

Brave New Words: How AI Will Revolutionize Education (and Why That's a Good Thing)

Salman Khan (Penguin Random House, New York, 2024), 265

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming education and Salman Khan's *Brave New Words: How AI Will Revolutionize Education* offers a compelling exploration of this shift. The book, organized into eight chapters, examines the role of AI—particularly Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (GPT) technology—in reshaping classrooms, personalizing learning, and addressing educational inequities. Written for educators, parents, and students, Khan blends practical advice with visionary predictions about how AI can fundamentally enhance teaching and learning experiences. Drawing on his experience as the founder and CEO of Khan Academy—a globally acclaimed online learning platform—Khan shares valuable insights and recounts his journey of integrating OpenAI's advanced large language models (LLMs) into education. The book highlights the immense potential of AI to reshape teaching and learning in profound ways.

As a prominent figure in Education Technology (EdTech), Salman Khan adopts a forward-thinking and optimistic perspective. Rather than approaching tools like ChatGPT with skepticism, he advocates for an open-minded and proactive stance. He encourages parents and educators to embrace AI's possibilities while acknowledging its imperfections. Khan demonstrates how AI can personalize learning, enhance assessments, and support classroom activities in innovative ways, complementing traditional educational methods to create more engaging and impactful learning experiences.

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Beyond the technical applications, *Brave New Words* explores the broader societal implications of AI in education. Khan addresses practical considerations for administrators, guidance counselors, and hiring managers, highlighting how AI can improve both educational systems and workplace practices. The book also explores the ethical and social dimensions of AI, offering thoughtful reflections on how these tools can be leveraged to create a more equitable and accessible education system for learners worldwide.

While this book provides a fascinating and optimistic vision for the future of education, the book occasionally overlooks some of the deeper challenges of AI implementation. For instance, while Khan acknowledges concerns about bias in AI algorithms, the discussion could have delved deeper into how systemic inequalities embedded in data sets might perpetuate or even exacerbate inequities in education. Furthermore, while he emphasizes AI's potential to democratize access to learning, the book assumes a level of global infrastructure readiness—such as access to devices and reliable internet—that is not yet a reality for many communities worldwide. These practical hurdles could have been explored more thoroughly to provide a more balanced perspective.

The launch of GPT-4 in May 2024 marked a transformative milestone in AI development, captivating audiences with its human-like conversational abilities and real-time responsiveness. This breakthrough redefined human-AI interactions, making them feel seamless and natural. In *Brave New Words*, Khan describes GPT-4 as a groundbreaking development for education. He envisions a future where every student has access to a personal AI-powered tutor, and every teacher benefits from an AI assistant, revolutionizing the learning and teaching processes. Through a structured, chapter-by-chapter analysis, Khan outlines how AI will reshape education, noting that several of his predictions have already materialized since the book's publication. His core argument emphasizes AI's potential to dramatically improve student outcomes and teacher experiences, paving the way for a future where world-class education is universally accessible.

However, Khan's vision of AI as a personal tutor and assistant might underestimate the complexities of teacher-student relationships. Education is not just about knowledge transfer; it also involves emotional intelligence,

mentorship, and interpersonal dynamics that are difficult, if not impossible, for AI to replicate. While AI can handle routine tasks and provide instant feedback, it cannot replace the uniquely human aspects of teaching, such as fostering empathy, inspiring creativity, and addressing individual emotional needs. These limitations are touched upon but could have been explored in greater depth to temper some of the book's optimism.

While skepticism around EdTech persists—due to concerns about its effectiveness, its potential to exacerbate inequality and fears of reducing personal interaction in education—Khan presents a compelling counterargument. Drawing on his experience and the development of Khanmigo, an AI-powered tutor, he argues that AI offers a scalable and cost-effective solution to the challenges of traditional education. Providing human tutors for every student is economically impractical, but AI-powered tutors can democratize access to personalized learning. Khan illustrates this with vivid examples, such as students engaging in immersive, virtual conversations with historical figures to bring history to life. He even recounts his virtual interactions with fictional characters, like Jay Gatsby, showcasing the creative possibilities AI brings to education.

Yet, some readers may question whether Khan's enthusiasm for AI-powered tools underestimates the risks of overreliance on technology. For instance, while he rightly highlights AI's ability to engage students in innovative ways, the book does not sufficiently address concerns about students losing critical thinking skills or becoming overly dependent on AI for problem-solving. Balancing the use of AI with promoting independent thought remains a crucial challenge that educators must navigate carefully.

AI-powered tools are also revolutionizing how students approach writing tasks. These tools offer real-time feedback on outlines, logical coherence, and areas requiring further research. They identify gaps in evidence, unclear ideas, and unaddressed counterarguments while providing suggestions to refine language and strengthen arguments. Khan acknowledges concerns about whether using AI constitutes cheating but compares it to widely accepted tools like spellcheckers or Grammarly. When used responsibly, AI collaborates with students rather than working for them, helping them overcome challenges and move projects forward. This perspective has gained traction among educators, many of whom initially resisted AI but

now encourage its thoughtful integration to support student learning.

Looking ahead, Khan stresses that proficiency in AI will become an essential skill across professions, including education. He argues that AI will not replace teachers but will empower them by managing time-consuming routine tasks such as lesson planning, grading, and monitoring student progress. Unlike earlier EdTech solutions that failed to reduce teachers' workloads, AI offers transformative support. By automating administrative responsibilities, AI enables educators to focus on inspiring students, building meaningful relationships, and providing individualized attention to those who need extra support.

However, integrating AI into schools comes with challenges, which Khan addresses candidly. He advocates for robust systems to protect student privacy, mitigate algorithmic biases, and bridge gaps in access to devices and connectivity, ensuring equitable opportunities for all learners. While these recommendations are important, the book might have benefited from more concrete strategies or case studies on how to implement these safeguards effectively.

Khan ultimately views AI as a transformative equalizer in the classroom, with the potential to revolutionize education on a global scale. *Brave New Words: How AI Will Revolutionize Education* is highly recommended for anyone interested in the future of AI in education. As a pioneer in EdTech, Salman Khan envisions a future where AI makes education more personalized, inclusive, and impactful—fundamentally changing how we teach and learn for the better. While the book provides an inspiring vision of AI's potential, readers may wish for a deeper exploration of the challenges and trade-offs involved in integrating AI into education.