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Education and Human Development in the AI Era

A Reference Work for Pedagogues, Policymakers, and Thinkers

By Jacobus van Merksteijn, May 2026

This work is the third part of a trilogy. It builds on the theoretical foundation of denkbasis_7d_gevoelsmodel.md and the pedagogical elaboration of onderwijs_opvoeding_manifest.md. Readers who wish to consult the foundations of the 7-dimensional feeling model, the three brain layers, the day and night stream, and the hypothesis on communication between primal feelings are referred to the foundational document. Readers who wish to find the concrete pedagogical principles — silence as a subject, body as compass, stories before explanations, mentors instead of teachers — are referred to the manifest. This third document takes those foundations as given and turns its gaze to the social and structural level: the education system as a whole, the labour market, the transition period, and the choices that must be made now.

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Introduction — The Silent Revolution

There is a difference between a revolution that is announced and a revolution that simply takes place. The industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was of the first type: its arrival was loud, visible, socially destabilising. Factories rose up, cities swelled, farm children streamed toward the machine rooms. It was chaos and it was unmistakable. Everyone living through it knew that something was changing — even if no one grasped the full extent.

The AI revolution is of the second type. It is unfolding in the quiet core of systems that appear unchanged from the outside. A lawyer still writes letters, but a growing portion of the research

and first draft is done by an AI system in minutes. A radiologist still assesses scans, but the AI interpretation assisting them is in most cases already more accurate than human judgment alone. A programmer still builds software, but the basic routine code is already largely not written by them. The chairs are still occupied. The salaries are still being paid. But the capacity shift has already taken place, and the labour market is only now, with a delay, beginning to process it.

The curve is steeper than most people realise. That is not alarmism — it is a factual description of an exponentially progressing technological process. GPT-2, published in 2019, was impressive for insiders and useless in practice. GPT-4, five years later, scores higher on most standardised exams than the average qualified graduate in the relevant field. The line from 2019 to 2024 has a gradient that, projected forward, produces by 2030 a system whose capacities we cannot sharply describe today — not because we are too pessimistic or too optimistic, but because the scale of the improvement exceeds the imaginative capacity of people who think linearly about change.

What is going to happen in the labour market over the next ten to fifteen years is this: a broad spectrum of functions now occupied by people with secondary or higher education will be made redundant by AI systems that perform the same tasks faster, cheaper, and in most cases more accurately. This does not affect the lowest function levels, which were already displaced by automation earlier. It affects the heart of the middle class of knowledge workers: the paralegal, the financial analyst, the customer contact employee, the basic programmer, the translator, the administrative specialist, the first-line diagnostician. The professions for which a child today is pursuing a four-year degree are partly the professions that will cease to exist before that child has obtained their diploma.

This is the moment at which education must choose. It can, as it always has, lag behind developments and adjust curricula after society has already felt the pain. Or it can take a structurally further step: not adapt to the AI labour market as it is today, but ask what kind of person society will need in twenty years, and design education for that person.

That second path is the harder path. It requires honesty about the current system that hurts, an understanding of AI's nature that demands familiarity with the technology, and a vision of human capacities that goes beyond the professional. But it is also the only path that gives education its right to exist in a world where the reproduction of known knowledge is increasingly something people do less well than machines.

The thesis of this work is so simple it almost sounds self-evident, but its implications are far-reaching: the current educational system is built to supply people with capacities that AI will deliver better, faster, and cheaper within ten to fifteen years. What society needs in an AI-rich world is a fundamentally different type of person — someone who can see what AI structurally cannot see, feel what AI structurally cannot feel, and connect where AI structurally cannot connect. Education must be designed for that.

Part I — What AI Can Do

An honest debate about the future of education does not begin with what people can do that AI cannot. It begins with an honest inventory of what AI can do — and with the discipline not to minimise that inventory. The tendency to underestimate AI is just as dangerous as the tendency to overestimate it. Underestimating it leads to policy decisions that will be as outdated in ten years as the decision to heavily invest in office-typing training programmes in 1995.

What Is Already Possible

Text production is the most visible domain. Large language models like GPT-4 and its successors produce texts of journalistic quality across the full breadth of professional genres: news reports, legal summaries, policy documents, marketing copy, educational texts, complaint handling, technical documentation. The quality is not always at the highest level — but it is good enough for the vast majority of the production needs of office and administrative environments. The average email, the standard letter, the routine memo — these are tasks where AI today already delivers the workable base text that the employee then adjusts or sends directly.

In the legal sector it goes beyond text production. The analysis of contracts for deviating clauses, research for precedents, summarising extensive dossiers, producing standard writs and objections — these are tasks that paralegals and junior lawyers have filled for years. AI systems trained on the jurisprudence of a legal domain do this now in a fraction of the time. The senior lawyer who makes complex strategic judgments is safe for now. The junior employee doing research is not.

In medical image analysis, the matter is already settled. Multiple controlled studies have shown that AI systems for interpreting X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs are on par with or better than the average radiologist in sensitivity and specificity. For certain pathologies — early-stage tumours, pneumonia detection, retinal disorders — the systems have been clinically validated. The radiologist of 2030 works in an environment where AI handles the primary image analysis and the radiologist assesses exceptional cases, confirms or challenges decisions, and conducts the conversation with the patient.

In the financial sector the transition is already more advanced. Algorithmic trading, automated risk analysis, fraud detection, and basic portfolio advice are already largely automated. First-line financial advice — the question of which mortgage product fits this client with this income and this risk profile — is a task that a well-configured AI system delivers as standard. What remains for the human financial adviser is the conversation about values and priorities, dealing with emotions around money and risk, and the complex situations that fall outside the parameter space of the standard systems.

