



## Leticia Britos Cavagnaro

Adjunct Professor  
Hasso Plattner Institute of Design

### Bio

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#### BIO

Leticia Britos Cavagnaro is a scientist-turned-designer working to shape the future of teaching and learning at the Stanford Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (d.school). She holds a PhD from Stanford, at the intersection of Developmental Biology and Computer Science.

Leticia has started and leads several d.school initiatives that support pedagogical innovation globally, such as the Teaching and Learning Studio – an open-enrollment professional development program that has trained over 1000 higher education professors and leaders since 2016– and the Innovative Teaching Scholars program –a collaboration with the Stanford Engineering Center for Global & Online Education to train university educators in Thailand.

She was the founding Deputy Director of the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter), an NSF-funded initiative to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in engineering education across the US that was spearheaded by Stanford's Management Science & Engineering department from 2011 to 2016. With Epicenter as its launchpad, Leticia co-founded, scaled, and spun-off the University Innovation Fellows program, which empowers students globally to be co-designers of their education in collaboration with faculty and leaders at their schools. The program has trained over 3200 Fellows from over 326 universities in 24 countries.

Leticia teaches Design Thesis and Advanced Reflective Practice to graduate students in Stanford's MS Design program. She also develops tools that leverage AI to empower learners to be self-directed, action-oriented, and reflective. Riff –the AI-powered reflection assistant Leticia developed– is being used by hundreds of educators globally and has supported over 55,000 student reflections in the past year.

Leticia's recent book *Experiments In Reflection* invites us to expand how we see the past and present and to become bold shapers of the future.

She was born in Uruguay and lives in San Francisco with her husband.

Connect with Leticia: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/leticiabc/>

#### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Adjunct Professor, Hasso Plattner Institute of Design

## Research & Scholarship

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### RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Assessment, Testing and Measurement
- Brain and Learning Sciences
- Collaborative Learning
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Lifelong Learning
- Professional Development
- Teachers and Teaching
- Technology and Education

### CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

My work builds frameworks and examples for how human agency can scale with AI. The conviction grounding my research and teaching is that the most consequential implication of frontier AI is its impact on how people learn.

I have taught design at the Stanford d.school for sixteen years and now lead a portfolio of AI-native learning tools developed end-to-end, from vision and concept through pedagogy, AI-assisted prototyping, user research, and distribution:

**Riff.** An AI-powered reflection assistant in private beta at riffbot.ai. Every student gets a personalized partner for thinking through their experiences, and educators can customize curriculum based on student reflections. Used by hundreds of educators globally and has powered over 50,000 student reflections to date.

**Mystery Machine.** An AI-powered multi-agent platform that builds immersive future scenarios evolving in response to learner input, designed to support adaptive learning and ethical reflection. Launched at SXSW 2025; used by 1,200+ learners across student, corporate, and civic-sector contexts. Co-led with Scott Doorley (d.school) and Stergios Tegos (Enchanted). Funded in part by Stanford Accelerator for Learning and Stanford HAI.

**Aftercast.** An AI-powered tool for innovators and decision-makers to explore and mitigate the unintended consequences of their projects, and to design their ethical architecture before launching them. In early development. Co-led with Emma Duncan (Stanford McCoy Family Center for Ethics in Society).

I also co-developed DANI (the d.school Ambiguity Navigation Instrument), a research-backed assessment tool measuring attitude and ability to act under open-ended, changing conditions, with Erica Estrada-Liou and Christina Hnatov (University of Maryland). The instrument was published in *Possibility Studies and Society* (2025).

My book *Experiments in Reflection: How to See the Present, Reconsider the Past, and Shape the Future* was published by Ten Speed Press / Penguin Random House (2023, Stanford d.school Library).

Recent essays on AI in education include "Are We Raising a Generation of Atrophying Centaurs?" (LinkedIn Pulse, March 2026), "Human-AI Collaboration: Establishing Rules of Engagement" (d.school Medium, January 2024), and "Reflecting with AI: A Tool to Develop Human Intelligence" (d.school Medium, April 2023).

I teach Thesis Project and Advanced Reflective Practice in the MS in Design Program, where I have developed curricula integrating AI literacy and ethics, and the Adventures in Design course at the Stanford Graduate Summer Institute, introducing ~400 graduate students to design practice each year. I also co-lead the Teaching & Learning Studio (TLS), the d.school's primary channel for introducing university and K-12 educators to design practices that support deep learning and pedagogically sound uses of AI. TLS has trained ~1,000 global educators since 2016, with international expansions in the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, and Chile.

## PROJECTS

- Beyond the Horizon: AI-Driven World-Building to Develop Adaptive Creativity - Stanford University

## Teaching

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### COURSES

#### 2025-26

- Advanced Reflective Practice: DESIGN 360R (Aut)
- MS Design Thesis 1: DESIGN 361A (Aut)

#### 2024-25

- Advanced Reflective Practice: DESIGN 360R (Aut)
- MS Design Capstone Project 1: DESIGN 361A (Aut)

#### 2023-24

- Advanced Reflective Practice: DESIGN 360R (Aut)
- MS Design Capstone Project 1: DESIGN 361A (Aut)

#### 2022-23

- Advanced Reflective Practice: DESIGN 360R (Spr)
- MS Design Capstone Project 1: DESIGN 361A, ME 316A (Aut)
- MS Design Capstone Project 2: DESIGN 361B, ME 316B (Win)
- MS Design Capstone Project 3: DESIGN 361C, ME 316C (Spr)

## Publications

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### PUBLICATIONS

- **Assessing the ability to navigate ambiguity: An essential skill for imagining possible futures** *Possibility Studies & Society*  
Britos Cavagnaro, L. C.  
2025; 4 (1)
- **Experiments in Reflection: How to See the Present, Reconsider the Past, and Shape the Future (Stanford d.school Library)**  
Britos Cavagnaro, L.  
Ten Speed Press (Penguin Random House).2023
- **An Innovators' Movement** *Does America Need More Innovators?*  
Britos Cavagnaro, L. C., Fasihuddin, H.  
2019: 25–50
- **A Moonshot Approach to Change in Higher Education: Creativity, Innovation, and the Redesign of Academia**  
Britos Cavagnaro, L., Fasihuddin, H.  
Association of American Colleges & Universities.  
2016 ; Liberal Education