

Leadership Matters:

**Leading Extension Through the Uneven
Landscape of AI Adoption**

MAY 2026



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Pulse Check



I've heard
of it

I've tried
it

I've used
it a bit

I use it
regularly

I'm highly
skilled



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Presentation Roadmap



Image generated by Adobe Firefly, prompted by Megan Poindexter

- AI: Definition & Current State
- Five Themes in AI Adoption
- EXPAND-AI
- Takeaways
- Q&A



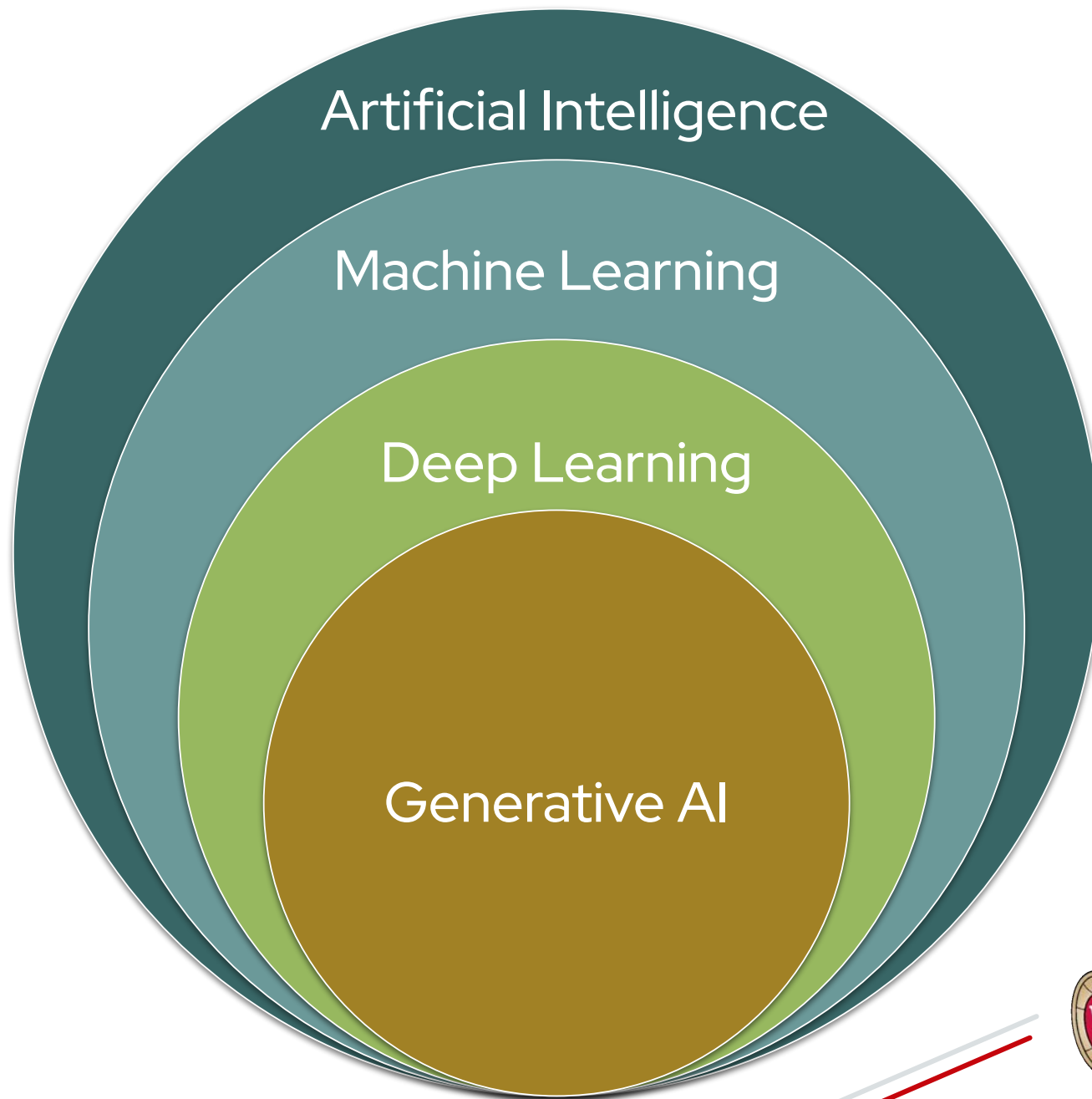


Artificial Intelligence

Machines that are capable of **performing tasks** that typically require **human intelligence** such as learning, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making