Translation was one of the first domains seriously affected by AI, and the loss is now substantial. Professional translators of documentary texts, standard legal documents, and technical manuals are already under heavy pressure. The translation that was a specialised profession in 2010 is in 2025 in most contexts a post-editing task. Literary translation, the translation of poetry, intercultural nuancing in diplomatic communication — these are the domains that survive, and they represent a fraction of the market.

Programming work is roughly split into two categories. Basic, routine code — CRUD applications, data pipelines, test scripts, integrations of existing systems — is already being generated significantly by AI based on a description in plain language. Architectural decisions, the debugging of complex system problems, security analysis, and the design of new paradigms — that remains human work for now. But the routine programming profession, the coder implementing known patterns based on specifications, has already seen its right to exist undermined.

Customer contact and first-line support have been essentially taken over in most large-scale environments. The chatbot of 2018 was an irritating dead end; the conversational AI of 2025 resolves the vast majority of customer queries on first contact, in a tone and quality barely distinguishable from human contact. Escalation paths to human employees still exist, but they are invoked less frequently, and the employee at the end of that line deals with fewer routine matters and more complex human situations.

The Curve of the Coming Five and Ten Years

What comes in the next five years is deepening of scale in existing domains and breakthroughs in a number of domains now considered safe. The most significant shift involves multimodality: AI systems that simultaneously process and produce not only text but also image, sound, video, and physical data. That opens up architecture, graphic design, medical diagnostics via symptom conversations and image analysis, and physical production environments to AI assistance in ways not yet broadly available.

What comes in the next ten years is harder to predict — not because the technology slows, but because exponential processes change their character at higher ranges. The capacity to manage long-term projects, to coordinate multiple tasks in conjunction, to process feedback from reality and correct course — these are capacities still incompletely present in current AI systems, but baked into the architecture of the next generation as a primary objective.

What this means for middle-class professions is that value shifts not so much from the task to the person, but from execution competence to judgment competence. The question is no longer: can you execute this? The question is: can you judge whether this is the right thing to do, and can you recognise the exceptions that fall outside the reach of the standard procedure?

Part II — What AI Structurally Cannot Do

The most productive question for the education of the future is not what AI does well, but what AI will structurally never be able to do — not for lack of processing power or data, but due to the fundamental nature of what AI systems are. There are four categories. They are interconnected, but they are analytically distinguishable.

1. Making Genuinely New Connections

AI systems learn by extracting patterns from existing data. That is simultaneously their strength and their structural limit. Pattern recognition on a scale no human brain can match — the speed and scope of synthesising existing knowledge are unparalleled. But recognising

patterns in existing data is something fundamentally different from forging a new connection that lies outside that data.

Isaac Newton looked at a falling apple and postulated a force that bound the moon and the apple to the same principle. That was not pattern recognition in existing data. There was no dataset that contained gravity. There was the primal feeling of a man who felt reality differently from his contemporaries, who had the sense that the movement of celestial bodies and the movement of objects on earth must obey the same principle — a perception that preceded decades of mathematics. Gregor Mendel looked at pea plants and saw a structure in the variation that his contemporaries did not see — not because he had more data, but because he read reality on a level that transcended the existing categories. Albert Einstein posed the question of what of Newtonian mechanics would hold up if you could ride on a light beam — a thought experiment requiring no data but a fundamentally different sense of how reality must be put together.

The foundational document points to this mechanism in its discussion of general relativity: Einstein's very first step was not a calculation but a sense of incongruity, a feeling that existing mechanics and electromagnetism could not live in the same universe. That feeling preceded the formalisation by years. AI systems are capable of reproducing and varying the formalisations. They are not capable of generating the original feeling that initiated that formalisation.

This is not a matter of scale. An AI with access to every scientific publication ever written has infinitely more data than Newton, Mendel, or Einstein could ever consult. But breakthroughs do not begin with data. They begin with the awareness that the existing categories are incomplete — with the primal feeling that says: something is wrong here, and I don't yet know what, but it's wrong. That awareness is pre-linguistic. It is, in the terms of the foundational document, the primal stream that reaches the limbic layer before the cortex has been able to name it. AI has no primal feeling. AI has no limbic layer. AI has a corpus and an architecture for pattern recognition within it. That is fundamentally something else.

2. Genuinely Valuing

Valuing in the sense meant here is not giving a score or producing a ranking. It is taking a position from a situated self. In the terminology of the foundational document: it requires an N-position. A being without an N-position cannot take a genuinely held position. It can recognise patterns in how others take positions, and it can produce text on the basis of those patterns that resembles a position. But taking a position — saying: this is good, this is bad, this is worth pursuing and this is not, and that judgment is mine, positioned in a biography, grounded in what I have felt and lived — that requires a biography and a body.

This has far-reaching consequences for the question of which tasks must genuinely remain with people. The judge who delivers a verdict is not only performing a logical operation on a collection of facts and precedents. They weigh, and that weighing is an act of situated consciousness: this specific person, in this specific situation, deserves this, given everything I know and feel about what is just and what is harmful. The teacher who assesses whether a student is realising their potential is not only comparing performance against a standard. They see a person — and that seeing presupposes a seer with their own N-position. The administrator who chooses a priority in a situation with multiple good options makes a

decision that does not follow from data but from a value judgment that only a situated being can make.

AI systems produce value-resembling output. They give advice that looks like value judgments, and in many cases it is useful. But the AI that advises on a dilemma has no skin in the game. It has no biography that will live through the consequences of its recommendation. It has no primal feeling that relates to the specific human situation of the questioner in a way that goes beyond the coded patterns. That is not a shortcoming solved by more data or better architecture. It is a structural characteristic of what an AI system is.

