



TRANSFORMING BIOLOGY EDUCATION THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A REVIEW OF TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES

Ahmed Ibrahim (PhD)

Department of Science and Technology Education,
Bayero University Kano
ahmadkt21@gmail.com
08034176161

And

Rabi Abdullahi

Department of General Studies
College of Nursing Science, Gusau
Rabiullahibagudu527@gmail.com

Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has precipitated a paradigm shift in educational practices worldwide, with particular implications for science education. This review critically examines how AI is transforming biology teaching and learning across secondary schools, colleges, and universities. This integrative review synthesizes evidence on AI applications including intelligent tutoring systems, generative AI tools, virtual and augmented reality, learning analytics, and automated assessment systems in the context of biology education. The review employs linking AI tools, pedagogical practices, and student learning outcomes, the review indicate that AI integration enhances personalized learning, improves conceptual understanding of complex biological phenomena, and supports the development of scientific inquiry skills. However, significant challenges persist, including data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, the digital divide, and teacher preparedness, particularly in developing countries such as those in Africa and Nigeria. The review identifies critical research gaps, including the underrepresentation of AI-supported educational games and simulations in biology. Future directions emphasize the need for human-AI collaboration frameworks, explainable AI in educational contexts, and context-sensitive policies that address infrastructural and equity constraints. The review concludes with actionable recommendations for educational practice, curriculum development, teacher education, and policy formulation.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, biology education, intelligent tutoring systems, generative AI, learning analytics, science education, digital divide, educational technology

Introduction

Biology education has undergone substantial transformation over the past several decades, evolving from teacher-centered, textbook-driven instruction to more interactive, inquiry-based, and technology-enhanced pedagogical approaches. The discipline of biology, characterized by its reliance on visualization, experimentation, and conceptual modeling, presents unique

instructional challenges. Complex topics such as molecular genetics, cellular respiration, protein synthesis, and evolutionary mechanisms require learners to engage with abstract, multi-level phenomena that are often imperceptible to the unaided human senses (Duran & Dikmenli, 2025). Traditional instructional methods have frequently struggled to adequately represent these dynamic, microscopic, or temporally



extended processes, leading to persistent student misconceptions and fragmented conceptual understanding.

The emergence of digital technologies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries introduced new possibilities for biology instruction, including computer simulations, virtual laboratories, and multimedia resources. However, these technologies largely remained supplementary tools rather than transformative pedagogical agents. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) in education represents a qualitatively distinct phase—one characterized by adaptive, personalized, and intelligent systems capable of responding to individual learner needs in real time (Wang et al., 2024; Zhai, 2023).

Artificial intelligence in education (AIED) has transitioned from a speculative research domain to a practical reality reshaping classrooms worldwide. The release of large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT in late 2022 marked an inflection point, democratizing access to sophisticated AI capabilities and catalyzing unprecedented interest in generative AI applications across educational sectors (Cooper, 2023; Shin & Shim, 2021). In science education specifically, the National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) established the Research in Artificial Intelligence-Involvement Science Education (RAISE) Research Interest Group in 2022, reflecting the growing scholarly commitment to this intersection (Zhai & Krajcik, 2024).

The applications of AI in biology education are multifaceted. Researchers have utilized machine learning and computer vision algorithms for automatic scoring of students' written explanations, argumentation, and drawn models (Ha et al., 2011; Zhai et al., 2022). More recently, generative AI tools have been explored for lesson planning, assessment design, and the simulation of

complex biological scenarios (Fiedler et al., 2024; Lee & Zhai, 2024). These developments signal a fundamental reconfiguration of the roles of teachers, learners, and educational technologies in biology classrooms.

Despite decades of reform efforts, biology education continues to face persistent challenges. Students frequently harbor entrenched misconceptions about evolution, genetics, and cellular processes that are resistant to conventional instruction (Duran & Dikmenli, 2025). Laboratory work, a cornerstone of biological training, remains constrained by cost, safety, and accessibility limitations, particularly in under-resourced educational settings. Furthermore, the exponential growth of biological knowledge; exemplified by advances in genomics, synthetic biology, and bioinformatics; has widened the gap between disciplinary frontiers and curricular content.

