

[Auto-generated transcript. Edits may have been applied for clarity.]
Hey, everybody, welcome to our San José State Center for Innovation and Applied Education Policy.

We are grateful today to be visited by one of our international panelists all the way from Sweden.

Dr. Charlotte von Essen will be speaking with us in our webinar series, Thinking Through AI.

Today will be moderated by myself and Dr. Carrie Holmberg to discuss a really

important and interesting topic that is: The Future of AI-mediated Higher Education:

Global Perspectives from Sweden and Beyond.

And I want to throw out a congratulations for those of you who are up at 9 p.m. somewhere in part of the universe.

We appreciate you very much for hanging in with us late in the evening for you.

But we are here at 12:00 California Pacific Time, and it's going to be a really interesting conversation.

So hang on and get ready to have some fun. Before we get started, we want to say something that we always say,

which is an acknowledgment for where we're situated in the work of AI and deeper learning.

Carrie and I have been in this work for several decades now,

but it's only been recently that we've been able to really update and reintegrate our thinking,

with AI and how it plays a role in the concept of deeper learning.

We know that deeper learning has a lot to do with exploring skills and knowledge and habits of mind,

and we're interested in the ways in which AI-mediated learning environments are helping our students,

potentially to develop new schema that we often call things like critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills.

These are all sorts of approaches that we think are important to college and career readiness.

And because Carrie and I work in the K through 12 research space, we're always trying to figure out what that link is between what's going on in the K through 12 system and what's happening in higher education.

We also are committed to what we call in K through 12 reform, something called ambitious teaching.

That is the teaching that aims at educative experience, as Dewey might have called it,

and invites learners to think through their curriculum in ways that require problem solving,

project- and performance-based orientations, and just general curiosity with the essential questions of any discipline they're studying.

Last but not least, part of the values of our center and what we bring, we think, to the conversation on AI

and deeper learning is a quest for assessment for deeper learning.

That is, what we traditionally called classroom-based assessment, formative assessment, assessment for learning.

We want to link that up in the age of AI to first principles, things we know something about,

but also go back to learning about whether or not dialogic exchange can be preserved inside of an AI-, machine-mediated world.

How do we create that dialogic part of assessment is a part of the ecosystem of any accountability or grading system.

So these are values. These are beliefs. But more importantly we're here to learn.

So today we're here to learn with an expert who's coming to us with her perspective.

We hope that perspective will be resonating for you. And we will have an opportunity at the end of the session to take a look at some of the Q&A.

If you have a burning question that you'd like to share. Okay.

Now I'm going to hand it over to my colleague, Dr. Carrie Holmberg. And it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Charlotte von Essen.

Dr. von Essen is the pedagogical and digital development lead at the Stockholm School of Economics,

where she shapes the future of business education through strategic innovation and faculty support,

Edtech, and AI-enhanced pedagogy. With a background spanning executive education, edtech leadership and curriculum strategy, Charlotte brings a sharp,

systems level lens to how institutions can deliver education that is human-centered, intellectually rigorous, and technologically extended.

Dr. von Essen maintains an active presence on social media platforms such as LinkedIn,

including the AI and Education Think Further Initiative, and is a major influencer on responsible approaches to AI in higher education.

We're so glad to have you with us today, Charlotte. Thank you. Thank you.

And these five questions will anchor our conversation today.

Number one, you often use LinkedIn to communicate essential questions facing AI-mediated teaching and learning.

What is your sense of how social media can be used or abused to help university faculty better engage with AI?

Second, what trends around AI and higher education are you most optimistic about?

Which trends are you concerned about these days? Three.

Are you noticing variations in international perspectives, for example, between Scandinavian countries and other parts of the world?

Fourth, let's talk about Norway's move to limit AI in the K-12 classroom for those 13 years of age and younger.

As someone who works upstream in higher education,

what do you see as opportunities and or challenges with managing AI exposure in primary and tertiary educational settings?

And finally, as a faculty member at the School of Economics with a global business orientation,

what is the future of AI in education that we cannot yet see on the horizon?

Let's get out our crystal balls. Dr. Van Essen, we're going to use a moderated flow approach to these questions.

There's a lot of them. So why don't we just take one at a time and let's go ahead and just kick off with the first one.

As you'll notice here, I put up one of your LinkedIn postings,

which I find to be incredibly interesting and helpful to orient me to all the things that are going on.

And so anyone who's not yet aware, who wants an opportunity to learn more about what Dr. Van Essen is doing in this space, please take a look.

But the question sort of helps to motivate you're communicating to us.

Tell us a little bit more about how that's working for you. Sure.

So I've actually only been really writing on LinkedIn for about a year.

And about a year ago, I realized that the way that people were communicating their value in the job market had changed.

And not to say that the old CV was, you know, no longer has its role,

but the idea that you kind of have your professional experience just on two sides of a piece of paper that you occasionally update seemed a bit,

a little antiquated, shall we say. So I guess I kind of thought, okay, I want to be part of this conversation.

I've started to share my views

only on LinkedIn. I'm not on any other platforms. In some ways, that kind of mirrors what our own students are going through, right?

That we're moving more from like end product, you know, fixed-end product assessments to like more of a process-based approach.

