

AI and professional practice: benefits, limitations and recommendations ethics



ABSTRACT

Efficiency, continuity, personalization, and significant scalability are among the most evident benefits of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applied to coaching.

These technologies offer professionals the ability to optimize workflows, analyze sessions with unprecedented depth, and create customized development paths. However, alongside these opportunities come significant risks: algorithmic biases that can perpetuate stereotypes, and technological dependence that risks atrophying human skills.

fundamentals, and the temptation to rely excessively on AI. While powerful in generating language and analyzing data, AI is incapable of understanding the silence, pause, and critical challenge that fuel the transformative depth of coaching. This article explores these dynamics in light of the scientific literature and ongoing experiments, such as the ReflectAI project .

Through critical analysis, a series of ethical and practical recommendations are proposed for the conscious use of AI, preserving the centrality of the human being and authentic reflexivity in coaching and supervision processes.

INTRODUCTION



When a coach concludes a session, there's often a silence filled with questions: What really happened? Where did I act automatically? What did I learn about myself?

From this space was born ReflectAI, a conversational agent designed to accompany the coach in post-session reflection, stimulating questions, insights and new awareness.

The experiment, launched by ISCP Italy Research Hub has allowed us to explore new territory: one in which artificial intelligence does not "replace" professionals, but helps them think better.

This article discusses how the Coachbot serves as a cognitive partner in reflective practice, amplifying the coach's awareness and depth of thought.

Through the experience gained in the ReflectAI project, the learnings, challenges, and ethical implications of this collaboration between human and artificial intelligence are highlighted—a relationship that opens up new perspectives for the future of coaching and for developing the quality of professional performance.

THE “AUGMENTED COACH” PARADIGM

The debate over the impact of AI on coaching is often polarized between a fear of replacement and the belief that no machine can replicate the complexity of human relationships.

However, a more pragmatic and powerful paradigm is emerging: that of the " **Augmented**

Coach." From this perspective, three paradigms can be distinguished:

- **AI-Led Coaching**, where technology takes on the role of coach;
- **AI- Enabled Coaching**, where AI acts as an operational assistant;
- **AI as a Cognitive Partner**, representing the new frontier, in which the machine becomes a stimulus for reflection and metacognitive learning for the human professional.

It is on this last dimension that our analysis focuses: technology does not compete with man, but accompanies him, amplifying his capacities for thought and awareness.

AI does what it does best: processing large volumes of data, identifying patterns, automating workflows, and generating content on demand. This frees up the coach's cognitive and emotional resources, allowing them to focus on what is uniquely and irreplaceably human: empathy, intuition, creativity, understanding nonverbal cues, building deep trust, and applying sound ethical judgment.

Adopting this paradigm doesn't diminish the coach's role; on the contrary, it elevates it, pushing them to operate at a higher level of emotional, relational, and strategic intelligence.

REFLECTAI: A CASE STUDY IN ENHANCED REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

To concretely explore the "Augmented Coach" paradigm, ISCP Italy Research Hub has launched the ReflectAI project (formerly known as Coaching Psychology Bot), an autonomous conversational chatbot designed to facilitate coaches' metacognitive processes.

Integrated into Telegram and based on OpenAI's GPT-4 model, ReflectAI interacts with the coach at the end of a session. Through targeted and structured questions, based on the principles of Coaching Psychology, the bot guides the professional in a **reflection -on-action process**.

The coach is encouraged to rework the experience, analyse the language, approaches and tools used, and bring out key awareness.

Initial analyses, albeit on a small sample, highlighted several advantages:

- **Improved Language** : Coaches tend to articulate more precise and detailed reflections to facilitate interaction with the bot, an exercise that clarifies thinking.
- **Metacognitive training**: Consistent use of this tool fosters greater awareness of one's professional dynamics.
- **Creating a "Safe Space"**: Paradoxically, interacting with a non-judgmental machine allowed some coaches to share doubts and uncertainties more freely, fostering more honest and profound reflection.

The project is still in its exploratory phase. Future developments include generating customized reports to monitor the evolution of the coach's reflective practice over time and creating a

coachee version to consolidate learning between sessions.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF AI IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The integration of artificial intelligence into coaching practice, as ReflectAI's experience shows, not only improves efficiency but also opens up new possibilities for learning and reflexivity.

The coaches involved highlighted some recurring benefits:

- the ability to return to sessions with greater clarity thanks to the Coachbot's structured prompts ;
- the emergence of new connections between thoughts, emotions, and actions;
- the perception of an "external memory" that supports the process of awareness over time.

However, the experiment also highlighted fundamental limitations: AI cannot access intuition, nor interpret the emotional context or implicit plot of the relationship.

It is precisely within these confines that the ethical perimeter of a conscious use of AI is delineated: a tool that amplifies, but does not replicate, human intelligence.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEARNINGS FROM THE REFLECTAI PROJECT

ReflectAI 's experience has allowed us to concretely explore not only the potential, but also the responsibilities associated with using AI in coaching.

From the early design stages, the research group chose to orient their work around a few guiding principles: **coach autonomy, protection of confidentiality, and the centrality of human reflection.**

The Coachbot does not provide answers or interpret sensitive data: it asks questions, accompanies, and stimulates connections.

This seemingly technical design choice is actually an ethical one. It means giving the coach full responsibility for their own thinking and judgment, preventing technology from assuming a prescriptive role.

During the experiment, some ethical observations and inspirations emerged that offer learning opportunities for future development:

- transparency in communicating to the coach how the data is processed and the fact that it is not archived;
- the clarity of the boundary between reflection and supervision, which the Coachbot does not replace but can facilitate;
- language therapy as a reflective practice, since the system's questions are inspired by the principles of Coaching Psychology and are constantly reworked to promote self-observation, presence, and awareness.

These observations confirm that the ethics of AI in coaching lies not in an abstract code, but in

relational design: in the way technology is conceived, mediated, and integrated into professional practice.

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ReflectAI experience represents the first step in a journey that combines technology and professional reflexivity.

The next step involves scientific validation, with a comparative study on the effects of Coachbot compared to traditional methods of professional reflection and journaling . Another line of development is ReflectAI. Coachee , a version intended for coaching clients to promote continuity of thought between sessions, while respecting individual autonomy and privacy.

From this experience, some recommendations emerge for those who intend to integrate AI into human development processes:

- **Centrality of reflective intention** . AI is useful only when it serves conscious learning, not as a substitute for relationships.
- **Ethical and linguistic design.** Each prompt reflects a thought process: it's important to base it on the principles of Coaching Psychology and review it periodically for inclusive purposes.
- **Human-AI co-learning.** Coach and AI evolve together in an iterative process: technology becomes a mirror, not a guide.
- **Transparency and data protection** . Every trial requires clear privacy policies and solid digital education for professionals.

- **A culture of reflection and ongoing research.**

The integration of AI opens up new fields of inquiry and dialogue between coaches, psychologists, technologists, and professional communities.

CONCLUSIONS

ReflectAI 's experience shows that technology, when designed with intention and ethical considerations, can become a reflective environment capable of supporting critical thinking and fostering continuous learning. Coaches who know how to engage with AI don't give up their humanity: they cultivate it.

In engaging with a cognitive partner, they train their intuition, presence, and ability to give meaning to experience. AI thus becomes an ally in awareness, a partner that stimulates rather than replaces.

The future of coaching hinges on this dynamic collaboration between human and artificial

intelligence: a balance between analysis and intuition, efficiency and depth.

Technology is not an end, but a catalyst for growth that invites us to evolve as professionals and as people—preserving what makes us profoundly human.

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