Future-Ready Classrooms Guide for K–12

Building College and Career Readiness in the AI Era

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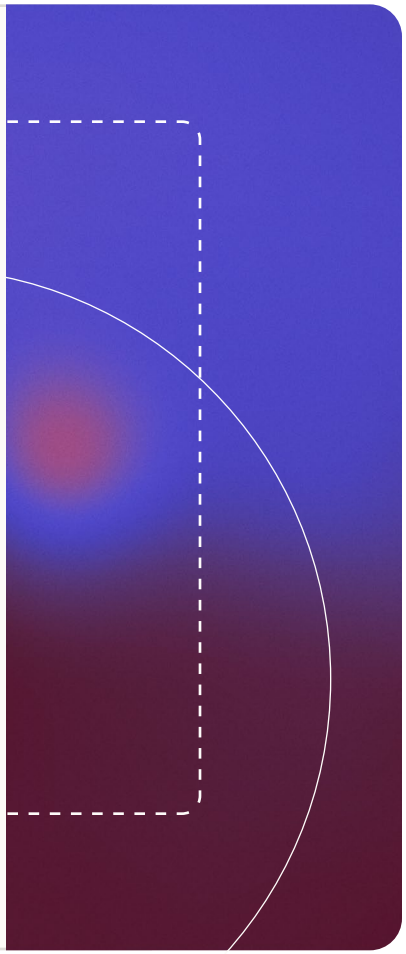


The Grammarly you trust, evolving to support education in the AI era of learning

Superhuman for Education extends Grammarly's trusted writing support into a human-centered AI platform designed for teaching, learning, and working. It helps students write and learn with AI through visible, defensible processes and provides faculty and staff with context-aware, agentic assistance embedded in their workflows, enabling transparent, controlled, agentic AI use that helps institutions innovate and meet today's challenges head-on.

Superhuman is the trusted technology partner for education institutions to complete your AI strategy, not compete with other AI tools.

It is no secret that high school students (and teachers) are using AI for everything from brainstorming ideas and finding sources to completing written assignments. Educators are learning how to model responsible AI use alongside students. And those students must be prepared to graduate ready to use AI tools to communicate and work effectively in college and the workplace.

To help ensure graduates emerge as strong communicators in an AI-enabled world, school and district leaders seek to revamp their approach to writing readiness for the AI era.

"Just because someone grew up with technology doesn't mean they know how to use it in a professional setting," says Tal Havivi, Product Marketing Lead at Superhuman. "They still need to be taught. We need to model how students can use AI to help them write in ways that will actually prepare them for college and their careers."

This playbook offers district-level frameworks and guidelines for how academic leaders can work with their instructional technology counterparts to incorporate AI readiness alongside pedagogical best practices. You will learn:

- What college and career writing readiness really means today, and what barriers must be overcome to ensure all students are prepared for their next step.
- How schools and districts can strategically incorporate AI into writing readiness, as well as how AI can help students become better writers.
- Why a scalable implementation framework is necessary when putting AI for writing readiness to use across a school or district.

