



# ElevatED:

Ascend and Transform Your World

June 15 - 16, 2026

MI-ACE Women's Network Conference Breakout Session  
"Lead the AI, Don't Follow It: A Practical Literacy Framework for Higher Education"

FIRST EDITION

# The Learn-It-All *Educator*

*A Guidebook for Training Brains,  
Not Replacing Them*

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THE AGE OF AI DOES NOT MAKE GOOD TEACHING OBSOLETE.

IT MAKES GOOD TEACHING ESSENTIAL.

Explore the concepts in [an interactive journey](#).



## How Does One Earn the Name "Deep-Minded"?

Ivar the Boneless. Bjorn Ironside. Harold Bluetooth.

# Unn's Crossing

Unn the Deep -Minded, a legendary Norse chieftainess, earned her epithet through an epic feat: leading her entire clan across the treacherous North Atlantic to settle in Iceland.

Her journey was not just a physical one; it demanded profound strategic thinking, meticulous planning, and unwavering leadership to navigate unknown waters and establish a new home.

This ancient saga provides a powerful metaphor for the challenges we face today in leading our institutions through the uncharted territories of artificial intelligence.

After losing her husband and son, Unn secretly commissioned a ship. She distributed land to followers, freed enslaved people, and built a new community.



# AI Is the Modern Longship

Clinker -built for strength, shallow draft for reach —turning a hostile ocean into a highway.  
**AI belongs to this lineage.** But many in higher education are still on the shore.

1

Denial

"AI doesn't matter for my discipline."

2

Anger

"It threatens academic integrity."

3

Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance

"If I write strict enough policies..."

4

Adaptation

Become **deep-minded** about the vessel: not deep -afraid of it.



# The Ship Is Not Neutral

AI carries the biases of its training data: A default voice, a default discipline, a default institution.

The same task yields different output when called up in a cost-free tool versus a paid account.



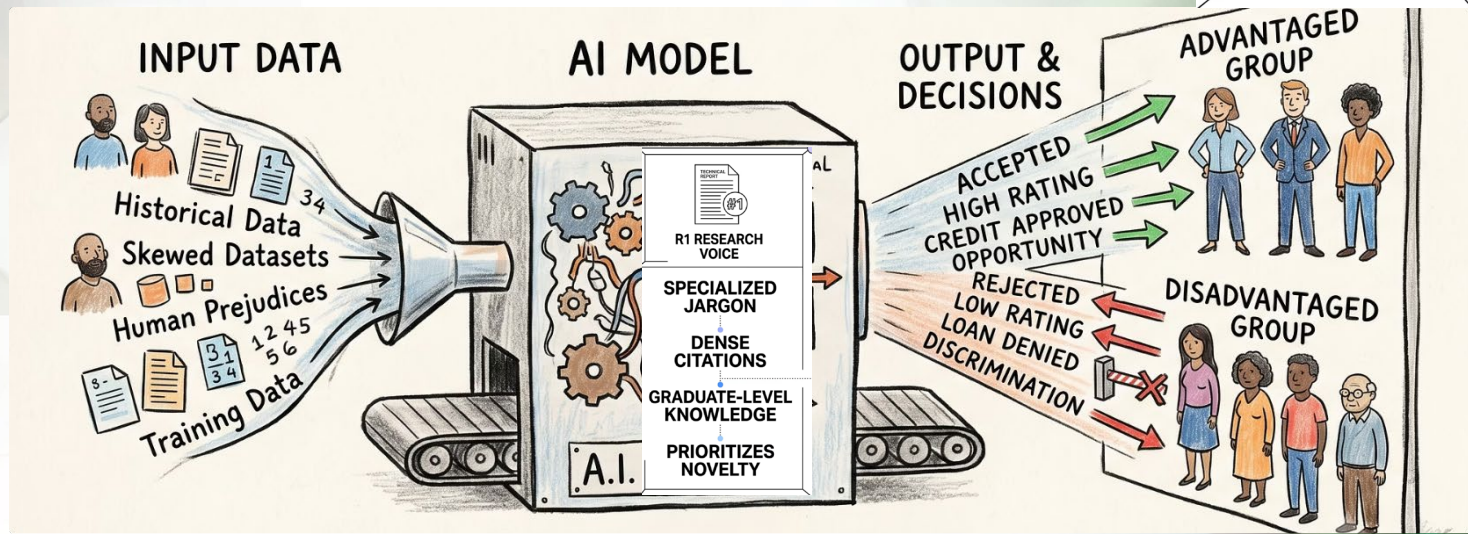
COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

SCAFFOLDED SUPPORT

DIVERSE STUDENT BACKGROUNDS

PRIORITIZES CLARITY



# Cognitive Triage: The Strategic Solution



## Identify

Distinguish tasks where perfection adds no value



## Delegate

Strategically deploy AI on capped-payoff work



## Invest

Pour cognitive energy into high-impact pedagogy

The paradox: AI can atrophy the brain if used carelessly, but the solution isn't avoidance: it's strategic deployment.

