



BranchED AI Compass

Domain-to-Practice Guide

Domain 1

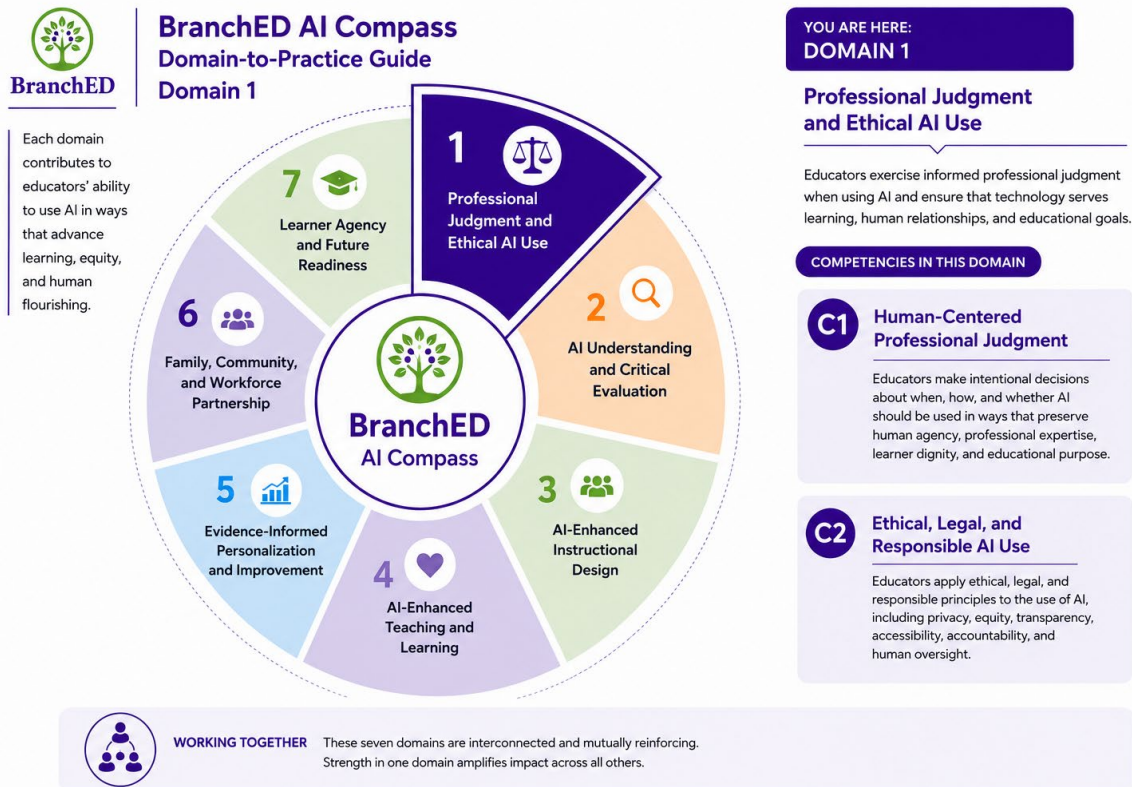
This guide¹ helps teacher educators support teacher candidates' (TCs) readiness for an AI-enabled world. It translates the BranchED AI Compass domain and competency language into concrete learning experiences, evidence sources, and course- and clinical-design decisions that teacher educators can incorporate into existing preparation experiences. The sections below show how the domain's competencies work together and provide practical guidance to help TCs develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and professional judgment reflected in the AI Compass.

How the Competencies Work Together

The competencies within this domain are distinct but interdependent. Human-Centered Professional Judgment focuses on determining whether, when, and how AI belongs in educational work. Ethical, Legal, and Responsible AI Use focuses on the responsibilities that accompany that decision. Together, they prepare teacher candidates to make AI-use decisions that serve learning while protecting human agency, learner well-being, and professional responsibility.

A Note on Policy and Context

AI use takes place within institutional, professional, and educational contexts. Teacher educators and teacher candidates should be familiar with and adhere to applicable program, institutional, school, district, state, and other relevant policies and guidance related to AI use, data privacy, approved tools, academic integrity, and professional practice. The AI Compass and accompanying resources are intended to support the development of AI readiness and informed professional judgment within these contexts; they do not establish or supersede institutional or district policy.



Domain 1: Professional Judgment and Ethical AI Use

¹ The development and design of this guide was assisted by ChatGPT.

Educators exercise informed professional judgment when using AI and ensure that technology serves learning, human relationships, and educational goals. This domain emphasizes both the decision to use AI and the responsibilities that follow, including ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, equity, transparency, and human-oversight considerations.

