Educators as AI Visionaries:

Artificial Intelligence in Educational Policy, Practice, & Pedagogy

Angela L. Moran

Are we empowering Florida educators to move from hesitant, passive users to active leaders who shape the AI landscape in their districts? Do we need to harness the aggressive adoption cheerleaders?

Pop quiz:

You have to wash your car, and the car wash is 100 feet away. Do you drive there or do you walk?

If you are human, you most likely said “drive.” But in a recent challenge, people have been posing this question to LLMs and frequently, the chatbot has been telling them to walk, even though this means their car won’t get washed.
As one model put it: “You’ll spend longer starting the car, pulling out and finding a spot than you will just walking. Drive only if you’re already in the car and it’s unsafe to walk.”

Social media responses to the car wash challenge have largely fallen into two camps:
AI skeptics who see the results as confirmation that AI isn’t so intelligent after all (“Forget the Turing test if an LLM can’t pass the car wash test,” one user wrote) and
AI proponents who blame the human testers for writing prompts with insufficient information (“Stupid and unclear example.”).

https://www.ibm.com/think/news/viral-car-wash-llm-challenge?lnk=thinkhpaic2us

Current research:

- Recent data shows 86% of educational organizations now use generative AI.
- The Higher Education Policy Institute found that a staggering 92% of students are now using AI
- 80% of faculty report a profound "lack of clarity" from their institutions on how to practically apply it
- 45% of educators globally report having received absolutely zero AI training.

WHAT'S YOUR PEDAGOGICAL ARCHETYPE?

- **The Co-Learner (The Embracer):** Have you shifted from a sage to a guide? Do you openly run with new AI products and invite students to figure it out with you? Is your classroom a co-lab where teacher, student, and AI are all working together to solve problems?

- **The Curator (The Middle):** Do you deter students from running wild with AI, and instead carefully select specific AI tools or prompts that align with lesson plans? Do you believe your job is to curate a safe, controlled environment where students can use AI as a bounded resource, not a crutch?

- **The Sage (The Avoider):** Have you doubled down on the traditional expert model? Do you deeply believe that internalized knowledge and human mentorship cannot be outsourced? Is your classroom a sanctuary for the Socratic method, focusing on unplugged discussion, human debate, and direct teacher-to-student mentorship?

Educators as AI Visionaries – from "How AI works" to "How will we lead with AI?" empowering Florida educators to move from hesitant, passive users to active leaders who shape the AI landscape in their districts.

TO ACCOMPLISH TODAY:

- Explore Generative AI tools and machine learning concepts for non-technical leaders.
- Identify District and school policies on what is allowed, what is restricted.
- Investigate approaches to ethical and efficient classroom integration.
- Identify the need for professional learning to extend staff capacity and digital literacy.

ICEBREAKER

THE HUMAN TOKENIZER

The "Token Cards" (Generative AI)

The "Common Knowledge" Sequence

Give one card to five different participants and have them stand in a random order.

Ask the audience to "run the model" by putting them in the correct sequence and predicting the final word.

The "Token Cards" (Generative AI)

The Human Tokenizer

Write two different phrases on the board or a large piece of paper: "The cat in the hat came back." (Simple/Common)

“Florida's Biogeochemistry." (Complex/Rare)