AI offers potential solutions to these challenges through personalized tutoring that addresses individual misconceptions, virtual laboratories that simulate expensive or dangerous experiments, and intelligent systems that scaffold scientific inquiry skills. However, realizing this potential requires critical examination of the empirical evidence, theoretical foundations, and contextual constraints governing AI integration.

Globally, AI adoption in education varies considerably across regions. While North American, European, and East Asian institutions have made substantial investments in AI-driven educational infrastructure, many developing regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, face significant barriers to implementation (Ayanwale et al., 2024). The digital divide, encompassing disparities in internet connectivity, device access, digital literacy,



and institutional capacity represents a critical challenge for equitable AI integration (Yan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, mobile technology penetration and the increasing availability of open-source AI tools present opportunities for leapfrogging traditional infrastructure limitations in resource-constrained settings.

Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED)

Artificial intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by computer systems, encompassing learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding. In educational contexts, AI has evolved through several phases: computer-assisted instruction (CAI) in the 1960s–1980s, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS) in the 1980s–2000s, adaptive learning platforms in the 2000s–2010s, and the current era of generative AI and large language models (Good et al., 1986; Holmes et al., 2022). This evolution reflects increasing sophistication in natural language processing, machine learning algorithms, and computational power.

Types of AI Relevant to Education

Several AI subfields are particularly relevant to biology education. Some of the educationally relevant AI to include the following:

1. Machine Learning (ML) refers to algorithms that enable systems to learn from data and improve performance without explicit programming. In education, ML powers predictive analytics, learning pattern recognition, and adaptive content delivery (Zhai, 2023).
2. Deep Learning, a subset of ML utilizing neural networks with multiple layers, enables sophisticated pattern recognition in complex datasets. Applications include image analysis for biological specimen identification, automated scoring of student-drawn models, and natural

language understanding (Lee et al., 2023).

3. Natural Language Processing (NLP) facilitates human-computer interaction through language. NLP underpins chatbots, automated essay scoring, and intelligent tutoring systems that engage in dialogue with learners. Recent advances in transformer architectures (e.g., GPT, BERT) have dramatically improved the fluency and coherence of AI-generated educational content (Bewersdorff et al., 2023).
4. Generative AI encompasses models capable of creating novel content including text, images, code, and simulations in response to user prompts. Tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Copilot have particular relevance for lesson preparation, concept explanation, and assessment support in biology education (Cooper, 2023; Walter, 2024).
5. Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) are AI-driven platforms that provide personalized instruction, adaptive feedback, and individualized learning pathways based on learner performance and knowledge states. ITS represent one of the most mature applications of AI in education, with demonstrated efficacy across multiple domains (Wang et al., 2024).

Nature and Objectives of Biology Education

Biology education aims to develop learners' understanding of living systems, from molecular and cellular processes to ecosystem dynamics and evolutionary patterns. Core objectives include fostering conceptual understanding of biological principles, developing scientific inquiry and reasoning skills, cultivating appreciation for the nature of science, and promoting



scientific literacy for informed citizenship (Duran & Dikmenli, 2025). The discipline's inherent complexity spanning multiple scales of organization, temporal dimensions, and abstract theoretical constructs, makes it particularly amenable to AI-enhanced visualization and simulation.

Challenges in Biology Teaching and Learning

Biology education faces several well-documented challenges. Students frequently struggle with abstract concepts that cannot be directly observed, such as gene expression, cellular respiration, and evolutionary mechanisms. Misconceptions about natural selection, genetics, and ecology are remarkably persistent and resistant to change (Duran & Dikmenli, 2025). Laboratory instruction, while essential for developing practical skills, is often limited by resource constraints, safety concerns, and time limitations. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of biological knowledge creates pressure to update curricula continuously, a challenge compounded by the inertia of traditional textbook-based approaches.

Need for Innovative Pedagogies

These challenges underscore the need for pedagogical innovations that can personalize instruction, provide immersive experiences of invisible biological processes, and scaffold the development of scientific reasoning. AI technologies offer potential solutions through adaptive tutoring, virtual laboratories, intelligent assessment, and data-driven instructional decision-making.

Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Biology Education

Intelligent Tutoring Systems

Artificial Intelligence in Biology Education is applied in some of the following ways: Intelligent Tutoring Systems such as Personalized Instruction, Adaptive Learning Pathways and Automated Feedback

i. Personalized Instruction

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) in biology education tailor learning pathways to individual student needs. For example, systems have been developed to adapt instruction in genetics based on real-time assessment of student understanding, providing additional scaffolding for struggling learners while accelerating advanced students (Duran & Dikmenli, 2025). A systematic review of ITS in learning contexts found that these systems consistently improve learning outcomes when integrated with clear pedagogical objectives (Aryawangsa, 2024). In Indian higher secondary biology education, ITS usage has been associated with increased learning motivation and achievement, particularly when systems are culturally contextualized to local curriculum standards (Patel, 2018; Rani & Sinha, 2023).

ii. Adaptive Learning Pathways

Adaptive learning systems use machine learning algorithms to continuously adjust the difficulty, sequence, and presentation of biological content. These systems can identify when students are struggling with specific concepts—such as meiosis or photosynthesis—and provide targeted interventions, alternative explanations, or additional practice problems. The adaptive nature of these systems aligns with cognitive load theory by ensuring that learners are appropriately challenged without being overwhelmed.

iii. Automated Feedback

Immediate, specific feedback is critical for learning in biology, particularly for complex problem-solving and conceptual reasoning. ITS can provide automated feedback



on student responses to biology problems, identifying errors in reasoning and guiding students toward correct understanding. Recent advances in NLP have enabled more sophisticated feedback on open-ended biological explanations, though challenges remain in assessing higher-order reasoning (Zhai et al., 2022).

AI-Powered Virtual Laboratories

AI-enhanced virtual laboratories can simulate complex biological processes—from PCR and gel electrophoresis to ecosystem dynamics and evolutionary simulations—with high fidelity. These simulations allow students to manipulate variables, observe outcomes, and develop experimental design skills without the constraints of physical resources. Fiedler et al. (2024) demonstrated the use of AI chatbots to simulate evolution education scenarios, enabling students to explore evolutionary principles through interactive dialogue. For institutions in developing countries, virtual laboratories offer a cost-effective alternative to expensive physical equipment and consumables. AI-powered simulations can be deployed on standard computing devices or mobile phones, reducing infrastructure requirements. However, the initial development costs of high-quality AI simulations remain substantial, and open-source alternatives are still limited. Virtual laboratories eliminate risks associated with hazardous biological materials, radioactive tracers, and dangerous organisms. This is particularly relevant for school-level biology education, where safety concerns often limit hands-on experimentation. AI-enhanced VLs can also simulate ethically sensitive procedures; such as animal dissection or genetic engineering; without ethical violations.

Generative AI Tools

Large language models such as ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), Claude (Anthropic), and Copilot (Microsoft) have been rapidly adopted in educational settings. In biology education, these tools serve multiple functions: generating lesson plans, explaining complex concepts, creating assessment items, and supporting student research (Cooper, 2023; Walter, 2024). Generative AI tool can be used in the following:

i. Lesson Preparation

Generative AI can assist biology teachers in developing lesson plans, instructional materials, and differentiated activities. Studies indicate that ChatGPT's responses to science education prompts often align with established best practices, including active learning, differentiation, and technology integration (University of Guelph, 2024). However, the lack of empirical evidence backing AI-generated recommendations and a tendency to rely on popular opinions necessitate critical evaluation by teachers.

ii. Concept Explanation

Generative AI can provide explanations of biological concepts at multiple levels of complexity, potentially supporting differentiated instruction. Students can query AI tools for clarification on topics ranging from cellular respiration to population genetics. However, the quality of explanations varies, and AI systems may generate plausible-sounding but biologically inaccurate content (hallucinations), requiring verification by knowledgeable instructors (Sadler et al., 2024).

iii. Assessment Support

AI tools can generate quiz questions, rubrics, and assessment tasks.



However, concerns about academic integrity and the potential for students to use AI to complete assignments have prompted debates about appropriate use policies. A meta-analysis of ChatGPT's impact on science education found moderate positive effects on academic performance when integration is intentional and teacher-guided, but highlighted significant challenges including low teacher preparedness and ethical concerns (SSRN, 2025).

iv. **Research Assistance**

Generative AI can support students in literature searches, hypothesis generation, and research design. However, the propensity of AI systems to generate fictitious citations (Annamalai et al., 2025) and the risk of cognitive offloading; where students rely on AI rather than developing their own analytical skills, present significant concerns for scientific training (Costa et al., 2024; Nasr et al., 2025).

