# A new era of education: Unbound Academy pioneers AI-driven learning



The recent developments in education technology reveal a significant trend towards the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching methodologies, with one charter school network poised to be a pioneer in this area. The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools has officially approved an all-virtual, AI-driven academic institution known as Unbound Academy. This charter school, which is set to launch in August, aims to cater to fourth to eighth-grade students across the United States, utilising personalised AI instruction through established online platforms like Khan Academy and IXL.

Unbound Academy will adopt a structured daily schedule during which students will engage in lessons covering science, literature, and mathematics for two hours each morning. According to Unbound's charter application, the AI system will actively monitor students' responses, the time spent on tasks, and even emotional indicators captured via webcam. The aim is to tailor the learning experience by adjusting the difficulty and presentation style based on each student's unique requirements. "This ensures that each student is consistently challenged at their optimal level, preventing boredom or frustration," the application states.

The educational model proposed by Unbound claims to enable students to achieve mastery of subjects at a rate up to 2.4 times faster than in traditional educational environments, as highlighted in their application materials. The institute's mission is to engage a generation of students deemed disengaged and to equip them for success in an evolving modern landscape.

Unbound Academy will utilise a "2hr Learning model," currently operational in Alpha, a network of private schools managed by Unbound Academic Institute. The Alpha network has multiple locations in Texas and Florida, with plans for new establishments in Santa Barbara, California, and Phoenix, Arizona. Unbound Academy is expected to provide virtual education to students in the Tucson area.

It is noteworthy that Unbound Academy will not employ traditional teaching staff. Instead, student engagement during AI lessons will be overseen by individuals referred to as "Guides." These Guides will step in to provide support when necessary, adopting a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approach. Within their application, Unbound asserts that this "human-in-the-loop approach, aligning with US Department of Education best practices, ensures that AI enhances, rather than replaces, human judgment." The school cites large class sizes in conventional schooling as a barrier to individual attention, claiming that its model will deliver more personalised, hands-on encouragement, despite budgeting only eight guides for a total of 250 students.

Selection of Guides is based on their motivational skills and familiarity with students. They will be drawn from top universities nationwide and are expected to possess strong backgrounds in technology and entrepreneurship.

Following AI lessons, students at Unbound Academy will participate in several hours of virtual life skills workshops. These workshops will address important topics such as financial literacy, public speaking, resilience, and critical thinking, facilitated by "community mentors," who may include local entrepreneurs and civic leaders.

In its charter application, Unbound acknowledges the higher costs associated with similar Alpha schools but aims to make its programme accessible to lower-income and underserved communities, with plans to provide laptops to enrolled families.

AI's capabilities in personalisation offer potential benefits in education, particularly for students of varying abilities who may not thrive in the traditional, one-size-fits-all educational system. As noted by Unbound, "Students can advance based on competency rather than age or time spent, beneficial for both struggling and gifted students."

While the shift towards AI in education is significant, the effectiveness of online learning, a model that gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a topic of debate. Many educators express skepticism regarding its efficacy; however, there is a growing trend in the proliferation of AI tutors. The long-term impacts of AI-driven learning environments may take time to fully understand as more data emerges from ongoing long-term implementation in educational settings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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