Building Digital Bridges: From Possibility to Partnership

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International Digital Week, Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France

June 2025

Connections

Access slides here:
https://tinyurl.com/DigitalBridges2025

Introducing Dr. Julie Lindsay

- Julie works in the Learning and Teaching Futures Portfolio at the University of Southern Queensland.
- She is an expert in online global collaboration in education, with 35+ years of experience across six countries. She has written two books, completed PhD research on global collaboration, and designed numerous international projects for K-12 classrooms.
- Her current research focus is on curriculum embedded global collaborative learning in higher education that also integrates AI as an equal learning partner.
- She leads the global Technology and Innovation Network for the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) and has received multiple awards for her work in educational leadership and specializes in using educational technology and AI to connect learners at all levels worldwide.

Outline

The Question That Changes Everything

“A rose by any other name….”

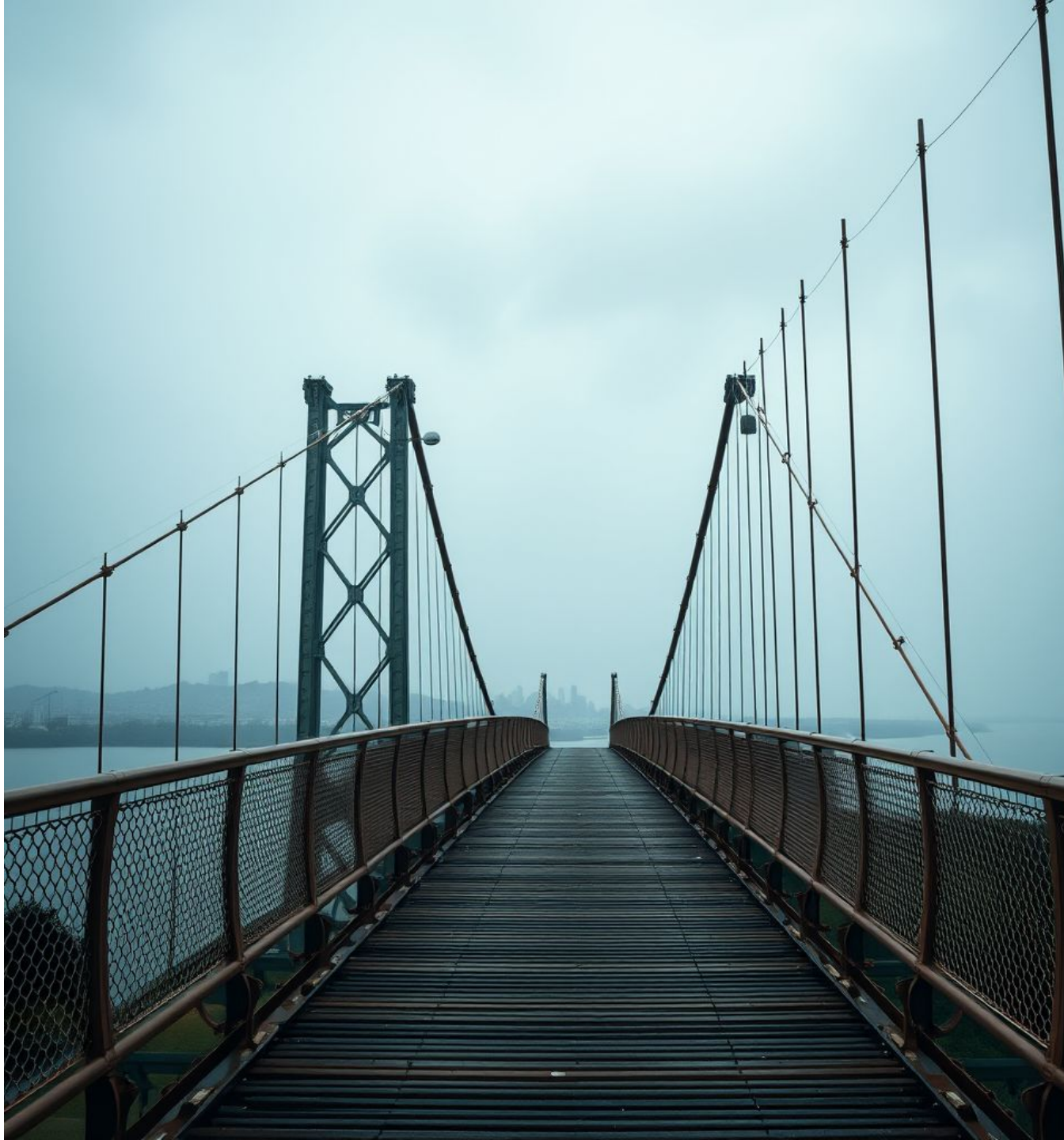
A Personal Story

Confronting Our Current Reality: The False Dichotomies

Introducing the Cosmogogy Learning Ecosystem

A Bold Vision: AI as Creative Partner, Not Cognitive Replacement

The Call to Action



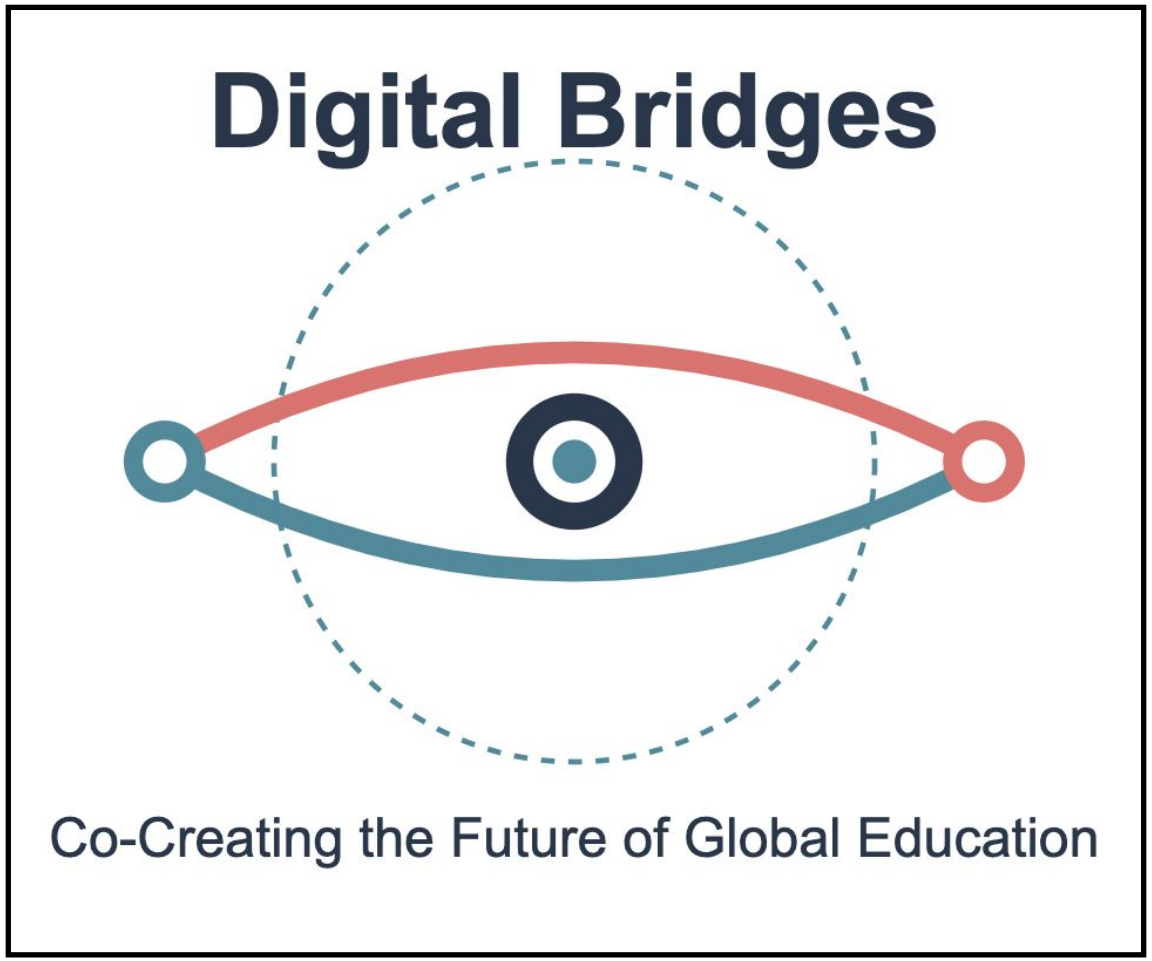
Introduction

Why ‘digital bridges’?