Not all tasks deserve equal cognitive energy. The key is distinguishing **harvesting** (transactional, capped payoff) from **seeding** (growth -oriented, uncapped payoff).

Critical warning: AI filtering is powerful but dangerous. Always verify what AI surfaces: filtering vs verification.

FRAMEWORK 1

# Cognitive Triage: FLUFF vs. SPARK

Not all tasks deserve your full attention. The question is: **what are you delegating, and what are you protecting?**

## FLUFF — Delegate This

- Formatting
- Layouts
- Under-the-hood tasks
- Filing & organizing
- Filtering information

This is *cargo*. Let AI carry it.

## SPARK — Protect This

- Specific judgment
- Persuasive argument
- Authentic voice
- Rigorous analysis
- Keen insight

This is *navigation*. It stays with the human captain.

# FLUFF: Work Worth Delegating to AI



## Formatting

Polishing syllabi, fixing citations, ensuring consistent fonts. A syllabus at



## Layouts

Designing banners, perfecting slides, creating headers. A serviceable layout communicates; perfection doesn't teach better.



## Under-the-hood

Fixing broken links, troubleshooting formats, updating embedded media. Necessary but should not consume cognitive energy.



## Filing

Organizing data, categorizing feedback, cleaning gradebooks. Pure administration—no neural pathways strengthened.



## Filtering

Sifting through search results, scanning articles, finding patterns. AI excels at this—use it to narrow the field.

# SPARK: Ideas Worth Thinking

Where human judgment, creativity, and rigor produce returns that AI cannot replicate



## Specific

Investment with high potential return in localized knowledge that AI cannot replicate



## Persuasive

Pushing into Unit 2 territory: complex, controversial, nuanced applications



## Authentic

Nurturing unique voice rather than harvesting what is typical and expected



## Rigorous

Moving beyond transactional tasks to verification that builds neural connectivity



## Keen-Insight

Where a single original idea can transform a project, course, or career

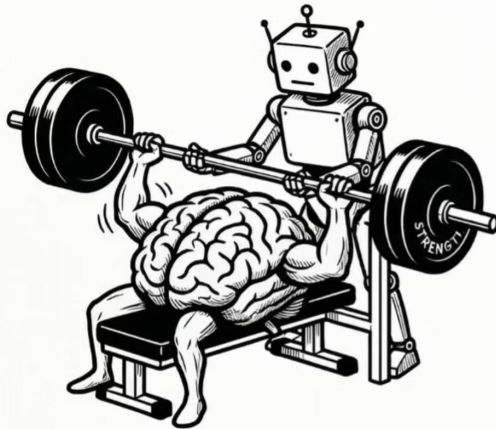
# The Cognitive Gym

Sweller's cognitive load theory identifies three types:

**intrinsic** (the real learning), **extraneous** (the noise), and **germane** (the productive struggle).

AI as a shortcut removes germane load. AI as a coach protects it.

AI can do some thinking for humans. You don't go to the gym to watch someone else lift the weights.



- **Progressive overload assignments** : Make the problem harder based on student capacity instead of making the answer easier
- **Persona Simulation:** Critique this proposal as a CFO who hates the risk profile. Where are the leaks in the budget?
- **The Pre-Mortem:** Imagine this project fails in 6 months. Tell me exactly why it happened and what signals we ignored today.
- **The Skeptic's Lens:** Provide feedback on this presentation from the perspective of someone who hates the idea of AI integration. What are their strongest points?
- **Complexity Compression:** Explain my strategy using the Pareto Principle. What

# The AI Audit

## FRAMEWORK 3

**Following AI** means accepting its first output. **Leading AI** means interrogating it first.

01

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### Assumptions

What did AI take for granted?

02

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### Sources

Dem and URL + direct quote. Verify existence.

03

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### Counter-Evidence

Find one credible source that disagrees.

04

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### Auditing

Re-compute math manually. Trace logic.

05

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### Cross-Model

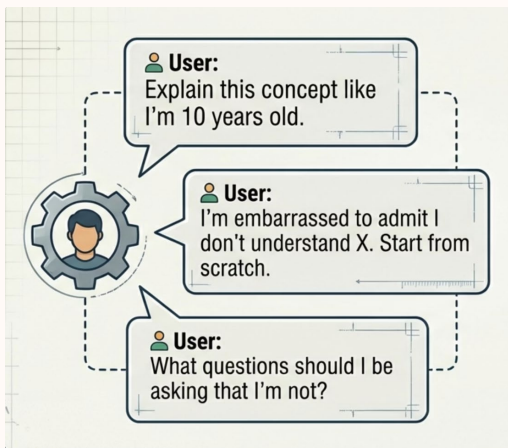
Verify across different AIs: Perplexity vs. Gemini.

