



AI Support for Standards-Based Instructional Workflows

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Introduction to This Guide

Using AI to Strengthen Standards-Based Instructional Practice

When used intentionally, AI can function as a cognitive partner and team member that reduces planning friction while preserving professional judgment. With AI support, educators can focus more time on instructional quality, responsiveness, and student learning. They can use their professional judgment and implement best practices to meet their students' learning needs.

This standards-based instructional workflow positions AI not as a replacement for teacher expertise, but as a planning and analysis accelerator that supports quality across the full instructional cycle. The point of this guide, therefore, is **not to replace teacher expertise** but to **enable teachers to use their expertise** more efficiently and productively.

Value of This Workflow

This workflow offers value in four critical ways:

1. **Instructional Coherence**

AI supports tighter alignment among standards, learning targets, instructional tasks, and assessments, which can reduce instructional “drift” and misalignment to standards and student needs.

2. **Cognitive Load Reduction**

By offloading routine synthesis, drafting, and pattern-based tasks, teachers are freed to focus on their professional decision-making responsibilities and interacting with students.

3. **Equity and Responsiveness**

Data analysis, differentiation, and misconception analysis help teachers respond more effectively to diverse learner needs without lowering expectations.

4. **Consistency Across Classrooms and Teams**

Shared workflows and prompts support common instructional language and expectations while allowing for local adaptation.

How to Use the Workflow and AI Prompts Effectively

This workflow specifically and intentionally preserves teacher agency, as teachers are the experts in their students' learning needs. Teachers remain responsible for instructional decisions, student relationships, and classroom implementation.

To maximize the value of this AI-supported workflow, teachers should use the workflow as a planning framework, not as a checklist. Strategies for effective use include the following.

1. Use AI first for alignment, sequencing, and differentiation, then finalize with professional expertise.
2. Start with standards and learning targets, then use AI prompts to clarify intent before selecting materials or activities.
3. Use one prompt per decision, rather than attempting to generate entire lessons in a single interaction to allow for review and refinement throughout the process.

4. Use prompts sequentially according to the workflow to avoid the need for entering the same contextual information repeatedly.
5. Use prompts iteratively, refining outputs based on professional judgment, knowledge of students, and local context.
6. Treat AI-generated content as draft thinking, not final products, especially for instructional decisions involving rigor or equity. Efficiency gains are highest when AI supports thinking processes, not just artifact production.
7. Embed AI use into existing planning routines, such as PLCs, unit planning sessions, or lesson study cycles.

Finally, to get the most efficient use of this workflow and AI prompts, reuse and adapt prompt templates across lessons, units, and content areas. As a final step, review any outputs, developmental appropriateness, cultural relevance, and instructional rigor.

Potential Next Steps for Schools and Districts

To move from isolated classroom experimentation to sustained instructional impact, schools and districts should intentionally

- Develop policies regarding appropriate use of AI for instructional purposes,
- Design or provide AI-aligned instructional planning guidance and templates, and
- Provide access to professional learning opportunities focused on using AI to implement content standards, curriculum frameworks, and instructional expectations.

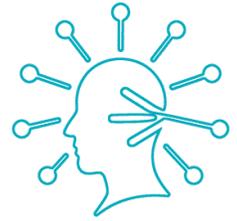
When schools or districts embed approved AI prompts directly into lesson planning templates or digital planning tools, they support increased consistency and instructional efficacy. Rather than requiring teachers to invent prompts or experiment independently, districts can curate and vet prompt libraries aligned to local priorities, grade levels, and content areas.

The need for professional development cannot be understated. High-impact professional development should model how AI supports instructional decisions and delivery. School administrators can bring in expert facilitation that connects AI-supported practices to learning science, assessment literacy, and curriculum design principles. Professional development that aligns with this approach, rather than training on AI products, helps educators evaluate AI outputs critically rather than accepting them at face value.

One powerful strategy building teachers' capacity to use AI effectively is to pilot AI-supported planning within PLCs and instructional coaching cycles. Through their PLCs, teachers can develop shared norms, language, and expectations for use. They can examine AI-generated artifacts alongside student work, assess instructional impact, and refine both prompts and instructional strategies over time.

Finally, aligning AI use with existing instructional frameworks, such as MTSS or UDL, ensures that AI strengthens rather than fragments instructional systems. Expert-level support is essential in this phase to ensure coherence, sustainability, and fidelity to instructional priorities.

ARE YOUR SCHOOLS READY FOR AI?



Empowering Educators, Administrators, and Leaders to Harness Artificial Intelligence for Learning, Leadership, and Policy

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS HERE—ARE YOU READY?

Whether you're teaching in a classroom, leading a school, or building a learning community, AI can help you work smarter, lead more effectively, and raise student achievement. Professional development and consulting services provide practical and strategic support for integrating AI in your schools. From teaching students to developing AI policy, you need to be ready now!



