AI FORWARD

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

Specimen

EDITED BY

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FOREWORD BY

Luciano Floridi

Finanziato dall'Unione europea NextGenerationEU
Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca
Italiadomani PIANO NAZIONALE DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA
Università per Stranieri di Perugia
TNE IMPACT Transnational Educational Partnership Innovative Mediterranean Partnership for Advancing Collaborative Teaching

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www.edilingua.it

I edizione: luglio 2026

ISBN: 979-12-59803-04-7

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Ogni azione umana ha un impatto sull'ambiente. A Edilingua siamo convinti che il futuro del nostro Pianeta dipende anche da ognuno di noi. "**La Terra ha bisogno del tuo aiuto**" è una piccola ma costante campagna di sensibilizzazione rivolta agli studenti: ogni nostro libro vuole essere un invito alla riflessione, uno stimolo al risparmio energetico e alla riduzione delle emissioni di CO_2. Ulteriori informazioni sul nostro sito (in "chi siamo").

The contributors of the volume do not represent the views of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, CVCL (Centro per la Valutazione e le Certificazioni Linguistiche, Centre for Language Evaluation and Certification), or of ALTE.

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Gli autori apprezzerebbero, da parte dei colleghi, eventuali suggerimenti, segnalazioni e commenti sull'opera (da inviare a redazione@edilingua.it)

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University for Foreigners of Perugia, 19-23 January, 18-20 May 2026

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The Winter School plus Spring Days on Artificial Intelligence for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment, brought together almost 200 participants focusing on the theme of *AI Forward* on two occasions at the University for Foreigners of Perugia (19-23 January and 18-20 May 2026).

The two events were convened and chaired by ALTE–the *Association of Language Testers in Europe* and CVCL–the *Centro per la Valutazione e le Certificazioni Linguistiche of the University for Foreigners of Perugia*–full member of ALTE for Italian as a second/foreign language. Both events brought together researchers, educators, policymakers, language professionals, and assessment specialists to explore how AI is reshaping language education and assessment practices worldwide. They were supported and sponsored by the TNE (Transnational Education) "IMPACT" project funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research.

From the perspective of ALTE, the discussions were contextualised within the Mission and stance of ALTE on the issues and the long-standing activities related to the use of educational technology (EdTech) in all aspects of assessment, and, more recently, discussions on the "dual impacts" of the latest Frontier Models of AI. In recent events, ALTE has sought to focus the discussions on educational uses of AI (EdAI) to support and extend all aspects of language learning-oriented assessment (LOA). That was the main focus of the ALTE International Conference, Munich 2026 (aspects of Responsibility and Empowerment), and also discussed and illustrated in recent publications: the Manual for Language Test Development and Examining and the Supplement to a Handbook for Aligning Language Education with the CEFR.

Building on the activities and outcomes of the Winter School, the Spring Days invited the participants to address and discuss the following question:

In our multilingual society, how can we use AI to "augment" the role of the human in language education, without replacing it?

In addition to lectures and presentations, the Spring Days convened three Round Tables:

- AI and the Future of Language Assessment: Standards, Validity and Ethics;
- AI in Language Teaching: Opportunities and Risks for Teachers and Learners;
- Teacher Professional Development and Responsible AI Adoption.

The participants were also asked to consider the following additional questions:

1. If language professionals are to be *AI Ready,* what do they need *to know* and *be able to do?* What *assistance* do they need to achieve this?
2. In what ways will language teachers need to *change their practices* to make best use of EdAI?
3. How can EdAI contribute to *"better language learning"* in transformative ways in both teaching and assessment?
4. Automation of educational processes can lead to *efficiencies and cost savings* but can also lead to narrower and *less valid solutions*. How can this be avoided?

In the extensive discussions around these questions from the different perspectives of the participants, a range of recurring points emerged, including the following:

- The importance of positionality and of stating a stance about AI
- The meaning and interpretation of "augmenting" human capacities and roles
- AI to support plurilingualism and learning-centred approaches, including the possibility of plurilingual assessments
- Clarification around the types of AI and their uses in general and specific ways (not only Large Language Models–LLMs).
- Sources of the well-known AI platforms and concerns for the commercial interests of their owners
- Hybridity and the appropriate balance of roles performed by humans compared with machines
- The risk of replacement of humans and human capacities, including the reduction of human cognitive abilities as a result of AI use
- Sustainability is an ethical issue; Generative AI (GenAI) has environmental, economic and social consequences
- Embrace EdAI opportunities but with "healthy" scepticism and caution
- Learn and keep up-to-date with the rapid changes, but plan and implement with care and time for reflection–e.g., based on an explicit AI strategy for your purposes.

