AI System Ethics: Values and Use

Competency

Learners assess whether using AI in an educational or digital context supports values such as fairness, transparency, and privacy. They reflect on whether its use is appropriate, beneficial, or potentially harmful.

Key Method

Educators examine how AI tools and systems uphold or challenge the values of fairness, transparency, and privacy. By analyzing AI use through these ethical lenses, they learn to evaluate when a tool is appropriate, beneficial, or potentially harmful in their instructional context.

Using this understanding, educators apply ethical principles directly to classroom practice. They evaluate an AI tool relevant to their work, design a lesson that models responsible use, and reflect on how their decisions support equitable, transparent, and privacy-protective learning experiences for students.

Method Components

Understanding Ethical Frameworks for AI

Educators begin by familiarizing themselves with three core ethical principles: fairness, transparency, and privacy. These principles guide responsible AI use and help educators determine when AI enhances learning and when it may introduce risks. Fairness encourages equitable treatment for all students and helps prevent biased outcomes. Transparency promotes understanding by helping students see how AI systems work and what their limitations are. Privacy protects learner's rights and personal information and remains a fundamental legal and ethical responsibility in schools.

Educators also consider situations in which students may feel uneasy about AI, such as online content monitoring or automated decision-making. Reflecting on personal beliefs about technology and learning helps teachers see how their own values shape decisions about integrating AI. This ethical foundation becomes the basis for the analysis and application that follow.

Fairness: Bias and Equity in AI

Because AI systems reflect the data and design choices that create them, they can reproduce the biases found in society. In this component, educators explore how algorithmic bias emerges from the "training" of the AI system. This training can come in the form of biased data, labeling, or system assumptions. For instance, even newer AI writing evaluators may still score multilingual learners lower, not because their ideas are weak, but because the system has learned to favor particular dialects or sentence structures. Or consider a reading-recommendation tool that suggests books to students based on past choices. If developers trained the system on data that underrepresents certain cultural groups or authors, the system may repeatedly recommend texts reflecting only a narrow range of voices and experiences. Students with different backgrounds might never see themselves reflected in the materials the AI promotes.

Educators will consider these inherent pitfalls and then develop strategies for recognizing and addressing bias when selecting an AI tool. These strategies include examining AI outputs and supporting students in identifying areas of bias or skewed perspectives.

Transparency: Explainability and Accountability

Transparency is essential when creating an informed relationship with AI tools. In this component, educators evaluate how clearly an AI system communicates its data sources, decision-making processes, and limitations. Understanding these factors helps teachers decide whether students can make sense of AI-generated content and whether the tool is appropriate for their instructional setting.

Educators also reflect on what responsible disclosure and accountability look like when schools adopt AI tools, both within the system itself and among the stakeholders who use it. When teachers explain how an AI system works, acknowledge its limitations, and clarify when human judgment is still required, students become better prepared to use AI thoughtfully and critically.

Privacy: Protecting Data and Student Rights

When using AI in an educational setting, privacy is a non-negotiable ethical principle. Examining data privacy policies and how student information is

safeguarded is both a legal and professional responsibility. Identifying the types of data AI tools might collect—such as writing samples, behavioral patterns, or usage history is crucial to evaluating the level of privacy afforded by the tool, as is understanding how that data might be stored, shared, or reused.

Educators will review key student privacy laws, including FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), and consider the implications these regulations have for classroom technology use. By understanding these expectations and recognizing the risks of inappropriate data sharing, educators are better equipped to select district-approved tools and implement safety measures that support student rights.

Evaluating Use: Appropriate, Beneficial, or Harmful

Educators learn to evaluate AI use through both an ethical and instructional lens. This evaluation includes analyzing real-world scenarios to determine when AI is appropriate and offers meaningful benefits, or when it may cause harm. In this evaluation, context matters. An AI writing assistant may be helpful when used through a teacher-controlled account, yet the same tool becomes problematic if students must log in, and their writing is stored or analyzed long-term.

To make these judgments, educators weigh potential benefits—things like efficiency, accessibility, or differentiated support—against risks such as reinforcing stereotypes or compromising data privacy. This evaluative work prepares educators to make informed decisions before introducing AI tools to students.

Classroom Application: Evaluating and Implementing Ethical AI Use

In this component, educators apply fairness, transparency, and privacy principles directly to classroom practice. They analyze AI tools used for instruction, evaluate whether the tool is appropriate for their own context, and design a lesson that models ethical AI use. Students learn not just how to use AI tools, but also how to question and evaluate them.