Virtual and Augmented Reality Supported by AI

AI integration enhances AR experiences through intelligent object recognition, adaptive content delivery, and real-time feedback. Recent studies demonstrate AR applications in virology activities targeting higher-order cognitive skills, AR-enhanced virtual field tours for ecology education, and integration with AI-driven feedback systems to extend outcomes to critical thinking and digital literacy (Stanič & Špernjak, 2025). In cell biology, AR applications enable three-dimensional visualization of cellular structures and processes, supporting spatial understanding that is difficult to achieve with two-dimensional diagrams (Assimi et al., 2023).

Learning Analytics

AI-driven learning analytics can predict student performance in biology courses based on engagement patterns, assessment results, and demographic factors. These predictions enable early identification of at-risk students and targeted intervention. However, Idowu et al. (2024) found that institutional data sources often contain significant biases, raising concerns about fairness in predictive modeling. Early alert systems powered by learning analytics can notify instructors and advisors when students exhibit patterns indicative of academic difficulty. In biology education, where cumulative knowledge building is essential, early intervention can prevent the cascade of misunderstanding that leads to course failure. AI-enhanced advising systems can provide personalized guidance on course selection, study strategies, and career pathways in biological sciences. These systems complement rather than replace human advisors, offering data-driven insights that enhance the quality of advising interactions.

Automated Assessment Systems

Computer-adaptive testing, powered by AI, adjusts question difficulty based on student performance, providing more efficient and accurate measurement of biology knowledge. These systems can cover large content domains while minimizing testing time. Automated essay scoring (AES) systems use NLP to evaluate student written explanations of biological phenomena. While AES has achieved reasonable reliability for assessing writing quality and factual recall, evaluating higher-order scientific reasoning, argumentation, and the use of evidence remains challenging (Zhai et al., 2022). The 2020 International Baccalaureate grading controversy, in which algorithmic grading replaced examinations during the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrates the risks of over-reliance on automated assessment (Jackson &



Panteli, 2023). AI-powered assessment systems can provide immediate feedback on student work, enabling rapid correction of misconceptions and supporting the iterative refinement of understanding. This immediacy is particularly valuable in biology, where misconceptions can become entrenched if not addressed promptly.

The impact of AI on academic achievement in biology and science education has been examined through multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews. A meta-analysis of ChatGPT's impact on science academic performance found a moderate and statistically significant positive effect, though with substantial heterogeneity suggesting context-dependent outcomes (SSRN, 2025). The pooled effect size indicated that ChatGPT enhances science learning when intentionally integrated with pedagogical instructions, adequate teacher support, and equitable access. However, the review identified only nine quantitative studies meeting rigorous inclusion criteria, highlighting the limited empirical base.

Wang and Fan (2025) conducted a meta-analysis of ChatGPT's effect on students' learning performance, learning perception, and higher-order thinking, finding significant positive effects when ChatGPT is used in structured, guided ways. These findings suggest that the pedagogical context of AI integration; whether as a supplementary tool or a core instructional component; mediates its impact on achievement.

Impact of AI on Biology Teachers

AI tools can offer the following impact for biology teachers in teaching biology to the students:

1. Lesson Planning Efficiency

Generative AI tools can significantly reduce the time required for lesson planning, material development, and assessment creation. Biology teachers

can use AI to generate lesson outlines, differentiation strategies, and assessment rubrics. However, the quality of AI-generated materials varies, and teachers must possess sufficient subject expertise to evaluate and refine AI outputs (Cooper, 2023).

2. Professional Development

The integration of AI in biology education necessitates new forms of teacher professional development. Teachers require training not only in technical operation of AI tools but also in pedagogical strategies for effective AI integration, ethical use guidelines, and methods for evaluating AI-generated content. The Intelligent-TPACK framework proposed by Celik (2023) highlights the need for ethical literacy as a core component of teacher professional knowledge for AI integration.

