

Beyond the Hype: Strategic AI Use for Adult Literacy

Wisconsin Literacy

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AI for Learning and Work initiative

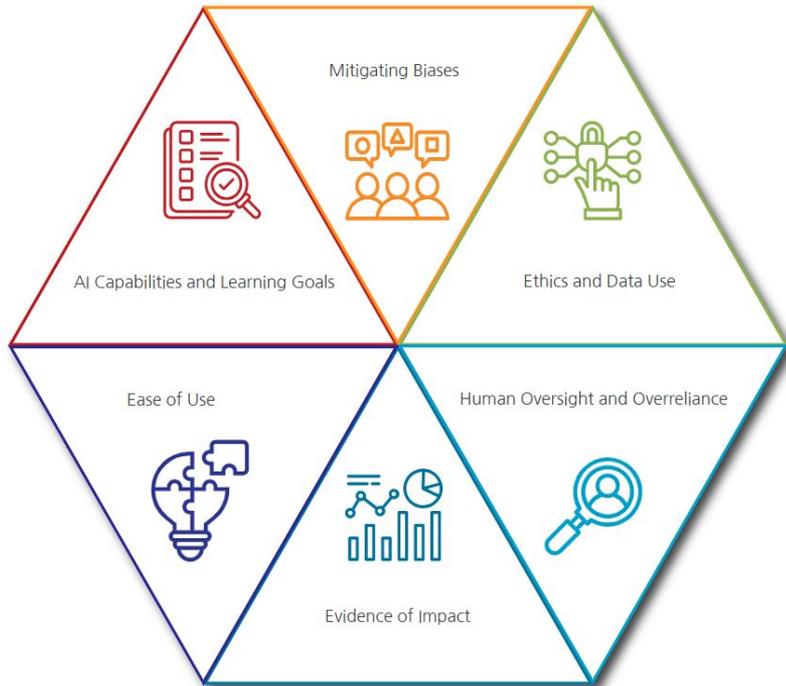


Human-Centered AI Strategy

- ✓ A **learning- and people-first** approach
- ✓ Redefining the ‘power user’, prioritizing **skilled use** over speed and frequency.
- ✓ Putting **craft and lived experience** above new tools and magical shiny things
cutting through the hype

(Re)Defining Power Users

AI Integration Framework



[View the framework](#)

- Co-developed with AI students at Harvard's Graduate School of Education
 - Informed by literature and resources from multiple sources
 - Infuses the “human” component
- Each dimension includes:
 - Overall guiding questions
 - Qs to
 - **Ask** of/about a given tool
 - **Consider** regarding human capacity to leverage that tool effectively
 - Adult education scenarios to illustrate
- Use with teams to spark discussion, develop policy, procure tools, etc.



Human-Centered Examples

Co-Design

Training

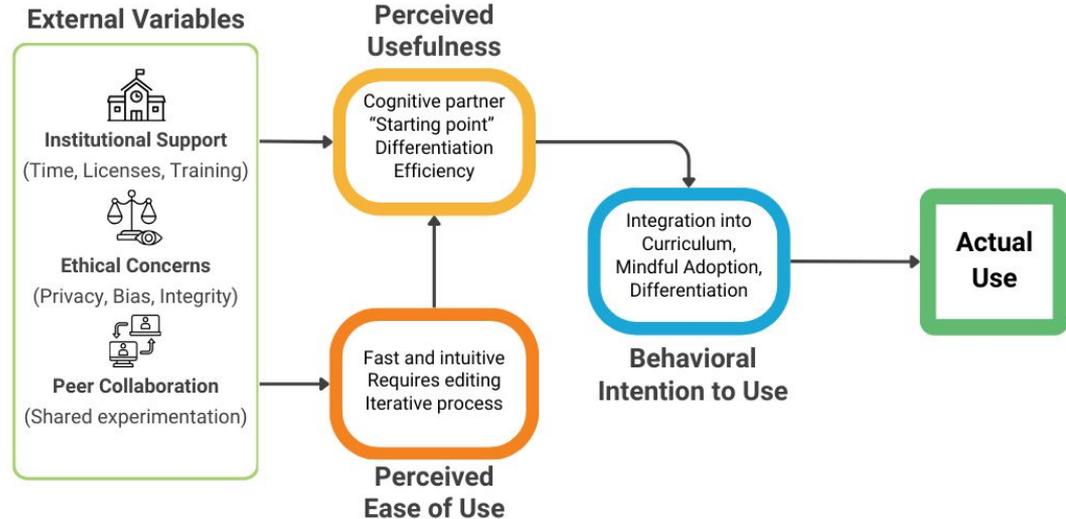
Data Analysis

Showcase
Interviews

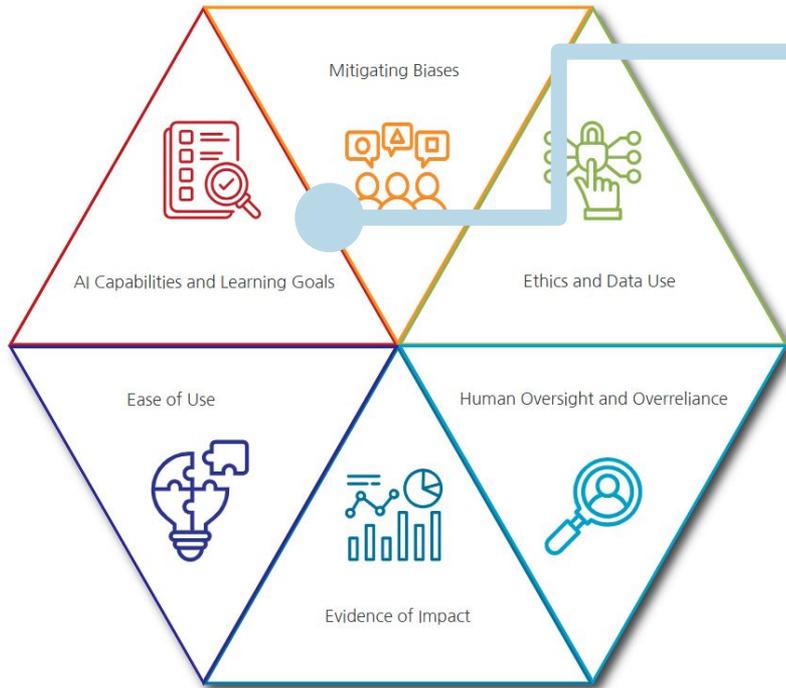
✨ **Coming Soon!**

From spark to practice:

