



AI Compass: An Educator Readiness Framework for an AI-Enabled World

Why This Framework, Why Now?

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how people access information, create knowledge, solve problems, communicate, and work. For educators, this shift raises questions beyond whether or how to use emerging technologies. It requires educators who can exercise sound professional judgment, evaluate AI and its implications critically, design meaningful learning experiences, and prepare students to navigate an AI-enabled world with agency, discernment, and responsibility.

We developed the BranchED AI Compass: An Educator Readiness Framework for an AI-Enabled World¹ in response to this broader challenge. The framework recognizes that preparing educators for an AI-enabled world is not primarily a technology integration challenge; it is a professional readiness challenge. Educators need opportunities to build the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and judgment required to determine when, how, and whether AI should play a role in teaching and learning, while preserving the relationships, intellectual engagement, creativity, and human expertise at the heart of education.

The framework provides a shared foundation for educator preparation programs, schools, and districts to move beyond isolated AI tools, policies, or practices toward a coherent approach to educator readiness. Its competencies articulate what educators should know and be able to do, while companion resources translate the framework into practice through reflection, application, evidence collection, and continuous improvement.

At its core, the framework reflects a simple premise:

Preparing students for an AI-enabled world begins with preparing educators to lead within one.

Why "AI-Enabled"?

We intentionally use the term AI-enabled rather than AI-driven or AI-powered. AI-enabled reflects a future in which artificial intelligence expands what educators and organizations can accomplish while preserving human agency, professional judgment, ethical responsibility, and meaningful relationships. Within this framework, ethical AI use includes decisions that protect human agency, dignity, privacy, equity, accessibility, intellectual and creative rights, and the well-being of individuals and communities, while also considering the broader social, environmental, and labor implications of AI systems. The framework prepares educators not simply to use AI-enabled technologies, but to lead effectively in environments where AI increasingly supports teaching, learning, and organizational improvement.

Framework Purpose

The BranchED AI Compass defines the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and professional practices educators need to prepare learners to thrive in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence.

The framework is grounded in a human-centered belief:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) does not replace educators. Rather, educators play an increasingly vital role in helping learners think critically, act ethically, learn continuously, and use AI responsibly and effectively.

This framework is intended for:

- Teacher Candidates
- Practicing Educators
- School and District Leaders
- Educator Preparation Program Faculty

Although the competencies are presented as a unified framework, they are intentionally designed to apply across educator roles. Companion resources will provide differentiated proficiency indicators, examples, and evidence expectations for teacher candidates, practicing educators, educator preparation faculty, and school and district leaders.

This framework may be used internally to guide program design, professional learning, and continuous improvement. It may also be used externally to support shared expectations, partnerships, and transparent communication about educator readiness in an AI-enabled world.

¹ The design of this document has been assisted by ChatGPT and feedback from internal and external reviewers.

The competencies in this framework are intentionally interconnected. AI is not treated as a separate instructional practice, but as a context that influences professional judgment, instructional design, assessment, collaboration, and continuous improvement. This distinction is intentional: the framework is not a technology integration framework, nor does it assume that AI use is inherently beneficial or appropriate. Instead, it prepares educators to begin with educational purpose and exercise discernment about when, how, why, and whether AI should be used.

How the Framework Works

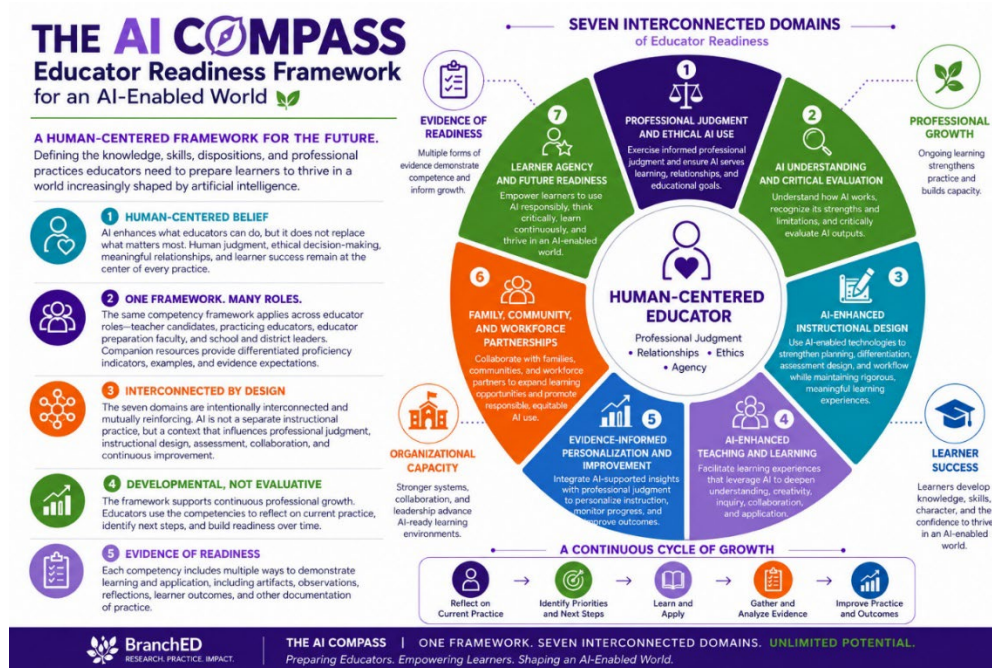
The Educator Readiness Framework for an AI-Enabled World is a human-centered framework that defines the professional competencies educators need to prepare learners for a world increasingly influenced by artificial intelligence. Rather than centering technology adoption or the integration of AI tools, the framework emphasizes the knowledge, judgment, dispositions, and practices educators need to make discerning decisions about AI while preserving the essential human dimensions of teaching and learning. Educational purpose comes first; AI is considered only in relation to whether and how it can responsibly strengthen that purpose.