These points converged in discussions on the final day of the event, visually summarized through the Mentimeter tag cloud reported below:

Figure 1. Mentimeter-generated word cloud illustrating participants' keywords proposed for inclusion in the AI Spring Days Resolution 2026.

The tag cloud shows a clear convergence around sustainability as the primary concern, supported by a coherent cluster of pedagogical, ethical, and methodological themes relevant to the use of AI in education. Sustainability is the dominant keyword, which indicates that participants prioritise long-term impact, responsible AI use, and both ecological and systemic awareness for the AI Declaration 2026. A secondary cluster of equally frequent keywords, notably ethics, mediation, reliability, integration, scaffolding, and process, points to complementary priorities: trust, responsibility, the human role in AI-supported interactions, and careful attention to how AI is implemented in teaching rather than only to its outcomes. Beyond these core clusters, a long tail of single-occurrence terms enriches the map and groups into meaningful strands: ethical and social orientation (inclusion, compassion, responsibility, relational ethics, social justice, transparency), pedagogical innovation (personalisation, co-construction, authentic learning, practical applications, training, support), cognitive and linguistic concerns (critical thinking, literacy, languaging, meaning, plurilingualism, mediation), human-AI balance (human touch, hybridity, augmentation, reflection), systemic and future-oriented views (policy, pace of change, future, new professionals, change), and assessment and quality (validity, reliability, alignment). Interesting signals include lexical variation and fragmentation (e.g., "ethics" / "ethic" / "etic", "reflection" / "reflexion"), which suggests overlapping but unsettled terminology; the presence of "carbon footprint" alongside "sustainability", which signals ecological as well as pedagogical concerns; and terms such as "human touch" and "hybridity", which emphasise a non-technocentric, human-centred vision of integration. Taken together, the cloud describes a

values-driven community (ethics, inclusion, responsibility), pedagogically grounded (scaffolding, integration, mediation), forward-looking yet cautious (pace of change, reliability, transparency), and committed to balancing innovation with human-centred approaches; in short, to the sustainable and ethical integration of AI in education grounded in pedagogy, critical reflection, and social responsibility.

On the basis of these reflections, ALTE will take these discussions forward by extending EdAI-related activities in its special interest groups (SIGs) and through interdisciplinary collaboration with its partners.

In balancing the dual impacts of AI, the concluding recommendation is to adopt the following 4 Maxims for implementing *AI-Forward in language learning, teaching and assessment* in safe and sustainable ways:

- Use AI in ways that are aligned with human values
- Use AI to enhance and extend the communicative approach
- Enable all aspects of language learning and assessment
- Focus on sustainability of all kinds.

AI-Forward Declaration 2026

From the Winter School and the Spring Days on Artificial Intelligence for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Explanatory notes

The explanatory notes for the **AI-Forward Declaration 2026** include the main findings from the three Round Tables held at the University for Foreigners of Perugia during the Spring Days on Artificial Intelligence for Language Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.

Round Table ❶:

AI and the Future of Language Assessment: Standards, Validity and Ethics

Moderator: Monica Barni, La Sapienza Rome

Spokesperson: Omar Schiavone, British Council

Speakers:

- Elisabetta Bonvino, University of Roma Tre
- Danilo Rini, CVCL
- Giulia Peri, University for Foreigners of Siena
- Diego Cortes, University of Roma Tre
- Vincent Folny, ALTE
- Omar Schiavone, British Council
- Daniele Bernardinelli, CINECA

Focus:

- AI in certification exams
- validity and reliability of automated scoring
- transparency and bias in AI assessment
- policy and accreditation implications.

What clearly emerged from this discussion is that artificial intelligence is no longer a future possibility in language assessment: it is already part of our operational reality. Across all the perspectives presented today–academic, institutional, operational, and technological–there seems to be a common understanding: AI offers extraordinary opportunities but also raises significant responsibilities.

We discussed efficiency, scalability, automated scoring, and innovation. But we also reflected on equally important issues: transparency, bias, digital literacy, inclusion, and accountability. In particular, one key point resonated throughout the round table: assessment must remain fundamentally human-centred, even when supported by increasingly advanced technologies.