And I kind of wanted to embrace this reflective style, but I also wanted to be helpful to people.

And so I started posting, you know, quite often,

just simple research summaries or things that I've been doing in my job, reflections, things I've learned, things I've heard from students,

things I've heard from other educators, and to try and see this as like an evolving space because, you know,

nobody needs me to tell them that this is a very traditionally polarized debate around AI in education.

It brings up some very strong opinions from different quarters of our discipline.

So I guess I wanted to try and craft a voice that would somehow navigate the, like the realities of this.

You know, we're all in it. We're in the thick of it. And yeah, rather than taking a sort of ideological perspective to actually think about,

you know, what we're actually seeing on the ground felt very like a good approach.

And it seems to have, it seems to have resonated with quite a lot of people

and hopefully provided some value along the way and helped other people have their conversations.

You know, just to kind of even if it just moves a little conversation on just half a step, I see that as like a good thing for our community.

And then, you know, I mean, maybe it's also worth saying that AI is really changing social media as well.

As a distribution platform. As a solution system.

So the idea, you know, you know, they, they want people to remain human to,

to actually post things that are real, that aren't just, you know, I'm sure everybody's probably in this room,

is familiar with like a lot of content on social media now, not being real, being a lot of AI slop out there, but, you know, comments not being real.

You know, we're entering this space,

which doesn't it really feels like we actually have to hold on to it and try and bring it back to something that actually can,

you know, resonate with people. So yeah, we're, you know, it's an interesting time to use social media.

But then I guess the wider question is, where do we have our conversations? You know, these are big topics like what's the future of education?

What should we teach students? Where are we having these conversations? And, you know, obviously we have them in the research.

We have them in conferences. We have them in our networks. But it makes sense to complement that with social media as well.

You know, it's really interesting.

When Carrie and I worked on our first two books, our traditional approach to writing a book would obviously be go to the library.

Well, who went to the library?

Go to the databases that are curated by the library, and do your literature review and take your own professional knowledge,

which usually was in the form of what have other people said in peer reviewed articles, or what are some of the major research findings for your field?

Typically, again, going into pretty static data sources.

This last book on AI and deeper learning, Carrie, I think you were surprised when you heard me say,

"We got to get into LinkedIn and see what people are saying there about AI,"

not just what academics are saying, But even what business and bots are saying?

Just to find out what the ecosystems of talk are.

I was surprised, Brent, by you saying that. And I think it was more a reflection of my ignorance about what was happening on LinkedIn.

I didn't, hadn't quite yet experienced it as a place where kind of cutting edge dialog,

dialog and just, I don't know, techniques to handle this new reality were unfolding on the daily. So.

Yeah. So, so that's on me because it was the right thing to suggest in my opinion.

Well, we met Charlotte through this, as well as a lot of other fellow travelers.

And I would say also, Charlotte, what I've noticed over the last year is that certain people are finding each other in

the globe that would not have found each other through traditional conference venues, because there's a lot of cross-disciplinary talk.

People come in with a certain identity if they have something to sell. But if they're actually trying to query and talk like you do:

"Nine Ways AI Adoption Is Failing in Higher Education"-- I can't think of a better

provocation to get me motivated to join with my perspective on what you're seeing.

So I think that in that sense, the proof concept here is it creates, as you said, and another avenue of dialog.

But AI slop bots and a lot of other sell, sell, sell things that are happening,

you can pretty quickly pick through those and still find the scholars and the leaders who are interested in the tough questions.

So I invite everybody to figure out what their relationship is to social media at some point.

But for now, let's go to really what today is about. What trends around AI and higher education are you most optimistic about, Charlotte?

And you know, which trends are you also concerned about these days? Yeah.

So I work in a business school and I sort of see this like a classic two by two.

So we've got this, you know, the opportunities and the challenges for both faculty and students.

And if we just take faculty for one, you know, one trend that I'm really seeing now, we're four years into this,

and I think there's a lot of AI fatigue out there, particularly in the faculty community.

You know, they are really fed up with the conversation just being...going round and round on AI and

feeling quite pressured, I think, to work this out and sometimes not with a lot of support.

Like, I get a lot of emails and direct messages from people all around the world saying,

"We don't have people like you in our institution," you know, I know, "I feel like I'm falling behind."

"I'm worried that we're not going to be able to keep up with our, you know, advancing our pedagogies to keep up with this new and changing world."

So, I think that that the anxiety that it's causing is certainly a trend

That's concerning.

But on the brighter side, I definitely see the work that we've done at the Stockholm School of Economics in the last year,

which has been very much around supporting a culture, a supportive culture for faculty to experiment,

to innovate, to try out new ways of working,

try out new pedagogical approaches and new assessments to get support where they

when they've got questions that they can come and have 1 to 1 consultations. I run something called an AI Breakfast Club every Friday, 8:30.

It's 30 minutes. If people just turn up, it's like a radio show.

I just, there's no slides. It's just me demoing something really simple, like, "Look, you could build this or you can,

"try this or try this prompt, or have you seen how this model has changed?"

Or "Here's what's in the news." And I think that is just reassuring for people.

