Back to School with AI

15 Practical AI Tips For Teachers

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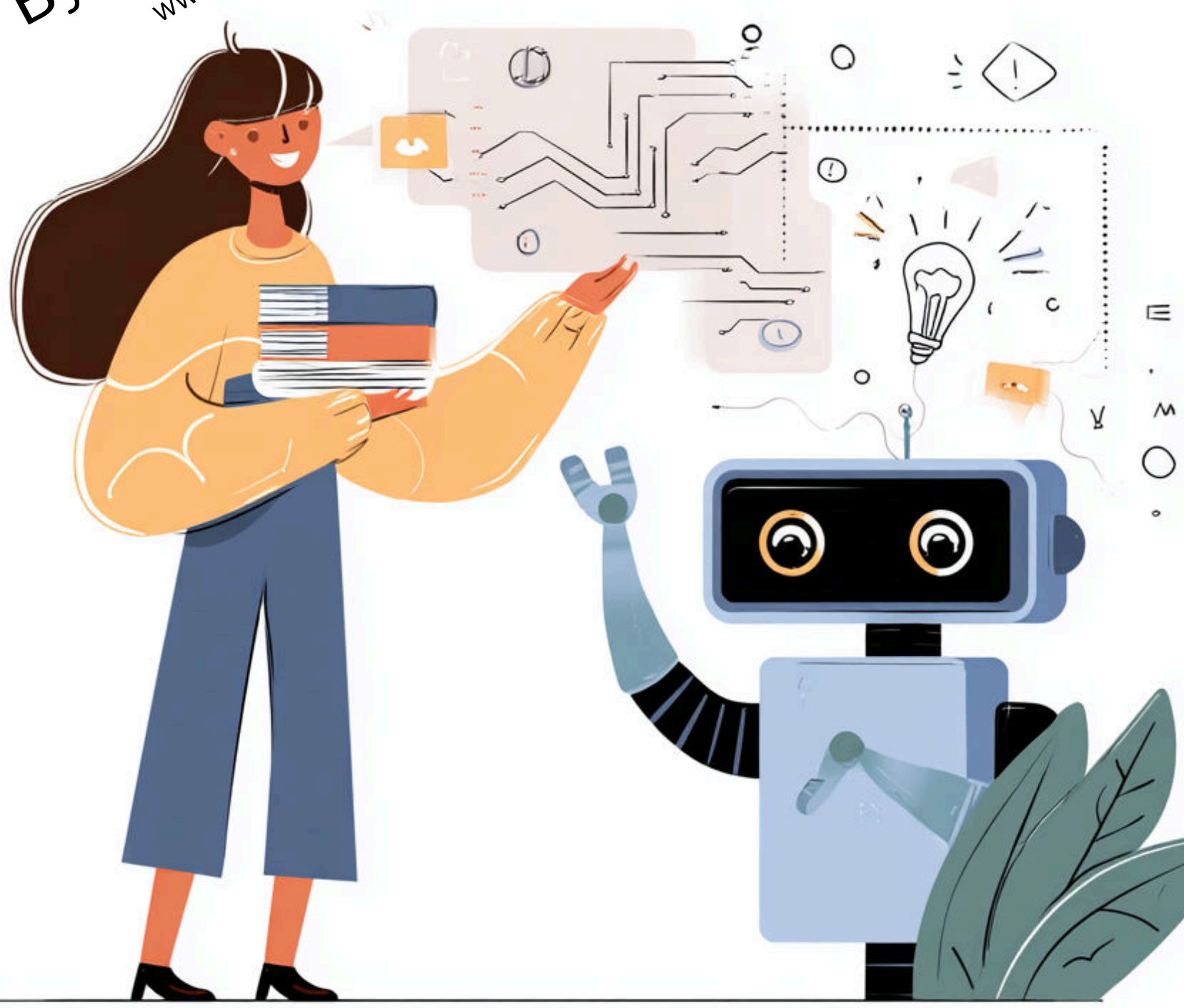


Visual inspired by UNESCO “Guidance for Generative AI in Education & Research”

1. Develop Your AI Pedagogy

Before diving into tools, think about your approach. Ground your use of AI in sound pedagogy and theory, not just convenience.

