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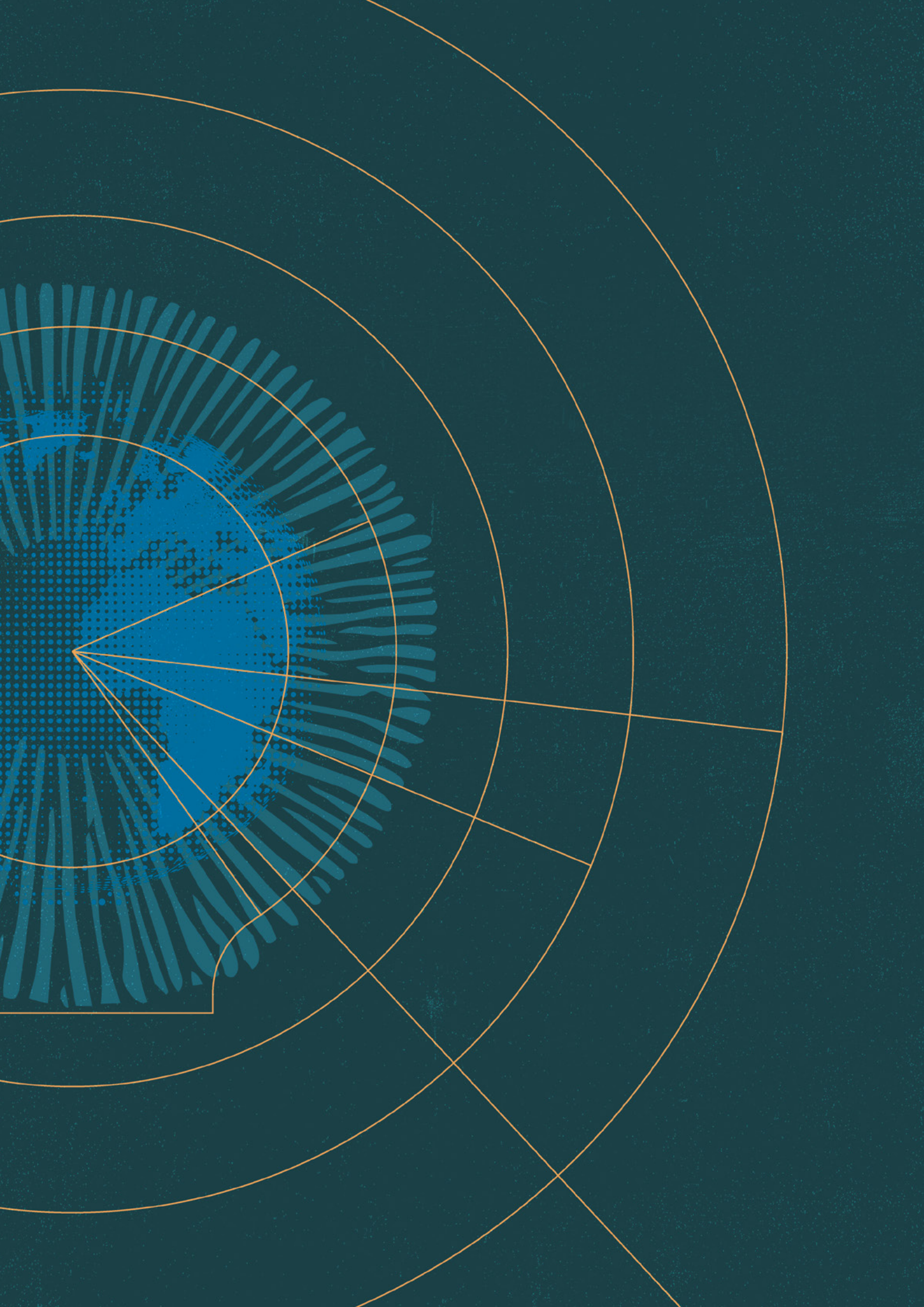
EDUCATION MATTERS

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Human-Centred Education in the Age of AI



Faculty of **Education**
The University of Hong Kong



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Dear Friends of the Faculty of Education,

Welcome to the latest volume of *Education Matters*.

Technological advancement, especially artificial intelligence (AI), is reshaping every aspect of society. From communication and healthcare to business and education, AI is changing how we live, work, learn, and connect with one another. As a Faculty of Education, this is not a development we can observe from a distance. We must embrace AI, engage with it seriously, and help contribute to its effective use in education and society.

This does not mean adopting technology uncritically. On the contrary, the more powerful AI becomes, the more important it is for educators to understand it well. Teachers, in particular, need to understand AI better than their students, because they carry the responsibility of guiding young people to use it wisely, ethically, and productively. Students will inevitably encounter AI in their studies, work, and daily lives. Our task is to help them move beyond simple use, towards critical understanding: knowing what AI can do, what it cannot do, how it may mislead, and how it can be used to support genuine learning rather than replace thinking.

In this issue, our feature stories highlight the Faculty's ongoing efforts in educational innovation, knowledge exchange, and community engagement. They explore AI's growing influence on language and literacy education, speech-language pathology, science learning, and higher education systems. Professor George Jiang's project shows how AI can support multimodal literacy, assessment innovation, and critical digital literacy. Professor Anthony Kong's work demonstrates its value in enhancing speech-language assessment and rehabilitation, while also affirming the irreplaceable role of human expertise, empathy, and clinical judgement. Professor Logan Chen's Amicus Aristotle AI reminds us that pedagogy must come before technology, and that AI should be used only when it serves clear learning purposes. Professor Jisun Jung's research emphasises that AI is never socially neutral: without careful attention to access, resources, and training, it may deepen existing inequalities.

This issue also features Professor Karen Chan's knowledge exchange work on swallowing safety and care food standards. Her contributions exemplify that innovation is not limited to digital technology. It also involves translating research into practical knowledge that improves everyday wellbeing. This broader understanding of innovation is central to education: knowledge matters most when it can be shared, understood, and applied responsibly.

When facing new technologies, people often focus too much on change and too little on continuity. Yet only when we recognise what must be kept can we determine how to change, and what to change into. Education is not simply about using the newest tools. It is about nurturing human growth, virtue, and creativity. These purposes remain constant, even as our methods evolve.

AI can enhance efficiency and create new opportunities for teaching and research. However, it cannot replace the human qualities at the heart of education: integrity, wisdom, humanity, and genuine connection. As educators, we must lead the conversation, not by resisting change or simply following it, but by asking what is educationally meaningful and socially responsible.

If we embrace AI with understanding, confidence, and mindfulness, while holding firmly to the enduring values of education, we can better prepare the next generation for a future full of possibilities amid uncertainty.

I invite you to explore this issue of *Education Matters*, and I hope it offers both insight and inspiration.