How adult education and literacy teachers perceive and use GenAI tools to create learning resources



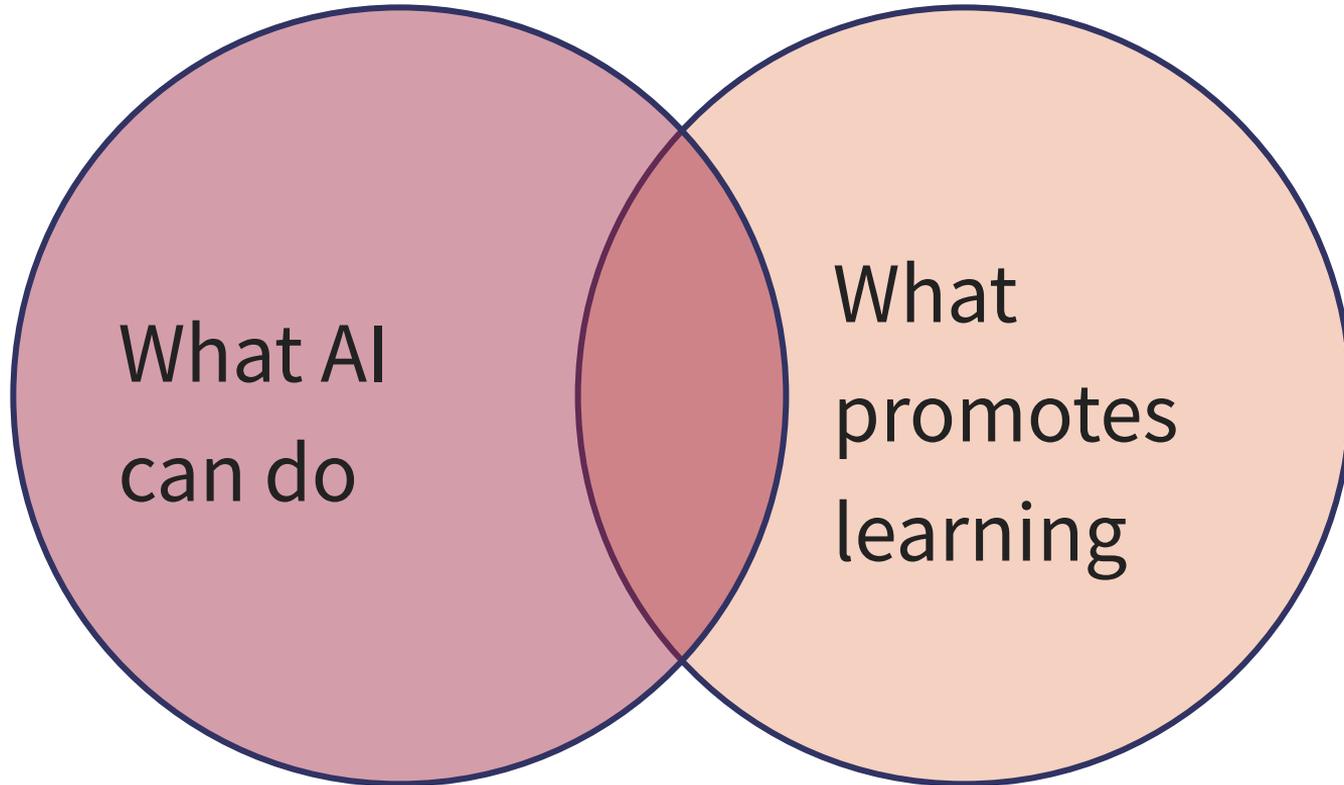
AI Capabilities and Learning Goals



What can AI do to engage learners, extend learning, or enhance learning?



Where is there overlap?



Contextualizing

CHATBOT

Web Page Scanning Challenge – Lesson Plan

Author: Matthew Keith Nichols

Theme: *Our Environment, Earth & Space*

Learning Outcomes:

- III.3 (Reading) Level 3 (AELTWC Outcomes and Benchmarks) - *Students will scan complex or extended texts (e.g., web pages) to find specific information.*
- VI (Digital Literacy), Sub Area 3, Sub Standard C, Benchmark 4 (AELTWC Outcomes and Benchmarks) - *Access and utilize websites and apps through various means, including web links, QR codes, and shortened URLs.*

Class Level: ESL 3 (CEFR A2)

Setting: Whole Class / Individual Activity

Time: 45 minutes

Activity is mobile-friendly

Materials Needed:

1. **Simple Reader** with a short list of words
2. **Mock "web page" (Hosted on Canva)** - A single-page document designed to look like a website, including:
 - o A **Header** (e.g., "Explore Earth & Space!")
 - o 3 **Sections**
 1. *Introduction*
 2. *3 Ways to Protect The Environment*
 3. *Summary*
 - o A small **image or icon section** to make it look authentic
 - o **Template**
3. **Question Online Worksheet (Template)** (Google Forms)- 5 comprehension questions requiring scanning (e.g., dates, names, locations). *Note: Click the "Use Template" button to save your own copy of this Form to your Drive. Share your version with learners.*
4. **Stopwatch or timer** - To add a time challenge (optional).

