the struggles of life, the book doesn't sugarcoat the fact that Natash might not be in America to see the next sun rise.

The two run into each other by chance in New York City while going through massive shifts in life. Daniel is instantly smitten and tries to convince a skeptical, fact-driven Natasha that they can fall in love using a scientific series of intimacy-building questions. And yes it's as ridiculous as the idea sounds and you'll be surprised by how much you can get to know about a person in a day that might take years, and the way Natasha and Danial manage it is beautiful.

Now I won't spoil the ending but if you're like me, a person who gets a little bored of happy endings you will not be disappointed by this book's bittersweet ending.
And lastly, the age rating for this book is PG 13.
Now if you've read this far thank you and hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I did.

– Vaibhavi

> "you'll be surprised by how much you can get to know about a person in a day that might take years"

Teachers' Day

At Deepanam school every year on teachers day insteadof the teachers teaching, the two oldest grades Faith and Hope teach the rest of the grades. I was really excited about becoming the teacher for the day because I have
never done anything like this before.

It was very surprising for me how difficult it was to planthe classes I thought it would be easy but it took us awhile to agree on what classes to do. Another thing that surprised me was that it was difficult to get all the kids to
listen and be engaged in the class. On another level I found it very easy to Communicate with my team we wereable to work together collaborative and come up with good ideas.

In the end of the day I felt tired but very happy about howthe day went and I feel like it was a success and I hope the kids also enjoyed the day. This experience made understand how difficult is to be in a role of a teacher.

Nina

This experience made understand how difficult is to be in a role of a teacher.

When our teachers first announced that we would become teachers for one day, I was excited for a few seconds. In my head, I was like, "We're going to be teachers for one day? What a teacher!" I thought it was going to be easy, but it was actually pretty hard. The kids weren't listening, and they were screaming throughout the whole class. However, the 1st graders were actually quite calm, except for a few kids.

Our second class was with the 3rd graders. They were like monkeys! We expected them to be calmer, but they were very energetic and difficult to control. Luckily, my group managed to handle them.

After that, we had a one-hour break to relax. We stayed in the classroom for the whole hour and got some time to rest. After the break, we played fun games with the 4th graders. Finally, we played games with the 5th and 6th graders. I enjoyed this part more because they were better behaved than the 3rd and 4th graders.

Overall, I didn't really enjoy being a teacher for one day. It was much harder than I expected, but it also helped me understand how difficult it can be to teach and control a class.

Stefan

I was excited because I had never been a teacher before, and I was looking forward to it. I enjoyed playing game Jurassic Park because, throughout the day, we did everything indoors, so I was happy playing outside. Working with the Light Group was the funniest part of the class. It also reminded me of my childhood experience of being a Light Grouper. It was also difficult to handle them, as it was difficult to make them understand. Overall, I felt that being a teacher is very hard. Big thanks to my teachers.

Shanjana