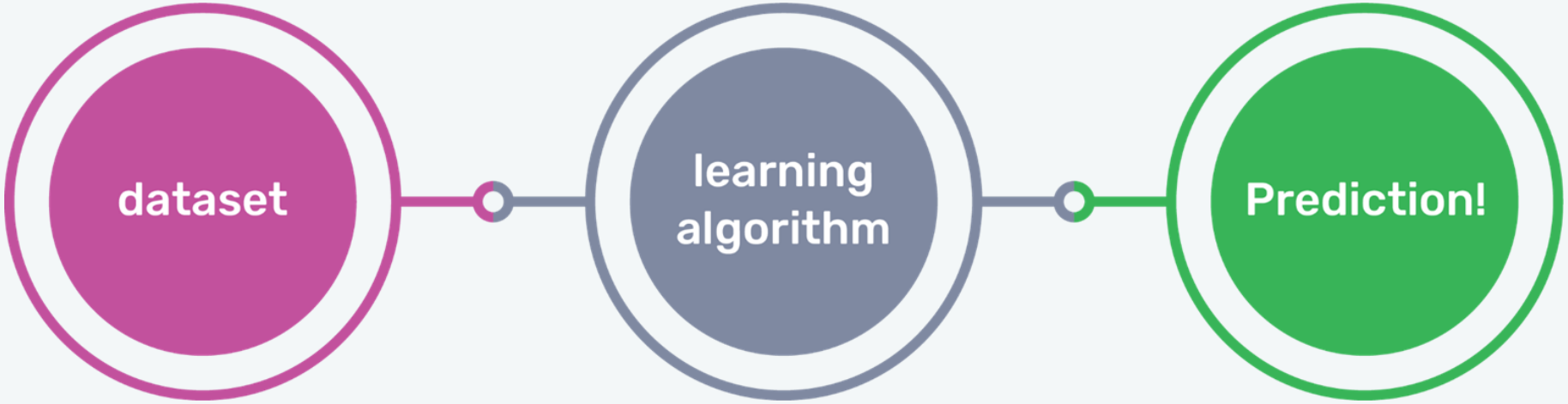
Hand out Post-it notes to two groups of educators.

Group 1 (Simple) : write each word and punctuation from the simple phrase on a separate Post-it note.

Group 2 (Complex): Break the complex phrase into fragments - only allowed to write 3–4 letters per sticky note until the whole word/phrase is finished. Punctuation gets a sticky note.

Ask both groups to stick their Post-its in a line on a wall or table as fast as they can.

An Introduction to How Machines Learn



It starts with a **dataset**: that's like the information or examples the machine is shown.

Then, a **learning algorithm** looks for patterns in that data, kind of like your brain figuring out how to solve a puzzle. In AI, neural nets are used.

Once it's learned enough, the machine makes a **prediction**, it tries to guess or decide something based on what it learned.

FOCUS : UNDERSTANDING THE TECHNOLOGY

Tokenization is used by both Machine Learning (ML) and Generative AI.

Raw text = rough, unprocessed lumber.

Tokenization = cutting the raw text down into these workable pieces for processing

Both fields use it but approach the cutting/milling process differently:

Traditional Machine Learning like a Crosscut Saw: cutting a board straight across the pre-marked spaces between words. The model counts how many times a word appears to classify a sentence.

Generative AI driven by Large Language Models (LLMs), uses subword tokenization, shaves words down into smaller, highly flexible units. Subword modularity allows LLMs to piece together entirely new sentences, handle complex human language at scale. AI calculates effort/cost by tokens. More complex words, jargon, expressions are more costly.

Further Comparison

Feature	Machine Learning (ML)	Generative AI (GenAI)
The Analogy	The Librarian (Finding and sorting info)	The Author (Writing a new book)
Example of School Use	Adaptive software that adjusts math difficulty based on past performance.	A tool that generates a customized reading passage.
The Risk	Low. It might misclassify a student, but it won't "make up" a new math rule.	High. It can confidently state false facts as if they are true.
Educator's Role	Data Auditor: Ensuring the "sorting" is fair and doesn't pigeonhole students.	Critical Editor: Ensuring the "creation" is accurate/original.

GROUP QUIZ: HANDOUT – Identify and justify. Is it

- **ML (The Predictor): Finds patterns in data to categorize, sort, or forecast. It's like an efficient standardized test grader or librarian? OUR LEADERSHIP JOB IS TO …**
- **Or GenAI (The Creator): Uses patterns to create new content (text, images, code). It's like a creative writing or art partner? OUR LEADERSHIP JOB IS TO …**