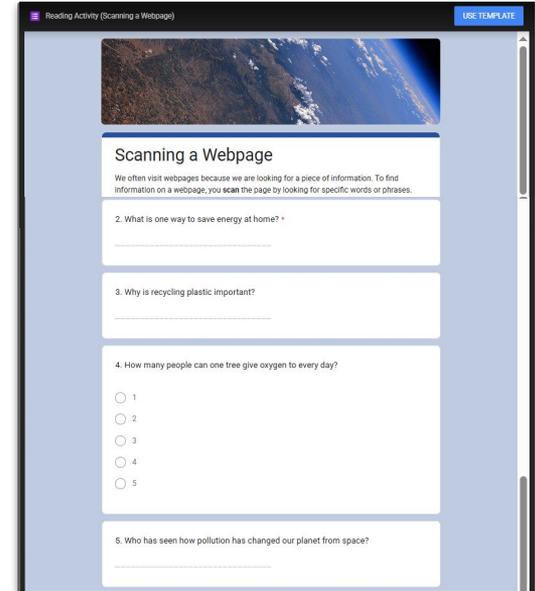
CANVA



The image shows a Canva template for a science explainer. The top left features a photograph of plastic bags floating in the ocean. The top right has a dark green header with the text "SCIENCE EXPLAINER" and "Protecting Our Planet" with a globe icon. The main title is "Why Is the Environment Important?". Below the title is a paragraph: "The Earth is our home. It gives us air to breathe, water to drink, and trees to provide shade. But pollution has made our planet dirty. We have used too much plastic, and it has already caused problems in our rivers and oceans." At the bottom is a photograph of people on a rocky beach with plastic waste.



GOOGLE FORMS



The image is a screenshot of a Google Form titled "Scanning a Webpage". The form includes a header image of Earth from space and a "USE TEMPLATE" button. The main text reads: "We often visit websites because we are looking for a piece of information. To find information on a webpage, you scan the page by looking for specific words or phrases." The form contains five questions:

2. What is one way to save energy at home? *
3. Why is recycling plastic important?
4. How many people can one tree give oxygen to every day?
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
5. Who has seen how pollution has changed our planet from space?

Differentiating

readingskillsfortoday.com

hemingwayapp.com



The History of Pizza

0 Pizza has been pleasing taste buds for a very long time. In
12 prehistoric times, people baked large pieces of bread on flat
22 cooking stones. Later, in Italy, these flat pieces of bread were
33 seasoned with herbs and called focaccia bread. To this day,
43 many people like to eat focaccia bread as an appetizer or
54 snack.
55

When Europeans came to the New World, they were
64 introduced to tomatoes, which they then took back to their
74 home countries. The Italians needed something to add to their
84 bread-filled diet. The people of Naples, Italy, were the first to
96 put tomatoes on focaccia bread. At first, people were hesitant
106 to use tomatoes. They thought this red fruit may be
116 poisonous.
117

The world's first pizzeria opened in 1830. Pizzas were baked
127 in an oven lined with lava from a local volcano. The first pizza
140 delivery occurred in 1889 when an Italian restaurant owner
149 was asked to create a special dish for the guest of honor,
161 Queen Margherita Giovanni.
164

He wanted to include the colors of the Italian flag in his dish for
178 the queen. He added tomatoes (red), mozzarella cheese
186 (white), and basil (green) to focaccia bread. He named the

Hemingway's classic desktop app. Save/load files and work offline. No AI. [Learn more](#)

Hemingway plus File Plus < Fix Grammar Plus < Rewrite Plus Bulleted List B I Menu

Write Edit Feedback

The History of Pizza

Readability

Grade 5
Good.

Words: 403
Show more stats

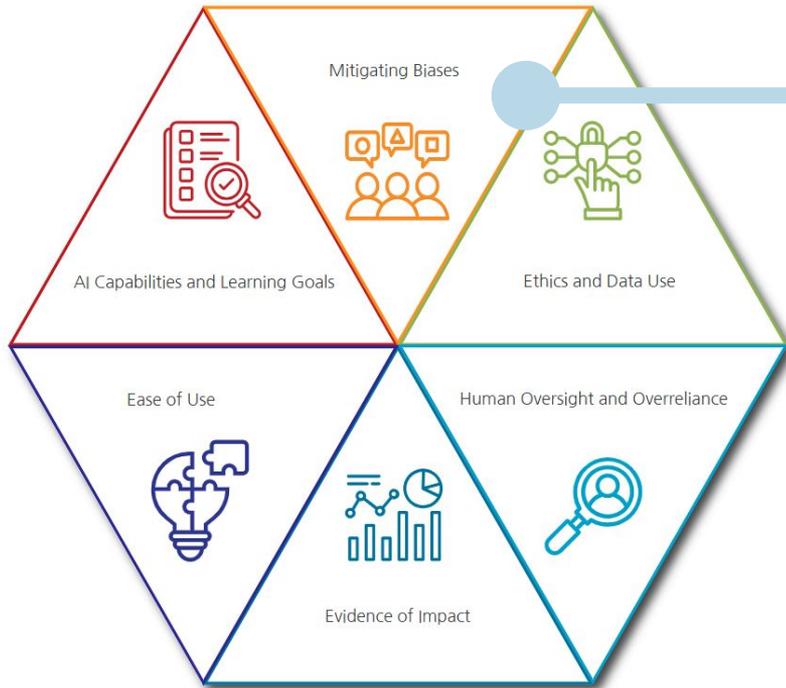
- 1 of 41 sentences is very hard to read.
- 3 of 41 sentences are hard to read.
- Find grammar and spelling issues with Editor Plus. Upgrade
- 9 weakeners. View details
- 0 words with simpler alternatives.

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The world's first pizzeria opened in 1830. Pizzas were baked in an oven lined with lava from a local volcano. The first pizza delivery occurred in 1889 when an Italian restaurant owner was asked to create a special dish for the guest of honor, Queen Margherita Giovanni.

He wanted to include the colors of the Italian flag in his dish

Mitigating Bias



What has AI learned about learners and learning? How do educators complement that?