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The Rapid Improvement of Language and Image Processing

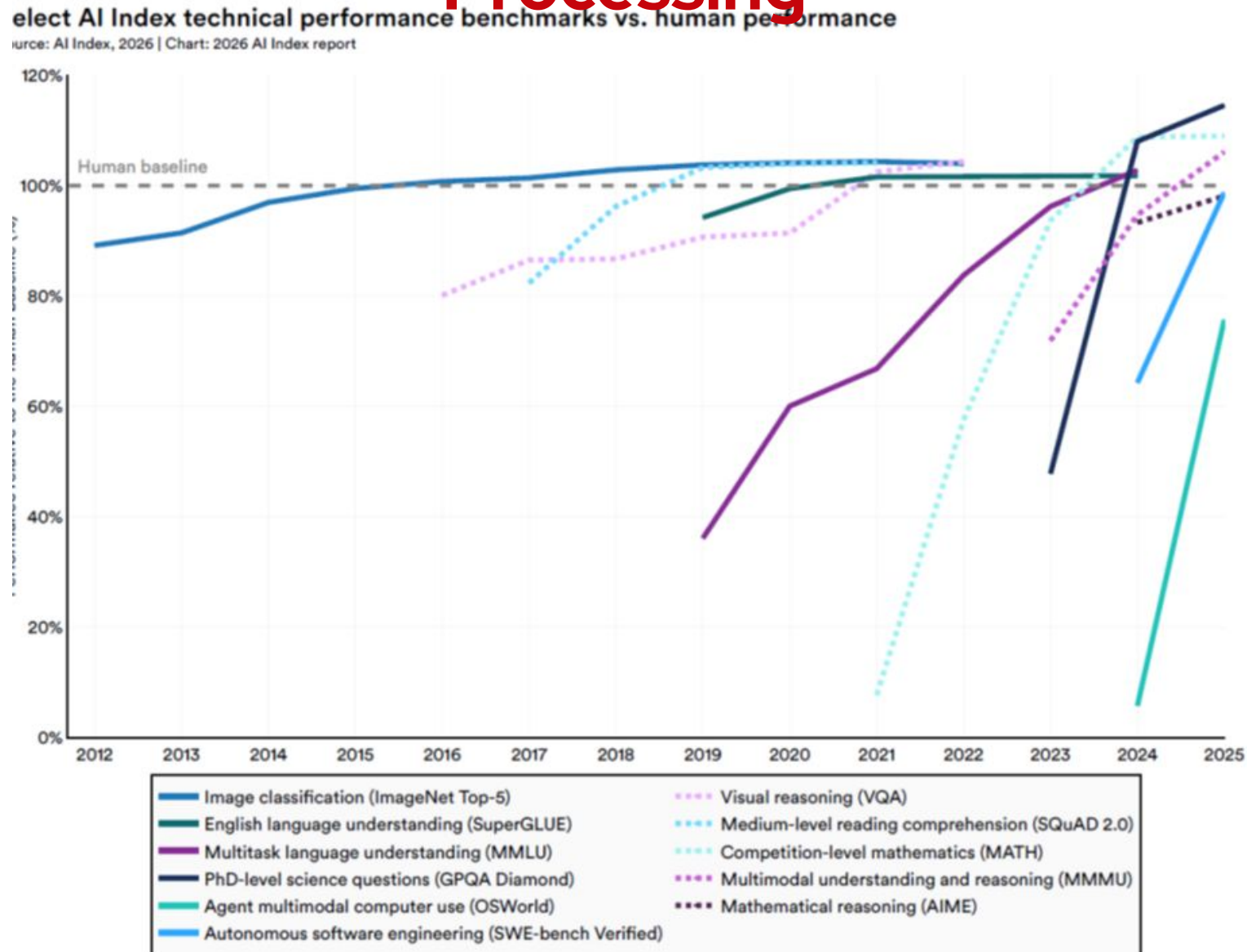


Figure 2.1



Five Practical Lessons Learned on AI Adoption

- Fluency and Adoption is Uneven
- Center Personal and Organizational Ethics
- Narrow the Scope
- Managers Matter
- Peers Matter Even More