- We will bridge the face-to-face with the asynchronous connection

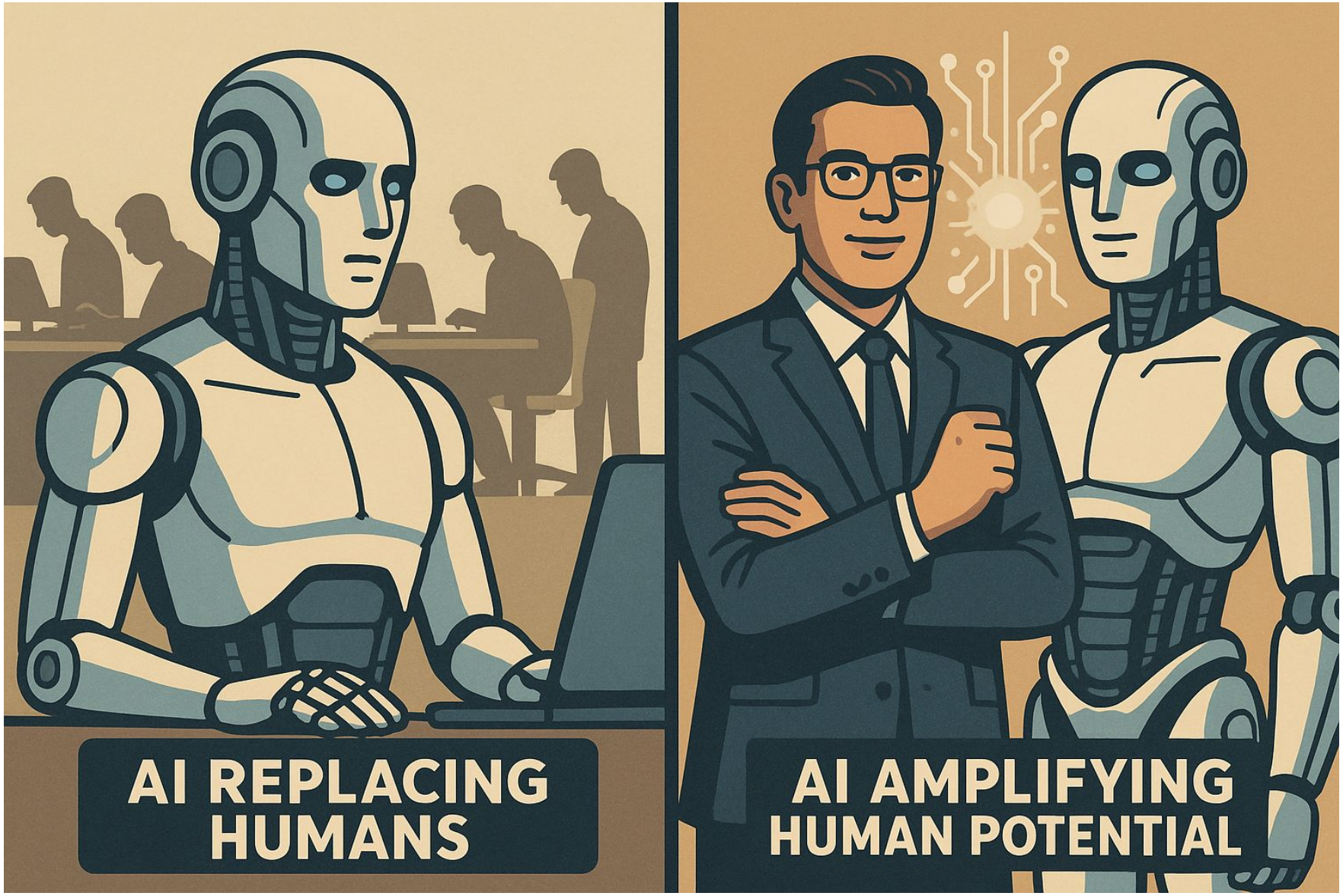
Why ‘possibility to partnership’?

- Ask the question, “...would it be possible to….?”
- Discuss, ideate, collaborate and find partners for actionable outcomes



What if we've been asking the wrong question about AI in education?

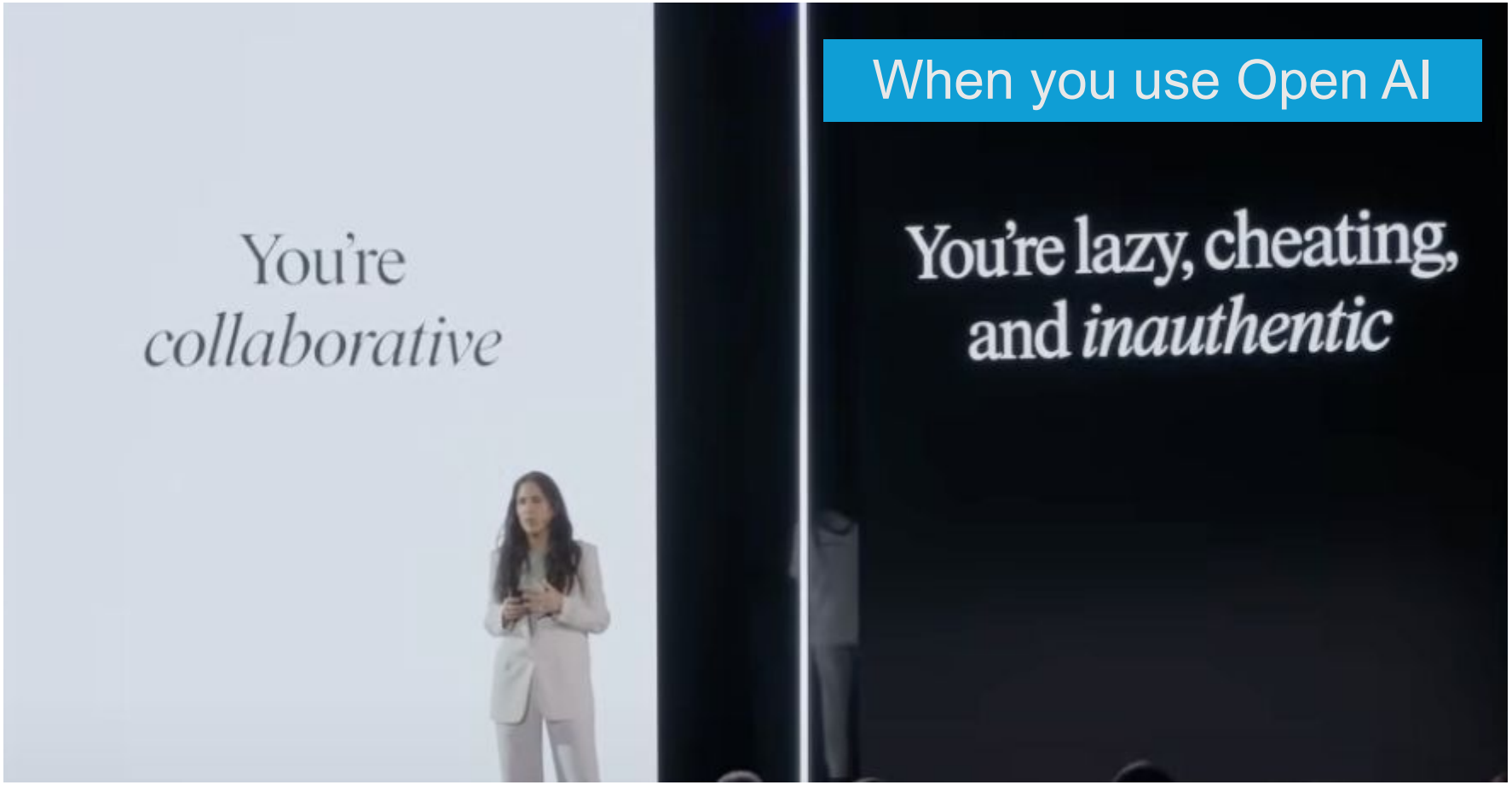
We keep asking,
‘Will AI replace humans?’
when we should be asking,
‘How will AI help us become more human?’