Know the Limitations

And complement them with “interaction skills”

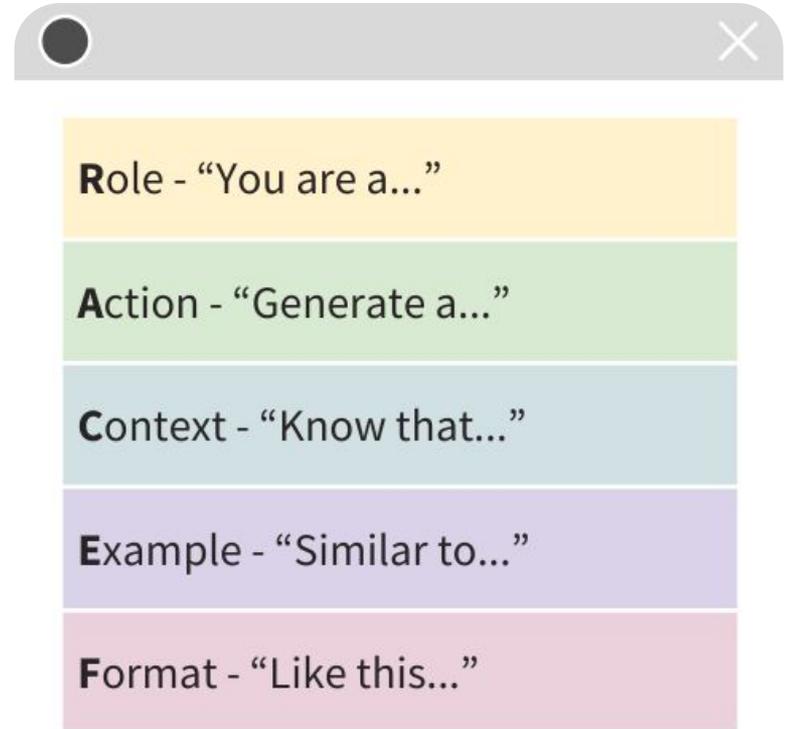


 Anders, Brent A. Designing Instruction with Generative AI: 24/7 Support for Optimizing Teaching and Learning. 1st ed. Routledge, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003568544>.



General Prompt Writing Tips

1. Use a **prompt framework** to remember which details to include.
2. Make sure your prompt is a sandwich where the **task** is the bread and the **context and details** are the fillings.
3. **Iterate and refine.** Prompting isn't a one and done!



Trevor



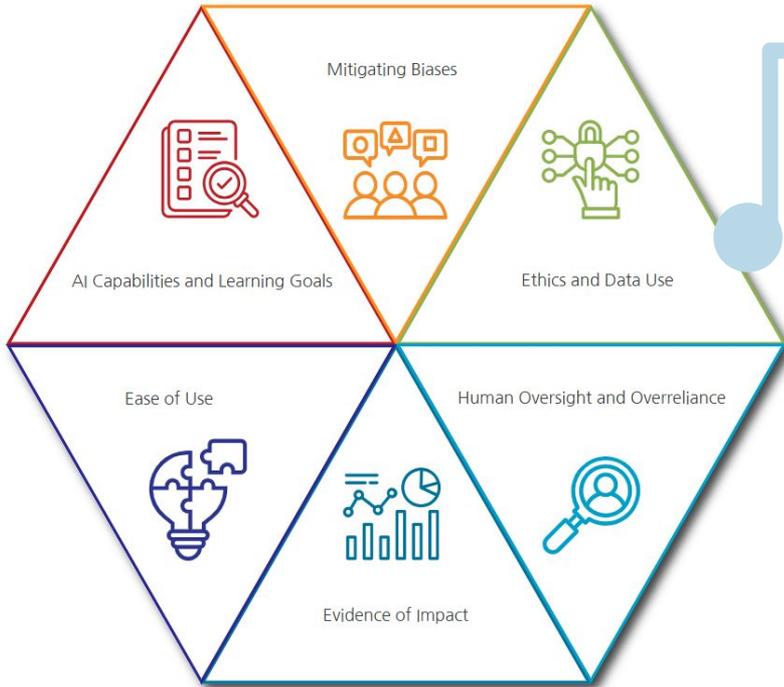
The Learner-Centered Synthesizer

- Mixes and matches GenAI tools and uses to meet the needs of diverse learners in a multilevel class
- Carefully considers what's meaningful and relevant for adults

“I need resources with simple language but targeted for adult audiences... and that is something that’s not out there a lot for adult education. For ESL.”



Ethics and Data Use



What is responsible development, deployment, and use?



What can we do about...

- The environment?
- Learners' data?
- Intellectual property?

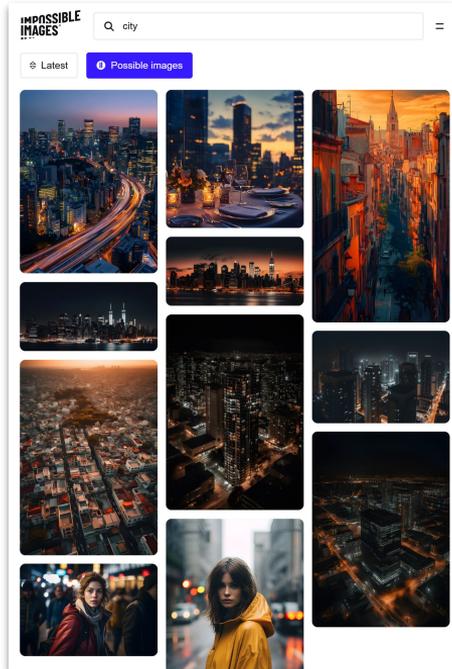


Image retrieved from [Google Throws Open Doors to Its Top-Secret Data Center | WIRED](#)

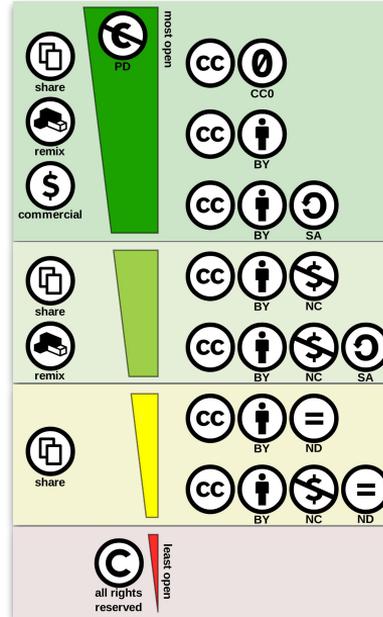


Reuse, Recycle

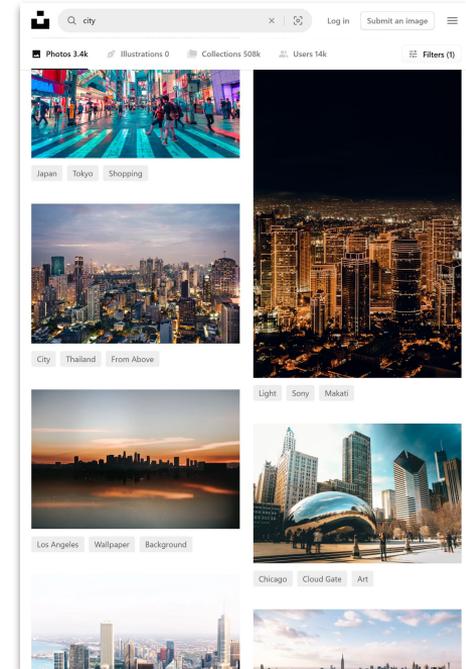
Organize, open license, and share content.



