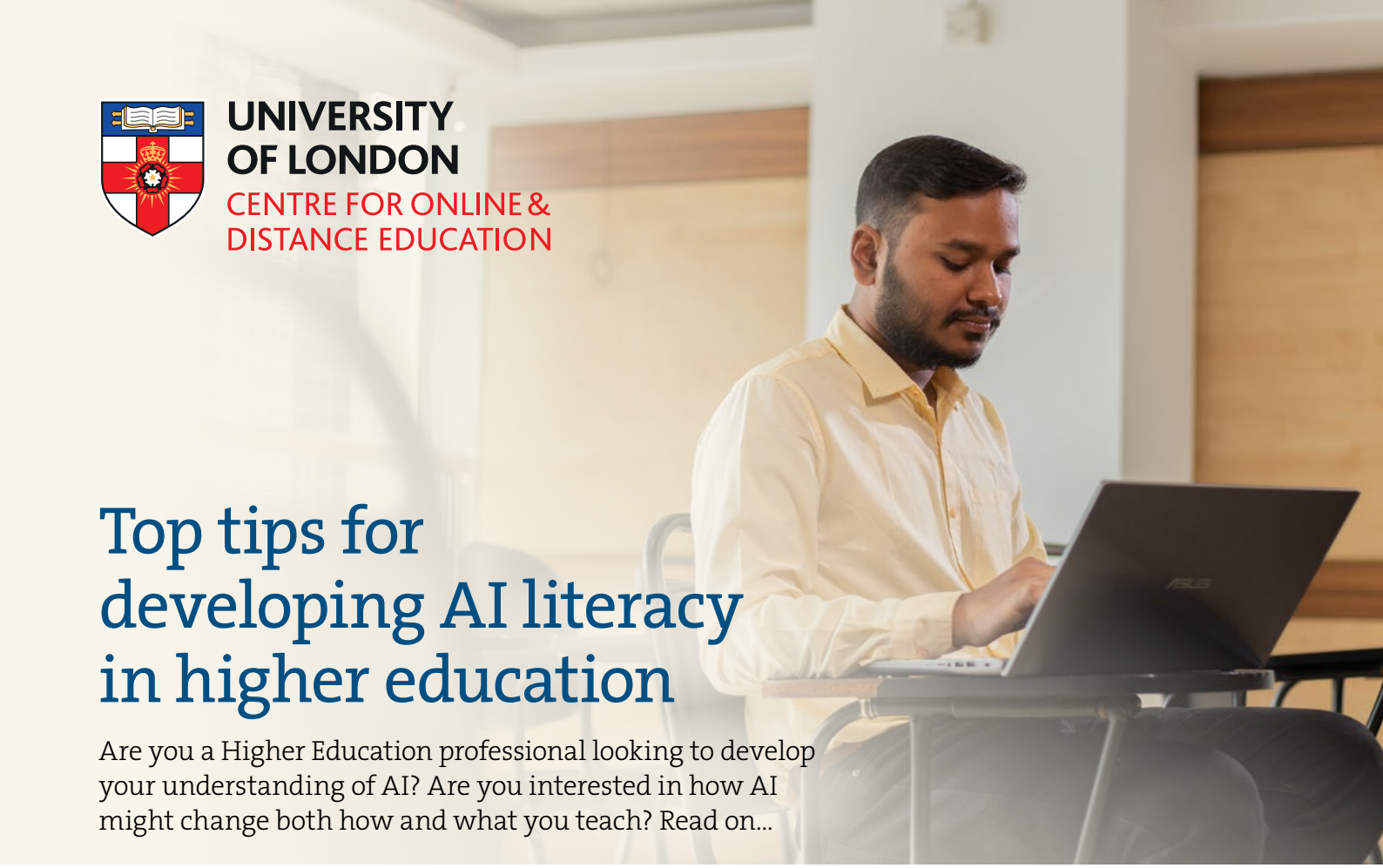
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
CENTRE FOR ONLINE & DISTANCE EDUCATION



Top tips for developing AI literacy in higher education

Are you a Higher Education professional looking to develop your understanding of AI? Are you interested in how AI might change both how and what you teach? Read on...

What do we mean by 'AI literacy'?

- AI literacy can be interpreted in different ways. One useful definition is the ability to critically evaluate and responsibly use AI technologies in educational settings.
- This includes understanding AI tools' capabilities and limitations, applying them effectively in your work, and considering ethical and societal implications.
- It's important to remember that AI literacy extends beyond ChatGPT and other generative tools.

