

Leadership Summit

October 10, 2025

The Ritz-Carlton, Denver

forward→ 2025



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Fundamentals of AI Lunch and Learn

Approach to accelerating
impact



Zach Kennelly

Senior Manager of STEM, AI and Partnerships

- Born and Raised in Colorado
 - Summa Cum Laude at CU Boulder - Political Science and Sociology
- 15th year as an educator
 - Masters in Teaching (MAT), Certified in Math, Science and Social Studies
- Leading in the [AI in Education space](#)
 - [Connect on LinkedIn](#)



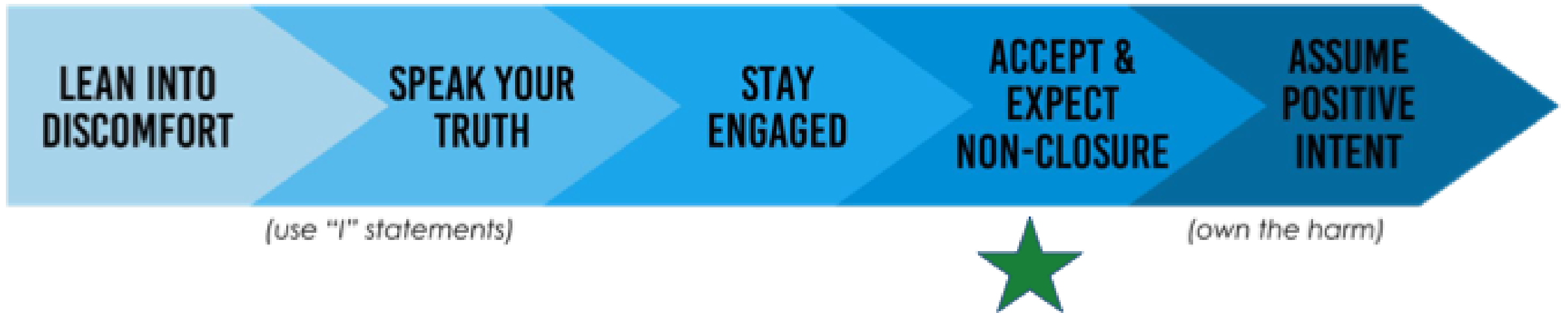
TEACHFORAMERICA
Metro Atlanta

COURAGE CURIOSITY INTEGRITY RESPONSIBILITY RESPECT DOING YOUR BEST

DSST PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Participant Guidance



