

Why Universal AI Rules Don't Work:

How to Build Responsive AI Policies with Your Students

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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

Oct 23, 2025

Agenda

- 1 Clarifying definitions
- 2 Current state of student AI use
- 3 What is responsive AI policy?
- 4 How to co-construct responsive AI policy with students?

Part 1:

Clarifying definitions



AI was already everywhere before ChatGPT:

- facial recognition
- personalized news feeds on social media
- customized suggestions & ads
- route planning (e.g., Google Maps)
- search engines (e.g., Google Search AI to improve accuracy and relevance of search results)
- Apps like Uber (ETA computation, trip price calculation, rider-driver matching)



Generative AI

- Natural language interface
- GenAI creates new content - text, images, code, audio, video
- Previous AI was narrow and task-specific
- GenAI have diverse capabilities - write, code, analyze, translate, summarize, generate images etc.



Part 2:

Current state of student AI use



1. Students are already using AI



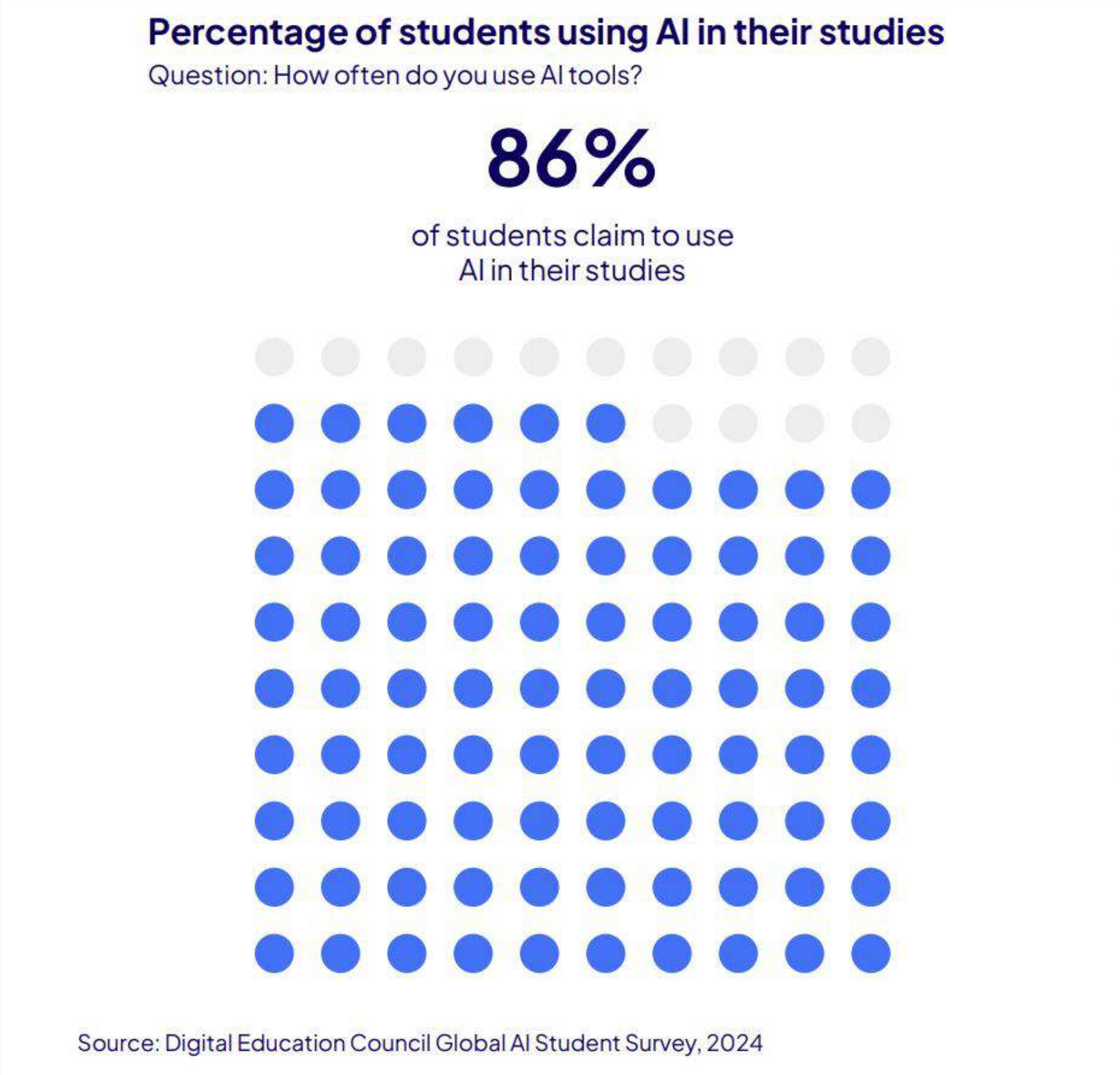
Students are already using AI

International Higher Education

Sample Size

- Higher education
- 3839 responses
- 16 countries
- bachelor, masters, and
doctorate students across
fields of study
- July, 2024

Digital Education Council. (2025). Digital Education Council Global AI Student Survey 2024. <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/digital-education-council-global-ai-student-survey-2024>



Students are already using AI

International Higher Education 🌐

Sample Size

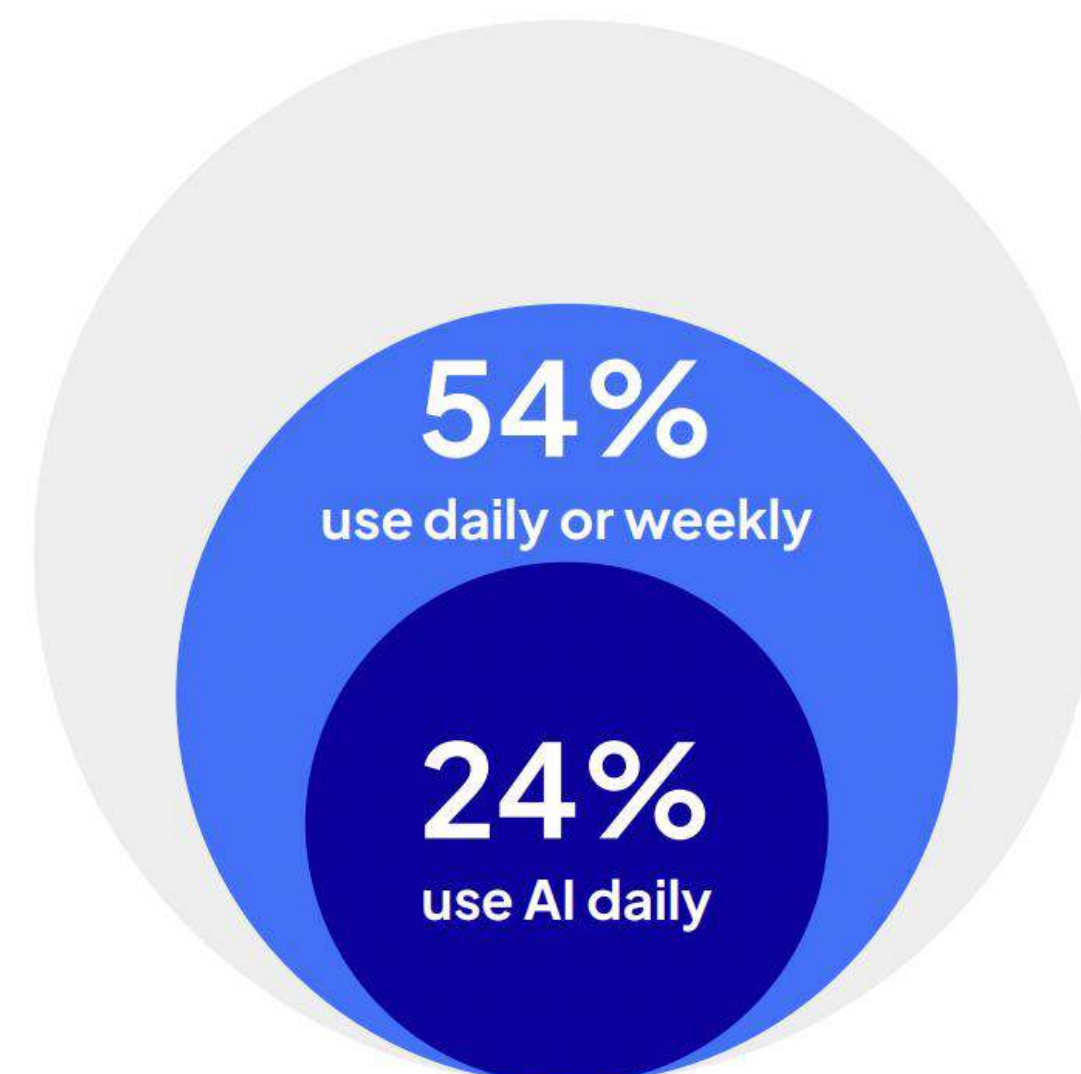
- Higher Education
- 3839 responses
- 16 countries
- bachelor, masters, and doctorate students across fields of study
- July 2024

Frequency of students using AI in their studies

Question: How often do you use AI tools?