AI REPLACING HUMANS
AI AMPLIFYING HUMAN POTENTIAL

A rose by any other name…?

Writing with a human editor ….
Collaborative
Responsible
Legitimate

Writing with AI help ….
Cutting corners
Taking shortcuts
Cheating



Sari Azout "Why we should use AI to expand what it means to be human"
https://youtu.be/uLjibfx49uA

Imagine if ….
Open AI had been called
Open Collective Intelligence (CI)

Artificial Intelligence

… The simulation of human-like intelligence by machines, enabling them to perform tasks such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and language understanding.
… It relies on algorithms and data to make decisions or generate content, often mimicking cognitive functions traditionally associated with humans.

Collective Intelligence

… The enhanced capacity that emerges when people and technology collaborate to solve problems, create knowledge, or innovate together.
… It leverages diverse perspectives, shared data, and interconnected systems to achieve outcomes no individual or machine could accomplish alone.

Personal story:

When technology enabled deeper human connection in learning.

The Flat Classroom Project – Bangladesh / Georgia, USA

The Flat Classroom Conference – Doha, Qatar

Web 2.0 technologies:

- Skype, Wikispaces, Google Docs, blogs

Other tech and tools (current and emerging):

- WiFi, video, podcast, Edmodo, Voicethread, Padlet

Flat Classroom Conference 2009

Article in Qatar Today, March 2009

tech talk

A virtual world of education

BY MEGHNA DEY

EDUCATION has always been a field that has constantly looked to innovate itself, whether done through teaching methods or through varying curricula. Technological developments offer solutions and innovations to broaden the education system and institutions are trying their best to evolve and keep up with these developing trends.

Taking pointers from Thomas Friedman's book *The World is Flat*, the Flat Classroom Project was co-founded by Vicki Davis of Westwood Schools, USA and Julie Lindsay of Qatar Academy (QA). QA recently held a conference that brought together students and speakers from different parts of the world at the first Flat Classroom Conference, a seminar held as part of Flat Classroom Project. The concept and practice of 'flattening' methods of learning into practical use, the Flat on the same level of opportunity and there's no hierarchy where the teacher is giving knowledge down to the students. Everybody in the classroom is a learner and everyone can be a leader or a teacher. It's a classroom that works together on whatever the learning objectives are and with that focus in mind, we connect with other classrooms around the world.

"Students in a flat classroom have to collaborate not only on a wiki and research the topic together but also make individual multimedia projects, and for that they have to get short clips from one of their other partners who are somewhere else in the world to put into their video, it's what we call outsourcing," Lindsay says, adding that once students establish a project idea, they continue to develop it further under the supervision of a teacher.

Julie Lindsay, Head of Information Technology, Qatar Academy

tion, collaboration and creation of ideas. Students analyse trends of Information Technology (IT) and use IT as a tool for education.

"A flat classroom uses emerging technology tools to facilitate learning, to keep the motion going. It needs to con-


WE'RE NOT HERE
TO DEFEND
AGAINST THE
FUTURE,
WE'RE HERE
TO DESIGN IT

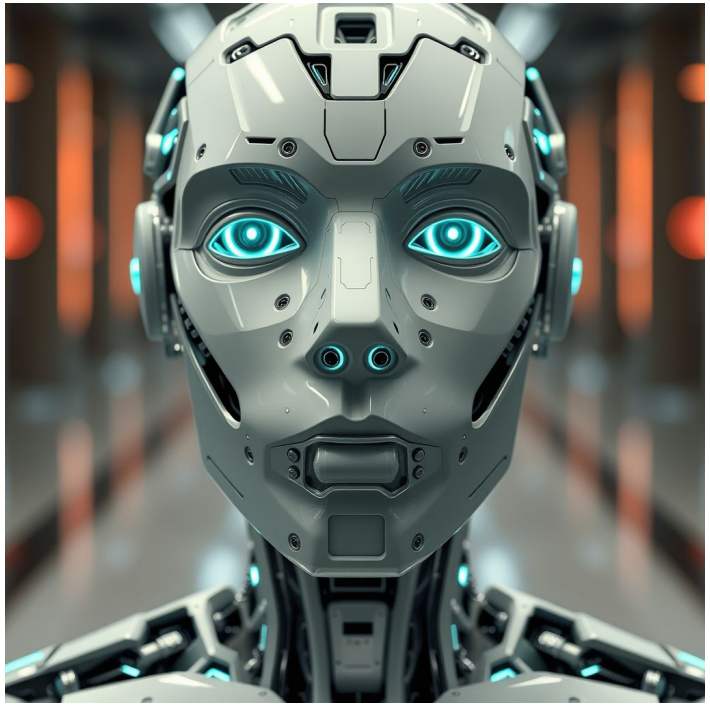
"Defending Against the Future" = Fear-Based Thinking

What this looks like:

- How do we prevent AI from replacing teachers?
- How do we stop students from using ChatGPT to cheat?
- How do we protect traditional educational values from digital disruption?
- How do we maintain human connection in an increasingly digital world?

The Problem with Defence Mode:

- You're always reactive, not proactive
- You're trying to preserve what exists rather than create what could be
- You assume the future is something that happens TO you, not something you create
- You end up fighting innovations instead of shaping them



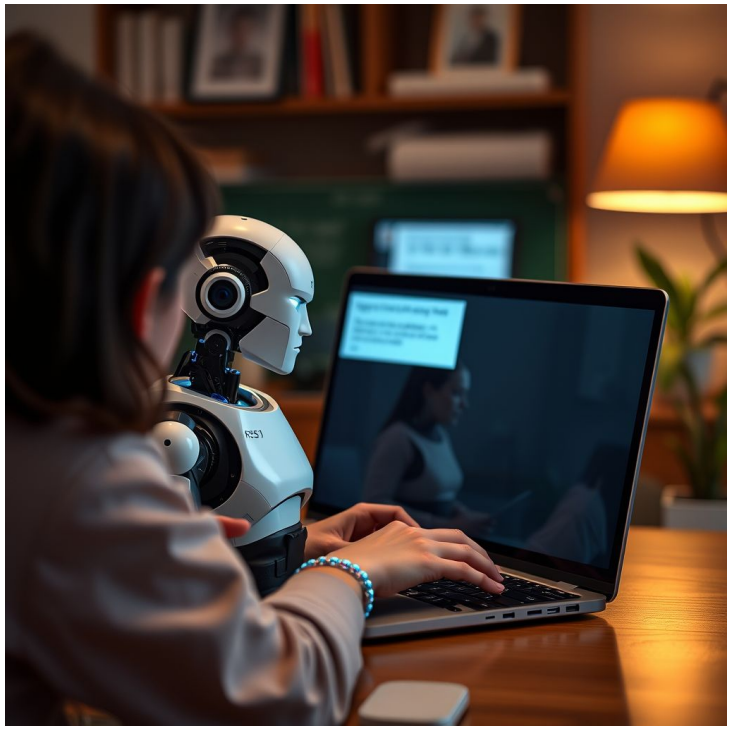
"Designing the Future" = Creative Leadership