AI work is Mission Critical

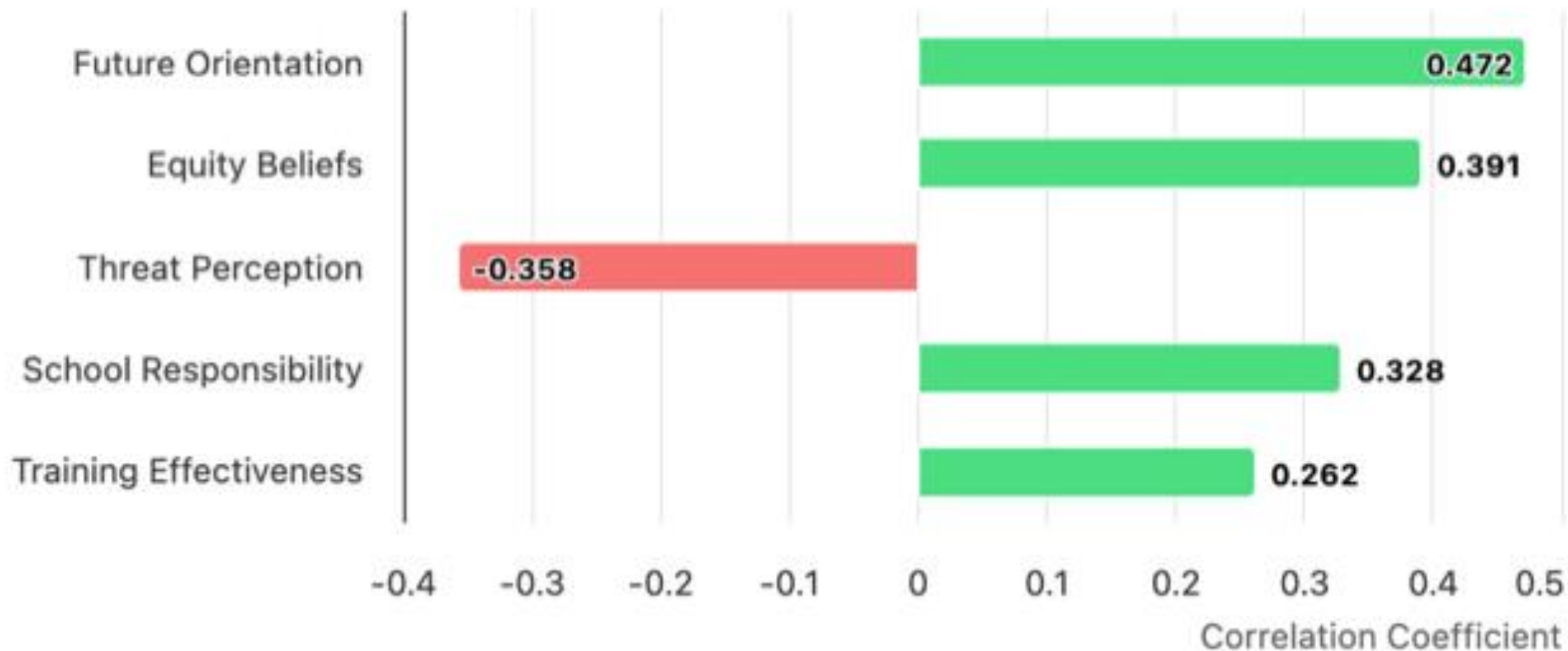
Focusing on AI Guidance

Organizational Approach to Generative AI

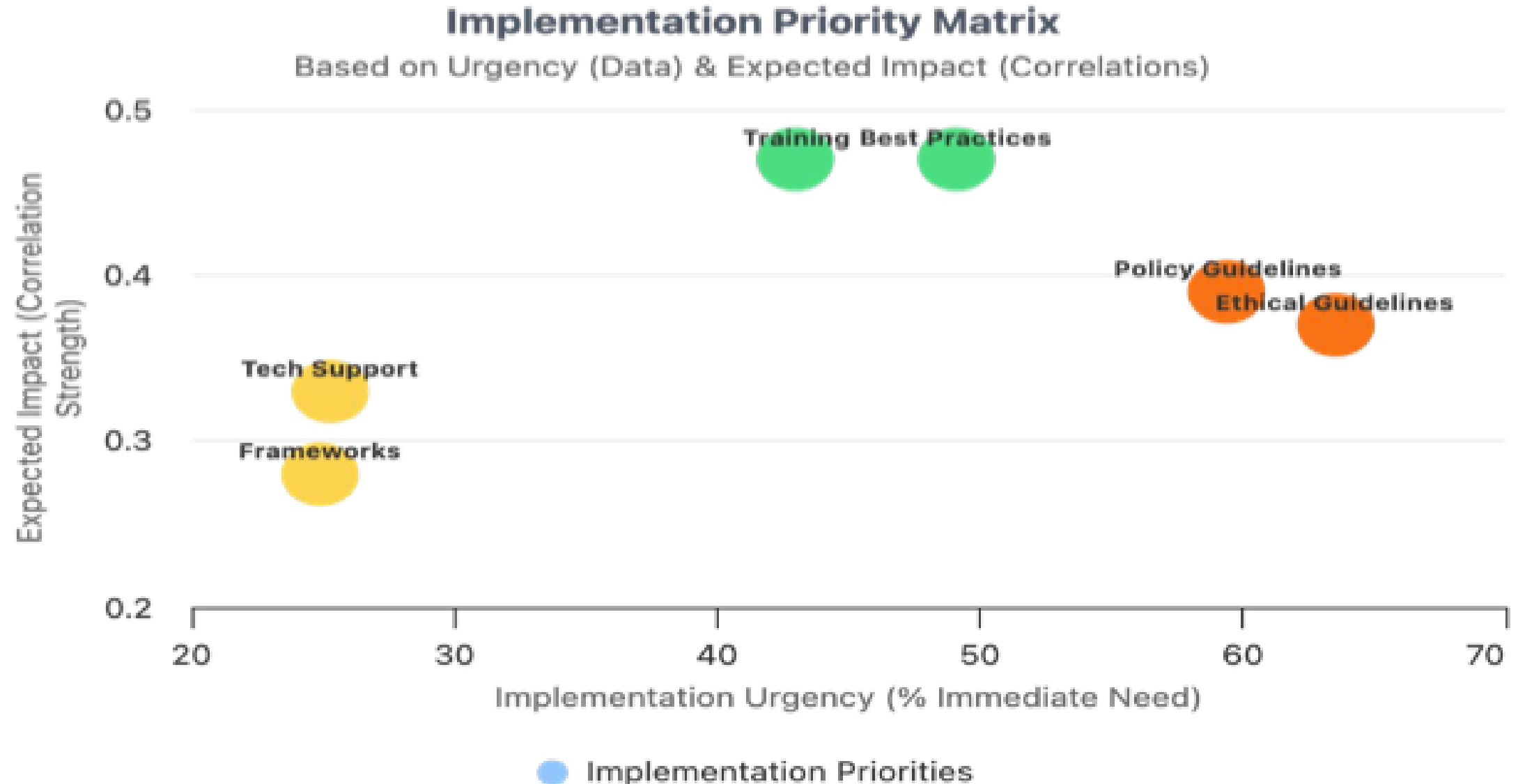


AI Readiness Mindsets at DSST

Leading Indicators of AI Readiness

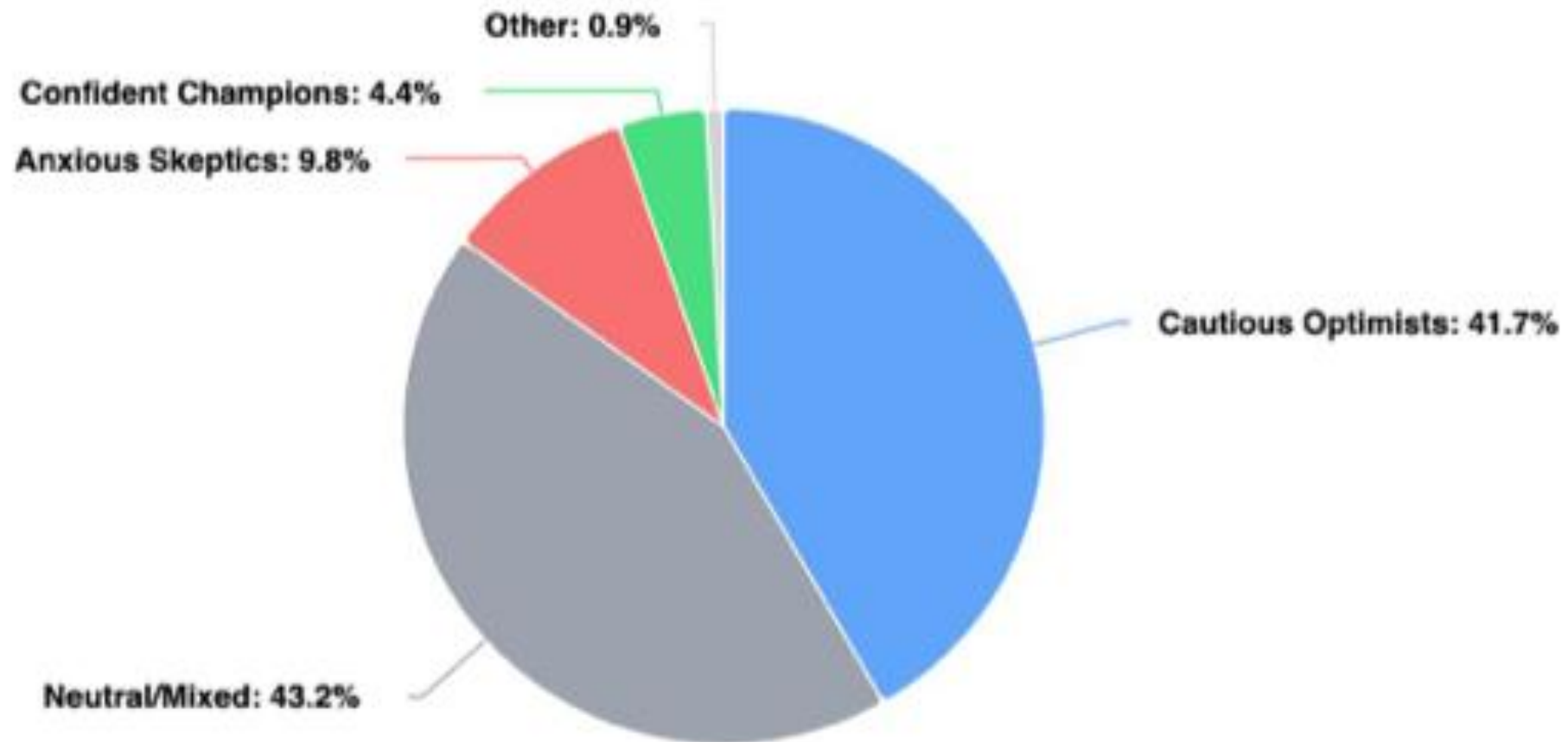


What Educators Need around AI



Educator AI Personas at DSST

Educator Mindset Distribution



Educator Perspectives at DSST

Cautious Optimists

41.7% of staff

Confidence:  4.5/5

Concern:  4.5/5

Key Characteristic: High confidence BUT high concern about misuse

Strategy: Provide ethical guidelines and policy frameworks

Neutral/Mixed

43.2% of staff

Confidence:  3.53/5

Concern:  3.66/5

Key Characteristic: Moderate confidence with significant concern

Strategy: Provide low-stakes entry points and clear guidance

Anxious Skeptics

9.8% of staff

Confidence:  1.5/5

Concern:  4.7/5

Key Characteristic: Low confidence AND high concern

Strategy: Intensive support across all areas

Confident Champions

4.4% of staff

Confidence:  4.8/5

Concern:  1.5/5

Key Characteristic: High confidence, low concern - natural early adopters

Strategy: Leverage as peer mentors and for pilot programs



Educator Concerns at DSST

Top 5 Ethical Concerns





We envision a technology-enhanced future more like an electric bike and less like robot vacuums. On an electric bike, the human is fully aware and fully in control, but their burden is less, and their effort is multiplied by a complementary technological enhancement.





