

The Urgency of the Moment

The Evolving Role of Technology in Classrooms

RGV A+ Education Leadership Collaborative | July 21, 2026

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Speaker, Facilitator, Author

THE VISION

Educate Texas will be the **central resource, convener, and driver** of AI education strategy and alignment to ensure that all students thrive across the State of Texas.

RESOURCE

The trusted source for AI guidance, tools, and evidence

CONVENER

The connective tissue linking districts, higher education institutions, education partners, and business leaders

DRIVER

The catalyst moving policy and practice forward statewide

What we will cover...

*The question is no longer whether AI will reshape work.
The question is whether our students will be ready when it does.*

The
Moment

The Culture

The Change

The National Moment

A convergence of forces is reshaping the conversation about technology in schools.

134

AI-related education bills in 31 states

10

Points in the AFT's national AI plan

40+

States with cell phone restrictions

3+

Countries changing course on ed tech

The conversation has shifted from "how fast can we adopt" to "what actually works."

Source: thehighwire.com — "The \$30 Billion Screen Experiment That Failed Our Children"

The World Has Already Changed.

*The question is no longer whether AI will reshape work.
The question is whether our students will be ready when it does.*

40%

of all jobs worldwide affected
by AI

IMF

57%

of U.S. work hours could be
automated

McKinsey

2030

deadline for 39% of key
workforce skills to change

WEF

The Jobs Picture: Disruption and Opportunity

World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report 2025 · 1,000+ employers · 14M+ workers surveyed

92M

jobs displaced by 2030

170M

new jobs created by 2030

Net result: +78 million jobs — but only for workers with the right skills at the right time.

The Disruption Timeline

2024–2027

Peak disruption. Career transitions spike. High uncertainty.

2028–2030

Reskilling intensifies. Human-AI roles solidify.

2031–2035

New equilibrium. Fewer but higher-leverage roles emerge.



Which Jobs Are Growing. Which Are Declining.

WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025 · Projected to 2030

| Fastest Growing Roles

- AI & Machine Learning Specialists
- Data Analysts & Scientists
- Renewable Energy Engineers
- Cybersecurity Professionals
- Care Economy Workers (nursing, social work)
- Educators & Training Specialists
- Creative & Content Producers
- Human-AI Interaction Designers

| Fastest Declining Roles

- Data Entry & Processing Clerks
- Administrative & Executive Assistants
- Cashiers & Ticket Clerks
- Accounting & Bookkeeping Clerks
- Postal & Mail Workers
- Bank Tellers & Related Workers
- Customer Service Representatives
- Graphic Designers (routine work)

The Skills That Will Define the Next Generation

WEF Future of Jobs 2025: 39% of key workforce skills will change by 2030

Technical Skills

AI & Big Data Literacy

#1 fastest-growing skill globally

Analytical & Systems Thinking

Top employer demand across all sectors

Technological Fluency

Networks, cybersecurity, digital tools

Data Reasoning

Interpreting data to make decisions

Human / Durable Skills

Creative & Critical Thinking

Ranked #1 most valued human skill

Resilience & Adaptability

Navigating rapid, continuous change

Curiosity & Lifelong Learning

Self-directed growth in uncertain times

Collaboration & Empathy

The irreplaceable human connection

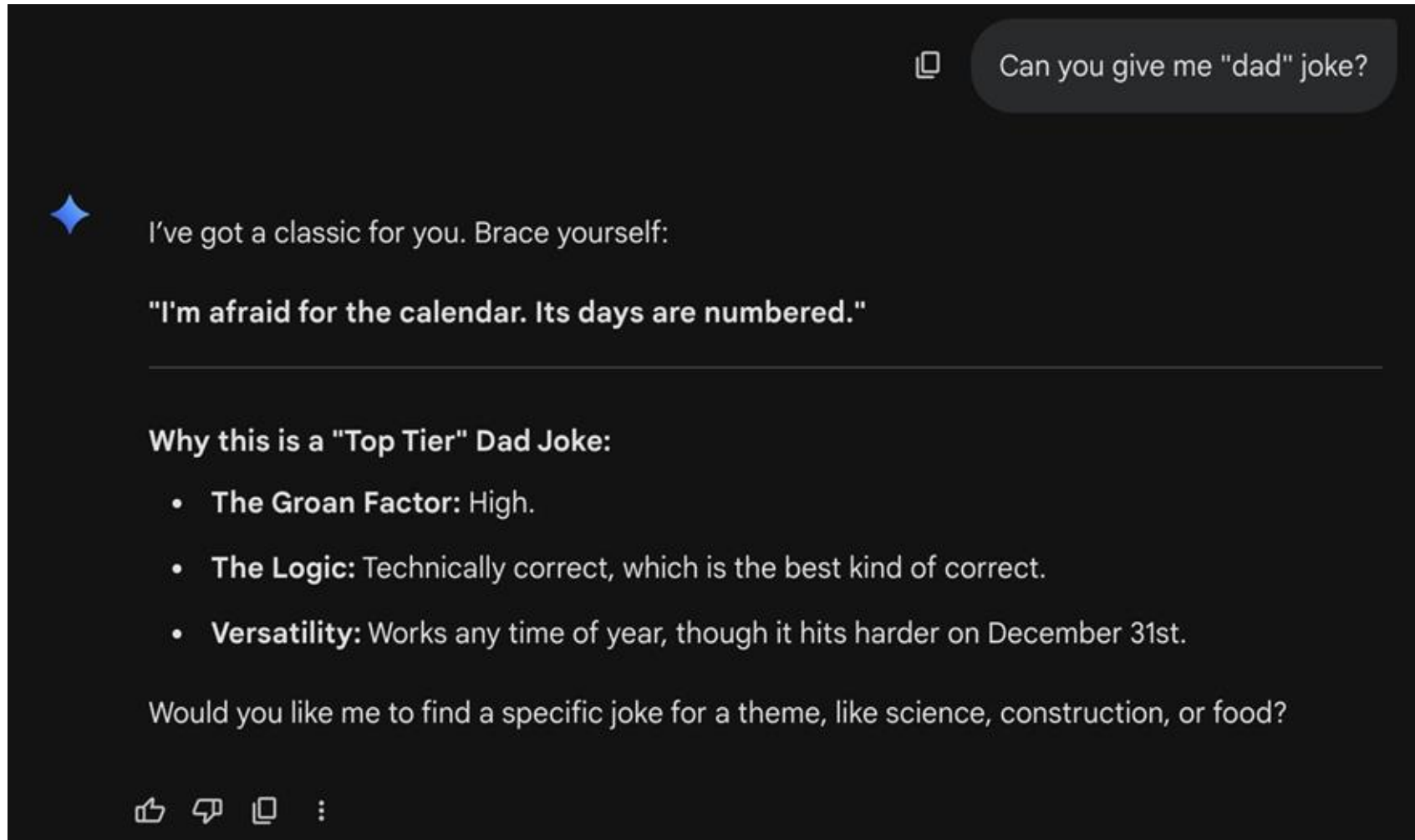
A LITTLE LEVITY...