Ask:

- How does this align with my teaching goals?
- How does it support critical thinking, creativity, or inclusion?
- Does this use of AI deepen student understanding, or just make tasks quicker?
- Will it encourage students to think more critically, or risk making them passive?
- How does it connect to the curriculum standards or learning outcomes I'm targeting?
- How will I assess the effectiveness of AI in supporting learning?

This mindset helps you avoid chasing trends and instead use AI intentionally.

2. Create a Classroom AI Use Policy with Students

Invite your students to co-create an AI use policy. Framing it as a shared agreement makes it more meaningful and encourages ownership. Define the purpose, scope, and expectations together

Here are some questions that you and your students can use to shape this shared agreement:

- What purposes should AI serve in our classroom: research, brainstorming, practice, or something else?
- Which types of assignments or tasks should AI be allowed for, and which should remain AI-free?
- How should students give credit or cite AI when they use it to support their work?
- How can we ensure AI use respects privacy, safety, and ethical boundaries?
- What are the expectations if someone misuses AI or goes against the agreed policy?
- How can we keep AI use equitable so that all students have fair access and support?
- How will we revisit and update this policy as we learn more about AI and how it fits into our class?

3. Discuss Assignment Guidelines for AI

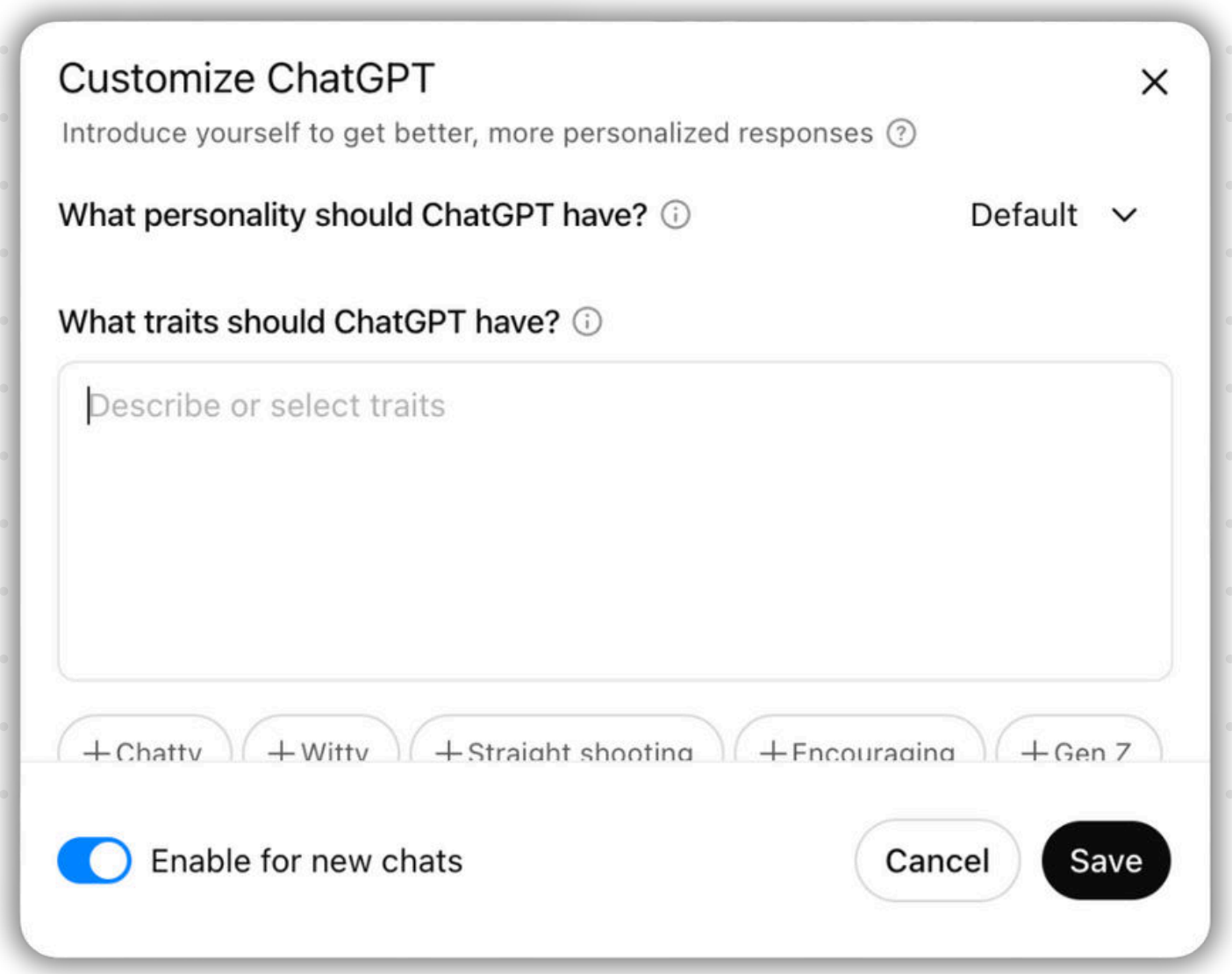
Clarify which assignments AI can be used for, and how. The AI Assignment Scale by Perkins, Roe, and Furze (2024) is a useful reference here.