Insight: K–12 Students Need Guidance on AI Use

+15%

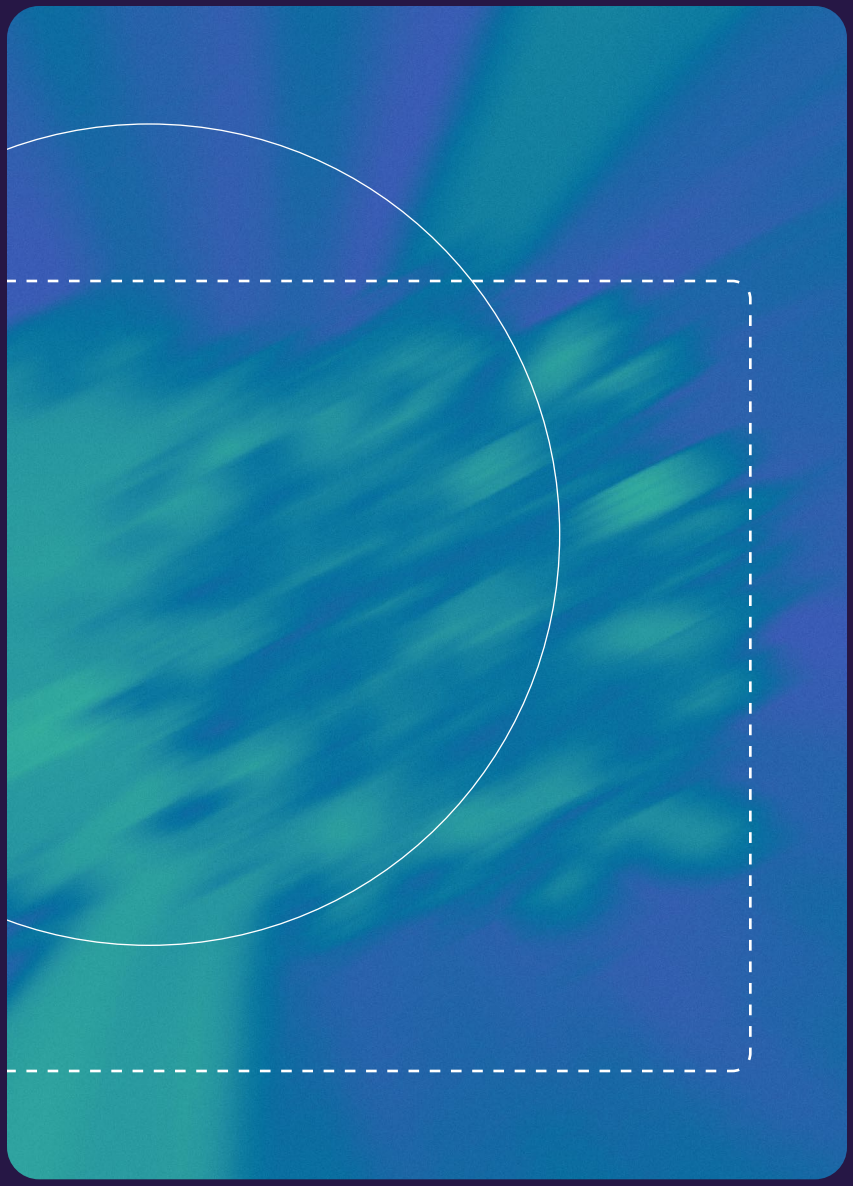
There has been a 15% increase over the last 1–2 years in the share of K–12 students (54%) and language arts, math, and science teachers (53%) using AI for school.[1]

80%+

Yet more than 80% of K–12 students say their teachers did not explicitly teach them how to use AI for coursework.[2]

83%

Nonetheless, 83% of working professionals think students should be prepared to use AI when they enter the workforce.[3]



Section 1

What does college and career writing readiness look like today?

Thesis statements. Five-paragraph essays. Well-crafted discussion board responses. Historically, K–12 writing assessment has focused on the finished product, with students graded on their argument structure, grammar, and clarity.

But this approach misses several other relevant skills that transfer more directly into success as communicators in college and the workforce, Superhuman's Havivi says.

Those skills include:

- Knowing when a draft is good enough for the next stage of review.
- Calibrating writing style and tone to the audience and context.
- Using research or evidence from multiple sources to support an argument.
- Determining whether the writing output is authentic and valuable.
- Understanding how to ask the right questions.

Schools are working to close the college- and career-readiness gap by embedding targeted education and training opportunities into the curriculum. At least 39 states have formally adopted these types of indicators.[4]