The framework is organized around seven interconnected domains that collectively describe educator readiness. Although each domain is presented separately, they are designed to function as an integrated system. Professional judgment serves as a throughline across the domains: educators retain responsibility for determining when, how, why, and whether AI is appropriate in their professional practice. AI understanding strengthens teaching and assessment; evidence supports continuous improvement; partnerships extend learning beyond the classroom; and learner agency remains the goal.

The competencies are intentionally designed as a single framework applicable across educator roles, including teacher candidates, practicing educators, educator preparation faculty, and school and district leaders. Rather than creating separate competency sets for each audience, the framework is differentiated through audience-specific proficiency indicators, evidence expectations, examples of practice, and implementation resources.

The framework is also developmental rather than evaluative. It is not about how to integrate technology into the classroom per se, but about how to be discerning and reflective about when, how, and why to use technology. It is intended to support continuous professional growth by helping educators reflect on current practice, identify areas for development, document evidence of implementation, and build readiness over time.

The framework positions AI as a context for professional practice, not the purpose or the objective of education. Human expertise, ethical decision-making, meaningful relationships, and learner success remain at the center of every competency. Across the framework, educational purpose and professional judgment precede decisions about AI use, and educators remain accountable for those decisions and their consequences.



Domain 1: Professional Judgment and Ethical AI Use

Educators exercise informed professional judgment when using AI and ensure that technology serves learning, human relationships, and educational goals.

- **Competency 1: Human-Centered Professional Judgment**
Educators make intentional decisions about when, how, and whether AI should be used in ways that preserve human agency, professional expertise, learner dignity, and educational purpose.
- **Competency 2: Ethical, Legal, and Responsible AI Use**
Educators apply principles of responsible AI practice, including ethics, legal compliance, privacy, accessibility, transparency, equity, data protection, and intellectual and creative rights, when selecting, using, and evaluating AI-enabled technologies. They consider learner accessibility, multilingual access, equitable participation, ownership and attribution, environmental and labor implications, and appropriate human oversight.

Domain 2: AI Understanding and Critical Evaluation

Educators understand how AI works, recognize its strengths and limitations, examine the human and systemic factors that shape AI systems, and critically evaluate AI-generated content and recommendations.

- **Competency 3: Foundational AI Literacy**
Educators understand core concepts related to AI, machine learning, and generative AI, including how AI systems are developed, trained, and deployed. They recognize that AI systems are sociotechnical: their design and outputs are shaped by human choices, training data, embedded assumptions, institutional priorities, and commercial or organizational interests.
- **Competency 4: Critical Evaluation of AI Outputs**
Educators critically analyze AI-generated content, recommendations, and insights for accuracy, bias, quality, developmental appropriateness, and instructional relevance.

Domain 3: AI-Enhanced Instructional Design

Educators use AI-enabled technologies to strengthen planning, differentiation, assessment design, learner support, communication, documentation, and workflow while maintaining rigorous and meaningful learning experiences.

- **Competency 5: Instructional Design and Differentiation**
Educators use AI-enabled technologies, when appropriate, to support the design of standards-aligned learning experiences that respond to diverse learner strengths, needs, interests, goals, linguistic and cultural assets, community contexts, and lived experiences.
- **Competency 6: Assessment, Feedback, and Evidence of Learning**
Educators use AI-enabled technologies to support authentic assessment design, formative feedback, progress monitoring, and evidence collection while ensuring validity, transparency, and meaningful demonstrations of learner thinking in AI-enabled environments.

Domain 4: AI-Enhanced Teaching and Learning

Educators facilitate learning experiences that leverage AI to deepen understanding, creativity, inquiry, collaboration, critical thinking, student agency, meaningful connection, and application.

- **Competency 7: AI-Supported Learning Facilitation**
Educators guide learners in using AI-enabled technologies productively for learning, exploration, feedback, revision, meaningful communication, problem-solving, and creation while supporting learner voice, curiosity, and meaningful engagement.
- **Competency 8: Productive Struggle, Rigor, and Academic Integrity**
Educators design learning experiences that promote authentic thinking, maintain academic integrity, and intentionally integrate AI in ways that preserve meaningful cognitive engagement, learner agency, and opportunities for learners to demonstrate their own understanding.

Domain 5: Evidence-Informed Personalization and Improvement

Educators integrate AI-supported insights with professional judgment and other evidence of learning to personalize instruction, monitor progress, and improve learner outcomes.

- **Competency 9: Data-Informed Personalization and Continuous Improvement**
Educators interpret AI-supported data and insights responsibly, integrate multiple sources of evidence, personalize learner supports, and continuously improve instruction. Human-in-the-loop decision-making, awareness of bias, and educator accountability guide all consequential decisions.

Domain 6: Family, Community, and Workforce Partnership

Educators engage families, communities, and workforce partners to promote responsible AI use and prepare learners for participation in an AI-enabled society.

- **Competency 10: Collaborative AI Readiness Partnerships**
Educators communicate transparently about AI, support responsible use beyond school settings, and collaborate with

community and workforce partners to strengthen learner readiness.

Domain 7: Learner Agency and Future Readiness

Educators prepare learners to navigate an AI-enabled world with confidence, curiosity, adaptability, and responsibility.

- **Competency 11: Learner Agency and Metacognition**

Educators help learners understand their own thinking, evaluate the role of AI in their learning, and develop increasing agency, independence, reflection, and responsible decision-making.

- **Competency 12: Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Problem-Solving in an AI-Enabled World**

Educators design opportunities for learners to investigate complex questions, generate original ideas, evaluate evidence, solve authentic problems, and create meaningful work using AI as a tool rather than a substitute for thinking and creating.



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