AI Adoption as of February 2026

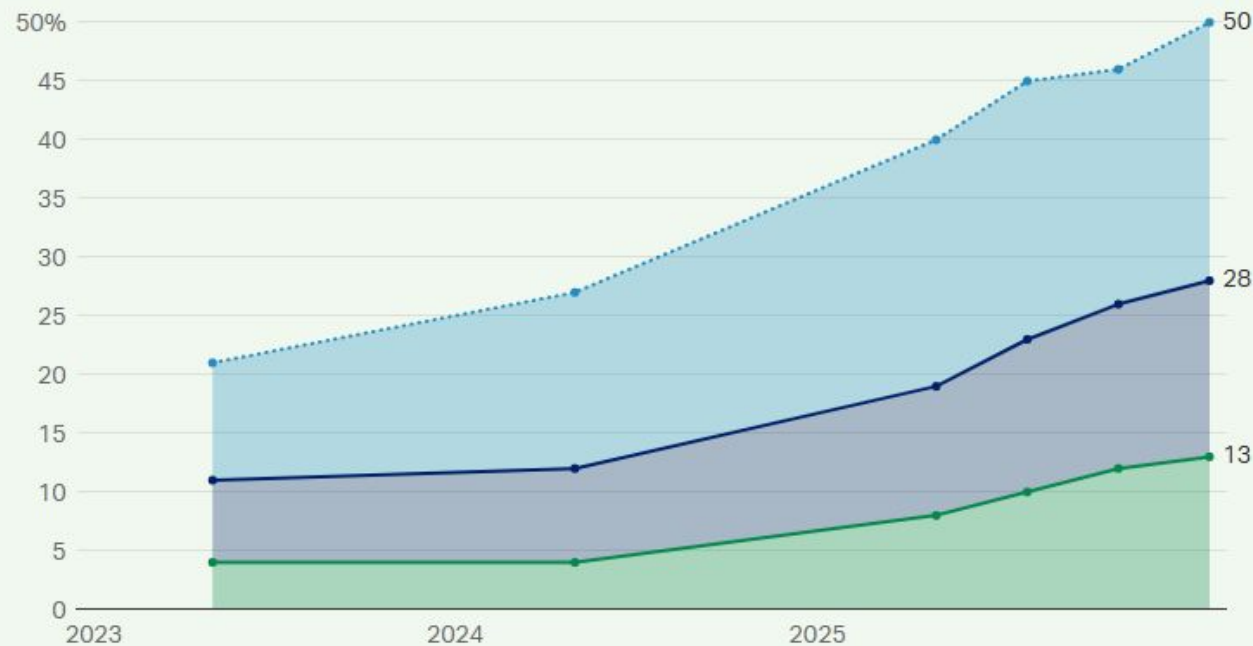
1 in 10 U.S. Employees Use AI Daily in Their Role

How often do you use artificial intelligence in your role?

Use the tabs below to view AI use as grouped trends over time or by response frequency.

U.S. Trend [Q1 2026 Snapshot](#)

— Daily AI users — Frequent AI users - - - Total AI users



Note: "Frequent AI users" includes employees who say they use AI daily or a few times a week. "Total AI users" includes employees who say they use AI daily, a few times a week, a few times a month or a few times a year.

[Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

GALLUP

- 13% of Employees use AI daily
- 2/3 claim it has a positive effect on their work
- **Half** of US employees have not used AI at work

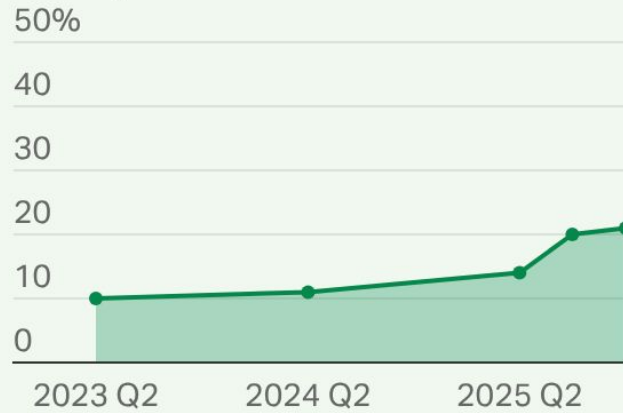


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Public Sector AI Adoption

- **21%** of Employees use AI frequently
- **42%** of Employees use it at least occasionally

% Frequent (Public)



% Total (Public)



Q4, 2025

The figure shows the proportion of the labor force that uses AI frequently (at least multiple times a week) and the total (including those who use it multiple times a year).

GALLUP



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▶ Pillars of an AI Philosophy

- AI Fluency ("Can I?")
- Ethics ("Should I?")
- Policy ("May I?")
- Purpose ("Why?")