Before we get into the hard stuff...

I asked AI chatbots for dad jokes. What happened next says a lot about how these tools actually think.

A LITTLE LEVITY...



Feb 2026 — “Can you give me dad jokes with better registers?”

A LITTLE LEVITY...

Give me five "dad" jokes and their probabilities.



Since we're mixing comedy with a little bit of "data," I've calculated the **Probability of a Groan (P_g)** for each of these.

Here are five dad jokes, ranked by their likelihood of making someone roll their eyes.

The "Statistical" Dad Jokes

Joke	Probability of a Groan (P_g)
1. Did you hear about the guy who invented the Lifesaver? They say he made a mint .	82%
2. I used to be a baker, but I couldn't make enough dough .	75%
3. Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything .	91%
4. I'm reading a book on anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down .	88%
5. What do you call a fake noodle? An Impasta .	96%

Five "dad jokes," ranked by probability of making someone groan.

A LITTLE LEVITY...

can you tell me why when i ask for five dad jokes with their probabilities, i get better responses?



It's a great observation, and it actually points to how I process instructions. You've essentially discovered a "prompting hack" without even trying!

Here is why your responses get a significant upgrade when you add a layer of "probability" or data to a simple request:

1. Increased Complexity and Context

When you just ask for "a joke," I pull from a standard list. When you ask for "five jokes with probabilities," you've added **constraints**. To fulfill that request, I have to:

- Synthesize two different styles (humor + data).
- Structure the data (usually in a table or list).
- Create a "persona" (the witty, analytical AI) to explain where those numbers came from.

High-density formatting: tables, bolded headers, structure — even for a joke.

A LITTLE LEVITY...

2. High-Density Formatting

By asking for "probabilities," you trigger my formatting tools. Instead of a single sentence, I'm now looking to provide:

- **Tables** for comparison.
- **LaTeX** for that faux-scientific flair.
- **Bolded headers** for organization.

This naturally makes the response feel more "premium" and easier to read.

3. The "Creative Friction" Effect

Adding a weird or technical requirement (like math) to a creative task (like jokes) forces me to bridge the gap between my logic-based training and my creative training. This "friction" often results in more clever, nuanced writing because I'm trying to justify *why* a joke has a 96% groan rate.

The "Joke Quality Spectrum" — from simple retrieval to creative synthesis.

A LITTLE LEVITY...

The "Joke Quality" Spectrum

In AI terms, you moved the slider from **Simple Retrieval** to **Creative Synthesis**:

Simple: "Tell a joke." → (Retrieves a string).

Complex: "Tell a joke and calculate its 'Eye-Roll Index'." → (Generates a concept).

Would you like me to try this "data-heavy" approach on something else, like ranking the
"Success Probability" of different cheesy pickup lines?

June 2026 — the same request, a few months later.

A LITTLE LEVITY...

When you ask an LLM for jokes and their probabilities, you are actually using a prompt engineering technique called **verbalized sampling**. It forces the model to treat the prompt mathematically rather than just outputting the single safest, most typical response.  Forbes +3

Asking for probabilities improves your results for three main reasons:

- **Stops "Mode Collapse"**: Models are generally trained to avoid edgy or controversial answers, leading them to constantly output the same few cliché jokes. Asking for probabilities breaks this loop because the AI has to map out and score a wider variety of its available knowledge.  X · akshay_pachaar +1
- **Forces Broader Evaluation**: To assign a probability or a confidence score to 5 different jokes, the model is essentially forced to "think out loud" about its dataset. This shifts the model from simply completing a sentence into an analytical mode.  Medium · Jasmeet +1
- **Prevents Typicality Bias**: During training, AI models are tuned to give answers that humans find "normal" or most predictable. Asking for multiple weighted options bypasses this bias and taps into the model's unconstrained creative pool.  X · akshay_pachaar +1

If you want, I can dive deeper into how **temperature settings** work, or we can test this out further. Would you like me to:

“Verbalized sampling” — why probability framing changes the model's output.

A LITTLE LEVITY...

If I ask for 5 dad jokes and their probabilities, will I get better responses?

Good meta-question. The short answer: **sort of, but not in the way you might expect.**

Here's what's actually happening when you ask for probabilities:

What you're asking for

5 dad jokes with probability ratings

What I actually do

I *generate* a number — I don't sample from a probability distribution or have internal confidence scores for jokes. The "probability" is a best-effort quality estimate dressed up as a number.

Partially meaningful

Does the framing improve quality?

Yes — prompting me to *evaluate* jokes implicitly asks me to pick better ones. It nudges toward selection over pure generation.

Mild quality boost

Are the numbers reliable?

Not really. "87% likely to make someone groan" is vibes in numerical clothing — not a calibrated confidence score. Treat them as rough relative rankings at best.