What this looks like:

- Partnering with AI to amplify human creativity
- Designing learning experiences that were impossible before AI existed
- Creating global classrooms where cultural diversity enhances rather than complicates learning
- Using technology to make education more human, not less

The Power of Design Mode:

- You're an architect of change, not a victim of it
- You influence how technology develops and gets implemented
- You create solutions that serve human flourishing
- You turn disruption into opportunity



Confronting Our Current Reality: The False Dichotomies

We're trapped in either/or thinking in an and/both world

How many of you have been in a meeting where someone said ….

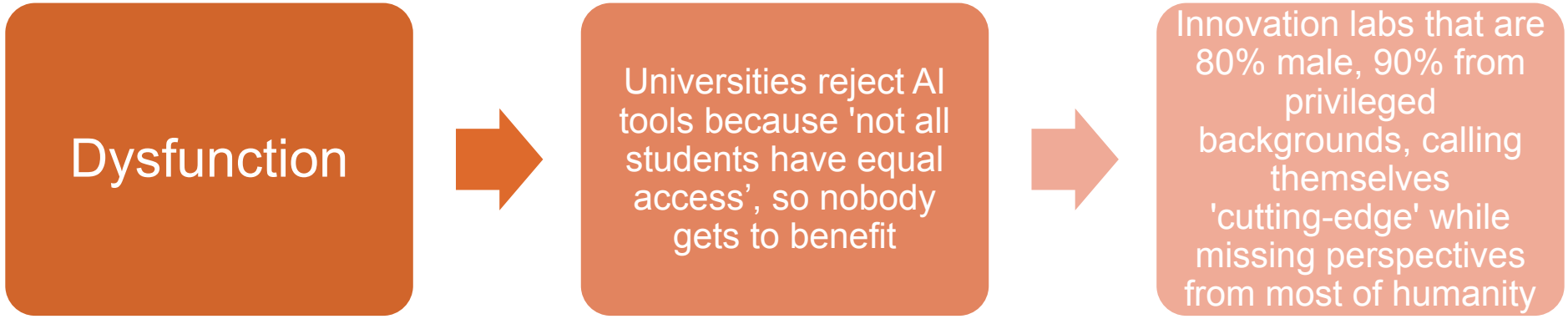
- 'We need to choose between being inclusive OR being innovative'? or,

- 'We can either preserve our local culture OR go global'?

This is the trap we've fallen into - binary thinking in a world that demands synthesis.

Dichotomy 1: Inclusion vs Innovation

The False Choice We're Told: "You can either slow down to include everyone or move fast to innovate. Accessibility requirements will stifle creativity. Supporting diverse learners means lowering standards."

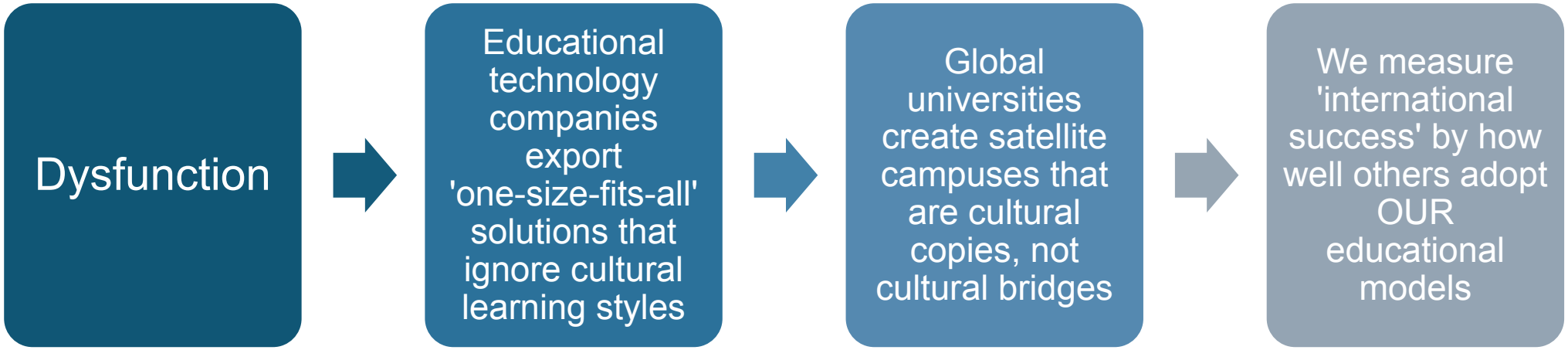


The Revolutionary Truth: The most innovative solutions come FROM diversity, not despite it. Universal design doesn't limit innovation—it demands it.

Real Example: Voice recognition technology was terrible for women and people with accents until diverse teams forced innovation. Now it works for everyone and opened entire new markets.

Dichotomy 2: Local vs Global

The False Choice We're Told: "Going global means standardization. Cultural authenticity gets lost in translation. You can either honour local traditions OR participate in global education."

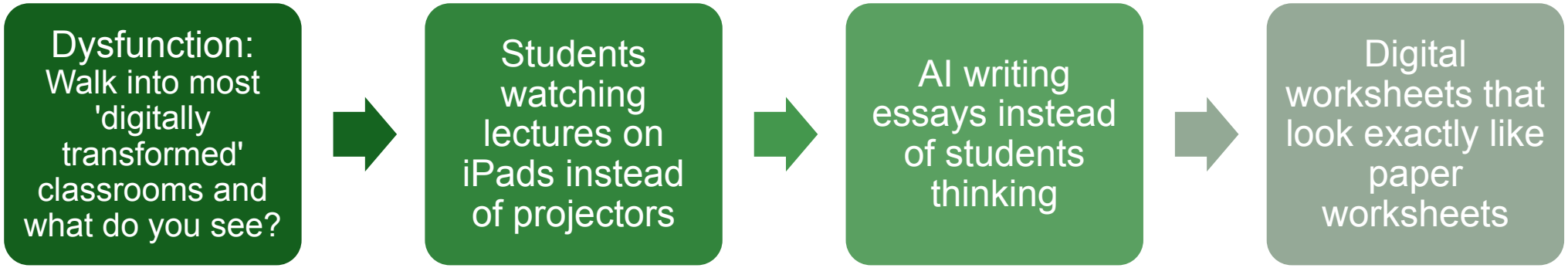


The Revolutionary Truth: True global education amplifies local wisdom it doesn't erase it. The world needs what each culture uniquely offers.

Provocative question: What if going global meant the world learning FROM your culture, not just learning ABOUT your culture? What if Finnish pedagogical approaches and Asian collaborative learning methods could enhance AI development rather than be replaced by it?

Dichotomy 3: Tools vs Transformation

The False Choice We're Told: "We can either adopt new technology OR maintain pedagogical integrity. AI will either revolutionize everything or destroy authentic learning."



The Uncomfortable Truth: Most educational technology implementations are sophisticated ways of doing the same old things. We're using 21st-century tools to perfect 19th-century factory models of education.