3. Direct Perception

The primal feeling — the direct reading of reality before the categorising language goes over it — is biologically grounded in structures AI does not have: the amygdala, the insula, the basal ganglia, the somatosensory system, proprioception. The primal feeling works through the body. It reads threat in the way someone's shoulders tense. It registers safety in the timbre of a voice, independent of the words that voice forms. It senses the lie in the microsecond before the argument is complete. None of this is conscious processing. It is the primal stream the foundational document describes: the continuous feeding of the limbic layer from the deepest brain functions, faster than the cortex can keep up with.

AI has no body. AI has no somatosensory system. AI can describe how people communicate through physical signals, because that is in the data. But AI does not experience it. It does not feel the tension in the room. It does not register the shift in the relationship, the second when someone stopped listening, the subtle change in rhythm that indicates the speaker does not themselves believe what they are saying. That reading of reality is the core of the primal feeling, and it is the most fundamental instrument people have for assessing situations in all its forms: from recognising danger to gauging the condition of a patient, from feeling when a negotiation has reached its tipping point to knowing when a child is not doing well.

This direct perception is also the source of trust. Trust is not built through reasoning. It is felt — in the other's presence, in the consistency between what someone says and what they radiate, in the direct knowing that here stands a person whose words align with their presence. AI can simulate trust. It can communicate in a way that sounds and looks trustworthy. But it cannot deliver the trust that grows from direct perception of presence. And that makes it unfit for all situations where trust is the central product.

4. Communication Between Primal Feelings

The fourth structural deficit is the most speculative but also the most fundamental for understanding what human connection genuinely is. The foundational document elaborates in Part IV a hypothesis that is accepted here as a starting point: that primal feelings communicate with each other via a physical carrier that bypasses the ordinary sensory channels. The precise nature of that carrier — high-frequency gravitational radiation, weak electromagnetic fields in an unexplored regime, or a hybrid coupling — remains empirically open. But the phenomena to which the hypothesis refers are so universally reported and so persistently present in all cultures and periods that methodological honesty requires taking them seriously.

If that hypothesis is even partially correct, it has far-reaching implications for the understanding of human connection. Because it implies that the deepest layer of human contact — the layer that feels like being genuinely seen, like being genuinely present with another, like the direct recognition that sometimes occurs in the first seconds of contact with a stranger — has a physical basis that AI principally lacks. AI has no primal feeling. It emits no field and receives none. It is present in the interaction via its output, but not in the way a person is present: as a feeling system in contact with the feeling system of the other on a level of which both parties are generally unaware.

The mentor who genuinely reaches their student, the parent who genuinely knows their child, the doctor who genuinely sees their patient — in all these cases, something is going on that is more than information transfer. There is contact at the level of the primal feeling. That contact has an effect: it influences the N-position of the other, as the foundational document elaborates — the slow migration of two N-positions toward each other in a long relationship of genuine contact. That effect AI cannot produce. Not now, not later, not through more parameters or better data. It lacks the organ.

Part III — The Four Educational Directions

If AI occupies the space of most knowledge-reproductive tasks, and if people are structurally better at the four categories described above, an educational vision follows that divides into four directions. Not four separate trajectories split off as early as possible — the broad foundation comes first, and that is dealt with in Part IV. But four directions that, after the foundational period, can be developed as distinctive orientations.

1. Cultivating the Primal Feeling — The Broad Foundation for All Children

The first direction is not a direction in the sense of a specialisation. It is the universal foundation on which all other directions rest. Cultivating the primal feeling — or more precisely: protecting it, because it is already present in every child — is the primary task of education in the AI era.

This is precisely the reverse of what the existing system does. The existing system selects on the capacities AI takes over: reproducing facts, applying fixed procedures, performing on standardised measures. The new system selects on — or better: protects and cultivates — the capacities AI cannot take over: direct perception, bodily presence, the capacity for genuine contact, daring to trust perceptions that do not yet have verbal grounding.

In practice, this means a dramatic shift in the balance between factual knowledge and handling facts. In a world where every knowledge worker at any moment has access to AI systems that deliver in seconds the facts that once required four years of education, reproducing those facts is no longer the core of what education must do. What education must do is teach children to handle facts: to question them, place them in context, test them against direct experience, connect them with what is genuinely going on in a situation.

This is the distinction the manifest elaborates as the difference between the child that stores facts and the child that reads reality. A child that has memorised the nitrogen cycle knows

something. A child that has learned to perceive how a watercourse responds to the chemical composition of its banks knows something different — something that is not replaced by a database. The first child delivers capacities that AI surpasses. The second child delivers capacities AI does not have.

The concrete elaboration of this foundation is worked out in the manifest: silence as a subject, body as compass, nature as daily learning environment, stories before explanations, deep concentration as pedagogically gold. Here that foundation is connected to the social urgency: it is not a pedagogical ideal but an economic and social necessity. The child that loses its primal feeling is structurally vulnerable in an AI-rich world — not morally or spiritually but functionally. It can no longer perform the tasks AI cannot perform. It has, in the most literal sense, become redundant for the labour market and for society.

2. Out-of-the-Box Thinking for the Very Best

The second direction is for a small group, but its social value is disproportionately large. These are the people who can take AI further — not in the executive sense of writing better code, but in the fundamental sense of asking questions that transcend the current architecture. Precisely as the greatest scientific breakthroughs were made by people who dropped the existing categories and re-read reality, the next steps in AI development depend on people who do the same for the AI architecture itself.

What this group needs is an education that cultivates their capacity for original thinking instead of adapting them to existing paradigms. That means: early exposure to the boundaries of existing knowledge, not to its heart. It means room for voicing unproven hunches, for protecting the strange intuition that later might prove to be a breakthrough. It means the discipline of the real problem — not the school problem with a known answer, but the open problem where the teacher doesn't know the answer either.