It's not even...it's not training as such. It's more just feeling that they know,

get a better sense of where that frontier is.

And then what we've seen, I think, is that that's just created this sort of safe ground that people can then go and maybe

try to to try new things.

And one area that I'm kind of really like I want to support faculty with is around their actual, like the system of their teaching

because teaching is, it's a it's an intense labor, it's a really existentially challenging and interesting profession.

But there's so much work around it that I think could be supported by AI,

never at the cost of of educated judgment or expertise or kind of trying to create some kind of cheaper alternative to education,

but just simply to be able to allow them to work in a way that maybe is just smoother, maybe

or just kind of like we can be more creative with the kind of tools that we create.

So I see us moving...You know, a lot of the faculty I work with, you know,

use AI to prompt and use it in that kind of chat, engage that kind of back and forth iterative chat.

But I think we see now more like, "Okay, how do I set this whole thing up so it supports me?"

So I design the system that supports my teaching and my course that I that I'm doing.

Like how do I make sure that I capture my instructional voice?

So whenever I draft anything it already comes out like...

it gets to me to a higher level that I can then check it off or, um, you know, how do I prep for class?

How do...you know...everybody preps for class, right?

This is something you have to do and everybody has to do it in that kind of 24 hour period before they go into class.

And how can AI maybe give me a really nice way to bring me up to speed so I can make sure that I use my time well?

You know, faculty all have these different...

That's what I love about my job. All faculty have their differences. Some are amazing at lecturing...

Some, some just have that personality. Some can give the most incredible feedback...

Some are fantastic at course design. And I think each...AI is just, you know, it's a general purpose technology.

It can help in all of these different ways.

It's us figuring out how we should do that and having a sounding board to be able to say, "Hey, I've got this idea, maybe it'll work."

"Can I try it out? What could we do?" That's very beneficial, I think.

So lots of, you know, opportunities there, I think, to support faculty.

And then the knock-on effect will be, we hope, better educational experiences for students.

You know downstream they could have more organized courses, more better resources, better pedagogically-grounded courses.

The opportunities here, I think are really great.

You know, one thing that sort of frustrates me a little bit is when I see a lot of the resources out there for faculty.

So much of it is so generic and kind of, you know, standardized prompts.

But if you use AI by saying, "Hey, I want to check the constructive alignment of my course. Here's Biggs's theory of constructive alignment...."

And, you know, this is one thing that I do for the course that I teach and do a full review of my learning objectives.

Do my assessments really meet what I want, what I want it to do? And then I can use it as that way to just kind of get a second opinion and think

"Oh, actually, learning objective two isn't really properly assessed in that way."

"Maybe I need to make a change next, you know, next time I deliver that course."

So these are kind of some, some examples, I think of the things that I'm, that I'm, that I'm working on.

But of course, you know, the challenges remain.

You know, the dangers that we're... in a very dangerous ground with students when we're having to teach them how to use, or not use, AI.

You know, the risks, the risks to their learning. We know the emotional and cognitive risks are real.

And we have to sort of work through that. We simply have to work through that.

There is no way to, to avoid it now. It's here.

The world has changed. We're in a new educational reality. And yeah, I guess we're in that in the sort of muddy, sticky world.

Let's work it out together kind of phase. At least here, at least where I work.

You know, there's a lot of ways to go right now, but I'm going to stick with faculty expertise,

faculty pedagogical content knowledge, faculty, dispositions towards improving their practice.

I had the great fortune in previous parts of my life to go to work as a student, I should say to study at two business schools,

one at Columbia University, and the other one was at Berkeley, at the Haas Business School.

And I know you basically work in a school of economics, and probably interface a lot with people who are very passionate about teaching students,

how to operate in the world in ways that can be seen as players in the

system, in the global system.

So I always found that the business schools were very forward facing towards new tech, new ideas about innovation, very excited about

getting students to do things that we were trying to get them to do over in the Ed school, but they were already doing it in the business school.

So I've always been a little bit less depressed about the possibilities for certain faculty to really embrace,

Charlotte, what you're describing at your particular university. I wonder if we're both not a little bit, though

biased in the sense that, I would be looking at from an Ed school, School of Education background,

You might be looking at more of a business or economics background, but there are so many other parts of higher education,

aren't there, in our major universities, there are many different colleges, many different departments, many different faculties.

And I just wonder if we have a good way of approaching folks in higher education across all those different areas?

You know, what is the through line for everybody in higher ed?

Is it course design? Is it new ways of delivering instruction?

Is it new project-based activities with students with AI that they would have never done previously?

Do you have a sense in the global environment?

Are there other faculties and other disciplines besides business and education that are really playing hard in these spaces with AI?

I think we see it more in the STEM subjects. Ironically,

I feel that the arts and humanities--and I've got my PhD is in literature

so, you know, I feel like this is, I know these departments and they have such an important role to play--

but they are quite reticent around it, and I think they are quite worried because it really does affect what they do.

They're often very heavily dependent on essays and take home papers.

AI really is flooding those kind of assessments.

And I don't think, I think there's a lot of schools where it is very much based on faculties or

or departments or it's kind of been left up to people to go...

It's like, "Go figure it out." You know, this is "Work it out in your subject area."