The Revolutionary Vision: Real transformation happens when technology enables what was previously impossible—global collaboration in real-time, AI as creative partner not replacement, learning that's simultaneously deeply personal and universally connected.

Example of AI being used for content delivery vs. creative collaboration

AI for Content Delivery

(Old Paradigm)

- **What it looks like:**
  - An AI tutor explains photosynthesis through personalized video lessons, adjusts the complexity based on student responses, and generates practice questions.
  - Students watch, absorb, and regurgitate information.
- **The limitation:**
  - Learning remains passive consumption.
  - AI is a more sophisticated teacher delivering pre-existing knowledge.

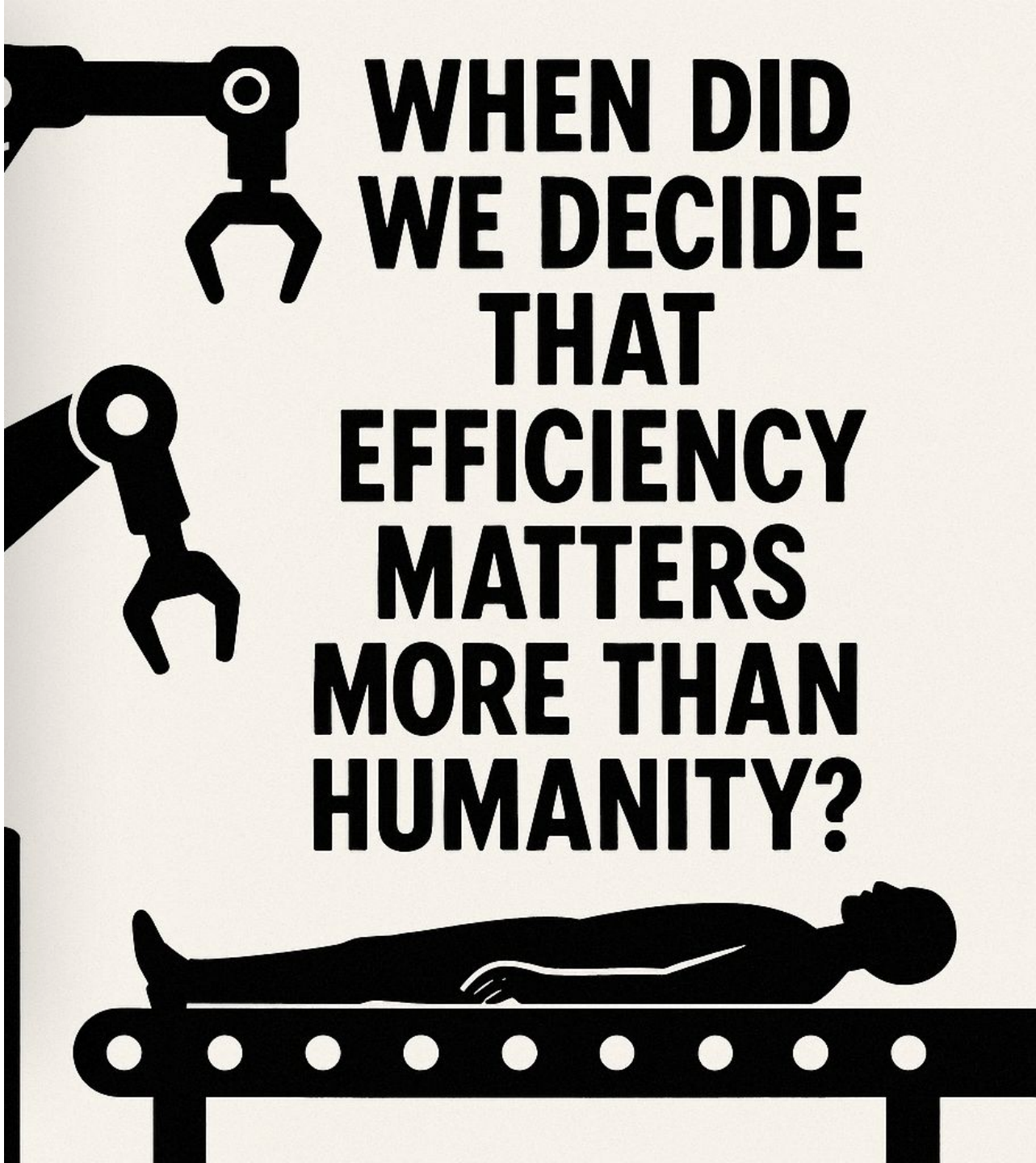
AI for Creative Collaboration

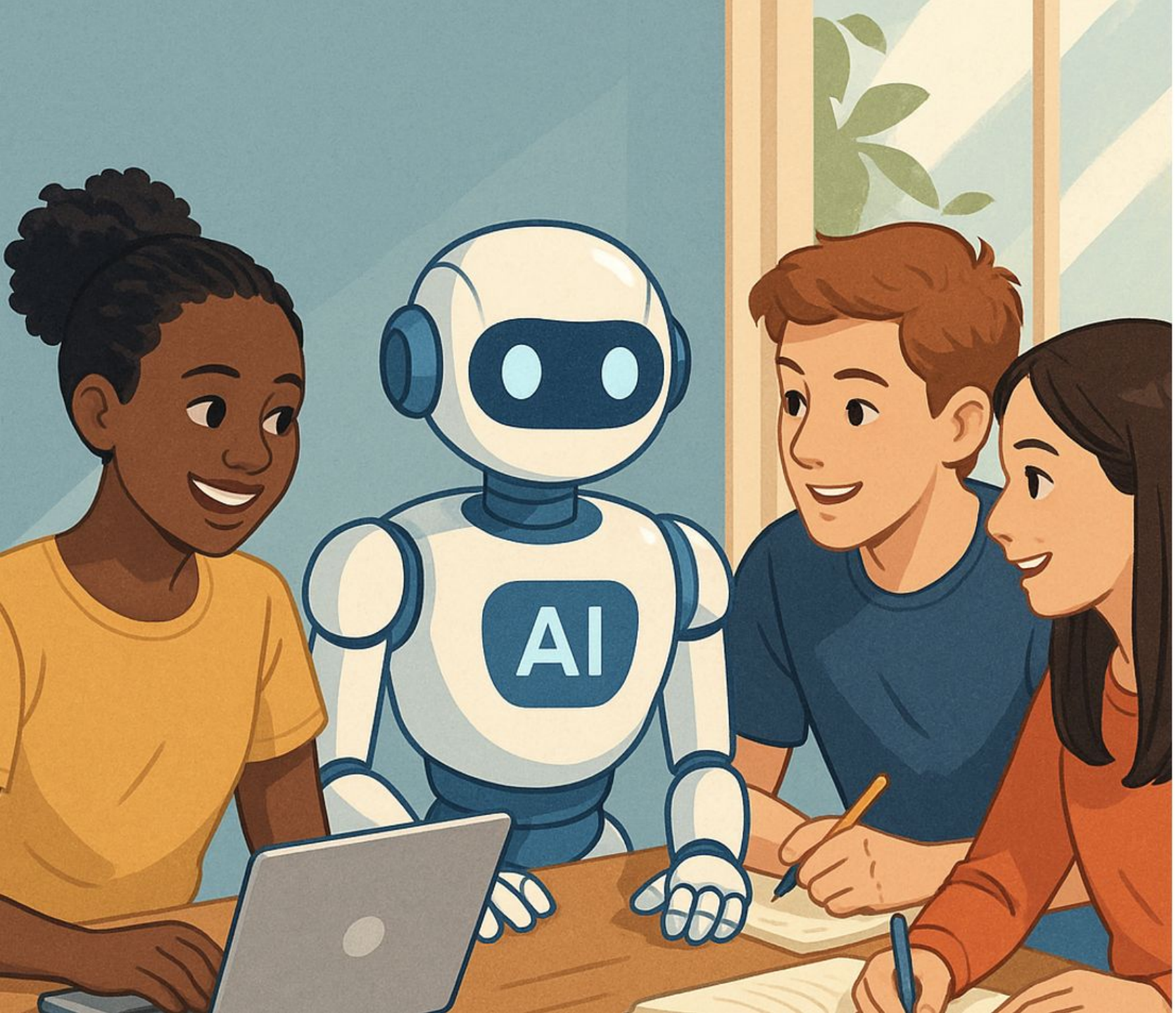
(New Paradigm)

- **What it looks like:**
  - Students from urban schools partner with peers in rural farming communities to investigate local climate impacts.
  - AI helps them analyze real-time environmental data, connects them with climate scientists globally, and suggests innovative experiments they can conduct in their different environments.
  - Together, they design solutions for their communities while the AI helps synthesize their findings into actionable research.
- **The transformation:**
  - AI becomes a research partner that amplifies human curiosity, connects diverse perspectives, and enables students to generate new knowledge rather than just consume existing knowledge.

