THREE REASONS TO ADDRESS AI IN EDUCATION NOW

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Today, many priorities for improvements to teaching and learning are unmet. Educators seek technology-enhanced approaches addressing these priorities that would be safe, effective, and scalable. Naturally, educators wonder if the rapid advances in technology in everyday lives could help. Like all of us, educators use AI-powered services in their everyday lives, such as voice assistants in their homes; tools that can correct grammar, complete sentences, and write essays; and automated trip planning on their phones. Many educators are actively exploring AI tools as they are newly released to the public1 . Educators see opportunities to use AI-powered capabilities like speech recognition to increase the support available to students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and others who could benefit from greater adaptivity and personalization in digital tools for learning. They are exploring how AI can enable writing or improving lessons, as well as their process for finding, choosing, and adapting material for use in their lessons. Educators are also aware of new risks. Useful, powerful functionality can also be accompanied with new data privacy and security risks. Educators recognize that AI can automatically produce output that is inappropriate or wrong. They are wary that the associations or automations created by AI may amplify unwanted biases. They have noted new ways in which students may represent others' work as their own. They are well-aware of "teachable moments" and pedagogical strategies that a human teacher can address but are undetected or misunderstood by AI models. They worry whether recommendations suggested by an algorithm would be fair. Educators' concerns are manifold. Everyone in education has a responsibility to harness the good to serve educational priorities while also protecting against the dangers that may arise as a result of AI being integrated in edtech.

To develop guidance for edtech, the Department works closely with educational constituents. These constituents include educational leaders—teachers, faculty, support staff, and other educators—researchers; policymakers; advocates and funders; technology developers; community members and organizations; and, above all, learners and their families/caregivers. Recently, through its activities with constituents, the Department noticed a sharp rise in interest and concern about AI. For example, a 2021 field scan found that developers of all kinds of technology systems—for student information, classroom instruction, school logistics, parent teacher communication, and more—expect to add AI capabilities to their systems. Through a series of four listening sessions conducted in June and August 2022 and attended by more than 700 attendees, it became clear that constituents believe that action is required now in order to get ahead of the expected increase of AI in education technology—and they want to roll up their sleeves and start working together. In late 2022 and early 2023, the public became aware of new generative AI chatbots and began to explore how AI could be used to write essays, create lesson plans, produce images, create personalized assignments for students, and more. From public expression in social media, at conferences, and in news media, the Department learned more about risks and benefits of AI-enabled chatbots. And yet this report will not focus on a specific AI tool, service, or announcement, because AI-enabled systems evolve rapidly. Finally, the Department engaged the

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educational policy expertise available internally and in its relationships with AI policy experts to shape the findings and recommendations in this report.

During the listening sessions, constituents articulated three reasons to address AI now: First, AI may enable achieving educational priorities in better ways, at scale, and with lower costs. Addressing varied unfinished learning of students due to the pandemic is a policy priority, and AI may improve the adaptivity of learning resources to students' strengths and needs. Improving teaching jobs is a priority, and via automated assistants or other tools, AI may provide teachers greater support. AI may also enable teachers to extend the support they offer to individual students when they run out of time. Developing resources that are responsive to the knowledge and experiences students bring to their learning—their community and cultural assets—is a priority, and AI may enable greater customizability of curricular resources to meet local needs[1].