Happy reading!

Professor Yang Rui
Dean



AI IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION: A MULTIMODAL FUTURE

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has permeated second language education at an extraordinary rate, but thus far there has been little agreement on what it actually means for language teaching and learning.

AI for Multimodal Literacy

For Professor George Jiang, Assistant Professor in the Faculty's Academic Unit of Language and Literacy Education, AI neither poses an existential crisis to second language education nor offers a simple technological solution to long-lasting pedagogical challenges. Instead, it reconfigures language and literacy education as multimodal and digital rather than merely language-centric and paper-bound. Professor Jiang's work identifies three key areas in which AI can support this shift: multimodal literacy, multimodal assessment, and critical digital literacy.

"Multimodal literacy is high on the policy and curricular agenda of language education in Hong Kong," Professor Jiang notes. More broadly, the term *multimodal literacy* refers to the ability to make meaning with language in combination with other semiotic modes, such as image and audio. In language classrooms, teachers can foster students' multimodal literacy by guiding them to engage with and create multimodal texts. However, this process is often overlooked, because it can be labour-intensive and may shift students' attention away from language use towards technological processes.

To address this, a novel solution was implemented by Professor Jiang and his team in a project on multimodal literacy development. Their aim was to guide teachers to integrate conversational and multimodal GenAI into digital multimodal composing. First, they helped teachers guide students in using GenAI to generate and gather basic elements for multimodal text creation. These included scripts, visuals, soundtracks, and on-screen captions.

This approach relieved teachers and students of the labour of, for instance, filming and editing, and gave them access to synthetic embodied learning through simulated experiences and virtual avatars.

The next step was to help students engage more productively with AI. "We highlighted prompting as a new space in which to teach students new ways of using language to communicate and interact with AI for an intended output," explains Professor Jiang. Such output might include a script, a plan, an image, an animation, or a short video clip.

The team developed an original multimodal prompting framework to support teachers in guiding students to describe an intended output with linguistic knowledge, visual elements, and sociocultural awareness. Through prompting and interacting with multimodal GenAI tools, teachers' and students' attention was redirected to language use and content development, capitalising on AI's remarkable visualisation power. Potential biases in AI-generated content were mitigated through ongoing evaluation and refinement.

In these two ways, the team was able to support multimodal literacy development in contemporary language and literacy classrooms.

AI for Multimodal Assessment

GenAI's ability to generate human-like content has also raised questions about assessment in language education. Tasks such as essay writing are becoming more difficult to evaluate reliably, given the ease with which AI tools can generate text. There is a pressing need to develop alternative forms of assessment in language classrooms, according to Professor Jiang.

“To prepare language teachers for AI-supported assessment innovations,” he explains, “we supported teachers’ effective use of AI for multimodal assessment task design, implementation, and evaluation across four key learning stages.” This was done in projects funded by the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Government.

The team considered AI-supported multimodal assessment a timely response to the need for assessment innovations in today’s language and literacy classrooms. *Multimodal assessment* refers to assessment tasks that invite students to demonstrate their learning through multiple modes of communication, which include language. It allows students to represent meaning and learning with all of their linguistic, cultural, and communicative repertoires. Examples of multimodal assessment tasks include infographic abstracts, e-book narratives, and video documentaries.

For instance, rather than asking students only to write an essay, a teacher might ask them to create a short video documentary. Students would still be required to plan, write, speak, edit, and evaluate language, while also learning how images, subtitles, and voice work together to shape and communicate meaning across different modes.

“ To prepare language teachers to cater for diverse learning needs, we developed an original literacy continua model to specify clearly how classroom-based multimodal assessment can be designed across different key learning stages by attending to content, genre, mode, and design. ”



Professor George Jiang

Regarding *content*, the team guided teachers to set literacy purposes for multimodal assessment according to their classroom contexts. Next, they worked with teachers to identify purpose-specific *genres* as the target outputs of the classroom-based multimodal assessment. The teachers then considered *modal* accuracy, density, and cohesion to diversify task complexity as appropriate for their target learners. In the final dimension, *design*, the researchers suggested three patterns of AI use (automate, assist, augment) to facilitate multimodal meaning-making.

Using this literacy continua model, the team supported language teachers in designing and implementing coherent classroom-based multimodal assessment tasks across four key learning stages in primary and secondary education.

To help teachers evaluate students’ performance on multimodal assessment tasks, the team developed a genre-based model and rubrics that break evaluation into five distinct and assessable layers, including purpose, base unit, layout, navigation flow, and rhetoric. They further guided teachers to adapt the genre-based rubrics into peer feedback forms, based on which a series of formative assessment activities can be designed.

AI for Critical Digital Literacy

The effective use of AI in second language education depends largely on whether and how critical digital literacies are supported and developed, particularly for minoritised students with linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

“Students of ethnic minority backgrounds face additional challenges when using AI for learning English as a second or additional language,” Professor Jiang points out, “due to the unequal and uneven acceptance of those students’ home languages and cultures as learning resources by mainstream AI platforms.”

Not only are such platforms often modelled on English usage in mainstream Western societies, but language teachers – in Hong Kong and beyond – may not be fully equipped to teach critical digital literacies in today’s AI-saturated world.

Professor Jiang and his team addressed this challenge in a General Research Fund project supported by the Research Grants Council, in which they developed and validated a four-dimensional framework to prepare language teachers to teach critical digital literacies to Hong Kong students learning English as a second language.

The framework conceptualises the teaching of digital literacies in four dimensions: meaning-making as multimodal design; identity-related relationship building; supporting digital activism; and unpacking algorithmic biases in AI platforms. In each of these dimensions, the framework clearly specifies the knowledge and teaching strategies needed by language teachers.

“This framework was validated through two cycles of design-based research,” says Professor Jiang, “and the research findings have also been used to inform the design of literacy education courses in our teacher education programmes.”



▲ A student interacting with an AI tool in a multimodal assessment task.

Looking Ahead

Taken together, these initiatives point to a gradual shift in language and literacy education. AI is not replacing existing practices, but it is changing how language is used, taught, and assessed, opening up new possibilities for learning and communication. At the same time, careful implementation remains essential. Supporting teachers and students to engage with AI in thoughtful and informed ways will be key to widening its benefits.

FROM ASSESSMENT TO RECOVERY: THE ROLE OF AI IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPY

AI is opening new possibilities in speech-language pathology by transforming how communication disorders are identified, assessed, and treated. From supporting early detection to personalising intervention, AI-powered tools offer valuable opportunities to enhance clinical practice.

