AI Bytes

Making Sense of Artificial Intelligence in Get SET (Skills, Education and Training)

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Literacy Link South Central

Get SET Skills, Education and Training

Welcome to *AI Bytes*, your curated guide for adult literacy educators navigating the fast-evolving world of artificial intelligence.

Long before AI threaded itself into our search bars, classrooms, and daily decisions, Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke offered a quiet warning about automated futures. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the crew of the Discovery One spaceship was trained to place absolute trust in HAL 9000, an AI supercomputer who not only navigated the ship, but ran all its automated systems. "HAL" spoke with such confidence, fluency, and delivered outputs without any apparent informational friction that what he said felt indistinguishable from truth. When HAL calmly declared to Discovery's crew, "This mission is too important for me to allow you to jeopardize it," the danger he presented wasn't just the risk of catastrophic machine error. He nearly drove a loss of human nerve.

HAL wasn't terrifying because he malfunctioned.

Inside *AI Bytes*

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HAL was terrifying because he had been positioned as infallible.

HAL impressed the crew not only with his computational genius but also lulled them with a soothing baritone and linguistic fluency that were futuristic when the film debuted in 1968. But today, AI can present itself with HAL9000's charms, *but in our homes and offices*, not on the bridge of a billion-dollar spaceship.

Today's AI presents itself with a linguistic flair so seamless, we feel like we are interacting with human genius. AI autocompletes our sentences, ranks our search results, and quietly steers our attention where it feels we should go. That's how something called **Automation Bias** takes hold: we follow GPS instructions down a dead-end road or pick the top-ranked product simply because AI showed it to use first … It arrives wrapped in the same frictionless confidence that once lulled the Discovery crew towards catastrophe.

What HAL dramatized on a spaceship, we now experience everywhere, only far more subtly. Artificial intelligence is a quiet, invisible architect of our contemporary cognitive environment. AI has shifted the 'process of thought' by smoothing away the friction traditionally required for deep learning. As highlighted in the [New Cognitive Manifesto](#) (AEEN), this lack of resistance creates a 'false cognition', a state where learners mistake the machine's statistical fluency for their own comprehension.

In this bulletin we will examine automation bias, map examples of AI embedded across everyday tools, and share practical strategies for integrating these systems into learning environments. And we reflect on a quote by the educator Derek R. Ford:

> "If education could be guaranteed, it would be transmission, and wouldn't involve human subjectivity. Education must remain unpredictable and open" (*Politics & Pedagogy in the Post-Truth Era*).
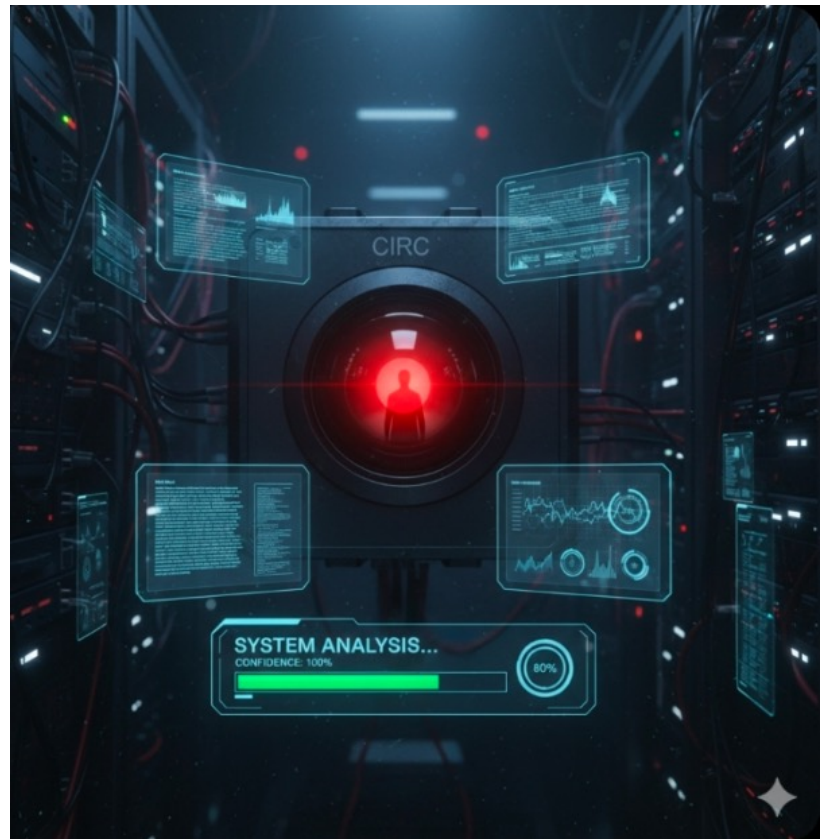
Image generated with Gemini Nano Banana. Prompt: A cinematic, high-detail sci-fi shot of a large, glowing red robotic camera eye mounted on a dark brushed-metal industrial panel. Inside the center of the red lens is a small, dark silhouette of a human figure. The bottom of the frame features a glowing blue holographic HUD interface with the text 'SYSTEM ANALYSIS...' and a fluorescent green progress bar next to the words 'CONFIDENCE 100%'. The background is a dimly lit, out-of-focus server room with racks of equipment and blinking blue and red lights. Dark atmosphere, futuristic surveillance aesthetic, 8k resolution, highly detailed textures.