As seen in voice assistants, mapping tools, shopping recommendations, essay-writing capabilities, and other familiar applications, AI may enhance educational services. Second, urgency and importance arise through awareness of system-level risks and anxiety about potential future risks. For example, students may become subject to greater surveillance. Some teachers worry that they may be replaced—to the contrary, the Department firmly rejects the idea that AI could replace teachers. Examples of discrimination from algorithmic bias are on the public's mind, such as a voice recognition system that doesn't work as well with regional dialects, or an exam monitoring system that may unfairly identify some groups of students for disciplinary action. Some uses of AI may be infrastructural and invisible, which creates concerns about transparency and trust. AI often arrives in new applications with the aura of magic, but educators and procurement policies require that edtech show efficacy. AI may provide information that appears authentic, but actually is inaccurate or lacking a basis in reality[2]. Of the highest importance, AI brings new risks in addition to the well-known data privacy and data security risks, such as the risk of scaling pattern detectors and automations that result in "algorithmic discrimination" (e.g., systematic unfairness in the learning opportunities or resources recommended to some populations of students). Third, urgency arises because of the scale of possible unintended or unexpected consequences. When AI enables instructional decisions to be automated at scale, educators may discover unwanted consequences. In a simple example, if AI adapts by speeding curricular pace for some students and by slowing the pace for other students (based on incomplete data, poor theories, or biased assumptions about learning), achievement gaps could widen. In some cases, the quality of available data may produce unexpected results. For example, an AI-enabled teacher hiring system might be assumed to be more objective than human-based résumé scoring. Yet, if the AI system relies on poor quality historical data, it might de-prioritize candidates who could bring both diversity and talent to a school's teaching workforce.

Researchers have articulated a range of concepts and frameworks for ethical AI7, as well as for related concepts such as equitable, responsible, and human-centered AI. Listening session participants called for building on these concepts and frameworks but

[1] Maslej, N., Fattorini, L., Brynjolfsson E., Etchemendy, J., Ligett, K., Lyons, T., Manyika, J., Ngo, H., Niebles, J.C., Parli, V., Shoham, Y., Wald, R., Clark, J. and Perrault, R., (2023). The AI index 2023 annual report. Stanford University: AI Index Steering Committee, Institute for Human-Centered AI.

[2] Sharples, M. & Pérez y Pérez, R. (2022). Story machines: How computers have become creative writers. Routledge. ISBN 9780367751951

also recognized the need to do more; participants noted a pressing need for guardrails and guidelines that make educational use of AI advances safe, especially given this accelerating pace of incorporation of AI into mainstream technologies. As policy development takes time, policy makers and educational constituents together need to start now to specify the requirements, disclosures, regulations, and other structures that can shape a positive and safe future for all constituents—especially students and teachers. Policies are urgently needed to implement the following: 1. leverage automation to advance learning outcomes while protecting human decision making and judgment; 2. interrogate the underlying data quality in AI models to ensure fair and unbiased pattern recognition and decision making in educational applications, based on accurate information appropriate to the pedagogical situation; 3. enable examination of how particular AI technologies, as part of larger edtech or educational systems, may increase or undermine equity for students; and 4. take steps to safeguard and advance equity, including providing for human checks and balances and limiting any AI systems and tools that undermine equity[3].

The central role of complex AI models in a technology's detection of patterns and implementation of automation is an important way in which AI-enabled applications, products, and services will be different from conventional edtech. The Blueprint introduces the need for transparency about AI models in terms of disclosure ("notice") and explanation. In education, decision makers will need more than notice—they will need to understand how AI models work in a range of general educational use cases, so they can better anticipate limitations, problems, and risks.

Though there continues to be widespread debate over the pros and cons of deploying AI technology in the field of education, including the concerns about depersonalization and the ethical considerations cited above, there is an emerging consensus that the extraordinary range of current and future benefits will carry the day.

The list of used literature

1. Maslej, N., Fattorini, L., Brynjolfsson E., Etchemendy, J., Ligett, K., Lyons, T., Manyika, J., Ngo, H., Niebles, J.C., Parli, V., Shoham, Y., Wald, R., Clark, J. and Perrault, R., (2023). The AI index 2023 annual report. Stanford University: AI Index Steering Committee, Institute for Human-Centered AI.
2. Sharples, M. & Pérez y Pérez, R. (2022). Story machines: How computers have become creative writers. Routledge. ISBN 9780367751951
3. European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2022). Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in teaching and learning for educators, Publications Office of the European

[3] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2022). Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in teaching and learning for educators, Publications Office of the European