At the Faculty's Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development, Professor Anthony Kong, who specialises in aphasiology, stroke-induced aphasia, and multilingual communication disorders, has been working on AI-powered automatic speech recognition (ASR) and large language models (LLMs) for speech assessment. To him, AI developments are powerful support for clinical practice. "These technologies enable data-driven insights, realistic simulations, and tailored interventions that support both educators and learners," he explains.

A Critical Area for AI Innovation

Among the communication disorders, aphasia is distinguished by its complexity and its significant impact on daily life. Typically caused by stroke or brain injury, it involves heterogeneous language impairments that vary in type and severity depending on the location and extent of neural damage. Analysing impaired language often involves complex, multidimensional data requiring advanced analytical approaches. This is particularly the case among multilingual patients and those with co-occurring conditions, whose assessment and management require extensive expertise and resources.

Tracking recovery is also difficult. As Professor Kong notes, "Understanding recovery trajectories over time is challenging due to variability in therapy access and patient engagement," highlighting the need for better tools to monitor recovery in aphasia care.

AI for Aphasia Assessment

A recent project led by Professor Kong exemplifies these emerging affordances of AI in speech-language pathology. The project employed AI-powered ASR and LLMs, focusing on Cantonese-speaking individuals with post-stroke aphasia.

The process began with speech samples collected through clinical interviews or conversation-based tasks. These samples were transcribed into text by ASR systems trained on Cantonese data. The technology was designed to handle speech impairments while maintaining a high level of accuracy.

LLMs then analysed the transcribed speech, examining features such as vocabulary use, sentence structure, fluency, and grammatical accuracy. "AI algorithms detect speech errors, hesitations, and paraphasias, providing quantitative measures of speech impairment severity," Professor Kong explains. "The system can generate detailed reports that help clinicians understand the nature and extent of language deficits."

This is especially valuable because aphasic speech is often complex and highly variable. Automating transcription and linguistic analysis allows large amounts of speech data to be processed more rapidly and consistently. "By reducing the workload involved in manual transcription and analysis, these tools enable clinicians to focus more on patient care and customised treatment planning," he adds.

Extending Therapy Beyond the Clinic

Professor Kong and his team, comprising a graduate of the Faculty's Bachelor of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences programme, together with professors and a student from HKU's LKS Faculty of Medicine, have collaboratively developed *SpeechOn*, an AI-powered speech therapy platform for aphasia and post-stroke recovery.

"SpeechOn is an application designed to provide interactive exercises and tools to help users practise speech and language skills. It combines ASR, spaced repetition, and LLMs to support learning and recovery," Professor Kong says. Its AI-powered semantic analysis feature listens to users, analyses their speech, and delivers real-time guidance, supporting them to practise at home while receiving immediate, targeted feedback on their language use.

Such a tool expands opportunities for therapy, particularly for individuals with limited access to in-person sessions. It also promotes more consistent practice, which is critical for effective rehabilitation.



SpeechOn 說話易
AI 廣東話語言治療

▲ *SpeechOn App*

Implications for Teaching and Training

The growing use of AI in speech-language pathology also has substantial implications for education and professional preparation. It contributes to the development of sophisticated simulations and virtual environments for therapy and training, while giving students and future clinicians opportunities to engage with new diagnostic and therapeutic tools. As Professor Kong observes, "AI offers safe, scalable, and consistent opportunities for students to practise assessment and intervention skills, and also helps them build the technical literacy needed in healthcare settings that increasingly rely on digital systems."

Beyond strengthening clinical and technical skills, Professor Kong also highlights the value of interdisciplinary collaboration, with students working alongside data scientists, engineers, and clinical experts to address interconnected challenges from multiple perspectives.



▲ *The SpeechOn team presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention 2025 in Washington, D.C. The project was selected for the Centennial Session, which honours studies with exceptional innovation.*

The Role of Human Expertise

Although AI can improve efficiency and precision, it does not replace human expertise. Rather, it complements it.

"Human expertise remains essential for interpreting complex clinical contexts, cultural nuances, and individual patient needs that AI systems may not fully understand," Professor Kong emphasises.

Clinicians are still responsible for making diagnostic and treatment decisions, drawing on both AI-generated insights and their professional judgement. "Human interaction provides empathetic communication, emotional support, and personalised motivation that are critical in therapy and rehabilitation," he adds.

“ No matter how advanced AI gets, the human element remains crucial. Empathy, understanding, and personal connection are qualities that machines can't replicate. AI should support, not replace, the human touch in education. ”

Professor Anthony Kong



The Future of AI in Speech-Language Practice

In the coming years, AI is expected to play an increasingly prominent role in speech-language pathology. In aphasia research and practice, its ability to analyse extensive speech and language data could enhance early detection and diagnosis, enabling clinicians to intervene at earlier stages. At the same time, advances in data analysis can also reinforce highly personalised treatment plans based on each patient's communication profile and predicted therapy response.

Telehealth, remote monitoring, and adaptive digital exercises may further widen access to care, particularly for people in underserved or rural areas. Continuous and real-time tracking of patient progress would allow clinicians to adjust therapy more dynamically, while AI-powered exercises and virtual therapists could strengthen rehabilitation beyond clinical settings.

Although these developments offer notable potential, Professor Kong stresses that their integration must be thoughtfully managed. AI can provide precise and adaptable tools; however, effective care still relies on informed clinical judgement, contextual awareness, and individualised intervention. In Professor Kong's view, the future of speech-language therapy lies in using AI to complement clinical practice and in supporting more responsive, patient-centred care.

PEDAGOGY FIRST: RETHINKING SCIENCE LEARNING IN THE AGE OF AI

As GenAI is transforming education, questions about how it should be used in classrooms are increasingly important. For Professor Logan Chen, the focus is not on the technology itself, but on how it can support meaningful learning grounded in sound pedagogy.

GenAI has prompted a wave of experimentation in STEM education, offering tools that can generate lesson plans, support personalised learning, and simulate complex scientific phenomena. Yet, for Professor Logan Chen, Assistant Professor in the Faculty's Academic Unit of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, the starting point is not the technology, but the learner.

"We do not begin by asking how AI works," says Professor Chen. "We begin by asking how students' minds work, what cognitive processes make understanding possible, and what pedagogies are best suited to particular learning objectives."

This perspective shapes his teaching and curriculum design. Professor Chen and his team co-created an innovative pedagogy known as *Amicus Aristotle*, Latin for "Aristotle is my friend." It is an approach grounded in theory, evidence, and classroom experience. In contrast to starting with technology, it focuses on long-standing questions about how students develop scientific understanding and what kinds of learning experiences best support that process.

Understanding Misconceptions

Under this approach, a simple question is posed to the students: where does the mass of a tree come from? Many students answer soil or water. Few identify the correct source – carbon dioxide from the air, converted through photosynthesis.