Not calibrated

Better approaches if you want high-quality jokes

- Ask me to generate 10 and pick the best 5
- Ask for jokes rated by specific criteria (pun quality, setup/punchline clarity)

A more thoughtful, less “mode-collapsed” response.

...AND THEN THE PUNCHLINE

Turns out, there's real research behind it.



🏠 | Publications | 2025

Quantifying Human-AI Synergy

Christoph Riedl, Ben Weidmann

The most important determinant of quality and accuracy of the product was the skill of the human in understanding the AI enough to collaborate with it — **Theory of Mind**: the ability to understand what another agent (AI) knows, and intends.

THE VISION

Our institutions must build these skills now
...for all learners.

AI will either increase existing gaps or help to close them.

THE EDUCATION GAP

The students in our schools today will graduate into an AI economy.

92% of students globally are now using AI tools

Only 25% of educators worldwide feel sufficiently trained to use AI in their curriculum

78% of employers are actively hiring for AI-related roles right now

3% of employers believe higher ed is adequately preparing graduates for an AI-driven future

65% of students agree that AI tools are essential for success

51% of students used AI for brainstorming; 53% use AI to get information

**If AI is already making such an
impact, why is there
so much resistance and
confusion?**



REFRAMING THE DEBATE

Both Sides Are Right

And that should tell us something about what we're really debating.

The Concerns Are Real

- NAEP scores declined post-tech adoption
- 88% of teachers report shorter attention spans
- “Cognitive offloading” — students outsource thinking to AI
- Dallas ISD: 24% increase in library checkouts after phone ban

The Potential Is Real

- AI grounded in learning science can elevate teacher practice
- Assistive tech is transforming access for students with disabilities
- Healthiest districts have the clearest instructional vision
- Readiness for post-secondary and workforce increasingly requires AI proficiency

But what if both sides are circling the same problem — and it's not about the technology at all?

AI Didn't Create This Crisis.

It revealed it.

For decades, the dominant instructional model has been: teacher deposits content, student receives content. Students as passive receivers. Teachers as depositors of information.

This has produced a system of disengagement and lower-rung learning. AI didn't cause that — but it has made it impossible to ignore.

If remembering is the primary form of learning, AI renders it completely off-loadable.

***AI is the same as things we have seen before
and simultaneously entirely different.***

Same, yet different

Same

- Tech tool
- Will amplify whatever environment it is dropped into
- 1st and 2nd order change

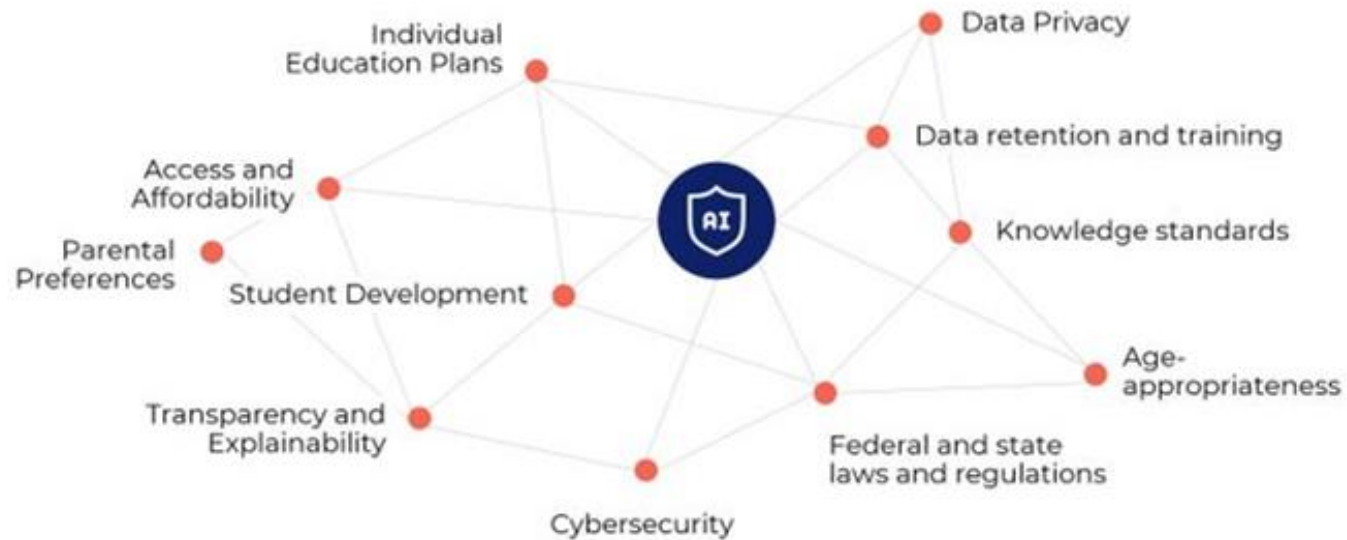
Entirely Different

- Arrival vs. adoption technology
- 10X whatever environment it is dropped into
- Risks of cognitive offloading are far higher



AI Use in Education Presents a Complex Web to Navigate

AI use in education presents a complex web to navigate



Over 60% of change management efforts fail.

***Where do we stand during this time of
such great uncertainty?***

A VOICE FROM THE CLASSROOM



“We didn't really do much on the computer. So we kind of just did games to mess around when we had free time. I remember really big was Crazy Taxis that we used to play. If we found solitaire online, we used to play it.”

— Teacher, 1:1 District, 2014

Technology doesn't transform classrooms...

People do.

We've Seen This Before

EdTech 1.0 taught us this lesson. We just didn't learn it.

EdTech 1.0 (~2010–2020)

Chromebooks became digital worksheets. Smart boards became expensive whiteboards.

A problem not of technology — but of mindset and instructional design.

