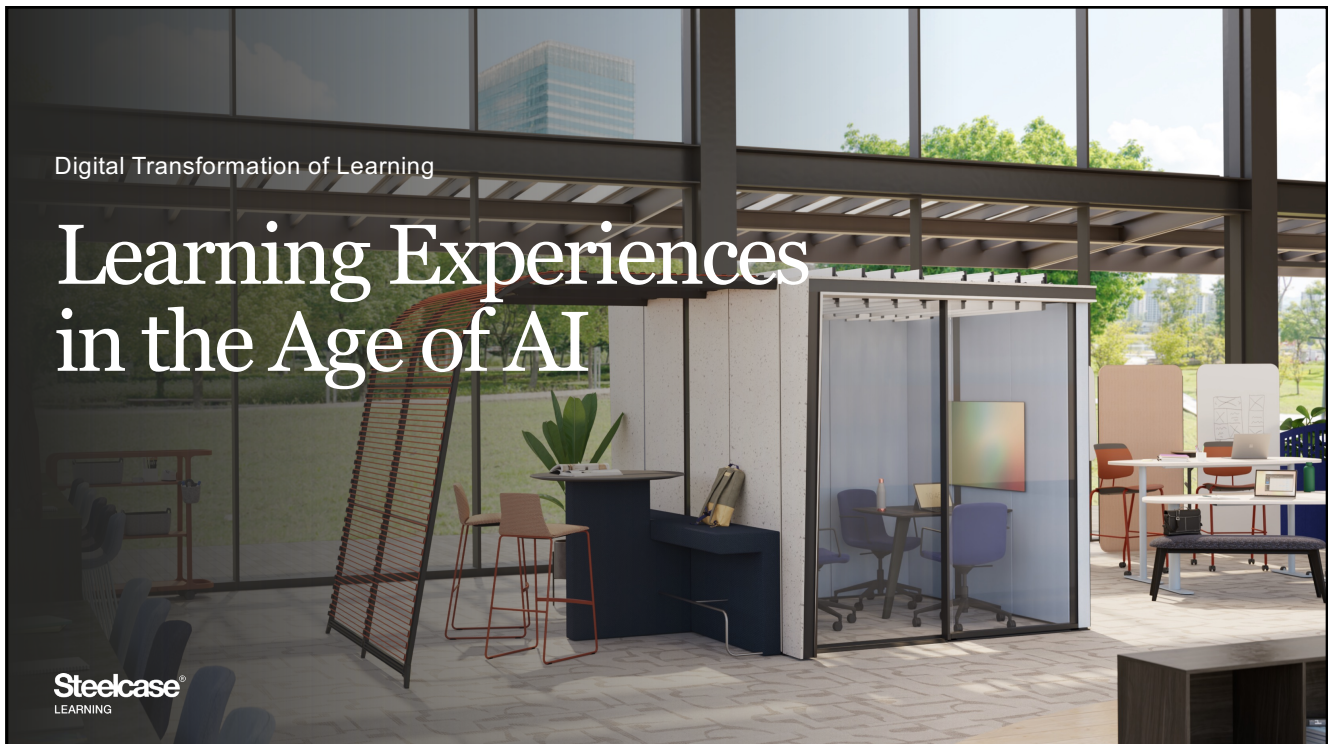




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Introductions



Patricia Wang
Steelcase
Principal Researcher



Jordan Smith
Steelcase
Principal Researcher



Andrew Kim
Steelcase
Director, Research +
Innovation

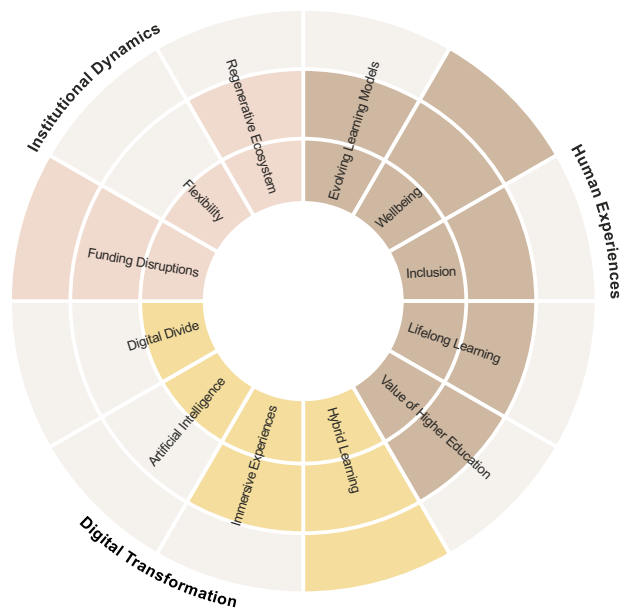


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As AI reshapes learning experiences,
how can spaces support deeper
understanding, stronger connections
and greater ownership of learning?

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What We Know

The Forces Shaping Learning's Future

We track shifts in human experience, technology and institutional priorities to understand what they could mean for learning.

Foresight Forces Maturity Ranking:



4

Learning Spaces Have Always Evolved With Technology



1960s – 1970s

Central Computing

Shared computers brought students into dedicated rooms.



1970s – 1990s

Personal Computing

Desktop computers shaped labs and fixed workstations.



