



Teaching With AI

Trends, Tensions, and Transformation in Higher Education



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Leading With Intention:

Higher Ed's Next AI Chapter

by Jenny Maxwell, Head of Grammarly for Education



The 2025–26 academic year marks yet another turning point in higher education's engagement with AI. Institutions have moved beyond the early panic—*Should we allow it? Should we ban it?*—and are now asking more nuanced, strategic questions: *How do we integrate AI into meaningful teaching and learning? What does responsible use really look like? What supports do educators and students need to thrive in this new environment?*

Despite substantial progress, challenges remain. Institutional policies are often disconnected from pedagogy. AI access and literacy vary widely across campuses. And while many faculty members are experimenting thoughtfully, their work is rarely supported by a coordinated strategy. Higher education is no longer at the beginning of its AI journey, but clarity of direction is still emerging.

Meeting this moment requires three foundational shifts:



From policy to pedagogy

Defining acceptable use is essential, but it's not enough. Institutions must design learning experiences that encourage responsible, creative, and reflective engagement with AI.



From tool awareness to literacy

It's no longer just about knowing what AI can do; it's about teaching students and faculty how to work with it critically, ethically, and contextually.



From responsible to reflective use

Institutions need to cultivate a culture where AI isn't just governed by policy, but engaged with critically—and where students are expected to think *with* AI, not just through it.

Achieving these shifts will require collaboration across campus roles—provosts, CIOs, teaching center directors, instructors, and student support leaders alike. Shared governance, intentional design, and institutional alignment will be essential for moving from reactive policies to proactive strategies that reflect the values of higher education.

The following chapters offer grounded examples of how educators and leaders are doing exactly that—reimagining teaching, assessment, and literacy in ways that prioritize student agency and academic integrity. You'll hear from the following experts, who outline various topics:



Dr. Michelle Kassorla

Associate Professor of English
Georgia State University

*Creation-first learning through
Inverted Bloom's Taxonomy*



Dr. Nick Potkalitsky

Principal CEO
Pragmatic AI Solutions

*AI literacy, tool infrastructure, and
reflective reading of AI-generated text*



Dr. Jason Gulya

Professor of English
Berkeley College

*Shifting from transactional grading to
process-first pedagogy*

These contributions are not blueprints—they're guideposts. They are meant to inform, provoke, and support the unique work each institution must do to align its AI strategy with its educational mission.

As AI continues to evolve, higher education has a rare opportunity to lead rather than simply adapt.

By embracing experimentation, elevating pedagogy, and foregrounding accessibility and critical inquiry, we can help shape an AI future that reflects the best of what higher education has always stood for: thoughtful teaching, meaningful learning, and a commitment to helping students grow.



Trend 1

Flipping the Writing Process:

Teaching With AI From Creation to Understanding

by Michelle Kassorla, Ph.D.



