

HOW WE MAKE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR EDUCATION

Invest in educating girls worldwide. UNESCO offers several compelling statistics that demonstrate the value of education at the individual level (“just one more year of school can increase a girl’s earnings, when she is an adult, by up to 20%”) and at the more macroeconomic level (“some countries lose more than US \$1 billion a year by failing to educate girls to the same level as boys”).

Actively work to remove racism and other systemic discrimination from the curriculum and the classroom, and increase the messages of inclusion and respect.

Re-imagine the delivery methods to redress education loss from COVID-19. Whatever the approach, we will clearly need bold and imaginative ideas to make up for the academic losses students around the world will have suffered from the pandemic.

Keep trying to improve the learning opportunity with technology. Learning in person has tremendous advantages, but as an adjunct to that or for students who excel in remote learning environments, the widespread move to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, while challenging, has also shown the opportunities for students to connect with teachers and classrooms anywhere—and in some cases, at any time.

Develop more adaptive curricula. The increasingly internet-connected world has many trade-offs for young people in terms of lack of privacy and anonymity; the very least we can offer in return is the opportunity to get a more personalized education, one that matches a student’s learning needs, skills, and potential in ways that can better prepare them for a fulfilling life and career.

Teach critical media literacy and digital literacy. The rise of misinformation and disinformation suggests that more people would benefit from skills in reading, asking critical questions, and making sense of media and institutions.

Teach young people the human skills they need for the future workplace. With so much of human work being augmented, displaced, and replaced by automation, it’s important to note a few things young people should be learning now and for the foreseeable future: complements of manual skills that are harder to automate, like plumbing and other fine motor work, and the skills commonly called “soft” which are mostly mature versions of human capabilities like making decisions in context, judgment calls, nuanced management, leading with emotional intelligence, and so on.

“Kate O’Neill’s fresh take bridges the gap and lays the foundation for embracing technology, empathy and opportunity as we speed towards a hopeful future.”

— CHRIS MATTMANN, CTO, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

KATE O’NEILL

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How **Strategic Optimism** and Meaningful Innovation
Can Restore Our Humanity and **Save The World**