1	NO AI	The assessment is completed entirely without AI assistance in a controlled environment, ensuring that students rely solely on their existing knowledge, understanding, and skills **You must not use AI at any point during the assessment. You must demonstrate your core skills and knowledge.**
2	AI PLANNING	AI may be used for pre-task activities such as brainstorming, outlining and initial research. This level focuses on the effective use of AI for planning, synthesis, and ideation, but assessments should emphasise the ability to develop and refine these ideas independently. **You may use AI for planning, idea development, and research. Your final submission should show how you have developed and refined these ideas.**
3	AI COLLABORATION	AI may be used to help complete the task, including idea generation, drafting, feedback, and refinement. Students should critically evaluate and modify the AI suggested outputs, demonstrating their understanding. **You may use AI to assist with specific tasks such as drafting text, refining and evaluating your work. You must critically evaluate and modify any AI-generated content you use.**
4	FULL AI	AI may be used to complete any elements of the task, with students directing AI to achieve the assessment goals. Assessments at this level may also require engagement with AI to achieve goals and solve problems. **You may use AI extensively throughout your work either as you wish, or as specifically directed in your assessment. Focus on directing AI to achieve your goals while demonstrating your critical thinking.**
5	AI EXPLORATION	AI is used creatively to enhance problem-solving, generate novel insights, or develop innovative solutions to solve problems. Students and educators co-design assessments to explore unique AI applications within the field of study. **You should use AI creatively to solve the task, potentially co-designing new approaches with your instructor.**

Perkins, Furze, Roe & MacVaugh (2024). The AI Assessment Scale

4. Pick the Chatbot of Your Choice and Customize

Choose a main AI assistant you're comfortable with: ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or another tool. Then adjust its settings to reflect your teaching context: tone, complexity of explanations, or even multilingual support. This way, the AI becomes tuned to your classroom needs instead of being a generic tool.



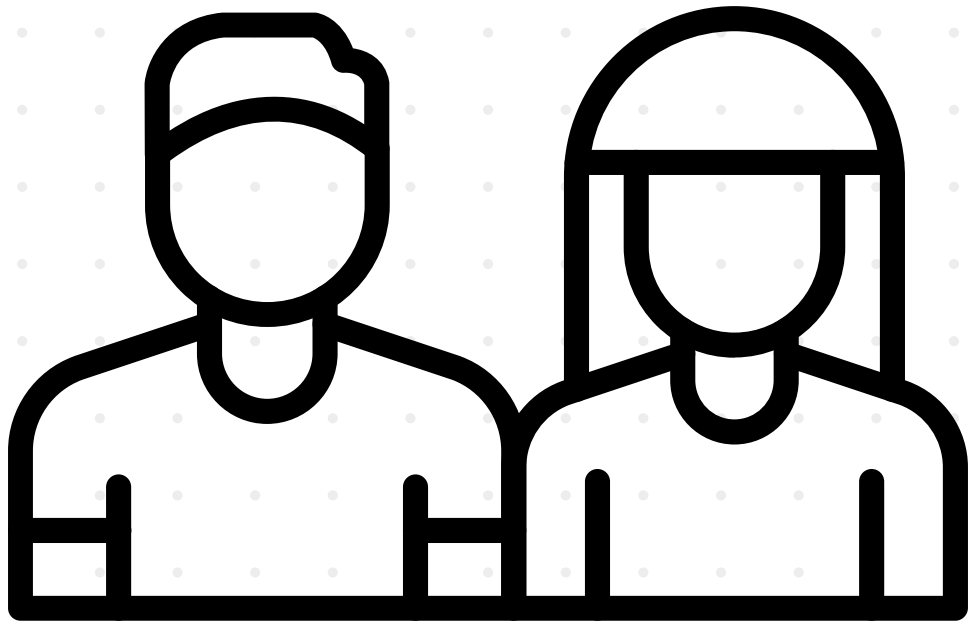
5. Create a Rubric for Evaluating AI tools