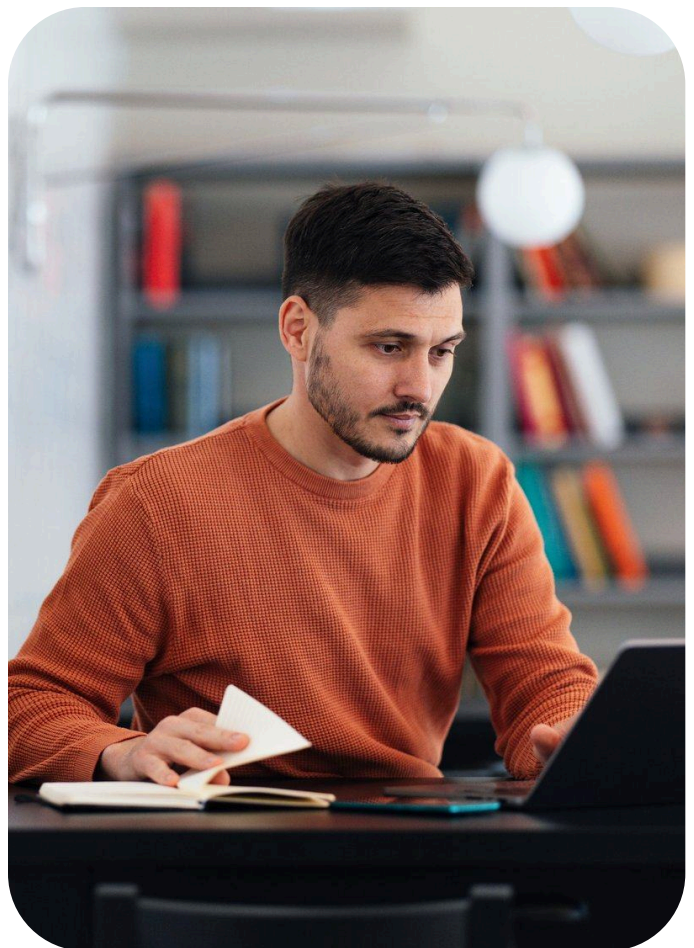
1. Status check

For decades, educators have relied on Bloom's Taxonomy to categorize cognitive skills, from foundational levels like "Remember" and "Understand" to higher-order skills like "Analyze" and "Create." AI is turning this pyramid on its head.

Today's students can start at "Create." With a simple prompt, they can produce a complete essay or artwork on a topic they've never studied, generating a polished product without foundational knowledge.

This poses a central question: If students can create without understanding, how do we foster the critical thinking skills that are the true goal of education?

The answer is an "Inverted Bloom's Taxonomy." This model uses creation as the starting point, guiding students through each stage of Bloom's Taxonomy, but in reverse order.