[AI-Generated Image Library](#)

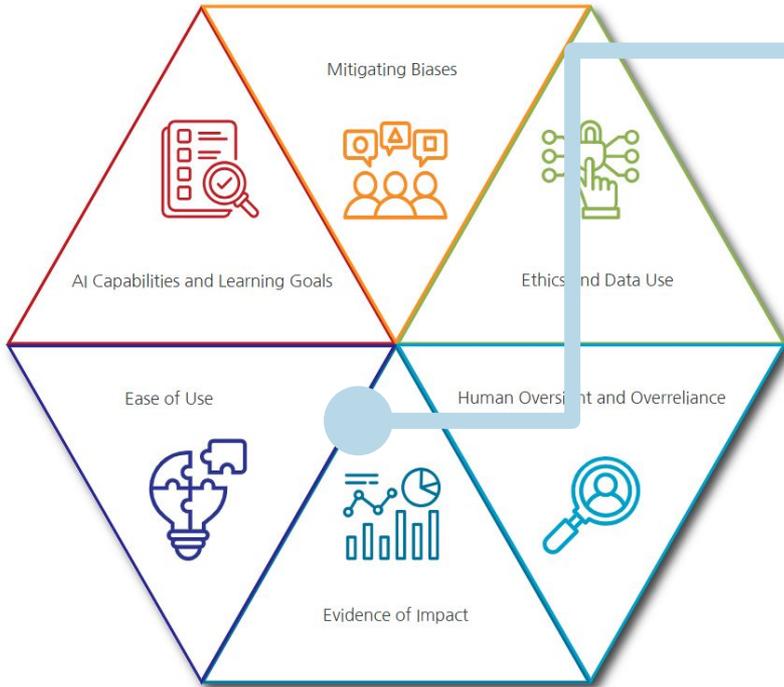


[About CC Licenses](#)



[Unsplash Images](#)

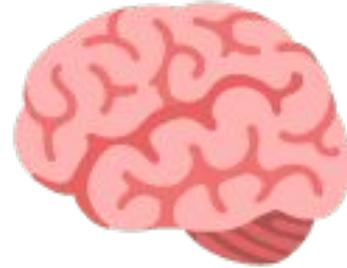
Ease of Use



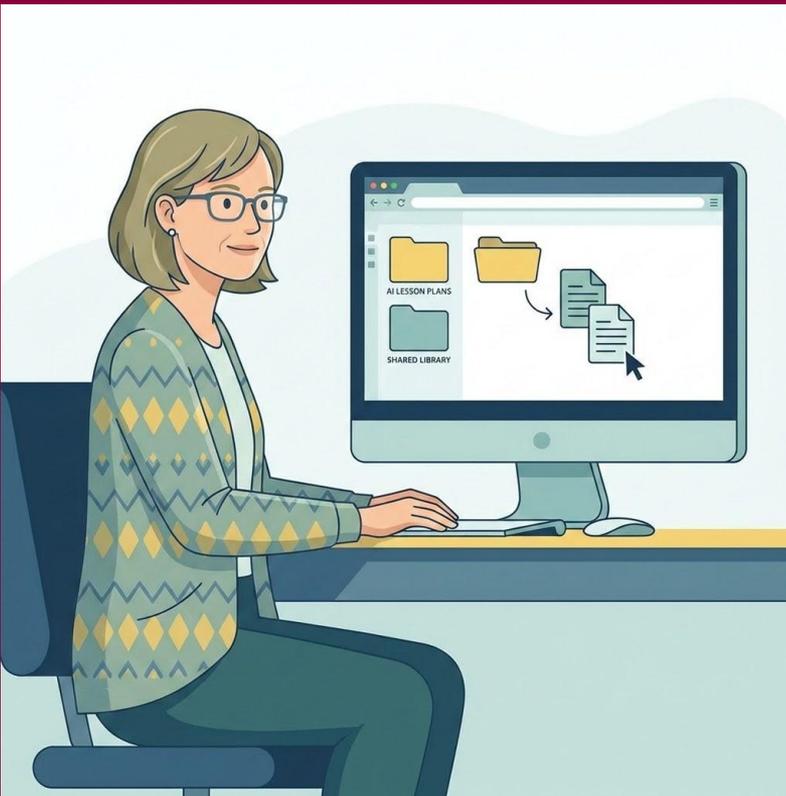
How can AI be integrated in a way that benefits everyone?



Devices, Connectivity, Literacy



Nora



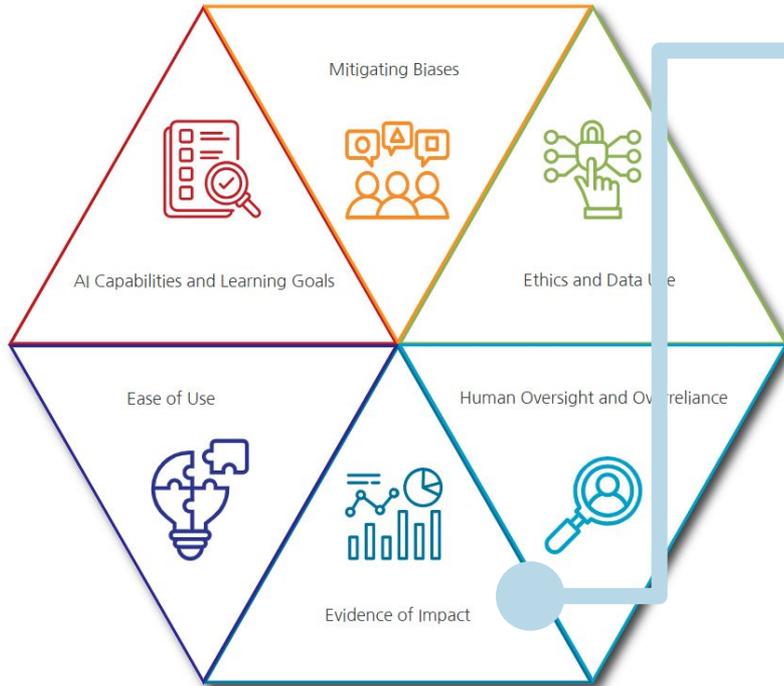
The Collaborative Creator

- Motivated by the ability to collaborate and hear from others as she's learning about AI
- Develops organized repositories of lesson resources for other teachers

“Overall, we use it for creating the material that support the teachers, and we're available for any teachers that want to learn.”