And there's a real question there about, well, you know, bottom up or top down?

You know, because students come with questions like, "Well, what can I do?"

You know, is this, you know, is it okay to use AI on this assessment? What should I do?

How does it affect my learning? And to some extent, there does need to be a joined up response to that, I think.

I think we owe it to them. That there is a sort of coherent, joined up response.

But it's a very good question. Yeah. How do? How do we get? Maybe...

Maybe we won't get that consistency across huge schools.

Maybe that's not realistic.

But yeah we might just go to the least common denominator and start making policies on plagiarism and AI detection, which seems to be a trend,

rather than really ask the harder questions,

which are what would it mean to support faculty in their own disciplines to research what is productive?

What is innovative? What is useful, what is, you might even say, a standard of excellence in my field if you're using AI?

But it's early days. It's early days. All right. So let's go ahead and talk a little bit about...Carrie?

Yeah. This one, about different perspectives. Charlotte, are you noticing variations within or intra and inter international

perspectives,

for example, between Scandinavian countries and other parts of the world?

Yeah, I do keep an eye on what other countries are doing at that national level,

because it is so interesting to see where national level initiatives match with universities.

You know, how do those two things play out at something as big and as important as AI?

And we've seen, you know, in the press, you know, countries like Latvia,

you know, lean big into AI in education through all parts of the education system.

China is often considered very forward leaning when it comes to this.

But I think when you dig deeper into into some of these policies, sometimes they are, you know, you have to look a little bit under the hype.

I think people are aware that if they go to they lean in too much to this,

there could be, there could be damage to be done with serious damage to to learning if, if it's not handled well.

So I certainly see I see that

policies coming out of China that are a little bit more measured and are kind of thinking about what's the right,

right role that AI should play in different parts. And maybe we should look underneath some of those headlines.

But in Scandinavia, we--we're in Stockholm here--

we are in the epicenter of AI entrepreneurship.

We have some of the biggest AI tech companies that didn't exist a couple of years ago.

And we are quite well connected with that ecosystem as well.

So we see that we're very we see the industry need, I think, in a way

that maybe

other schools and other faculties maybe, we see where our graduates are, got the kind of jobs that they're landing.

And AI is part of that reality now. So we, you know, we can't ignore that.

And we can't face a situation where they basically either don't have AI skills

or don't have the fundamental cognitive skills to be able to work without AI.

So we're trying to manage both on both sides.

And I think the other Scandinavian countries as well are trying to, you know, tread this fine line between

where do we where do we integrate it into our programs and where do we actually think we

should place additional focus on other skills and abilities that are non-technical,

but are just as important, who are maybe going to be even more important in the future. In higher education

there's a lot of talk around, they have different names: durable skills, soft skills, human skills.

But really they're talking about sort of maybe nonacademic, not nonacademic, but

non nontraditional academic kind of skills that, that maybe AI can, can do now.

So where do we place that focus? So it's really it's changing all the time, right?

Like every week, you know, there's new news about a different country taking a different stance.

Or maybe they've signed, some countries have signed national deals with AI providers.

But these are quite controversial. So yeah, we're going to see how this plays out

in a very interesting way. It's very hard to separate out who's

talking.

In our research on our book, we looked at UNESCO. We looked at the OECD reports.

We did our best to understand what the European Union was focusing on.

And again, as you said, changing month by month and in some sense, reactive, at this point.

But that variation is natural

I think whenever you have what we call a paradigm shift. In fact, the anomalies that we're witnessing now inside of education,

whether you believe in the hype or you don't, whether you're committed to the project or you're not.

The fact of the matter is, the tech has shifted basic foundational concepts of how we operate and provide education.

And so you look at the Scandinavian, you look at the European Union, in the US,

it's stunning. If you try to do a study of the 50 states, what are their AI adoption policies?

Take California, take Michigan, take Texas, take Florida.

Take any of the bellwether large states and ask yourself, what are they doing to, in the K through 12 space,

move forward something called AI policy? Of course when you step up out of K through 12, now you're up in the higher ed. world.

And that's pretty unregulated. That's the whole point of it, right?

Academic freedom, among other principles, would say we don't want state regulation of what your university does or what our university does.

So it's a bit of a fragmented space and trending seems hard to do in forecasting.

But I would ask you this because we're going to move to it in a minute.

Is there anyone in your experience at your university and or in the universities like

yours that are calling for less AI preparation for the incoming class of freshmen?

Like they, "We don't want them to know about that."

"We want them to not pay attention to that for a year, and then at some point in the curriculum will tell them about it."

Or is there kind of a baseline assumption that they're going to come in as freshmen and ready or in this case,

you know, postgraduate to ready to work with these tools?

No, I think there's a recognition that when they're coming in now, it's really varied.

Maybe they may have some AI literacy, some AI skills.

They've got some exposure at least. But it's going to be really, you know, dependent.

And it depends on things like their financial access to these tools.

Students are paying for them themselves in a lot of cases.

And we haven't got to the point, at least in Sweden, I think, where, you know, that has been standardized at that the K-12 level.

And I think that's not where we've got to yet.

And therefore the universities are struggling to say, well, you know, the students who come from this school, maybe they've got a bit more.