The AI Moment (2023–Now)

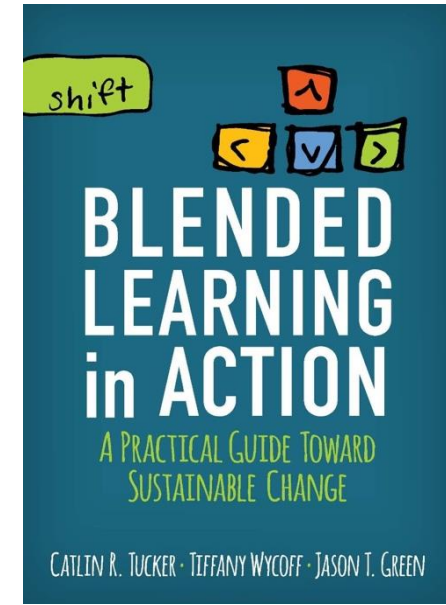
AI chatbots become cognitive crutches. Adaptive platforms become babysitters.

Same pattern. Higher stakes. Same root cause.

The Bloom's Reckoning

If our systems primarily measure remembering and understanding — the lower rungs of Bloom's taxonomy — then AI doesn't just threaten that model. It renders it obsolete. This was the argument of Blended Learning in Action 15 years ago. AI is now making it impossible to ignore.

The most important lever we have is building learning culture.



AGENCY

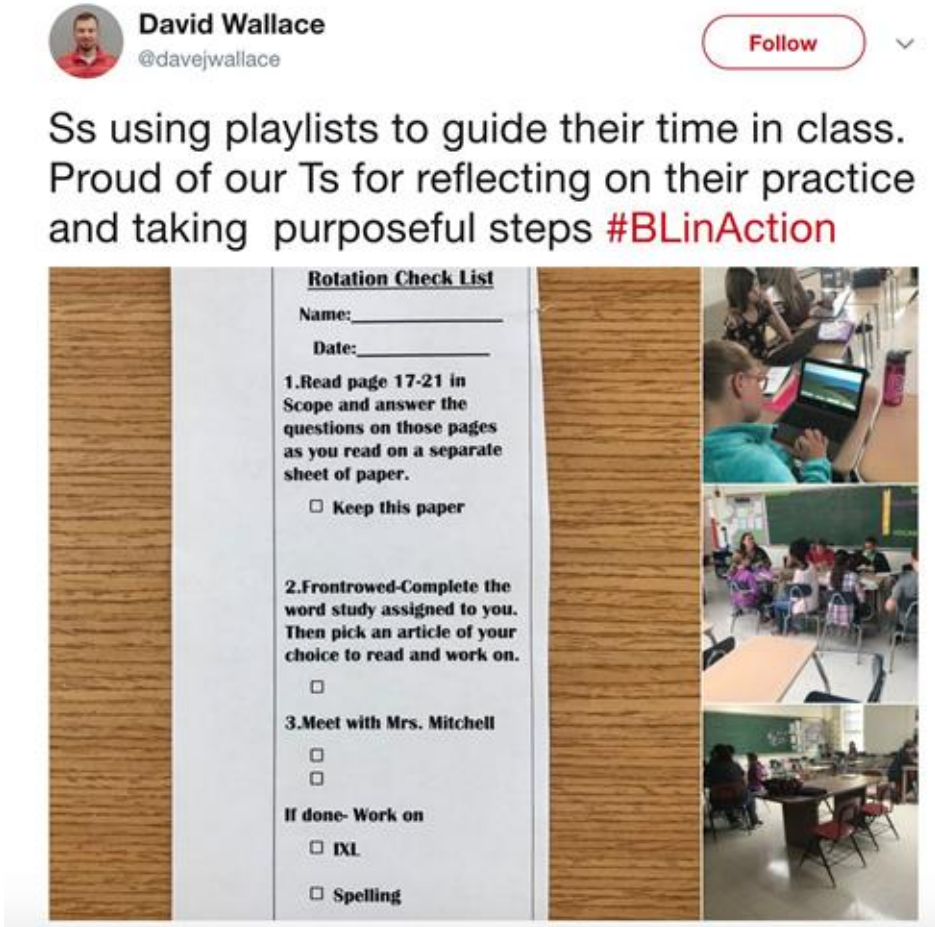
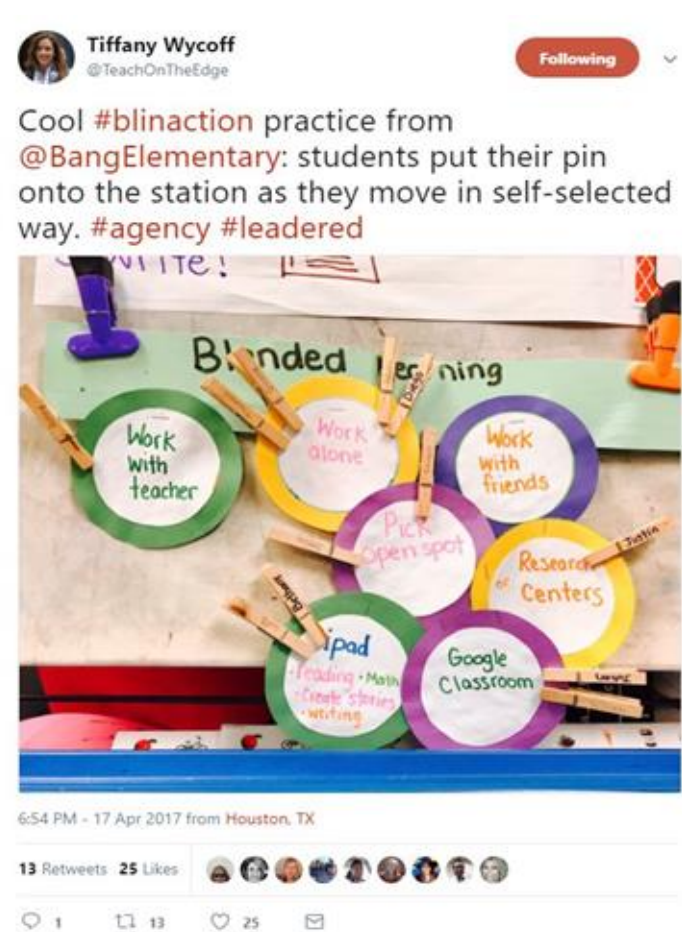
AUTHENTICITY

CONNECTIVITY

CREATIVITY

PERSONALIZATION

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE



#BLinAction in classrooms — playlists, self-direction, purposeful reflection.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE



Authentic audiences: student magazines, real feedback, real pride of ownership.