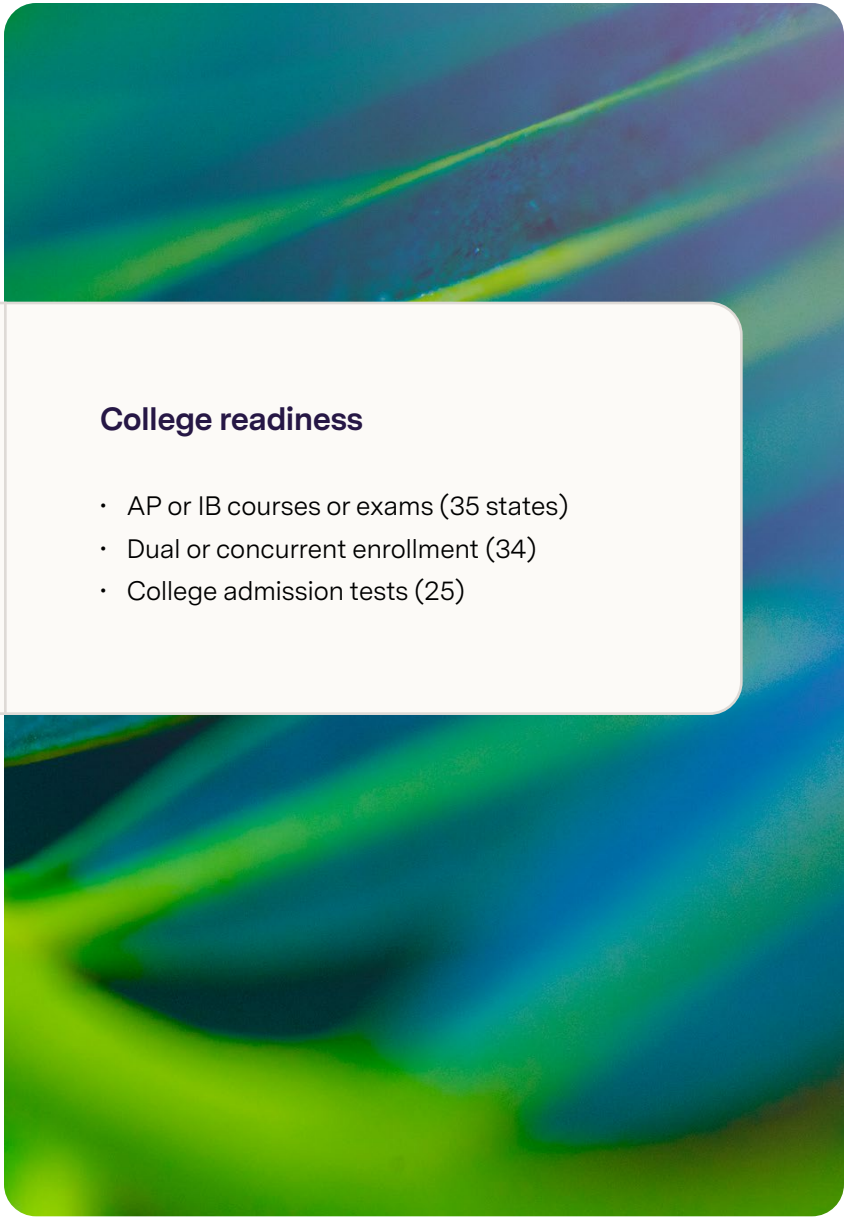
The most common are:

Career readiness

- Industry-recognized credentials (23 states)
- Career & Technical Education pathway completion (16)
- Work-based learning (14)

College readiness

- AP or IB courses or exams (35 states)
- Dual or concurrent enrollment (34)
- College admission tests (25)



While these opportunities assess broader readiness, they do not actually address writing readiness. Aligning writing skill development with college and career readiness is critical. Educators have long been working to close a gap identified in the most recent (2011) NAEP writing assessment data. In that assessment, just 27% of seniors and 8th-grade students performed at or above proficient, while 21% of seniors and 20% of 8th graders scored “below basic” (the lowest category).[5]

Progress has been challenging:

Seventy percent of 8th graders, 75% of seniors are below reading readiness assessment, a proxy for understanding trends in writing skills development, with significant shares (33% and 32%, respectively) scored below basic, indicating that the readiness gap is also widening.[6,7] Seniors' average scores that year were down four points from 2015 and the lowest since NAEP began studying the trends in 1992.[8]

The share of ACT test-takers meeting college-readiness benchmarks is decreasing across the board. Less than half of students (49%) were in the readiness range for writing production on the English test last year.[9] National averages for reading and writing on the SAT are also on the decline.[10]

A majority (+80%) of hiring managers say most high school students are not prepared to enter the workforce (and less so than previous generations).[11]

Writing for assessment in school looks like lower-frequency, summative such as:

- Papers, essays
- Discussion board responses
- Short answers

Sometimes collaborative, but more often a solo endeavor.

