AI Innovator Studio

— 2026 —

Why We're Doing This

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is shaping how we live, learn, and work. For today's students, understanding how to use AI responsibly isn't optional — it's essential. The AI Innovator Studio empowers educators and students to explore AI as a tool for solving real problems, while building the skills needed for ethical, safe, and inclusive innovation.

This program advances the UN Sustainable Development Goals of Quality Education (SDG 4) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) by helping schools foster digital inclusion and responsible digital citizenship. It also builds on the ISTE Student Standards and ISTE Digital Citizenship Competencies, ensuring students become empowered learners, innovative designers, creative communicators, and global collaborators.

WHAT IS THE AI INNOVATOR STUDIO + CHALLENGE?

The program includes two connected opportunities:

1. **AI Innovator Studio** – A support hub for educators that includes lessons focused on strengthening AI literacy, educator webinars, and collaboration opportunities. Teachers can integrate lessons and the accompanying resources into classroom instruction across content areas, clubs, camps, or broader innovation programs. Educators may choose to use the Studio lessons to build innovation and AI literacy and/or to guide students into the Challenge.

2. **AI Innovator Challenge** – A culminating opportunity for student teams to design AI-powered solutions that address a problem or concern in their community, align to a UN Sustainable Development Goal, and demonstrate the ethical, safe, and responsible use of AI. Top teams will be showcased online, with finalists presenting in-person at ISTELive. Students are able to participate in the Challenge with the support of a teacher sponsor without having completed Studio lessons.

Together, the Studio and Challenge give schools flexible entry points into AI innovation, while spotlighting the creativity and impact of student teams worldwide.

AI Innovator Studio

The Studio equips educators with resources and support to bring innovation into classrooms, clubs, and communities.

STUDIO SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATORS

- **Lessons** – A set of 15 lessons incorporating Intel's Skills for Innovation that can be used as quick innovation starters or combined into a full progression. Lessons follow a studio cycle:

  Spark → Explore → Experiment → Create → Share → Reflect

- **Webinars and Coaching** – Live and recorded sessions for district leaders and teachers, offering strategies, classroom ideas, and support throughout the year.

- **Professional Community** – A space to share approaches, connect with peers, and access exemplars to support AI and innovation in learning experiences within and beyond classrooms.

WHY THE STUDIO MATTERS

The Studio is more than preparation for a competition — it's a way to make AI literacy and innovation accessible to all students. By giving teachers flexible tools and ongoing support, the Studio helps schools:

- Reach a wider range of learners, not just those who enter the Challenge.

- Integrate innovation and design thinking into everyday learning.

- Build student skills for problem-solving, collaboration, and ethical technology use.

- Create inclusive pathways where all students can see themselves as innovators.

HOW EDUCATORS CAN USE THE AI INNOVATOR STUDIO

The Studio is designed to be flexible. Schools can use the resources in many different ways, depending on time, goals, and student needs. Here are some of the most common approaches:

- **In the Classroom** – Integrate AI innovation directly into teaching and learning. *Such as: short embedded units in different content areas, a full PBL progression, or cross-curricular collaborations.*

- **Beyond the Classroom** – Extend learning opportunities outside the school day, giving students flexible ways to explore innovation. *Such as: after-school clubs, independent or capstone projects, advisory activities, or break-week innovation camps.*

- **Special Events** – Spark creativity and energy with concentrated, high-impact experiences. *Such as: schoolwide innovation weeks or hackathons, community innovation nights, or pop-up labs in makerspaces and libraries.*

- **Broader Programs** – Build sustained pathways for innovation across courses, schools, or regions. *Such as: dedicated electives, community partnership projects, regional-led cohorts, or makerspace innovation incubators.*

AI Innovator Challenge

The AI Innovator Challenge is designed to give students the opportunity to become problem-solvers, designers, and innovators who use AI for good. Teams will explore how AI can be applied ethically, safely, and responsibly to make a difference in their communities — and connect their work to global goals.