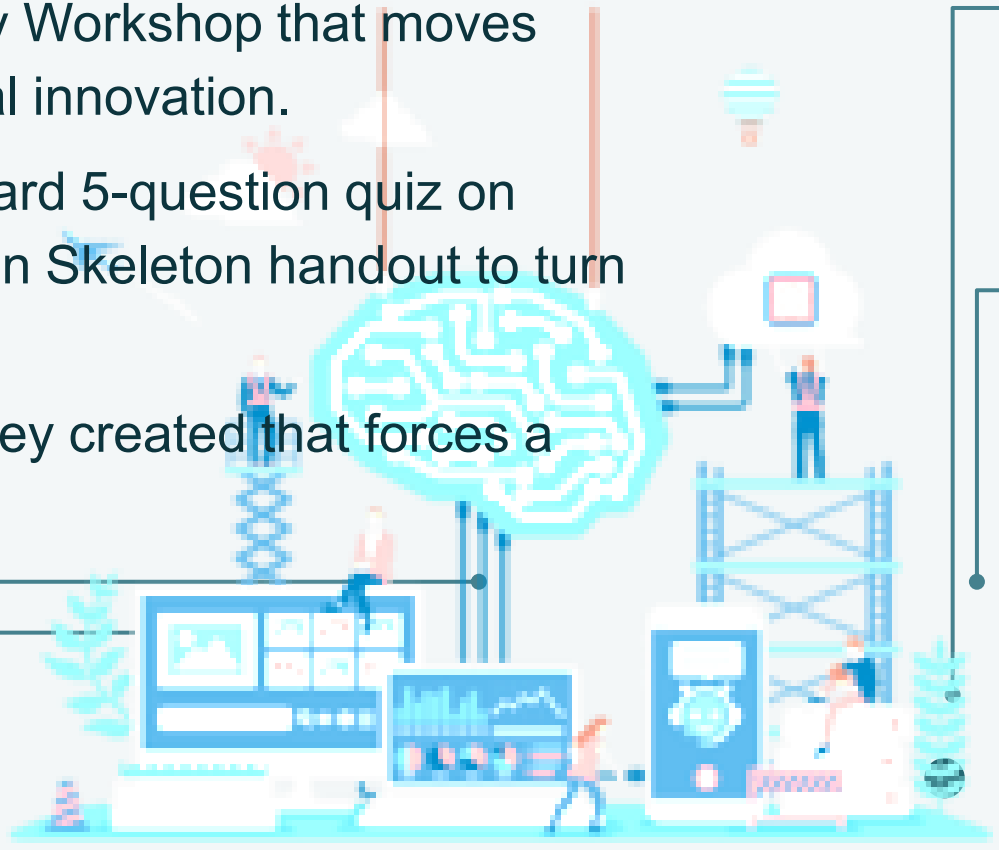
Scenario 1: From Literacy to Fluency

Scenario: It's mid-semester at Sunshine State Middle School. The administration has provided all teachers with access to a premium AI lesson-planning tool. While 80% of staff use it to generate quick quizzes and email templates, student engagement scores have been dropping. Observations show students are also using AI to shortcut the very quizzes the teachers are shortcut-planning.

In your breakout groups, Design a 30-minute faculty Fluency Workshop that moves staff from using AI for administrative automation to pedagogical innovation.

For an example - Take a stale lesson plan (example - a standard 5-question quiz on Florida ecosystems) and use the Socratic Template and Lesson Skeleton handout to turn it into an AI-Enhanced Inquiry.

For example - Each group must present one Master Prompt they created that forces a student to think harder, not just work faster.