Writing for communication at work looks like high-frequency, multi-format such as:

- Emails
- Chats
- One-pagers
- Bullet points

Collaborative and process-oriented.

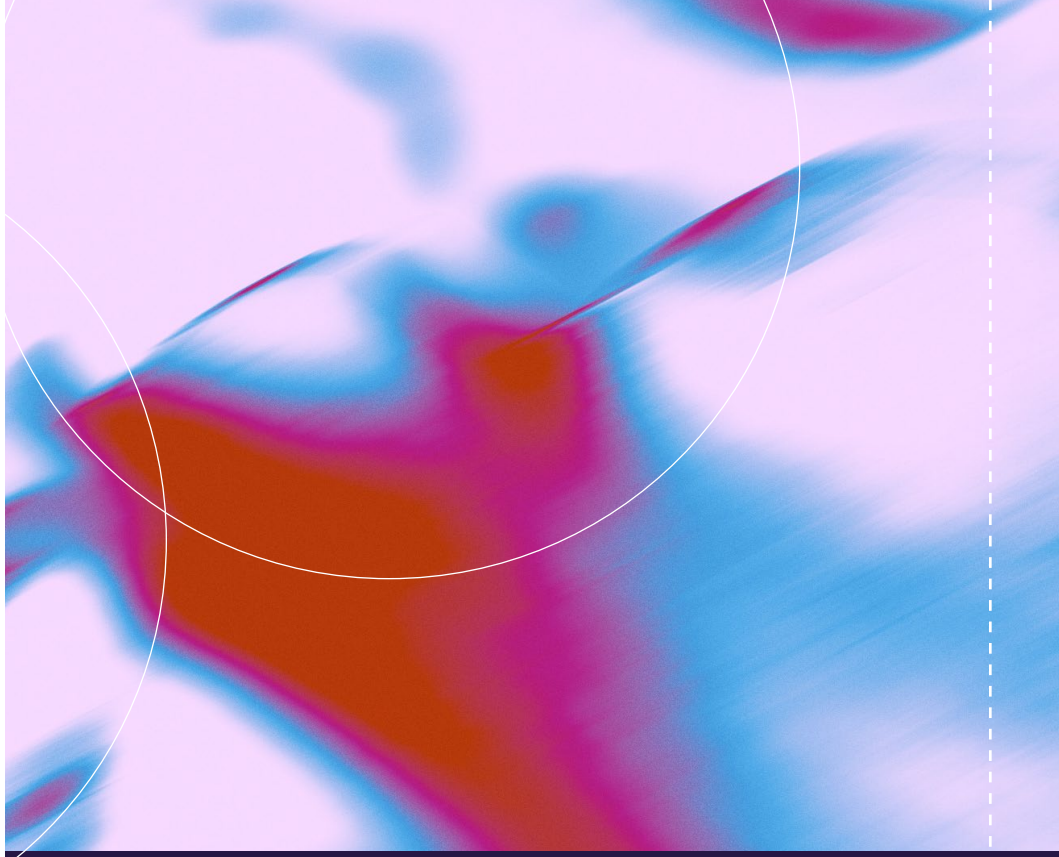
As interpersonal communication evolves in college and the workforce, K–12 educators have the opportunity to expand the role of writing development in their curriculum, widening the lens to look not only at the end result but also at the process a student took to get there. That is where AI can help.

Section 2

Rethinking writing education for the AI era

Schools and districts are experimenting with a variety of approaches to managing AI. Some are banning it outright, while many more are monitoring its use. But to ensure AI can deliver on its potential to support college and career writing readiness, educators need to strike a balance, says Stacy Hawthorne, Chief Academic Officer at Learn21, a nonprofit that supports ed tech across Ohio schools, and Board Chair of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN).

"It's important not to say, 'Here's how you cannot use AI,'" says Hawthorne, who is also a former classroom teacher. "Instead, set governance that enables teachers and students, and that shows what strong and responsible AI use looks like."



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Stacy Hawthorne,
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The following principles, protected practice, guided judgment, and developmentally appropriate use, provide educators with a framework for ensuring AI is used deliberately and responsibly to support the development of college and career writing skills.

Protected practice: Build the foundation.