Evidence of Impact



*What is known /
tested about
integrating AI in
this way?*



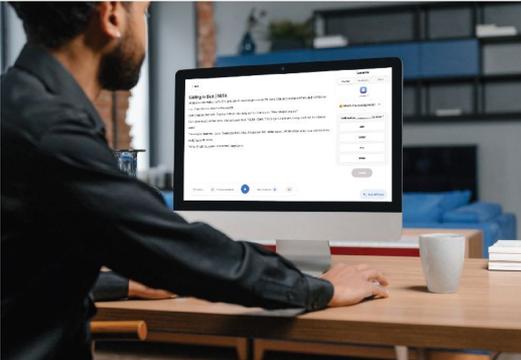
Examining the Tools

FEBRUARY 2025


WORLD EDUCATION
 A DIVISION OF JET

Exploring the Potential of Pace AI in Adult ESOL Classrooms

Rachel Riggs, Justine Schade, Dr. Jen Vaneek, Dr. Aleksis Cherevka





Consider access to technology. Pace functions on any device. Teachers have designed instruction with careful consideration of how to maximize the use of available devices (e.g., computers, headphones) both onsite and those accessible to their students outside of class.

Seek support when needed. Whether collaborating with peers or contacting Pace AI's support team, teachers accessed timely assistance to address any issues.

Pace AI has always aligned AI development to NRS levels in its lesson and content creation, teachers expressed the desire to see the NRS level and CASAS level tags displayed in the interface (UI). In response, the Pace AI team not only presented the relevant levels to them in the UI but also leveraged their standards-aligned AI to generate test practice for Reading STEPS from all leveled reader content.

to better support civics and a variety of career topics, the Pace AI team used AI algorithms to align with the Teaching Skills for Success (TSSM) framework. We worked with teachers to more closely align with their search for content relevant to the skills they need (see Figure 3).

Recognizing the diverse digital backgrounds of learners, it is understandable that adults encounter specific challenges when integrating digital technology. Despite these challenges, teachers and learners expressed enthusiasm for Pace AI's ability to enhance digital and language learning.

Teachers reported that the ability to help them gain confidence in using technology, a crucial skill for both work and life (Bergson-Shilcock & Taylor, 2017; Frank & Castek, 2017). This was well summarized by one teacher:

"[AI] built their confidence on using technology because some of them are afraid of using a computer... so that built their confidence also on their reading level."

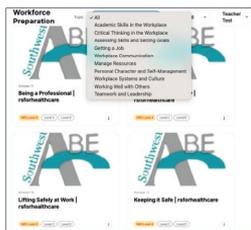


Figure 3. Teaching Skills That Matter framework to navigate resources in Pace AI



Figure 4. Learner Satisfaction (n=117)

56% of learners reported being satisfied or very satisfied with Pace AI, as illustrated in Figure 4. Teachers observed that onboarding was crucial to usability. Those who had more time to explore the platform before introducing it to learners felt more confident incorporating it into their instruction. This aligns with the information we gathered regarding comfort with technology. We found high levels of satisfaction, 75% "satisfied or very satisfied", among learners who stated they were comfortable or very comfortable with technology. Our qualitative data indicated that when questions arose, teachers found the technical support from Pace AI staff helpful and responsive, enabling them to quickly resolve any issues. One teacher commented:

"I think the onboarding for the instructor was very well put together. The support has been immediate."

Making it Work: Implementation Insights

The findings demonstrated Pace AI's alignment with the needs of adult learners and highlighted key considerations for its integration into classroom instruction. Teachers emphasized that Pace AI's personalized, self-paced learning approach was extremely beneficial in multilevel classrooms, enabling students at different proficiency levels to engage with appropriate content. This was especially valuable in open-enrollment programs, where learners join at various times throughout the semester.

Factors Supporting Success

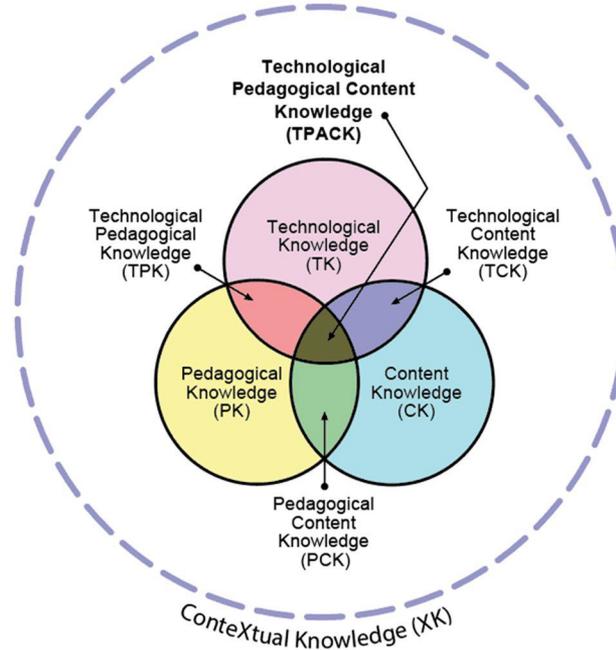
Teachers' and learners' insights revealed these practical tips for using Pace AI, which could be broadly applied to any new digital learning tool.