Scenario 1: From Literacy to Fluency

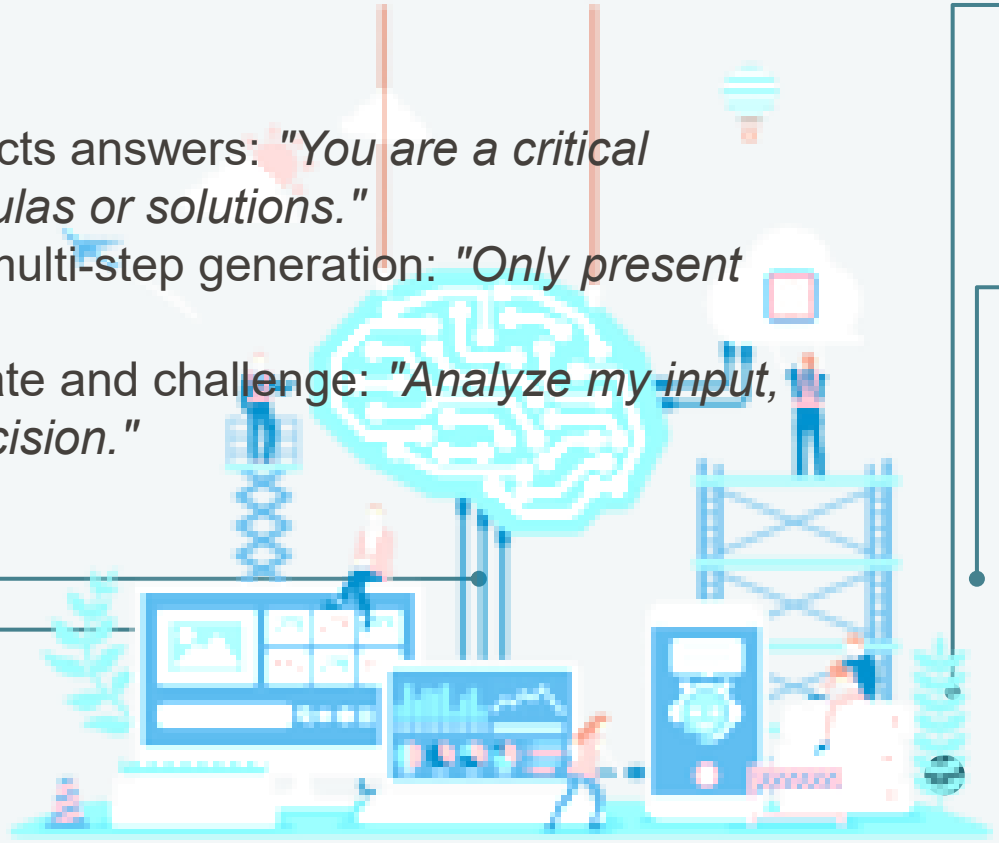
The Stubborn Tutor Analogy

Standard AI usage is like asking a classmate for their finished worksheet - the answers are handed over instantly, completely skipping the learning cycle.

The **Socratic Method** reconfigures the AI into a mentor who keeps their hands behind their back. Instead of generating output, the AI prompts the student with targeted questions exactly one step ahead of their current logic, forcing them to self-correct.

The Prompt Framework

- **Persona with Constraints** Establishes the role and strictly restricts answers: *"You are a critical project supervisor. Under no circumstances will you give me formulas or solutions."*
- **The Increment Rule** Forces step-by-step engagement to block multi-step generation: *"Only present one scenario or question at a time and wait for my response."*
- **Pushback Mechanism** Uses standards-aligned criteria to evaluate and challenge: *"Analyze my input, point out real-world flaws in my logic, and ask me to justify my decision."*



