

Industry Forum on AI in K-12 Education

Discover the Role of AI in Shaping the Future of K-12 Education



OCTOBER 22ND, 4PM-7:40PM
FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY
Cohen Ballroom

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Short talks** showcasing AI in teaching, learning, and K-12 applications.
- **Panel** with experts discussing real-world AI solutions and applications for K-12 education.
- **Networking** with educators, industry leaders, and community partners.
- **Award Ceremony** for the GenCyber Teachers Camp on AI & Cybersecurity.

Registration



Join us for an exclusive event hosted by **Dendritic the AI and Data Science Institute at FGCU** and the **College of Education** where experts will share insights into how AI is transforming K-12 Education. This forum is an opportunity to connect with industry leaders and gain a deeper understanding of AI-driven innovations.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Time	Session	Presenter
4:00-4:15	Welcome message by the U. A. Whitaker College of Engineering	Dr. Huzefa Kagdi (Dean of the College of Engineering)
4:15-4:30	Dendritic Presentation: The Role of the Dendritic Institute in Shaping AI Education	Dr. Leandro de Castro (Dendritic Director)
4:30-4:55	Keynote 1: From Campus to Classroom: Bridging AI Ethics and Policies Between Higher Ed and K-12	Dr. Chrissann Ruehle (Lutgert College of Business)
4:55-5:20	Keynote 2: Scaffolding Student Literacy Advancement in K-12 Education with the Support of AI	Dr. Jessica Essary (College of Education)
5:20-5:40	Coffee-Break and Networking	
5:40-6:05	Keynote 3: AI Tools that Empower Teaching & Leadership	Dr. Nathan Poteet (Freedom Institute)
6:05-6:30	Keynote 4: Bridging K-12, Higher Education, and Industry through AI Innovation and Human Intelligence	Dr. Guido Minaya (Minaya Learning)
6:30-7:00	Industry Panel with the Keynote Speakers	Moderated by Dr. Diana Cheshire (Dean of the College of Education)
7:00-7:30	Award Ceremony: GenCyber Teachers Camp on AI and Cybersecurity	Dr. Chengyi Qu (College of Engineering), Dr. Charles Wang (College of Education)
7:30-7:40	Closing remarks by the College of Education	Dr. Diana Cheshire (Dean)

Event Details

Date: October 22nd, 4pm-8pm

Location: Cohen Ballroom, Florida Gulf Coast University
(10501 Cohen Center, 11090 FGCU Blvd N, Fort Myers)

Capacity: limited to 100 guests

Includes: Coffee break

Parking: Free parking is available on campus

Registration



Guest Speakers Information (Preliminary)



Dr. Chrissann Ruehle, DBA, MBA, CPM

Title: From Campus to Classroom: Bridging AI Ethics and Policies Between Higher Ed and K-12

Abstract: This presentation examines how AI ethics and policies from higher education can be adapted for K-12 environments. We bridge university-level AI governance frameworks with practical classroom challenges, addressing student data privacy, algorithmic bias in educational tools, and age-appropriate AI literacy. Attendees will gain strategies for translating college AI policies into actionable frameworks that protect students while promoting responsible innovation in elementary and secondary education.

Bio: Dr. Chrissann Ruehle is an AI ethics researcher and educator at FGCU, serving as Engagement Chair for the Dendritic AI, and Data Science Institute. A former Provost Faculty Fellow for AI, she led FGCU's AI Task Force. She teaches AI Ethics and Management, pioneers trustworthy AI certification courses, and consults with healthcare leaders. Her research focuses on AI governance and AI in education.



Speaker: Dr. Jessica Essary

Title: Scaffolding Student Literacy Advancement in K-12 Education with the Support of AI

Abstract: This talk shares practical methods for teaching literacy using AI tools while preserving student authorship. The process involves oral story dictation, transcribing in real-time, and using AI-generated images to stimulate precise editing and metacognitive writing. The session demonstrates how to use a custom GPT to generate leveled texts and question sets aligned to Florida benchmarks, supporting differentiation and creating evidence-based documentation to uphold academic integrity.

Bio: Dr. Jess Essary is a Professor of Early Childhood Education at FGCU and an FGCU alum with a PhD from the University at Buffalo. Her work focuses on developmentally considerate use of digital tools and technology-enhanced learning with young children. A former Pre-K, 1st, and 4th grade teacher, she integrates formative assessment, emergent literacy, and AI-supported differentiation. She previously served as a United Nations NGO Representative addressing technology in humanitarian settings.



Dr. Nathan Poteet

Title: AI Tools that Empower Teaching & Leadership

Abstract: This keynote moves beyond AI theory to explore real-world implementation in K-12 classrooms and leadership offices. For teachers, AI streamlines grading, supports differentiation, and enables student creativity (e.g., multimedia projects). For administrators, it automates reporting, analyzes data, and improves staff morale by reducing paperwork. Attendees will see practical AI tools in action and gain actionable strategies to improve student outcomes and boost overall school efficiency.

Bio: Dr. Nathan Poteet is the Executive Director of Programs and AI at The Freedom Institute, leading AI integration and credentialing

opportunities for students and the community. With 14 years in K-12 education, he drove academic growth, successfully elevating two schools from a "C" to an "A" school grade. He co-founded and served as the first principal of a high school focused on personalized, career-focused education, emphasizing individualized learning for future success.



Dr. Guido Minaya

Title: Bridging K-12, Higher Education, and Industry through AI Innovation and Human Intelligence

Abstract: This presentation explores how K-12 and higher education can partner with industry to create AI-augmented learning ecosystems that balance AI with Human Intelligence (HI). Drawing on corporate learning expertise and the AI + HI Center of Excellence model, it shares strategies for implementing AI to enhance, not replace, human judgment and creativity. We will discuss industry use cases, AI readiness for K-12, and professional development for educators.

Bio: Dr. Guido Minaya, CEO and Chief Learning Officer of Minaya Learning Global Solutions, is a learning and development executive with over 25 years of experience supporting Fortune 500s. He is committed to building AI-augmented learning ecosystems that link K-12, higher education, and industry. His firm launched the AI + Human Intelligence (HI) Center of Excellence to advance workforce readiness, corporate transformation, and a responsible, ethical approach to AI adoption.



Dr. Diana Cheshire

Bio: Dr. Diana Cheshire is the Dean of the College of Education at FGCU, providing strategic leadership for academic programs, partnerships, and early childhood lab schools. With over 25 years of executive experience, she drives organizational growth and innovation, particularly in technology-enabled learning. Holding a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education with a specialization in instructional systems technology, her research focuses on the transformative role of technology, including AI, virtual reality, and human performance improvement, positioning her as a champion for digital transformation across education and business.

GenCyber Teachers Camp on AI and Cybersecurity Award Ceremony

The GenCyber program aligns with the goals of the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-C) by creating awareness of college and career pathways in cybersecurity for secondary students and educators. In summer 2025, Florida Gulf Coast University U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering was awarded its first GenCyber grant to host a GenCyber Teachers Camp, providing professional training in AI and Cybersecurity for middle and high school educators. This award ceremony recognizes the educators who participated in the camp, highlights their reflections, and showcases how they are integrating the camp outcomes into their classrooms during the Fall 2025 semester. The event also serves to honor their contributions to advancing cybersecurity education and to celebrate the broader impact of the GenCyber initiative in strengthening the K-12 educational pipeline.