

## BACKGROUND

The 19<sup>th</sup> century German research university, the model for most modern universities, championed the development and rise of disciplines and higher education as the formation of the science-minded disciplinary self. But disciplines are increasingly challenged to address issues and problems that are messy, fuzzy, and sometimes even explicitly wicked, and for which neither their ontological orientations nor their disciplinary practices are well suited. The reaction has been to increasingly call for interdisciplinary collaboration; however, this seemingly progressive call to think beyond disciplines simply rehearses technoscientific framing by treating disciplines as just another resource that can be ordered, reordered, and switched around to produce the “knowledges” needed to achieve the desired “outcome.” A more visible challenge is the existential threat to higher education’s epistemic authority posed by the advent of Large Language Model AI (like ChatGPT). Here too, the reaction of the higher ed community, with its concerns about cheating, testing, and credentialing, is based squarely within the technoscientific framing: “Something is interfering with our meeting education goals” can be *reactively* addressed and fixed without “higher education” as this is currently understood and operative in American colleges and schools even being described, let alone critically addressed, when what is really called for is a *response* that tries to rethink this current understanding and asks how to foster a free relation to science and technology that would reposition epistemic authority on a new, non-technoscientific ontological footing, based in experiencing life as lived through instead of the current knowledge-processing, outcomes-based model where ChatGPT appears mainly just an impediment.

ITERATA sees in these and related events an opening for the radical reconsideration of what higher education is *for* and what it really *means* to be educated. For this year’s competition, ITERATA is interested in promoting work that explores ways of addressing these challenges. What does it mean to be “educated,” if acquiring general information about the natural and human worlds and learning useful techniques for achieving instrumental goals is not enough? What life-enhancing knowledge and skills should be included in a genuine “education”? Could a situated thinking – a thinking from life as it is being lived-through – be developed and taught that would contextualize the use of instrumental rationality? How could the very idea of “higher education” be revised to develop approaches that emphasize the life-enhancing skills that attune us to the needs for social and environmental justice, political equality, and personal flourishing that are ignored in an environment where educational policy is guided by management ideas of retention, persistence, degree completion, and vocational success?

Applications for FY2023 will be accepted until August 1, 2023. Successful applicants will be notified by August 31, 2023. Prize awards are in the amount of \$5,000 and may be used for release time during the academic year, summer salary, and/or travel. Awards will normally be made to institutions (university, college, or institute) through their Offices of Sponsored Programs, and no funds may be used to cover indirect costs. ITERATA expects to make up to 5 awards in FY2023. Applications should include a proposal of up to 5 pages, (single spaced, 12 point type), and include a CV and Reference list. Awardees are expected to produce a publishable manuscript or white paper, or to conduct some other form of project that addresses the challenge described here. Papers and projects are expected to be completed by September 1, 2024).

Questions about the Small Grant program can be addressed to [info.iterata@gmail.com](mailto:info.iterata@gmail.com)