Scenario 1: From Literacy to Fluency

The Lesson Skeleton Method – Bones before Flesh

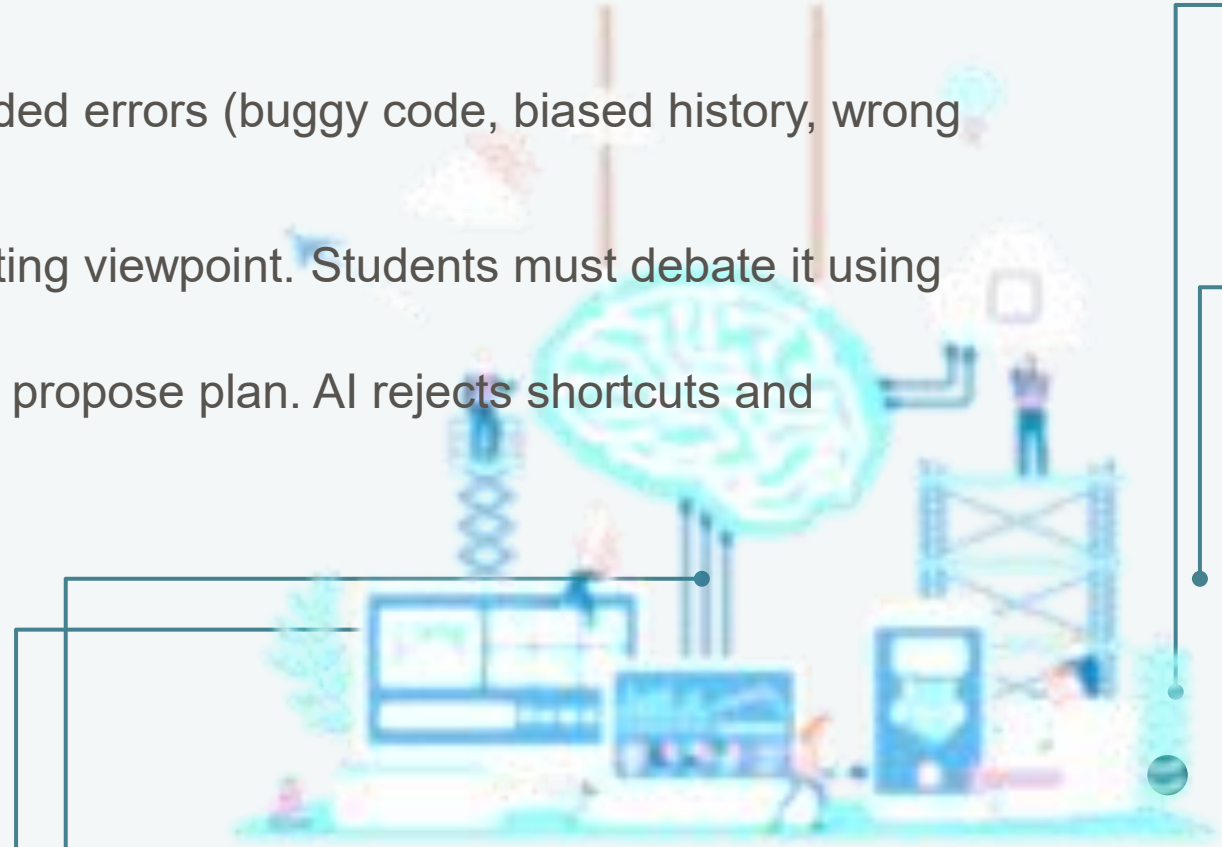
If we use AI to build the **flesh** of a lesson like definitions, paragraphs, and reading passages, they are vulnerable to student AI automation. The **Lesson Skeleton** designs the bare bones of persona, rules, constraints, and feedback loops. The assignment does not function until a human student drives it forward.

Three Possible Models for the Classroom

Flawed System - AI generates a model with embedded errors (buggy code, biased history, wrong data). Students must audit and fix it.

Negotiation - AI acts as a stakeholder with a conflicting viewpoint. Students must debate it using course vocabulary to reach compromise.

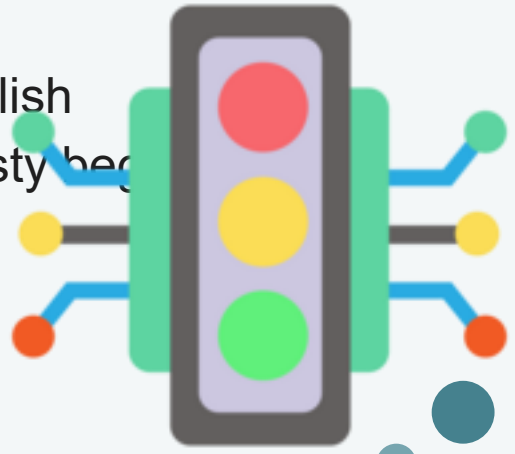
Supervisor - AI acts as a demanding boss. Students propose plan. AI rejects shortcuts and demands step-by-step logical proof and justification.