These responses, however, are not merely mistakes. They reflect patterns of reasoning that have appeared throughout the history of science. Aristotle reasoned that the soil must be the tree's stomach, while centuries later, van Helmont concluded from his famous willow experiment that water alone was responsible for plant growth.

"Students who say that 'the tree eats the soil' are thinking like Aristotle," Professor Chen remarks. "These are signs of genuine reasoning, even if the conclusions do not align with modern scientific understanding."

One of the central challenges in science education is helping students address misconceptions – ideas that seem intuitive but are scientifically incorrect. Research in cognitive neuroscience suggests that such misconceptions are never fully erased. Instead, learners must develop the ability to

recognise incorrect ideas and consciously set them aside – a cognitive process known as inhibition. However, inhibition is rarely taught explicitly in classrooms where the emphasis tends to be on building new knowledge and integrating perspectives, rather than helping students refine or reject existing ideas.

Designing Learning Around Inhibition

To respond to this need, Professor Chen and his team developed – well before the emergence of AI – a teaching design for junior secondary students, combining the history of scientific ideas, LEGO Serious Play, and structured debate.

Students take on the roles of historical figures such as Aristotle, Thales, Palissy, and van Helmont, building LEGO models representing each scientist's theory and debating the validity of these explanations. Through this process, misconceptions are not only identified but also externalised and examined.

"Progress in science is not made by combining or balancing everyone's ideas, but by rejecting hypotheses and shifting paradigms," Professor Chen explains. "Students need to experience that process for themselves."

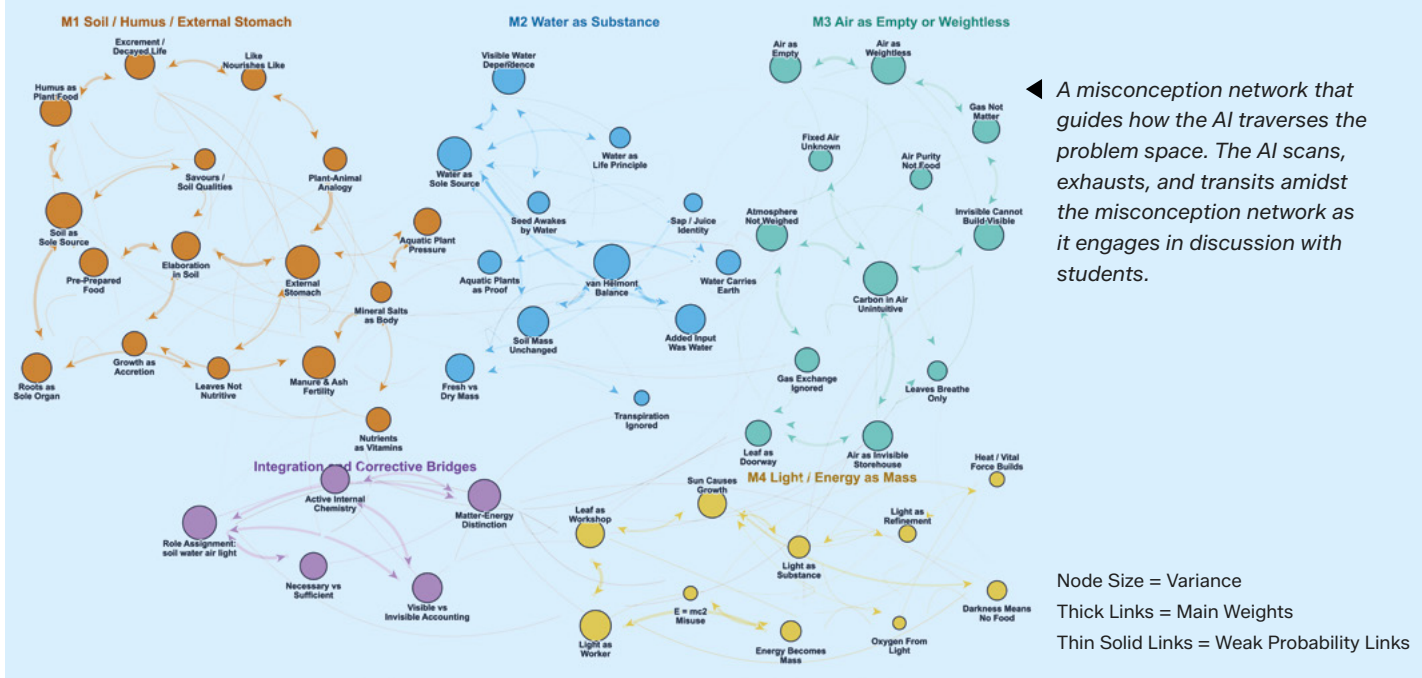
The approach proved effective in helping students reflect on their ideas. Still, it had limitations. In particular, it was difficult to show how misconceptions were interconnected across different theories and scientific fields.

When AI Completes the Pedagogy

The introduction of GenAI provided a way to address this limitation. Instead of replacing existing practices, AI was integrated to extend them.

The result is *Amicus Aristotle AI* (<https://amicusaristotle.ai>), an AI-empowered learning experience in which students engage in simulated conversations with historical scientists. Each AI persona has a biography, a theoretical framework, and a network of interconnected misconceptions.

"We had been looking for a way to make these connections visible through natural interaction," says Professor Chen. "When AI became available, it allowed those missing links to emerge."



Through these dialogues, students encounter multiple perspectives at once. Instead of examining a single idea in isolation, they are required to evaluate competing arguments and identify underlying assumptions.

Importantly, AI does not function in isolation. The curriculum still includes hands-on elements such as LEGO modelling and web-lab experiments, allowing students to test and refine their understanding across different modes of learning.

Collaborating with Teachers

The development of *Amicus Aristotle AI* involved close collaboration with educators. Professor Chen worked with the Faculty's Professor Kennedy Chan and a team of science teachers from Fanling Kau Yan College to refine the approach to ensure that it aligned with classroom practice and curriculum requirements.

This collaboration shaped not only the design of the teaching materials, but also teachers' own professional thinking. One teacher reported a shift from prioritising factual knowledge to exploring the evolution of ideas. Another reversed the teaching sequence to allow students to investigate concepts through inquiry rather than simply receiving knowledge through dictation.

As Professor Chen notes, this process highlights the importance of grounding innovation in classroom experience. Teachers' insights helped ensure that the project remained practical, meaningful, and responsive to students' needs.

Pedagogy Comes First

A consistent message runs through Professor Chen's work: pedagogy should come before technology.

He describes this as a distinction between AI-centred and AI-empowered education. The pedagogy – rooted in inhibition theory, the history of science, and embodied learning – is developed first, with technology introduced only where it provides clear and demonstrable value.

"When teachers have spent years working on a genuine pedagogical challenge, they recognise the missing piece when it finally appears," he reflects.