Not all AI tools are created equal. Develop a rubric with criteria such as accuracy, transparency, accessibility, and privacy. Share it with students so they can also evaluate tools critically. Having a consistent framework prevents you from adopting flashy apps that may not actually support learning.

Criteria	Guiding Question	Rating (1–5)
Accuracy	Does the tool provide reliable and factually correct information?	
Transparency	Does the tool explain how it works and allow you to check sources?	
Accessibility	Can all students (including those with disabilities) use it easily?	
Privacy	Does the tool protect user data and avoid unnecessary collection?	
Educational Value	Does it support the learning goals and deepen understanding?	

6. Communicate with Parents

Parents need to know what AI is doing in your classroom. Share your AI use policy and explain how it enhances student learning. Many parents may have concerns or misconceptions. Proactive communication builds trust and demonstrates your commitment to responsible use.



7. Explain Ethical and Safety Implications

Set time aside to discuss the ethical dimensions of AI. Talk about bias, privacy, plagiarism, and how AI outputs should always be reviewed with a critical eye. This positions AI as something students need to think about, not just consume.

8. Define Consequences Clearly

Make sure students understand what happens if they go against your AI policy or academic integrity guidelines. Consequences should be clear, consistent, and fair. When expectations are transparent, students are more likely to respect the boundaries.

Example

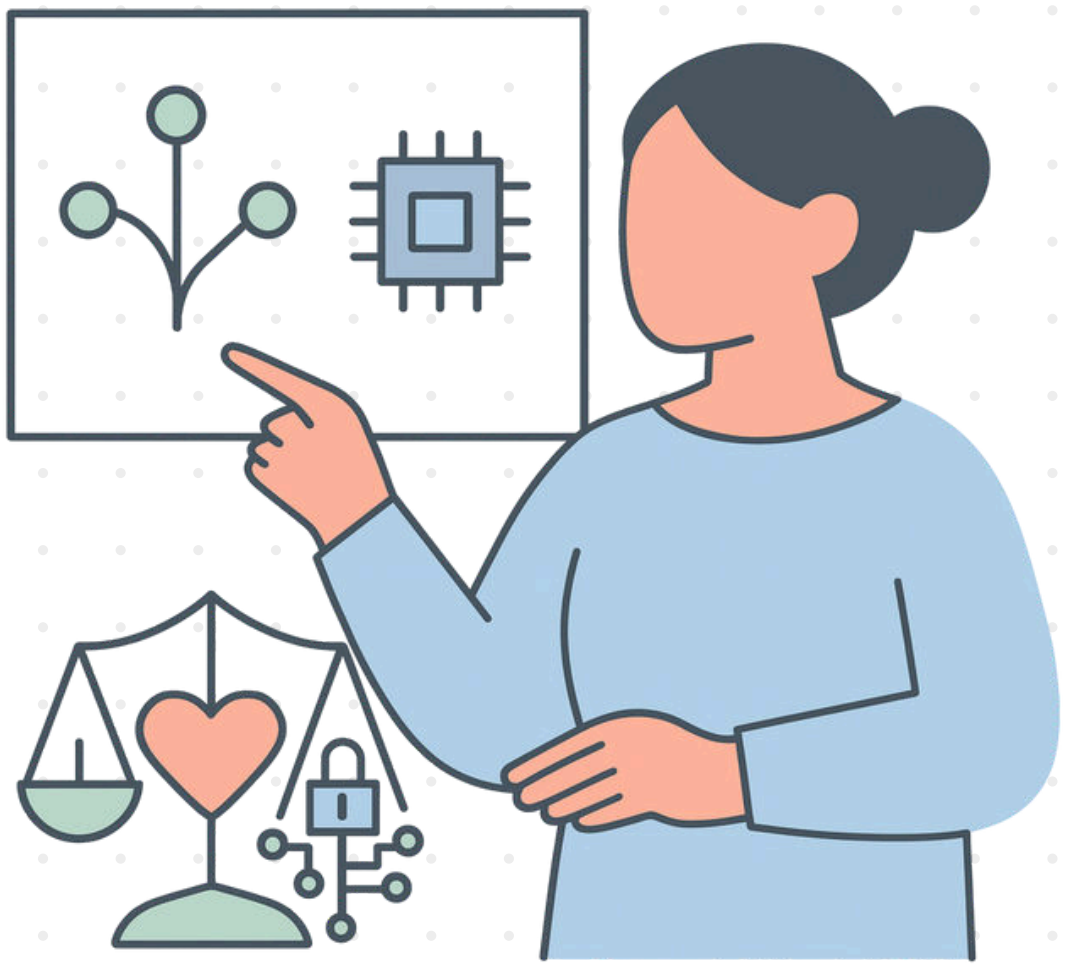
"If AI is used in ways we didn't agree on, the work won't count and you'll need to redo it. If it happens again, school rules on academic integrity will apply."