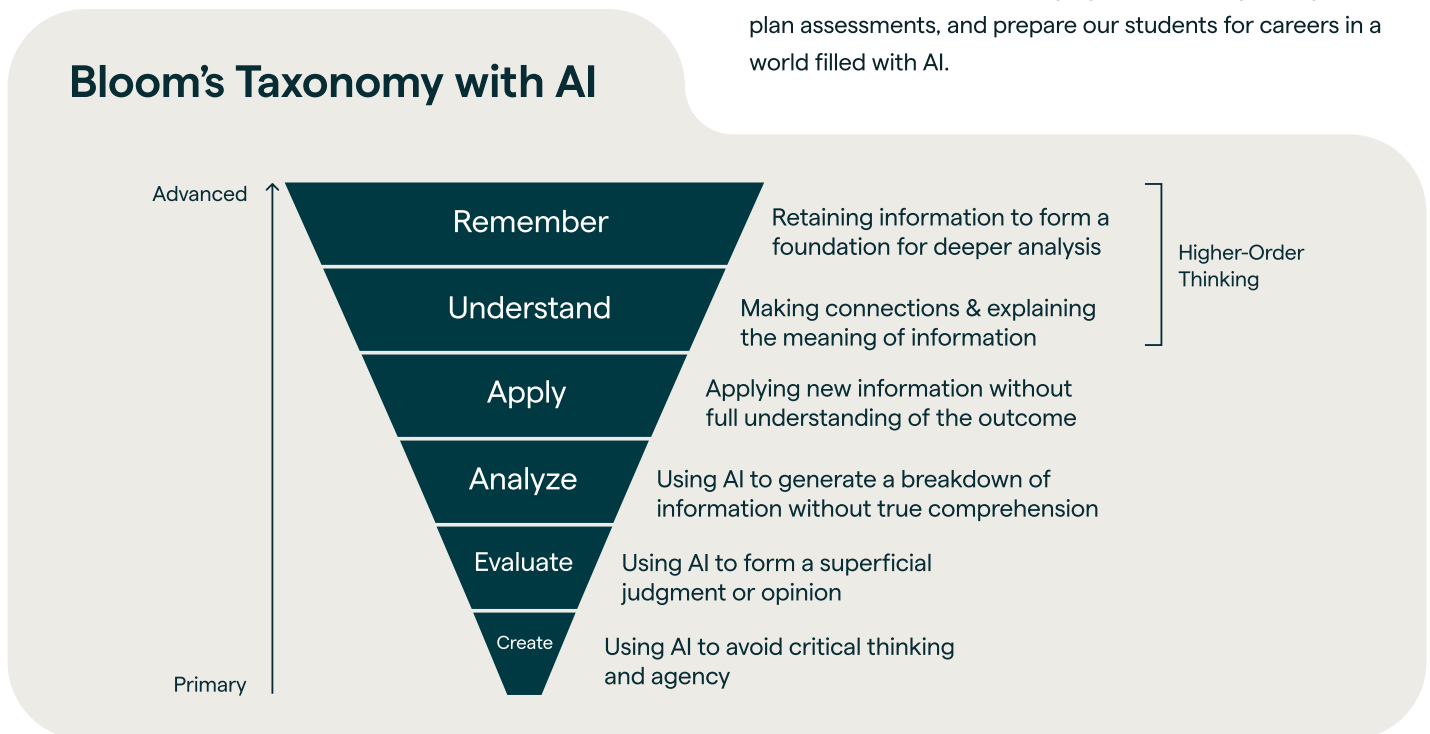


2. Forecast

The pedagogical path forward, though uncomfortable to some, is not to fight AI, but to embrace it. The “create-first, deconstruct-later” model of Inverted Bloom’s offers a framework for this new reality, where the learning journey moves from **Create** → **Evaluate** → **Analyze** → **Apply** → **Understand** → **Remember**.

In this model, the AI-assisted output isn’t the end product; it’s the raw material for learning. The real work begins *after* the initial creation. This is where I introduce “**productive friction**”—the cognitive effort required to transform a superficial, machine-generated artifact into something demonstrating true ownership and insight.

This approach requires changing how we design assignments, plan assessments, and prepare our students for careers in a world filled with AI.



Assignment design

This model challenges us to rethink the very purpose of student writing. Rather than focusing on the final artifact, we must center the learning process itself—how students critique, adapt, and personalize AI drafts. Assignment design must evolve to prioritize how students think through and transform their work. The true value lies in the labor of revision, analysis, and metacognition—not in the polish of a single deliverable.



Assessment

With AI handling mechanics like grammar, we can assess what is uniquely human: individual voice, expression, content knowledge, ethics, and curiosity. Rubrics should reward students for sparring with AI—for probing its answers and refusing the first output. These skills are needed to develop the necessary critical thinking required to succeed with and beyond AI.







Career readiness

Inverted Bloom’s Taxonomy prepares students for careers where professionals use AI as a starting point. The essential skills are no longer creating from a blank page, but interrogating and revising a first draft for voice and intent, then ethically shaping it into a human-accountable product—the labor of learning shifts from drafting to critical evaluation and revision.

3. Action items

To implement this model, instructors can take several concrete steps to transform AI from a “cheating machine” to a powerful learning tool:

- **Reframe creation as the starting point**
Treat the AI-generated draft as “raw material.” Design assignments where the primary task is not writing the initial text but critiquing, fact-checking, and substantially revising it. The goal is to move students from passive acceptance to active engagement with the AI content.
- **Design for productive friction**
Move beyond one-and-done assignments. Create scaffolded multistep projects where students must first generate an output with AI, then use a rubric to evaluate its weaknesses, analyze hallucinations and generic language, and apply new information to improve the work. This is the labor that leads to understanding.
- **Mandate process transparency**
Require students to show their work. Design assignments where the task is not simply to “write an essay,” but to document how they revised and reworked AI content. Ask students to submit their initial prompts and chat logs, write a “transparency statement” on their AI use, and reflect on how they made choices throughout the drafting and revision process. Assess their ability to evaluate, analyze, and apply knowledge—revealing their learning through the quality of their thinking, not just the sheen of a finished product.
- **Adapt rubrics**
Grading criteria must evolve. Instead of mechanical perfection, shift to evaluating students’ analysis of the AI’s output by evaluating shared chat links for prompting proficiency, resistance to the AI’s initial output, and the thoughtfulness of their co-creative AI interaction. A student who takes a poor AI draft and thoughtfully expands it, explaining how and why they improved it, has demonstrated a higher level of learning than one who passively accepts AI output and cannot explain their process.