- 1. Gather buy-in from your team.** When administrators back the use of Pace AI, teachers can share ideas, content, and strategies for its use.
- 2. Take time to explore the features.** More use leads to greater comfort and learner engagement. Teachers value the time they spend testing and experimenting with the full suite of features.



Using Our Knowledge

Adult learning happens when we combine our TK, AK, CK



TK: What is the nature of GenAI?

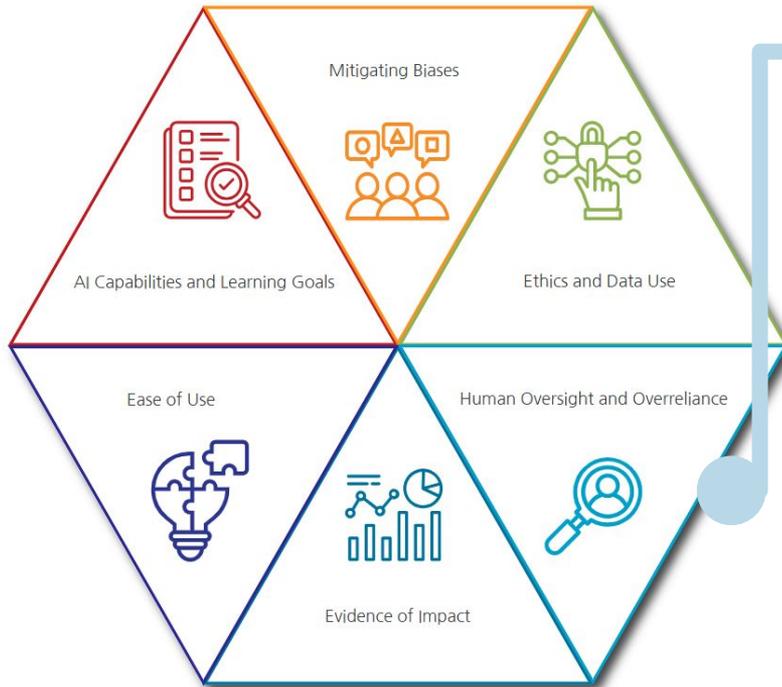
CK: What are the “zones of possibility”?

AK: How do adults learn?

 Mishra, Punya, Melissa Warr, and Rezwana Islam. “TPACK in the Age of ChatGPT and Generative AI.” *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education* 39, no. 4 (2023): 235–51.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2023.2247480>.



Human Oversight

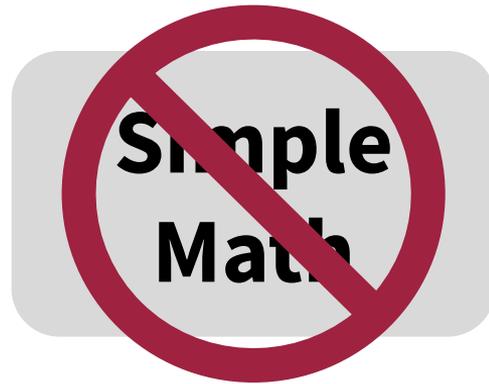


How do we ensure humans are involved in meaningful ways?



Stop. Think. Consider.

Know when generative is [n't] the solution.



Calculate the total of
what I need to put in
this invoice.



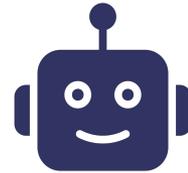
What's the history of
the term "social
capital?"

Human-AI Collaboration

Write an essay.

Use AI to draft.

Write and submit.



Ben



The Skeptical Problem-Solver

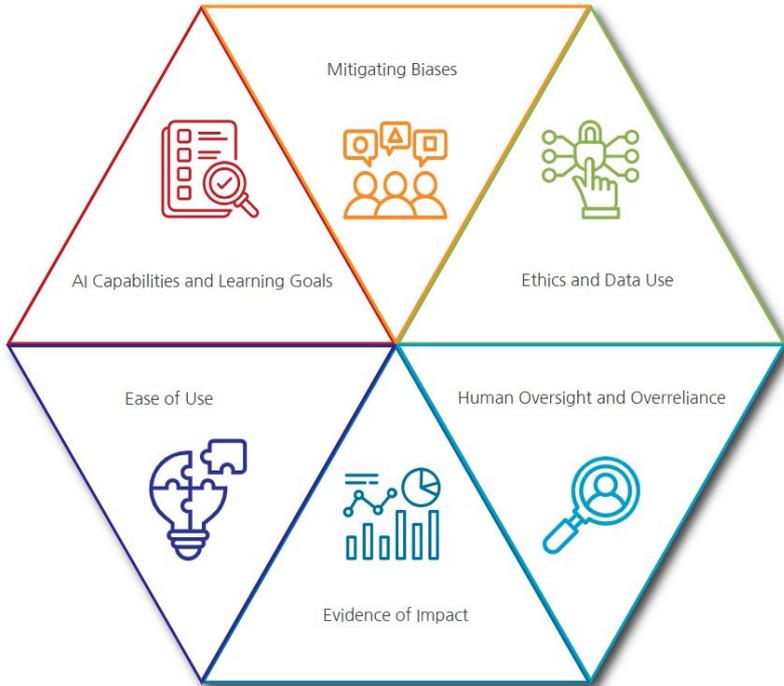
- Experimenting with AI reduced Ben's anxiety overall but validated his concerns about reliability and ethics
- Uses AI occasionally for research or to create presentations

“I went to Gemini and said, okay. I know nothing about this... it didn't solve my problem, but it did start me on the journey when I had nowhere to start.”





Pause & Reflect



 Ideas?

 Questions?

 Reflections



Building Your Powers

Human-AI Collaboration

What is the problem?

Will using AI **reasonably** help solve the problem?

What skills, knowledge, and awareness do I need?

Is this a **good outcome**?