54%

of students use AI at least
on a weekly basis



Digital Education Council. (2025). Digital Education Council Global AI Student Survey 2024. <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/digital-education-council-global-ai-student-survey-2024>

Students are already using AI

Canadian Higher Education 🍁

73%

of Canadian students now use AI for schoolwork

Sample Size

- 684 students (18+) attending university, college, vocational, or high school educational institutions.
- from August 15 to September 15, 2025

Generative AI boom among Canadian students raises dilemmas—KPMG Canada. (2025, October 9). KPMG. <https://kpmg.com/ca/en/home/media/press-releases/2025/10/generative-ai-boom-among-canadian-students-raises-dilemmas.html>

Students are already using AI

UK secondary schools schools 

About the research: 2,000 students aged 13–18 across the UK were surveyed in August 2025.

Key findings

8 in 10 young people use AI tools in their schoolwork

Oxford University Press. (2025). Teaching the AI-Native Generation. https://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/secondary/Teaching_the_AI_Native_Generation.pdf

Students are already using AI

US secondary schools schools

In 2025, 54 percent of students indicated that they used AI for school.

Sample Size

- 1,261 middle school and high school students surveyed in January–February 2025 as part of the American Youth Panel (AYP)
- 852 middle school and high school2 students surveyed in February–March 2025 as part of the AYP
- 984 parents of 12–17-year-olds surveyed in February–March 2025 as part of the American Parent Panel (APP)

AI Use in Schools Is Quickly Increasing but Guidance Lags Behind

Findings from the RAND Survey Panels

Christopher Joseph Doss, Robert Bozick, Heather L. Schwartz, Lisa Chu, Lydia R. Rainey, Ashley Woo, Justin Reich, Jesse Dukes

RESEARCH — Published Sep 30, 2025

Doss, C. J., Bozick, R., Schwartz, H. L., Chu, L., Rainey, L. R., Woo, A., Reich, J., & Dukes, J. (2025). AI Use in Schools Is Quickly Increasing but Guidance Lags Behind: Findings from the RAND Survey Panels. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4180-1.html

2. Students often use AI in the shadow and they are worried



Students are using AI in the shadow

US Higher Education

41% of students had used AI in ways explicitly banned

Many more students (59%) reported ambiguous use cases.

Sample Size

733 undergraduates in introductory psychology 2023-2024, a large state university in the US

Stone, B. W. (2025). Generative AI in Higher Education: Uncertain Students, Ambiguous Use Cases, and Mercenary Perspectives. *Teaching of Psychology*, 52(3), 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283241305398>

Students are worried about being at a disadvantage if they don't use AI while their peers do. (Stone, 2025)

Perception of peers cheating with AI

15% (113) thought 0–19%

29% (212) thought 20–39%

28% (208) thought 40–59%

21% (157) thought 60–79%

6% (42) thought 80–100%

Sample Size

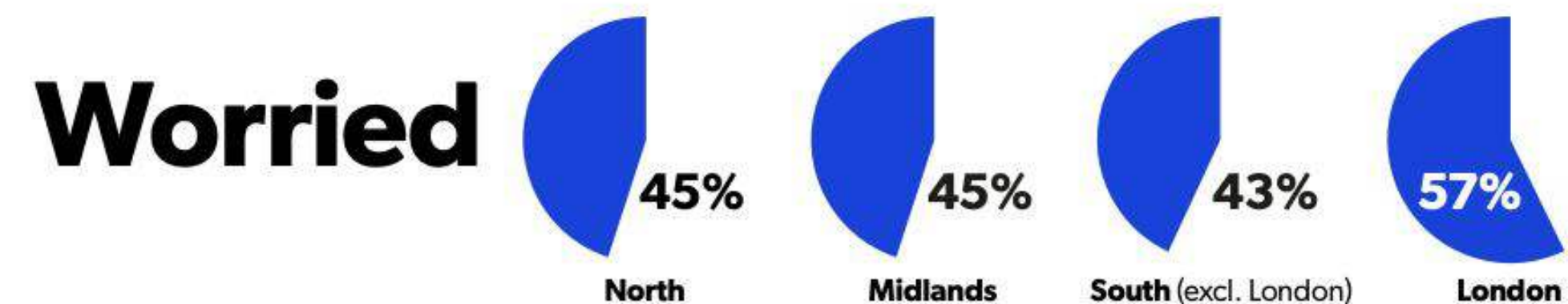
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Students are worried about being at a disadvantage if they don't use AI while their peers do.

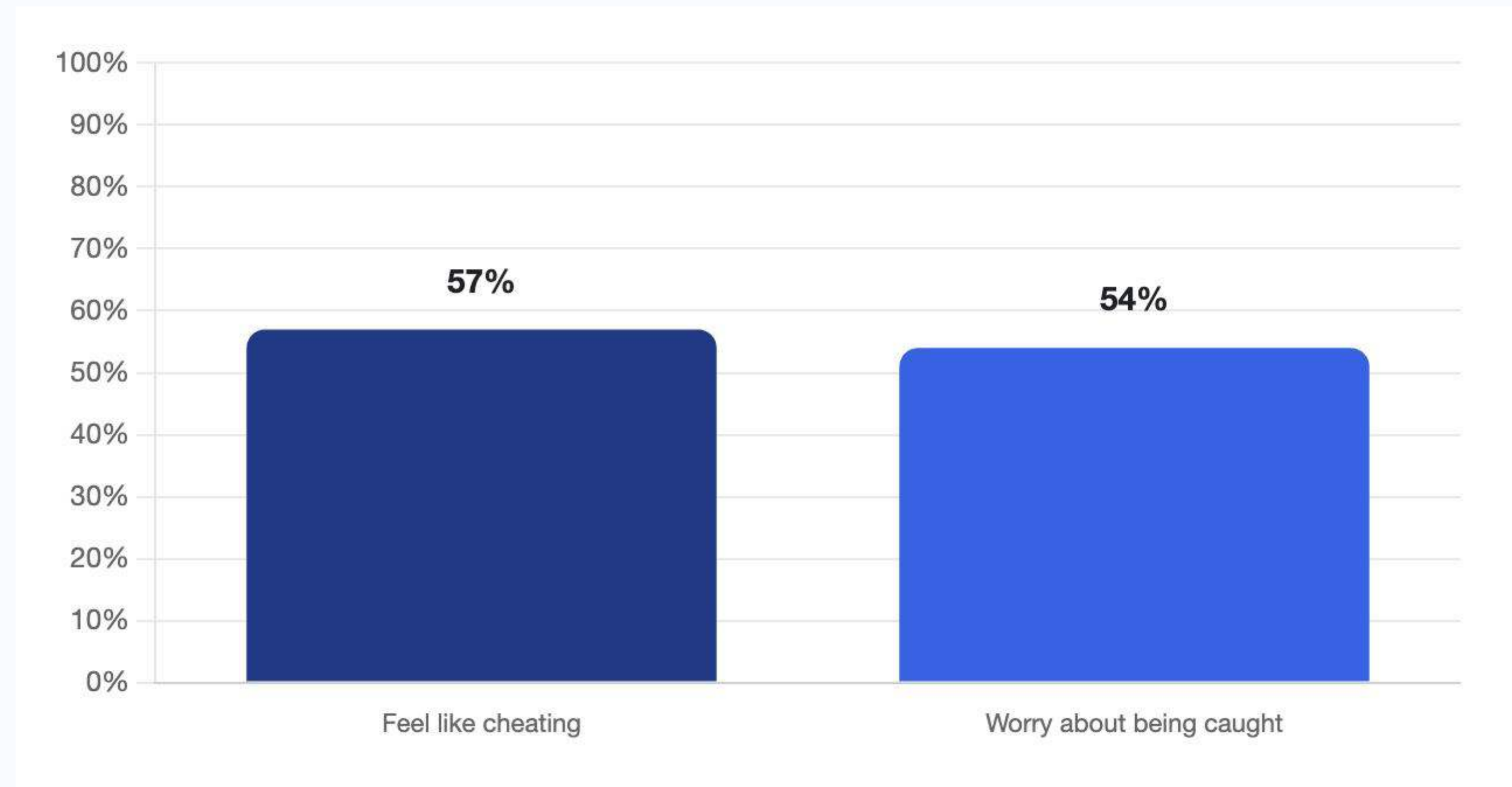
48% of young people are concerned pupils in their year are secretly using AI to do their schoolwork, with students in London worrying the most about this, and almost as many (47%) pupils are concerned their teachers are unable to spot when this happens.