As assessment professionals and institutions, our responsibility is therefore not simply to adopt AI, but to govern it responsibly. This means ensuring that technology enhances fairness rather than creating new barriers, that operational delivery remains reliable and inclusive across different contexts, and that human oversight continues to play a central role in protecting validity, trust, and credibility.

Another important takeaway from today's discussion is the value of interdisciplinary dialogue. The complexity of these challenges requires collaboration between researchers, institutions, operational teams, policymakers, and infrastructure providers. No single perspective alone can fully address the ethical and practical implications of this transformation.

Ultimately, the success of AI in language assessment will not be measured only by technological sophistication, but by our ability to preserve the integrity, accessibility, and human dimension of assessment itself.

Round Table ❷:

AI in Language Teaching: Opportunities and Risks for Teachers and Learners

Moderator and spokesperson: Roberto Dolci, University for Foreigners of Perugia

Speakers:

- Valeria Caruso, AItLA–Associazione Italiana di Linguistica Applicata
- Massimo Maggini, ILSA–Insegnanti Italiano Lingua Seconda Associati
- Sarah Ellis, Cambridge University Press and Assessment
- Alessandro Mencarelli, OxfordAQA–Oxford University Press and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance

Focus:

- teacher roles in AI-supported classrooms
- student autonomy and AI tutors
- training needs and professional development
- ethical classroom integration.

Held within the conference framework of the guiding question "In our multilingual society, how can we use AI to augment the role of the human in language education, without replacing it?", the round table brought together voices from teacher associa-

tions (ILSA), researchers and scholars association (AItLA), distance university education (EDUNEXT), and major institutions of teacher training and language assessment (Cambridge University Press and Assessment, OxfordAQA). The discussion was structured around four themes: teacher roles in AI-supported classrooms, student autonomy and AI tutors, training needs and professional development, and ethical classroom integration. Valentino Santucci (EDUNEXT), invited among the panelists, was unable to attend; the contributions of the four participating panelists are summarised below.

Teacher roles. Massimo Maggini (ILSA) opened the discussion by focusing on how the teacher's role evolves in relation to learners' use of AI in the classroom, and on the international institutions that have begun to address the ethical concerns raised by the use of these tools in education. Alessandro Mencarelli (OxfordAQA) returned to the same theme, weighing the opportunities AI offers against the challenges of integrating it in a pedagogically meaningful way. His central argument was that, far from diminishing the figure of the teacher, the growing presence of AI makes the teacher's role more central, not less. In passing he also referred to a new generative AI tool currently being developed by Oxford University Press.

Student autonomy and AI tutors. Valeria Caruso (AItLA) developed the second theme, focusing on the affordances of conversational AI tutors in distance and blended settings. She balanced the benefits–anytime/anywhere practice, immediate feedback, motivation, personalisation–against significant risks: over-reliance on the tool, reduced metacognitive effort, loss of authentic human interaction, and the uneven reliability of AI models across languages, particularly the less-resourced ones spoken by migrant and minority learners. She raised the question of how learners can be educated to use these tools both autonomously and critically, and how such autonomy interacts with the validity of assessment.

Training and professional development. Sarah Ellis (Cambridge University Press and Assessment) framed this strand around the development of assessment literacy, digital skills and AI literacy as the competences teachers most need today, in order to support classroom practices and assessment policies that are both pedagogically robust and ethically grounded.

Contributions from the floor. The discussion was enriched by interventions from the audience, which emphasised three further points: the need to investigate uses of AI that actively support plurilingual and pluricultural competence; the ethical dimension of AI use, with reference to the recent encyclical of Pope Leo XIV "Magnifica Humanitas"; and the importance of educating both students and teachers to understand how AI actually works, refusing to treat it as a "black box".

Concluding remark. Across the interventions a shared orientation emerged: AI in language education is most promising when it is integrated critically and ethically, with the teacher's pedagogical role and the learner's plurilingual experience held firmly at the centre.