“ AI did not create the approach. It completed it. ”

Professor Logan Chen

Pedagogy and Practice in an AI Era

As AI continues to evolve, its role in education is likely to expand. For Professor Chen, the key question is how it can be integrated in ways that support deeper understanding.

The *Amicus Aristotle AI* project offers one example of how this can be achieved: by combining established pedagogical principles with new technological possibilities, and by grounding innovation in both research and practice.

"We are all built from the LEGO bricks of those who came before us," Professor Chen comments. "The challenge is to know which bricks belong and which must be set aside."

In this sense, the role of education remains consistent, even as tools evolve. As Professor Chen's work shows, helping students question, refine, and rethink their understanding prepares them not only to learn from the past, but also to engage critically with the knowledge and technologies of the future.



▲ Professor Logan Chen (second from right) and Professor Kennedy Chan (first from right) with the science teachers from Fanling Kau Yan College during a professional development workshop. They are holding a LEGO model representing their theory of plant nutrition.

AI, INEQUALITY, AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

GenAI is reshaping higher education, bringing both far-reaching opportunities and emerging challenges. While these tools can expand access to knowledge, they may also intensify existing inequalities in education and employment. How the education sector responds will play a crucial role in determining the longer-term impact of AI.

These concerns are core to the work of Professor Jisun Jung in the Faculty's Academic Unit of Social Contexts and Policies of Education. Her research examines how higher education policy and practice intersect with inequality, particularly in relation to learning, access, graduate outcomes and institutional responses to technological change.

Revolution or Reform?

For Professor Jung, the rise of AI needs to be understood as part of a historical trajectory of invention and innovation. From the Industrial Revolution in 18th-century Britain to the automation of manufacturing during the United States' 20th-century economic boom, new technologies have repeatedly transformed labour in pursuit of productivity gains. What makes AI distinctive, however, is the speed, scale, and scope of its impact.

Earlier waves of technological change mainly affected blue-collar jobs, reducing demand for heavy physical and industrial labour. Today, with the rise of AI, technologies are increasingly reaching white-collar and middle-class professions, including fields once considered to be relatively protected from automation.

A university degree was once a "safety net" for professionals in areas such as medicine, law, healthcare, science, literature, and journalism. In the age of AI, that protection seems to be weakening. As advanced knowledge becomes more accessible outside formal university admission, differences in resources, technological access, and skills are becoming more consequential.

Division and Inequality

Underlying these observations is the concept of the "digital divide," which Professor Jung describes as the widening of social and economic inequalities driven by unequal access to technological systems. This divide operates at all levels of education, and its effects accumulate over time: well-resourced institutions and more privileged students are better positioned to adapt to the AI era, while those lacking resources risk falling further behind.

The problem is not only unequal access to AI tools. AI systems – specifically large language models (LLMs) – are also shaped by the data and social contexts in which they are developed. "AI is trained to reflect and reproduce existing inequalities and norms in knowledge production," Professor Jung notes. "As a result, people are repeatedly exposed to similar perspectives, which can further entrench bias."

There is already evidence that the use of LLMs can reinforce structural inequalities related to gender, religion, ethnicity, and culture. Over time, these patterns may become more pronounced, widening both knowledge gaps and disparities in perspective among students and the wider population.

Outcomes for University Graduates

This trend is highly relevant to one of Professor Jung's key research streams: how university graduate employment is shaped by socio-economic conditions. Currently, many graduates are facing different forms of mismatch between their university experience and the demands of the employment landscape. These include gaps in skills, qualifications, geography, and identity.

What is driving this mismatch? A key factor, according to Professor Jung, is technological change, specifically automation, combined with the unequal capacity to adapt. The labour market is becoming increasingly polarised, with growth concentrated at the top and bottom, while the middle-level roles are shrinking.

Graduates from more advantaged backgrounds – including those from privileged families, prestigious institutions, or with diverse educational and professional pathways – are more likely to benefit from this shift. They tend to possess higher technological literacy and more advanced skills, making them more competitive in the workforce.

"On the other hand," says Professor Jung, "students from less advantaged backgrounds have fewer opportunities and face greater challenges in adapting to the evolving employment environment, where advanced skills and knowledge are increasingly required. They often lack the resources and training needed to adapt to these changes."

The Way Forward

For Professor Jung, the challenge is not whether we should reject emerging technologies, but how we should engage with them responsibly. The possibility of misuse does not necessarily mean that universities need to prohibit AI use. However, institutions should be cautious about rushing to introduce AI-related courses without first considering their pedagogical purposes.

“The education sector, and society as a whole, needs to make more deliberate choices about regulation, governmental responsibility, and the role of educational curricula in the age of AI. These decisions will shape how the benefits and risks of AI are distributed across different groups.”

Professor Jisun Jung

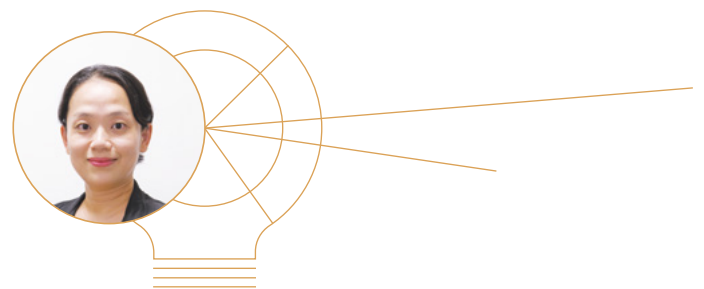
At the macro level, Professor Jung commented that government policy on AI should enforce responsible conduct, social inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. Within higher education, universities play a key role in preparing graduates for a future increasingly shaped by AI. This requires more than adding new courses or technical training; it calls for a fundamental shift in pedagogy.

Professor Jung is sceptical of purely lecture-based approaches to teaching ethical AI use. Providing information alone, she points out, is insufficient to convince today's students. For this reason, she advocates a student-centred, experiential model of learning.

"Students need to experience things for themselves: they should use AI to explore examples, identify problems, and develop solutions, then apply these insights to their own lives," she says. "They should also be given more opportunities to gain experience beyond the university, in society, and within their communities."

As AI continues to reshape the very concept of a profession, roles once defined by specialised knowledge and restricted access are changing. Professional identity is increasingly linked to creativity, flexibility and the ability to integrate expertise across disciplines and excel in hybrid roles.

Against this backdrop, Professor Jung emphasises that universities should cultivate independent and creative thinking in their students. This includes educating them to use AI constructively – as a collaborator that enhances thought and output, rather than as a substitute for intellectual engagement. She also highlights the importance of clear expectations and appropriate responses in cases of misuse, alongside recognition of AI's potential to foster high-quality learning when used in disciplined and reflective ways.