How worried are you that other people in your year are secretly using AI when they shouldn't to do their work?



Oxford University Press. (2025). Teaching the AI-Native Generation. https://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/secondary/Teaching_the_AI_Native_Generation.pdf

Students are worried about cheating and getting caught (KPMG, 2025)



Generative AI boom among Canadian students raises dilemmas—KPMG Canada. (2025, October 9). KPMG. <https://kpmg.com/ca/en/home/media/press-releases/2025/10/generative-ai-boom-among-canadian-students-raises-dilemmas.html>

Students are worried about false accusation (Doss et al., 2025)

Half of students said that they are worried they will be falsely accused of using AI to cheat (Doss et al., 2025).

Doss, C. J., Bozick, R., Schwartz, H. L., Chu, L., Rainey, L. R., Woo, A., Reich, J., & Dukes, J. (2025). AI Use in Schools Is Quickly Increasing but Guidance Lags Behind: Findings from the RAND Survey Panels. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4180-1.html

3. Students want to be guided & to be heard



Students want to learn

International Higher Education

72%

agree that universities should provide training for students on the effective use of AI tools

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
• Universities should provide training for students on the effective use of AI tools



72%

agree that universities should offer more courses on AI literacy

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
• I expect my university to offer more courses on AI literacy



- 77% want their educational institution to offer courses on how to use AI (KPMG, 2025).

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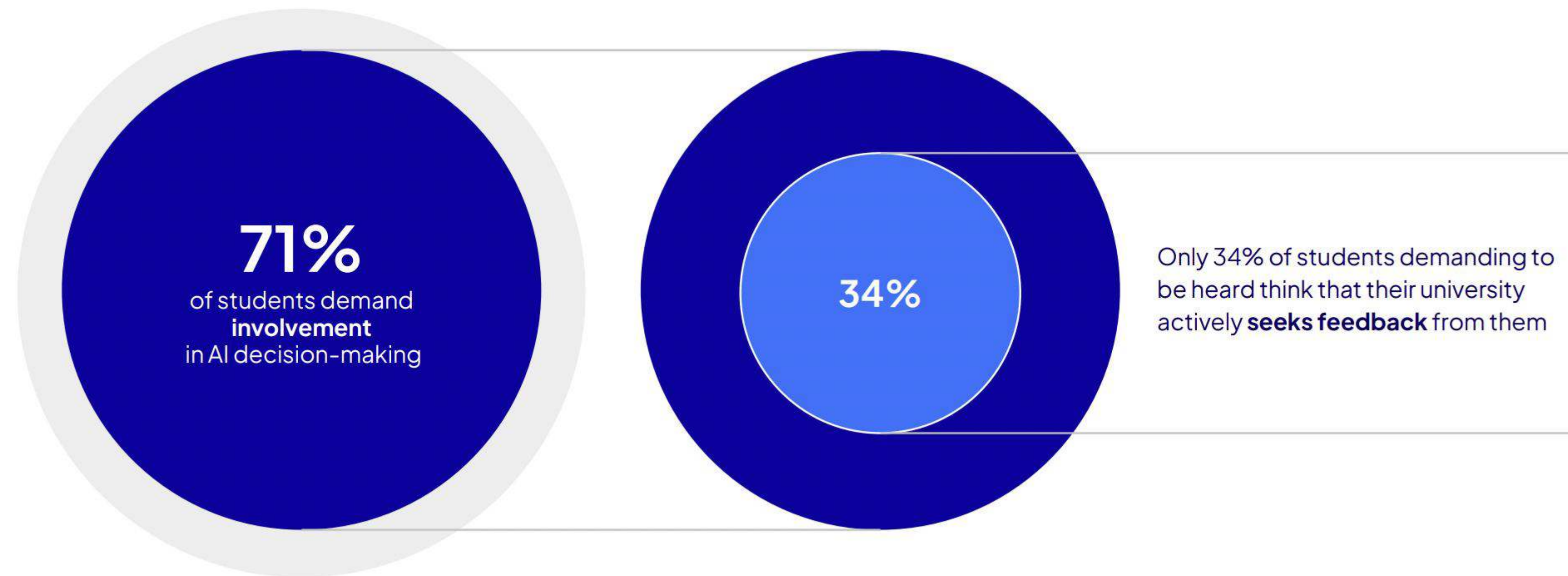
Students want to get involved in AI-decision-making

International Higher Education

Student expectations and perception of involvement in AI decision making

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Universities should involve students in the decision-making process regarding which AI tools are implemented
- My university actively seeks student feedback on the effectiveness of its AI tools



Digital Education Council. (2025). Digital Education Council Global AI Student Survey 2024. <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/digital-education-council-global-ai-student-survey-2024>

Current State of Student AI use

Students are already using AI

Students often use AI in the shadow and they are worried

Students want to be guided & to be heard

Part 3:

Responsive AI Policy



What is Responsive AI Policy?