CHALLENGE GOALS

Through the Challenge, students will:

- Act as empowered learners, digital citizens, knowledge constructors, innovative designers, creative communicators, and global collaborators in alignment with the ISTE Student Standards.

- Build an awareness of how AI works and how to use AI tools ethically and responsibly.

- Develop digital citizenship competencies, emphasizing safety, inclusion, equity, and respect.

- Apply design thinking and innovation practices aligned with and inspired by the Intel Skills for Innovation framework.

- Create a usable product or prototype that addresses a problem or concern in their community and connects to a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of their choice.

WHY THE CHALLENGE MATTERS

By participating, students are able to showcase their creativity while learning to design with purpose.

They solve authentic problems, evaluate AI responsibly, and develop solutions that can be shared beyond the competition to benefit their schools, communities, and the wider world.

WHAT TEAMS WILL SUBMIT

- **Digital Product or Prototype**
  A working resource, app, media product, or tool that demonstrates their solution.

- **Pitch Video** *(up to 3 minutes)*
  A video that includes their compelling why/need they are trying to address, a description or walkthrough of their product, its intended impact, and how it aligns with their chosen SDG.

- **Team Story** *(written ~1 page)*
  An introduction to the team and an explanation of why they chose this problem or concern.
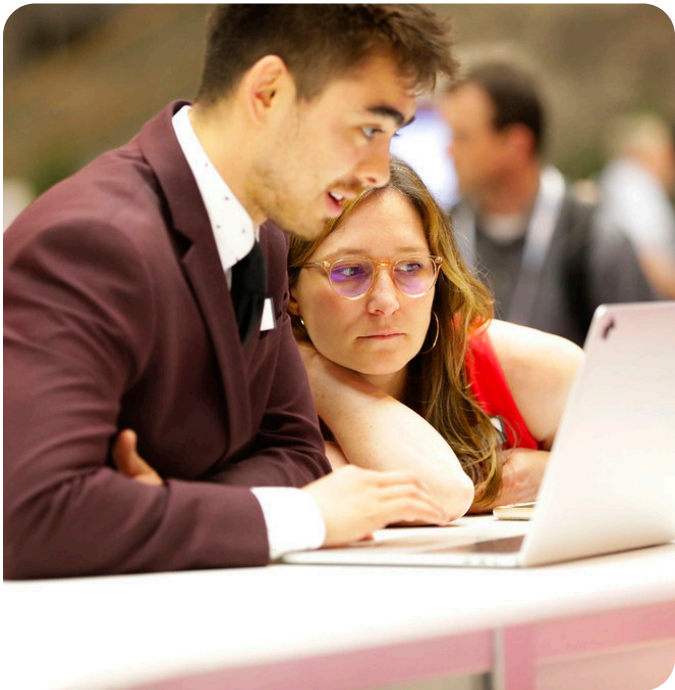
HOW PROJECTS ARE SCORED

Projects are evaluated in two phases:

PHASE 1 — Ready to Share

Does the project meet the requirements and demonstrate a clear, thoughtful approach?

PHASE 2 — Finalist Evaluation

Top-scoring projects are evaluated for innovation, impact, feasibility, ethical AI use, and communication.

RUBRIC HIGHLIGHTS

Projects are assessed on:

1. **Connection to Community Problem & SDG**
   a. Clear definition of a local problem/concern.
   b. Meaningful connection to the chosen UN SDG.
   c. Evidence of empathy and understanding of those affected.

2. **Responsible & Ethical Use of AI**
   a. Safe, responsible, and ethical application of AI tools.
   b. Attention to bias, privacy, inclusivity, and digital citizenship.

3. **Innovation and Creativity**
   a. Originality in concept or novel application of AI.
   b. Creative problem-solving and design thinking approaches.

4. **Impact, Relevance, & Longevity**
   a. Potential to make a positive difference for intended users.
   b. Breadth of potential impact (who and how many could benefit).
   c. Evidence that the solution could be sustained or scaled beyond the Challenge.

5. **Design Quality & Accessibility**
   a. Solution is usable, inclusive, accessible, and feasible.
   b. Clarity around how others can engage with it.
   c. Evidence of testing and iteration with feedback incorporated.

