

Exploring Educational Futures: A Comparative Analysis of AI-Generated Utopian and Dystopian Scenarios

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Abstract

This presentation explores potential educational futures through an innovative methodological approach: employing advanced AI chatbots as speculative agents. Three leading AI systems—GPT-4o, Gemini 2.0 Flash, and DeepSeek R1—were prompted to generate both utopian and dystopian scenarios for education, including detailed narratives of student experiences within these imagined futures. Thematic analysis of these scenarios reveals striking patterns across four key dimensions: equity and accessibility, creativity and critical thinking, technology integration, and social connectivity. In utopian visions, AI-powered personalization enables more equitable access to resources, while fostering global collaboration and creative problem-solving. Conversely, dystopian scenarios warn against surveillance, standardization, and widening socioeconomic divides. The imagined futures differ notably in their conceptualization of human agency, sustainability, and resistance to technological control. Perhaps most revealing is how the AI systems frequently position artificial intelligence itself as a central driver of educational transformation, reflecting assumptions embedded in their design. This methodological innovation not only offers fresh insights into possible educational trajectories but also serves as a critical lens for examining the values embedded in AI systems themselves. The findings contribute to ongoing discourse about educational futures by illuminating both opportunities and risks of technological integration while offering a framework for stakeholders to navigate the ethical implementation of AI in education. The study demonstrates the value of speculative methodologies in education research while highlighting the importance of human values guiding technological development.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, educational futures, speculative methods, thought experiment, utopia