

# AI Literacy Framework for L&D Professionals

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## How to Use This Framework

This framework is a thinking tool, not a checklist. A few ways to put it to work:

### 1. Orient Yourself

Read through the eight domains and reflect on where your confidence is strongest and where gaps exist.

### 2. Set priorities

Not every L&D professional needs depth in every domain. Identify two or three areas most relevant to your current role and focus your development there.

### 3. Engage your team

The framework works as a facilitation tool for conversations about collective AI capability — where are we strong, where are we underprepared, and what do we need to build?

### 4. Evaluate learning resources

Map courses, workshops, or other AI learning opportunities against the framework to see which domains and levels they address — and which gaps they leave.

## A Note on This Update

This framework has gone through a few iterations since its first publication in 2023, shaped by input from colleagues and the wider L&D network, and in response to the continuously evolving nature of AI. What follows is a brief account of what changed in this version and why.

**AI Governance and Policy** has been added as a standalone domain. Governance appeared in earlier versions as a thread within AI Ethics, but it has grown into something that deserves its own space. As organizations establish AI policies and regulators introduce legislation, governance is no longer a subset of ethical awareness — it is now a distinct professional competency for L&D practitioners.

**Critical Thinking and Fact-Checking** has been renamed **Critical Thinking and Sense-Making**. While it worked in the earlier version, fact-checking implies a fairly narrow activity. What AI demands of us now is more nuanced — navigating outputs that can be plausible, confident, and wrong simultaneously, and exercising judgment that cannot always be outsourced to a verification tool.

**AI Pedagogy and Assessment** has been reconceived as **Working with AI** — shifting focus from how AI is used in educational settings broadly, to how L&D professionals integrate AI into our own practice and develop the discernment to interrogate the pedagogical assumptions embedded in the tools we adopt.

Finally, the framing of **AI Ethics** has deepened. Ethical challenges are now positioned not as problems to be judged but as problems to be actively solved — iteratively and practically, with the same design sensibility we bring to our work.

## The Eight Domains

The framework is organized across eight interconnected domains (Figure 1). Together, they reflect the full scope of AI literacy that we need to engage with AI critically, practically, and responsibly.

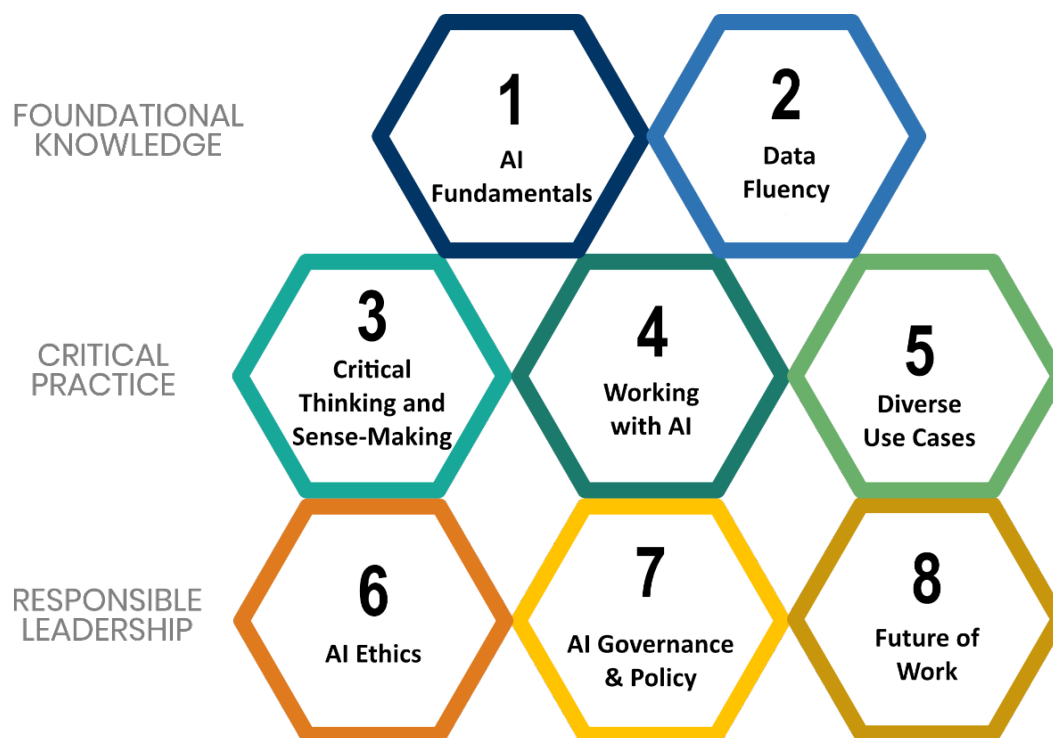


Figure 1: AI Literacy Framework across eight domains.