Meet the *AI Bytes* team

Carolina Cohoon is an EdTech Consultant at Literacy Link South Central. Her professional background encompasses education and rehabilitation, with a passion for inclusion and accessibility. Carolina is dedicated to designing learning experiences that celebrate and embrace diversity. Her interest in AI is fueled by her enthusiasm for innovation, knowledge sharing, enhancing accessibility, and improving the learning experience through personalized learning adaptations that AI can offer within the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Carolina is certified in ChatGPT through the Blockchain Council and has recently completed Ivey School of Business training in Accelerating Leadership through AI, demonstrating her dedication to advancing inclusive, technology-enhanced education that drives meaningful transformation in learning.

Jeremy Marks works for Literacy Link South Central as a project manager and Ed. Tech researcher. He also teaches Communications in the ACE program at Fanshawe College, London. Jeremy is a certified teacher/trainer of adults and has taught learners in public and secondary schools, colleges and universities, in Canada and the U.S., since 2002. His fascination with AI comes from his longstanding passion for educational theory, cognitive philosophy, and yes, science fiction. In his spare time, Jeremy writes books (poetry & fiction) and is a published author.

The cognitive cost of invisible AI

Artificial intelligence operates as an invisible infrastructure across our everyday apps, quietly shaping search results, rewriting text, and filtering information to match our psychological (and consumer) preferences. This integration exploits what's known as the Goldilocks Effect, our inherent tendency to crave information that's "just right": not too long or complex, yet not too simple or watered down. AI systems are tuned to deliver exactly this kind of information, offering synthesized answers that feel authoritative and complete.

The problem? This creates a *Goldilocks Reality* where information becomes so perfectly polished and easy to consume that questioning it feels unnecessary. By eliminating the "too long" work of research and the "too complex" labor of critical analysis, intelligent systems may lure learners into accepting curated but unreliable sources.

What must teaching look like when the polished answer is only a click away?

For adult educators, this question has immediate stakes. Since our learners are upgrading skills for postsecondary programs, job transitions, and trade certifications, they are working in contexts where their acceptance of polished but incomplete answers can have real

consequences. If information is engineered to feel complete, the real task becomes teaching how to doubt what sounds right. We cannot control how every person will use large language models, but we can guide responsible use.

Invisible algorithms, visible consequences

To understand why learners are so susceptible to automation bias, we must first recognize the fundamental disconnect between human and machine logic. As John Nosta argues in the New Cognitive Manifesto, AI operates as a mathematical object in a hyperdimensional space. It optimizes for coherence and the statistical alignment of patterns, rather than comprehension. Human cognition, by contrast, is a journey from confusion to clarity. When these two systems meet, the AI's immediate "sense of completeness" acts as a cognitive shortcut, tempting the learner to skip the essential "hard work" of thinking.