3. Classroom Management

AI tools can support classroom management through automated attendance, behavior monitoring, and personalized learning pathways that reduce disciplinary issues stemming from boredom or frustration. However, AI-driven surveillance raises significant privacy and ethical concerns that must be addressed (Yan et al., 2025).

4. Assessment Practices

AI is transforming assessment practices in biology education, from automated grading to predictive analytics. While these tools offer efficiency gains, they also challenge traditional conceptions of assessment authenticity and teacher professional judgment. The 2020 International Baccalaureate controversy illustrates how algorithmic grading can erode trust when implemented without



adequate transparency and human oversight (Jackson & Panteli, 2023).

5. **Instructional Decision-Making**

Learning analytics and AI-generated insights can inform instructional decision-making by identifying concepts that require reteaching, students who need intervention, and instructional strategies that prove most effective. However, over-reliance on algorithmic recommendations may diminish teacher autonomy and contextual judgment.

6. **Teacher Workload Reduction**

AI has the potential to reduce teacher workload by automating routine tasks such as grading, attendance, and basic content delivery. However, the initial investment in learning to use AI tools, evaluating AI outputs, and managing AI-integrated classrooms may offset these gains, particularly for teachers lacking technical support.

7. **Changing Teacher Roles**

The integration of AI in biology education is reshaping teacher roles from primary knowledge sources to learning facilitators, AI evaluators, and ethical guides. Teachers must develop new competencies for guiding student-AI interaction, evaluating AI-generated content, and maintaining the human relational dimensions of education that AI cannot replicate (Muwagunzi et al., 2024).

Opportunities of AI in Biology Education

Some of the opportunities of using AI in biology education include the followings:

1. **Personalized Learning**

AI enables truly personalized learning in biology education, adapting content, pace, and scaffolding to individual student needs. This personalization addresses the diverse prior knowledge, learning

preferences, and misconceptions that characterize biology classrooms.

2. **Accessibility and Inclusiveness**

AI tools can enhance accessibility for students with disabilities through text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and adaptive interfaces. For students in remote or under-resourced settings, AI-powered virtual laboratories and mobile learning applications can provide access to high-quality biology instruction that would otherwise be unavailable.

3. **Increased Engagement**

Interactive AI tools, particularly AR, VR, and gamified tutoring systems, can increase student engagement with biological content. The immersive and interactive nature of these technologies addresses the motivation challenges that often accompany abstract or complex biological topics.

4. **Real-Time Feedback**

AI enables immediate, specific feedback on student work, supporting the iterative refinement of understanding. This immediacy is particularly valuable in biology, where misconceptions can become entrenched if not addressed promptly.

5. **Data-Driven Decision-Making**

Learning analytics provide teachers and administrators with data-driven insights into student learning patterns, enabling more informed instructional and policy decisions. However, the quality of these decisions depends on the validity of the data and the interpretive frameworks employed.

6. **Enhanced Scientific Visualization**

AI-powered visualization tools enable representations of biological processes that are impossible or impractical to observe directly. From molecular dynamics to ecosystem simulations, these visualizations



support the development of mental models essential for biological reasoning.

7. **Support for Remote and Blended Learning**

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote and blended learning models, and AI tools have proven valuable in supporting these modalities. AI tutoring systems, virtual laboratories, and automated assessment can maintain instructional quality in remote settings, though equity of access remains a concern.

Challenges and Ethical Concerns

Use of AI in biology education pose some challenges and ethical concerns. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Data Privacy Issues**

The collection and analysis of student data by AI systems raise significant privacy concerns. AI-powered educational platforms often collect extensive data on student performance, behavior, and personal characteristics, creating risks of unauthorized access, misuse, and commercial exploitation (Al-Zahrani, 2024; Yan et al., 2025). In many jurisdictions, regulatory frameworks for educational data protection remain underdeveloped, leaving students vulnerable to privacy violations.

2. **Algorithmic Bias**

AI systems can perpetuate and amplify existing biases through biased training data, flawed algorithmic design, and inequitable deployment. In educational contexts, algorithmic bias can result in discriminatory recommendations, unfair assessment outcomes, and the reproduction of social inequalities (Idowu et al., 2024). Studies in India and Morocco have documented

instances of algorithmic practices that replicate gender, class, and ethnic inequalities (Ferhataj et al., 2025; Kamali et al., 2024). Fairness audits using metrics such as Absolute Between-ROC Area (ABROCA) and Average Odds Difference (AOD) reveal that institutional data sources often contain significant biases that propagate through predictive models (Idowu et al., 2024).