## The Eight Domains in Details



### AI Fundamentals

AI Fundamentals lays the groundwork for understanding artificial intelligence. It explores the core concepts behind AI, its historical evolution, and how it continues to reshape our world. This includes examining different AI techniques — from machine learning and large language models to generative and agentic AI systems — and developing a working understanding of how these models are built, what they can and cannot do, and why that matters for learning professionals.

Foundational knowledge in this domain is what allows us to cut through hype, understand what type of AI we are using, ask the right questions of vendors and colleagues, and make informed decisions about when and how AI adds genuine value to our work.



### Data Fluency

Understanding how AI works is foundational — but knowing how to interrogate the data that powers it is a different skill, and an equally critical one. The effectiveness of an AI model is directly tied to the quality and the representation of the data it trains on. This domain focuses on developing the skills to scrutinize and work effectively with data used in AI systems: understanding data sources, differentiating types of data, recognizing bias and misrepresentation, and applying data governance principles. For L&D professionals, this also means understanding how learner data is collected, used, and protected within AI-powered learning systems — and knowing when to push back before recommending or deploying them.



### Critical Thinking and Sense-Making

AI systems can generate plausible-sounding information with high confidence — including fabricated references, inaccurate case studies, and subtly biased content. Developing strong critical thinking and sense-making skills is essential for L&D professionals who rely on accurate information to design learning experiences, advise stakeholders, and curate resources.

This domain focuses on building the analytical habits needed to evaluate AI-generated content, identify logical fallacies and misinformation, and make well-reasoned judgments about when and how to trust AI outputs.



### Working with AI

AI tools are now embedded in nearly every stage of the learning design process — from needs analysis and content generation to learner feedback and evaluation. This domain focuses on how L&D professionals actually work with AI: developing

effective prompting and iteration strategies, maintaining human judgment and oversight in the creative and analytical process, and integrating AI into existing workflows without compromising quality or learner trust.

Critically, this domain also addresses something that is easy to overlook: AI tools marketed for learning are not pedagogically neutral. Every tool embeds assumptions about how learning happens — what good instruction looks like, how learners should be assessed, what counts as engagement. We need the skills to identify and interrogate those assumptions, and to evaluate whether these tools align with the learning needs and contexts we serve.



### Diverse Use Cases

To fully understand AI's possibilities — and its limits — we need to look beyond our own field. Across healthcare, law, finance, urban planning, and other sectors, AI is being applied in ways that are often more advanced and further along than in L&D. Examining these use cases helps us develop a broader perspective: understanding

what works, what has failed, and why.

More importantly, this domain builds the capacity to draw transferable insights from other domains and apply them creatively to learning design, performance support, and organizational capability building. Breadth of awareness is the starting point; the goal is transfer.



### AI Ethics

Conversations about AI must always include its ethical dimensions — but for L&D professionals, ethical awareness alone is not enough. Drawing on [Caroline Whitbeck's foundational work on ethics as design](#), this domain is grounded in the view that ethical challenges are not simply problems to be judged — they are

problems to be solved. Similar to design problems, ethical problems in AI are complex, often ill-defined, and rarely have a single correct answer. Addressing them well requires the same iterative capacity we bring to learning design: defining the problem clearly, devising possible responses, testing them against competing demands, and refining as we learn.

In practice, this means we need both the values-based foundation — understanding privacy, informed consent, data ownership, algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability — and the practical skills to devise responses when those values come into tension. It means asking not just “is this AI application ethical?” but “what can we actively design — in our tools, our processes, our policies, and our learning experiences — to make it more so?” And it means recognizing that ethical practice is not a one-time review but an ongoing, iterative responsibility that evolves as the technology and its contexts continue to change.



## AI Governance and Policy

As AI becomes embedded in organizational systems, we are increasingly called upon to navigate — and contribute to — the governance structures that shape how AI is used at work.

This domain focuses on understanding organizational AI policies, regulatory frameworks such as the [EU AI Act](#) and emerging guidelines in other jurisdictions, and the practical responsibilities these create for learning professionals. It includes knowing how to assess vendor compliance, understanding data residency and privacy obligations, and recognizing when AI use cases require escalation, review, or explicit stakeholder approval. Governance is not someone else's job — for L&D professionals working at the intersection of people, data, and technology, it is a core competency.



## Future of Work

AI is no longer simply automating routine tasks — it is reshaping how humans and machines collaborate across creative, analytical, and interpersonal roles. For L&D professionals, this creates both a professional responsibility and a personal one: to anticipate how AI will transform the roles our learners occupy, and to continuously develop our own capacity to work effectively in an AI-shaped landscape.

This domain focuses on understanding workforce trends, emerging and disappearing roles, the evolving skill demands across industries, and the strategic role that we play in supporting organizations through AI-driven change. Staying current is not optional — it is part of the job.