

CONFERENCE REPORT (MAKE A DIFFERENCE CONFERENCE 2024)

Konference Make a Difference 2024: zpráva z konference

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The 10th Make a Difference Conference 2024¹ occurred on 12 November in Copenhagen. The conference is organized by the Online and blended learning (OBL) departments at the University of Copenhagen. These are the ITLC (IT Learning Center) department, TEACH (Pedagogical Center), and The Center for Online and Blended Learning (COBL). All these centers support different faculties – ITLC supports the Faculty of Science, TEACH supports the Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Theology, and COBL supports the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. This year's main topic was artificial intelligence in education. The conference introduced many interesting speakers who presented their research in education. Even though AI was the main topic, not all researchers were concerned about it. The conference's venue was the Maersk Tower, connected to the Panum Building – the modern campus of the Faculty of Health and Medicine. Most speakers were employees of the University of Copenhagen, the same as the attendees.

Bjarne Simmelkjær Sandgaard Hanse, an organization committee member, opened the conference. The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences vice-dean, Jørgen Kurtzhals, also made the opening remarks. He set principles for working with AI; some of them being the importance of learning and well-being. He also said that universities need to use AI smartly to achieve all principles mentioned above.

The conference officially started with the first keynote speaker of the day, Inge de Waard from the InnoEnergy company. Her main job is teaching and learning in the InnoEnergy System. The title of the keynote speech was *Harnessing AI: Balancing Collective Wisdom for a New Learning Era*. During the speech, many questions were addressed. Some of them were “*Is it ethical to use historical figures and put words into their mouths?*” followed by “*What are (y)our core values?*”. Learning aims to

¹ <https://eventsignup.ku.dk/makeadifference2024/conference>

engage students and technologies, and AI can help us with that. It was mentioned that before using AI, we must think about its benefits and downfalls. It could help the students with their theses and critical and ethical thinking. Universities should adopt generative AI guidelines to ensure that students and their teachers use AI responsibly and ethically.

The conference was divided into four parallel sessions, followed by the keynote speech. The opening parallel session featured the first three presentations of the day. The first presentation was from Annette Q. Pedersen and Mikala Hansbøl from the TEACH Pedagogical Center; the title was *Exploring UCPH Student Perspectives on Generative AI: Learning, Employability, and Ethical Considerations*. During the presentation, the results of the survey among students were presented. The survey aimed to find out how students use generative artificial intelligence, how it affects their learning and employability, and what their ethical concerns are. The second presentation of the session was *Writing Academically with AI* by Gemma C. Solomon, a professor at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen. Her course, *Scientific Writing, Planning, and Presentations*, fully implemented AI. The students had no restrictions on using it, and AI tools became integral to the course. This session's last presentation was *Development of Absalon Rooms for Health Law in Medical Education* by Signe Smith Jervelund and Emilie Vestergaard Forssling from the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences and by Camilla Thamdrup from the Copenhagen Academy for Medical Education and Simulation. The presentation introduced a project regarding developing online learning courses on the Absalon platform. The courses in health law are designed for students in bachelor's and master's programs.

The second parallel session introduced four inspiring presentations. *Exploring Human-AI Collaboration: Can Students Solve Expert Engineering Tasks with Large Language Models?* by Felix Agner and Julia Adlercreutz from Lund University; *Fostering Student Engagement: Tools and Strategies for Inclusive Classroom Participation* by Jacob Ørmen from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen; *Introducing VR Technology to Enhance Learning in Sports Science* by Jacob Wienecke from the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen; and *Silent Movement and Dance: Enhancing Creativity and Teaching Skills through Digital Technology* by Peter Christian Raffalt from the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen. This session was dedicated to using modern technologies to make learning engaging and inclusive.

The third parallel session was also dedicated to the use of modern technologies in classrooms, and it consisted of five presentations: *Your Friendly Neighborhood Chatbot: Using ChatGPT in University Teaching* by Mark Friis Hau from Roskilde University; *Integrating Generative AI in Linguistic Variation and Bias Education*

by Marian Flanagan, Anna Bothe Jespersen and Kim Ebensgaard Jensen from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen; *Techno-Aesthetic Analysis* by Tanya Ravn Ag from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen; *Automated Feedback in Didactic Taste Tests* by Michael Bom Frøst from the Department of Food Science, University of Copenhagen; and *Virtual slaughterhouse – an interactive tool to be used in the meat inspection course* by Hanne Ingmer and Kirsten Schauser from the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen.

The fourth parallel session was dedicated to the gamification of the learning process and introduced the following presentations: *Transforming Learning with AI: Developing an Intelligent Tutor for Programming and Problem-Solving* by Jon Sporing and Ken Friis Larsen from the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen; *Let AI be the gamemaster of your academic teaching* by Dean Cooper-Cunningham from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Copenhagen; *Game Jam: Transmedia Storytelling in East Asia – Journey to the West* by Barbara Wall from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen; *Gamified Learning in Veterinary Medicine: Project-Based Cases from Aalbæk Island* by Pernille Tveden-Nyborg and Dorte Bratbo Sørensen from the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen; and *Virtual Treasure Hunts: How to give 1st-year Master Students a Sense of Belonging* by Bodil Helene Allesen-Holm from the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen.

The conference was closed by the second keynote speaker of the day - Mhairi Aitken from The Alan Turing Institute. The topic of the speech was *The Ethics of AI in Education: Addressing the Risks to Realize the Potential*. Many claims about AI were made during the speech, both positive and negative. However, many are far from reality; they do not make sense. However, we should be aware of the risks of AI in and for education. As direct risks are mentioned, bias and misrepresentation are something we should be aware of before using AI. The broader societal impact of AI in education regards the normalization of data collection practices. We should be aware of the data being collected and use only transparent tools for data collection. Another big problem with AI is misinformation, especially conspiracy theories. Teachers need to help their students develop critical thinking. AI tools could be a good helper in this.

However, what does AI do well? It was mentioned that it can process complex information and large data sets. It can further classify information and make predictions based on a pattern. It can speed up repetitive tasks and help with reformatting information. However, it is important to understand that AI will never be human. People have deep knowledge and creative thinking, something AI is still lacking.

The conference addressed many important issues and topics related to the use of AI in education, a topic that could be talked about for a long time. This one-day event was nevertheless very successful. Another conference is already planned for next year and will probably be as successful as this year's.

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