**Bill Gates Talks Artificial Intelligence in Education**

With Microsoft pumping dollars into chatbots, the company’s founder discusses the technology’s implications for learning.



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Could artificial intelligence advance human intelligence? Bill Gates thinks so.

In a recent interview with [*The Verge*](http://www.theverge.com/2016/4/25/11492102/bill-gates-interview-education-software-artificial-intelligence), the Microsoft founder and long-time education proponent explained how advancements in AI will make personalized learning more effective.

At present, personalized-learning software allows students to move through course content at their own pace: Students who master material quickly advance to the next subject, while students who require extra practice can revisit modules as needed.

Although studies — such as [those conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/student-success/continued-progress-promising-evidence-on-personalized-learning/) — show that the approach can positively impact learning outcomes, Gates thinks there’s room for improvement, especially when it comes to human-software interactions. He describes the technology’s failings in his interview with *The Verge*:

Today’s interactivity is OK: I answered a few questions wrong, so then it repeats the lecture. [With an AI tutor,] I can engage in a dialogue. You know, part of the reason I’m so willing to tackle new subjects is that for each of those subjects, if I get utterly confused, I know somebody I can send an email to, and they’ll straighten me out. If you can’t have somebody straighten you out, and say, “Is this as complicated as I think? Am I missing something here?” then you’re probably not as ambitious.

Chatbots, which rely on AI to simulate human conversation, could bridge the gap between personalized-learning software as it stands today and Gates’s vision of the future. Microsoft has already made headway in this area, experimenting with a chatbot called Tay and outlining practical applications for its [Conversations as a Platform initiative](http://www.edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2016/03/microsoft-unveils-conversations-platform-build-2016).

In his interview, Gates suggests that leveraging the technology within the education space could someday soon provide students with the subtle guidance they need to learn more effectively: “The idea that you could talk to a [virtual] advisor that would understand different misconceptions and arbitrary linguistics around it, that’ll certainly come in the next decade,” he says.

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