About the author

Michelle Kassorla, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Georgia State University, Perimeter College, where she teaches English and composition. She has over 30 years of experience in higher education and has been actively integrating AI into her writing instruction since 2023.

You can find more of her work on [The Academic Platypus](#) or connect with her on [LinkedIn](#).

Designing for Discovery:

Toward a Reflective Model of AI Literacy

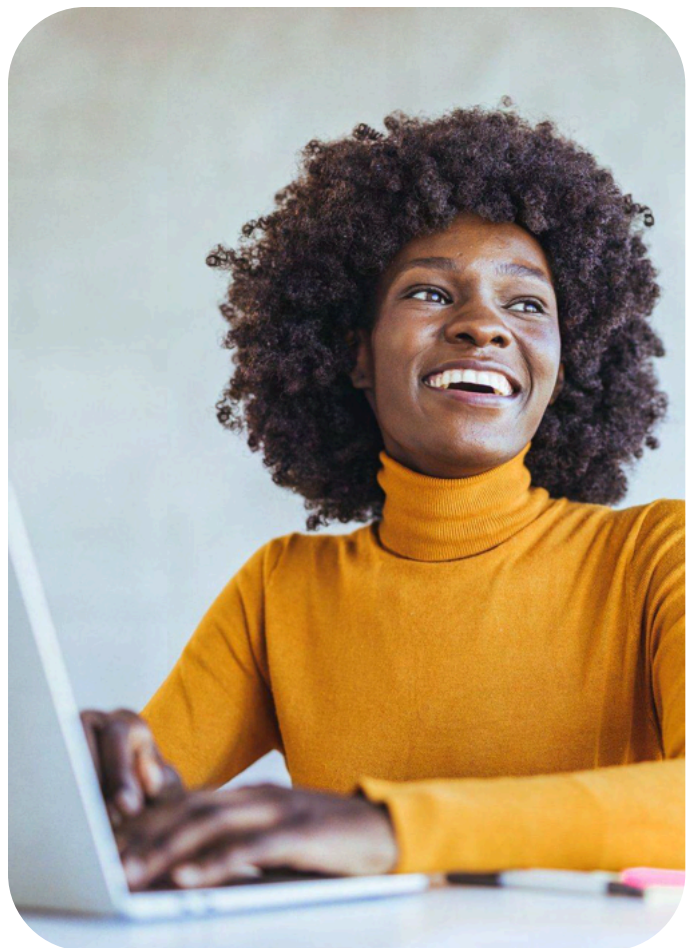
by Nick Potkalitsky, Ph.D.

1. Status check

Most current AI literacy initiatives focus on adults and professionals, addressing workplace productivity and professional development. These efforts serve important purposes, helping people navigate immediate challenges around tool competency and integration into existing workflows. However, the real next step in AI literacy requires pedagogical reform in educational settings.

Existing educational approaches often adapt adult-focused frameworks, creating detailed guidelines about when students can and cannot use AI or teaching practical skills like prompting and citation. These structured approaches offer clarity and consistency, which matters in institutional settings. Yet they primarily focus on tool mastery rather than helping students understand how to engage with tools that have agentic properties.

My experience designing an AI Theory and Composition course with research partner Terry Underwood suggested possibilities for a different approach. When we stopped prescribing AI use and started creating conditions for students to discover it themselves, we found patterns that challenged our assumptions about integration. This experimental approach may not be feasible in all educational contexts, but the findings point toward alternative directions worth considering.



2. Forecast

The future of AI literacy lies in designing authentic situations where students develop their own relationships with these tools. This means shifting from assignments with predetermined outcomes to “writing situations” where students navigate their own pathways with AI as a potential collaborator.

In our experimental course, we created an autobiographical writing situation where students explored their relationships with technology. Rather than prescribing AI use, we gave students access to powerful tools and studied their choices. The pedagogical foundation emerged through AI Mentor Prompts that guided students through autobiographical writing without predetermined responses.