6. **Collaboration & Process**
   a. Team story demonstrates authentic student ownership, shared purpose, and meaningful collaboration within the team.
   b. Clear and purposeful outreach to others for expertise, feedback from those affected, and inclusion of diverse perspectives.
   c. Reflection highlights where the team iterated and what they learned through the process.

7. **Presentation & Communication**
   a. Pitch video is clear, compelling, and within the time limit.
   b. Narrative is engaging and easy to understand for a broad audience.

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WINNING PROJECTS

The AI Innovator Challenge celebrates the creativity, responsibility, and impact of student innovation.

1. **Student Showcase:** All projects that meet the "Ready to Share" standard will be highlighted in the online ISTE+ASCD Student Showcase, giving teams visibility beyond their own schools and communities.

2. **Top Three Teams:** The three highest-scoring teams will receive travel and accommodations to present their projects live on the global stage at ISTELive 26 in Orlando, Florida. This is a chance for students to showcase their ideas in front of educators, leaders, and innovators from around the world.

3. **Recognition for Educators:** Teacher sponsors of winning teams will be recognized for their leadership in guiding students through responsible AI design and innovation.

Participating in the Challenge means more than competing — it's about making a real contribution to your schools as well as local and global communities while providing the opportunity to amplify student voices and have your voice heard on a global stage.

Program Timeline

The AI Innovator Studio runs throughout the school year, giving educators and students time to learn, create, and showcase their ideas. The Studio provides ongoing support, while the Challenge offers clear milestones that keep projects moving forward.

KEY DATES AND STAGES

1. STUDIO PHASE

- **September 24, 2025:** Launch webinar for district leaders and educators; website and resources go live.

- **October 2025:** Release of 15 lessons incorporating Intel's Skills for Innovation for use in classrooms, clubs, and projects.

- **October–December 2025:** Educator support webinars. Teachers introduce Studio lessons in class, clubs, or projects.

- **Ongoing (Sept–Dec):** Studio tips and resources (emails, design prompts, reflection tools).

2. CHALLENGE PHASE

- **January 9, 2026:** Challenge launch. Official kickoff with a launch webinar and resources for teams and educators.

- **January–February 2026:** Additional educator webinars. Students begin prototyping and testing.

- **Ongoing (Jan–March):** Challenge tips and support. Emails, design resources, and reflection tools shared.

- **March 13, 2026:** Final submission deadline. Teams submit digital product/prototype, pitch video, team story, and walkthrough.

- **March 13-April 2026:** Judging and Finalists announced.

3. SHOWCASE PHASE

- **April 2026: Winners Announced** — Top three teams invited to ISTELive 2026. Showcase of "Ready to Share" projects published on the AI Innovator Studio website.

- **June 2026 (ISTELive 26)** — Top 3 finalist teams present in-person on the ISTE+ASCD global stage.

How to Get Involved

There are many ways for educators and students to participate in the AI Innovator Studio + Challenge. You can start by joining the Studio for yearlong support, dive straight into the Challenge, or do both.

JOIN THE STUDIO

- **ISTE+ASCD Connect Community** – Become part of the conversation, share ideas, and access updates.

- **Studio Sign-Up Form** – Complete the form to officially join the Studio and get access to support materials.

- **Launch Webinar** – Watch the Studio kickoff and learn how to bring innovation to your school.

- **Download the Lessons** - Complete the form to access a lesson guide and all 15 lessons for free.

- **Ongoing Webinars** – Sign up for educator sessions throughout the year to explore strategies, lesson sparks, and examples.

JOIN THE CHALLENGE

- **Challenge Tips & Resources**
  Sign up to receive weekly Challenge emails starting in January 2026.

- **Form a Team**
  Teams of up to three students (grades 9–12) with a teacher sponsor are eligible.

- **Start Creating**
  Use AI tools approved by your school and Studio resources to design your solution.

- **Final Submission (March 13, 2026)**
  Teams submit their digital product/prototype, pitch video, team story, and walkthrough.