Why is AI literacy important?

- It enables informed decisions about AI use in your practice
- It helps you support students in an AI-enhanced world
- It allows you to contribute to important discussions about AI in education
- It supports professional development in a rapidly changing landscape
- It helps you navigate complex ethical and practical challenges

Understanding the context

- There are no definitive answers yet about AI in education
- Different disciplines and individuals have varying perspectives
- Both wholesale rejection and uncritical acceptance can limit learning
- Making space for difficult discussions is essential
- Your experiences and concerns are valid parts of the conversation

Key considerations for teaching and learning

We need to rethink both HOW we teach and WHAT we teach in an AI-enhanced world

HOW we teach and assess:

- Traditional essays and assessments may need redesigning
- Feedback approaches may need updating
- Research and information literacy skills need reconsidering
- Student study practices are evolving

WHAT we teach:

- Curricula may need updating for an AI-enabled world
- Subject knowledge requirements may be shifting
- New skills and competencies may be needed
- Professional practice in many fields is changing

Top tips

1. Start with play and experimentation • Begin with low-stakes exploration • Try different tools and approaches • Learn through trial and error • Question how AI might change your subject area
2. Design multi-dimensional engagement • **Social:** Create communities around AI adoption • **Cognitive:** Develop critical thinking about AI • **Behavioural:** Build practical AI usage skills • **Collaborative:** Foster peer learning • **Emotional:** Address concerns and expectations
3. Balance academic and social engagement • Connect with colleagues across disciplines • Share experiences and insights • Create both structured and unstructured learning opportunities • Engage in professional dialogue about AI
4. Challenge your assumptions • Question traditional teaching methods • Rethink assessment approaches • Consider what knowledge is fundamental • Reflect on changing professional requirements • Be prepared for your views and attitudes to change
5. Focus on practical applications • Start with real problems you want to solve • Test new assessment approaches • Experiment with different feedback methods • Explore curriculum updates
6. Develop critical awareness • Understand tool limitations • Consider ethical implications • Evaluate potential biases • Think about access and inclusion
7. Create safe spaces for learning • Allow yourself to experiment • Accept that not everything will work • Share both successes and failures • Support others' learning journeys
8. Engage with difficult questions • Address controversial aspects • Consider multiple perspectives • Discuss concerns openly • Navigate uncertainties together
9. Build sustainable practices • Develop manageable routines • Create adaptable curriculum elements • Design flexible learning activities • Maintain academic integrity
10. Contribute to the community • Share curriculum innovations • Discuss assessment evolution • Participate in pedagogical discussions • Help shape future teaching approaches

Questions to consider

- How might AI change the fundamental knowledge and skills needed in your field?
- What aspects of your current teaching methods need rethinking?
- How can assessments evolve while maintaining academic standards?
- What new elements might need adding to your curriculum?
- How is professional practice in your field changing with AI?
- How can we ethically prepare learners for their future personal and professional journeys?

Remember

- There's no 'right way' to develop AI literacy
- Both teaching methods and curriculum content need reviewing
- Experimentation and play are valuable learning tools
- Changes should enhance rather than compromise learning
- Uncertainty and scepticism are natural parts of the process – just because we may not be Top tips experts in the application of these tech should not undermine our identities as academics
- Your experiences contribute to our collective understanding

Resources

This is a fast moving, rapidly changing space so dynamic resources online are likely to be the best place to find information. On AI literacy try the AI Literacy Institute: **ailiteracy.institute** and JISC AI Literacy resources pages **nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve**. Jisc also have an exploration page **exploreai.jisc.ac.uk**. The Guardian 'Black Box' Podcast series is an excellent introduction to many of the issues, tensions and potentials of AI and for a wider aspect 'The Good Robot' is subtitled 'Where technology meets feminism'. Janelle Shane's **aiweirdness.com** blog always offers fascinating insights. On responsible AI, try responsible.ai. A very accessible, educator friendly book is Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI (2024) by Ethan Mollick.

It is also useful to keep abreast of your institutional guidance and policies (where these exist), such as King's College London's **Guidance on generative AI for teaching, assessment and feedback** and the **University of London's AI policy**.

Contact

This guide has been produced by the 'Evaluating the impact AI in education projects and capacity building innovations' CODE project. To contact us, please email: **code@london.ac.uk**