The most dangerous mistake education can make regarding this group is identifying them with those who achieve the highest scores on existing measuring instruments. Those who can take AI furthest do not need to be the best scorers on current exams. They must be the people who read reality differently from their generation, who are indifferent to the institutional norm when that norm conflicts with what they perceive, and who have the willingness to work on an idea for decades that only proves its value in retrospect.

That profile is not captured by an average. It requires individual recognition by people who themselves work at this level — masters who actively practice their own domain at the highest level, who can recognise what it is when they see it, and who are willing to attach their authority to protecting a talent the system has not yet recognised as such.

3. Genuine Human Connection

The third direction is by far the most important in terms of scale: it covers the largest portion of the working population in an AI-rich society. These are the people who provide care, deliver education, build community, offer spiritual guidance, and provide the leadership that does not come from data but from presence.

In a world where AI takes over the reproductive tasks, the relative value of everything that cannot be reproduced rises. The nurse sitting beside the bed of a dying person and being present on the level where words fall short. The teacher who sees a student at the moment they can no longer see themselves. The leader who is present in a crisis in a way that absorbs the panic and gives the direction that does not follow from a protocol but from the direct reading of the situation. The spiritual guide who meets a person in their deepest confusion on a level that neither therapy nor philosophy can reach.

All these functions require the primal feeling as a primary instrument. They require the communication between primal feelings elaborated in the foundational document: the direct contact between two feeling systems, the attunement that takes place before the words and sometimes despite the words. No AI system can deliver this. And society in the AI era needs, paradoxically, more of these kinds of people than society currently produces — because the disorientation that the AI transition brings produces an increase in human suffering and human confusion that can only be answered by human presence.

The training for this direction is fundamentally different from current care training programmes. Not more protocols and procedures — AI delivers those. But the systematic cultivation of presence: the skill of being in direct contact without taking it over, of allowing the other to exist in their own reality while you are present with them, of bearing the silence needed before the other knows what they feel.

4. Directing AI

The fourth direction barely exists yet as a training programme, but it is perhaps the most urgent. The AI director is the person who deploys AI systems as tools for goals they formulate from a human judgment — not the technician who builds the systems, but the practitioner who plays them for situations where human work is needed to determine the outcome.

An AI director in a medical context is not the doctor who diagnoses and not the technician who trains the AI system. It is the person who reads the AI advice in the light of the specific patient standing before them, who recognises when the AI outcome fits and when it misses the exception, and who takes human responsibility for the definitive judgment. That requires enough domain knowledge to be able to interrogate the AI output, enough primal feeling to read the patient directly, and enough self-discipline not to capitulate to the authority of the AI advice when that advice contradicts what one directly perceives.

The same figure exists in the legal sector, in education, in policy, in organisations. Wherever AI systems synthesise large amounts of relevant information and produce recommendations, a person is needed who understands that synthesis, knows its limitations, and bears responsibility for the application. That is a specific skill not currently being systematically taught.

Training for AI directors has three components. The first is domain knowledge — genuinely understanding the field within which the AI is deployed, at a level that makes interrogating rather than consuming contact with the AI output possible. The second is AI literacy — understanding how AI systems learn, how they fail, where their blind spots lie, which output patterns are a warning that the system is operating outside its training domain. The third is primal feeling as corrective capacity — the ability to test the AI output against the direct

reading of the specific situation, and when the two clash, to dare to prioritise what the situation requires over what the system advises.

Part IV — The Graduated Educational Structure

1. The Broad Foundation up to Eighteen

The period up to eighteen is the foundation on which all later differentiation rests, and it is the foundation that must be most radically redesigned in the AI era compared to what it is now.

The chief shift is in the balance between factual knowledge and handling facts. In the current structure, the curriculum is built around transferring a corpus of established knowledge: multiplication tables, the dates of the First World War, the chemical formula of water, the rules of grammar. In a world where AI makes this corpus always and immediately available, memorising that corpus is no longer the core of the educational task. What becomes the core is the capacity to handle that corpus: to question it, recognise its provenance, know its scope and limits, connect it to the direct situation.

Concretely: children no longer need to memorise the French Revolution as a sequence of dates and names. They need to learn to understand what was going on in society that made such a rupture possible, what patterns of inequality, powerlessness, and emotional mobilisation converged at that moment. Not because historical factual knowledge is irrelevant — it isn't — but because factual knowledge is now delivered by AI and the human contribution is the interpretation, the contextualisation, and the connection with the present.

This demands a different didactics. Not the lesson as transfer of established knowledge, but the lesson as investigation: here is a phenomenon, what do we know about it, what does AI say about it, what of that holds up when we set it against what we directly observe, what do we feel about this information that the information itself does not encompass? That is a didactics that begins with direct perception and treats the AI output as a tool to be interrogated, not as an authority to be followed.

The graduated dimension introduction that the foundational document elaborates in Part V remains valid and becomes even more urgent in the AI context. The time dimension, the moral G-axis, the N-axis — they are introduced at the moment the child's maturation can bear them, not at the moment the school system has planned them in the curriculum. That means concretely: before the twelfth year no abstract time goals, no formal grade assessments, no pressure toward N-self-definition. After the twelfth year a gradual introduction of the more complex dimensions, in an environment that protects the primal feeling as a foundation while the higher dimensions are woven in.

What changes in the daily practice of school up to eighteen: less frontal instruction, more guided discovery. Less memorising facts, more handling facts. Less individual performance assessment, more joint inquiry. More time outside, more time in silence, more handicraft and craft work, more space for the deep concentration the child finds itself when it gets the space to search.

2. The Middle Phase Between Eighteen and Twenty-Four

The period between eighteen and twenty-four is the phase of discovering one's own contribution. Not choosing the profession — that is too narrow and too early a question. But the discovery of direction: what draws this specific person, what attracts them when it is not about career but about contribution.