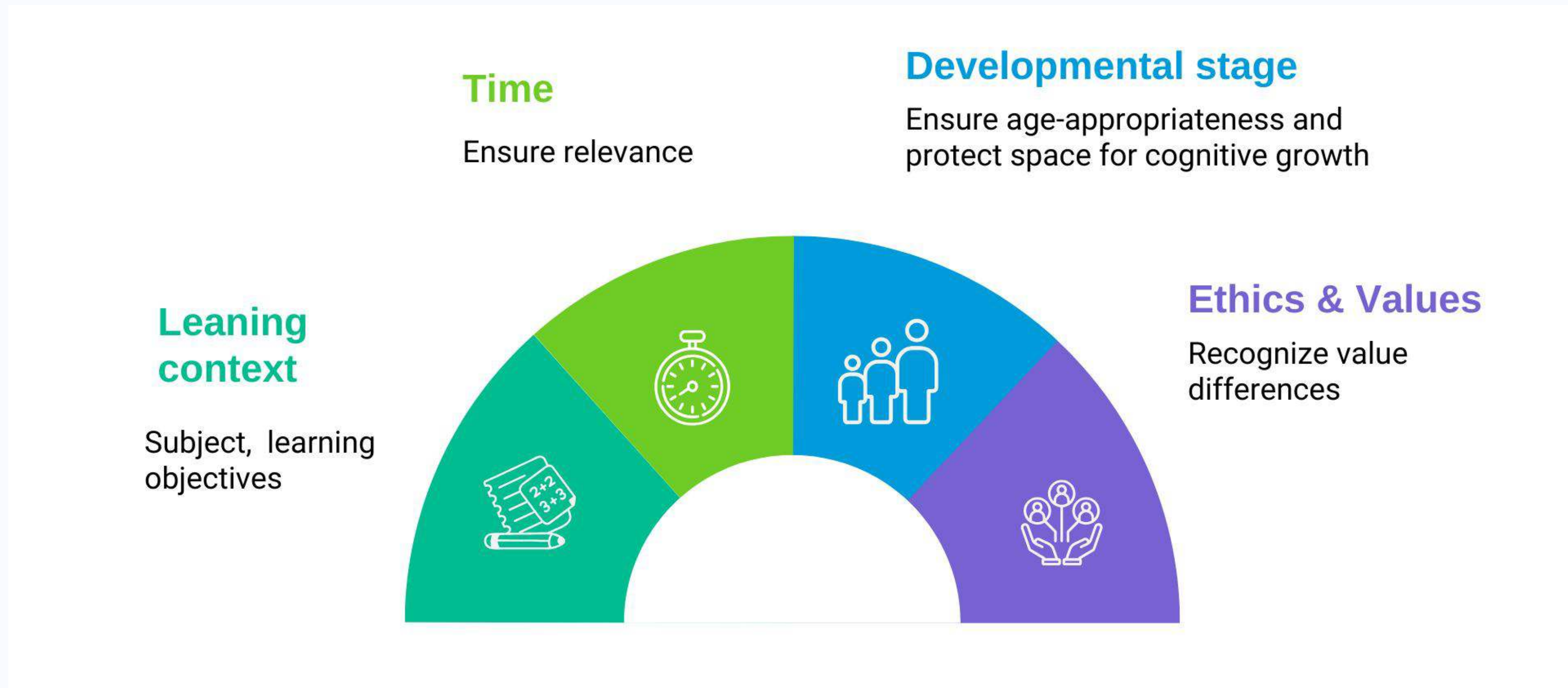
- Responsive AI Policy is co-constructed by learners, educators, and administrators.
- It adapts to specific learning contexts and learners' developmental stages
- It evolves alongside AI advancements
- It creates space for stakeholders to express their values, navigate ethical considerations together, and build consensus.

Why we need Responsive AI Policy?

- "Should a student use AI to help write their history essay? Debug their code? Practice language? Create a graphic design?
- The answer isn't simple - it depends on what they're actually supposed to be learning.
- What is appropriate AI use in one assignment/project in one subject might be counterproductive in another.
- One-size-fits-all policies don't capture the contextual nuances across learning contexts and human-AI interactions.
- We need responsive, dynamic, contextual policies rather than blanket rules.

A subtle text goes right here

AI Policy should be responsive to...



A subtle text goes right here

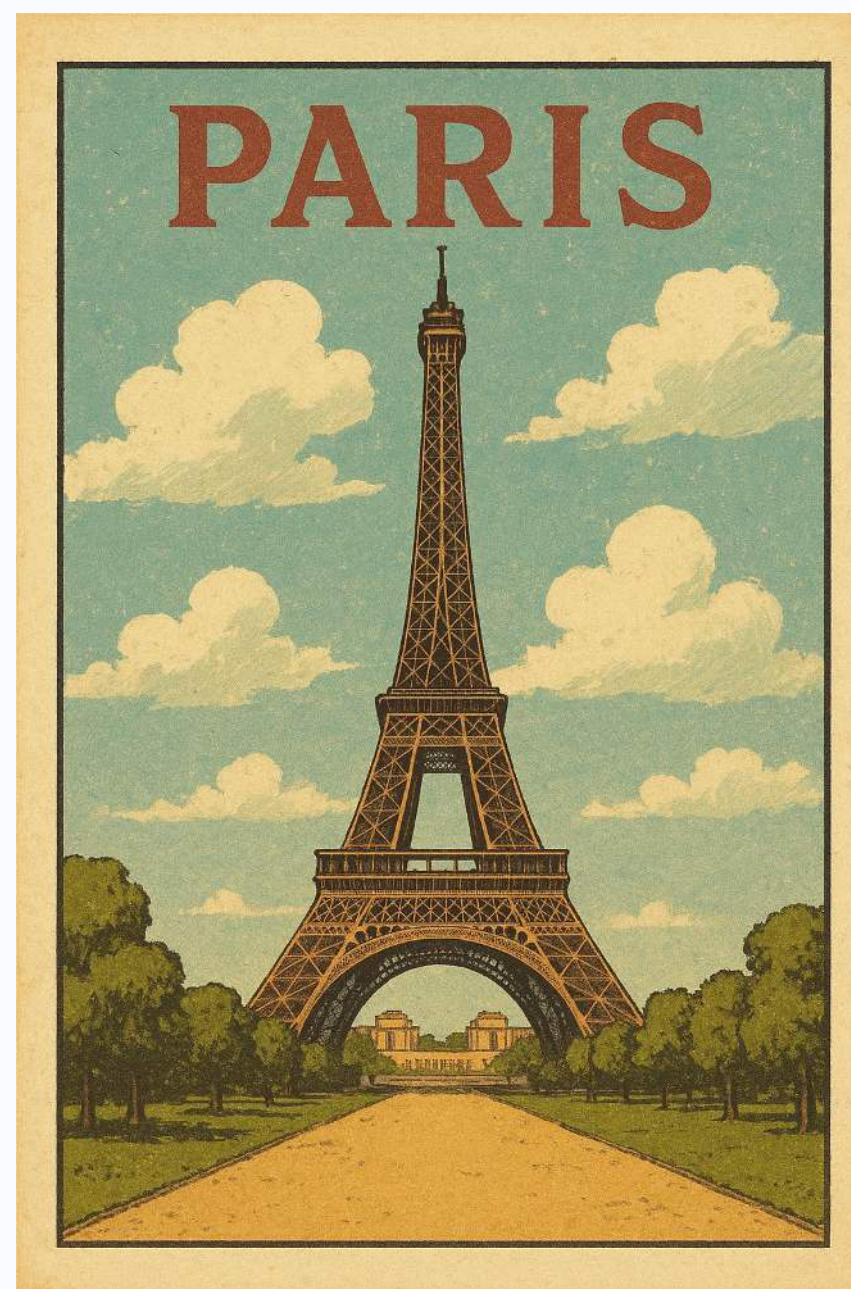
1. Responsive to Learning Context

Example:

Use AI to generate postcard illustrations for a French Class Assignment

vs.

Use AI to create a still life composition in an Art Class



2. Responsive to Time

Here are a few research publications by **Lydia Cao** (education researcher) that I was able to locate:

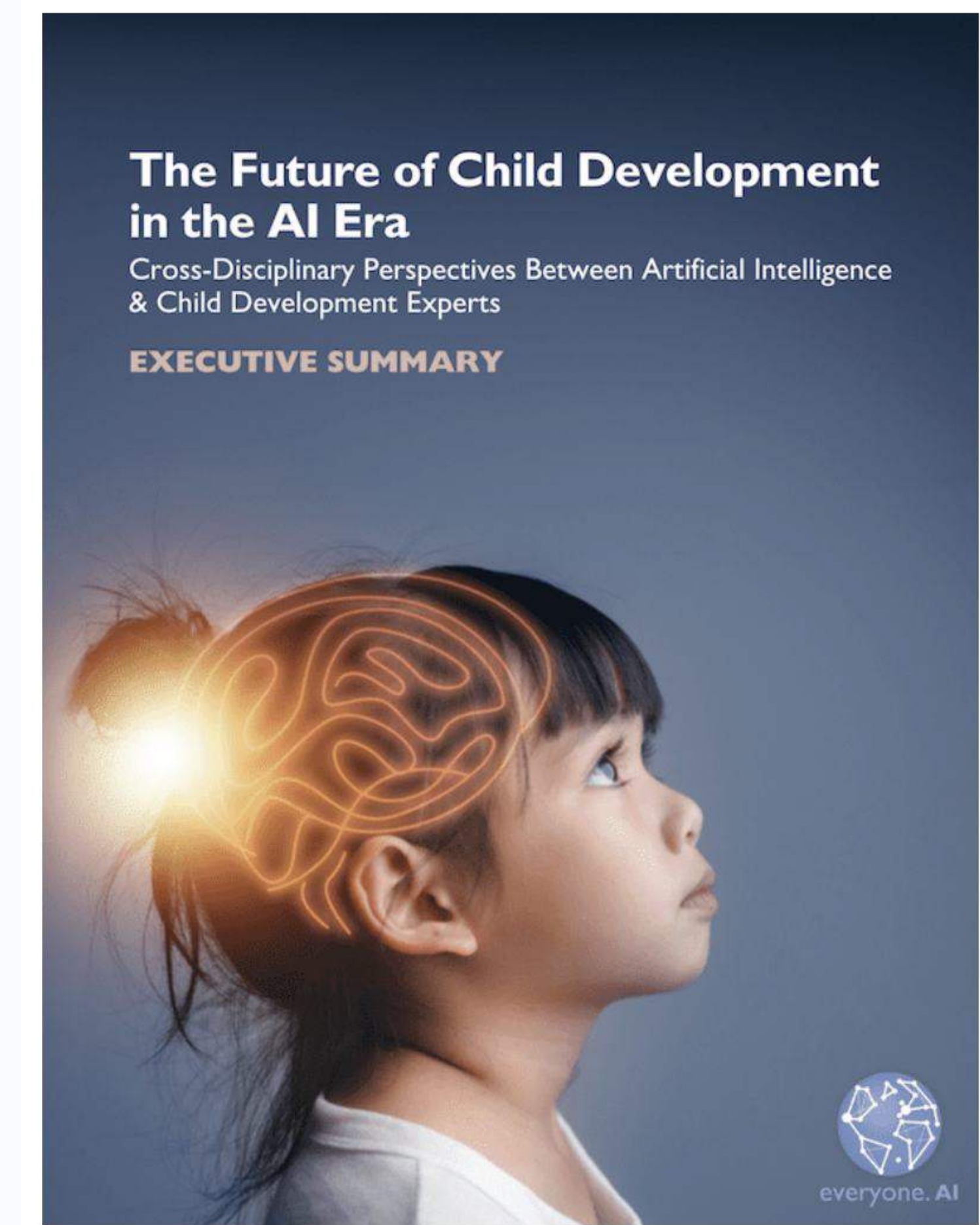
Year	Title	Venue / Notes
2022	<i>"Technology Use for Teacher Professional Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A systematic review"</i> (Sara Hennessy, Sophia D'Angelo, Nora McIntyre, Saalim Koomar, Lydia Cao , Meaghan Brugha, Asma Zubairi)	Computers & Education Open, 2022. OUOI
2023	<i>"Thinking fast, slow, and ahead: Enhancing in-service teacher contingent responsiveness in science discussion with mixed-reality simulation"</i> (Lydia Cao)	J-GLOBAL listing. jglobal.jst.go.jp
2023 (or ongoing)	<i>"Developing Teachers' Contingent Responsiveness in Science Discussions With Mixed-Reality Simulation: A Design-Based Study"</i> (Cao, Lydia Y.; Wegerif, Rupert; Hennessy, Sara; Dede, Chris)	Proceedings of the 17th International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS 2023). repository.cam.a...

If you like, I can **search for a more complete list** of her publications (including conference papers, chapters, and journal articles) and provide full citations.

    ...  Sources

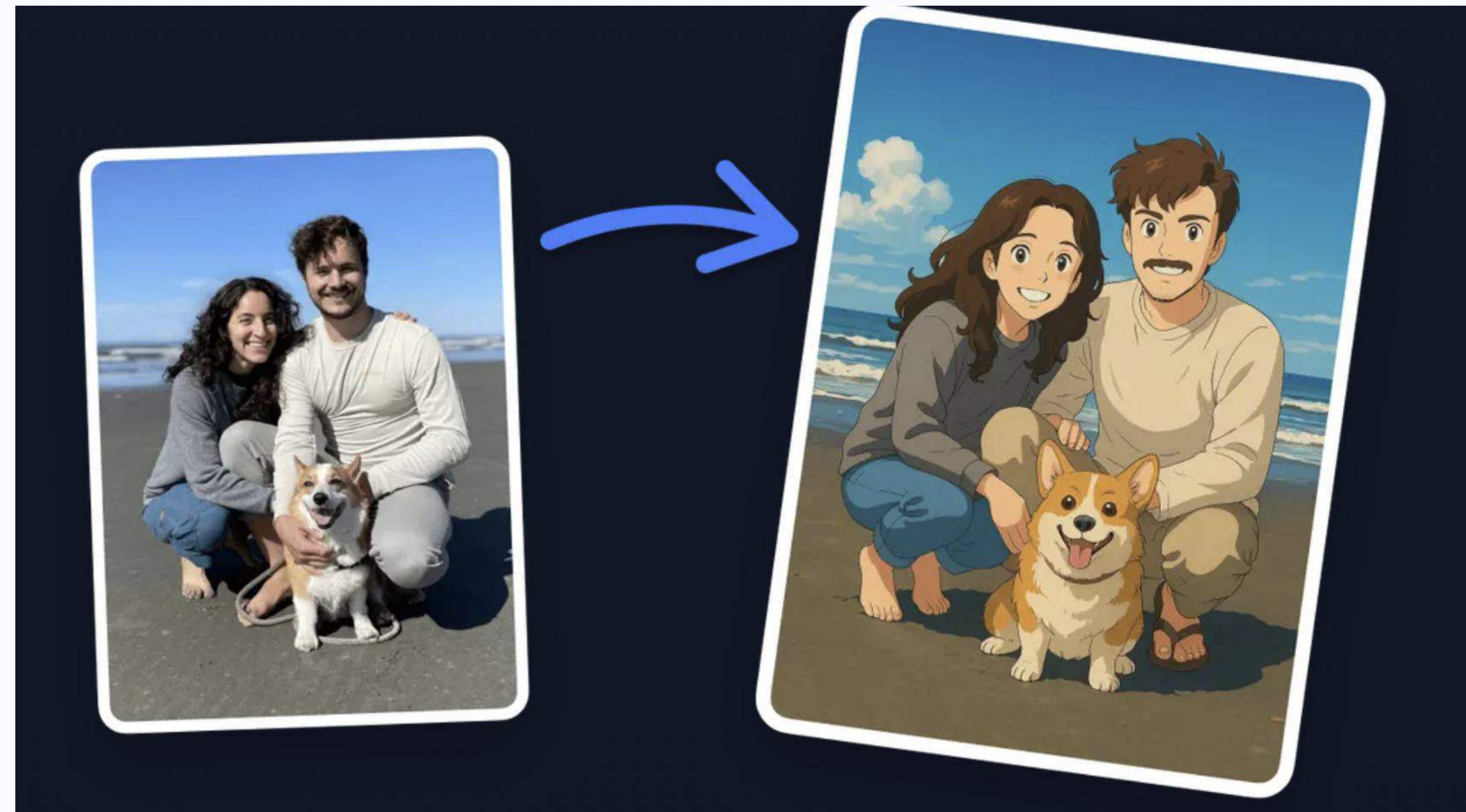
3. Responsive to Developmental Stage

- Exposure to AI during key developmental stages could limit children's opportunities to acquire and develop fundamental skills, e.g., language, attention, executive functioning, emotional regulation, and etc.



4. Responsive to Ethics and Values

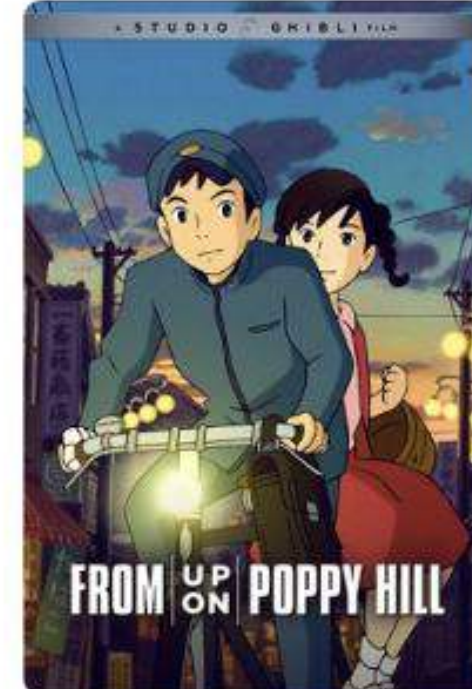
e.g., Is it OK to Ghiblify an image?