2000s – 2010s

Mobile Computing

Laptops and mobile devices expanded where students learn.



2020 – Present

Computing Everywhere

Connected and immersive technologies are reshaping spaces.

New Tensions Put Human Skills in Focus

Connects & Disconnects

As technology expands access, how do we help students feel part of the learning experience?

Efficiency & Friction

As technology makes answers easier to find, how do we preserve the thinking that builds understanding?

Consume or Create

As technology offers a starting point, how do we encourage students to question, explore and shape their own ideas?

What We Know

New Tensions Put Human Skills in Focus

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Connects & Disconnects

As technology expands access, how do we help students feel part of the learning experience?

Social Intelligence

Building relationships, understanding perspectives and practicing empathy.

Efficiency & Friction

As technology makes answers easier to find, how do we preserve the thinking that builds understanding?

Critical Thinking

Questioning information, evaluating evidence and forming independent judgements.

Consume or Create

As technology offers a starting point, how do we encourage students to question, explore and shape their own ideas?

Creativity & Agency

Developing original ideas and choosing how technology supports learning.

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Human-centered design process

Research Topics

- AI Learning Experiences
- Teacher Prep in the Age of AI
- 3-D AI Environments
- Immersive Learning
- Hybrid Learning

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Human-Centered Design Process

1	2	3
Understand	Observe	Synthesize
4	5	6
Realize	Prototype	Measure

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AI is reshaping teaching and learning experiences.

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AI's Expanding Role in Education

“AI is changing the face of education across all avenues. How we teach. How we do assessments. How we make business decisions on the administration side.”

Executive Vice President &
Chief Medical Officer
Private University

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10

The capability of AI is expanding.

Perceptive AI

Recognizes and interprets information, such as speech and images.

Generative AI

Creates content, summarizes information and develops ideas.

Agentic AI

Plans and carries out tasks toward a defined goal.

Physical AI

Interacts with the physical world through devices and robotics.

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Jensen Huang, Nvidia, 2025



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Institutions expect AI to change how teaching and learning happen.

Over the next five years, institutions anticipate:

99%

More online and hybrid classes

97%

More interdisciplinary classes

93%

More project-based learning

92%

More discussion-based, flipped classrooms

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Steelcase Chooser Survey (2026)



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Students are making AI part of everyday learning.

"I like to ask ChatGPT to explain stuff to me like I'm a toddler, and that really helps my base understanding."

Cybersecurity Major
Public, four-year institution

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Study Support

Asking AI to explain difficult concepts, generate practice questions and help test their understanding.

Writing Support

Using AI to brainstorm ideas, organize drafts and refine writing through feedback and proofreading.

Personalization

Turning course material into summaries, study guides or audio that fit how they prefer to learn.

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Faculty are rethinking how they teach.

"I'm not going to stop them from being able to use AI. It's gonna be a part of their lives, so I want them to know how to use it responsibly"

Business & Management Professor
Private, Four-Year institution

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Course Design

Using AI to brainstorm syllabi, develop learning activities and explore approaches to assessment.

Teaching Materials

Developing presentations and generating sample work for students to analyze and critique.

Evaluating Work

Using AI to identify patterns across submissions and explore signs of possible AI use.

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AI is changing
what learning
spaces need to
support.



Technology-Light Spaces

Classrooms and shared spaces support conversation, reflection and hands-on learning with minimal reliance on digital tools.

Technology-Rich Spaces

Connected classrooms, studios and commons support digital collaboration, content creation and immersive experiences.

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As learning continues to evolve,
the opportunity is not simply to
introduce more technology into
every space, but to align
environments with the needs of
different learning experiences.

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Insights

01

AI can speed up answers
but limits deeper learning

02

AI can standardize
student thinking

03

AI can further weaken
social connections

04

AI interactions are becoming
more immersive and intuitive

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Insights

01

AI can speed up
answers
but limits
deeper learning

Design Principle

Design for the Process over the Product of Learning

Give students places to share work in progress,
explain their thinking and work through challenges
together. Pair shared writing surfaces with flexible
settings for discussion, practice and reflection.

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02

AI can
standardize
student
thinking

Design Principle

Design for Creative Exploration & Divergent Thinking

Give students places to explore alternatives, test ideas and learn through making. Pair hands-on work surfaces with space to display experiments, compare approaches and discuss different perspectives.

03

AI can further
weaken social
connections

Design Principle

Design for Connection & Belonging

Create welcoming places where students can meet, exchange ideas and learn together. Combine small-group settings with informal gathering spaces that invite conversation and make it easy to join in.

04

AI interactions
are becoming
more immersive
and intuitive

Design Principle

Provide more vibrant,
dynamic 2D and 3D
environments

Design environments that support emerging forms of interaction, enabling learners to engage with digital content through spatial, immersive, and multimodal experiences.

Insights and Design Principles

01

AI can speed up answers
but limits deeper learning

Design for the process over
the product of learning

02

AI can standardize
student thinking

Design for creative exploration
and divergent thinking

03

AI can further weaken
social connections

Design for connection and
belonging

04

AI interactions are becoming
more immersive and intuitive.

Provide more vibrant, dynamic 2D
and 3D environments



Thoughtfully designed campus spaces can support students and faculty as AI reshapes teaching and learning experiences.

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