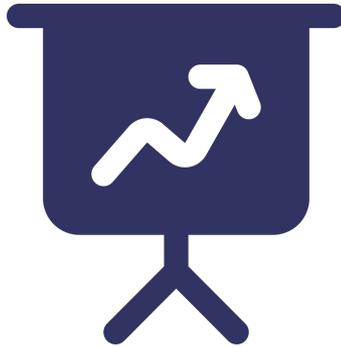


Choosing the Right Tool



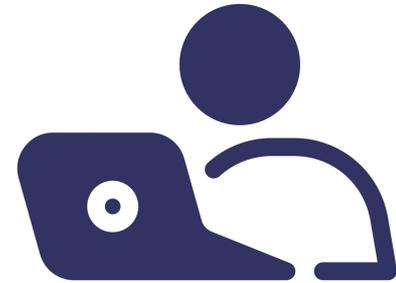
Administrative Tool

Analyze class data
Perform “[donkey work](#)”
Perform research



Teaching Tool

Create lesson content
Brainstorm ideas
Translate



Learning Tool

Provide personalized practice
Project-based activities
Developing AI literacy

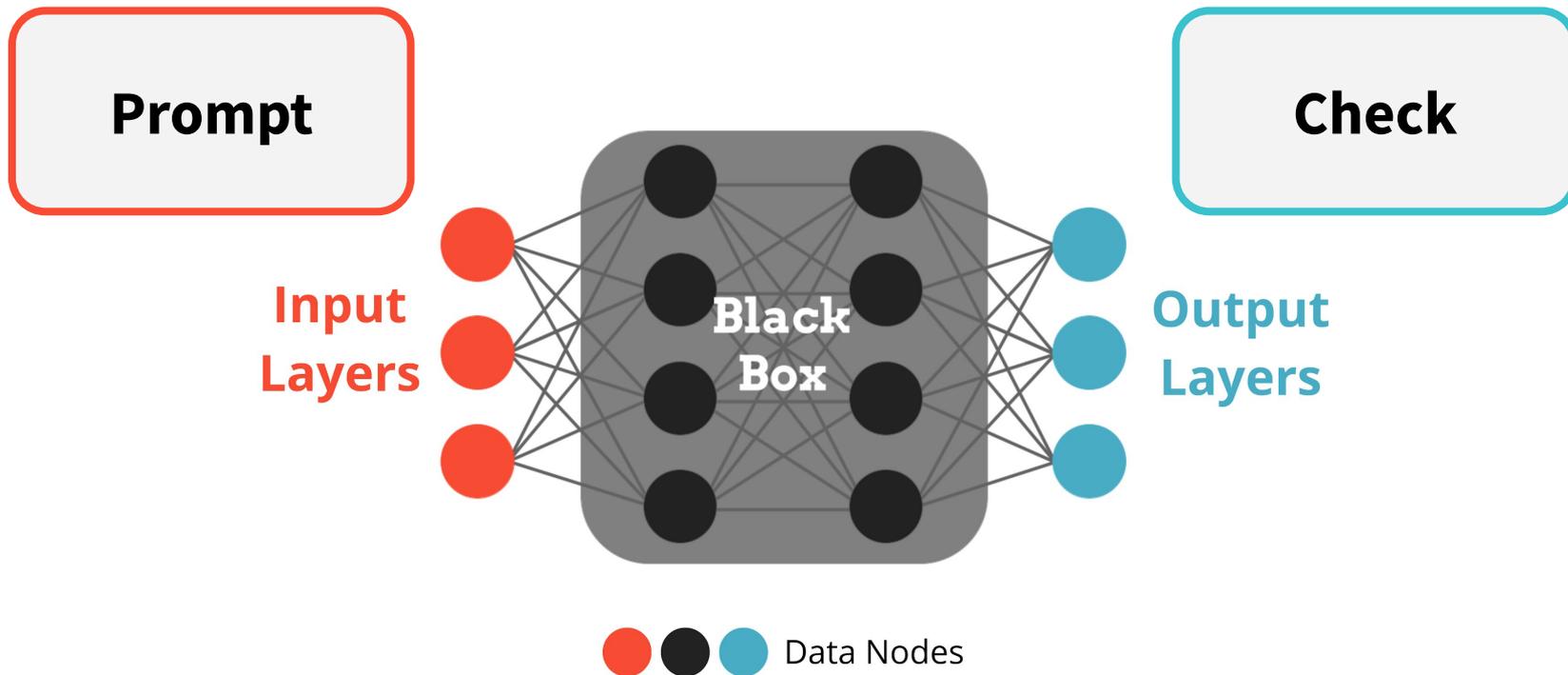
List of Tools

Category	Description	Tools*
General	Natural language, realistic image	<i>Claude, Gemini, ChatGPT, Copilot, Pi</i>
Teaching ↓ Learning	Lesson planning	<i>MagicSchool.ai, Diffit, Twee, Brisk, Ludia</i>
	Engagement	<i>Kahoot, Quizziz, Curipod, Padlet</i>
	Adaptive learning	<i>Pace AI, Duolingo, Khanmigo, School AI</i>
	Multimodal	<i>Natural Readers, Snorkl</i>
Design	Generate multimedia	<i>Canva Magic Studio, Synthesia, ElevenLabs, Adobe Express, Descript</i>
Productivity	Managing information and tasks	<i>Humata, NotebookLM, Goblin.Tools, Perplexity</i>

*Tools mentioned in this table are crowdsourced from educators. This is not an endorsement, nor an exhaustive list.



“Interaction Skills”



The Open Prompt Book

TEACHING LANGUAGE WITH RHYTHM

Incorporating music into language learning taps into the rhythmic and melodic elements that enhance memory retention and recall, making it a powerful educational tool. In CampGPT, educators got creative developing song lyrics, poems, and jazz chants.

Try it out!
Click the link below to view the response to this prompt.

[ChatGPT](#)

LANGUAGE GROOVE

You are an instructor in a community-based ESL program.

Write a rhythm and blues song about shopping at the grocery store that teaches these parts of speech: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. In the song, make explicit connections between a part of speech and its function, and give some examples.

Since these are beginners, keep the language simple and straightforward with no idioms or figurative language.

Example: On the shelf, above, below, behind the can, prepositions show us where; now we have a plan.

2

Authentic Use Cases

Concrete Examples

Prompts + Reflections

AI for Learning and Work Resources



Prompt Book: worlded.me/aipromptbook

[AI Integration Framework](#)

[GenAI Crash Course](#)

AI Literacy Matters: worlded.me/ailitmatters

BRIDGES: digitalskillslibrary.org

Thank you!



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