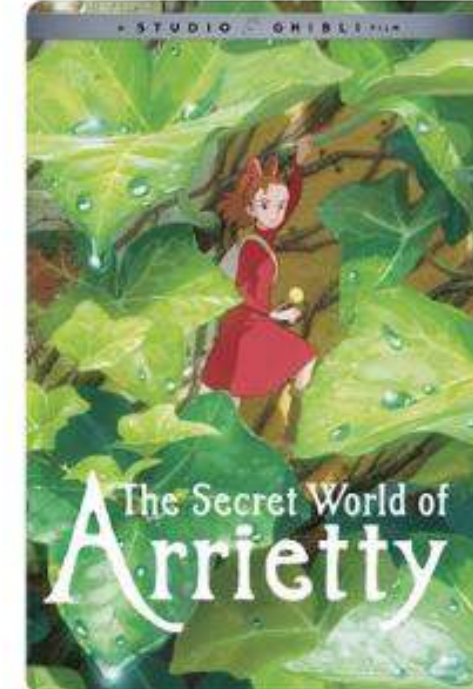
Studio Ghibli's work is widely regarded as painstakingly crafted and deeply personal.



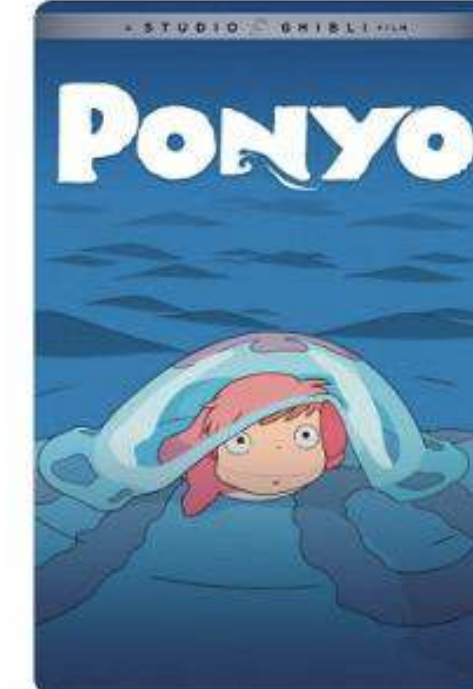
Only Yesterday
Kids & Family



From Up on Poppy Hill
Kids & Family



The Secret World of A...
Action & Adventure



Ponyo
Kids & Family



Howl's Moving Castle
Action & Adventure



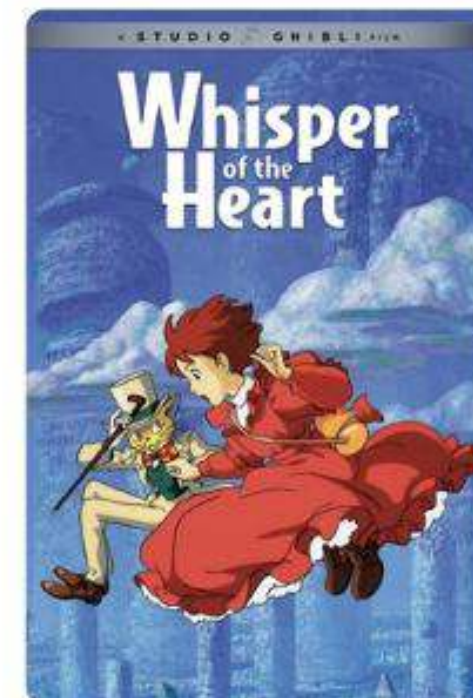
Spirited Away
Action & Adventure



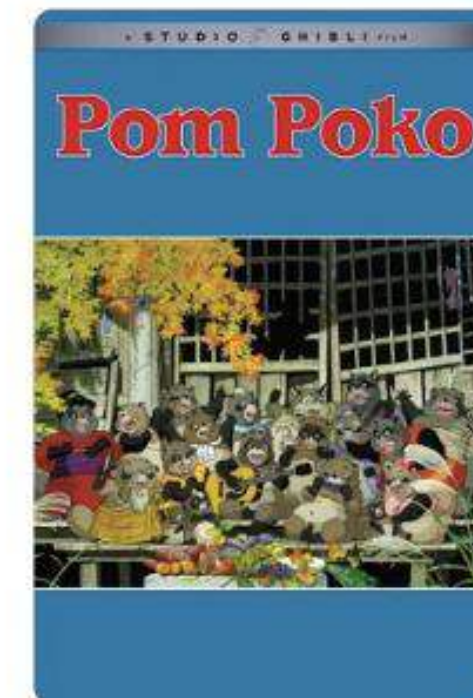
My Neighbor Totoro
Sci-Fi & Fantasy



Princess Mononoke
Action & Adventure



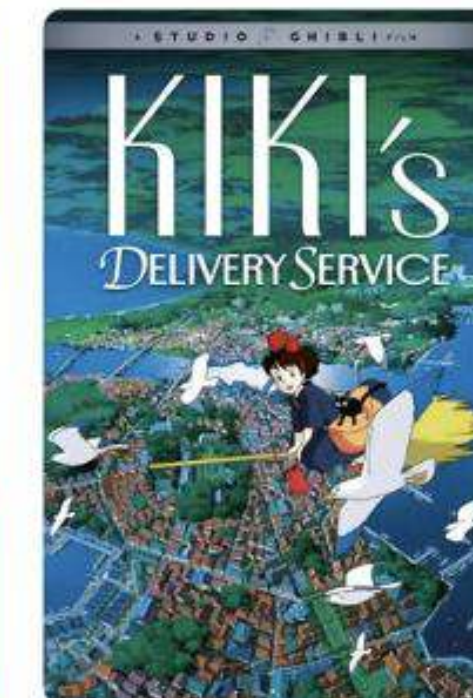
Whisper of the Heart
Drama



Pom Poko
Comedy



Porco Rosso
Action & Adventure



Kiki's Delivery Service
Action & Adventure

We need open dialogue, sharing of perspectives, and continuous reflection.



Part 4:

How to co-construct responsive AI policy with students?



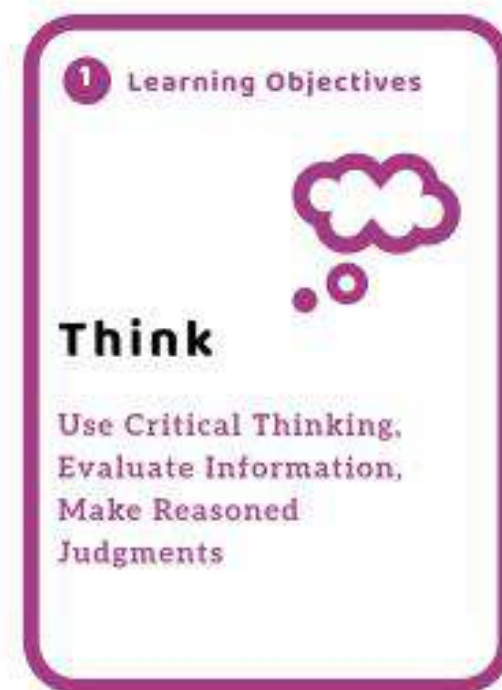
Responsive AI Policy Builder



Responsive AI Policy Builder Play Guide

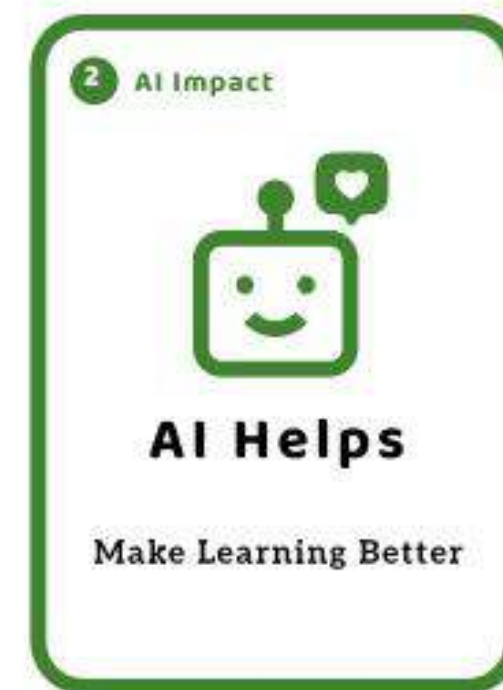
🕒 Time: 20-30 min 👥 Group size: 3-5 people