What we discovered challenges conventional thinking about AI integration. Despite having unprecedented access to powerful AI tools in a classroom culture that explicitly valued experimentation, students became more cautious about AI use as the course progressed, not less. They developed sophisticated judgment about when and how to engage with these tools.

One initially AI-enthusiastic student began developing critical distance as she worked through our prompts. When AI produced hallucinations, she saw them as “bugs, not features” and learned to extract what served her vision while discarding what didn’t fit. Another student who began with deep discomfort gradually developed a nuanced understanding of when AI assistance supported rather than undermined her authorial voice.






The students who developed the strongest critical frameworks were often those who initially embraced AI most enthusiastically. They learned through direct experience what cognitive offloading felt like and discovered that sophisticated AI use often meant knowing when not to use it.

This points toward a different future for AI literacy. Rather than teaching students to follow expert guidelines, we need frameworks that amplify student agency and provide safe spaces for discovery. The innovation lies not in the technology but in pedagogical structures that help students develop their own understanding of authentic learning in an AI-infused world.



3. Action items

To support a more reflective, systems-aware approach to AI literacy, instructors can incorporate these strategies to help students read, interpret, and engage with AI-generated text more critically.

-  **Design writing situations, not assignments**
Establish authentic contexts where students can navigate their own pathways rather than creating tasks with predetermined outcomes. Give students agency over AI engagement within carefully constructed frameworks.
-  **Let students set standards**
Bring students together to develop a shared understanding of effective work. When students own evaluation criteria, they grapple more deeply with questions about authenticity and learning quality.
-  **Study choices rather than prescribe them**
Create safe environments for AI experimentation, then observe and discuss student decisions. The goal is developing sophisticated judgment, not compliance with policies.
-  **Expect growing caution**
Students who engage thoughtfully with AI often become more selective about its use. This apparent resistance signals developing wisdom about cognitive effort and authentic learning.
-  **Focus on frameworks, not tools**
Specific platforms will evolve rapidly. What matters is creating pedagogical structures that help students develop agency and critical thinking, regardless of which tools they encounter.



About the author

Nick Potkalitsky, Ph.D. is an educator, researcher, and curriculum developer focused on teacher-led transformation in AI-integrated instruction and assessment. He leads AI strategy for the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio and Pragmatic AI Solutions, and is the author of *AI in Education: A Roadmap for Teacher-Led Transformation*.

You can explore his work at [Educating AI](#) or connect with him on [LinkedIn](#).

Breaking the Transaction:

AI, Learning, and the End of Grade-First Thinking

by Jason Gulya, Ph.D.

1. Status check

In the past five years, two major forces have put pressure on traditional grading: the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of generative AI.

When classrooms moved online, many institutions temporarily loosened rigid grading structures. Pass/fail systems became more common. Deadlines became more flexible. There was a willingness—if only briefly—to reimagine what assessment could look like.

But as campuses returned to normal, traditional grading systems quickly reasserted themselves. Now, with AI tools capable of producing polished educational products in seconds, we're once again forced to ask: *What do grades really measure—and what do they miss?*

AI doesn't just change how students complete assignments—it exposes the flaws in how we've structured education. In [Off the Mark: How Grades, Ratings, and Rankings Undermine Learning](#), Jack Schneider and Ethan Hutt describe a transactional model where students trade educational products for grades, grades for diplomas, and diplomas for jobs. The system rewards output, not understanding.

This logic is only amplified by AI. As Forbes reporter [Dan Fitzpatrick put it](#) after speaking with high schooler William Liang, “*When the goal is the A grade, and a tool exists that gets you there in a fraction of the time, why wouldn't you use it?*”

This mindset didn't start with AI, but AI makes it harder to ignore.

If we want students to see learning as the goal—not just the grade—we have to rethink the systems that reward shortcutting. That means creating classrooms where students are recognized not for turning in polished products, but for showing how they got there and what they learned along the way.



2. Forecast

There are many different ways that educators are starting to push against the grade-centered mindset that contribute directly to the transactional model of education.

