



AI can make education more efficient. But can it make learning better? In this issue, we explore how leaders can use AI to deepen student thinking, expand teacher capacity, and strengthen instructional decisions without losing the professional judgment and relationships that matter most.

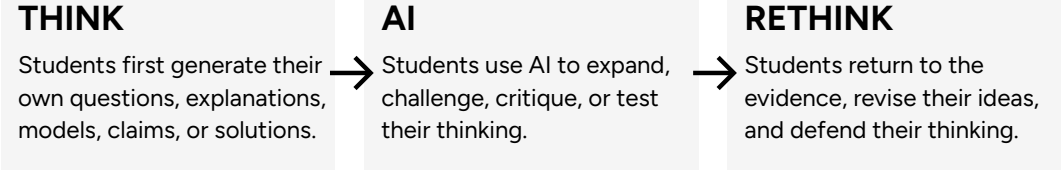


AI in the Equation: Designing for Thinking, Not Just Answers

AI can either expand student thinking or quietly replace it. The difference lies in the design.

Emerging research suggests that as confidence in AI increases, people may invest less critical-thinking effort. At the same time, AI creates new demands: students must verify information, evaluate evidence, recognize limitations, and decide what to accept, revise, or reject.

That is why I use a simple **Think–AI–Rethink** instructional cycle:



IN THE CLASSROOM

In a middle school science class, for example, students might first develop a model explaining how cell structures contribute to the functioning of a cell. AI could then generate alternative analogies or explanations for students to evaluate. Finally, students revise their models and explain which AI suggestions they accepted, changed, or rejected.

The goal is not simply teaching students to use AI. It is designing learning so they still question, connect, create, and think independently because of how they use it.

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

How can AI deepen student thinking?

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Written by Jessyca Lucero-Flores
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Amplify What Matters: Three Ways AI Can Support Great Teaching

When exploring AI, educators might start with a different question—not “How can I use AI?” but “What do I want more time and capacity to do?”

Used as a thought partner, AI can help expand possibilities while keeping educators’ expertise and professional judgment at the center. Consider three places to start:

- 1 PLAN**
Anticipate misconceptions, refine questions, generate lesson ideas, or explore differentiated approaches.
- 2 CREATE**
Develop examples, explanations, scaffolds, communications, or resources that can then be adapted for specific students and contexts.
- 3 RESPOND**
Examine patterns in student learning, consider possible instructional responses, and generate questions for deeper analysis.

The quality of that support also depends on the context we provide. Rather than relying on generic prompts, **give AI relevant information** such as learning targets, grade level, instructional materials, student evidence, or specific constraints. Then evaluate, question, and refine what it produces.

AI can provide possibilities, but teachers decide what their students need.

The goal isn’t to replace teacher thinking. It’s to create greater capacity for the thoughtful, responsive, and deeply human work that great teaching requires.

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

How can leaders support thoughtful teacher use of AI?



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FROM THE FIELD

AI Recognizes Probability. Educators Recognize Possibility.

The future of education will not be shaped by artificial intelligence alone, but by educators who use it wisely, ethically, and purposefully.

SAN BERNARDINO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Using AI effectively means recognizing its limitations and biases, protecting student information, and knowing when human judgment must lead. In San Bernardino City Unified School District, we have seen this firsthand as educators use tools such as Brisk and Gemini to close the feedback loop for student writing.

Student growth and engagement remain rooted in relationships, strong instruction, timely feedback, high expectations, and caring adults. AI can save time, identify patterns, personalize support, and strengthen planning, but it cannot replace an educator’s knowledge of students or professional judgment.

As AI grows more capable, human skills matter even more: critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, empathy, and ethical decision-making. Students and educators are using AI to deepen thinking by asking better questions, evaluating evidence, checking claims, revising ideas, and explaining their reasoning.

START SMALL. KEEP DECISIONS HUMAN.

Educators can start small: learn one approved tool, verify its outputs, keep decisions human, and use efficiencies to create more time for connection.

AI recognizes probability. Humans recognize possibility. The goal is not more technology, but better learning, with exceptional teachers leading the way.

CONTINUE READING

AI Literacy Begins with Human Leadership: Why Every Educator Needs Both

BY DR. MICHELLE CLEVELAND

[READ MICHELLE’S BLOG →](#)



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