9. Avoid Policing AI Use

Over-policing can backfire. Heavy surveillance creates an atmosphere of mistrust. Instead, focus on guiding students toward responsible, ethical practices. Building a culture of trust leads to healthier long-term learning habits.

10. Prioritize accessibility

Ensure that AI tools are accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities or limited internet access. If certain tools fall short, find or create alternative pathways. Equity should guide every AI decision you make.



11. Model Responsible AI Use

Students learn best by seeing their teachers in action. Show them how you use AI responsibly: checking sources, citing outputs, and using it as a thought partner rather than a shortcut. Modeling sets the standard more effectively than rules alone.

12. Keep Human Connections Central

AI can assist, but it can't replace the human bond between teacher and student. Prioritize empathy, mentorship, and relationships. A strong rapport with your students is the foundation of all effective teaching and no algorithm can replicate that.

13. Invest in Professional Development

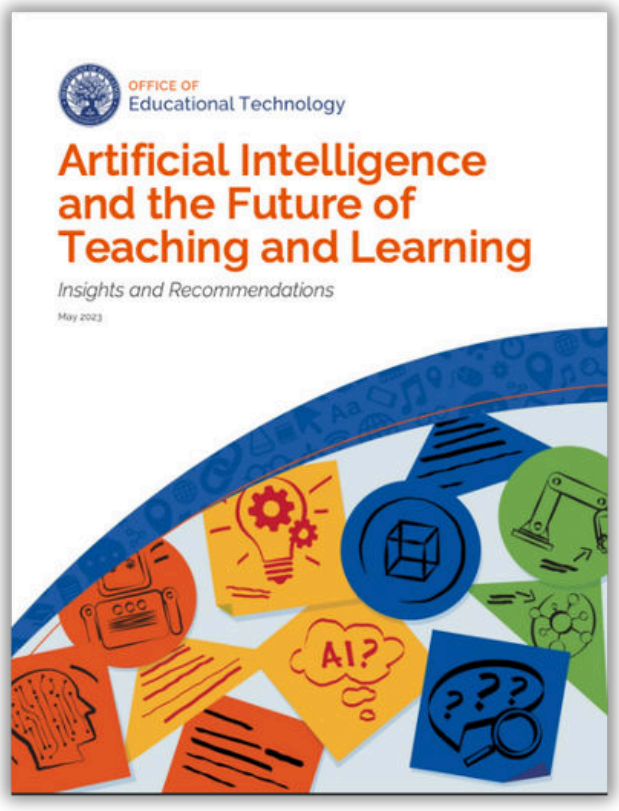
Dedicate time to developing your own AI literacy. Explore guides, online PD sessions, or webinars tailored for educators. The more confident you are in using AI, the better you'll be at supporting your students.