One shift involves **prioritizing reflection on process**. Rather than assigning one-and-done educational products like final papers or presentations, instructors are beginning to design assignments that ask students to document their thinking. This means tracking how they revise, what decisions they make, and what they learn along the way.

Another emerging approach is to **de-emphasize grading where possible**. This doesn't mean eliminating feedback or accountability. It means decoupling every learning moment from a letter or percentage. Some educators are using ungraded pre-quizzes or reflective prompts to reframe the learning environment. These ungraded experiences can build trust and invite more curiosity.

A third direction is to **integrate self-assessment** as part of the learning journey. Faculty are encouraging students to evaluate their own work using instructor rubrics, or to design their own criteria. This process not only builds metacognitive skills, but also encourages students to rethink the meaning of “quality” and to recognize that grades are not fixed measures of learning.

Taken together, these shifts point to a future where **process—not product—is at the heart of assessment**. The action items below offer concrete ways instructors can begin designing for that shift.



3. Action items

To support this shift toward process-centered assessment, instructors can adopt strategies that disrupt the product-for-grade exchange and invite students to see revision, reflection, and iteration as core parts of learning.

Use edit-to-mastery assignments

For these assignments, choose one or two objectives that you want students to demonstrate. Instead of giving a letter or percentage grade, submissions will receive a grade of either Complete or Incomplete.

If a student receives a Complete, it means they hit the objective and get full credit. If they receive an Incomplete, it means that they should try again until they've mastered the competency.

The goal is to establish a behavioral approach of trying again and iterating instead of viewing assignments as final products.

Assign portfolios and process-folios

With this strategy, the goal is to approach assignments as clusters of interconnected activities. With traditional assignments, educators usually limit themselves to one or two entry points. They see only a couple of products, assuming that they can create a reasonable snapshot of the students' process from then on.

Portfolios and process-folios push against this tendency, though in different ways.

With portfolios, students often string together separate distinct assignments into a single narrative of personal growth. With process-folios, the focus is often on the process behind the products. For example, students might include outlines, free writes, multiple drafts, peer review notes, and more in a single process-folio to give the teacher a sense of what they did and why.

As the collection of essays in [Susan Blum's *Ungrading* \(2020\)](#) makes clear, there are many ways to disrupt traditional grading. Instructors can choose the model that makes the most sense to them or create their own model.



About the author

Jason Gulya, Ph.D. is a Professor of English and Communications at Berkeley College, as well as a keynote speaker and faculty development trainer. He has worked with thousands of educators across institutions and recently coauthored the book *Artificial Intelligence, Real Literacy*.

You can explore more of his work on [The AI Edventure](#) or connect with him on [LinkedIn](#).

How Grammarly Can Help

As higher-education institutions embark on the next phase of their AI journey, it's critical to work with a trusted AI partner that can meet your organization where it is today, fuel growth to progress your AI transformation, and provide enterprise-grade security at the pace of your innovation.

Grammarly is ready to support higher education with:

Context-aware AI

Grammarly provides writing assistance that is contextually relevant to academic environments, helping students, faculty, and administrators communicate effectively across platforms.

Leading indicators of impact

While an EDU-specific Effective Communication Score is anticipated later in the year, Grammarly's analytics panel already offers valuable insights through features like number of suggestions accepted over time. These can serve as leading indicators of how communication tools are improving student engagement, instructional quality, and operational efficiency.

Responsible AI at our core

Built on more than 16 years of experience with AI, Grammarly's approach to responsible AI is woven into the fabric of our development and deployment processes, ensuring that our AI not only enhances communication, but also safeguards user data, promotes fairness, and maintains transparency.





About

Grammarly

Grammarly for Education is an AI-powered communication assistant trusted by over 3,000 educational institutions to equip students with essential AI skills for the new era of work. It helps students learn as they write, enhancing their ability to communicate confidently and succeed in the classroom and beyond. For educators, Grammarly boosts productivity and makes teaching more efficient and meaningful. By offering writing suggestions that augment classroom instruction and improve student outcomes, Grammarly serves as the trusted AI partner for your entire institution. Learn more at grammarly.com/edu.