

## A SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR TEACHERS

# The Purposeful AI Audit

A two-minute self-check. Are you using AI to deepen learners' thinking, or to do the thinking for them?

Most teachers now use AI, but few have a system for it. Used well, AI clears the mechanical work and leaves more room for thinking. Used carelessly, it quietly takes over the thinking itself, and that builds what researchers call **cognitive debt**. Score yourself honestly against the six dimensions below. The aim is to be the teacher who can answer one question about every AI task: **what is my learner's brain doing right now that it could not do without this tool?**

For each statement, circle the number that matches your current practice:

1 Never

2 Sometimes

3 Usually

4 Always

## 1 Clarity of purpose

I decide the learning goal before I open any AI tool.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

I can say why AI is the right choice for this task rather than another method.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

I check that the output serves the lesson aim, not just my convenience.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

## 2 Prompt quality

My prompts state the age group, subject, and how the output will be used.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

I include constraints, such as reading level, length, or misconceptions to avoid.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

I refine the prompt rather than accepting the first response.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

## 3 Cognitive demand preserved

The AI handles the mechanical work while learners still do the thinking.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

Learners evaluate, question, or improve the AI output rather than copy it.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

I can name which thinking the AI has replaced, and judge whether that trade is acceptable.

(1) (2) (3) (4)

#### 4 Checking and accuracy

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| I verify AI-generated facts against a reliable source before sharing them.  | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I model that checking in front of learners, so verification becomes normal. | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I treat confident-sounding output as a draft, not as the truth.             | ① ② ③ ④ |

#### 5 Learner thinking and metacognition

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| Learners reflect on what the AI did and what they still had to do themselves.     | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I am explicit with learners about when AI help is appropriate and when it is not. | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I notice when AI use is reducing the effort learners put into thinking.           | ① ② ③ ④ |

#### 6 Equity and access

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| Every learner in my class has the same access to the tools I use.                    | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I consider whether AI-generated material disadvantages learners with lower literacy. | ① ② ③ ④ |
| I avoid tasks where AI quietly rewards the most digitally confident learners.        | ① ② ③ ④ |

Add your scores -----

/ 72

## Your result

Eighteen statements, four points each. Find your total below.

**58–72 Purposeful practitioner**  
AI is deepening thinking in your classroom. Share your approach with a colleague, or mentor someone starting out.

**43–57 Developing with intent**  
You are on the right track. Take your lowest-scoring dimension and change one routine this week.

**28–42 Generic user**  
AI is helping, but it may be doing too much. Start with prompt quality and cognitive demand; small changes pay off fast.

**18–27 Passive use**  
Pause AI in lessons until you have a clear rule for who does the thinking, then reintroduce it one task at a time.

Want the evidence behind this audit? Read [Cognitive Debt: A Teacher's Guide to AI Dependency](#) and the rest of our AI series at [structural-learning.com](https://structural-learning.com).