▶ Mitigating Risk / Providing Benefit



Data Security



Accountability



Trust





Narrow the Scope

- Increases Success
- Increases Confidence
- Success Compounds



Example: AI in Reporting



- **Appropriate Scope?**
 - Reporting Tool?
 - Expense Reports?
 - Justification Paragraph?
- **Purposeful Friction**
- **Humans-in-the-Loop**





Manager Support

1.7x

as likely to use AI a few times a week or more

7.4x

as likely to strongly agree that AI gives them more opportunities to do what they do best every day

8.7x

as likely to strongly agree that AI has transformed how work gets done in their organization



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AI Mentorship

- Serve as Models of Safe, Relevant, Effective AI
- The Ripple Effect
- Requires Space & Time for Collaboration



Example: Lesson Planning Bot



- Tracking Tools and Experience
- Opportunities for Scale
- Facilitating Collaboration
 - practitioners meetings
 - use case library
 - prompt library



EXPAND Training Program



May
2026



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NETWORKING, AND DEVELOPMENT



▶ Program structure



- The program consists of **nine core virtual sessions**, each focusing on different core competencies. These sessions will include practical assignments, interactive discussions, and breakout sessions for small group learning.
- EXPAND also includes a **3-day in-person meeting** on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus to strengthen the cohort's connections.
- Participants will work on a **capstone project** that addresses real-life challenges they face in their work, and will present their work at their final virtual meeting.

EXPAND-AI Pilot Course



Amber Shanahan



Annie Lisowski



Bill Oemichen



Christian Schmieder



Christine Rybak



Karl Green



John Parrish



John Shutske



Deanna Schneider



Megan Poindexter



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▶ **EXPAND: AI – Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

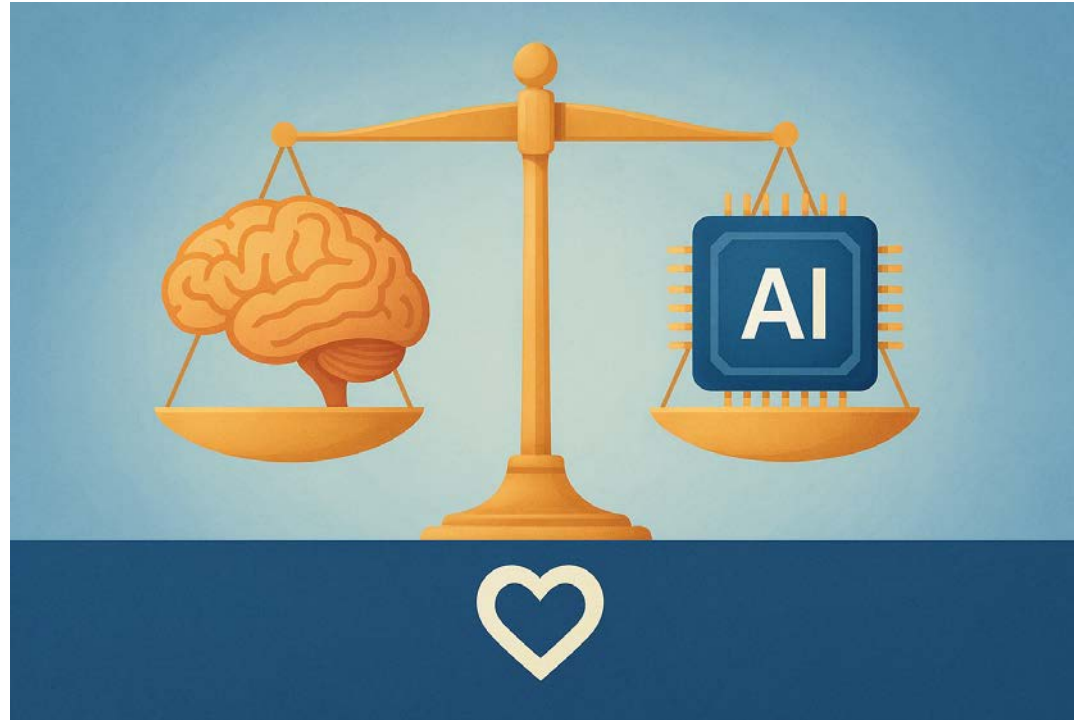
1. **Describe the core principles** of artificial intelligence and its relevance to Extension programming and operations.
2. Identify opportunities to **integrate AI tools into existing programs** in **responsible and ethical ways**.
3. **Evaluate AI tools** for accuracy, inclusivity, and alignment with Extension's public mission.
4. Experience and practice **integrating AI tools into teaching and training** to enhance learning and engagement.
5. Apply AI tools through an **Action Learning Project (ALP)**, demonstrating how AI can increase efficiency, creativity, or reach within a current Extension effort.
6. **Build connections and confidence** through **shared learning, reflection, and experimentation in a supportive virtual cohort**.



