

УДК 371.3:004.9:004.8

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**TEACHING STUDENTS TO READ THE MACHINE:
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE RISE
OF INFORMATION LITERACY IN EDUCATION**

Generative and data-driven AI systems are rapidly reshaping how information is produced, searched, summarized, and amplified. Education must respond not only by adopting useful AI tools but by helping learners develop the skills to judge, contextualize, and verify AI-produced information. UNESCO and national education authorities identify both promise and risk: AI can enhance access and personalization, but it also spreads low-quality or deceptive content if students lack critical literacy.

Opportunities. AI enables personalized feedback, adaptive learning pathways, and quick summarization of large information sets – features that can support differentiated instruction and scaffold research tasks. These affordances can be harnessed to strengthen students’ information-seeking habits when intentionally integrated into teaching practice.

Risks. Generative models produce plausible but incorrect statements («hallucinations»), amplify misinformation, and create deepfakes; students who rely on surface fluency (how natural a text reads) may be misled. Automation bias – trusting algorithmic output over human judgment – is a specific threat to information literacy in AI-rich contexts.

To prepare learners for the AI era, information literacy curricula should expand beyond source identification and evaluation to include:

- understanding AI provenance and limitations i.e. how models are trained, what “confidence” does and does not mean, and why hallucinations occur;

- verification and lateral reading strategies i.e. cross-checking facts across trustworthy sources, using reverse-image search and domain heuristics;

- responsible use and attribution i.e. when and how to disclose AI assistance and how to evaluate ethical implications;

Prompt literacy and tool fluency i.e. crafting queries/prompts that produce more reliable outputs and understanding tool-specific behaviors.

These components combine technical, critical, and ethical literacies that is aligning with recent frameworks for AI literacy and educational policy.

There are some practical classroom strategies.

A. Short AI-literacy modules. Introduce short, scaffolded lessons (1–3 sessions) that teach students to spot common AI errors, perform lateral reading, and document tool use in assignments. Use examples drawn from current generative tools so lessons are concrete.

B. Library + classroom partnership. Academic and school librarians are natural partners for embedding AI-aware information literacy across subjects: co-designed modules, workshops on fact-checking AI output, and curated resource guides. Libraries are already adapting traditional IL frameworks to include generative AI evaluation.

C. Inquiry projects with verification requirements. Require students to (a) produce an initial synthesis with an AI tool, (b) explicitly list and check 4–6 claims via independent sources, and (c) submit an audit log showing prompts and verification steps. This trains both production and verification skills.

D. Assessment redesign. Move away from assessments that reward verbatim reproduction and toward authentic tasks that assess critical evaluation, source triangulation, and the rationale behind accepting or rejecting AI outputs. Policy guidance recommends aligning assessment design with AI’s capabilities and limitations.

The successful integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into education depends not only on access to digital tools but also on the establishment of coherent policy frameworks and systematic professional development opportunities. At the policy level, institutions should adopt transparent guidelines that define the boundaries of acceptable and responsible AI use by both educators and students. Such guidelines are necessary to address issues of authorship, intellectual property, plagiarism, and accountability for AI-

generated errors. Without clear regulations, practices may vary across faculties and courses, leading to inconsistency and potential violations of academic integrity. International organizations, including UNESCO, emphasize that national and institutional policies should balance innovation with ethical safeguards, while also ensuring equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background [3].

Professional development is equally crucial, since many teachers and librarians report that they lack sufficient preparation to navigate the rapidly evolving AI landscape. Training programs should not be limited to technical skills but should integrate critical and ethical perspectives. For instance, educators must acquire strategies for integrating AI tools into classroom practices without undermining students' independent thinking. They also need to understand the risks of «automation bias», where learners may over-trust AI-generated responses. Recent studies highlight the importance of developing AI literacy frameworks that combine technical knowledge, critical thinking, and ethical reflection, enabling teachers to guide students through fact-checking processes and the verification of AI outputs [2; 5].

Collaboration among different professional groups is another significant aspect. Subject teachers, IT specialists, and librarians should work together to embed AI literacy into curricula across disciplines. Research demonstrates that such interdisciplinary cooperation increases students' capacity to evaluate information critically and consistently in diverse learning contexts [4]. Moreover, professional development should be conceptualized as a continuous process, not a one-off event. Communities of practice, peer mentoring programs, and online platforms for resource sharing can help educators remain up to date with new AI tools and teaching strategies [2].

Finally, the effectiveness of both policy and professional development depends on institutional support and adequate funding. Schools and universities must allocate resources for teacher training, provide secure and reliable AI tools, and develop monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the impact of training initiatives. The U.S. Department of Education stresses that sustainable investment in AI integration is essential to ensure equity and accountability across educational systems [1]. Only by aligning institutional policy with ongoing professional development can education systems prepare students to use AI responsibly, critically, and creatively, thus strengthening their overall information literacy and readiness for the digital future. In summary, AI is neither a panacea nor merely a threat. When educators proactively teach the mechanics, limits, and verification practices associated with AI, students gain stronger, transferable information-literacy skills. Embedding AI awareness into existing IL instruction – via short modules, librarian partnerships, inquiry tasks, and aligned assessments – will help

learners read the machine critically rather than absorb it uncritically. The timeline for action is immediate: curricula, teacher education, and institutional policies should evolve now to prepare students for an AI-saturated information landscape.

Educational systems must therefore adopt a balanced approach that integrates the benefits of AI while actively mitigating its limitations. This involves embedding AI literacy into existing curricula and expanding the concept of information literacy to include not only traditional skills of evaluating sources but also critical understanding of how AI models generate outputs. Students should be explicitly taught to identify inaccuracies in AI responses, verify information through triangulation, and reflect on the ethical dimensions of AI-assisted work [2; 4]. In this way, AI becomes not a shortcut to bypass learning, but a tool that deepens learners' engagement with knowledge when used responsibly.

The role of educators and institutions in this transformation cannot be overstated. Teachers must be supported through continuous professional development that equips them with the skills to integrate AI effectively and ethically into teaching practices. At the same time, institutional and national policies must provide clear guidelines for AI use, ensuring transparency, accountability, and respect for academic integrity [1; 3]. When combined, policy frameworks and teacher training create the foundation for sustainable change, preventing misuse while enabling innovation.

Moreover, AI integration in education is not merely a technological question; it is a matter of preparing citizens for democratic participation in a digital society. Students who understand how AI systems work, and who are able to evaluate AI-generated content critically, will be better equipped to navigate the broader information ecosystem where misinformation, deepfakes, and algorithmically curated content increasingly shape public opinion [4; 5]. Thus, teaching AI literacy is not just about improving classroom outcomes, but about strengthening the resilience of societies in the face of digital transformation.

In conclusion, AI offers powerful tools to enhance learning, but its long-term value depends on the readiness of educators, institutions, and policymakers to embed information literacy at the heart of AI adoption. A future-oriented education system must not only teach students how to use AI but also how to question, verify, and ethically apply its outputs. Only by cultivating critical and responsible use of AI can we empower learners to thrive in a world where information is abundant, yet reliability is uncertain. Aligning pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and continuous professional development will ensure that AI becomes a catalyst for deeper learning rather than a threat to intellectual independence.

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