I'm Sorry. There's Been a Misunderstanding

AMICAL 2025

Audrey Watters

An Apology

What do we talk about when we talk about AI in education

"the branch of computer science dedicated to making computers work the way they do in movies"

Alan Blackwell, *Moral Codes: Designing Alternatives to AI*

"In most contemporary educational situations where children come into contact with computers, the computer is used to put the children through their paces, to provide exercises of an appropriate level of difficulty, to provide feedback, and to dispense information. The computer programming the child."

Seymour Papert, *Mindstorms*, 1980

"The Two-Sigma Problem"

Benjamin Bloom,1984

"One can predict in a few more years, millions of schoolchildren will have access to what Philip Macedon's son Alexander enjoyed as a royal prerogative: the personal services of a tutor as well-informed and responsive as Aristotle"

Patrick Suppes, 1966

Here's what we *aren't* talking about when we talk about AI in education:

facial recognition technology in test proctoring software; course recommendation algorithms; learning analytics; foreign language translation; teacher hiring algorithms; Google search (indeed, the whole "productivity suite"); automated essay graders; plagiarism detection software; social media monitoring; college counseling algorithms; student visa revocation; financial aid: student and parent loans and credit scores; student retention predictions; etc.

There's been a misunderstanding.

"We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings."

Ursula K. Le Guin, 2014