■ Types Of Cards



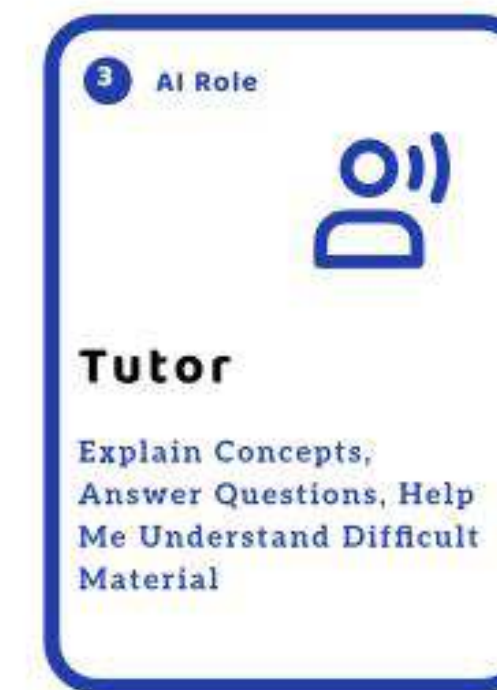
Learning Objective Cards

Define the purposes and meaning behind a learning task.



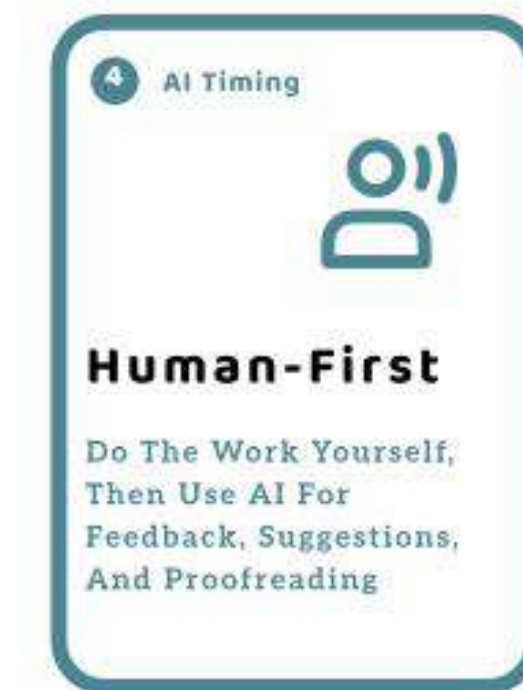
AI Impact Cards

Evaluate how AI affects each learning objective.



AI Role Cards

Specify how AI can be appropriately used.



AI Timing Cards

The cards show when to use AI in a learning task

1. Map Learning Objectives

1 Learning Objectives



Think

Use Critical Thinking,
Evaluate Information,
Make Reasoned
Judgments

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1 Learning Objectives



Create

Create Original Ideas,
Communicate Your
Unique Voice And
Perspective

© 2025 Lydia Cao

1 Learning Objectives



Collaborate

Work With Others,
Understand Different
Viewpoints, Build
Community

© 2025 Lydia Cao

1 Learning Objectives



Culture & Perspectives

Explore Different
Cultures, Explore
Historical Perspectives,
Develop Global
Awareness

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1 Learning Objectives



Research

Find Reliable Sources,
Evaluate Credibility,
Organize And Synthesize
Information

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1 Learning Objectives



Design

Empathize With Others,
Think Out Of The Box,
Prototype Solutions,
Iterate Based On
Feedback

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1 Learning Objectives



Develop Mastery

Develop Technical Skills,
Follow Procedures, Build
Proficiency Through
Repetition

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1 Learning Objectives



Ethics & Value

Make Moral Judgments,
Consider Consequences,
Develop Character And
Integrity

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1 Learning Objectives



Foster Agency

Follow Personal
Curiosity, Pursue
Individual Interests,
Learn Through Self-
Directed Investigation

© 2025 Lydia Cao

1 Learning Objectives



Solve Problems

Work Through
Ambiguous Challenges,
Think Creatively And
Strategically, Try
Multiple Approaches

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1 Learning Objectives



Make An Impact

Use Knowledge In Real
Situations, Solve
Authentic Problems,
Make A Difference In The
World

© 2025 Lydia Cao

1 Learning Objectives



Reflect & Grow

Practice Metacognition,
Assess Your Own
Learning, Pursue
Personal Development

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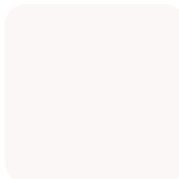
1 Learning Objectives