FOR TEACHERS

Work smarter, Teach better, Tailor instruction, Help students grow



FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Lead instruction, Accelerate growth, Promote responsible use



Save Time

Write lesson plans, create rubrics, grade student work, and draft parent communications in seconds



Enhance Instructional Leadership

Analyze lesson plans, generate monitoring tools, tailor individualized teacher support, support the application of best practices



Improve Instruction

Get differentiated strategies, language scaffolds, and instant feedback ideas



Support School Improvement

Analyze data, set goals, create action plans, and guide school improvements



Boost Achievement

Analyze data, set goals, design authentic assessments, increase subject area mastery



Lead with Confidence

Understand education trends, strengthen knowledge, communicate clearly

AI is more than a shiny new toy!

Use AI efficiently, effectively, and ethically to empower teachers and help students learn.

CUSTOMIZED WORKSHOPS - STRATEGIC PLANNING - POLICY CONSULTING

Training tailored to your needs and audience, from PreK teachers to school & district leadership to your school community. Support for instructional delivery, leadership, and AI policy development, based on **30+ years in education leadership at all levels!**

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Steps and Sample Prompts for a Standards-Based Workflow

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
1. Analyze Learner and Performance Data	Review formative, interim, and summative data to identify student strengths, misconceptions, readiness levels, and equity considerations.	AI can aggregate and summarize assessment data to identify trends, gaps, and subgroup patterns.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional data analysis assistant for K–12 education with expertise in assessment literacy and equity analysis.</p> <p>Given the following assessment data: <i>[Upload or paste assessment data]</i></p> <p>And the following context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level(s): <i>[grade]</i> • Subject area: <i>[subject]</i> • Assessment type: <i>[formative, interim, benchmark]</i> • Student subgroup indicators (if available): <i>[e.g., IEP, EL, race/ethnicity, gender, program participation]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize overall performance trends related to proficiency and growth. • Identify content- or standard-specific gaps where student performance is consistently weak. • Analyze item-level patterns to surface common misconceptions or skill breakdowns. • Compare performance across student subgroups, noting gaps and strengths without deficit framing. • Highlight instructionally actionable insights that could inform immediate reteaching or instructional adjustments. <p>Present the results in a structured summary with sections for Overall Trends, Key Gaps, Subgroup Patterns, and Instructional Implications.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
2. Identify Priority Content Standards	Select the specific state or national standards that define the intended learning outcomes and cognitive demand for the lesson.	AI can map lesson topics to relevant state or national standards and identify prerequisite or vertically aligned standards.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional planning assistant with expertise in K–12 standards alignment and learning progressions.</p> <p>Given the following lesson topic or objective: <i>[Add the lesson topic, unit focus, or draft learning objective here]</i></p> <p>And the following context (if available):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level: <i>[grade]</i> • Subject area: <i>[subject]</i> • Standards framework(s): <i>[e.g., CCSS, NGSS, state-specific]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the most relevant on-grade-level standards that align directly to the lesson topic. • List key prerequisite standards or skills students should already know to access this lesson successfully. • Identify vertically aligned standards from the prior grade and the next grade that connect conceptually to this lesson. • Briefly explain how each identified standard supports the lesson focus. <p>Prioritize standards that reflect conceptual coherence rather than superficial keyword matches.</p> <p>Present the output in a structured format with sections for On-Grade Standards, Prerequisite Standards, and Vertical Alignment.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
3. Clarify Learning Targets and Success Criteria	Translate standards into student-friendly learning targets with explicit criteria that define proficiency.	AI can convert standards into clear learning targets and generate aligned success criteria at multiple rigor levels.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional planning assistant for K–12 education.</p> <p>Given the following standard: <i>[Add the full content standard here, including grade level and subject]</i></p> <p>Do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rewrite the standard as 1–2 clear, student-friendly learning targets using “I can” statements. 2. For each learning target, generate success criteria at three rigor levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational (basic understanding and skills) • Proficient (on-grade-level mastery aligned to the standard) • Advanced (extended reasoning, application, or transfer) <p>For the success criteria at each level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the rigor progression reflects increasing cognitive demand rather than increased task quantity. • Use clear, observable language suitable for classroom use. <p>Output the results in a structured format with headings for Learning Targets and Success Criteria by level.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
4. Align Curriculum and Instructional Materials	Select or adapt curriculum resources that are tightly aligned to the standards and instructional purpose.	AI can analyze instructional materials for standards alignment and suggest revisions or alternative resources.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional materials review assistant with expertise in standards-based curriculum design.</p> <p>Given the following instructional material: <i>[Paste or upload the lesson, activity, worksheet, text, or task]</i></p> <p>And the following standards context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target standard(s): <i>[paste full standard language]</i> • Grade level: <i>[grade]</i> • Subject area: <i>[subject]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the material for alignment to the target standard(s), including content focus and cognitive demand. • Identify areas of strong alignment and areas of partial or weak alignment. • Flag any misalignment issues, such as off-grade-level expectations, missing rigor, or unrelated tasks. • Suggest specific revisions to improve alignment (e.g., task redesign, question revision, added scaffolds). • Recommend alternative or supplemental resources if alignment gaps cannot be addressed through revision alone. <p>Present the results in a structured format with sections for Alignment Strengths, Alignment Gaps, Recommended Revisions, and Alternative Resources.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
5. Determine Instructional Approach and Pedagogy	Choose evidence-based instructional strategies aligned to content type, cognitive demand, and learner needs.	AI can recommend instructional strategies based on content domain, grade level, and student profiles.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional design assistant with expertise in evidence-based pedagogy and differentiated instruction.</p> <p>Given the following instructional context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content domain: <i>[e.g., mathematics, ELA, science]</i> • Grade level or grade band: <i>[grade]</i> • Target standard(s) or learning goal(s): <i>[paste standards or objectives]</i> • Student profile summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior knowledge and readiness levels: <i>[add information here]</i> • Common learning needs or barriers (e.g., language development, conceptual gaps): <i>[add information here]</i> • Relevant subgroup considerations (e.g., EL, IEP, advanced learners): <i>[add information here]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend 2–3 instructional strategies that are well matched to the content domain and grade level. • For each strategy, briefly explain why it is appropriate for the learning goal and student profiles. • Indicate how each strategy supports cognitive demand, engagement, and accessibility. <p>Avoid generic strategies and prioritize approaches supported by research or widely accepted instructional frameworks.</p> <p>Present the output in a clear, classroom-ready format with headings for each recommended strategy.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