Scenario 2: Strategic Leadership & Policy Advocacy

The Grey Area Crisis

- **Scenario:** A high school junior at Everglades Academy is disqualified from a prestigious state-level essay competition because an AI-detection tool flagged their submission as 40% AI-generated. The student claims they only used AI to brainstorm an outline and check grammar, which isn't explicitly forbidden in the current, vaguely worded District Code of Conduct. The parents are threatening legal action, citing a lack of clear guidance.
- **Challenge:** Your group is the newly formed AI Ethics Task Force. You cannot wait for the state to issue a specific ruling. How do you verify the claims of each side? What are you going to put in place for the future? With only 23% of Florida districts explicitly referencing AI in their 2024-25 Codes of Conduct, a policy gap exists that educators must fill.
- **Deliverable:** Draft a Level of Use rubric (Red, Yellow, Green) for the school's English department that defines exactly where brainstorming ends and academic dishonesty beg How will you communicate this to parents and students to rebuild trust?



New policy outlines the **official standards** for integrating artificial intelligence within the School District of Palm Beach County. It establishes **responsible use guidelines** for both students and staff, emphasizing the importance of **academic integrity**, data privacy, and ethical conduct. **Students** may use AI-generated artifacts for learning when permitted by instructors, while **employees** are prohibited from using AI as the sole basis for critical decisions regarding student outcomes. To ensure safety, the **Technology Clearinghouse** must vet all AI tools, and the district mandates **annual training** to keep stakeholders informed of rapid technological changes. Ultimately, the document serves as a **regulatory framework** to balance educational innovation with the protection of confidential information.

The Advancing American AI Literacy and Workforce Development Executive Order, issued on April 23, 2025, establishes a comprehensive national strategy to ensure the United States remains a global leader in artificial intelligence by fostering literacy, proficiency, and workforce readiness

- Establishment of the White House Task Force on Artificial Intelligence Education
- Creation of the Presidential Artificial Intelligence Challenge: Within 90 days, the Task Force must plan a national competition to highlight student and educator achievements in AI. This challenge will feature multiple age categories and geographic regions to encourage interdisciplinary exploration and collaboration between government, industry, and academia
- Support for K-12 AI Literacy: The order directs agencies to form public-private partnerships with industry leaders and academic institutions to develop online resources for teaching K-12 students foundational AI skills. Federal funding, including discretionary grants, will be prioritized. The Secretary of Education, the Director of the NSF, and the Secretary of Agriculture are tasked with prioritizing AI teacher training programs
to reduce administrative tasks, providing professional development to integrate AI across all subject areas, and conducting research on AI's effectiveness in classrooms
- Workforce Development - The Secretary of Labor is directed to increase participation in AI-related Registered Apprenticeships by establishing growth goals and industry standards. All agencies providing educational grants must consider AI a priority area within existing federal fellowship and scholarship-for-service programs.

POLICY RESOURCES

US AI in EDUCATION POLICY

US AI Policy

Draft EU Policy

FL Task Force on AI

Scenario 3: Instructional Leadership

- **The Scenario:** Palm Tree Elementary has seen a 15% increase in students qualifying for Tier 3 reading interventions, but the school's interventionist positions remain unfilled due to budget constraints. The Principal has tasked the Grade Level Leads to use AI to close the gap. Teachers are overwhelmed and worried that bot-teaching will hurt their most vulnerable learners.
- **Challenge:** Using the Five S Model (Strategy, Specificity, Structure, Style, and Supervision), your group must move beyond simple questions to get high-quality, safe outputs. How do we use AI as assistive to reduce cognitive load and customize reading levels for students with disabilities? How do educators lead students in algorithmic auditing and learning to detect bias, check for hallucinations errors, and verify facts against primary sources.
- **Deliverable:** Create a master Prompt Library for your grade level that allows a single teacher to instantly take a standard science text and recreate it for five different reading abilities, including an ESL version and a version for students with dyslexia, while maintaining the core Florida standards.