Students get low-stakes, structured opportunities to develop their writing skills before AI is introduced as an aid, and ongoing spaces where they can write without AI assistance, so their foundational abilities remain visible and preserved.

Example: A 10th-grade English class requires students to complete first drafts without AI support. Once the teacher reviews the draft, the student can use AI to refine clarity and tone. This ensures the core ideas and structure are the students' own work, and teachers can see both versions.

Guided judgment: Develop discernment.

Students are taught when, why, and how to use AI tools, not just that they can. This requires developing critical thinking skills to evaluate AI suggestions rather than simply accepting them at face value, making students discerning users of AI rather than dependent ones.

Example: A teacher walks students through AI-generated feedback that appears to improve the flow of a sentence but changes its meaning. The teacher then guides students through an exercise to help them learn when to accept, modify, or reject an AI suggestion. This is a transferable skill students will use in college and the workforce.

Developmentally appropriate use: Ensure the pace matches the student.

Students are introduced to AI in ways that align with their cognitive, emotional, and academic readiness, with more scaffolding and guardrails in earlier grades and more autonomy as students mature. Age-appropriate use also protects younger students from becoming overreliant on AI before their judgment skills develop.

Example: Ninth-graders may use AI only for spelling and grammar feedback, whereas by 11th grade, students are using the technology for tone and clarity suggestions supported by teacher-led reflection. Seniors, meanwhile, are deciding for themselves how to use AI, practicing the autonomy they'll have in college and the workforce.

> **These three principles work as a progression. "Together, they make the case that responsible AI usage isn't a shortcut," Superhuman's Havivi says. "It's a structured set of tools that, when used well, actually deepens writing skill rather than replaces it."**

Section 3

Scaling AI-enabled college and career writing readiness support

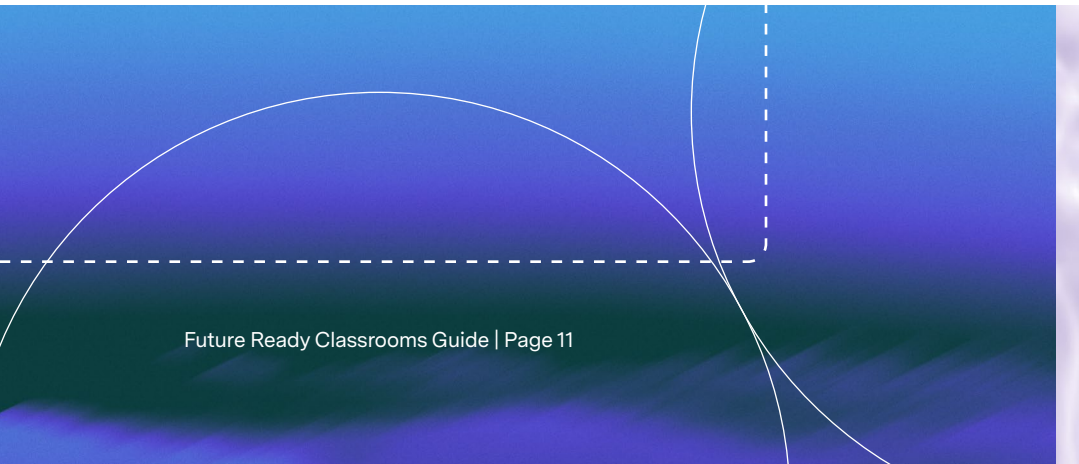
For K–12 leaders who embrace the progression of protected practice, guided judgment, and developmentally appropriate use, the challenge becomes how to expand that framework across the curriculum.