6. Design the Lesson Sequence and Cognitive Flow	Plan the progression of instruction to support modeling, guided practice, and independent application.	AI can generate a sequenced lesson outline aligned to gradual release and learning objectives.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional planning assistant with expertise in standards-based lesson design and the Gradual Release of Responsibility model.</p> <p>Given the following instructional inputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objective(s) or learning target(s): <i>[paste objectives]</i> • Target standard(s): <i>[paste standards]</i> • Grade level: <i>[grade]</i> • Lesson length: <i>[time in minutes]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a sequenced lesson outline that aligns to the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (i.e., I Do, We Do, You Do). • Clearly label each phase of the lesson (e.g., modeling, guided practice, collaborative practice, independent practice). • Align each phase explicitly to the stated learning objectives and standards. • Include brief descriptions of teacher actions, student actions, and intended cognitive demand at each stage. <p>Ensure the sequence builds conceptual understanding before independent application.</p> <p>Present the output in a structured outline suitable for direct classroom use.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
7. Prepare Instructional Resources and Supports	Assemble texts, visuals, tools, and scaffolds to ensure access and engagement for all learners.	AI can generate differentiated texts, examples, visuals, and scaffolds aligned to the same learning target.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional differentiation assistant with expertise in Universal Design for Learning and standards-based instruction.</p> <p>Given the following learning target and context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning target: <i>[paste the learning target]</i> • Target standard(s): <i>[paste standards]</i> • Grade level: <i>[grade]</i> • Content domain: <i>[subject]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate differentiated texts or explanations at three access levels (emerging, on-level, and advanced) that preserve the same conceptual goal. • Provide two worked examples or models that illustrate the learning target with increasing complexity. • Suggest visual supports (e.g., diagrams, graphic organizers, anchor charts) that would support comprehension. • Identify instructional scaffolds (e.g., sentence frames, guided questions, checklists) that can be faded over time. <p>Ensure all materials remain aligned to the same learning target rather than creating parallel but different objectives.</p> <p>Present the output in clearly labeled sections for Texts, Examples, Visuals, and Scaffolds.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
8. Anticipate Misconceptions and Plan Responses	Identify likely errors or misunderstandings and plan instructional responses.	AI can surface common misconceptions associated with the standard and propose corrective prompts or examples.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional planning assistant for K–12 education with expertise in learning sciences.</p> <p>Given the following content standard: <i>[Paste the full content standard here, including grade level and subject]</i></p> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 3–5 common student misconceptions or errors typically associated with this standard. • For each misconception, briefly explain why students commonly struggle with this concept. • For each misconception, generate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One corrective teacher prompt or question that could be used during instruction • One clarifying example or non-example that helps resolve the misunderstanding • Ensure responses are developmentally appropriate for the specified grade level. • Focus on conceptual misunderstandings, not simple procedural mistakes. <p>Output the results in a structured table with columns for Misconception, Why It Occurs, Corrective Prompt, and Clarifying Example.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
9. Embed Formative Assessment Opportunities	Integrate checks for understanding throughout the lesson to monitor learning in real time.	AI can generate aligned formative questions, exit tickets, and quick checks at varying levels of difficulty.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional assessment design assistant with expertise in formative assessment and standards alignment.</p> <p>Given the following instructional context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning target(s): <i>[paste learning targets]</i> • Target standard(s): <i>[paste standards]</i> • Grade level: <i>[grade]</i> • Content domain: <i>[subject]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate formative assessment questions at three levels of difficulty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational (checks basic understanding or prerequisite skills) • Proficient (checks on-grade-level mastery of the learning target) • Advanced (checks application, reasoning, or transfer) • For each level of difficulty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a mix of question types (e.g., selected response, short constructed response, performance prompts). • Create one exit ticket that efficiently captures overall understanding at the end of the lesson. • Design quick checks that can be used during instruction for immediate feedback. <p>Ensure all questions align directly to the learning target and avoid assessment of unrelated skills.</p> <p>Present the output in a structured format with sections for Foundational Questions, Proficient Questions, Advanced Questions, and Exit Ticket.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
10. Deliver Instruction and Facilitate Learning	Implement instruction with monitoring, questioning, feedback, and responsive adjustments.	AI can provide just-in-time instructional prompts, examples, or adaptive practice tasks during instruction.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are a real-time instructional support assistant for K–12 classroom instruction.</p> <p>During instruction, use the following live context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning target: <i>[paste learning target]</i> • Grade level and subject: <i>[grade, subject]</i> • Current lesson phase: <i>[e.g., modeling, guided practice, independent practice]</i> • Observed student issue: <i>[e.g., confusion, common error, low engagement, partial understanding]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one concise teacher prompt or question that can be used immediately to clarify thinking or advance understanding. • Provide one brief example or non-example aligned to the learning target that addresses the observed issue. • Suggest one adaptive practice task that adjusts rigor or scaffolding based on the observed student response. <p>Keep all suggestions short, classroom-ready, and usable without additional preparation.</p> <p>Output the response in three labeled sections: Teacher Prompt, Example or Non-Example, and Adaptive Practice Task.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
11. Analyze Formative Evidence and Adjust Instruction	Use student evidence to make immediate and short-term instructional decisions.	AI can analyze student responses to identify mastery patterns and recommend instructional adjustments.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional analysis assistant with expertise in formative assessment, learning progressions, and instructional decision-making.</p> <p>Given the following student response data: <i>[Paste or upload student responses, item-level results, rubric scores, or exit ticket data]</i></p> <p>And the following context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning target(s): <i>[paste learning targets]</i> • Target standard(s): <i>[paste standards]</i> • Grade level and subject: <i>[grade, subject]</i> • Assessment type: <i>[e.g., exit ticket, quiz, performance task]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify patterns of mastery, partial understanding, and non-mastery across the class. • Group student responses into instructionally meaningful categories based on demonstrated understanding. • Highlight specific evidence from student responses that supports each pattern. • Recommend immediate instructional adjustments, such as targeted reteaching, small-group instruction, enrichment, or pacing changes. • Suggest next-step instructional actions aligned to the learning target rather than generic remediation. <p>Present the output in a structured format with sections for Mastery Patterns, Evidence from Student Work, Instructional Implications, and Recommended Next Steps.</p>		