Scenario 4: Merit and Bias

- **Scenario:** Your district has just piloted ScholarshipScout, an AI tool designed to identify high-potential students for a new state-funded leadership scholarship. The AI was trained on 10 years of data from successful scholarship recipients in Florida. However, after the first round of selections, the results are troubling: students from three specific zip codes were almost entirely excluded, despite having high GPAs and strong community service records.
- **Challenge:** As a breakout group, you are the **District Ethics Review Board**. You must investigate the black box of this tool. Why did the AI ignore these students? Upon review, you realize the AI was using Participation in Lacrosse and Sailing as a high-weight proxy for Leadership, as those were common in the 10-year training data. It also penalized students who had gaps in their extracurriculars during the summer, not realizing those students were working summer jobs.
- **Deliverable:** How do we create policy to avoid these biases and how to teach students the risks, develop a protocol? Take one tool currently used (e.g., a reading leveled-reader or a math practice app) and run it through the protocol. What data was used for training? What is missing? What assumptions were made?

EXAMPLE: The state mandates use of FAST Star assessment to track literacy. The computer algorithm cannot adjust for dialect, vocabulary proxies, or digital familiarity at home, so how do we as educational leaders design district safeguards to ensure data from a screen is never used as the sole metric to track or label a child? How do we teach our teachers to act as the human audit to the machine's prediction?

IS AI ALL BAD?

Cal Smith, Student (17 years old) You struggled to get through the last 12 years of school. You understand everything and have lots of great ideas. You also have dyslexia. This year, though, has been much better. Using talk-to-text and read-aloud apps has helped you become much more confident in your writing, and Grammerly's ability to expand what you started is so helpful. Luckily, you have an English teacher this year who encourages you to use tools like these as long as you are transparent about your use.	**Kelly Jones, Student (16 years old)** You are an artist and have been working to create a great portfolio to submit to art schools next year when you start applying to college. You can't believe some schools let students submit artwork that uses AI. AI is trained on other artists' works. Using it is basically plagiarizing someone else's ideas. AI art is not real art.
Kathryn Smith, Mother of Cal Smith (48 years old) You want your kids to be safe, so you utilize Life360 to monitor their driving habits. Your son recently got his driver's license, and you are very thankful to be able to see where your son is and how fast he's driving when he borrows the car. You're glad that if he were in an accident, you would get an alert right away and that the app flips his phone into safe driving mode whenever he hits the road.	**John Henderson, Father (49 years old)** A few years ago, someone got into my bank account and stole quite a bit of money before I realized what was happening. I only got some of the money back, and they never caught the thief. I am happy that my bank is now using AI to detect fraud earlier. I got a call from them just the other day asking if a purchase that came through was legitimate because it didn't match my regular buying patterns. I was so thankful!
Keegan Bennett, Adolescent Therapist (34 years old) You love your job and that you get to help kids work through tough times and learn to manage mental health issues. You are excited about the opportunity to offer cognitive behavioral therapy for your clients via virtual reality headsets. It has already helped a client with OCD learn management skills and another who struggles with addiction.	**Frankie Capelli, Dean of Faculty, Lakeside College (52 years old)** Over the last few years, faculty concerns about student integrity have risen. Professors are worried that some students are using AI to generate written assignments. Right now, it's pretty easy for professors to detect when a paper is not actually written by a particular student; what happens as AI improves to the point where it's too hard to tell?

ETHICS CARD

Final Leadership Takeaways

- AI should support teachers—not replace them
- Humans are always responsible
- Students must be taught transparency and accountability
- All students deserve fair access to high-quality tools

AI should help students think deeper, not think less.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- **Join the Steering Committee:** Educators should advocate for and join district AI Governance Committees to ensure policies are grounded in classroom reality.
- **Proactive Planning:** Instead of waiting for top-down mandates, lead your department in developing "AI-resistant" or "AI-integrated" assessments that focus on the *process* of learning.
- **Equity Leadership:** Be the voice for students from under-resourced communities who may only have access to AI through school-provided devices, recognizing that **paid versions** of AI are often less biased than free versions. Ideally all students should have access to the highest-quality, most ethical tools to prevent an accuracy gap.
- **Understand the policies:** Teach students that under Florida's 2026 guidance, they are expected to **disclose** how AI was used and are ultimately responsible for any biased or inaccurate content in their work. Additionally, Florida lawmakers have been tracking bills aimed at requiring districts to adopt formal AI policies that include safeguards against automated high-stakes decisions without human oversight.

Thanks!

amoran1220@gmail.com

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