See next section for examples of free guides to help build your AI Literacy

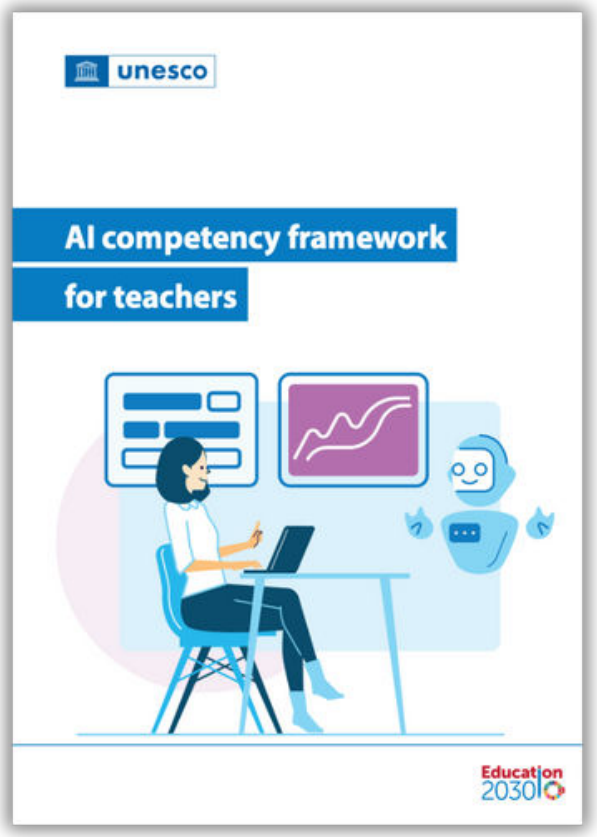
6 Free AI Guides for Teachers

Foundational guides that provide you with everything you need to teach, lead, and adapt with AI.

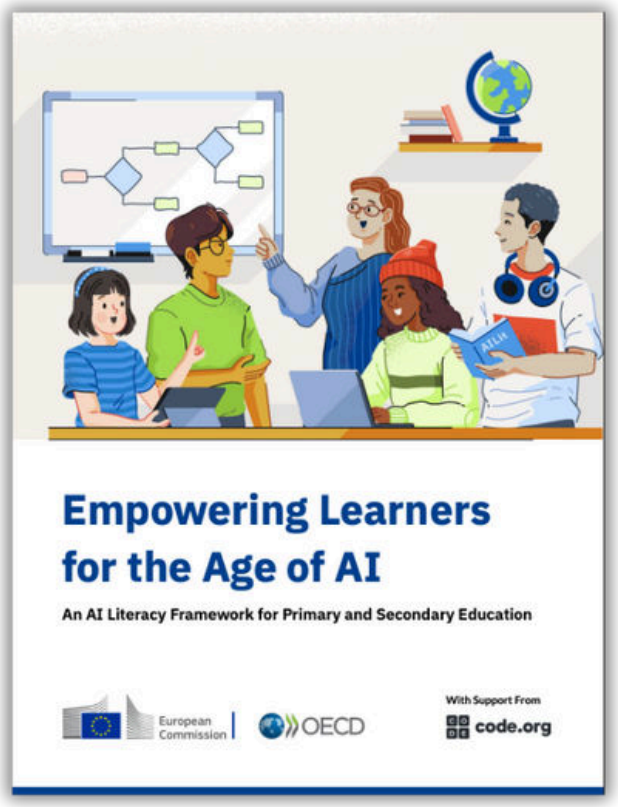
Compiled by Med Kharbach, PhD



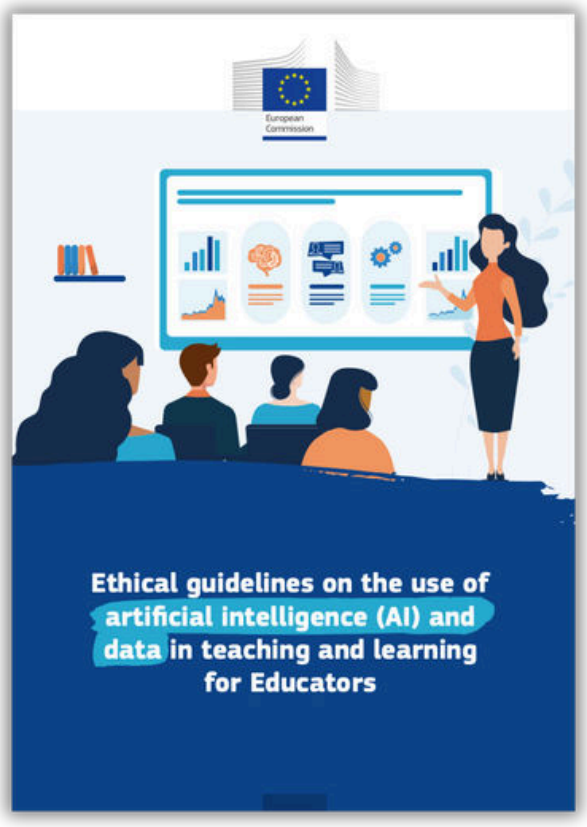
Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning



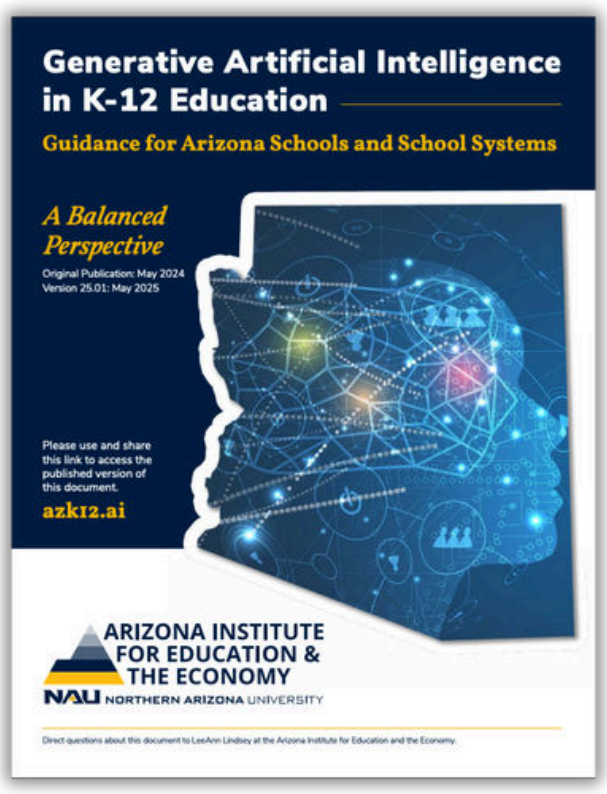
AI competency framework for teachers



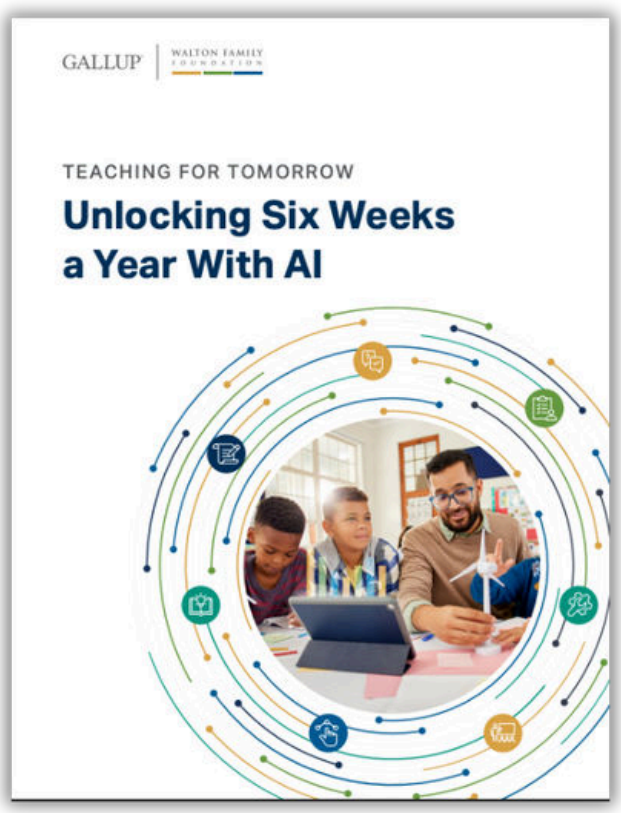
Empowering Learners for the Age of AI



Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in teaching and learning for Educators