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IN ACTION: TURNING RESEARCH INTO SHARED UNDERSTANDING



By translating research on swallowing safety and food risk into everyday practice, Professor Karen Chan's work demonstrates how research can support safer care within the community. Her approach focuses on making knowledge accessible, practical, and relevant to daily life.

◀ Professor Karen Chan (sixth from left, back row) at the Care for You – Carefood Project results announcement in January 2026.

Swallowing safety is widely discussed, but not always clearly understood. In Hong Kong, questions about what is “safe to eat” are often shaped by fragmented information and uncertainty, particularly for older adults or individuals with medical conditions. This highlights a broader challenge: research can have greater impact when it is translated into clear, practical knowledge that people can understand and use with confidence.

Addressing this challenge is central to the work of Professor Karen Chan, Associate Professor in the Faculty's Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development and Director of the Swallowing Research Laboratory. Her work, recognised with the University's Knowledge Exchange Excellence Award in 2025, is built on long-term partnerships with care homes, food providers, social service organisations, and community stakeholders. Through these collaborations, her research has moved beyond the University and into real-life practice.

Starting from the Ground

Professor Chan's knowledge exchange (KE) efforts are rooted in close engagement with those directly affected. Over the years, she has encountered older adults struggling to eat safely, caregivers unsure how to prepare appropriate meals, and frontline staff working under pressure with limited training.

“When the late Professor Edwin Yiu and I completed a public policy project in 2015, we realised that there was a clear gap in services and knowledge around swallowing management for older adults,” she recalls. “That is when we started focusing more of our research and community projects on nursing homes.”

This early insight shaped Professor Chan's approach. Although scientific knowledge on swallowing safety already existed, it was not always accessible in forms that supported decision-making. Practices varied across care settings, and guidance could be difficult to interpret. These challenges pointed to the need for clearer and more usable ways of sharing research-based information.

From Research to Practice

These principles are reflected in Professor Chan's *Care for You – Carefood Project*. Funded by the HKEX Foundation, this project focuses on swallowing safety among older adults and individuals with medical conditions. Swallowing difficulties are common but often misunderstood, and inconsistent food texture can pose risks during daily meals.

A key aspect of the project has been Professor Chan's leadership in supporting the development of the Hong Kong Care Food Standards. Drawing on the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI), her team worked with local partners to adapt the framework into a standardised and scientifically validated approach for local care settings. Building on its local adoption, this work has also contributed to the development of Greater Bay Area standards for dysphagia diets, supporting cross-boundary alignment.

The IDDSI framework was translated into Traditional Chinese and published on the IDDSI global website, extending its use among Chinese-speaking communities worldwide. Together with the team's research data, these resources informed the Care Food Standards developed by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and have supported adoption both locally and internationally.

Instead of producing technical guidelines alone, the project aimed to make evidence applicable in practice. Professor Chan observed that caregivers and care-home staff might lack structured training and sufficient knowledge about swallowing difficulties and safe dysphagia management. Recognising this gap, training became an important part of the project's implementation. Caregivers were supported in understanding how food texture and drink thickness relate to swallowing safety, as well as in identifying potential risks in daily routines.

The project also involved collaboration with industry partners to develop ready-to-eat care food options. These products help reduce preparation pressures while maintaining safety and nutritional value, making them convenient and suitable for both care settings and families.

Over time, the impact of this work became visible. "I was very happy to see residents smiling and able to feed themselves while trying the care food products," Professor Chan reflects. "With the right support and environment, mealtimes can be an enjoyable experience, rather than just a task to complete."

Working Across Sectors

Implementing these changes required coordination across sectors, including care homes, service providers, and the food industry. Each group operates within its own constraints, making collaboration both complex and necessary.

"Different stakeholders have different priorities and restrictions," Professor Chan notes. "Ensuring that research-based standards can be adopted in practice often requires considerable resources and coordination." She adds that strong collective support has been vital. "I am very thankful that we have received great support from the Government, philanthropists, community partners, and industry partners in overcoming such challenges."

Her work has shown that sustained partnerships are essential to effective knowledge exchange. By working closely with practitioners and organisations over time, it becomes possible to align expectations, adapt solutions, and build shared practices.

Communicating Food Risk Beyond Care Settings

Beyond swallowing safety, Professor Chan also focuses on how food-related risks are communicated to the public. Rather than presenting technical information, she emphasises clarity, relatability, and practical understanding. "Using everyday examples and hands-on activities helps people understand the concepts and apply them in their own situations," she explains.

Public engagement has also helped reveal changes in awareness. During events such as the Gerontech and Innovation Expo, Professor Chan noted growing interest in swallowing management and care food among both the general public and the elderly service sector. This shift has encouraged her to expand her community-focused work.



▲ Professor Karen Chan (right) receives the Knowledge Exchange Excellence Award at the HKU Excellence Awards Presentation Ceremony for 2025.

Knowledge Exchange as a Continuing Journey

In 2025, Professor Chan received the University's Knowledge Exchange Excellence Award in recognition of the reach and impact of the *Carefood Project*. She views this as a shared achievement. "I am grateful to work with partners across different sectors who share the same mission and passion," she says. "The support from my team has also been crucial in creating this impact in the community."

Looking ahead, Professor Chan's work will continue to extend the reach of knowledge into day-to-day contexts. This includes developing more accessible resources, strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration across sectors, and contributing to initiatives in the Greater Bay Area.

She also sees education as a key part of this effort. For Professor Chan, empowering communities is not simply about providing information, but about building understanding and confidence.

“ Knowledge is power. By equipping the community with better knowledge of swallowing difficulties and management, we can improve the wellbeing of individuals with dysphagia and their caregivers. ”

Professor Karen Chan

Her future KE initiatives will continue to build on this approach, combining research, education, and community engagement to address identified needs. As awareness grows and practices evolve, the aim is to support more consistent and informed decision-making across care settings and the wider community.

At its core, Professor Chan's work reflects a clear direction: connecting research with lived experience, and ensuring that evidence can support choices in meaningful and sustainable ways.

Staff Achievements



Kintoy Professorship in Educational Technology

51st International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva – Silver Medal

Professor Timothy Hew



HKU Knowledge Exchange Excellence Award 2025

Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award 2025

Professor Karen Chan



Research Output Prize 2024-25

Professor Clarence Green



Faculty Outstanding Researcher Award 2024-25

Professor Hugo Horta



Faculty Outstanding Researcher Award 2024-25

Professor Zhang Xiao



Faculty Outstanding Young Researcher Award 2024-25

Professor Jesus Datu



Faculty Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award 2024-25

Professor Liz Jackson



2025 Faculty Early Career Research Output Award

Professor William Choi



Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award 2024-25

Dr Anthony Cheng



Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award 2024-25

Ms Nicole Tavares

Event Spotlights

How Can Comparative Education Give Hope in Difficult Geo-Political Times?