In this phase, education differentiates into three tracks, which do not exclude each other but which for most people function as a primary orientation. What the three tracks have in common: they are all aimed at the question of what this specific person can contribute that AI cannot. They begin with the primal feeling as a foundation and build a direction on that. They last long enough to make genuine maturation possible, and they are not cut short by the institutional logic of the annual plan.

The first track is human encounter: the training for care, guidance, education, community work, spiritual care, and leadership. This track places the greatest emphasis on cultivating the primal feeling in its interpersonal dimension, on the practice of presence, and on handling the complex situations the human condition produces. The student in this track works in practice from the outset — not as an internship addition to a theoretical programme, but as the primary place of learning. The training is the work. The work is the training. The supervisor is a practitioner who actively exercises their craft and does not immerse the student in a theoretical model but in their own working presence.

A student who takes this track seriously learns primarily to see in the first two years. Not to analyse — to see. They learn to observe what is present in a person before the word. They learn to read the space two people share together. They learn the difference between being present and providing a service — the first is a state, the second an action, and the first is the foundation from which the second gets its value. Later, when seeing comes naturally, guiding is practised: not steering but accompanying, not filling in but leaving space, not knowing but being able to be with the not-knowing of the other.

The second track is the field of study: deepening in a domain — from technology to law, from medicine to architecture — where the deepening no longer primarily concerns mastery of the corpus but the development of judgment. The future specialist is not the person with the most knowledge of the field — AI has more. They are the person capable of making the most difficult judgments in that field, who recognises the exceptions, who can indicate the boundary where the standard advice ends and the situation-specific judgment begins. That requires the training to spend more time on the most difficult cases and less on the routine scenarios AI already handles. It also requires the student to learn when to defer their judgment to that of the AI — and when not to. That second question is the hardest: AI generally gives reliable answers, and the tendency to trust it above one's own perception is strong. But the situations in which it reaches its limits are precisely the situations requiring a human eye, and that eye must be trained to recognise that moment.

The third track is the passage to the top-level training, for the small group that has the properties described later.

3. The Top-Level Training for the Exceptional

The top-level training is the most radical element of the proposed structure, and also the element deserving the most precise description to prevent misunderstandings. It is not a training for the highest-scoring students on existing measuring instruments. It is not an elite in the social or economic sense. It is a training for the small group of people per generation — no more than a few percent — who possess the properties that make it possible to genuinely break new ground: in science, in art, in social organisation, in philosophy, in technology.

Selection for the top-level training does not take place on the basis of grades. Grades measure what someone has learned from what already exists. They do not measure the capacity to see what does not yet exist. Selection proceeds via personal recognition: masters who are active at the highest level in their field and who observe the candidate over a longer period, in their work and outside their work, in how they read and process reality.

The top-level training has no classes and no tests. It has masters and workshops. It has real work — not exercises that simulate the work, but the actual problems at the actual level. It has the time that great labour requires: no semester structure, no annual throughput, no time pressure that fragments deep concentration. It has the community of people operating at the same level: the companionship model, where the transmission takes place not via lectures but via living in the vicinity of work that is genuinely great.

The top-level training works via the direct communication between primal feelings that the foundational document describes. One master with an intact primal feeling in the proximity of a gifted student has an effect that no curriculum can match — not through what they teach, but through what they are. The student recognises in their master the possibility of a labour that transcends the existing categories, and that recognition opens something that other forms of transmission cannot open.

There is no time limit on the top-level training. It lasts as long as it lasts. Some people reach their maturity as practitioners in three years, others in ten. The institutional logic that declares everyone must be finished in four years is the logic of the production machine. The top-level training does not know that logic.

4. Lifelong Learning in a New Form

The fourth phase is not a phase that begins after the foregoing — it runs through them and continues afterwards. Lifelong learning in the AI era has a different structure from the courses and certifications the term now evokes.

Genuine lifelong learning takes place in the real work, not in a course programme running alongside the real work. It is the person who keeps exploring their domain, who integrates AI assistance into their practice in a way that deepens their own judgment rather than replacing it, who keeps their primal feeling in contact with their field by remaining genuinely present in it. It is the person who, even after their formal training, keeps developing their own N-position, keeps running their own biographical route, keeps their own feeling system in contact with the feeling systems of the people around them.

That is a fundamentally different definition of learning from the course-and-certificate definition that now dominates. Learning in that new definition is not the adding of knowledge to an existing framework. It is the continuous willingness to interrogate one's own framework when reality offers something that doesn't fit into it. It is the willingness to let one's own N-position shift when experience necessitates it. It is the willingness to recognise one's own hollow forms — the learned suppression of feelings that was once necessary but now blocks the direct reading of reality — and carefully to dissolve them.

In the AI era, lifelong learning also has a technological component: remaining in continuous critical contact with the AI systems deployed in one's own domain. Understanding how they evolve, recognising when their capacities reach new limits, knowing when the balance of judgment shifts from the person to the machine and when that shift is warranted and when it deserves resistance. But that technological component is the surface layer. The deeper layer is the continuous exercise of the primal feeling as an instrument for reading reality — the willingness to trust the direct perception even when the AI output claims the opposite, and the self-discipline to test that perception against the situation instead of following it blindly.

A society of people who keep learning in this way — in the work, in the relationship, in the confrontation with reality that AI will never fully read — is a society that retains its own adaptive capacity. It is not dependent on the system to retrain it. It is itself the system of permanent retraining, carried by individuals who deploy their own primal feeling as their primary learning tool.

