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“Two reasons why it matters for education that AI is Intelligence, ‘but not as we know it’”

In this presentation I will discuss the ways in which Artificial Intelligence, particularly Machine Learning, is different to Human Intelligence (HI): it is intelligence, but not as we know it. The implications of these differences are significant for education and its relationship with AI. We need to leverage the differences between HI and AI if we are to effectively bring the potential benefits of AI to teaching and learning. Two particular ways in which these differences can be used are, firstly, the ability of AI to deal with huge amounts of data and complex calculations at speed in order to continuously learn. This ability enables us to use AI within education – for example to provide individualised tutoring to complement the role played by human educators.

Secondly, and far less appreciated, is the role that AI can play in order to help us understand the challenges that we may wish to address through AI. If we use AI to help us unpack the complex challenges that we face as educators and learners, we will be in a much better position to really leverage the benefits that AI can bring. This second way in which education can benefit from the fact that AI is not the same as Human intelligence relies on the application of AI to data sets about a particular challenge. It is the ability that

AI has to deal with large amounts of data, to find patterns and information that we may not previously have appreciated that is the key here. I use a short worked example in the presentation to show how the application of AI to the educational challenge of ensuring the consistency, quality and standards of educational provision when a sudden shock such as COVID-19 comes along, can shed light on the challenge in useful ways.