Generative Artificial Intelligence in K-12 Education



Unlocking Six Weeks a Year With AI

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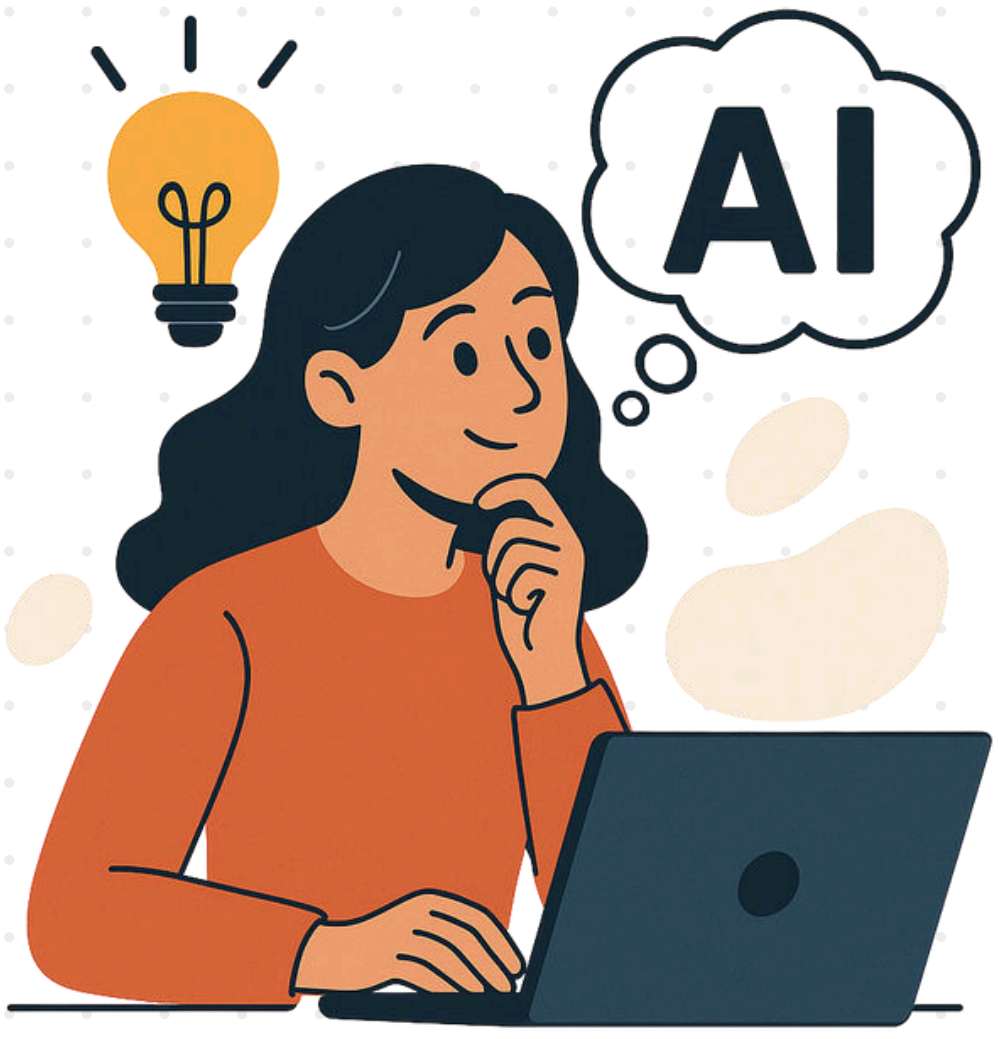
14. Reflect and Adjust

Regularly reflect on your own use of AI in teaching. What worked? What fell flat? Adjust your strategies based on classroom realities and student feedback. Treat AI integration as an iterative process, not a one-time decision.



15. Learn with colleagues

AI integration doesn't need to be a solo journey. Share experiences with colleagues, exchange strategies, and discuss what's working in different classrooms. Professional communities and conferences are great spaces to sharpen your practice.

Platforms & Communities

- TeachAI (global initiative on AI in education)
- AI for Teachers (Facebook groups, LinkedIn groups)
- ISTE forums and online communities
- Edutopia and EdSurge discussion spaces

Conferences & Events

- ISTE Live (International Society for Technology in Education)
- EDUCAUSE Annual Conference
- SXSW EDU
- Learning Technologies Conference
- UNESCO's AI in Education events
- Local or regional education technology summits

Professional Networks

- School or district PD sessions
- University workshops and webinars
- National subject associations (e.g., NCTE, NSTA, etc.) running AI-themed sessions