3. **Digital Divide**

The digital divide, the gap between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not represents a major barrier to equitable AI integration in biology education. This divide encompasses not only access to devices and internet connectivity but also digital literacy, technical support, and the cultural capital required to effectively utilize AI tools. In developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, infrastructure limitations severely constrain AI adoption in education (Ayanwale et al., 2024).

4. **Infrastructure Limitations**

AI-enhanced biology education requires robust technological infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, adequate computing devices, and technical support systems. Many educational institutions, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas, lack this infrastructure. Cloud-based AI applications are particularly vulnerable to connectivity limitations, while on-device AI requires modern hardware that may be unavailable.

5. **Teacher Preparedness**

Effective AI integration requires teachers who are knowledgeable about both biology content and AI technologies. However, many



biology teachers lack training in AI literacy, pedagogical integration strategies, and ethical evaluation of AI tools. Ayanwale et al. (2024) found that while Nigerian pre-service teachers demonstrate strong AI knowledge, this does not necessarily translate to ethical use, creative application, or emotional regulation in AI-enhanced teaching.

6. Academic Integrity Concerns

Generative AI tools pose significant challenges to academic integrity, enabling students to complete assignments, essays, and even research projects with minimal original effort. The ease of generating plausible biological content can undermine the assessment of genuine student learning and complicate traditional plagiarism detection (Černý, 2024; Swist et al., 2024). Many universities have not yet developed institutional policies to regulate AI use, creating ambiguity for students and instructors (Duah & McGivern, 2024).

7. Overdependence on AI

Overreliance on AI tools may erode fundamental cognitive and metacognitive skills. Students who habitually defer to AI for answers may fail to develop the independent reasoning, critical evaluation, and creative problem-solving skills essential for scientific practice (Costa et al., 2024; Nasr et al., 2025). This "cognitive offloading" represents a significant risk for biology education, where the development of independent inquiry skills is a primary objective.

8. Equity and Inclusion Concerns

While AI has the potential to enhance educational equity, it may also exacerbate existing inequalities. Students in well-resourced schools

with trained teachers and robust infrastructure may benefit disproportionately from AI-enhanced instruction, while their counterparts in under-resourced settings fall further behind. The design of AI tools often reflects the cultural and linguistic contexts of their developers, potentially marginalizing non-Western perspectives and local biological knowledge systems (Bradley et al., 2024).

AI in Biology Education in Africa and Nigeria

AI adoption in African biology education remains in early stages, characterized by pockets of innovation amid widespread infrastructural constraints. Mobile technology penetration has created opportunities for AI-enhanced learning applications, but systematic integration into formal biology curricula is limited. Ayanwale et al. (2024) examined AI literacy among Nigerian pre-service teachers, finding moderate levels of AI knowledge but significant gaps in ethical application, creative use, and emotional intelligence in AI-enhanced teaching contexts.

Several initiatives have emerged to promote AI in African education. The UNESCO AI competency framework for teachers provides guidance for AI integration, though contextualization to local educational realities remains necessary (Cukurova & Miao, 2024). National policies such as Nigeria's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy and various national education policies emphasize digital transformation, but implementation in biology classrooms remains limited. Institutional readiness for AI integration in African biology education varies considerably. Elite universities and private schools in major urban centers may possess the infrastructure and expertise for AI-enhanced instruction, while rural public



schools face severe constraints. The lack of reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and technical support represents fundamental barriers to AI adoption.

National AI policies in African countries are emerging but often lack specific provisions for educational AI. Data protection regulations, where they exist, may not adequately address the unique vulnerabilities of educational data. The policy environment for AI in education requires strengthening to ensure ethical deployment, data protection, and equitable access.

Challenges Specific to African Contexts

Beyond the universal challenges of AI integration, African contexts face specific constraints: (1) linguistic diversity, with many AI tools optimized for English and major European languages; (2) curriculum misalignment, with AI tools often designed for Western curricula; (3) infrastructure deficits, including unreliable electricity and limited internet bandwidth; (4) teacher training gaps, with limited opportunities for AI literacy development; and (5) funding constraints, with competing priorities for limited educational budgets.