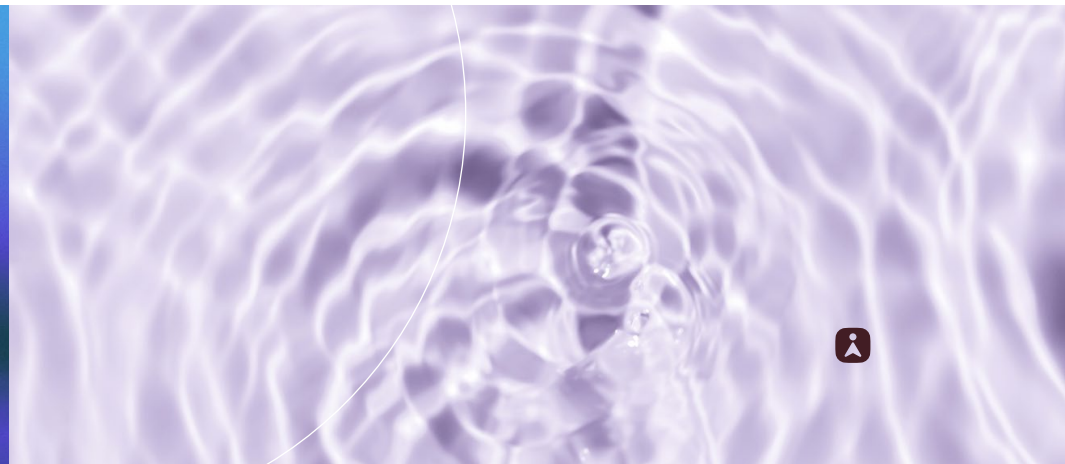
“There are pockets of great success with AI, but those pockets lead to fragmentation unless there is a coherent and cohesive strategy from the district level,” Havivi says.

The following five-step process offers educators a roadmap for implementing AI across a school or district to improve readiness writing in a deliberate, strategic, and responsible way.

Five-step framework to integrate and expand AI for writing readiness in K–12

1. **Assessment**
2. **Pilot**
3. **Professional development**
4. **Rollout**
5. **Measurement**





1. Assessment

The first step when evaluating options for AI to support writing readiness is to develop a shared definition of success and what outcome(s) the tool should drive toward.

Both Havivi and Hawthorne advise K–12 leaders to first look at their Portrait of a Graduate (or a similar community-developed framework of skills and traits deemed necessary for success in college or career) to identify the skills already present and those that might be missing. “It probably already has what you want, just in different verbiage,” Hawthorne says.

Educators who want to better connect their Portrait to AI-supported writing readiness skills may incorporate learner characteristics and capabilities like:

- Communicates with clarity and intention across audiences and formats.
- Demonstrates AI fluency in different writing contexts.
- Understands their own writing process and can reflect on how they developed ideas.