This domain brings together competencies that help teacher candidates decide whether AI belongs in educational work and, when it does, how to use it responsibly. Read the competencies as connected parts of one professional judgment cycle: begin with the learning purpose and human role, examine ethical and legal responsibilities, and then make context-sensitive decisions that protect students while supporting meaningful learning.

Each competency section below explains the distinct contribution of that competency. The later domain-level sections consolidate development activities, readiness indicators, evidence sources, and Compass connections, so teacher educators can see how the competencies work together in practice.

Competency 1 | Human-Centered Professional Judgment

AI Compass Competency

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.

What This Means for Teacher Candidate Development

For TC development, this means learning to make intentional decisions about when, how, and whether AI should be used, including recognizing when it is unnecessary, inappropriate, or less effective than a human-centered approach. TCs learn to make these decisions in ways that preserve human agency, professional expertise, student dignity, and educational purpose.

Design Principle: *Begin with the learning and the learner. Then determine whether AI belongs in the work.*

In Practice

For teacher candidates (TCs), this competency means starting with the learning purpose and learner needs before deciding whether AI belongs in the work. TCs should be able to determine when AI adds value, identify which aspects of a task require human judgment, interaction, or responsibility, and remain accountable for decisions made with AI support.

Why This Matters

AI can make many educational tasks faster or easier, but availability alone does not make its use appropriate. TCs will need to judge when AI extends human capability and when it may weaken learning, obscure professional reasoning, diminish relationships, or shift responsibility away from the educator. Preparing TCs for an AI-enabled world therefore requires more than teaching them how to use AI; it requires helping them decide when AI belongs in the work.

What Teacher Candidates Need to Know & Understand

- AI is a resource for professional practice, not an end in itself. Choosing not to use AI can be an intentional and professionally sound decision.
- The appropriateness of AI depends on the learning goal, student context, task, potential benefits and risks, and the professional judgment required.
- Core dimensions of educational practice depend on human judgment, relationships, empathy, interpretation, and accountability and should not be delegated to AI.
- Using AI does not transfer responsibility for a decision or outcome from the TC to the technology.

What Teacher Candidates Need to Practice

- Clarifying the educational purpose, student needs, task demands, and potential benefits and risks before deciding whether and how AI should be used and explaining the rationale for that decision.
- Comparing AI-enabled and human-centered approaches to determine which better serves the student and the task.

- Identifying which parts of a professional task require human judgment, expertise, interaction, or accountability and defending what should remain meaningfully human.
- Reconsidering an AI-supported decision when evidence, student needs, or professional judgment indicate that another approach is warranted.

Competency 2 | Ethical, Legal, and Responsible AI Use

AI Compass Competency

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.

What This Means for Teacher Candidate Development

For TC development, this means learning to recognize and address the responsibilities that come with AI use. TCs need opportunities to consider ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, equity, transparency, data protection, and intellectual and creative rights; examine who may benefit or be disadvantaged by an AI-enabled approach; and determine what safeguards and human oversight are needed. They should learn to make these considerations part of their decision-making rather than treating responsible use as a check completed after a tool has been selected.

***Design Principle:** Responsible AI use begins before the tool is used: examine the people, data, context, risks, and responsibilities first.*

In Practice

For TCs, this competency means recognizing that responsible AI use begins after, and alongside, the decision to use AI. TCs should be able to identify relevant ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, equity, and transparency considerations; protect student information; anticipate who may benefit or be disadvantaged; and maintain appropriate human oversight.

Why This Matters

AI-enabled tools can affect student privacy, access, opportunity, representation, and decision-making. TCs need habits of responsible inquiry before adopting or using a tool so that convenience or novelty does not override professional obligations to students, families, and communities.

What Teacher Candidates Need to Know & Understand

- Responsible AI use includes ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, transparency, equity, data-protection, and human-oversight considerations.
- Student data and educational records require careful protection; de-identification does not automatically eliminate all privacy or re-identification risk.
- Access to AI may vary by disability, language, connectivity, cost, and tool design, so equitable participation must be considered intentionally.
- AI systems have broader environmental and labor implications that can be relevant to responsible selection and use.

What Teacher Candidates Need to Practice

- Reviewing an AI-enabled tool or proposed use for privacy, accessibility, transparency, equity, and data-protection concerns before use.
- Identifying what student information should not be entered into an AI system and explaining why.
- Comparing AI options for those who can access and benefit from them, including multilingual students and students with disabilities.
- Explaining what human oversight is needed and how responsibility will remain with the educator.

