



Welcome to the Spring 2026 semester! In this issue, learn more about:

- DFI Masterclass: Universal Design for Learning for faculty
- AI in 30 Minutes: Notebook LM skills
- DFI Speaker Series
- Open Practices: AI Reading Group & Design Studio Making Sessions
- Support for Multimodal Dissertations

## Webinars in February 2026

### DFI Masterclass: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in 30 Minutes

This webinar offers a practical introduction for faculty to UDL principles with easy classroom applications. Faculty will learn small design choices, multiple formats, and flexible activities that reduce barriers and increase student participation.

**Date: February 10, 2026 (Tuesday)**

**Time: 11:00 - 11:30 AM**

**Location: Online (Zoom)**

REGISTER

**AI in 30 Minutes: Your AI-Organized Digital Notebook using NotebookLM**

In just 30 minutes, see how to build your own custom AI-powered notebook. Upload PDFs, websites, YouTube videos, audio, Google Docs, or Slides. NotebookLM will summarize them, connect ideas, create a podcast and flashcards, and answer your questions. Great for studying, teaching, or planning—your notebook, your way.

**Date: February 19, 2026 (Thursday)**

**Time: 12:00 - 12:30 PM**

**Location: Online (Zoom)**

REGISTER

## DFI Speaker Series

### 20 Years of Real-World Education Research Impact



At this DFI Speaker Series talk, Dr. Edward Metz presents key findings from the 2025 report *From Seeds to Scale*, which examines the social and economic impact of the ED/IES Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program between 2013 and 2023. The program serves as a critical source of early-stage capital for research-based education technology products.

Dr. Metz shares results showing that research-based products emerging from the program reached more than 130 million learners and educators and generated an estimated 9:1 return on federal investment.

He discusses how the ED/IES SBIR program pioneered approaches to integrating rigorous research into the iterative R&D of commercially viable EdTech products, while also engaging academic researchers in commercial product development as a mechanism for readying evidence for scale.

The talk concludes with reflections on the dismantling of IES in March 2025 and why a next-generation IES is essential to ensuring that evidence-based research informs practice and improves outcomes for students.

**Title: *From Seeds to Scale: Insights from 20 Years at IES—  
Turning Education Research into Real-World Impact at Scale***

**Date: February 25, 2026 (Wednesday)**

**Time: 12:00 - 1:30 PM**

**Location: Smith Learning Theater, Russell Hall 4th Floor (in-person only)**

REGISTER

# AI & Ed Reading Group: All are Welcome!

Would you like to cut through the noise surrounding AI in Education and engage in a critical and thoughtful discussion with TC students, staff, and faculty? The AI & Ed Reading Group is a collective focused on thinking through big ideas at the bleeding edge of issues of AI and education.

Each session, we'll dive into a carefully selected article exploring topics like AI tutoring systems, algorithmic bias in educational technology, the impact of generative AI on student work, emerging pedagogical approaches in an AI-enhanced world, and more.

No prior expertise in AI required. This is a welcoming place to share perspectives, ask questions, and learn. Just bring your curiosity and willingness to think critically about these rapidly evolving issues.

**Dates:** February 12 & 26 | March 12 & 26 | April 2, 16 & 30

**Time:** 12:00 - 1:00 PM ET

**Location:** In-person (DFI, Russell Hall 5th Floor) & Zoom

REGISTER

## Open Practices: Design Studio Making Sessions



In academic settings, we are often asked to follow a singular path toward expertise. But what happens when we prioritize the process over the product? What emerges when we treat tools and

materials not just as objects, but as active collaborators in our thinking?

Join us Wednesdays from 1:00 - 2:00 PM in the DFI [Design Studio](#) for a dedicated time to move through the studio and play with the equipment through undirected inquiry. Each week we'll use a different prompt to help us get into the mess and see what happens.

This is an opportunity to see what is possible across different modes to let the materials lead the way before a project even starts. Whether you are a seasoned builder or just curious about the space, show up to experiment with us.

**Who:** Open to the public

**When:** Wednesdays, 1:00 - 2:00 PM

**Where:** In-person at the DFI Design Studio,  
Teachers College, Columbia University - Russell Hall 5th Floor

REGISTER to ATTEND

## Puppets in Education Video Series



DFI has released a new Puppets in Education video series! The series is organized around a set of interviews centered on an exhibit held in the Digital Futures Institute Gallery in 2024–25. The series explores dimensions of puppetry using archival, string, parade, printed, virtual, and artificial puppetry as a way to pose shared questions of education.

Across the series, the exhibit designers reflect on our education's relationship with puppets. From dolls and marionettes to classroom practices and television programming, and from animating physical objects to the digital armatures of virtual and artificial systems, puppets have consistently functioned as mediating forms through which gesture, voice, and expression are redirected.

Returning to shared lines of inquiry, the series asks: What are we doing when we pick up, move, and speak through an object that is not ourselves? Why does this act so reliably hold our attention? By taking up puppetry as both practice and analytic lens, the exhibit and video series invite reflection on what is educative about puppets—and on what puppets themselves might teach us about education.

To access the [puppet series and walkthrough](#), go to [this link](#).

## **NEW: DFI Support for Multimodal Dissertations**

DFI is expanding our support for doctoral students pursuing multimodal dissertations (dissertations involving media creation). Doctoral students should [submit a ticket with DFI](#) to discuss possibilities for support, including planning and strategy support, support with video and audio production in DFI studio spaces or on location on campus and support and guidance with post production.



Instagram



LinkedIn



YouTube

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