World Conference on
Teaching, Learning, and Education

16 - 18 October 2026

Milan , Italy

Understanding Educational Transformation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Human-Centred Perspective on Educational Change

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most influential developments in contemporary education, generating growing interest in its potential to transform teaching, learning, assessment, and educational practice. Existing research has made important contributions by examining AI adoption, personalised learning, digital competence, institutional readiness, ethical considerations, and professional development. However, much of this literature begins with technological innovation itself, implicitly positioning AI as the primary driver of educational transformation. Comparatively less attention has been given to the interpretive processes through which educators construct professional meaning before technological innovation influences educational practice.

This conceptual paper argues that educational transformation begins earlier, with the ways educators interpret and construct professional meaning around technological change before translating it into practice. Drawing on research in teacher cognition, professional identity, reflective practice, educational change, and professional agency, the paper develops a human-centred perspective that positions educators as the principal agents of educational transformation.

To explain this process, the paper introduces the Professional Meaning-Making Framework for Educational Transformation (PMM Framework). The framework proposes that educators interpret AI through the interaction of their beliefs, professional identities, prior experiences, educational values, contextual realities, and reflective judgement. Professional meaning-making therefore mediates the relationship between technological innovation and educational practice, helping to explain why similar technologies often lead to different practices across educators and contexts.

The paper concludes by discussing the implications of this perspective for educational research, professional learning, educational leadership, and policy. Rather than viewing AI as the direct source of

educational transformation, it argues that technological innovation becomes educationally meaningful and transformative only through educators' professional meaning-making and judgement.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Educational Change; Educational Transformation; Professional Identity; Professional Meaning-Making; Teacher Cognition