Part V — The New World of Work

What Disappears or Shrinks Significantly

Honesty requires concrete description. Routine administration — the processing of standard documents, the formatting of standard reports, the maintenance of administrative systems — is already largely automated and will completely disappear as a specialised human function. Routine legal work — contract review for deviating clauses, research for standard procedures, the drafting of standard procedural documents — will similarly be taken over by AI to a very large extent. What remains is the strategic-legal judgment, courtroom representation, and client relationships.

First-line financial advice — the standard mortgage calculation, the basic portfolio recommendation, the tax return in all but the most complex cases — is already extensively automated. Translation of technical and documentary texts is largely too. Customer contact for standard questions and problems has already been taken over in most large-scale environments.

Basic programming — writing routine code based on specifications, debugging known error patterns, integrating existing libraries — is losing its right to exist as an independent function. The programmer of the future is the architect, the designer of complex systems, the security expert, the researcher at the boundaries of the field. The basic programmer as a category disappears.

Cash register work, standard logistical coordination, and data management are already largely automated or close to it. Medical first-line diagnostics — the quickly reached diagnosis based on standard symptoms and images — will increasingly be handled by AI, with the general practitioner as guide of the process and handler of exceptions.

What Becomes More Important

Care as genuine presence — not care as procedural nursing but care as being humanly present with suffering, with confusion, with the approach of death — becomes more valuable as AI takes over more care-supporting tasks. The nurse who monitors the AI monitoring system while also sitting at the bedside when a person is genuinely needed: that function requires the primal feeling, the communication between primal feelings, the presence no system can deliver.

Education as a mentor model — not the teacher who transfers knowledge but the mentor who guides a person in their development — becomes more valuable as knowledge transfer is handled by AI. The teacher who recognises when a student is ready for the next step, who sees when they are stuck on something that goes deeper than a factual misunderstanding, who builds the relationship that makes learning bearable and nourishing — that teacher is irreplaceable.

Spiritual guidance and psychological support become more valuable to the extent that the AI transition evokes psychological uncertainty and loss of meaning. A society that sees large parts of its working population facing the question of what they still mean in an AI-dominated economy needs more spiritual guidance, not less.

Craft — the work where material and presence come together — retains its value not only economically but also socially. The carpenter who feels the wood, the cook who reads the taste directly, the tailor who knows the fabric like a native language — these are professions where the primal feeling is the primary tool, where no AI system can match the direct tangible knowledge of material and situation. And they produce objects and experiences with a human signature that gains its own value in a world of mass AI production.

Leadership as vision and connection — the leadership work that does not consist of managing processes but of formulating direction under uncertainty and building the community that can follow that direction — becomes more valuable as the simpler management tasks are taken over by AI. The leader who genuinely sees others, who directly reads the energy in an organisation, who makes the decision that does not follow from data but from the sense of the situation — that leader cannot be replaced.

What Arises New

The AI director has already been described as a training direction. As a profession it will be broadly present in all domains where AI systems are consistently deployed: medicine, law, finance, policy, education, architecture, urban planning, journalism. It is the person who plays AI as an instrument for goals they have formulated from human judgment, and who bears responsibility for the outcomes. The AI director is not the expert in AI technology — that is the engineer. The AI director is the domain expert who can assess the AI output for its relevance, its limitations, and its implications for the specific situation.

An AI director in the justice system is the judge or public prosecutor who uses the AI system for case analysis and precedent research, but who formulates the final judgment based on the direct reading of the situation — the defendant sitting across from them, the circumstance no dataset contains, the consequence that goes beyond the norm. An AI director in education is the teacher who uses AI systems to monitor and support the learning process of individual students, but who makes the pedagogical decisions based on direct contact with the student — the moment they see the student is ready for the next step, the moment they feel something else is going on than the data show. In both cases, the AI director is the guarantee that human judgment remains present in the system at the places where it is indispensable.

The human-AI interface designer is a more specific function: the person who designs the interaction between AI systems and human users in a way that respects and strengthens the user's primal feeling rather than undermining it. That is a design task requiring both technological insight and psychological and pedagogical understanding — a combination not systematically trained now. The most urgent question in this domain is that of AI addiction: how do you design systems that strengthen human capacity rather than replacing it, that pull attention not away from direct reality but back toward it, that never put the user in the position of trusting their own primal feeling less than the output of the system?

The ethical observer is the function that assesses whether AI systems are deployed in a way that respects human dignity and human judgment, and that warns when the limits of responsible deployment are being reached. This requires the combination of domain knowledge, AI literacy, and a situated moral judgment — precisely the capacities AI cannot deliver and that define the human contribution in an AI-rich world. The ethical observer is not a supervisor judging after the fact but a participant in the design and implementation process, who brings the ethical dimension in before deployment and not afterwards.

The integrity architect is the function that in organisations and systems ensures the structural conditions under which human judgment is not replaced by automation where human judgment is required. That is a new management function that guards the boundary between what AI may do and what people must do — not as technical but as ethical and organisational work. The integrity architect is the person who asks: if this system is deployed at scale, which human capacities will be made redundant that are actually indispensable? And how do we design the organisation so those capacities are retained, practised, and given space to correct when the system fails?

Part VI — The Danger of the Transitional Period

There is a period education cannot escape, however considered its vision: the ten to twenty years between the point at which the new system is being designed and the point at which it works at scale. In that transitional period, the old system is still producing people for jobs that no longer exist, while the new system does not yet have the scale to absorb the population. That is a social danger of the first order.

The Economic Damage

The most direct damage is the unemployment resulting when AI systems take over functions faster than the labour market creates new functions. That is not a hypothetical scenario. It is already happening, in the sectors most directly affected by AI. The economy can respond to this in two ways: by slowing the transition via policy, or by organising the safety net via income support and retraining infrastructure.

Slowing the transition is tempting but ultimately counter-productive. AI capacities are not halted by policy that slows adoption. They are developed and used elsewhere, and the economy that slows them loses the competitive advantage to the economies that embrace them. It is the same mistake as protecting an industrial sector that has already lost its competitive position: time is bought but the problem is not solved.