Round Table ❸:

Teacher Professional Development and Responsible AI Adoption

Moderator and spokesperson: Andrea Villarini, University for Foreigners of Siena, DILLE–Didattica delle Lingue e Linguistica Educativa

Speakers:

- Francesca Gallina, GISCEL–Gruppo di Intervento e Studio nel Campo dell'Educazione Linguistica
- Cristina Gaggioli, University for Foreigners of Perugia
- Manuela Kelly Calzini, Trinity College, London
- Jessica Niewint, INDIRE–Istituto Nazionale per la Documentazione, l'Innovazione e la Ricerca Educativa
- Talia Sbardella, University for Foreigners of Perugia

Focus:

- Teacher training needs and AI literacy
- Classroom practices, CLIL and multilingual contexts
- Co-design of AI-enhanced tasks, institutional policies and guidelines for safe, inclusive use.

The topics were mainly addressed from two different but converging perspectives: the one related to language education and to the pedagogical one. The focus was especially on language teaching, but the issues discussed have implications for the teaching of all disciplines.

AI technologies were framed within an ecosystem built around three pillars: the linguistic space (shaped by AI-generated productions), the human space (namely, the space of personality and learning styles and teaching methods of students and teachers), and the cultural space (that is, the society in which the various educational pathways are embedded).

All participants emphasized the importance of teacher training that deeply integrates digital skills (including therefore the use of AI in the classroom) into everyday teaching practices, overcoming the current view that associates them merely with a support tool "for thinking less" and "getting things done faster".

The need to anchor teacher training to the guidelines emerging from European documents was reiterated, particularly the European frameworks DigCompEdu and DigComp, which provide a theoretical reference for understanding AI as a cross-cutting element that redefines, respectively, teachers' professional identity and students' competencies. The Universal Design for Learning model was also mentioned, as it guides educational planning toward accessible, flexible, and inclusive environments.

Moreover, it was emphasized that the conscious use of AI is not intended to replace the teacher's role, but rather will partly reshape its characteristics, making some practices obsolete while introducing new ones.

It was also pointed out that the increasingly widespread use of AI in language learning, teaching, and assessment raises a question of democracy as well, in the sense that what is being discussed is a technology that has become pervasive and central to educational practices, and therefore guaranteeing everyone–no one excluded–access to and informed use of these tools is essential.

The role of the student was also discussed, as students too are called upon to radically rethink their behaviors and their way of learning, so that AI may become a true added value in acquisition processes.

Through examples drawn from operational proposals that had already been tested, the meaning of "responsible AI adoption" was explored, reflecting on how to preserve linguistic plurality, interpretative complexity, and the relational dimension within language education, as well as on how to personalize the use of AI for the development of each student's full potential.

Also, with the support of data from surveys conducted on samples of teachers, the role of technologies in redefining the assessment of acquired competencies was emphasized; consequently, it became evident that teacher training can no longer afford to overlook these aspects.

Finally, the following operational suggestions were provided for teacher training aimed at integrating AI into everyday teaching practices:

- Shifting attention toward learning processes rather than the products of learning, which are now too strongly influenced by the use of technology;
- Making training on the use of new technologies a key and central element, rather than treating it as an additional component where only a very limited number of hours is devoted compared to the overall time allocated to professional development courses;
- Supporting teachers in the use of technologies over a longer period that extends beyond the initial phase of their careers;
- Encouraging training models based on the group sharing of good practices for the use of technologies in the classroom;
- Conceiving the use of AI as a cross-cutting element that concerns all disciplines and all learning processes, not only those related to foreign languages.