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Center Personal and Organizational Ethics

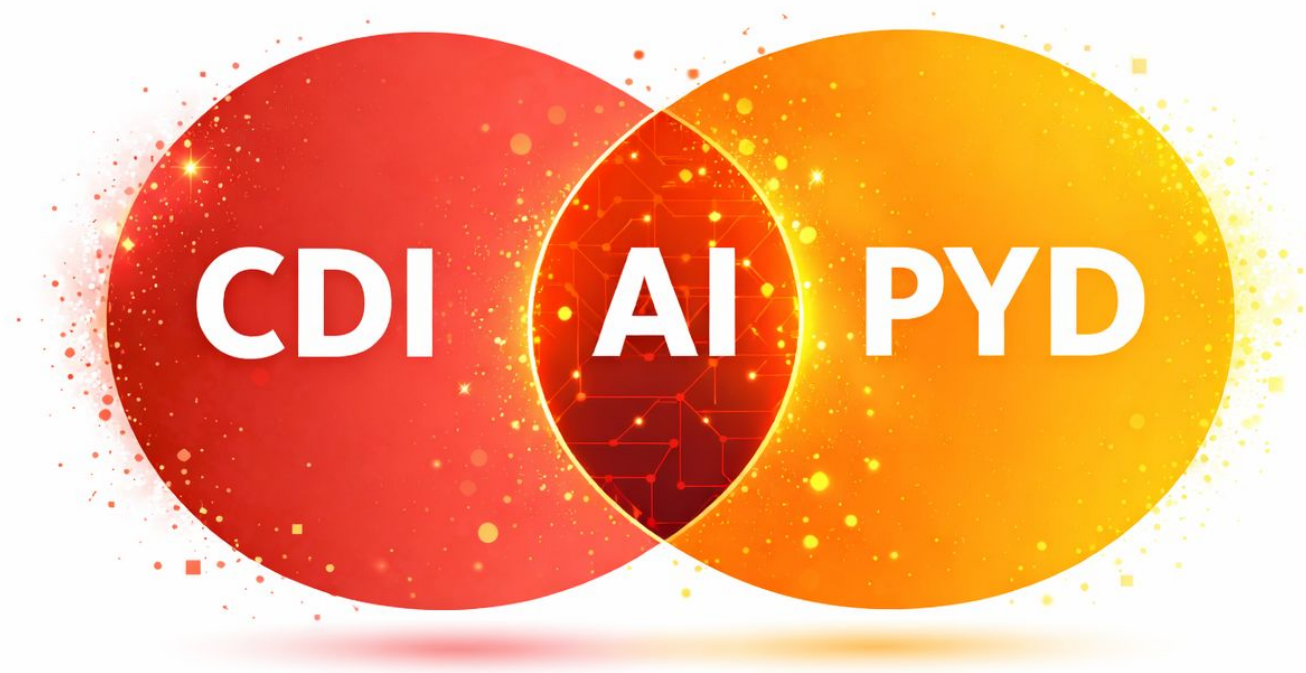


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Narrow Scope



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Narrow Scope

V	Visible Learning	Does this use of AI make thinking, feedback, or understanding more transparent?
A	Alignment	Does this activity serve a specific course goal or cognitive process?
L	Low-stakes	Can this be a low-risk, feedback-oriented task rather than a graded one?
U	User-focused	Does this AI use match my students' current disciplinary knowledge, digital fluency, and critical thinking abilities?
E	Ethical and Equitable	Does this activity maintain trust, integrity, and accessibility for all students?



Takeaways: Practical Tips for Implementation



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Bottoms Up Implementation

- Understand the Work
- Skill Building
- Co-creating Solutions



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Enabling Constraints

- Design Thinking
- Small Scale
- Internal or External





How managers matter

- Creating Space for Learning
 - 1-1 Meetings
 - Scheduled Training Time
 - Collaborative Exploration
- Modeling and Encouraging Use



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Centering Ethics

How does AI use fit into the mission of Extension, or your Institute, of your role?



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extension.wisc.edu/community-development/



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