

Dupont Summit 2019

Presentation: “Could an AI System Replace Your Online Instructors?”

### Abstract

During the late [1980s into the 1990s](#), the push toward artificial intelligence (AI) was seemingly everywhere in the news. Today, [discussions of AI are back in the news](#), in academic courses and training sessions especially when we talk about [autonomous vehicles](#). AI seems to be everywhere. So, why shouldn't AI be in the online classroom?

### Reasons Supporting Having an AI Online Teacher

Over [100 online students](#) were surveyed about this topic in 2019. One student offered a year when AI online teachers would be 2030. Results were from humorous to serious.

### What then are the Requirements Needed to be Met to Create an AI Online Teacher?

There are students not willing to accept an AI system to replace a human for online training. Negative replies were evident in the 1980s and 1990s when MIT and other innovative institutions were building autonomous vehicles. A similar pattern of negative reactions is evident in many of the innovations that are now in common use. But, those few positive reactions to the past technology innovations became a [hidden teacher](#) of technology acceptance. Is AI *The Hidden Teacher* as Loren Eiseley defined? Eiseley defined the hidden teacher before the Computer Age. “[Teachers don't have to explain things to students in a noisy, typical schoolroom to be 'teachers,' anyone who teaches someone else something can be a teacher.](#)” AI expert systems, like the [desktop Alexa](#) or [Echo](#) in the home are hidden teachers, answering questions. The AI online teacher may become a new form of hidden teacher in plain sight.

### Summary

What we have with these findings is a set of requirements to build a successful AI online teacher. If a builder of online classes can overcome all the negatives, then there might be a place soon for AI online teachers. Or, a combination of AI and human teachers in each online course. Maybe the AI segment of the course could give the human teacher more time to engage the student in video or audio or typed dialogue and discussions?

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