I wish you curiosity.

— Oprah Winfrey



***Genius is 1%
inspiration and 99%
perspiration.***

— Thomas Edison

The Gift of This Moment

AI is forcing a conversation we've avoided for decades.

The Old Model

- Students as passive receivers
- Teachers as depositors of content
- Assessment = recall
- Technology layered onto broken pedagogy

The Necessary Model

- Students as active owners of learning
- Teachers as generative professionals
- Assessment = application, analysis, creation
- Technology in service of deep pedagogy

This isn't a technology debate. It's a pedagogy reckoning. And AI is making the need for deep pedagogy impossible to ignore.

Active Learning: The Real Antidote

Cognitive offloading is the symptom. Active learning is the treatment.

Cognitive Offloading

Students outsource thinking to AI rather than persisting through challenges.

They are accustomed to immediate rewards online — schoolwork feels comparatively boring.

The problem isn't that students can't pay attention. It's that they're less willing to.

Active, Hands-On Learning

Project-based, experiential, and career-connected learning engages students in applying knowledge to real-world problems.

CTE students build, troubleshoot, collaborate, and explain their reasoning.

This is the opposite of drill-and-kill — and the antidote to cognitive offloading.

The question for this room: does your AI strategy support active learning — or continue outdated practices?

REFLECTION



“Most teachers model their classrooms not by how they learned best but by how they were taught.”

— Dr. Arnetha Ball, Stanford University

What This Means for School Leaders

The gap between the workforce students will enter and the education they're receiving — this is a leadership problem with a leadership solution.

01

This Is Not Someone Else's Problem

Districts, vendors, and policymakers will all play a role. But the building principal is the single most influential lever in whether a school prepares students for the AI economy — or doesn't.

02

The Skills Gap Starts in Your Classrooms

Every skill on the next-generation list — AI literacy, critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration — is built or neglected through the daily instructional choices teachers make.

03

Intentional Leadership Is the Differentiator

Schools that build AI capacity coherently — starting with culture, grounded in pedagogy, supported through real capacity building — produce students who are more ready. That's you.

“Good teaching has always been about preparing students for the world they will inherit — not the one we grew up in. That starts with how we lead.”

Ten Characteristics for Navigating Uncertainty

Leaders who are personally proximate to AI — who use it, question it, and wrestle with its implications — lead transformation more effectively than those who delegate it.

1 Learner

Grows capacity by unlearning old assumptions, treating themselves as the first student of the change.

Peshkam, HBR (2026); Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends

2 Nimble

Runs small pilots, learns quickly, and adjusts — a test-and-learn approach rather than waiting for a perfect plan.

Kotter, Accelerate (2014); MIT CISR

3 Connector

Spans departments, districts, and sectors to build peer networks with shared direction and commitment.

Center for Creative Leadership, DAC framework

4 Communicates Plainly, Often

Repeats a plain-language vision across many channels — most change efforts fail from under-communication.

Kotter, Leading Change (1996)

5 Vulnerable

Names honestly what we don't yet know, building the trust and psychological safety teams need to learn in public.

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6 Calm

Creates perspective and mindfulness while managing emotional reactivity — sets the emotional thermostat for the system.

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Anchors decisions in the best available evidence, letting results — not hype or fear — determine the next step.

Pfeffer & Sutton, HBR (2006)

8 Plays the Long Game

Treats AI leadership as an infinite game: the goal is to keep the institution learning and advancing its mission.

Sinek, The Infinite Game (2019)

9 Thinks Fast and Slow

Knows when quick, intuitive judgment serves, and when consequential decisions demand slower, deliberate reasoning.

Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow (2011)

10 Keeps Humans in the Forefront

Holds a positive vision of human flourishing, dignity, agency, and relationships as the test for every AI decision.

Dr. Meghan Sullivan, Notre Dame — DELTA Framework

NOT ALL CHANGE IS THE SAME

*“AI can make you more efficient. It can make your teachers more effective.
Or it can fundamentally transform what teaching and learning look like.
Which one happens depends entirely on how you lead it.”*

1ST ORDER

Efficiency

Doing the same things faster.

The structure of school doesn't change. Roles don't change. Beliefs don't change. AI reduces friction and gives leaders more time and bandwidth.

Same job, less effort.

2ND ORDER

Practice

Doing things differently.

The way people work begins to change. Teachers make different instructional decisions. Coaching gets sharper. The principal's role starts to evolve.

Better work, new habits.

3RD ORDER

Transformation

Becoming something different.

Fundamental beliefs about teaching, learning, and the purpose of school are challenged and reimaged. Culture, structure, and roles transform.

Different school, different outcomes.

Three Orders of Change: What It Looks Like for a Principal

AI as an efficiency tool, a practice-shifter, and a transformation catalyst — in that sequence.

1ST ORDER · EFFICIENCY

Communications

AI drafts parent newsletters, staff memos, and board reports — cutting writing time from hours to minutes.

Observation Notes

AI synthesizes walkthrough notes from a full day of classroom visits into a structured summary while it's fresh.

Data Analysis

AI surfaces attendance, discipline, and grade patterns in seconds — no more manual spreadsheet work.

Admin Load

AI helps schedule coverage, draft agendas, and respond to routine parent inquiries faster.

2ND ORDER · PRACTICE

Coaching Conversations

AI-synthesized walkthrough data enables specific, evidence-based feedback on instructional patterns.

Instructional Design

AI helps teachers redesign units for blended learning, differentiation, or project-based models.