Title

Definition

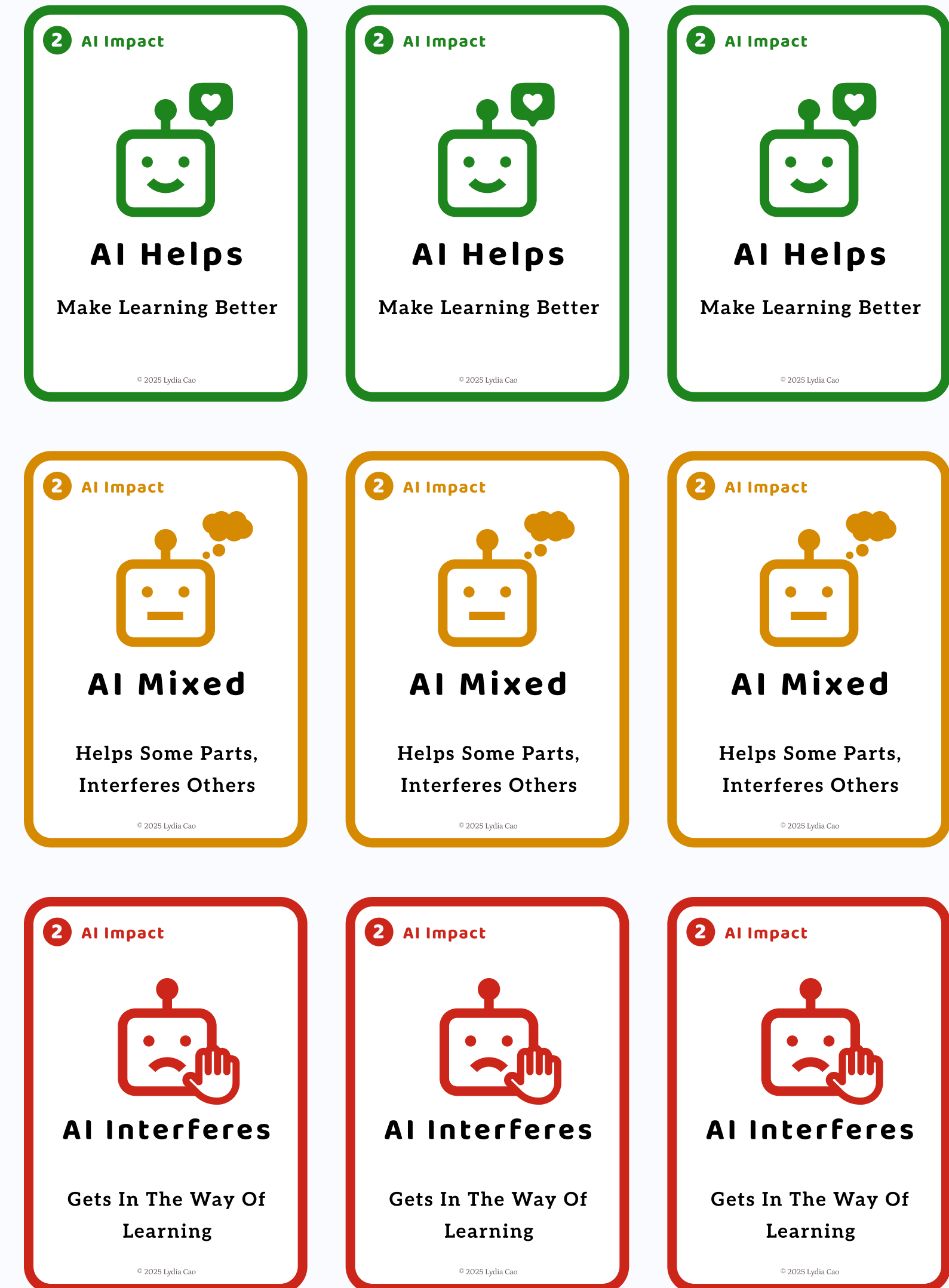
1 Learning Objectives



Title



2. Assess AI's Impact



3. Determine AI roles

3 AI Role



Tutor

Explain Concepts, Answer Questions, Help Me Understand Difficult Material

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3 AI Role



Coach

Give Feedback On My Work And Suggest Improvements

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3 AI Role



Research Assistant

Find And Organize Source And Information

© 2025 Lydia Cao

3 AI Role



Quality Checker

Review My Work For Errors, Check Grammar, Check Citations, Ensure I Follow Instructions

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3 AI Role



Practice Generator

Create Problems For Me To Solve And Generate Materials For Me To Develop Mastery

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3 AI Role



Creative Collaborator

Brainstorm Ideas With Me, Offer Inspiration, Suggest Approaches

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3 AI Role



Technical Assistant

Help With Formatting, An Other Routine Tasks That Aren't The Main Learning Goal

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3 AI Role

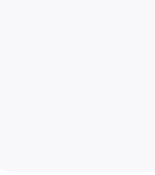


Accessibility Support

Remove Barriers, E.G., Explain A Difficult Vocabulary, Converting Text Into Audio

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3 AI Role

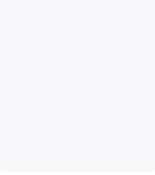


Title

Definition

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3 AI Role

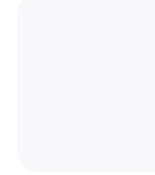


Title

Dummy Text

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3 AI Role

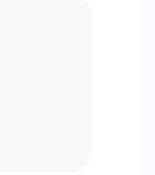


Title

Definition

© 2025 Lydia Cao

3 AI Role



Title

Dummy Text

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4. Choose AI timing

4 AI Timing

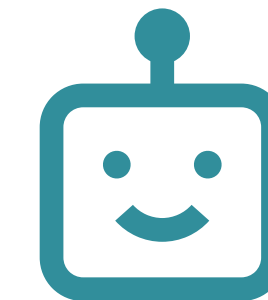


Human-First

Do The Work Yourself,
Then Use AI For
Feedback, Suggestions,
And Proofreading

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4 AI Timing

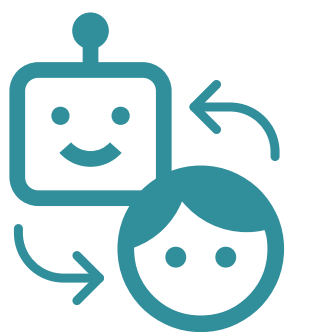


AI-First

Let AI Generate Initial
Output, Then You
Verify, Select, And
Build Upon It

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4 AI Timing



Ongoing Collaboration

Use AI Flexibly At Any
Stage With Continuous
Back-And-Forth
Iteration

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Purpose of the game

- Deeper understanding of the “Whys” behind learning
- Enhance intrinsic motivation
- Increase buy-in of AI policy
- A visual guide for responsible AI use
- Develop critical judgement on AI and become a mindful user and creator of AI

Who have tried Responsive AI Policy Builder?

- University instructors
- Masters students
- High school students
- Teacher candidates (to come)

What we learned...

- A structured yet open-ended way to have think critically about AI
- Shift away from binary thinking to more contextual and nuanced approach to AI
- Be more intentional and transparent about learning objectives
- Surface different perspectives and build community consensus
- Develop AI literacy and identify gaps in AI literacy

Join us to make it better!

- Help us play test and co-design
- We want to hear your feedback
- Make the game better for everyone!

What Is This Game For

Old student use AI for learning?

answer isn't simple - it depends what they're actually supposed to learn.

It is appropriate AI use in one context might be counterproductive in other.

-size-fits-all policies don't capture nuances across subject, learning objectives, developmental stage.

Game Objectives

goal for this game is to map learning objectives for one assignment/activity/assessment critically evaluate AI's impact specify how AI can be appropriately used identify when AI can be used.

What Players Will Gain

deeper understanding of the "why" behind their assignments increased intrinsic motivation practical, visual guide for appropriate AI use

Who Should Play

tutors, learners, curriculum planners, educational administrators

Photograph this layout and use it as a visual guide. The cards show what to do, when to use it, and why.

Lydia Cao. All rights reserved.

Responsive AI Policy Builder Play Guide

🕒 Time: 20-30 min

👥 Group size: 3-5 people

Types Of Cards

Learning Objectives

Think

Use Critical Thinking, Evaluate Information, Make Reasoned Judgments

Learning Objective Cards

Define the purposes and meaning behind a learning task.

AI Impact

AI Helps

Make Learning Better

AI Impact Cards

Evaluate how AI affects each learning objective.

AI Role

Tutor

Explain Concepts, Answer Questions, Help Me Understand Difficult Material

AI Role Cards

Specify how AI can be appropriately used.

AI Timing

Human-First

Do The Work Yourself, Then Use AI For Feedback, Suggestions, And Proofreading

AI Timing Cards

The cards show when to use AI in a learning task

How To Play

1 Learning Objectives

2 AI Impact

3

Discuss

What are the learning objectives?

To do

Choose 2-4 OBJECTIVE cards that you think best describe the learning objectives of this activity/assignment/assessment.

Use blank cards for any missing objectives you identify.

To do

For each OBJECTIVE card, assess AI's impact.

Green (AI helps)

Yellow (AI mixed)

Red (AI interferes)

Stop here if all OBJECTIVES are Red

AI shouldn't be used for this assignment

If any OBJECTIVE card has Green or Yellow impact cards, move to 3

1 Learning Objectives

Think

Use Critical Thinking, Evaluate Information, Make Reasoned Judgments

1 Learning Objectives

Create

Create Original Ideas, Communicate Your Unique Voice And Perspective

1 Learning Objectives

Foster Agency

Follow Personal Curiosity, Pursue Individual Interests, Learn Through Self-Directed Investigation

1 Learning Objectives

Solve Problems

Work Through Ambiguous Challenges, Think Creatively And Strategically, Try Multiple Approaches

1 Learning Objectives

Research

Find Reliable Sources, Evaluate Credibility, Organize And Synthesize Information

1 Learning Objectives

Design

Empathize With Others, Think Out Of The Box, Prototype Solutions, Iterate Based On Feedback

1 Learning Objectives

Reflect & Grow

Practice Metacognition, Assess Your Own Learning, Pursue Personal Development

1 Learning Objectives

Ethics & Value

Make Moral Judgments, Consider Consequences, Develop Character And Integrity

Acknowledgment:

Game Design & Concept by Lydia Cao

Graphic Design by Emily Liu

Download Responsive AI Policy Builder

<https://tinyurl.com/yurxuzyx>

A large black and white QR code that, when scanned, likely leads to the download page for the Responsive AI Policy Builder.

The Creative Commons license logo showing the icons for Attribution (BY), Non-Commercial (NC), and Share-Alike (SA).

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Thank You



ly.cao@utoronto.ca