And then, you know, maybe these students could afford those tools so they, they know a bit more and then even, even so what does that really mean?

What do we really assess as the baseline? Like how do we assess the baseline?

You know, do we can we even say that just because you use an AI, you can use it functionally?

You can use it technically. Does it mean that you can use it to extend your thinking to... you can use it to challenge your thinking....

Or are you just using it to shortcut and to basically as a productivity tool.

We don't really assess students as they come in.

So I think we've we're kind of working in the dark. You know, it's fascinating because you said accessibility.

That's what we heard at least. Carrie and I wrote a chapter on accessibility in our book.

And accessibility is not merely the tools that are used to make learning more accessible to students.

There's also something about the digital divide and the growing new sense

among some of us who think about the implications of what you just described.

The variations in high schools will determine quite a bit about who has that leg up or leg down,

however you want to see it, going into a competitive university environment.

So, you know, digital divides are have always been a question of technology adoption and the

age of AI when you have to pay for tiered programing to get tiered services

it's only going to accelerate as they have to no longer capitalize the companies, but actually return profit to them as a market,

not to one company, not to that company or this company, but to the marketplace in general, which are driven mostly right now by stock valuations.

So it's like

at what point does it even get harder to get the free version and hence push governments and schools to negotiate contracts that are affordable,

quote unquote. Have you seen a difference between what goes on in the university classroom and what goes on at home?

In other words, do people who have more capital and resources at home tend to have no problem navigating this world,

whereas the people who come to the university with less of those resources really have to rely on what the university provides for AI.

Because I think that's another question. How do we build access that's actually sustainable if we're going to engage in reform?

Yeah, and we have we have struggles with this. We offer tools, free tools to all of our students,

and yet we find that a lot of them don't want to use the tools provided institutionally because there is a fear of surveillance.

There is a fear that there's still this kind of stigma around using it that somehow that we can see the back end,

we can read their chats, and people therefore move this off...

They move their interactions into things that they pay for, which, you know, obviously has the, the equity issue,

but it also has a security and data issue.

You know, the reason why one of the main reasons we provide institutional tools is because they reach our security and data standards.

And therefore, you know, that that is a safe place to do it. And we've got to we know that we have to make that case with them.

And but, you know, the fear and the fear of surveillance just hovers over everything that you do.

It's a very strange interaction. Right? Irony.

Paradox. Contradiction. There's a reason why we wrote a chapter on that as well.

One of the funniest things about this space, Charlotte, that we've been able to determine whether you're in K through 12 or higher ed,

is everything you think you want to do with this, has a cost, has a trade off.

And it can turn out that by doing the right thing, you end up doing the wrong thing.

Or if you do the wrong thing, it turns out that you're the right thing.

So I'll just leave it at that and say, here's a great example of a segue into that.

Let's talk about Norway, because Norway, at least on the surface of

the media reports that I've been able to discern,
is saying something about developmentally appropriate reform,
and that AI, as a part of the education reform system,
has to always be built on a sense of what human development, child
development and cognitive development require.

And so Norway has sort of put its fingers up and said, no, stop, halt.

Now we know that in Australia that this has been done with social
media.

But apparently in Norway, this has to do with AI and using it as a
planning tool,

an instructional tool, an assessment tool, any of those kinds of uses.

So, what's your sense of that in terms of a policy where if you're
working upstream in university

admissions and you know that you have a group of students who've been
kind of held back in a way,

maybe rightly so, what's the trade off that people are going to have
to make?

How are they going to manage

what they're gaining from this kind of a policy and what they're
losing from this kind of a policy going forward?

What do you think? I think it's going to be really again.

Yeah, again, as you say, messy because I don't...we have yet to find
out whether or not this will result in them having stronger
foundational skills,

maybe or not, or whether or not actually the ones who,

you know, have had some AI integrated into their curriculum have been
able to get those

foundational skills and then being able to move on and kind of maybe
do some of,

Bloom's higher, higher taxonomy. I have a ten year old in the in a
neighboring country

So, I'm watching this news unfold.

And it's really interesting because, you know, my daughter came home one day and said, "Mama, we learned about AI today."

And I said, "Oh, that's really interesting." And then she showed me her... I have it here, actually.

It's like she has her...She brought her picture and then she put it into a model and she wanted to apply like a little filter to it.

And then she had to evaluate it. And in a really simple way, she had like a little AI workflow.

Right? She had a little process. And I said, "Were you happy with the outcome?"

And she said, "Yeah, but you know, it changed this and that and I didn't like it."

And, you know, so she had those evaluative skills to be able to do this on a very simple level.

And I was both worried and also like impressed. I was I literally had this very like conflicted response because in some ways I don't really want my daughter to be to have too much of a technologically-enhanced education too young.

I want her to be out playing in the park and actually like playing and just trying stuff out and doing things.

But at the same time I thought, well, you know, she has learned something here.

She's learned this little kind of evaluative model, even on her own, her own work.

And then also there are ethical implications because that is her student data that they've put somewhere,

you know, I mean, even if it's just a little painting!

So yeah, it brings up so it's very personal and it's it brings up a lot of questions.

