

The Essential 4-Question Framework for Evaluating AI Tools

Not all AI is created equal. Here's how to choose the right tool for your district.

1. What problem are we trying to solve?

Start with the *need*, not the tool.

- ✓ Does the tool solve a specific problem?
- ✓ Does the tool align with your strategic plan?
- ✓ Does the tool enhance the educational process (rather than just mimicking existing processes on an AI platform)?
- ✗ Avoid tools that sound exciting but don't solve a clearly defined problem

2. Is the AI *generating* or *instructing*?

There's a big difference between tools that *coach* students and teachers versus tools that do the work for them.

- ✓ Does the tool act as a tutor or coach? Promote reflection and revision? Support skills growth?
- ✗ Avoid tools that give a shortcut without strategy

3. Can the data be trusted and measured?

If the same student submission gets different feedback every time, that's a problem. Generative AI changes its answers based on the prompt. That makes it tough to measure progress or ensure fairness.

- ✓ Does the tool have consistent, rules-based scoring?
- ✗ Avoid tools that use open-ended AI feedback as the sole source of grading

4. Who owns the learning—the student or the AI?

AI should push students to *think deeper*, not replace their thinking.

- ✓ Does the tool help students understand their thinking process?
- ✓ Does the tool model the ethical use of AI by acting as a thought partner?
- ✗ Avoid tools that make students passive, rather than active, in their learning