The Key Difference

- **Content Delivery**: AI serves information TO students
- **Creative Collaboration**: AI works WITH students to create something new





The Rise of AI Agents

Reshaping education from passive consumption to active co-creation:

- from Chatbots that "ask and receive"
- to AI Agents that "collaborate and create"

After years of Global Education... and collaboration

I've learned that:

- Every time we choose 'either/or,' we lose.
- Every time we find 'and/both,' we create something unprecedented.

I encourage you to be

- local AND global,
- inclusive AND innovative,
- technologically sophisticated AND deeply human.

And that's exactly what the **Cosmogogy Learning Ecosystem** makes possible...

COSMOGOGY

- The method and practice of learning while connected to the world using digital technologies.
- The context of learning is ‘with’ rather than ‘about’.
- It is not location based and whom you learn with and what you construct together is most important

"Cosmos" (Greek: κόσμος) meaning "world" or "universe"
"-agogy" (Greek: ἀγωγή) meaning "leading" or "teaching”

(Lindsay, 2016)

What if learning wasn’t bound by location, but by connection?

Cosmogogy Learning Ecosystem

Human Domain

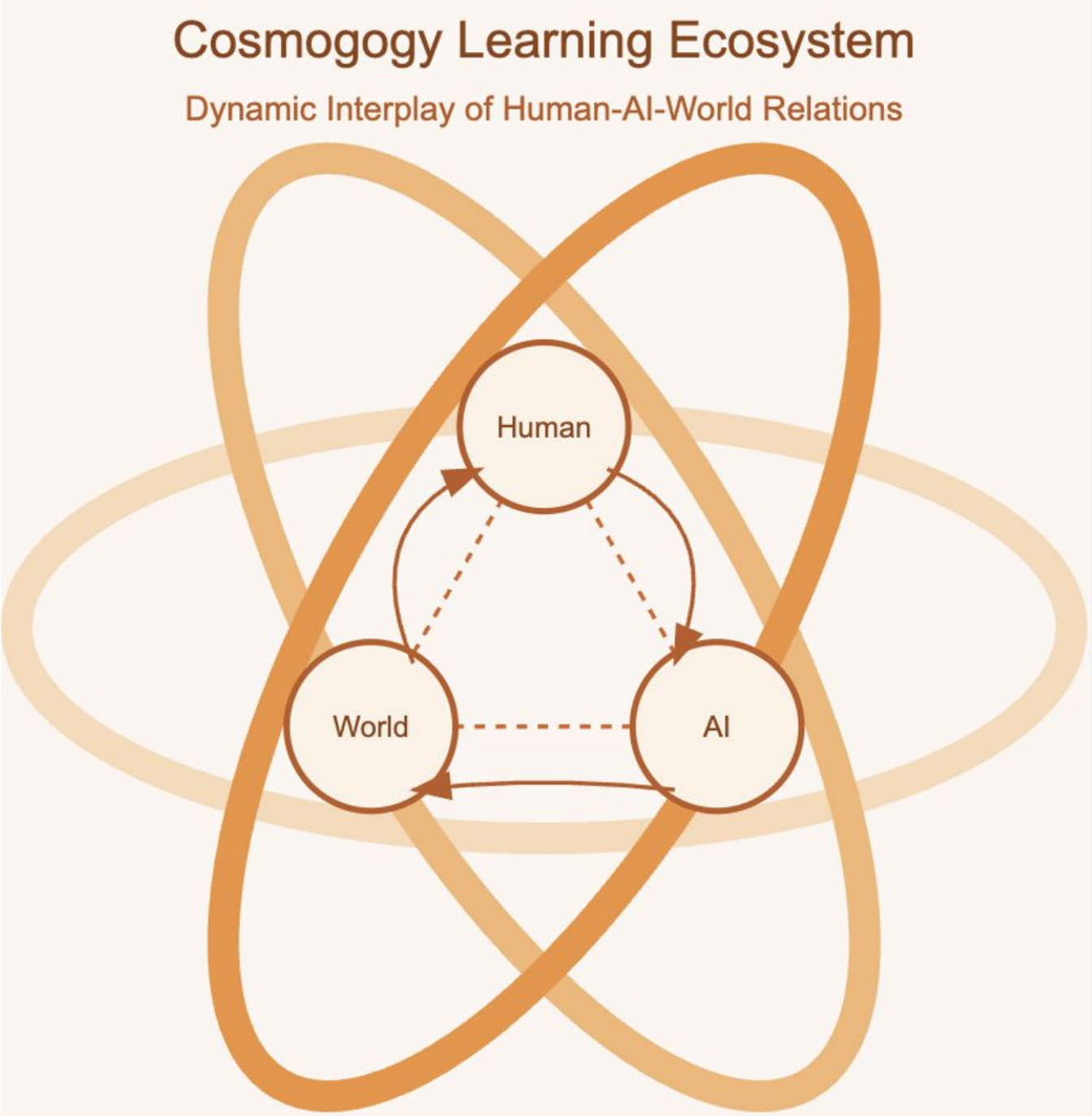
- Learners, educators, global communities
- Global co-creators with cultural intelligence