Prospects for Future Implementation

Despite these challenges, prospects for AI in African biology education are not entirely pessimistic. Mobile-first AI applications, open-source tools, and regional partnerships offer pathways for contextually appropriate AI integration. The growing youth population and increasing recognition of digital skills as essential for economic development create political momentum for educational technology investment. However, realizing this potential requires targeted policy attention, infrastructure investment, and teacher professional development.

Emerging Trends and Future Directions

The rapid evolution of generative AI models promises increasingly sophisticated applications for biology education. Future developments may include AI systems capable of generating personalized biological simulations, interactive Socratic tutors for scientific reasoning, and adaptive scientific writing coaches. However, the pedagogical integration of these tools must keep pace with technological capabilities. Some of the future directions include the following:

1. AI-Powered Adaptive Laboratories

The next generation of virtual laboratories may incorporate AI-driven adaptive scaffolding that responds to student experimental design choices in real time, providing intelligent guidance that mimics the support of a skilled laboratory instructor. These systems could bridge the gap between scripted simulations and authentic inquiry.

2. Explainable AI

Explainable AI (XAI), systems that provide transparent, interpretable explanations for their decisions has particular relevance for education. Khosravi et al. (2022) proposed the Explainable Artificial Intelligence in Education (XAI-ED) framework, emphasizing stakeholder-centered design and assessment. In biology education, XAI could help students understand why an AI tutor recommended particular content, fostering metacognitive awareness and trust in AI systems.

3. Human-AI Collaboration

The future of biology education likely lies not in AI replacement of human teachers but in sophisticated human-AI collaboration. Teachers may focus on relational, ethical, and creative dimensions of instruction while AI



handles personalization, feedback, and data analysis. Realizing this vision requires rethinking teacher preparation and classroom organization.

4. **AI for Scientific Inquiry**

AI tools that support authentic scientific inquiry, such as automated data analysis, literature synthesis, and hypothesis generation, can introduce students to the practices of professional biology. However, careful scaffolding is required to ensure that AI supports rather than supplants the development of independent inquiry skills.

5. **AI-Supported Curriculum Design**

AI may increasingly support curriculum design by analyzing learning standards, mapping conceptual prerequisites, and suggesting optimal sequences and activities. However, human judgment remains essential for ensuring that curricula reflect local biological contexts, cultural values, and educational priorities.

6. **Future Biology Classrooms**

The biology classroom of the future may feature AI tutors providing personalized guidance, AR/VR systems enabling immersive exploration of biological systems, learning analytics informing real-time instructional adjustments, and generative AI supporting creative scientific expression. However, this vision must be tempered by attention to equity, ethics, and the irreplaceable human dimensions of teaching and learning.

7. **Under-Researched Areas**

This review identifies several under-researched areas requiring further investigation: (1) AI-supported educational games and simulations in biology, which Duran and Dikmenli

(2025) found to be insufficiently represented in the literature; (2) longitudinal studies examining the sustained impact of AI on biology learning outcomes; (3) AI applications in evolutionary biology and biodiversity education; (4) context-specific AI tools for African and other developing region curricula; (5) the impact of AI on the development of scientific identity and career aspirations; and (6) ethical frameworks for AI deployment in resource-constrained educational settings.

Implications

Transforming Biology Education through Artificial Intelligence has the following implications:

1. **Educational Practice**

Biology educators should approach AI integration as a pedagogical decision rather than a technological imperative. Effective practice requires: (1) clear alignment between AI tools and learning objectives; (2) scaffolding to prevent cognitive offloading and promote active engagement; (3) critical evaluation of AI-generated content; (4) attention to equity in AI access and use; and (5) maintenance of human relational dimensions of teaching. Teachers should view AI as a tool for enhancing rather than replacing their professional judgment.

2. **Curriculum Development**

Curriculum developers should consider how AI literacy can be integrated into biology curricula, preparing students to critically evaluate and effectively use AI tools in scientific practice. Curricula should also address the ethical dimensions of AI in biology, including data privacy, algorithmic



bias, and the responsible use of biotechnology. The alignment of AI tools with local curriculum standards and biological contexts requires attention, particularly in non-Western educational settings.