When to Leverage AI in Learning

Strategic Integration Based on Neuroscience Research

1



Start with Human Thinking

- ✓ Brainstorming independently
- ✓ Problem-solving from scratch
- ✓ Initial writing & planning
- ✓ Wrestling with ideas

Neural Engagement



Maximum

2



Strategic AI Introduction

- ✓ After initial effort
- ✓ For specific feedback
- ✓ To enhance creativity
- ✓ Exploring alternatives

Memory Formation



Strong

3



Collaborative Enhancement

- ✓ Co-create with AI
- ✓ Refine & polish ideas
- ✓ Metacognitive reflection
- ✓ Compare approaches

Learning Retention



Optimal



Using AI too early can inhibit learning and efficacy for educators and students. When we start with human thinking then leverage AI, we learn more and can be more effective.

What is genAI?

Generative AI is a next _____ predictor
(word)

*Using massive amounts of
training and context (billions of
“weights”)*

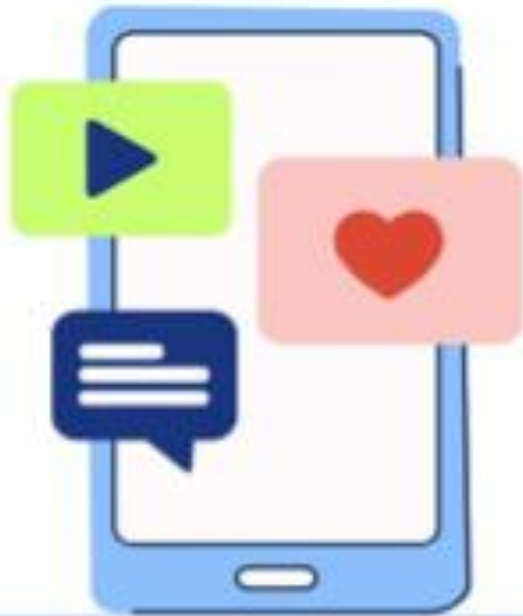
- *Statistical measures* (code)



How Does Gen Z Learn About AI?

55%

Social Media



35%

News/Media



15%

Educators



12%

Employers/Colleagues



*Source: How can we upskill Gen Z as fast as we train AI? (Merriman & Sanz Sáiz, 2024)
(5,218 respondents distributed globally)*

Why do we need a principled stance?

Reactive → Proactive

Efficiency → Efficacy

Convenience → Equity



Alignment to Graduate Profile

GRADUATE PROFILE



Core Skills in 2030



There are three key qualities which will prepare students best for entering and succeeding in the future workforce



AI fluency

- AI fluency looks like:
 - What it is, how it works
 - Strengths / weaknesses of different models
 - What a good prompt looks like
 - Ability to spot and prevent hallucinations
 - Checking AI work
 - Using multiple models to improve product
 - ...



'Human spark'

- Humanity is what differentiates us
- 21st Century Skills look like:
 - Leadership, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and teaming, creativity
- Emotional Intelligence including:
 - Empathy, compassion, moral reasoning, active listening, curiosity



Lifelong learning

- A commitment to lifelong learning will help students succeed in an ever-evolving workforce
- Those who embrace growth, resilience, and motivation are more likely to thrive than those resistant to change



As AI advances and reduces the number of entry-level roles, **internships and other real-world experiences** that showcase AI fluency, 'human spark', and an ability to learn will become increasingly valuable



“

Educators and students
without AI literacy aren't just
missing opportunities, they're
vulnerable to exploitation.
When we teach AI responsibly,
we're not just opening doors;
we're protecting our
community.

”



DSST Position, Principles and Beliefs around AI

MISSION STATEMENT

DSST Public Schools transforms urban public education by eliminating educational inequity and preparing all students for success in college and the 21st century.

1

Position

AI is mission critical

2

Principles and Beliefs

Human Centered

3

Policy

Dos and Don'ts



Document tabs



Position, Principles a...



Policy : Student Handbook



Policy: Staff Handbook

[Full Position,
Principles, Beliefs
and Policy](#)

Courage

Curiosi

DSST Position on

At DSST Public School
technologies, includi
staying at the forefro
and ensure students
lead in 21st-century c

How We Appro

These principles shap

1. Human Centere

Aligned to guidance?

Practice

Type into the text boxes!

[Click on this link to open a Custom Playlab bot for Practice](#)

AI Fundamentals

This app helps DSST educators build practical skills for implementing the DSST Position, Principles, Beliefs and Policy document at DSST through interactive scenarios and real-world examples.

Grade Level(s) You Work With

Content Area or Role

Subject (optional)

Save my progress   

Start

The creators of this app can review your usage, never share personal information.
AI is not intended to give professional, legal, medical or financial advice.