And then you think, well, she's nine, you know, she's going to go to university in ten years time.

She's going to be hitting, you know, how different is her experience

going to be?

How much, you know, compared to, say, a child who might have been held back from having access to those tools?

One thing I would add is that we do know from a lot of data that banning tools doesn't mean they won't have access.

So so a little part of me is also thinking, will there be that much difference in the end?

Will they will they have somehow found a way to get access to these tools

even if they don't have them at school, they'll have them at home. Their parents will use them.

Their siblings at university will use them. Like, you know, we can't you know, you turn on Google now, the first thing you get is an AI answer.

You're going to turn every word... you've got AI, it's literally integrated into everything.

It's like that annoying paperclip from Microsoft back in the 90s. You know, you have to like... I remember that paperclip.

Yeah, that little thing that came up on your screen? That's right. So, so, so it's pervasive.

And as you say, it's a paradigm shift. And to be able to shield or sort of like, like block people off from that.

I understand the sentiment and I understand the pedagogy. Actually, I understand the need to say, hey, I want you to learn your times tables.

I want you to learn handwriting. I want you to learn how to read a physical book.

I want I understand this and I empathize with this, but I also know that

we're in this this radically technologically-mediated world now and that we that it's going to be very hard.

So, Charlotte, I thank you for sharing about your daughter and her use at school of AI and just what's happening,

as you said, in a neighboring Scandinavian country.

And I'm trying to think

how I'm trying to determine your beliefs about... I hear some skepticism about how these policies really play out on the ground that you

they can't protect kids who are under age 13 from having access to AI.

and then, I don't know, nor would you necessarily want that?

But I am curious about like in a Different World where you could have influence, where you could make policies for larger populations.

Let's not even call them countries. Let's just call them larger populations.

Like you, you were reaching, you know, parents of kids of a certain age.

Would you try to exercise it for the good of humanity and developing?

I mean, we're in such a changing time as you just described. Yeah, I would like to see it a bit like they do start to do some digital literacy.

You know, even in a basic sense, like when they, when they do their first ever,

like, oh, we've learned how to start a word document and write it and save the file.

And, just I really believe in the the power of us shaping educational experiences.

So it's not like the Wild West so that our students in K-12 basically don't just say,

"Hey, you know, AI is not something that's part of our system." So go, you know, just pretend it doesn't exist.

I would rather see staggered, scaffolded, sensible, critical integration into what they do so they can see the difference,

and that then they can have the confidence to know they can do things with or without AI.

That's what I think is for me, the like, the North Star with this, which is like, that they can they can work on their own,

but then they know when they can use that tool to basically to go further or to challenge or to, to go deeper.

So yeah, it's, it's, it is coming down to the judgment of when, when these tools are and aren't appropriate.

I think... that's a pedagogical decision. Yeah.

Let me just say that I think we know something about theories of education. We spend a lot of time discussing them in our work.

If you start with constructivism, because many people like to start there,

or you want to go to behaviorism, which I think also now has to be looked at... cognitivism.

These are three big "isms" in the world of 100 years of research, with lots of theory and in some cases, really good empirical study.

In other cases, not as much. But what you find is the theory of learning will drive in a lot of ways what your understanding of a good outcome is.

And I think one of the things I'm noticing in these policies developed by nation states, including China, Norway, the US, we don't have one at all.

But let's assume that in some future we do.

You would still want to know what was the developmental theory that would even allow you to believe that introducing

limited brainstorming ChatGPT activities in second grade is cognitively disabling versus introducing a worksheet.

Yeah. There are plenty of non-digital tools that we know about that are behaviorist in

orientation and have generally been about regulating and managing time in classrooms,

and have had very little to do with cognitive demand of certainly higher-order thinking.

And so, again, if we're going to be honest about looking at where the challenges are,

even for with AI or without AI, we're still back to the fundamental question: who is the learner?

How do they learn what's appropriate development? When? How do we know?

And I think that's ahead of us.

There hasn't been a whole lot of research done because the paradigm shift can't even allow for stabilizing the phenomena.

There's not enough stable stability to the phenomena to say, let's study it for five years.

So a lot of papers coming out, a lot of claims being made.

But I think we should be healthily skeptical about what we really know about developmentally appropriate uses...

...yet. That doesn't mean we should just open the doors. It just means: let's do that research.

That gets us to our next question in a way, because it's going to be time to get out our crystal ball.

I think at some point. As a faculty member at the School of Economics with a global orientation

Right? What do you sort of see for the future of AI in education in your particular working space?

And let's just, you know, brainstorm together, let's play, let's think.

And we'll take also a look at some of the questions that may be in the Q&A. In the meantime, Charlotte, it's yours to think about.

What are we looking at going forward here?

So when I look back at the changes that we've been through in recent years, the rise of the MOOCs,

learning management systems, online degree programs, a lot of these changes,

we had the luxury of kind of deciding whether or not it was kind of something we wanted to go into,

or we could do it at our own pace and and we could not do it on our own terms, with our own, our own systems and this change is very different.

This is one that's been like in like enforced on us.

And we're having to respond to it. And it's really unraveling a lot of the mechanisms that we work with

even in business school, which obviously probably is a bit more forward leaning when it comes to AI.

