

Futures Dialogues

AI and the Futures of Education

Date and time: Wednesday 22 October 2025, 14:00 to 15:30 (Paris time)

Languages: English and French

Format: Zoom meeting – [Please click here to register](#)

The increasing presence of AI in education has sparked a broad spectrum of viewpoints. It creates both transformative opportunities and complex challenges. Education can steer and foster human agency in a world impacted by AI. Yet, at the same time, AI is reshaping pedagogies, curricula and education governance.

AI in education raises critical questions about ethics, equity, and roles of teachers – whose professional autonomy is being redefined. As debates swirl over AI's disruptive potential, ranging from utopian promises to doomsday scenarios, education systems must navigate here-and-now dilemmas, including the implications of digital surveillance, system and model biases and the potential erosion of human accountability in education decision-making.

Processes and decisions connected to education policy, pedagogy, infrastructure and governance need to be recalibrated to account for AI and ensure this new class of technology fosters learning equity, embeds ethics by design and centres human agency. As AI systems grow more sophisticated, autonomous and extractive, shaping their trajectory is not just a necessity but a shared societal responsibility. Education, as a shared public endeavour, must actively direct AI towards serving the pedagogical, cultural and social needs of diverse communities. This calls for AI-capable education leaders, students and teachers who can not only engage with AI responsibly, but also actively co-create the norms, policies and research agendas that will govern its ethical design and use, both within education and beyond.

These issues were discussed at UNESCO's [Digital Learning Week 2025 \(DLW\)](#) convened in Paris on the theme '[AI and the Future of Education: disruptions, dilemmas and directions](#)' from 2-5 September. The event offered a space for dialogue and action – a global commons – highlighting the polyphony of voices and perspectives surrounding AI in education. It surfaced both enthusiastic and critical viewpoints, fostering constructive debate and encouraging participants to anchor discussions in research and practice. During the event, UNESCO also launched the publication '[AI and the future of education: Disruptions, dilemmas and directions](#)', which brings together 21 think pieces from experts representing diverse disciplines, regions and perspectives.

DLW 2025 aimed to clarify pathways for equitable, ethical and human-driven AI integration in education. Specifically, the event sought to:

- Foster critical reflection and visionary thinking about AI in education
- Encourage multistakeholder dialogue, action and capacity building
- Support the co-creation of resources and tools
- Imagine probable and desirable futures for AI in education through foresight approaches

Key takeaways from Digital Learning Week 2025 included:

- **Philosophical engagement as a lever for action:** Conversations highlighted in keynote speeches, accompanied by think pieces in UNESCO's 2025 publication on *AI and the Future of Education* compellingly argued that we need to engage more consciously with the underlying philosophical questions that influence and shape global and local narratives on AI in education. This foundational work is crucial because it creates spaces to clarify, define, redefine and locate the role of technologies within the purpose and values of education under volatile, complex and fast-changing conditions.
- **Navigating tensions:** The discussions highlighted how AI in education remains a deeply contested and dynamic space. What emerged was the importance of rejecting singular polarized and binary narratives—whether overly utopian or dystopian—and instead embracing nuanced, evidence-informed dialogue and practices that offer rights-based, social justice and equitable alternatives to dominant binaries that focus primarily on the potential and limitations of AI in educational contexts. These conversations on burgeoning tensions need to be anchored in debates on emerging philosophies, and varied approaches to evidence, policy, research and practice.
- **Teachers' irreplaceable role:** The discussions reaffirmed that while AI can support teacher roles and enhance teaching practices under certain conditions, it cannot replace the human relationships and pedagogical judgment that define quality education. Strengthening teachers' individual and collective agency, deepening the teacher-student relationship, and enabling lifelong professional learning and support, emerged as critical practices, consistent with UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Teachers and the Santiago Consensus of the World Teachers Summit held in Chile in August 2025.
- **Governance, safety and ethics:** Across sessions, there was a shared recognition that robust ethical and governance frameworks are needed to protect learners and educators across varied contexts. Issues of data privacy, algorithmic transparency and bias mitigation were recurrent themes, underscoring the urgency of building trustworthy and human-centred AI ecosystems in education.
- **Challenging AI inequalities:** The conversations surfaced growing concerns about deepening existing inequalities and the emergence of new forms of algorithmic inequalities that are underscored by disparities in access to digital infrastructure, data and skills.
- **Local relevance and design dignity:** A recurring theme was the need for contextually-responsive approaches to AI in education that centre on local ownership in the design and creation of AI models. Emerging strategies on design dignity and dignity by design enriched these conversations, drawing on practices in local communities across the world.
- **Global solidarity and the need for a global commons for dialogue and action on AI in education:** The dialogues highlighted that navigating the complexities catalyzed by AI's influence in education requires the creation of spaces for open, critical dialogue, action and global solidarity – a global commons - where the AIED communities can convene and co-create ideas, policies, and actions towards inclusive and equitable AI futures.

UNESCO Chairs and other participants in the Futures Dialogue will engage with and continue the discussions on AI and the futures of education. Following an overview of the week there will be two moderated panels (1) Overall reflections on 'AI and the Future of Education: Disruptions, dilemmas and directions' and a specific focus on (2) Anticipated futures of curriculum, futures of digital citizenship, and futures of open educational resources. Finally, there will be time for open dialogue.

This Futures Dialogue is organized in the run-up to [World Futures Day](#) on 2 December 2025 (register [here](#)), to be hosted in-person by UNESCO HQ, on the theme of 'Anticipation in an Era of Volatility'.

Provisional Agenda

AI and the Futures of Education Wednesday 22 October 2025, 14:00 – 15:30 (Paris time)	
14:00-14:10	Welcome Overview of Digital Learning Week 2025 and Reflections Shafika Isaacs , Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO
14:10-14:35	Panel discussion Segment 1: ‘AI and the Future of Education: Disruptions, dilemmas and directions’ Moderator: Elena Toukan , Research Coordinator, Futures of Education, UNESCO • Wayne Holmes, UNESCO Chairholder in Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Education and Professor of Critical Studies of Artificial Intelligence and Education, University College London, United Kingdom. • Felisa Tibbitts, UNESCO Chairholder in Human Rights and Higher Education and Chair in Human Rights Education, Utrecht University, Netherlands. • Nastassja Pugliese, UNESCO Chairholder in the History of Women in Philosophy, Sciences, and Culture, Professor of Philosophy of Education, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
14:35-15:00	Panel discussion Segment 2: Anticipated futures of Curriculum, Futures of Digital Citizenship, and Futures of Open Educational Resources Moderator: Elena Toukan Research Coordinator, Futures of Education, UNESCO • Nurul Akqmie Binti Badrul Hisham, Research Fellow and UNESCO Chair Manager on Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion, The National University of Malaysia, Malaysia. • Janeth Kigobe, UNESCO Chairholder on Teacher Education and Curriculum and Senior Lecturer, The Open University of Tanzania, United Republic of Tanzania. • Tel Amiel, UNESCO Chairholder in Open Education and Technologies for the Common Good and Adjunct Professor, School of Education, University of Brasilia, Brazil.

15:00-15:20	Collective reflections, open dialogue and ways forward
15:20-15:25	Concluding comments Shafika Isaacs , Chief, Section for Technology and AI in Education, UNESCO
15:25-15:30	Closing remarks and next steps Keith Holmes , Research Coordinator/UNITWIN, Future of Learning and Innovation Division, UNESCO

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