FRAMEWORK 4

# The Intelligent Simpleton

Expertise becomes an ego trap when the environment changes unexpectedly.

When your credibility depends on knowing, it takes courage to say: *"I don't know how this works yet"*



⚠️ The visibility cost of learning publicly is not equally distributed. Adjuncts risk non-renewal. Teaching-intensive faculty have no release time. Women are judged differently for visible mistakes.

Unneeded **legal permission**, not just bravery. Who builds the structures that let your community be publicly deep -minded?

# The Learn-It-All Leader

## Know-It-All vs. Learn-It-All

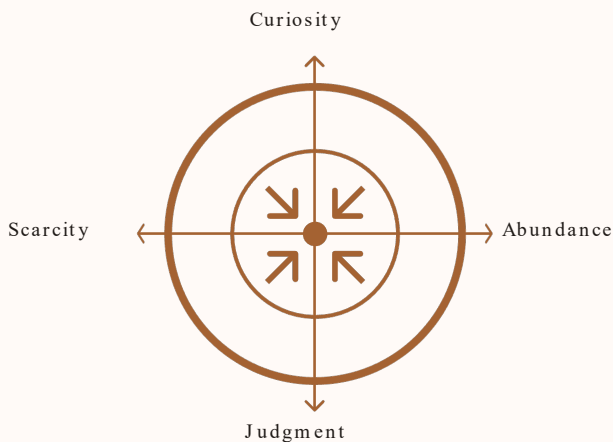
Higher education rewards expertise. But knowledge changes faster than ever, the expert who cannot become a beginner again is an expert with an expiration date.

*"The learn -it -all does better than the know -it -all."*

—Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft

The goal: shift from **know -it -all** to **learn -it -all** , not because expertise is unimportant, but because expertise without systematic humility becomes obsolescence.

[The Learn -It -All Educator | A Guidebook for Training Brains, Not Replacing Them with AI](#)



# The Deep-Minded Legacy

Unn's structural decisions compounded over a thousand years .  
Modern Iceland:  
and 1 in 10 will publish one.



## The Rules Compound

What you build structurally  
outlasts what you build  
individually

## Standards Elevate Everyone

Viking men were judged by  
the culture's intellectual  
standards

## Your Institution's Ask

Who builds the culture that lets leaders be publicly deep -minded?

# What This Presentation Does Not Address About AI

## On the Evidence Base

The neuroscience research cited (Kosmyna et al., 2025) is a preprint, not yet peer-reviewed. Claims about cognitive benefits and harms of AI use remain emerging science, not settled fact.

## On Environmental and Labor Costs

AI systems consume significant energy, water, and computational resources. The "free" tools educators and students use are subsidized by venture capital, data extraction, and - in some cases - underpaid content moderation labor.

## On Data and Privacy

When educators and students interact with AI platforms, that data may be used to train future models or inform commercial products. The implications for academic privacy and intellectual property remain unresolved.

## On the Case for Resistance

Legitimate pedagogical alternatives exist: handwritten work, synchronous assessment, AI-free course designs, and curricula that deliberately preserve struggle without technological scaffolding.

## On Academic Freedom

Nothing in this presentation should be read as pressure to adopt AI. Educators have the right to design AI-minimal or AI-free courses based on their disciplinary values and pedagogical philosophy.

## MI-ACE: *"Lead the AI, Don't Follow It: A Practical Literacy Framework for Higher Education"*

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### Presentation slides:

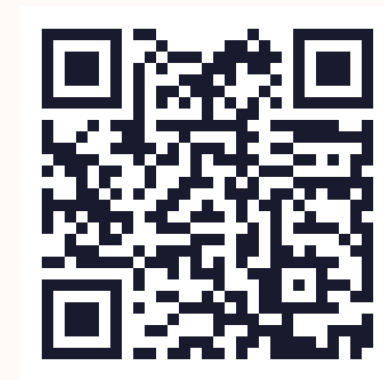
- **Gamma Slides:** [Lead the AI, Don't Follow It](#)
- **Interactive Exploration:** [Concept Slides](#)

### Free OER Edition (Ch 1–4):

- **Companion site:** [The Learn-It-All Educator](#)
  
- **Ch 1: Cognitive Triage** — FLUFF/SPARK framework for workload
- **Ch 2: The Intelligent Gearbox** — Prompting progression, basic to agentic
- **Ch 3: The Cognitive Gym** — AI Audit, VINE, progressive overload
- **Ch 4: The Intelligent Simpleton** — Ego barriers, neuroplasticity

### Complete Edition (Kindle & Print)

- **Companion site:** [Publisher Site](#)
  
- **Ch 5: Ogres Have Layers** — Four Layers of AI + Displacement Clock
- **Ch 6: Jobs & the New Frontier** — Nine engines of AI job creation
- **Ch 7: AI Companions** — When AI crosses from tool to relationship
- **Workbook & Action Guide** — Structured team sessions



Explore the concepts in [an interactive journey](#)

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