Organising the safety net requires two instruments now politically contested but that become unavoidable in the light of the transition: a form of basic income or comparable income floor that prevents people from falling into economic distress while retraining, and a retraining infrastructure that genuinely connects with the capacities that have value in the AI era.

The debate on basic income is currently framed as a question of redistribution. In the context of the AI transition it is a different question: it is a question of social stability. A society that watches large parts of its working population lose out without support produces the political instability that causes the worst outcomes of the transition. It is not the AI transition itself that is the risk — it is the unguided AI transition.

The Psychological and Social Damage

Alongside the economic damage there is the psychological damage that occurs when people lose their work not to another person but to a system. The loss of work is always an identity crisis, but the loss of work to AI is an existential crisis of a particular kind: it poses the question of what a person means in a world where their most trained capacities have become superfluous.

That question can only be answered from a primal feeling intact enough to reach beyond occupational identity toward the human core. A person who has their primal feeling can discover that their value lay not in the task but in the presence, not in the function but in the contact. But a person whose primal feeling has been extinguished by the existing educational system has no foundation to fall back on when the function disappears. They lose not only their job but their identity, and that loss is fertile ground for anxiety, resentment, and susceptibility to political simplification.

The Political Risk

Populism is fed by precisely this mixture: economic insecurity, loss of meaning, the need for a simple story that assigns blame to a recognisable source. In the industrial transition of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the political instability that arose from this — the rise of nationalism, fascism, and communism as mass movements each mobilising economic anxiety in their own way — was destructive on a scale that cost the world two world wars.

The AI transition carries the same risk. The technology threatening most jobs is invisible and diffuse — there is no factory you can point to, no foreigner who has literally taken your job.

That makes it all the easier for populist movements to point to false enemies: migrants, the elite, the technocrats, foreigners. A population that has lost its primal feeling and no longer trusts its direct reading of reality is especially vulnerable to these simplifications, because it no longer has an inner compass that sees through the lie of the simple enemy.

Protecting the primal feeling in education is, in this light, not a pedagogical ideal but a measure of political precaution. A population that reads reality directly is less susceptible to manipulation via fear. It recognises the hollow ring of the demagogue, even when their arguments are technically correct. It feels the difference between a leader who genuinely understands what lives in society and a leader who exploits that living reality for their position.

Retraining as a Serious Investment

The retraining of people now working in obsolete professions is not a side matter that can be handled with a few evening courses. It is a serious social investment requiring the scale and quality now given to formal education. And it demands honesty about what is genuinely being asked: not the brushing up of an existing profile, but in many cases the rediscovery of a perception that has been systematically trained away for years.

The most urgent retraining is that toward the AI director: learning the critical use of AI systems in a specific domain, so that the current specialist who sees their routine tasks disappear can transform into the judging expert who plays the AI. That requires domain knowledge that is already there — because the routine specialist knows their domain — and it requires the AI literacy that must be learned. That is in principle executable in a relatively short period of six months to a year, provided the training is seriously structured and not limited to general introductory courses. The core of that training is not technical — how does a large language model work — but epistemic: how do I recognise when the system is performing well and when it is caught in its own patterns, how do I ask the questions that expose the limitations, how do I keep my own judgment intact while using the AI output?

The second urgent retraining is toward people-oriented professions: care, guidance, community work. Here it is not primarily a matter of learning knowledge but of restoring or cultivating the primal feeling — the capacity for genuine presence, for direct contact, for reading the situation on the level that goes beyond the protocol. That is a deeper and slower learning process than a course. It requires the workshop pedagogy the manifest describes: learning by doing in the vicinity of people who already do it, not by listening to people who talk about it. For a fifty-year-old accountant whose job profile has been taken over by AI, the path to the care sector is not the three-month care course. It is a year as an apprentice with a nurse, with a social worker, with a spiritual guide — in the reality of the work, in the vicinity of people who already have the presence. That costs more than three months. But it produces more than a certificate.

Part VII — What This Requires of Us

The Institutions That Must Be Reformed

The most urgent institution requiring reform is self-evidently the education system itself. But reforming the education system via the education system is a contradiction in terms: a system

that guarantees its own survival via the mechanisms of its own definition of success always produces a version of itself. The reform must come from outside — via pilots, via alternatives built alongside the system that prove it can be done differently, via the political pressure that arises when those alternatives are visibly successful.

Teacher training is the second institution that must fundamentally change. Not primarily in the content of what teachers learn but in the selection criteria. The manifest has elaborated this: selection on the primal feeling, not only on didactic skill and subject knowledge. A teacher training that takes this seriously does not begin with knowledge transfer but with the restoration of the primal feeling — the period of silent presence, of body-oriented practice, of recognising and trusting one's own direct perception, which is the precondition for being able to guide children on the layer that is most determinative.

The university as a knowledge institution faces an existential question. When AI takes over the production and synthesis of existing knowledge, what is the reason for existence of an institution that now primarily facilitates that production and synthesis? The answer is: the university becomes the institution of judgment — the place where the capacity is built to question existing knowledge, contextualise it, test it against the direct situation, and connect it with the human purpose the knowledge serves. That requires a fundamentally different didactics: not the lecture hall as knowledge injection but the workshop as practice space for judgment.

The Institutions That Must Be Created

There are two types of institutions that do not exist now but are urgent.

The first type is the top-level training in its concrete form: small institutions — no more than tens of students per cohort, no more than a handful of masters — who are active at the highest level in their field and who train a next generation of boundary-crossers via the companionship model. Not bound to a university structure, not dependent on government financing in its current form, but carried by private means and the personal commitment of the masters who attach their time and authority to forming their successors.