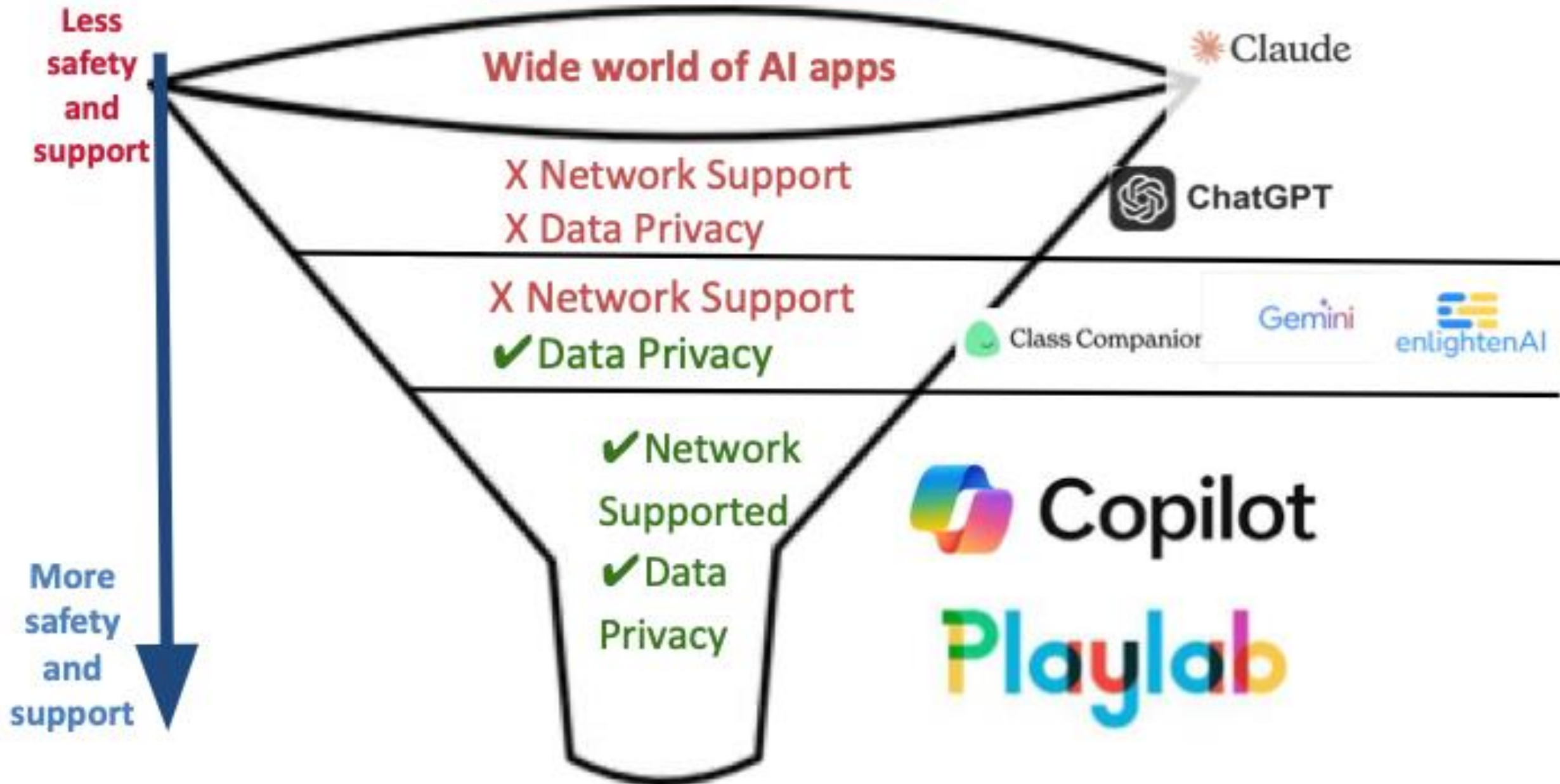




- 1) What resonates with you about DSST's position, principles, and beliefs?
- 2) What are you still wondering about after reading our organizational position on AI?
- 3) What is a "Do or Don'ts" that people you lead (at HO/in Schools) might need more time to process?

AI Tools at DSST in 25-26

DSST: AI Tool Funnel



Network Supported AI Tools

CoPilot

This is the network general purpose tool (*use to leverage AI aligned to our beliefs, for everyday tasks*). It is meant to support you with an easy access general purpose tool.



Playlab

Will be our AI instructional tool. Those who enroll in the 100 person AI Pilot will get access first. They will be able to build AI bots on Playlab. All other teachers will have access to using Playlab tools.