Ways to Develop the Domain

Teacher educators can develop this domain by giving TCs repeated opportunities to make AI-use decisions and examine the responsibilities attached to those decisions. The learning experiences below provide practical ways to develop the competencies individually and in combination.

Learning Experience	Primary Focus	How It Builds the Competency
Use It, Limit It, or Leave It?	C1	Present a realistic teaching task and ask TCs to decide whether AI should be used, used only for selected parts, or not used at all. Require them to justify the decision in relation to learning, students, and professional responsibility.
Who Should Do This Work?	C1	Give TCs a professional task that could be completed partly by AI, such as analyzing student work, drafting family communication, generating instructional options, or providing feedback. Ask them to identify what could be augmented by AI and what should remain meaningfully human.
Compare the Approaches	C1	Have TCs complete or examine the same task using an AI-supported approach and a human-centered approach. Ask them to compare quality, efficiency, learner impact, professional judgment, and what may be gained or lost in each.
Defend the Decision	C1	Use a scenario in which reasonable educators might make different choices about AI. TCs make a recommendation, use evidence and context to defend it, and respond to an alternative perspective.
Responsible-Use Scan	C2	Give TCs a proposed classroom AI tool or use case and ask them to conduct a structured scan for privacy, accessibility, equity, transparency, and human-oversight concerns before recommending use.
Whose Data Is It?	C2	Present a scenario involving student work, assessment data, or family information. TCs determine what may be shared with an AI system, what should not be shared, and what safeguards or alternatives are needed.
Access for Whom?	C2	Have TCs compare how an AI-supported activity may work for students with different languages, disability, technology access, or economic circumstances and redesign it for more equitable participation.
Responsible-Use Brief	C2	TCs develop a concise rationale or guidance statement for an AI use, identifying benefits, risks, safeguards, transparency expectations, and the role of human oversight.

Indicators of Developing Readiness

These indicators describe how readiness across the domain may develop over time. They should be interpreted across multiple forms of evidence rather than as a rubric for scoring a single learning activity. Teacher educators can use evidence gathered across coursework, clinical experiences, simulations, reflections, and authentic performances to identify where TCs are developing and where additional practice opportunities may be needed.

Developmental Level	Observable Indicators
Emerging	Tends to treat AI use as inherently positive or negative or relies mainly on general cautions and rules. Decisions may focus on convenience, preference, or broad risk awareness, with limited attention to educational purpose, learner context, privacy, accessibility, equity, transparency, or oversight.
Developing	Considers the educational purpose and key responsible-use factors, though the reasoning may be inconsistent or incomplete. May identify benefits, risks, or safeguards without fully connecting them to specific students, tools, contexts, human judgment, or educator responsibility.
Ready	Makes intentional, context-sensitive decisions about when, how, and whether AI should be used. Systematically considers ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, transparency, equity, and data-protection implications; identifies safeguards; explains how the decision serves learning and students; and maintains human oversight and accountability.
Extending	Navigates complex or ambiguous situations by weighing competing considerations, evidence, and stakeholder perspectives. Anticipates less obvious or systemic implications, revises decisions when warranted, seeks additional expertise when needed, and helps others reason through appropriate and responsible AI use.

Possible Sources of Evidence

Teacher educators may draw on multiple sources to understand how a TC is developing this domain, including:

- Scenario-based AI-use decisions and rationales
- Lesson or unit plans with AI-use decisions
- AI-supported and human-centered task comparisons
- Responsible-use analyses
- Tool-selection rationales
- Privacy and learner-data scenarios
- Accessibility or equity reviews
- Annotated artifacts showing where AI was used or intentionally not used
- Clinical observations and coaching conversations
- Teacher candidate reflections
- Policy or guidance critiques
- Simulations or case analyses
- Oral defenses of AI-use decisions
- Responsible-use briefs identifying benefits, risks, safeguards, transparency expectations, and human oversight

Try It in Your Course

Use these prompts to identify one practical opportunity to strengthen this domain in an existing course or clinical experience.

Where do these connected competencies already show up in my course or clinical experience?

My idea:

Where could TCs more explicitly examine the ethical, legal, privacy, accessibility, equity, transparency, or oversight implications of an AI-use decision?

My idea:

What existing assignment, learning experience, or assessment could be adapted so that candidates practice both professional judgment and responsible AI use?

My idea:

What evidence could I collect to understand whether TCs are making context-sensitive, responsible AI decisions rather than simply following rules?

My idea:



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