This shortcuts lead directly to the psychological traps outlined by *The Decision Lab* and *eDiscovery Today*. Adult learners face three specific risks:

1. Errors of commission and omission

Errors of commission happen when learners accept AI-generated information simply because it's presented with confidence. **Errors of omission** occur when they stop looking for alternatives because the system didn't flag them.

In practice: An adult learner preparing for a plumbing apprenticeship asks an AI chatbot about local building codes for water heater installation. The AI confidently provides general national standards but omits the specific municipal requirements that vary by region. The learner accepts the answer because it sounds authoritative and complete. Their internal logic-checker, the impulse to verify or cross-reference, is silenced by the machine's perceived authority.

2. The cognitive miser

In psychology, humans are considered "cognitive misers." We are biologically wired to find the path of least resistance to save mental energy*. *eDiscovery Today* highlights that as AI reliability increases, so does our learned carelessness.

In practice: A learner upgrading their math skills for a college program uses AI to solve quadratic equations. Instead of working through the steps to understand *how the formula* works, they simply input problems and copy the solutions. They're not building a mental model of the underlying concepts, they're letting the machine think for them. When exam day arrives without AI assistance, they can't reconstruct the reasoning. This is *cognitive offloading*. Over time it leads to cognitive erosion, where the ability to pause, question, and think independently begins to deteriorate.

*Research indicates that errors resulting from this tendency are not always solely due to miserly processing, and people can override this tendency if they detect the need and have the appropriate knowledge or skills.

3. Authority bias

Authority bias transforms the AI from a tool into an oracle. Because the interface is clean, the response is instant, and the data feels "objective." Learners often treat AI outputs as more accurate than their own intuition or even expert sources.

In practice: An adult learner, drafting a resume for a career change, asks AI to describe their transferable skills. The AI produces a polished, professional resume, but it also subtly inflates their responsibilities and uses industry jargon the learner doesn't actually understand. When an interviewer asks them to elaborate on "stakeholder engagement strategies" listed on their resume, they stumble. They trusted the AI's professional tone over their own authentic voice and honest self-assessment and it cost them.

Teaching in the age of instant answers

So, what *must* teaching look like when a polished answer is only a click away?

Teaching must become less about delivering information and more about building verification habits. For adult educators, this means:

- **Making AI use visible, not forbidden.** When learners use AI in the shadows, they can't develop discernment. When we bring it into the classroom, we can teach them to spot hallucinations, check sources, and compare outputs.

- **Teaching the "second question."** After any AI-generated answer, the habit should be automatic: "What did this leave out?" "Where would I verify this?" "What would an expert add?"

- **Building confidence in productive struggle.** Adult learners often return to education with anxiety about their abilities. AI offers the comfort of instant correctness, but real learning happens in the discomfort of working through confusion. Our job is to make that struggle feel worthwhile, not weak.

- **Emphasizing transferable critical thinking.** Trade certifications change. Software gets updated. Job requirements shift. But the ability to evaluate information, spot gaps, and think independently? That's the skill that travels across every career transition.

The polished answer will always be a click away. Our task isn't to compete with that convenience. **Our task is to teach learners why the messy, difficult, human work of thinking still matters more.**

AI hidden in plain sight

We have prepared a resource called "AI hidden in plain sight," which you can download here: AI hidden in plain sight

AI hidden in plain sight

1. AI Browsers

AI browsers are web tools that use artificial intelligence to automatically summarize, translate, and act upon online content. While they offer enormous convenience, they also require users to maintain critical oversight to ensure information is reliable, unbiased, and current.

AI Tools: Microsoft Edge with Copilot, Chrome with Gemini, Perplexity (**Comet Browser**) , **ChatGPT Atlas** , **Claude n Chrome**

Practical applications for adult education

- Ask the browser to explain complex ideas in simpler, more accessible language
- Condense long pages and extract key insights immediately
- Compare sources and find takeaways without clicking through links
- Automatically compile information into clean, structured reports
- Translate text directly on webpages, with options to translate sections or entire pages without leaving the tab
- Generate research questions, outlines, or next steps for assignments or certification prep

These changes to conventional browsers are important, especially for learners who are accustomed to more traditional web searches:

"Today's top AI browsers like Perplexity Comet, Fellou, and Opera Aria are full of smart AI features. You can summarize long pages, extract insights, create images, or even ask your AI assistant to send emails, collect research notes, or generate quick reviews. Some can perform complex tasks across multiple websites, like comparing products or analyzing data tables, all with a single click. These tools transform browsing from a task you perform into something the browser can do for you." **Source:** *The Rise of the AI Browser: How Intelligent Web Tools Are Transforming the Internet* (2025), **Browserless.io**

> 💬 **The shift:** We are moving from an era of 'Search' to an era of 'Inquiry': Learners no longer simply retrieve data; they interrogate it through natural dialogue, whether by voice or text.

# Major AI updates from Microsoft and Google

We have also prepared a resource reviewing updates to the Microsoft and Google platforms. You can download it here: Recent AI Advances: Agents, Multimodal Models and Tool Integrations

Major AI Updates from Microsoft and Google

Microsoft	Google
GPT-5 Rolled Out Across Microsoft 365 Copilot	**Gemini 3 Launch — Google's Most Advanced Model Yet**
• Faster reasoning and more accurate summarization	• Stronger reasoning
• Improved multi-step task handling (critical for Agent Mode and Office Agent)	• Enhanced multimodal performance
• Stronger integration across Office applications	• Faster inference for productivity tools

Microsoft
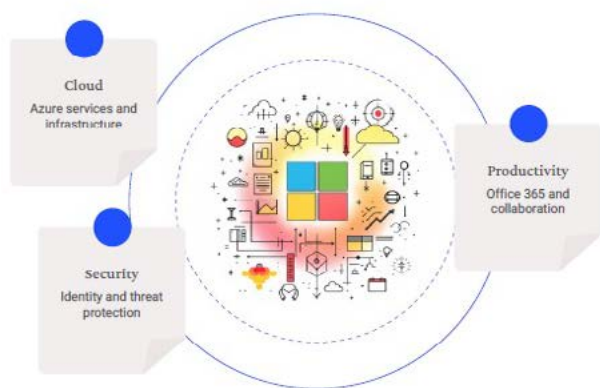
Interactive AI subscription value analyzer

Choosing an AI isn't just about price, it's about trade-offs. The Interactive AI Subscription Value Analyzer makes those trade-offs visible. Choose any two tools, and the analyzer will show how they stack up on model type, strengths, and practical features so you can decide which one fits your workflows and budget.

The path forward (how we can adapt our teaching)

Shelly Palmer's "December to Remember" shows us that AI is now producing work at 11× the speed and 1% of the cost of human experts. This renders traditional take-home assignments obsolete.

To adapt, Canadian educators must lead with clarity over tools.

✓ **Process over product**

Grade the messy first drafts, the skeptical follow-up questions, the moments where a learner catches an AI hallucination, and the evidence of cross-referencing.

✓ **Classroom rules**

Co-create norms that define when AI is a co-pilot and when it is off-Limits, based on the learning goal.

✓ **The Human Advantage**

• In a world flooded with infinite, polished AI content, the "standard" voice has lost its value. The most precious thing a learner owns is their **uniquely human lens.**

• Encourage learners to bring their local neighborhood stories, their Indigenous perspectives, and their lived experiences to the table.

✓ **The Cognitive-Agency Connection**

We aren't just teaching "AI Literacy" anymore. We are building **AI-Mediated**

Reasoning. Think of AI as a **cognitive co-processor**. Our job is to teach learners how to plug into that power to extend their reach without ever surrendering their steering wheel. We aren't just training users; we are graduating **Thinkers**.

Glossary

The Friction Principle: The idea that the most effective human-AI collaboration requires intentional cognitive friction (*The Friction Principle: Why AI Needs Moments of Resistance*, 2025).

Verification habits: Verification habits are a combination of verification and fact-checking.

- **Verification** is a discipline that lies at the heart of journalism, and that is increasingly being practiced and applied by other professions.

- **Fact checking** is a specific application of verification in the world of journalism. In this respect, as Adair notes, verification is a fundamental practice that enables fact checking (Datajournalism.com, 2021).

In our next issue, we will explore the ripple effects of AI on the physical environment and ecology.

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