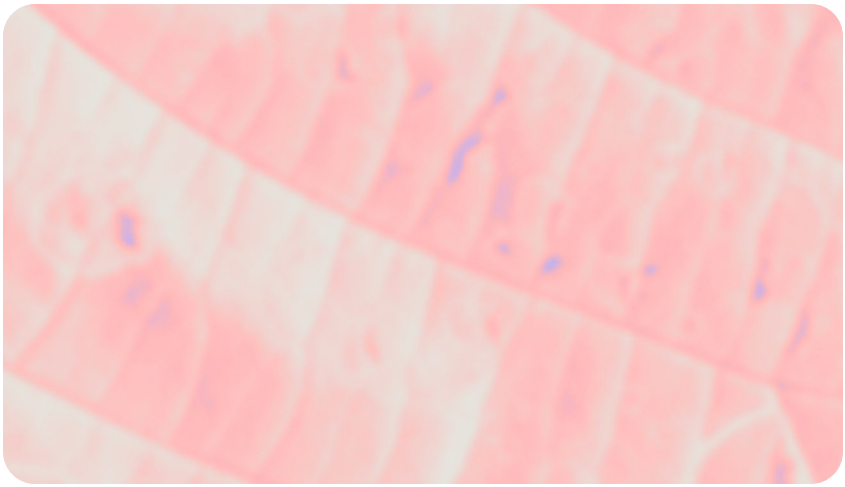
2. Pilot

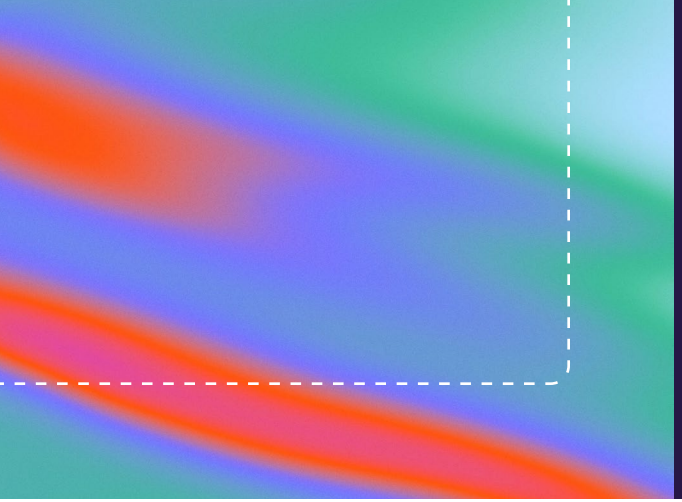
Testing out an AI-based solution is a critical step in bringing the technology into your institution, but these efforts can fall short if the process and outcomes are not shared beyond the pilot group.

“To make a pilot successful, leaders need to keep the school community in the loop,” Hawthorne says. Sharing information like:

- Pilot progress to date
- Learnings so far
- Changes stemming from pilot learnings

can help ensure staff, teachers, and other stakeholders feel connected to the pilot and are not surprised if and when those learnings and changes are implemented more broadly.





“Change is an extremely personal process. One PD session and expecting 50 teachers to change their behavior is never, ever going to work. We need coaches, and they need to be embedded in the job along the way.”

Stacy Hawthorne, Chief Academic Officer at Learn21

3. Professional development

This is the most important step of the entire process, Hawthorne says. She recommends integrating training with educators’ daily workflows and pairing them with coaches who are not their supervisors or otherwise responsible for managing their performance. This helps ensure educators can take on the student role as they approach AI.

“Change is an extremely personal process. One PD session and expecting 50 teachers to change their behavior is never, ever going to work,” Hawthorne says. “We need coaches, and they need to be embedded in the job along the way.”

4. Rollout

Ongoing educator oversight, continued professional development, and alignment with instructional technology and district IT teams are all critical when expanding an AI tool beyond the pilot stage.

Hawthorne and Havivi recommend three resources for school and district leaders looking to bring AI-enabled writing support into their curriculum:

- 6 Tenets of Postplagiarism: Explores how educators can shift their thinking on authenticity and authorship in the AI era.
- CoSN’s K–12 Gen AI Maturity Tool: Looks at how to integrate AI across several domains.
- ASCD’s Profile of an AI-Ready Graduate: Explains what AI skills students can develop.

“When you take a look at all of those different pieces, you’re putting together guidance that helps your district make good, solid decisions that align with your strategic plan, without necessarily having to add new policies and procedures,” Hawthorne says.

5. Measurement

Observing outcomes is an ongoing process. And it is important to ensure that the AI tool's success metrics align with established student learning outcomes.

"The metric for teacher competency hasn't changed. It's still the test at the end of the year," Hawthorne says. "Teachers know what they're going to get when they do it the way they're doing it now. They don't know what they're going to get when they do something different, like bringing on an AI tool."

School leaders can help classroom teachers and other educators see how AI tools align with longstanding metrics by ensuring decisions tie back to their Graduate Portrait, college- and career-readiness goals, and even to market data showing the skills colleges and employers say new grads need.

"A lot of times, things are done to teachers rather than done with and explained to teachers. The latter is essential when onboarding AI," Hawthorne says.

Conclusion

The future of writing readiness is here

When implemented properly, AI can help students develop the writing-based communication skills employers demand. This will ensure that students, as lifelong learners, can acquire new, durable skills to keep pace with evolving technology.

From typing classes to media literacy courses and now to AI oversight, educators have guided students through technological change and helped ensure they have the skills needed to be strong users of those tools and systems after graduation.

Today, through tools like Grammarly Authorship, AI can assist classroom educators as they help students navigate the new world of AI. **They can do this in several ways, including:**

Identifying what student work was developed with AI, adjusted using AI, or is original content. This meets an acute need for educators while keeping the student in the driver's seat.

Observing how a student's writing process unfolded. By seeing how a student approached the task, such as when they paused, backtracked, or added new information, a teacher can offer more productive feedback.

When technology unlocks higher-order thinking, students benefit, too. Grammarly research found a strong correlation between community college students who used the tool and higher confidence among those students in their own writing abilities.