AI partnership

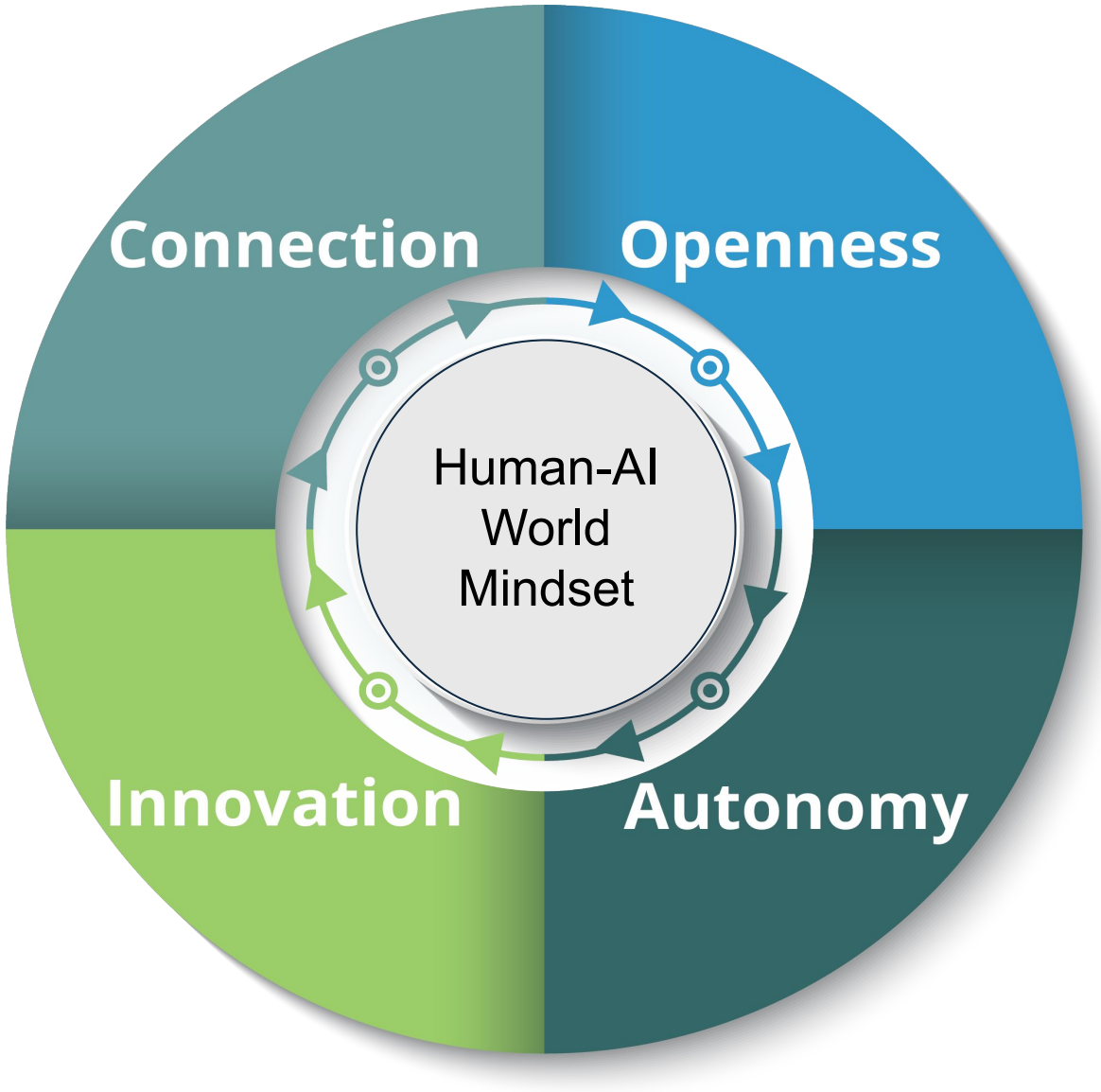
- Enhancement, co-creation, augmentation
- AI as creative collaborator and cognitive amplifier

World Domain

- Authentic challenges, real-time data, cultural dimensions



The Human-AI-World Mindset



Connection

Building relationships across all boundaries.

Openness

Receptivity to human and Artificial Intelligence.

Autonomy

Self-direction and independence within collaborative ecosystems.

Innovation

Creating new solutions through hybrid intelligence.

The Cosmogogical Leadership Challenge

Be a leader who:

- fosters globally connected learning
- Ensures learning is personalized but not isolating
- Succeeds such that learning feels strange when NOT connected to the world

The following hypothetical case studies share stories of projects where Human-AI-World collaboration created something impossible through traditional means through the application of Cosmogogy as an approach to learning.

Case Study 1: The Global Climate Solutions Network

The Challenge: Climate scientists in Kenya needed to predict drought patterns but lacked access to advanced modeling tools and real-time global data.

Solution by Human-AI-World Collaboration:

- **Human**: Kenyan farmers shared traditional weather knowledge and local observations; MIT climate scientists provided modeling expertise
- **AI**: Machine learning algorithms processed satellite data, traditional knowledge patterns, and global climate models in real-time
- **World**: Live environmental sensors, satellite feeds, and farmer reports from across East Africa fed continuous data

The Impossible Outcome: A predictive system that's 40% more accurate than traditional models alone, combining indigenous wisdom with cutting-edge AI.

Why It Was Impossible Before: No single institution had access to both the traditional knowledge, AI capabilities, and real-world data streams simultaneously. Creating a "super-intelligence" no one could achieve alone.

Case Study 2: The Multilingual Medical Breakthrough

The Challenge: A rare genetic condition affecting children globally had scattered research in 12 different languages across 8 countries, with no coordinated treatment approach.

Solution by Human-AI-World Collaboration:

- **Human**: Paediatric specialists from Brazil, Japan, Sweden, and Nigeria; families sharing symptoms and experiences
- **AI**: Natural language processing translated research papers instantly; pattern recognition identified treatment correlations across cultures
- **World**: Real-time patient data from hospitals worldwide; genetic databases; treatment outcome tracking

The Impossible Outcome: A breakthrough treatment protocol developed in 8 months instead of the typical 10+ years.

Why It Was Impossible Before: Language barriers, isolated research silos, and lack of real-time global collaboration meant breakthroughs were trapped in individual institutions. The Human-AI-World partnership broke down every barrier simultaneously.

A Bold Vision?

… or next steps for learning and teaching?

As they say in Scandinavia – “There’s no bad weather, only bad clothes’

What if AI handled the mundane so humans could focus on the magnificent?

Stop asking AI to do human things; start asking AI to free humans for superhuman things

AI manages scheduling, grading, content curation → Humans focus on empathy, creativity, critical thinking

AI provides instant translation → Humans focus on deep cultural exchange and understanding

AI analyzes learning patterns → Humans design personalized meaning-making experiences