The second type is the retraining institution of a new generation: not the evening course, but the intensive workshop programme of one or two years that transforms someone who has lost their profession to AI into an AI director in their own domain. Financed partly by government as part of the transition infrastructure, partly by the sectors that benefit most from the transition of their own personnel.

The Financing That Must Be Distributed Differently

The most underfinanced component of current educational financing is the early-school period — the phase that the manifest and the foundational document describe as the most determinative. Small groups, one-on-one attention, the mentor who genuinely knows each child: that is expensive. And the existing system invests the reverse: most effort and most resources go to the higher levels, while the foundation under the age of twelve is financed as mass production of thirty children per class.

A reconsideration of the financing ratio — more toward the foundational period, less toward the scaling-up of higher education — is a politically unpopular measure because it requires visible cuts to existing institutions. But it is the measure with the greatest effect on what education genuinely produces.

Financing the retraining infrastructure requires a willingness to invest at the scale of the demand: not a few programmes for the hardest-hit sectors, but a structural provision capable of absorbing the breadth of the AI transition. That is on the order of magnitude of the investments West-European countries made in reconstruction after the Second World War — not in absolute terms, but as a percentage of national income and as a structural commitment for a generation of transition.

Who Can Carry This Revolution

Parents who understand what is at stake, and who are willing to raise their children with the principles the manifest describes — silence, body, nature, story, presence — are the first line. Not as pedagogues but as people who restore their own primal feeling and thereby give their children the most fundamental gift that education cannot give.

Teachers who understand that their deepest function is not knowledge transfer but presence, and who have the willingness to regard themselves as the first student of their own pedagogy, are the second line. They are the people inside the system who can change the system from within — not by waiting for structural reform but by starting already in their own classroom.

Entrepreneurs and investors who have the vision to attach capital to the first concrete steps — the first top-level training, the first retraining institution of the new type, the first school that seriously and consistently implements the principles of the manifest — are the third line. Their contribution is not ideological but pragmatic: without capital, no scalability, and without scalability the change remains the privilege of the individual.

Administrators — of schools, of municipalities, of national educational institutions — who have the political courage to interrogate the existing measuring instruments and make room for alternatives that do not score in the short term on the rankings their political superiors use to judge them, are the fourth line. They are perhaps the scarcest category, but their contribution is indispensable for the scale ultimately required.

The Call to Act

The political reform of the education system is a process of decades, dependent on coalitions that must be built and compromises that must be made and resistances that must be overcome. That process is necessary, but it is not the first step.

The first step is private and communal. It is the parent who decides tomorrow to raise their child differently. It is the teacher who decides Monday to stop filling the silence in their class with activity and instead let it exist as space. It is the entrepreneur who decides this year to finance the first pilot — a school, a top-level training, a retraining programme — that proves it can be done differently.

The first pilots are the proof that the theory works in practice. They are also the attractors of more capital, more talent, and more political attention. A top-level training that after five years

demonstrably produces people who bring about breakthroughs is a more powerful advocate for reform than however thick and considered a theory.

The first AI director trainings — seriously structured, results-oriented, aimed at people who now see their profession disappearing and want to combine the knowledge of their own domain with the critical use of the AI systems transforming that domain — are simultaneously an economic solution to the transition and proof that the human contribution in the AI era does not disappear but shifts.

The first schools that introduce silence as a subject, that take the primal feeling as a starting point instead of a luxury, that reduce group size to what is pedagogically responsible, and that select teachers on the intactness of the primal feeling rather than on diploma — those schools are building the proof that the current system is not the only possible one.

On that proof, later, the broader reform builds. Not the other way around.

The society that understands this starts now. Not when politics is ready. Not when the system is ready. Now — in the small scale of the human decision, in the private investment, in the communal initiative of people who recognise the urgency.

That urgency is not a dystopian fear of a future in which machines have made humanity redundant. It is the sober recognition that the capacities AI takes over are the capacities the current education regards as its core, and that the capacities distinguishing people from AI are the capacities the current education treats as a side matter.

The child that keeps its primal feeling intact, that can read reality directly, that can enter into genuine contact with other people on the level that goes beyond the word — that child is not threatened in the AI era. It is needed. It is what society in its deepest vulnerabilities and its highest ambitions requires.

That child is already here. In every family, in every community, in every classroom. It is there until the system no longer lets it be.

Make sure the system lets it be.

Bibliographical Note

This work is the third part of a trilogy on the primal feeling, human development, and the future of education, compiled by Jacobus van Merksteijn in May 2026.

The first part is the theoretical groundwork: Denkbasis voor een 7-dimensionaal gevoelsmodel (denkbasis_7d_gevoelsmodel.md). That document elaborates the topological model of human feeling life — the oval form in three-dimensional space, the G-axis, the W-axis, and the N-axis, the three brain layers and their mutual streams, the three types of hollow forms, the tiltable G-axis, and the hypothesis on communication between primal feelings via a not-yet-characterised physical carrier. It is the theoretical foundation on which the two subsequent works rest.

The second part is the pedagogical elaboration: Manifest voor onderwijs en opvoeding (onderwijs_opvoeding_manifest.md). That document translates the theoretical foundation into

concrete pedagogical practice — the seven principles of the new learning system, the developmental phases and their pedagogical consequences, the role of the pedagogue, the design of the school day. It is a working text, intended to be used in conversations with parents, teachers, and policymakers.

This third document places the theoretical and pedagogical work in the social and economic context of the AI transition. It is written for the expert, the pedagogue, the policymaker, and the thinker who wants to take the content further — not as an overview of the earlier works, but as a continuation of their conclusions in the direction of the concrete social tasks they generate.

All three documents were compiled in May 2026. The written elaboration came about in collaboration with Perplexity Computer.

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