AI Network Roadmap - Next 9 months

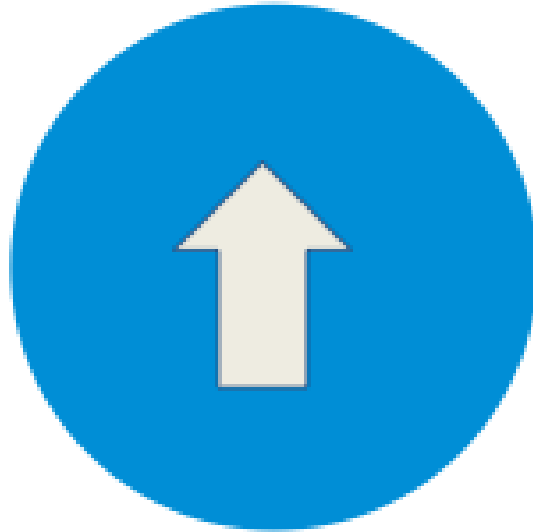


AI for Leaders (Today)

AI for All Staff (TLI)

Summer Development

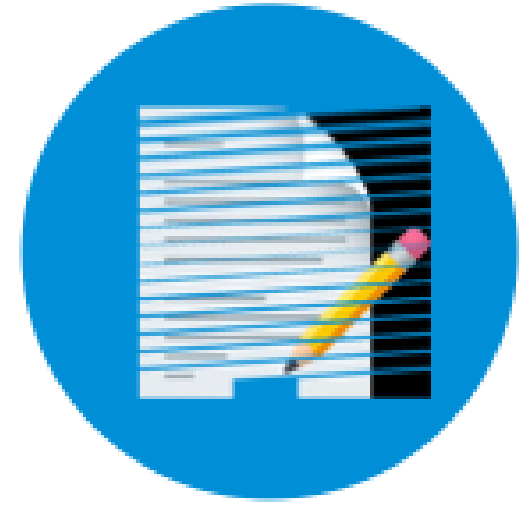
 Grounding in our DSST Position,
Principles, Beliefs and Policy