3. Teacher Education

Teacher education programs must prepare biology teachers for AI-enhanced classrooms through: (1) AI literacy development; (2) pedagogical training for AI integration; (3) ethical reasoning about AI in education; (4) technical skills for evaluating and troubleshooting AI tools; and (5) strategies for maintaining teacher autonomy and professional identity. The Intelligent-TPACK framework (Celik, 2023) provides a useful model for structuring this preparation.

4. Educational Management

School leaders and administrators must develop policies and infrastructure for ethical AI integration, including data governance frameworks, equitable access policies, and professional development provisions. Management must also address the workload implications of AI integration, ensuring that teachers receive adequate support and time for adaptation.

5. Educational Technology Policy

Policymakers should establish regulatory frameworks that protect student privacy, ensure algorithmic fairness, and promote equitable access to AI-enhanced education. Policies should address: (1) data protection standards for educational AI; (2) requirements for algorithmic transparency and auditability; (3) investment in infrastructure for underserved communities; (4) teacher professional development mandates;

and (5) guidelines for academic integrity in the age of generative AI. International cooperation may be necessary to address the global dimensions of AI governance in education.

6. Research

Future research should address the identified gaps through: (1) rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental studies examining causal impacts of AI on biology learning outcomes; (2) longitudinal designs assessing sustained effects and developmental trajectories; (3) qualitative studies examining student and teacher experiences of AI integration; (4) design-based research developing and refining AI tools for specific biology content areas; (5) equity-focused research examining differential impacts across demographic groups; and (6) implementation science research identifying effective strategies for scaling AI in diverse contexts.

Conclusion

This review has critically examined the transformation of biology education through artificial intelligence, synthesizing evidence on AI applications, impacts, opportunities, and challenges. The major findings indicate that AI technologies, including intelligent tutoring systems, generative AI, virtual and augmented reality, learning analytics, and automated assessment; offer significant potential for enhancing biology teaching and learning. Evidence suggests positive impacts on academic achievement, conceptual understanding, motivation, and engagement when AI is integrated with clear pedagogical intention, adequate teacher support, and attention to equity.

However, the review also reveals significant challenges that must be addressed for AI to fulfill its transformative potential. Data



privacy, algorithmic bias, the digital divide, teacher preparedness, academic integrity, and the risk of overdependence represent critical concerns requiring ethical frameworks, policy intervention, and pedagogical innovation. The context of Africa and Nigeria illustrates how infrastructural and capacity constraints can exacerbate these challenges, while also highlighting opportunities for mobile-based and contextually appropriate AI solutions.

The contributions of this review to biology education include: (1) a comprehensive synthesis of the rapidly evolving evidence base; (2) a conceptual framework linking AI tools, pedagogical practices, and learning outcomes; (3) identification of critical research gaps, particularly in evolutionary biology education and AI-supported simulations; (4) context-sensitive analysis of AI adoption in developing countries; and (5) actionable recommendations for practice, policy, and research.

The practical significance of this review lies in its guidance for educators, policymakers, and researchers navigating the complex landscape of AI in biology education. As AI technologies continue to evolve, the need for critical, evidence-informed integration becomes ever more urgent. The future of biology education will likely be shaped by the choices made today about how to deploy AI whether as a tool for democratizing access to high-quality science education or as a mechanism for reproducing and amplifying existing inequalities.

The recommendations emerging from this review emphasize: (1) intentional, pedagogically grounded AI integration rather than technology-driven adoption; (2) substantial investment in teacher professional development and AI literacy; (3) robust ethical frameworks and regulatory oversight for educational AI; (4) targeted efforts to

address the digital divide and ensure equitable access; (5) context-sensitive AI development for diverse educational settings; and (6) sustained research investment to build the evidence base for effective practice.

Looking forward, the intersection of AI and biology education stands at a critical juncture. The choices made by educators, policymakers, and researchers in the coming years will determine whether AI serves as a catalyst for transformative science education or merely as an incremental addition to existing practices. Realizing the transformative potential of AI requires not only technological innovation but also pedagogical wisdom, ethical commitment, and unwavering attention to equity and human dignity.

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