

California Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance

Reader's Guide

Chapter 8: Generative Artificial Intelligence

Chapter Summary

Understanding Generative AI Tools – Generative AI tools create content by identifying patterns in large datasets rather than truly understanding facts. They can produce text, analyze images, and generate audio or visuals from prompts. Because outputs may contain errors or bias, human review is essential. Educators should use AI as a support tool, not a replacement for professional judgment. Effective use depends on clear, detailed prompts that include context, task, format, and tone, along with careful verification of results.

AI for Adult Learners – AI literacy is a key part of digital literacy, helping adult learners use tools responsibly and critically. AI can support learning through explanations, communication practice, assessments, and career exploration. Educators guide effective use by modeling strategies, evaluating outputs, and setting expectations. Activities like refining prompts and comparing AI responses build critical thinking. AI also supports résumé writing and interview practice. Thoughtful use enhances learning while requiring human judgment for accuracy, ethics, and real-world application.

AI for Administrators and Support Staff – AI helps streamline administrative tasks in adult education by drafting communications, summarizing data, supporting reporting, and creating outreach materials. It can assist with translations, scheduling, grant writing, and identifying data trends. By reducing workload and improving efficiency, AI allows staff to focus on relationships, decision-making, and program quality.

Responsible AI Use in Adult Education – Responsible AI use in adult education requires strong privacy protections, ethical practices, and clear policies. Programs should avoid sharing sensitive data, reviewing platform policies, and guiding learners on safe use. Transparency, copyright awareness, and human oversight are essential. Because AI may reflect bias or misinformation, outputs must be verified for accuracy and fairness. Environmental considerations encourage purposeful use. Clear guidelines, training, and AI literacy frameworks help ensure consistent, ethical, and effective integration across programs and classrooms.

AI Tool Overview – Adult education programs should start small when selecting AI tools, testing free versions and evaluating privacy, integration, and alignment with goals. General-purpose tools offer flexibility, while specialized tools provide targeted support. Emerging features and built-in AI across platforms expand possibilities. The best tools fit program needs, workflows, and long-term sustainability.

Guidance Engagement Questions

Understanding Generative AI Tools - AI can 'hallucinate' or produce fluent-sounding but inaccurate answers. If you were using AI to draft a lesson plan or a student handout, what is one specific verification step you would take before handing that document to your learners?

Getting Started with AI Prompts – AI outputs depend heavily on the instructions, context, audience, and purpose included in the prompt. When you ask AI for support, what information do you usually need to provide so the result fits adult learners and your program context? What reusable prompt structure, template, or checklist could help you give clearer directions when asking AI to draft or revise materials?

AI for Adult Learners – AI literacy is now a fundamental part of digital literacy for adults. How can activities like comparing a human-written email to an AI-generated one help your students in their actual careers?

AI for Administrators and Support Staff – If you could ask an AI to find the correlation between your attendance records and CASAS skill gains across the last three years, how would that big picture view change your strategy for the next grant cycle?

Data Privacy, Ethics, and Use Policies – Personally Identifiable Information — like names or test results — should never be entered into public AI tools. If you are using AI to help draft a student's progress report, how can you use fictional profiles to get the job done without compromising the student's legal right to privacy?

Use Policies for Programs and Classrooms – AI use policies help clarify when AI can be used, when it should not be used, and what role human judgment should play. In your program, which decisions should always remain with educators, support staff, administrators, or learners rather than being delegated to an AI tool? What classroom or program policy language would help clarify acceptable AI use, required disclosure, verification expectations, and human review?

Frameworks for Responsible AI Integration – AI literacy for adults focuses less on computer programming and more on understanding, using, and critically reflecting on AI in daily life. Why is this distinction important for our staff and learners?

AI Tool Overview – AI is already being integrated into platforms we use every day, such as YouTube, Google Workspace, and Microsoft Office. How does the invisible nature of these tools change how we train our staff?

Emerging AI Features – This section introduces tools for generating images, audio, and video from simple text prompts. For an adult learner with low literacy or someone who is a visual learner, how could an AI-generated audio summary image change their ability to engage with complex course content?

AI Tools for Adult Education – Some AI tools are general-purpose, while others are designed for education tasks such as adapting reading levels, creating activities, generating examples, or drafting lesson materials. When you need a classroom-ready resource, what matters most: speed, accuracy, reading level, accessibility, translation, standards alignment, privacy, or ease of editing? What type of AI tool should you test for one specific instructional need, such as adapting a reading, creating practice questions, generating examples, or preparing differentiated materials?