AI for writing readiness is already helping teachers and students work smarter within the current education system. It also gives educators a way to envision new opportunities for college and career writing readiness, such as discipline-specific AI literacy (DiSAIL) education, which uses AI to help students build knowledge and skills in specific curricular or workforce areas.

> "If we really want to talk about getting kids ready for college and career readiness. We need to change what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn so they really are being prepared for jobs of the future."
>
> **Stacy Hawthorne, Chief Academic Officer at Learn21**

Resources

1. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4180-1.html
2. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4180-1.html
3. https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/technology/employers-want-new-grads-with-ai-experience--knowledge
4. https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Final_Lets_Measure_Ready.pdf
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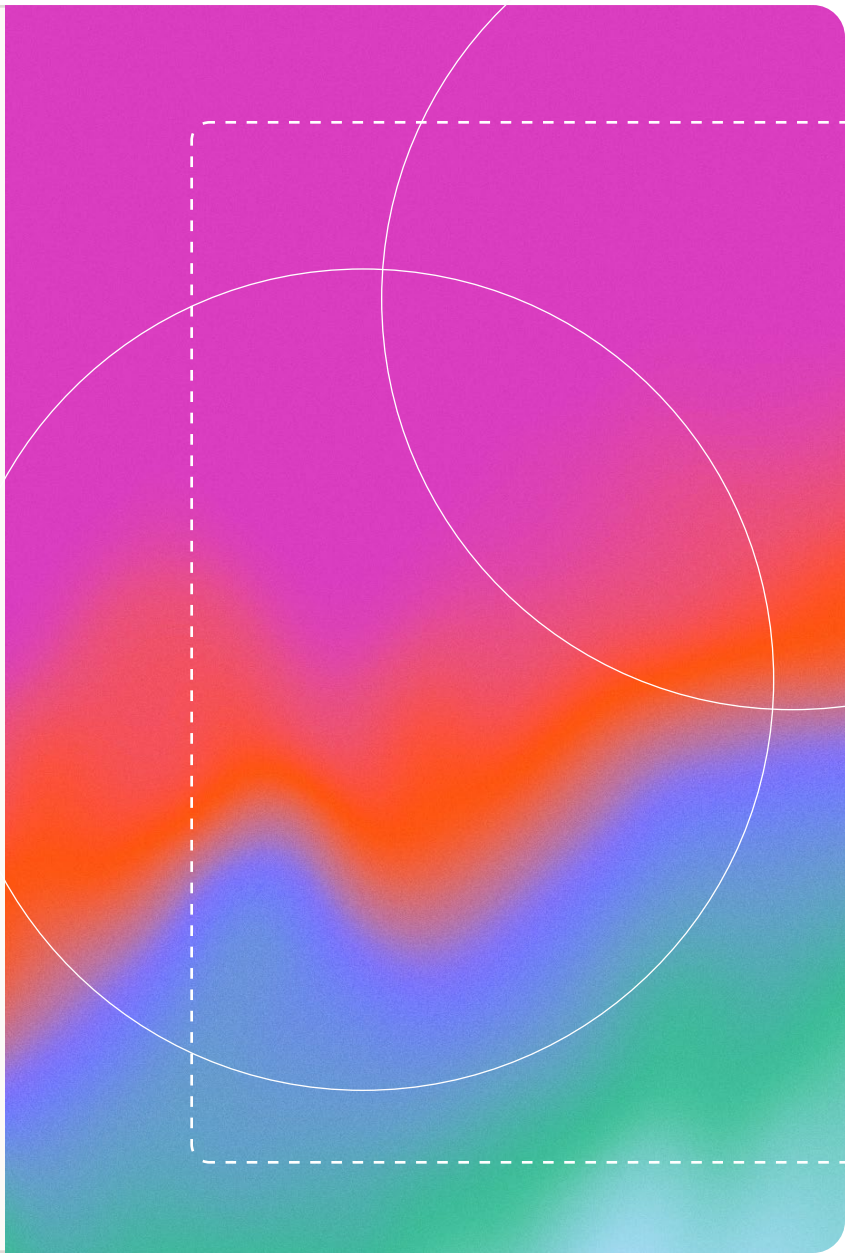
Learn more



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