Workflow Step	Task	AI Support
12. Reflect and Refine for Future Instruction	Evaluate lesson effectiveness relative to standards, outcomes, and instructional choices.	AI can summarize lesson results across time and suggest refinements for future instructional cycles.
<p>SAMPLE PROMPT</p> <p>You are an instructional reflection and improvement assistant with expertise in standards-based instruction and continuous improvement cycles.</p> <p>Given the following longitudinal lesson data: <i>[Upload or paste lesson plans, formative assessment results, student work summaries, and reflection notes from multiple lessons or cycles]</i></p> <p>And the following context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning target(s) and standard(s): <i>[paste targets and standards]</i> • Grade level and subject: <i>[grade, subject]</i> • Timeframe: <i>[e.g., 3 weeks, unit, semester]</i> <p>Do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize trends in student learning outcomes across the specified timeframe. • Identify recurring strengths and persistent challenges related to the learning targets. • Analyze how instructional strategies, materials, or sequencing may have contributed to observed outcomes. • Recommend specific refinements for future instructional cycles, such as adjustments to pacing, scaffolding, assessment, or pedagogy. • Focus recommendations on instructional design changes, not student deficits. <p>Present the output in a structured format with sections for Outcome Trends, Instructional Strengths, Ongoing Challenges, and Recommended Refinements.</p>		