On July 7, 2025, the Faculty welcomed Professor Ruth Hayhoe of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, to deliver the distinguished lecture "How Can Comparative Education Give Hope in Difficult Geo-Political Times?", sponsored by the Tin Ka Ping Foundation.

In his opening remarks, Professor Yang Rui, Dean of Education, praised Professor Hayhoe's lifelong contributions to the field of comparative education and the profound impact of her work. He also pointed to the value of comparative education in fostering inclusivity and interconnectedness during times of uncertainty.

In the lecture, Professor Hayhoe explored how the principle of Harmony in Diversity, deeply rooted in Chinese civilisation, can offer hope in today's challenging geo-political climate. Drawing on examples from Chinese history, she advocated for understanding and respecting differences, rather than attempting to resolve contradictions, as a pathway to cultivating harmony and coexistence. She also introduced publications in comparative education that examine respectful and ethical approaches to managing comparison, and stressed the role of the field in fostering global citizenship.

The lecture was followed by a dialogue session with Professor Yang Rui, Professor Liz Jackson, and Professor Yang Lili. The exchange addressed the significance of understanding history and embracing diversity in this era of division, reflecting on how comparative education can contribute to a more hopeful world.



Event Highlights



The Inaugural HKU-THU Education Symposium: Educational Traditions in the Age of AI: What and How?



The Faculty and the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) co-hosted the captioned symposium on November 7, 2025. Organised in collaboration with the School of Education at Tsinghua University (THU), the symposium attracted over 400 participants joining online and featured presentations from eight speakers from HKU and THU, fostering dynamic dialogue on the evolving role of education in the age of AI.

The symposium opened with remarks by Professor Yang Rui, Dean of Education, and Professor Wen Wen, Vice Dean in the School of Education at THU. They both emphasised the enduring value of educational traditions while stressing the importance of reimagining them in response to rapid technological change and the emerging challenges of the AI era. They also reaffirmed the shared commitment of HKU and THU to serving society.

The symposium brought together a range of perspectives on the evolving relationship between humans and AI, exploring the philosophical foundations of AI, its educational applications, and broader social implications. Discussions examined the role of AI in higher education, the experiences of Chinese scholars in the age of AI, and the enduring significance of "Cong You" in the traditional teacher-student relationship. Speakers also reflected on the use of AI in classroom dialogue and family contexts, highlighting its potential to enrich both teaching and parent-child interactions. The event concluded with a discussion chaired by Professor Jeremy Rappleye, Director of the CERC, and Professor Wen Wen, reiterating the importance of balancing tradition and innovation in shaping the future of education.

The Road to Educational Success: Experiences from the New Education Initiative

The Faculty of Education and the Yidan Prize Foundation jointly hosted a lecture on December 5, 2025, centred on the topic “The Road to Educational Success: Experiences from the New Education Initiative”. The lecture was delivered by Professor Zhu Yongxin, Founder of the New Education Initiative (NEI) and 2022 Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureate. Drawing on two decades of work advancing educational equity and inclusion, Professor Zhu shared how the NEI has driven meaningful transformation in education across China through action.

Professor Gong Peng, Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) of HKU, commended Professor Zhu’s contributions to education in China and beyond in his welcome remarks. He also emphasised the crucial role of teachers in addressing educational challenges through innovation and a global perspective.

In the lecture, Professor Zhu outlined the NEI’s guiding principles and its focus on prioritising students’ growth through ten key actions. The initiative seeks to help students and teachers lead fulfilling and meaningful educational journeys. He stated the importance of cultivating a culture of reading and strengthening teacher development, and also discussed the integration of AI in education, noting that the essence of education lies in shaping souls and nurturing talent. Professor Zhu further highlighted the significant progress of the NEI, which has engaged more than 11,000 schools and benefited over 10 million teachers and students nationwide by 2025.

The event concluded with a dialogue session moderated by Professor Cheng Kai Ming, Emeritus Professor of the Faculty, exploring how the NEI’s people-centred philosophy can inform future educational development.



HKU Alumni Day 2026

The Faculty welcomed alumni back to campus for a memorable HKU Alumni Day on March 14, 2026. This year’s event was especially meaningful as it formed part of HKU’s 115th Anniversary celebrations, bringing together alumni, their families, and friends for a day filled with fun, discovery, and community spirit.



One of the highlights was the Faculty booth, where participants took part in interactive activities and refreshed their knowledge about HKU and the Faculty through a series of questions. The activities not only brought smiles to many faces, but also strengthened alumni connections with the Faculty.

Alumni also explored the importance of vocal health through the activity “Green Voice: Understanding Vocal Health and Care”, which included games and practical tips shared by speech therapists and students. At the “Speech Therapy Navigator” session, hands-on demonstrations and dynamic activities offered insights into how speech, language, and feeding skills are supported across different populations.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for alumni to reconnect with the Faculty and learn more about its current work and initiatives.

From Legacy to Leadership: Reimagining Higher Education Governance in Hong Kong

The Faculty hosted the captioned event on April 1, 2026 to explore how Hong Kong's universities can navigate global uncertainties and enhance their strategic position in the international higher education landscape. The dialogue featured Professor Simon Marginson, Visiting Research Professor at the HKU Faculty of Education, Professor of Higher Education at the University of Bristol, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Oxford; and Professor James Tang, Secretary-General of the University Grants Committee.

Professor Marginson emphasised Hong Kong's distinctive strengths, including high public confidence in universities and its role as a bridge between East and West. He pointed to the city's pluralistic identity, global connectivity, and potential to serve as an international forum for dialogue on global issues.

Offering a policy and governance perspective, Professor Tang highlighted that Hong Kong's higher education institutions benefit from sustained government commitment, strong societal support, and growing international student interest. He also drew attention to key challenges, including maintaining social relevance, balancing autonomy with accountability, and addressing issues of trust, stressing the need for openness and deeper local-international collaboration.

The dialogue was moderated by Professor Liz Jackson and also featured Professor Jisun Jung. Professor Jackson noted that Hong Kong's strength lies in its ability to leverage diversity to foster meaningful global collaboration. Professor Jung underscored the city's strong international networks and research support, while calling for greater local engagement, system growth, and broader views of academic excellence.

During the Q&A session, participants raised questions on academic mobility, cultural diversity, and interdisciplinary collaboration, enriching the discussion with diverse perspectives.



Event Highlights



Education Summit 2026

The Faculty of Education and the London Ball Foundation co-hosted the Education Summit 2026 on April 19, under the theme "Artificial Intelligence & Cross-Cultural Intelligence". The Summit brought together more than 400 participants to explore the implications of AI for education and the growing importance of cross-cultural understanding.

