Digital Promise Launches FutureLab to Investigate Transformative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Global nonprofit expands, hires Dr. Jessica Tsang to oversee new initiative

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023 | Washington, D.C. - Digital Promise, a global nonprofit working to expand opportunity for every learner, announced today the launch of the [Digital Promise FutureLab](). This cutting-edge initiative embodies Digital Promise's long-standing dedication to innovation in education and aims to not only revolutionize the current state of education, but to reimagine a new world of learning.

FutureLab is funded in part by Digital Promise's [recent gift from MacKenzie Scott]().

"Innovation is in Digital Promise's DNA, and we are reaffirming our commitment to push the boundaries of what's possible in education," said Jean-Claude Brizard, President and CEO of Digital Promise. "We believe the Digital Promise FutureLab will be a catalyst for transformative change in education. It's a significant opportunity to collaborate with visionary educators, technologists, and researchers to create a more equitable future for learners worldwide."

The Digital Promise FutureLab launches as the need for future-facing innovation in education reaches a peak. Recent analyses of national data point to numerous challenges, including post-pandemic learning recovery and a widening digital learning gap. At the same time, advances in technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), are changing the landscape of how learning can and will take place. Taken together, this moment is ripe with the need for change and the potential to respond with innovative and future-facing transformations more rapidly than ever.

To lead this new effort, Digital Promise has hired Dr. Jessica Tsang as Director of the Digital Promise FutureLab, reporting to Digital Promise Vice President and Chief Program Officer Chaula Gupta. Tsang is a former consultant and researcher who brings expertise from across her experiences in the nonprofit, research, edtech, and philanthropy sectors. Most recently as a consultant, she compiled the Jacobs Foundation Research Agenda on learning variability and helped to launch the Center for Measurement Justice, a research group dedicated to culturally sustaining and antiracist assessments. Jessica formerly led an

education R&D grant portfolio with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and conducted research at Stanford University on how children learn elementary math concepts. She co-authored the book, *The ABCs of How We Learn: 26 Scientifically Proven Approaches, How They Work, and When to Use Them*, which was recognized by NPR as one of the best books of its year. She has a Ph.D. from Stanford University and a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania.

"Transformative change requires innovating well beyond the existing assumptions of learning and school," said Tsang. "I am thrilled to have the opportunity at the FutureLab to engage many corners of the field—brilliant and divergent as they are—in fostering future-facing learning systems for a rapidly changing future. Digital Promise's core strengths in practical, research-grounded, and inclusive innovation are an ideal foundation for this initiative."

The Digital Promise FutureLab is committed to equity-centered innovations, including shaping an equitable future of AI in education in a way that centers the voices of those whose needs have not been met by traditional education technology.

FutureLab will also explore strategies such as prize competitions that catalyze a new generation of emerging technologies and innovative ways to apply them so that they better serve educators, developers, and learners, particularly those who have been historically and systematically excluded from opportunities. Digital Promise already has deep experience in this space, having managed the inaugural [Visionary Interdisciplinary Teams Advancing Learning (VITAL) Prize Challenge](#), supported by a partnership between the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Schmidt Futures, and the Walton Family Foundation.

FutureLab will also sponsor a series of seminal papers in education innovation. These papers will explore crucial topics such as multilingual learners, digital equity, and assessment, with the intention of inspiring further research and innovation in these areas.

For more, please visit [digitalpromise.org/futurelab](#).

Additional Quotes of Support:
- **Kristina Francis**, Managing Director of JFFLabs: "Advancing equitable solutions and testing new models in education is more than a choice—it's an imperative. Our commitment to pushing boundaries and driving systems change enables students and workers to fully realize their potential and achieve economic advancement. Jobs for the Future and our innovation lab, JFFLabs, is excited for the Digital Promise

FutureLab's focus in shaping a future rooted in the service of lifelong learning and quality jobs."

- **Kim Smith**, Founder of LearnerStudio: "Our young people know that their—and our—future depends on us architecting a very different approach to lifelong learning. Creating this equitable future of learning will require collaboration across many innovative education and learning organizations. We are thrilled at the launch of FutureLab as an important addition to this work, building upon the Digital Promise track record of connecting technology, equity, and innovation."
- **Michelle Culver**, Founder of the Reinvention Lab at Teach for America: "I'm thrilled for the launch of Digital Promise's FutureLab and optimistic about what is possible for young people through our shared commitments to innovation and equity. We've seen firsthand that Digital Promise brings important expertise and momentum to ensuring that today's students are poised to both thrive in and shape our rapidly changing world."

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About Digital Promise
Digital Promise is a global nonprofit working to expand opportunity for every learner. We work with educators, researchers, technology leaders, and communities to design, investigate, and scale innovations that support learners, especially those who've been historically and systematically excluded. Our vision is that every person engages in powerful learning experiences that lead to a life of well-being, fulfillment, and economic mobility. For more information, visit the Digital Promise website and follow @digitalpromise for updates.