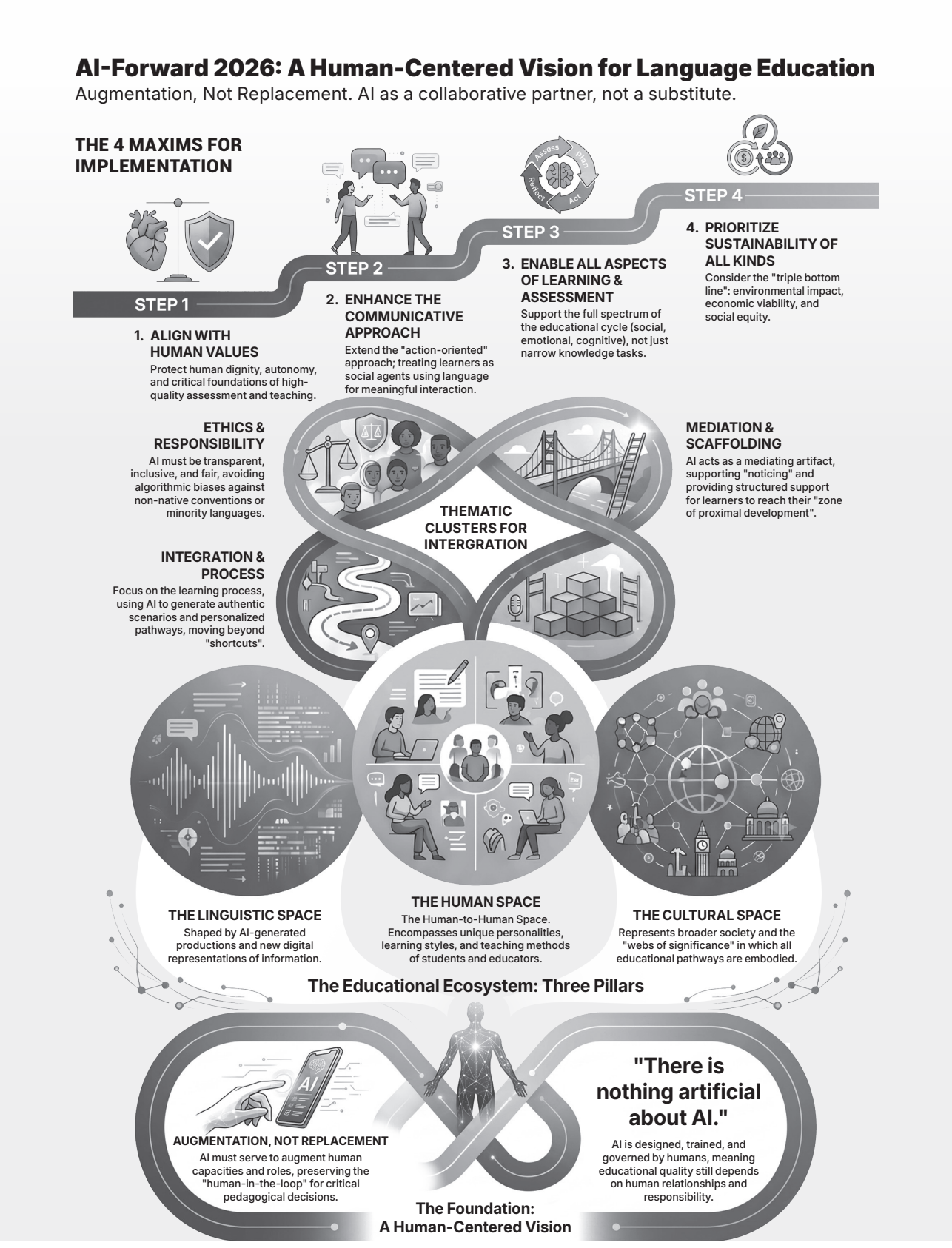

Figure 2. AI-generated infographic illustrating key themes from the Winter School and Spring Days on AI in language education.

AI FORWARD

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

ISBN 979-12-59803-04-7

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How is artificial intelligence changing the way we learn, teach, and assess languages? And how can we make sure that technology serves education, rather than the other way around?

Born out of the Winter School and the Spring Days on Artificial Intelligence for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment at the University for Foreigners of Perugia in 2026, and convened in cooperation with ALTE, the Association of Language Testers in Europe, within the framework of the MUR TNE IMPACT project, this volume brings together the voices of scholars, teachers, researchers, policymakers, and language assessment specialists from across Europe.

Opening with a foreword by Luciano Floridi on the "languages of information", the book unfolds in four parts, guiding the reader from policy and conceptual frameworks (ALTE, the ECML, INDIRE, and the European Commission) through institutional implementation in educational ecosystems, to concrete tools, applications, and case studies–web apps, chatbots, automated item generation, and interactive lesson platforms–before closing with a human-centred reflection on the future of language education and publishing in the age of AI.

One red thread runs through every contribution: AI as augmentation, never as a substitute for the teacher. Not "replacing" but "re-placing" the human: putting professional judgement, critical thinking, ethical awareness, and clear pedagogical goals back at the centre.

The volume can be read as both a snapshot of the state of the art and an invitation to ask not only what AI can do, but what it should do, for teachers, researchers, and policymakers seeking to navigate, with awareness and purpose, a transformation already underway.

These reflections are included in the "AI-Forward Declaration 2026", jointly issued by ALTE and the CVCL of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, following the reflections and comments of speakers and policymakers, as well as the conclusions of the Round Tables.