So I think we will see redesign of programs.

It's one thing we're looking at is a real interrogation of our intended learning outcomes on our programs.

So are they fit for for the world?

Are we preparing graduates with the right capabilities for the the world that they're going to enter?

And that is very that's critical to our, to to what we do because we don't want to send graduates out there,

who are not, who don't have the right skills, whether they be AI or not.

So I think we're going to see programs where there will be more AI integration, more AI literacy, but also more

we have already we have AI in entrepreneurship courses,

AI in finance... And because a lot of industry is being shaped by AI and we've obviously, you know, feed that back into our education that we provide.

But I also see a huge impact on the executive education space.

Right? Because look, think of all the people who are in the workplace now.

I've had no formal training in AI. Everything is just kind of, you know, been trial and error from me.

And I'm sure I've got gaps in my, in my knowledge, but there's going to be a big demand in that, in that sector I think, for upskilling.

Again, both. Yes. Some technical skills of course, they change all the time anyway.

So, are we going to teach things that are actually a bit more robust?

They're going to last a bit longer?

Rather than just being able to bump this tool or change that tool or tweak with this button and kind of do that functional work,

but actually being able to have this element of teaching people how to learn better, right?

I've been reading a lot of literature recently about educatability.

And there's like an ultimate skill. And to some extent, it isn't new.

You know, always the ability to learn is just this super power, isn't it?

If you can learn well, you're going to be, you're kind of going to be able to be more resilient whatever change will come.

So I think we're going to see, I think we're going to see changes to what we teach and how we teach.

If I was going to summarize it in a neat way. Since we all have our crystal ball, Carrie, I'll

defer to you in a minute with your crystal ball observation or prediction, but here's mine, and it comes straight out of the Atlantic.

July 8th, 2026, with the catchy title "The End of Reading is Here."

So if I was to pull up my crystal ball,

I would say that the trending downwards on reading as we have known it for the generations that have come before the age of AI,

is in pointing the direction that the Atlantic is somewhat alarmistly claiming,

and that is that we have been moving more and more from a world of text as something to be encountered in any kind of a productive struggle, to text

to be synthesized and summarized at my fingertips instantaneously,

to now text that will be read by other bots for me to tell me whether I should even bother to read the primary text.

So I think when I think about reading, reading literacy has been a great debate.

There's something called "The Reading Wars" in K through 12 reform.

It's a story of what kind of best approaches to reading will help to increase reading literacy.

It's almost as if those two claims are about whether we're doing phonics or whether we're doing whole language,

have been mooted by the paradigm shift of AI in mediated spaces in education, because it won't really matter much the method.

What's going to matter, I think more and more is whether people bother to read,

reread or slow down to read much of anything that would have been called a primary source in a previous generation.

So for me, the most interesting thing about talking about when you mentioned, like, you know, times tables, let's call that numeracy.

And then we think about like literacy and reading or oral communication and all the ways you could define literacies.

One area that is under siege, and it is not because of AI.

That would be a huge misconception.

AI has only accelerated a trend that began with social media and with other forms of synthesizing and summarizing digital technologies.

So I don't know how you read Shakespeare anymore.

I don't know how you read *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

I don't know how you even read James Baldwin. Because you're in a world now

--and this is why the humanities people may be resisting, as we said earlier, more than we've imagined--I think, because for good reason

they sense that their bread and butter, what they've tried to communicate to young people as valuable,

--that is the act of reading and reading consistently, deeply, productively-- is gone.

How do you encounter literature? How do you even encounter the biggest, most important books that you think everyone should read?

So I'm going to say that my crystal ball, that reading like *The Atlantic* had said,

is slowly dying in the way that an adaptation and selection dynamics in the natural world we're now seeing

in the social world, certain practices are just becoming, no longer useful in the way they once were.

That was my long-winded prophecy. I hope I'm wrong in every way.

Carrie, your turn. Yeah, I have a I have a rather short one.

And I predict that in the near term, the arguments about what is developmentally appropriate for children and adults,

their use will heat up and that different bodies, there will be recommendations, kind of like the warning label

that's on, cigarettes or junk food or, I don't know,

there's going to be a massive uptaking of this urgency to understand

developmentally what AI use does to young brains and therefore the need to protect them.

So I predict we will therefore also see some interesting coalitions come together in that, in that effort.

So that's my prediction. We do have Q&A, a couple of Q&A questions.

Go ahead. Why don't you read them for us? Since the theme is about higher education today, one of our questions is:

Could the widespread use of AI change the value employers place on a college degree?

If so, how should universities respond? Yeah, a big question, and it's such a critical one.

And we know that this is on students' minds, right? You know, they are deeply anxious to learn that they're learning AI

and that AI is taking their jobs. And they're asking whether their degrees are preparing them, right for the for the world.

But I take comfort from, I was reading today about

one commentator talking about how for all the talk of the threat to sort of knowledge work for AI presents,

we may actually see the requirement for knowledge work to go up.

Paradoxically, we might see it go up because

Now it's all you know, it is about quality. It is about what you can bring?

