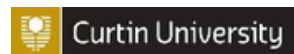




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## Teachers for every student

West Australian, Perth



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# Teachers for every student

**ALEX  
JENKINS**



What if I told you that we now have the technology available to offer every child in the world — regardless of their location or socio-economic status — a one-on-one tutor? It might sound far-fetched but with the rapid advances in artificial intelligence, I expect we will see major steps towards making this a reality in the next six to 12 months.

Our current model of educating children has served us well but it's outdated given the concept was originally born out of the industrial revolution as a means of upskilling more people for factory work. And don't get me wrong, there are plenty of positives about the way we teach children, including offering the vast benefits of education to more people than ever before and breaking down significant barriers to education, without mentioning the social and emotional benefits.

But we are at a critical turning point for the transformation of education and we have the power to help every child across the globe if we harness the benefits of artificial intelligence right now and carefully.

We have the power to kickstart an education revolution in the next year or we risk falling behind forever.

I can picture a world where a teacher is standing at the front of the classroom while every

child is gaining the immense benefits of one-on-one tutoring in the STEM subjects, particularly mathematics.

The technology already exists with the proved results to turn a below-average student into an above-average student — and even an average student into an excellent pupil — improving their educational outcomes by up to two standard deviations.

While we have never before had the resources available to provide a tutor for every child, the possibility of virtual education assistants is now just within reach.

We seriously need to consider a model where every classroom has a teacher and 30 virtual education assistants guiding students at their own pace, ensuring they master a concept before moving on to the next one. This will free teachers up to do what they do best — work with children in a more hands-on role — and it also has the added benefit of saving them valuable time with less marking.

While some are scared of the power of artificial intelligence amid talk of dystopian theories, fears of cheating and speculation of bans to combat the negative publicity, I believe the risks can be minimised and the benefits far outweigh any potential hazards.

Sure, there are glitches that need to be addressed before we are at the point of rolling out a tutor to every child across the planet but the way the technology is advancing, these hiccups can be simply managed in small-scale trials.

There is obviously so much more to a child's learning

experience than simply educational outcomes and a machine will never replace the social, emotional, communication, behavioural and hands-on benefits that a

traditional school environment of fers.

We never want our children to be sitting in front of a computer all day at the expense of those equally important lessons.

Artificial intelligence is not a magic bandaid and it can't replace the role of teachers as valuable mentors and role models but it is a vital tool in a teacher's toolkit that we can't ignore. There are also significant benefits for teachers with artificial intelligence having the power to notably boost productivity by creating lesson plans and class exercises for various skill levels in a matter of seconds.

It's this type of technology that will transform every sector of our economy — and if your business, workplace or organisation isn't thinking about how artificial intelligence can change the way you do things, you're already on the back foot. That's why our upcoming Data and AI for Business Conference and Exhibition, on August 2 and 3, will explore the artificial intelligence revolution for anyone, regardless of their knowledge of the field.

For me, my passion for innovation and learning started as a child when I would join my brother at monthly computer garage sales where we eventually cobbled together enough spare parts to build our own computer for next to nothing.

That is the power of



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technology — and it's that drive that pushes me to advocate for a future where a greater number of the world's population is more literate, better at maths, critical thinkers and generally more educated with fewer children falling behind.

**Alex Jenkins is director of the WA Data Science Innovation Hub based at Curtin University**

I can picture a world where every child is gaining the immense benefits of one-on-one tutoring in the STEM subjects.