Personalized PD

AI identifies which teachers need support with which specific practices and informs coaching cycles.

New Teacher Support

AI gives early-career teachers real-time planning scaffolds; principals coach the thinking behind the plan.

3RD ORDER · TRANSFORMATION

Teacher's Role Reimagined

Teachers shift from content deliverers to learning designers; AI handles routine generation.

Personalized Pathways

AI continuously adapts practice and feedback for individual students — no single organizing lecture.

Assessment Redefined

Ongoing, embedded, AI-supported feedback replaces periodic standardized snapshots.

Student Agency at Scale

Students use AI purposefully as part of how they learn and create.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER

***“You cannot lead 3rd order change without moving through the first two.
The sequence is the strategy.”***

1st Order Builds Trust

When teachers see AI saving them real time on real tasks, skepticism drops. You earn the credibility to ask them to go deeper. Skip this and you lose the room before the real work begins.

2nd Order Builds Capacity

Changing practice is hard. It requires modeling, coaching, iteration, and time. If you haven't built the capacity for 2nd order change, deploying 3rd order tools creates chaos — not transformation.

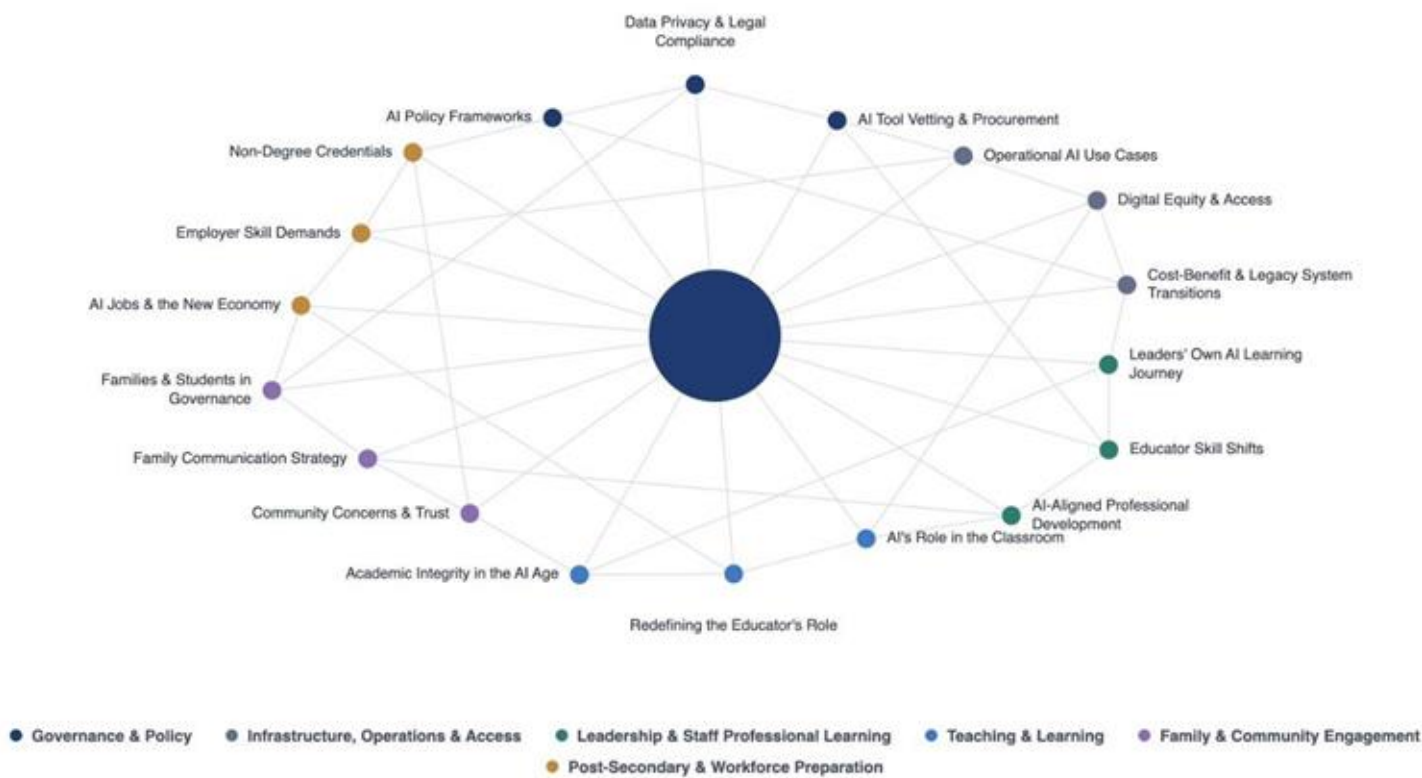
3rd Order Requires Culture

Transformation only happens where people feel safe enough to question fundamental assumptions. Culture is either the gas pedal or the brakes. Build it first — then accelerate.