Playlab Cohort

Starting in September

Apply to be a part of a 100 person
builder cohort with AI



Cortex Course

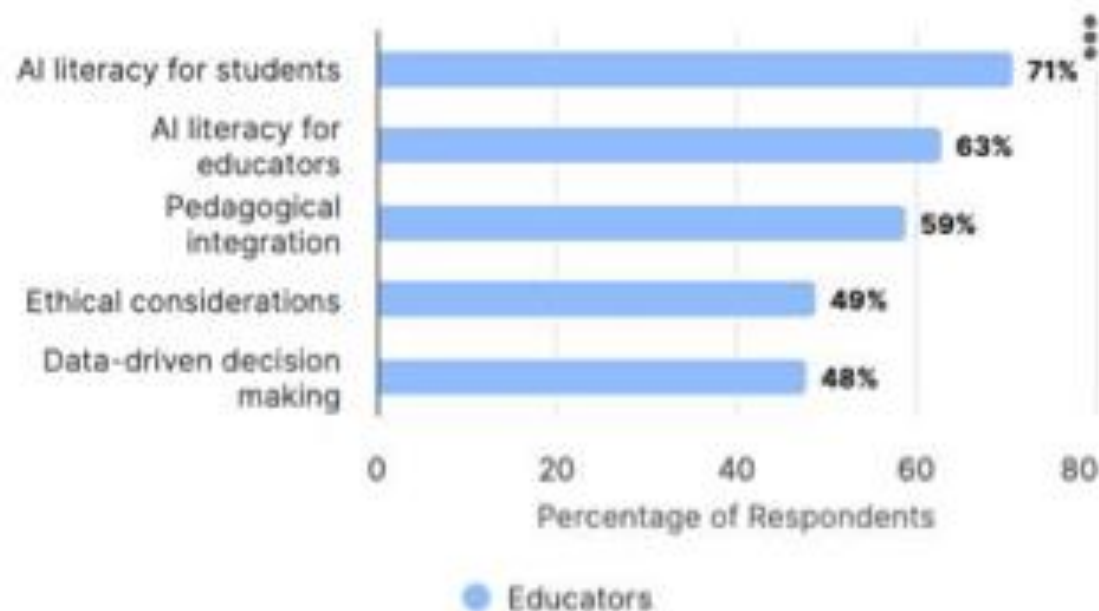
By May of 2026

Everyone access deeper learning
around AI

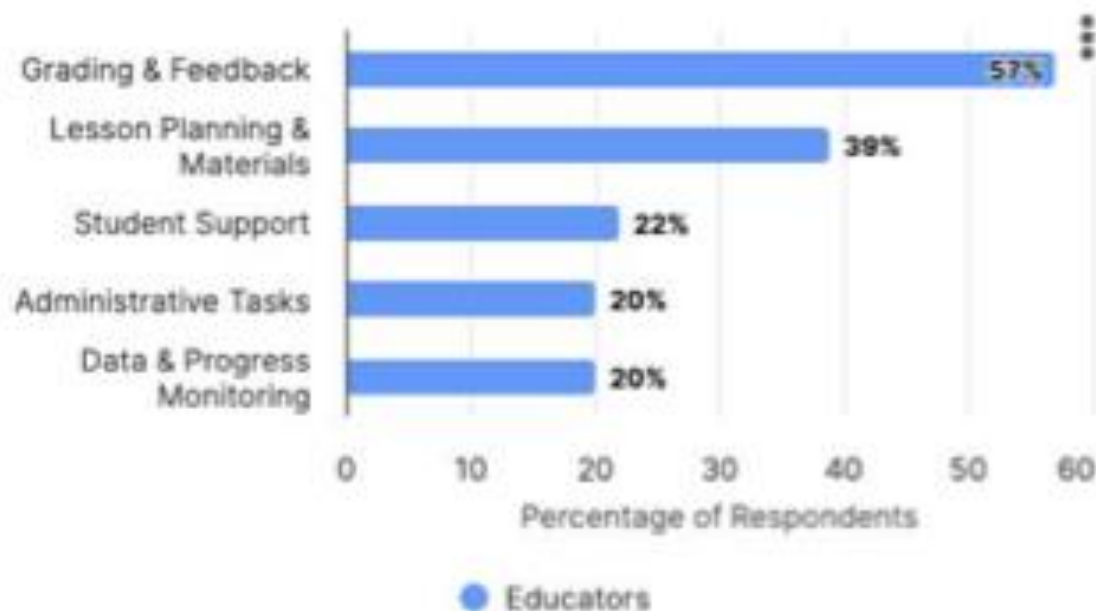
Educator Opportunities with AI at DSST

The Philosophy-to-Practice Gap

What They Want to Learn

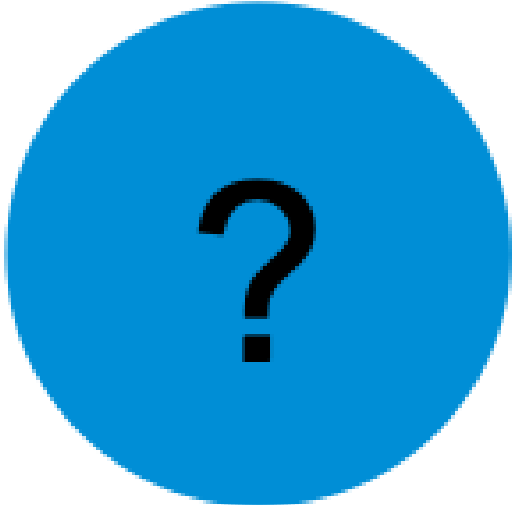


What They Need to Solve



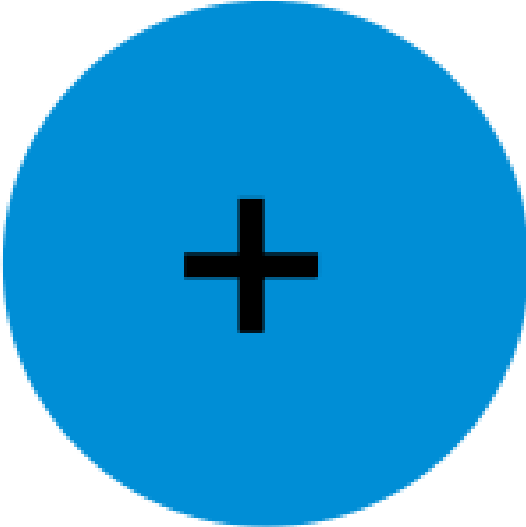
Reflection Protocol & Survey

What? So What? Now What?



?

Learned



+

Implications



!

Actions



What?

What is one thing you learned today about DSST's approach to AI or leveraging AI?



So What? (choose 1-2)

1. How does DSST's approach differ from just 'using AI to save time'?
2. Think about teachers and students. Why does our human-centered approach matter for THEM specifically?



Now What?

"Tomorrow, I will..." *(One immediate action - could be as simple as updating syllabus)*

"This week, I will..." *(One AI experiment using our guidelines)*

"This month, I will..." *(One bigger shift)*



THANK YOU!



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AP Psychology Case Study

Case Study: Human-Centered AI in AP Psychology

The Human-Centered AI Strategy

We started with a human-centered hypothesis:

"If we increase aligned at-bats and feedback velocity, student performance on AAQs and the AP exam will rise."

[Click Here for Case Study](#)



Additional Resources

AI Toolkit



#1

[Teach AI AI Literacy Framework](#) and [Anthropic AI Fluency](#) resources



#2

[The Rithm Project Relationships and AI](#)



#3

[The Learning Accelerator AI in Action](#)



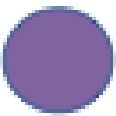
#4

[Playlab AI in Action](#) (Need access to Playlab first)



#5

[aiEDU AI Literacy and Framework](#)