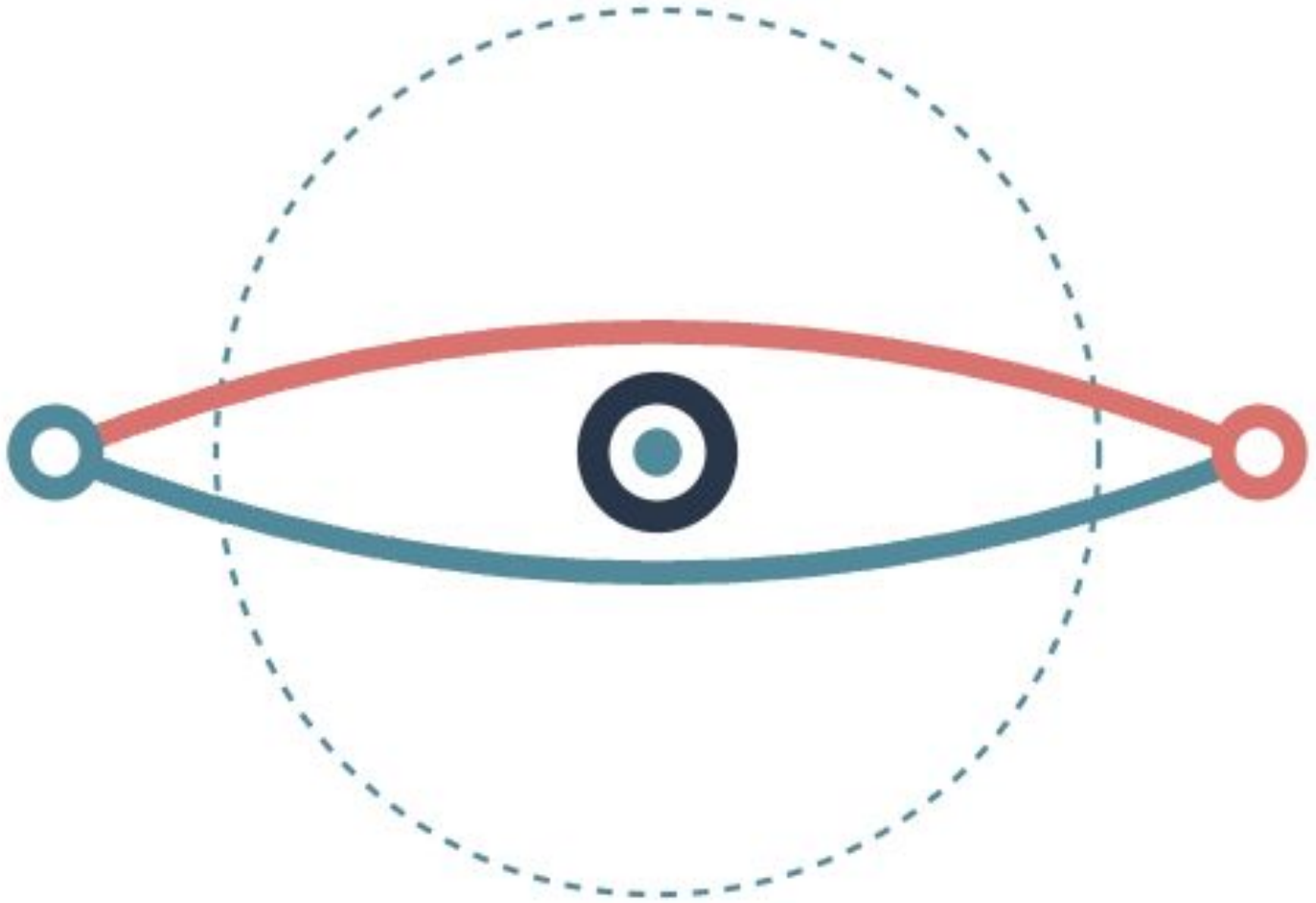
The Building Bridges Connection

Designing the Future Together

You're not here as passive recipients of technological change. You're here as active designers of educational futures. The future of global education isn't something that will happen to you—it's something you will create together, starting today.

- This is a call to agency, creativity, and collaborative leadership rather than defensive reaction.
- You are protagonists in your own story rather than victims of technological disruption.

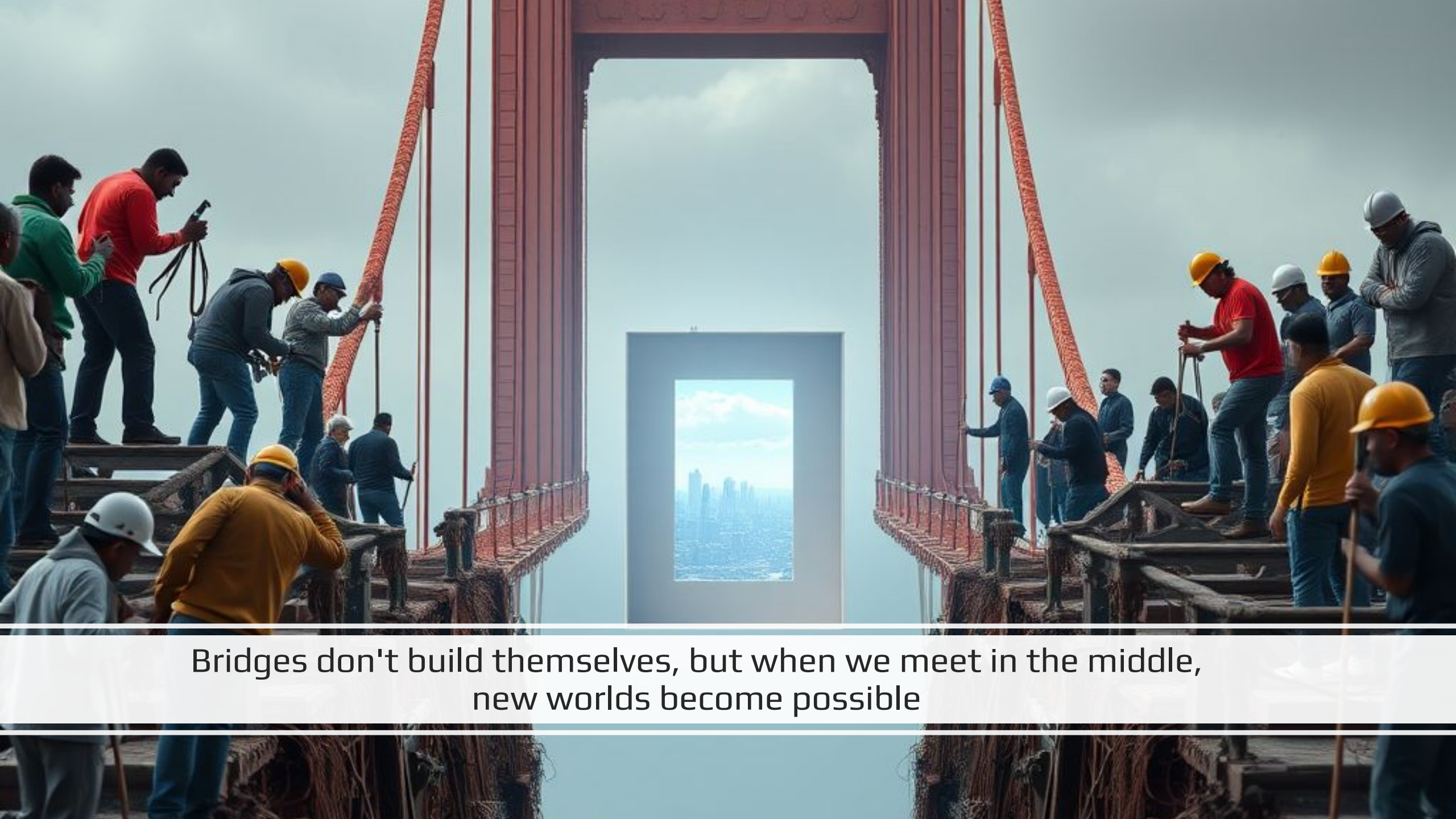
DIGITAL BRIDGES



Co-Creating the Future of Global Education

Participants will:

- Think like bridge-builders: **Connect, don't just consume**
- Embrace creative tensions: **They're not problems to solve but spaces to innovate**
- Design for Human+AI, not Human vs AI: **Partnership, not replacement**
- **Align design with the Cosmogogy Ecosystem inclusive of Human, AI, and World**



Bridges don't build themselves, but when we meet in the middle,
new worlds become possible

Bridget - Digital Bridges ChatBot

A warm and encouraging facilitative chatbot supporting participants in the "Digital Bridges: Co-Creating the Future of Global Education" workshop.

Bridget knows what you should be doing, why and when.

She has her finger on the pulse all day - just ask her!

https://chatgpt.com/g/g-6825f980fa2c8191a3fff4b4ea152af4-bridget

AI Chatbot - Explainer Ellie

Ask anything and she explains it clearly, step-by-step.

Provides essential explanations for terms, concepts, and processes and more!

https://chatgpt.com/g/g-681704fe2afc81919b7948741d1d9e08-explainer-ellie

AI Agent - Contrary Connie

Designed with an enhanced Human-AI-World focus.

Use Connie to get ‘out of the box’ ideas related to the Human-AI-World context.

Connie encourages constructive and critical discussion on your topic, providing mainstream and contrarian viewpoints to help build your ideas and approach.

https://chatgpt.com/g/g-6828805 15b04819186aa817983264c97-contrary-connie

Call to Action! Create the Future of Learning

- Augment collaboration through wise use of AI tools.
- Share ideas and possibilities.
- Be open to partnerships.

Connections

Access slides here:
https://tinyurl.com/DigitalBridges2025

Resources

Connect with Julie:

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https://www.linkedin.com/in/julieannelindsay/

https://learningconfluence.com/

Lindsay, J. (2016). *The global educator: Leveraging technology for collaborative learning & teaching.* International Society for Technology in Education.

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