It's about your own, you know,

your own particular angle and slant and perspective on things that you can bring and that this can just allow us to go further,

be more creative, find better solutions, and that this is rich and important knowledge work,

and that this will require many of the fundamental skills.

We've always been really good at teaching in higher education. So I would like, I think that that gives me a kernel of hope, I think,

to think that actually we will do what we've always done and we will do and we will do it better.

Thank you. Do we have another question in the Q&A?

We do, we do. Let me read it. Here it is. If AI can personalize education for every student,

should traditional grading systems still exist?

I mean, this one is again, another really good question, because I actually went to a webinar only last week on this topic,

and somebody started off in this webinar, they had a picture of this beautiful like plate of food.

And they said, in the middle there's this little cup and it represents poison.

And this is representing our grading system in our system.

This is what this person that it was just a provocation to get kind of people talking about whether or not we still have a role for grades anymore,

when, you know, we already did, the data shows that the great grades are coming together, right?

You know, there's because of the way that people are using AI tools, there's less differentiation in our grading system, we're seeing this

kind of conflating of all the grades.

So where I work, they're not going anywhere. I don't think so.

I don't think anytime soon.

But yeah, that conversation is coming, and people are having that conversation in a way that they would never have five years ago.

Charlotte, I have to say that one of the great joys for Carrie and I and others who work in assessment reform over the last 30 years in K through 12,

is that now our higher education faculty are asking the questions that we've been asking for 30 years.

There is a long, long set of stories that people could get informed about regarding approaches, traditional grading,

nontraditional grading, performance-based assessment versus, let's say, great paper and pencil.

You know, all this. What I find interesting, having gone to a small college in California called UC Santa Cruz in the 1980s,

was that we had a very revolutionary and in many ways considered to be absolutely absurd grading system.

That is, we have what we call the pass/fail narrative evaluation system.

That is, it was not interesting whether you had an A minus or a B+ or a C.

What mattered was the evaluation that came from your faculty about the work you had produced and the performance you had engaged in during class time.

So these could be anywhere from one paragraph to four paragraphs per class.

Your transcript was quite thick. This is the days before even laptops.

It was a quite onerous thing to ask of the university faculty, and it was very difficult to understand by outsiders because outsiders were like, "What?"

You don't have a grade point average? I don't understand what's going on here." I mentioned this to make a point.

There's no reason we couldn't go back to narrative evaluations now, with AI and digital technologies that would allow professors to customize and radically rethink how they evaluate their students.

In fact, if anything, now we're better positioned than we ever were in the 1970s and 80s to go into a reform that says,

"I'm going to personalize this assessment." The challenge would still remain, and this is where we see the backward pressure on grade point averages.

The problem would be how do we discern and differentiate at the upper levels of performance,

who were hiring, who were pushing forward into post-graduate work or whatever?

And so even if we have the tech to do it, and we now could do it better than we ever did it before to "personalize" quote unquote assessment,

we're still left with the signal function, which is I don't care what your experience was or what your professor really thinks about you.

What I want to know is whether or not you beat out five other universities in terms of your GPA,

so that I can make a decision about whether you're the employee I want. That's the old model of thinking.

If we're going to update that model of thinking, we're going to have to have a tech solution,

but also a reframing of what we call evaluation and assessment.

And I think it's very hard to get higher ed to move in that direction, as it has been for 30 to 40 years in K through 12.

So good luck to everybody who thinks we're going to change to personalized assessment.

But I would be willing to work on any research project where someone wants to figure that out with AI,

because I think it's scalable in a way that the other systems weren't. That's my \$0.02 on it.

Carrie, do you have anything to say about personalized assessment since you work in this field, too?

Well, my angle into it is that I currently teach pre-service teachers.

They will soon be entering their student teaching assignments.

They're eager to make a difference in the world in teaching today's youth.

That said, right. They have they're very wildly ambitious, great ideas,

and yet their own educations on the whole have been so traditional and uncreative that they're there...

They they find themselves in an interesting place.

So on the one hand, they're perched to make a huge difference and the other, they're going to need help.

They can't do it all by themselves. Because they currently expressed to me some very traditional non-progressive ideas about grading:

why it happens, what it's for, who needs it, that they're going to do it.

And, I'm just being, I'm just being frank.

I'm super hopeful that the side that is ambitious and creative and idealistic and wants to make a difference

is going to win out and that they don't get crushed by the system that's out there.

I think the same could be said for higher ed, wouldn't you agree, Charlotte?

There's people with very different conceptions of grading and there's people who want to look for progressive alternatives.

We need to find the people we can help and support, and the way we can do that is by listening to voices like Dr. Charlotte von Essen's,

who are really, she is really looking at what it means to straddle both worlds and to work with

multiple orientations from faculty and to give them opportunities to experience new things.

And isn't that half of the story? Half of the story is new, educative experiences that you're leading for the faculty at your university.

We appreciate you so much. Thank you everybody for attending today. This webinar will be posted on our website.

There will be an update as well with the transcript and a summary.

We want everyone to come back to this. And Charlotte,

we hope you'll visit us in six months or eight months and come back and maybe we'll bring some other your

colleagues in from Europe and talk a little bit about comparative perspectives on what we're seeing then.

I would love that. Thank you so much for having me. Thank you so much.