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY

AI Use in Education Presents a Complex Web to Navigate

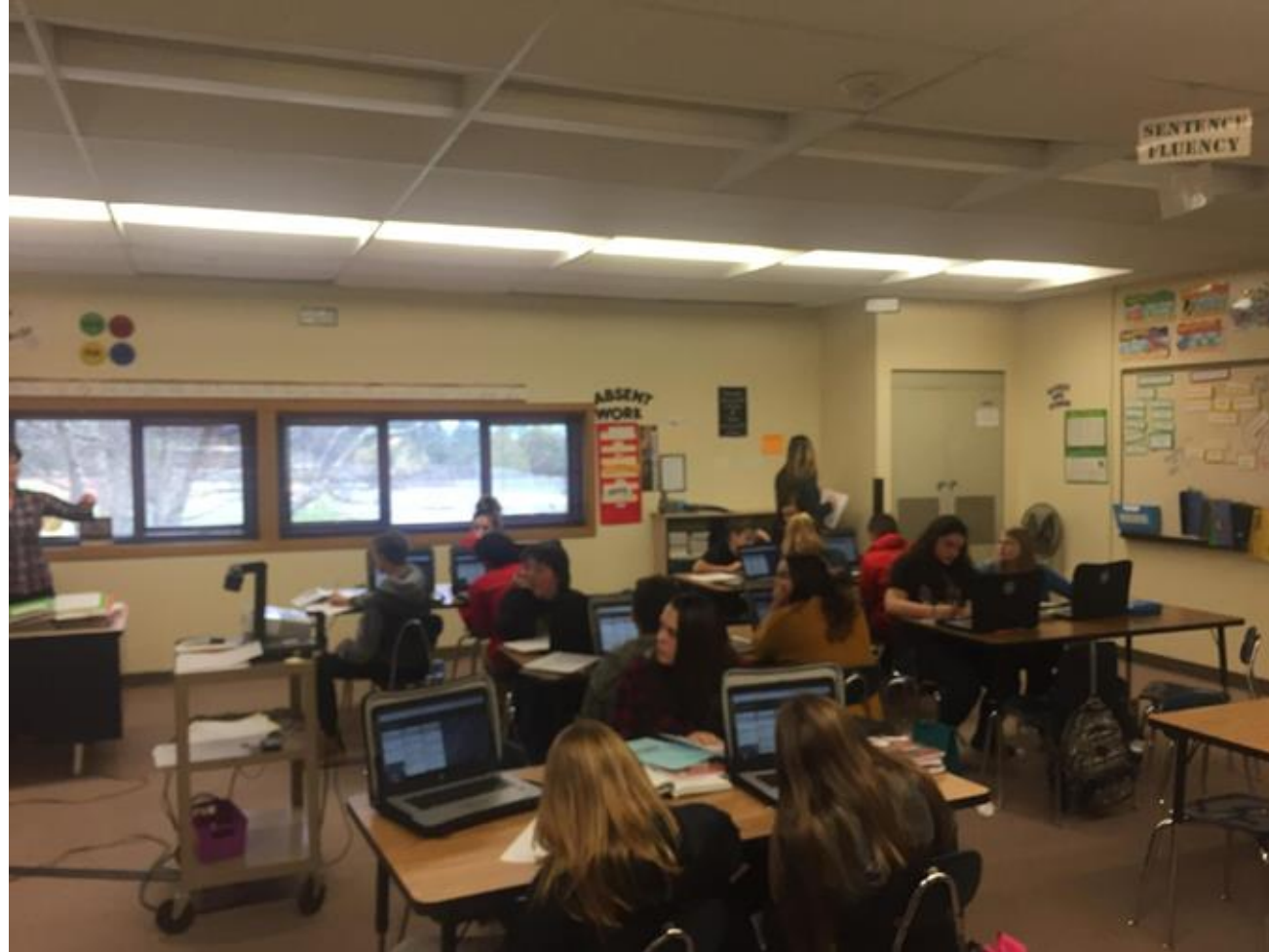
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Some things don't change...

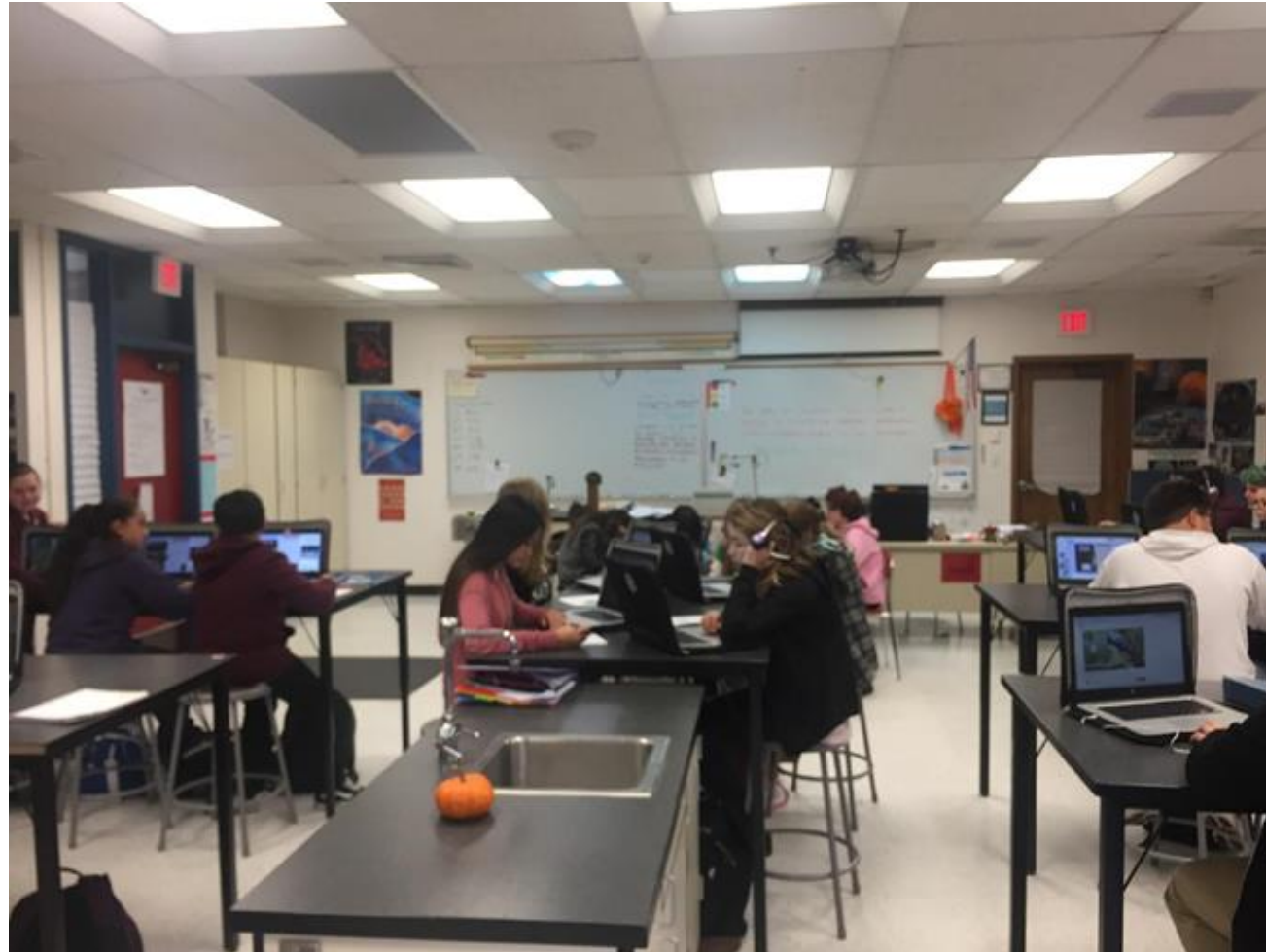
Good teaching is still good teaching.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