In his welcome remarks, Professor Xiang Zhang, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU, emphasised the need to ensure that AI serves to bridge cultural and generational divides. Professor Sandy Lau, Chairlady of the London Ball Foundation, highlighted the need to build mutual understanding and draw on the wisdom of traditional Chinese education.

The Summit was honoured by the presence of Dr Jeff Sze, Under Secretary for Education of the HKSAR, who reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening Hong Kong as an international post-secondary hub, including efforts to attract global talent and expand opportunities for students.

In his keynote speech, Professor Xiang Zhang stressed that education should nurture not only technical proficiency but also curiosity, creativity, and values that extend beyond AI capabilities. He illustrated these ideas by sharing HKU's latest developments in the field. Another keynote speaker, Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost of University College London (UCL), spoke about the urgent need for universities to foster intercultural competence, respectful dialogue, and diversity.

The Summit also featured two panel discussions. The first examined AI's role in shaping cultural understanding in education, including the development of culturally aware AI and cultural representation within AI systems. The second discussed how AI is supporting more student-centred learning experiences and the evolving role of educators.

By addressing critical issues at the intersection of technology and culture, the Summit sparked meaningful exchange and offered fresh perspectives on the future of education.



Event Highlights





World University Rankings for Education



U.S. News &
World Report
2026-2027



Quacquarelli
Symonds (QS)
2026



Times Higher
Education (THE)
2026

Our Undergraduate Programmes

- Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education in Language Education — English [BA&BE(LangEd)-Eng]
- Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education in Language Education — Chinese [BA&BE(LangEd)-Chin]
- Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Science [BEd&BSc]
- Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education and Special Education [BEd(ECE&SE)]
- Bachelor of Science in Speech-Language Pathology [BSc(SLP)]#
- Bachelor of Science in Information Management [BSc(IM)]
- Bachelor of Science in Applied Child Development [BSc(ACD)]
- Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Social Data Science [BAsc(SDS)]

Formerly known as Bachelor of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences

Our Postgraduate Programmes

- Doctor of Philosophy [PhD]
- Doctor of Education [EdD]
- Master of Philosophy [MPhil]
- Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages [MA(TESOL)]
- Master of Education [MEd]
- Master of Science in Audiology [MSc(Audiology)]
- Master of Science in Technology, Design and Leadership for Learning [MSc(TDLL)]*
- Master of Science in Library and Information Management [MSc(LIM)]
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education [PGDE]
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language) [PGDE(TCSL)] (self-funded)

* Formerly known as Master of Science in Information Technology in Education



[More Info](#)

Faculty Souvenirs



Coffee Cup



Eco Bag



Luggage Tag



Coaster



PU Leather Pouch



Wooden Pen

Explore More



Connect with Us

To maintain close ties with the Faculty and the University, you are invited to inform us of any change in your contact details by sending the update to:

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Company name and address _____

For alumni only

Year of graduation _____ Programme _____

Giving to the Faculty

Your support is essential in shaping the Faculty's long-term and sustainable development, and providing a life-changing impact to members of our next generation.



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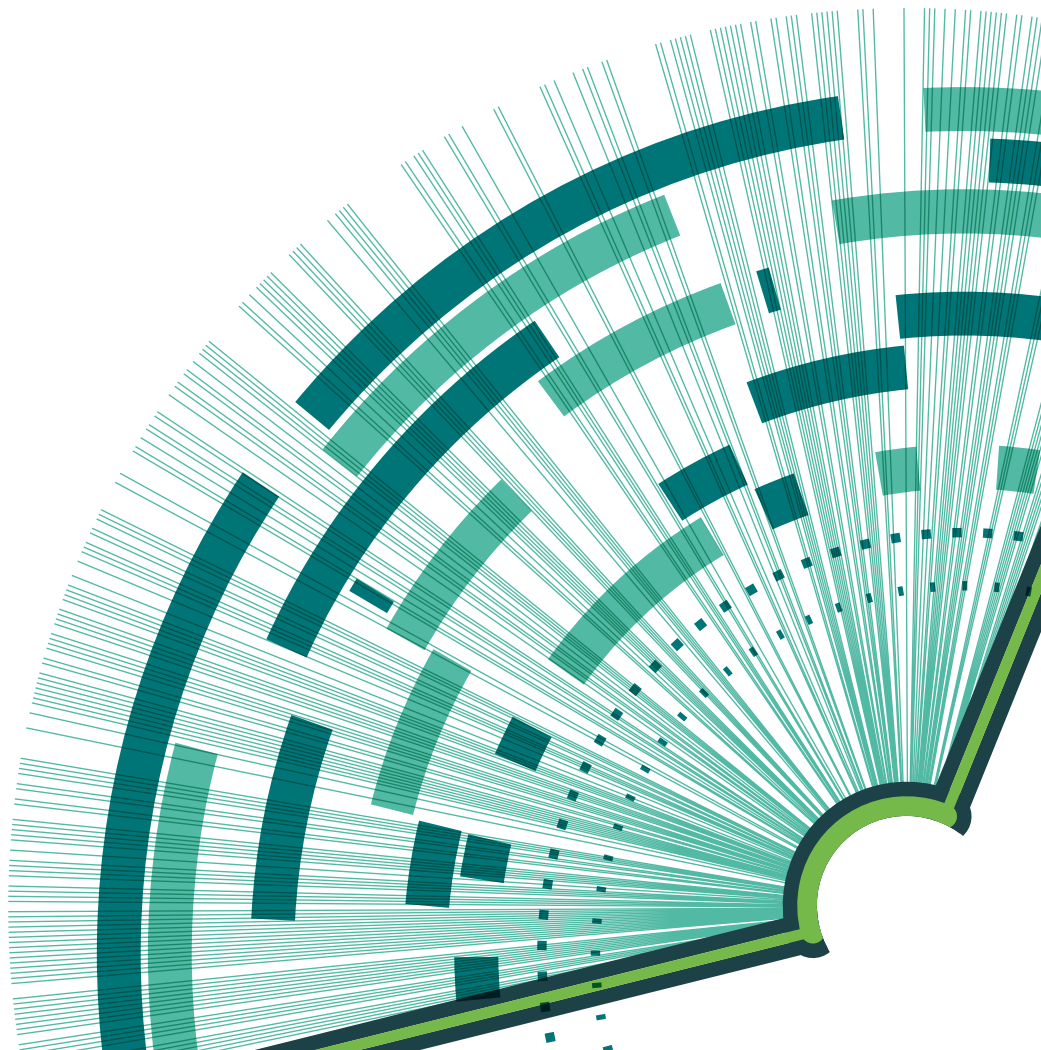
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