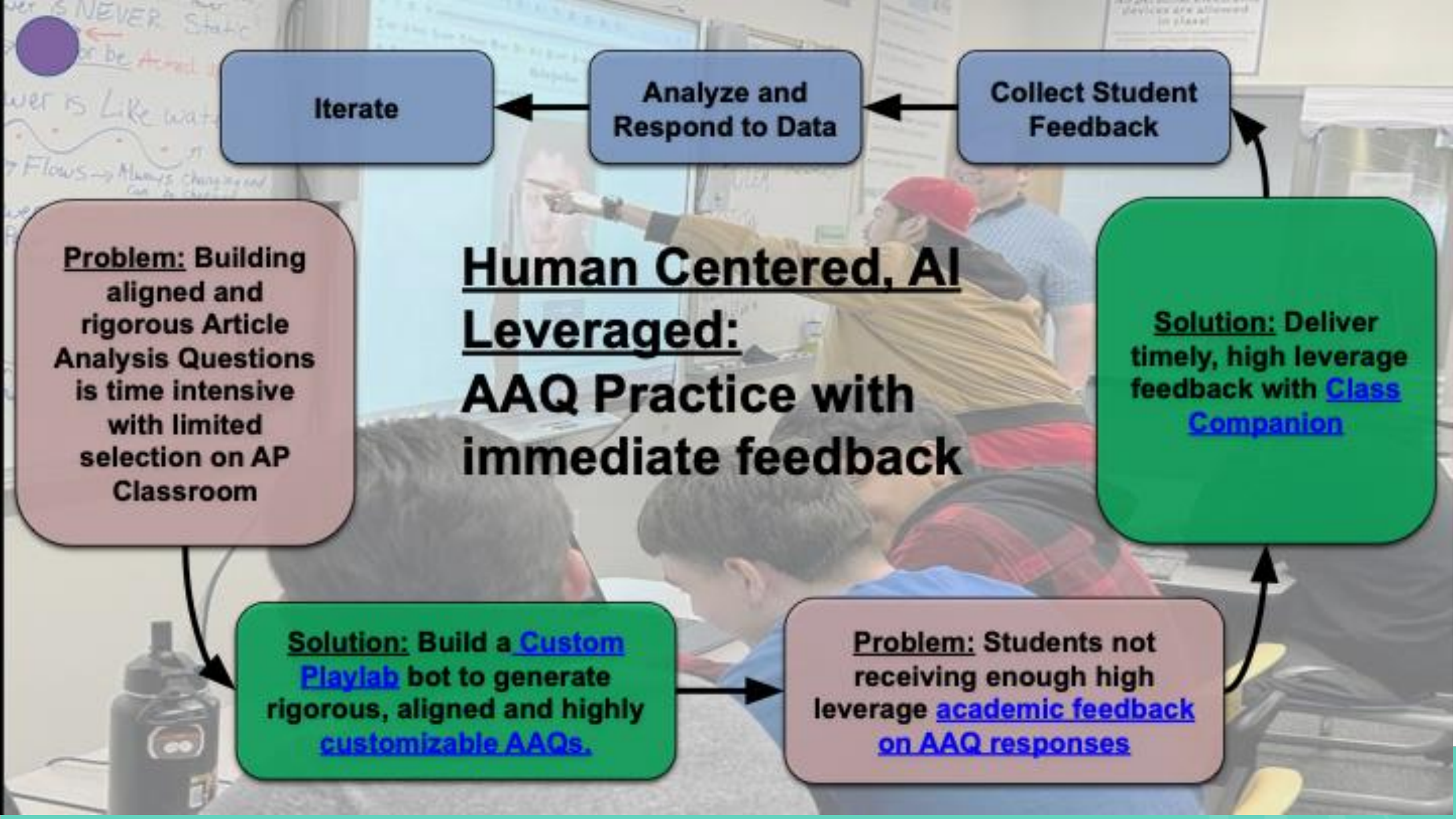
Investigate

Playlab AAQ Generator

- Try generating an AAQ based on this unit:
 - Click HERE: [Playlab AAQ](#) and [School Teams AI Collaborative Explanation](#)
 - Unit: Cognition
 - Topic: Spacing Effect
 - Trying this tool helps you see the idea of “scaling” writing aligned AAQs

Class Companion

- Class Companion: Review example student response + feedback.
 - Click HERE: [Class Companion Example from School Teams AI Collaborative](#)
 - Reading this Case Study helps you see the process in action





Share

How does this align with our DSST Principles and Beliefs?

How did this approach balance innovation with instructional priorities?



Where could this go wrong if implemented poorly?

Example Prompt

Role: .1% AP Psychology educator focused on building an aligned peer talk strategy for analyzing research articles (article Analysis Questions = AAQ) on our first day of AAQ's.

Context: Teacher of AP Psychology at DSST College View in Denver. Students will be reading and annotating their first research article. The article is digital and students will take Cornell notes by hand or on a computer.

Source: [Research AAQ](#)

Content: Brainstorm three peer talk strategies for students to do after taking reading the article and taking cornell notes to help them analyze the research.

Plan: Generate strategies then work with me to select and customize the best strategy





Help us to Improve.

Your feedback is appreciated. Please use the QR code at right to tell us how we did.



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