Stanford Accelerator for Learning

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH LEARNING

The Stanford Accelerator for Learning harnesses data, technology, and breakthroughs in the brain and learning sciences to catalyze discovery and scale research-driven solutions in education. We envision a world where innovation opens the door to effective and joyful learning for all.

A NEW VISION FOR LEARNING

About the Stanford Accelerator for Learning

Learning well drives personal growth and correlates with positive outcomes, from health to wealth to democracy. Many current educational solutions are legacies of the 150-year push to make universal education: one teacher lecturing in front of a packed classroom, a set curriculum, and a uniform pace. This structure did not account for differences in how students learn or what they need to succeed. Now, with rapid advances in the science of learning, data, and technologies like artificial intelligence, we can finally optimize for learning and not solely for student throughput.

The Stanford Accelerator for Learning is a university-wide initiative anchored by the Stanford Graduate School of Education. The accelerator harnesses the unrivaled talent of Stanford to nurture and scale ground-breaking discoveries and innovations. Hundreds of faculty and students from all seven schools are working alongside policymakers, entrepreneurs, philanthropies, school districts, educators, and more.

The accelerator creates portfolios of excellence where there is great need and great promise for improvement. It resources interdisciplinary teams with grants and dedicated technical, research, and learning experts. The accelerator attracts partners who enable teams to transform promising innovations into delivered solutions. The Stanford Accelerator for Learning brings the benefits of learning well to the world.

AN INNOVATION HUB FOR LEARNING

The Stanford Accelerator for Learning has identified six areas in urgent need of evidence-based solutions. Breakthroughs in these areas have the potential to impact a wide variety of learners and broadly benefit society.

Digital Learning and Artificial Intelligence

Faculty director: Dan Schwartz, I. James Quillen Endowed Dean of the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, Halper Family Faculty Director of the Stanford Accelerator for Learning, Nomellini & Olivier Professor of Educational Technology

Digital learning tools, including those powered by artificial intelligence (AI), give us the opportunity to rethink what—and how—people learn. When guided by the science of learning, these tools have the potential to create more effective, inclusive, and personalized learning experiences that empower students. The accelerator is helping educators and policymakers navigate these rapidly evolving technologies and ensure that they enhance—not diminish—students' creativity, critical thinking, and learning. The program funds interdisciplinary research; builds digital literacy through professional learning experiences for educators and education leaders; and hosts conferences that bring researchers, teachers, and technologists together to chart the future of learning.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: CLASSROOM-READY RESOURCES ABOUT AI FOR TEACHING (CRAFT)

The CRAFT AI literacy platform publishes free and adaptable instructional resources to help high school teachers educate students about how to explore, understand, question, and critique AI. "How can AI help a community prepare for a flood?" "How efficient is the human brain compared to AI?" and "What are the ethical implications of AI-generated artwork?" are just a few of the many topics covered in the platform's growing library of lesson plans and other resources. Through CRAFT, the accelerator is preparing young people for an AI-powered economy—one in which AI literacy will be an essential skill.

Systems Change for Advancing Learning and Equity (SCALE)

Faculty director: Susanna Loeb, Professor of Education

SCALE improves educational opportunities for K–12 students by scaling promising innovations, approaches, and policies. Even when research-backed solutions exist, implementing them widely is often difficult because each school or district has unique needs and challenges. SCALE addresses this by rapidly testing and refining interventions; connecting educators, policymakers, and researchers across institutions to equip decision makers with tools that work in the field; and broadly sharing effective strategies. Through collaborative research, practical tools, and engagement with decision makers, SCALE integrates research, policy, and practice to drive meaningful improvements in education.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: THE NATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT ACCELERATOR

The National Student Support Accelerator (NSSA) conducts research on tutoring and other personalized, relationship-centered student support strategies and translates insights into action on the ground. NSSA has contributed more than 60 research studies to the body of evidence on high-impact tutoring and informed statewide programs and policies in Florida, Michigan, and Oregon. NSSA has also created more than 40 practical tools for educators and advised hundreds of school districts, tutoring providers, and others around the country.

