

The Great Distraction

Technology and AI in Education

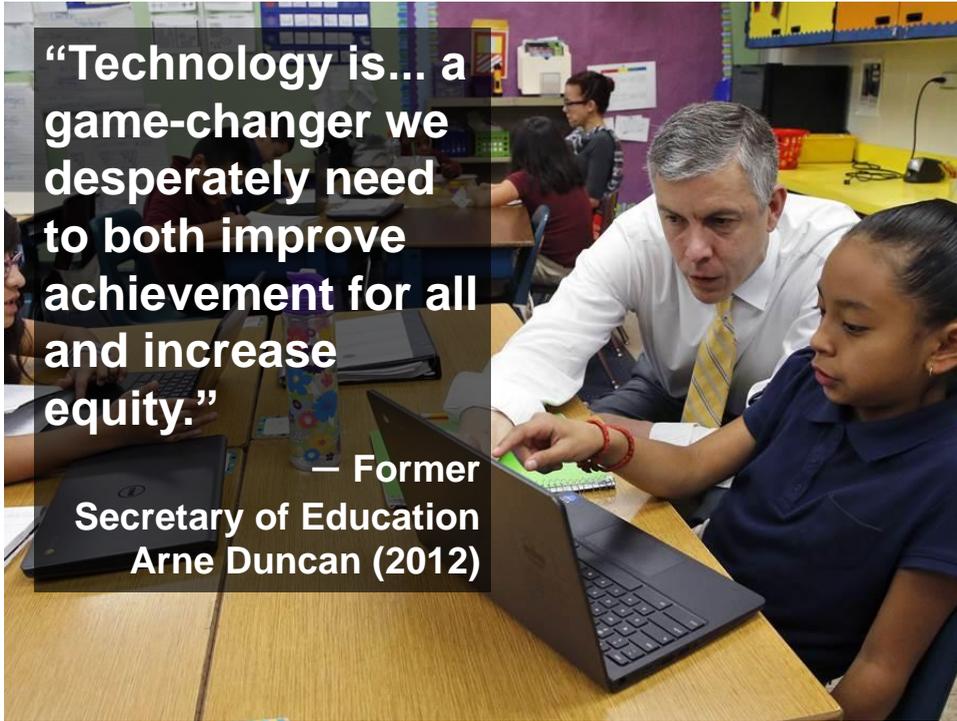
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Artificial Intelligence in Education:
Is There A Silver Lining in the Dystopian Storm Clouds?
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“Technology is... a game-changer we desperately need to both improve achievement for all and increase equity.”

— Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2012)



To what kind of school would you prefer to send your children? A school with...

- a) No teachers, computers with AI
- b) Bad teachers, no computers
- c) Bad teachers, computers with AI
- d) Good teachers, no computers
- e) Good teachers, some computers with AI
- f) Good teachers, many computers with AI



Seattle's Lakeside School

Very expensive.

Bill Gates was a student.

Every student has a laptop. Some of the software is AI-enabled.

Parents still pay for additional tutoring.

The most important thing in education is good adult supervision.

Photo: RaviGa - <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/23200149> ; <http://www.emersonwaldorf.org/>

When did you first learn to use a computer?

- a) Primary school age or younger
- b) Secondary school age
- c) In college or university
- d) At work
- e) Never



Finland :
Low-tech, high PISA scores

Waldorf schools ban digital technology in classroom.



*Good education is possible
without digital technology.*

Photo: Sanna Schildt : <http://www.emersonwaldorf.org/>

Imagine you are the CEO of a company that has a good product but is losing money. Which of the following would you do?

- a) Replace the VP of Sales
- b) Implement a new sales strategy
- c) Provide better training for all sales staff
- d) Buy the latest iPads for all employees
- e) Tell employees to use the new AI add-on for Excel
- f) Turn on the AI features of your data center

*Technology doesn't solve institutional problems **anywhere.***



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Recommendations

- Focus on the basics.
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- Consider AI only in contexts where...
 - The basics are in place;
 - Teachers want it; and
 - There is good evidence that the technology has educational value.
- Don't expect AI to meaningfully address educational inequalities.
- Be skeptical of for-profit companies, *especially* if the product is free.

Summary

Technology **amplifies** underlying human forces.

AI is no different.

In education, consider AI only in cases where the basics are in place, teachers want it, and it has confirmed value.

Thank you!

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