The Learning Generation | EDC.ORG

High Touch High Tech for All

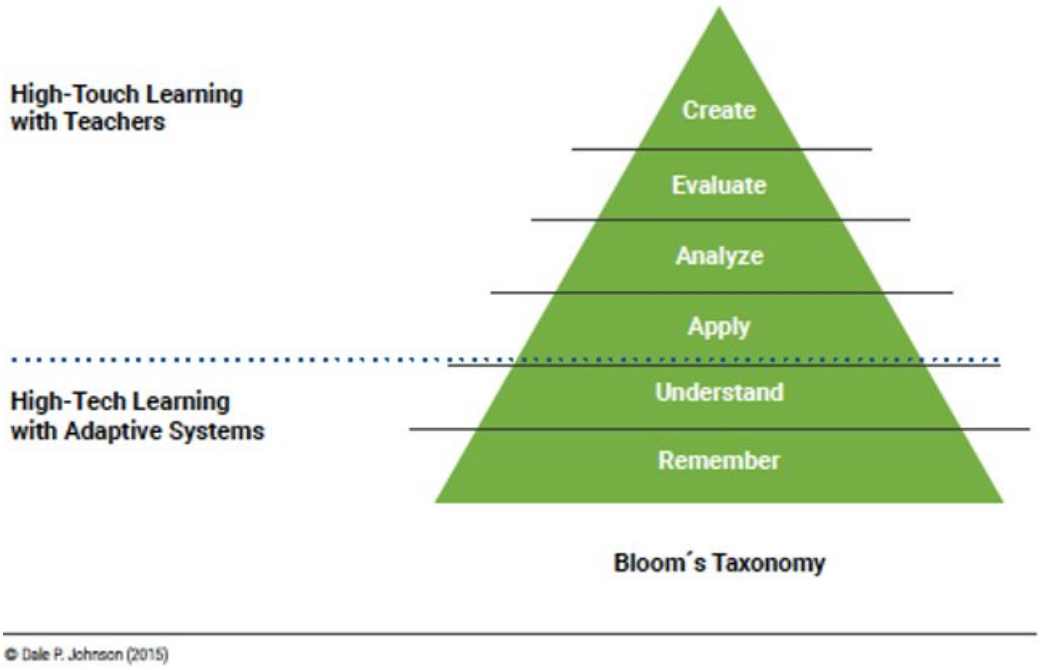
Transforming learning to achieve equitable learning for all

Why now?

While technology has evolved rapidly in the last 20 years, education has changed little over the past 200 years. The current classroom model, where teachers deliver standardized content in a uniform mass manner, cannot meet students' individual needs. There is strong evidence for the past 15 years that personalized learning approaches, such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), which reorients teaching to the level of the student, consistently improves learning outcomes, yet this has been difficult to do at scale. Emerging research shows that technology-supported personalized adaptive learning may help to close educational gaps for lower attaining students. This is desperately needed as 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries can't read or understand a simple text, and 68% of the world's youth are not on track to learn basic secondary skills by 2030.

The Vision: High Touch High Tech for All

High Touch High Tech for All (HTHT) is an approach that aims to deliver the vision of personalized learning for the most disadvantaged learners by combining the unique strengths of the teacher (High Touch) and the power of AI-enabled adaptive learning technology (High Tech). The locally available **technology** selected by the government or partner provides adaptive content and assessment aligned with the national curriculum. This develops students' foundational skills by meeting students at their level and helping them progress at their own pace. The **teacher** uses data to personalize teaching and nurtures higher-order skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and socio-emotional growth. The technology combined with teacher training and support provides the potential to accelerate learning for all at scale.



Promising results to date: Vietnam, Uruguay

The Education Commission, now the Learning Generation Initiative (LGI) at the Education Development Center (EDC), in partnership with Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training and Arizona State University and funding from UK FCDO, developed a High Touch High Tech (HTHT) prototype that trained teachers to harness adaptive learning technology at the same time as including more active learning techniques. It generated significant results after just one semester: **Math test scores of grade 7 students improved by an equivalent of two years of learning (0.436 standard deviation).** Furthermore, teachers gained familiarity with instructional technology and collaborated around student data, optimizing their ability to impact student learning and resulting in greater teacher satisfaction. In Uruguay, the Education Commission (now LGI) and Education Commission Asia partnered with CEIBAL Uruguay's public policy center for digital education, and the Inter-American Development Bank, to implement a HTHT pilot for math in grade 5 and computational thinking in grade 7. **Math scores improved by an equivalent of 1.63 years of learning in one year's time (0.33 standard deviation) and computation thinking scores had a statistically significant improvement (0.1 standard deviation).** Notably, only the combination of high-tech and high-touch improved performance. Schools that received only technology without teacher training did not achieve similar improvements in scores.

With generous support from Temasek Trust's Philanthropy Asia Alliance and the Equinix Foundation, LGI is undertaking two additional pilots, one in Cambodia and one in the Philippines. In Cambodia, LGI is partnering with Teach for Cambodia to implement HTHT in 9 schools in Phnom Penh and Kandal, focusing on math for grades 7 and 8. In the Philippines, LGI is partnering with the Ayala Foundation to implement HTHT in 9 primary schools in Zambales, focusing on math for grades 4-6. The results of the impact evaluation will be available at the end of 2025.

High Touch High Tech: LGI's role

After the promising pilot results, LGI now plans to work with partners to develop a scaling framework and pilot HTHT at scale, capturing insights and lessons on implementation. LGI will also facilitate global knowledge sharing and partnerships for others to harness this approach.

LGI's approach in summary:

Analyze: research and rigorously test HTHT, capturing evidence in accessible formats
Act: work with countries to pilot, evaluate, and develop ecosystems for scale.
Amplify: facilitate global learning, networks, partnerships, and financing for scale.

How you can be involved

With additional partners, we can create a community of actors working on personalized learning. We would welcome others to **harness this approach** to accelerate progress in learning, whether this is foundational learning, STEM at secondary level, or skills development. There is also a need for more **implementation research** for digital personalized learning approaches at scale, including examining the necessarily enabling factors. Please be in touch if you are interested in using or researching this approach. Together we can share lessons and evidence to help teachers ensure that all children can learn.

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