Early Childhood Learning and Development

Faculty director: Philip Fisher, Diana Chen Professor of Early Childhood Learning

The Stanford Center on Early Childhood's work supports young children and families during a critical period of rapid brain development that can shape the course of children's lives. The center brings together researchers, educators, community groups, and policymakers to design programs, conduct research, and share practical solutions that help children thrive.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: RAPID

Launched nationally in April 2020, the RAPID Survey Project initially gathered information about the well-being of young children and their caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, RAPID has continued to capture timely snapshots of families' experiences and has heard from more than 23,000 parents and 15,000 childcare providers nationwide. Today, the project is a valuable source of information for practitioners, government agencies, and other stakeholders hoping to identify and address critical challenges for early learners, their families, and educators.

Equity in Learning

Faculty director: Maisha T. Winn, Excellence in Learning Graduate School of Education Professor

While equity is embedded in all of the accelerator's projects, Equity in Learning is focused primarily on addressing persistent educational disparities and analyzing the roles of race, culture, poverty, community, and identity in learning and teaching. The accelerator's work in this area studies past social movements to inform today's fight for educational equity, creates practical tools for educators, and invests in research that drives real change in classrooms and policies. By connecting students, faculty, and communities, Equity in Learning fosters accountability, continuous learning, and shared responsibility for progress.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: FUTURING FOR EQUITY LAB

The Futuring for Equity Lab convenes researchers and designers from across disciplines to help children and families imagine and build thriving futures—a process the lab calls "futuring." Through hands-on social design experiments, the lab helps parents and caregivers develop tools that empower them to plan educational futures for children, envisioning educational paths that span up to 10 years into the future.

Learning Differences and the Future of Special Education

Faculty director: Chris Lemons, Professor of Special Education

Many students have learning differences, but most teachers have not received enough training to meet their needs. There is also a severe shortage of special education teachers, and research on how to effectively teach diverse learners often fails to make its way into everyday practice. These challenges contribute to low graduation rates and limited opportunities for children with learning differences. The accelerator is addressing these issues by bringing together experts from multiple fields—including neuroscience, education, technology, and policy—to design and share practical, inclusive solutions.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: RAPID ONLINE ASSESSMENT OF READING (ROAR)

ROAR, developed at the Brain Development & Education Lab at Stanford, enables school districts to assess their entire student populations for struggling readers in the time it currently takes to run a standard assessment on a single student. This online tool transforms educators' ability to identify struggling young readers—previously a costly task requiring one-on-one time with a teacher or reading specialist. Moreover, it helps educators detect potential challenges and provide appropriate interventions in a child's journey. In addition, the tool is advancing research into the causes of reading difficulties in children. It is now used in school districts across more than 20 states.

Adult and Workforce Learning

Faculty director: Candace Thille, Associate Professor of Education

As technology races ahead, adults who can access new knowledge and skills will be far more likely to succeed in an evolving labor market. The accelerator is leveraging advances in technology, science, and design in partnership with companies and nonprofits to prepare working learners for dynamic opportunities throughout their lives by creating new ways of learning and tools for learning.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: PEOPLE WHO HELP OTHER PEOPLE LEARN

In addition to formally trained teachers, there are many others who help people learn—mentors, community health workers, and tutors, to name a few. These teachers have invaluable contextual and cultural insight yet often lack structured educational training. The People Who Help Other People Learn program provides seed grants for research projects that pioneer the use of technology to make these educators more effective. Examples of supported projects include AI-driven coaching for university section leaders and a tool that equips nail technicians with the skills to educate clients on melanoma prevention and detection.

IT TAKES ALL OF US, INCLUDING YOU.

We don't just measure success by what happens at Stanford—our vision is to accelerate solutions to the most pressing challenges facing learners far beyond campus. When learners of all kinds flourish, it lays the foundation for a brighter future.

Solutions felt by all require help from all—we can't do this alone. When we come together across disciplines, expertise, and life experience, we make progress. Please join us.

The Stanford Accelerator for Learning is an initiative of the Stanford Graduate School of Education. For more information, please visit acceleratelearning.stanford.edu

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