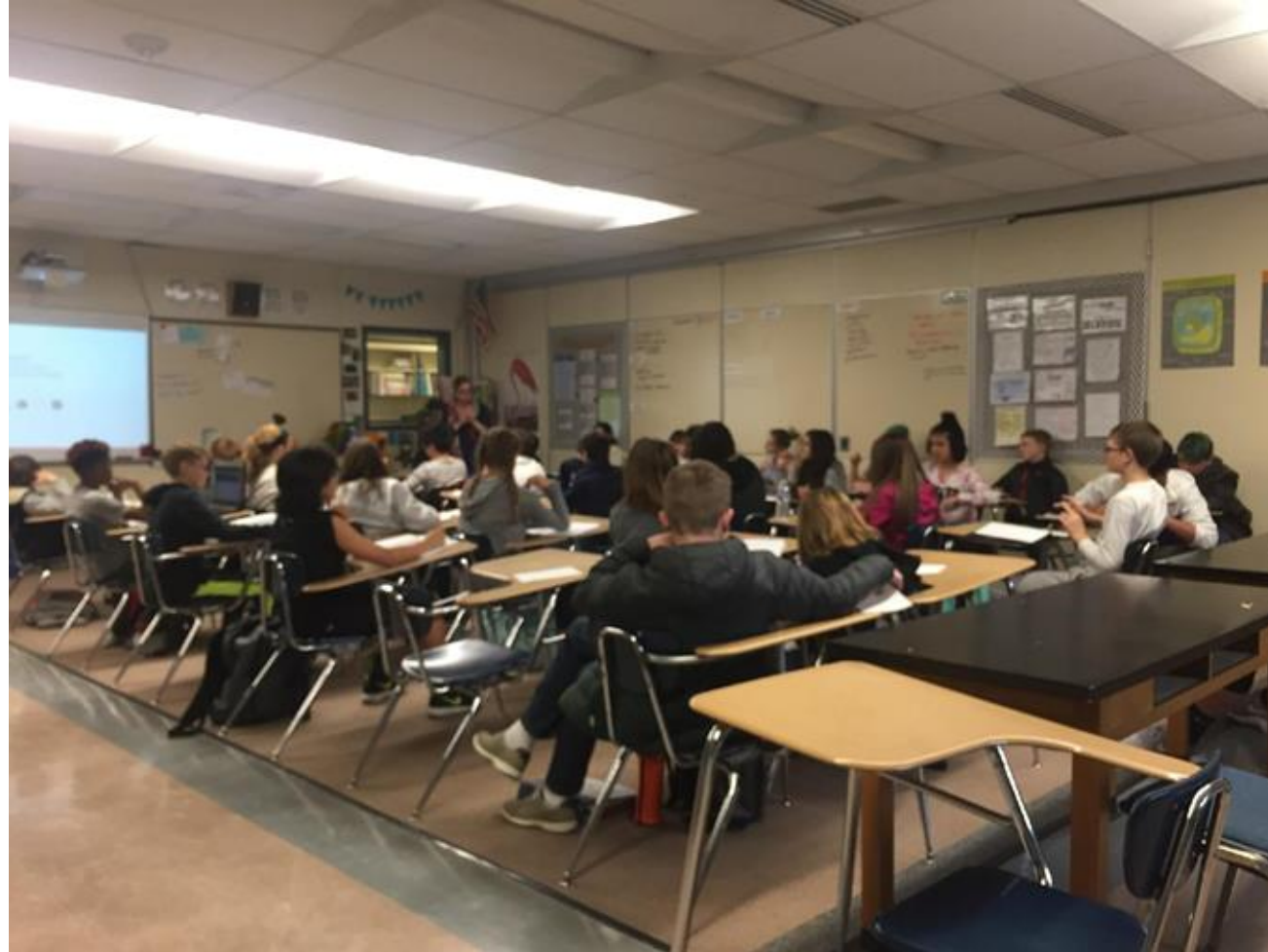
The PAACC framework in action — students at work, teachers as facilitators.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



Purposeful use of devices, grounded in a strong instructional model.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



A bit more teacher-centered...

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



Active, hands-on learning — the antidote to cognitive offloading.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE



Real classrooms. Real students. The work behind the framework.

THE FRAMEWORK

The PAACC Framework Is Good Teaching

PERSONALIZATION



AGENCY

Making decisions



AUTHENTICITY

Relevant learning for
real audiences



CONNECTIVITY

Collaborating with
peers and experts



CREATIVITY

Building skills and
innovating

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING



A new mindset...
***will require us to shift from
deliverers of content to
designers and facilitators of
learning experiences.***

***When a strong learning culture is present, we
do not need to police students' use of AI.***

WITH GRATITUDE



The deepest learning is often the messiest and most uncomfortable. We must seek opportunities to find discomfort and be willing to exist there long enough for breakthroughs to happen.

What we covered...

*The question is no longer whether AI will reshape work.
The question is whether our students will be ready when it does.*

The
Moment

The Culture

The Change



What educators do right now will write the story for the next phases of humanity.

THANK YOU!



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