Educators also reflect on their instructional choices, such as what guidelines they set, how they communicate expectations, and how students respond. This reflection helps refine the educator’s approach and strengthens their ability to guide students in developing responsible AI habits.

Reflection, Evaluation, and Next Steps in the Classroom

Educators conclude by reflecting on their learning and evaluating the impact of AI use in their classroom. They revisit how fairness, transparency, and privacy shaped

the experience and consider what worked well and what they would adjust. Based on these insights, educators outline the next steps for sustaining ethical AI practices over time. This plan supports ongoing professional growth and helps establish shared expectations that can be communicated to colleagues.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Radanliev, Petar. “AI Ethics: Integrating Transparency, Fairness, and Privacy in AI Development.” Applied Artificial Intelligence, vol. 39, no. 1, 7 Feb. 2025, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08839514.2025.2463722, https://doi.org/10.1080/08839514.2025.2463722.

Radanliev, Petar. “Privacy, Ethics, Transparency, and Accountability in AI Systems for Wearable Devices.” Frontiers in Digital Health, vol. 7, 17 June 2025, pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12209263/, https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2025.1431246.

Wieczorek, Michał, et al. “Unpacking the Ethics of Using AI in Primary and Secondary Education: A Systematic Literature Review.” AI and Ethics, vol. 5, no. 5, 23 June 2025, pp. 4693–4711, link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43681-025-00770-0, https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-025-00770-0.

Yan, Yuyang, et al. “A Systematic Review of AI Ethics in Education.” Journal of Global Information Management, vol. 33, no. 1, 30 July 2025, pp. 1–50, www.sciencedirect.com/org/science/article/pii/S1062737525000654, https://doi.org/10.4018/jgim.386381.

Mosa, Msbah, et al. “AI and Ethics in Surveillance: Balancing Security and Privacy in a Digital World.” International Journal of Academic Engineering Research (IJAER), vol. 8, no. 10, 2024, pp. 8–15, philarchive.org/archive/MOSAAE-2.

Resources

AI Support for Educators
Microsoft Elevate for Educators

Understanding Ethical Frameworks for AI
Ethical Principles for Artificial Intelligence in K-12 Education

AI Glossary of Terms

Fairness: Bias and Equity in AI

The Role of AI in Content Moderation

▸ Gender Shades

AI in the Classroom: Empowering Teachers

▸ How to Teach Fairness in AI

AI in the Classroom – Equity, Creativity, and Teaching

Transparency: Explainability and Accountability

Transparent Assignment Design Using AI

AI and Teacher Trust

Privacy: Protecting Data and Student Rights

Student and Educator Data Privacy

AI Privacy Risks in Education

How to Protect Student Privacy When Using AI

Evaluating Use: Appropriate, Beneficial, or Harmful

Example Scenarios of Ethics and AI Use in Classrooms

9–12 Scenario Example Flashcards

Classroom Application: Evaluating and Implementing Ethical AI Use

AI Guidance for Schools Toolkit

Empowering Educators in the Age of AI

Code.org: How AI Makes Decisions; Lesson 2 – Training AI

ISTE Hands-On AI Project for K-12

Human-Centered AI Guidance for K-12 Public Schools

Teaching the Environmental Impact of AI Through PBL

Unlock Generative AI Safely and Responsibly—Classroom Toolkit

Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient in all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

200 - 300 words.
Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Teaching Context:
   Describe your teaching context, including grade level, subject area, and student demographics. Include any special considerations such as multilingual learners, students with IEPs (Individualized Education Program), or other instructional needs. How do these factors influence your perspective on ethical AI use?

2. AI Tool Exploration:
   Identify a district-approved AI tool or system you will use. This may include tools for written expression, images, video, coding, or other instructional purposes. Why have you chosen this tool, and what educational goals or challenges does it seem able to address?

3. Ethical Values Analysis:
   Reflect on the tool using the lenses of fairness, transparency, and privacy. Which of these values feels most relevant in your context, and why? Are there trade-offs you would need to navigate?

4. Evaluation of Potential Use:
   Based on your initial exploration, what ethical considerations would you need to keep in mind when using this tool with your students?

5. Professional Decision-Making:
   How does your role as an educator influence the decisions you make about whether and how to use AI tools with students?

Passing:
- Gives context (grade, subject, demographics, special considerations).
- States the rationale for using AI.
- Addresses values (fairness, transparency, privacy).

- Evaluates use (appropriate, beneficial, potentially harmful) in the context of the students with whom the educator will work.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following three artifacts as evidence of your learning. See the Rubric for the passing score. For all artifacts, PDF is the preferred format.

*Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

Artifact 1: AI Ethics Reflection and Analysis Journal
(450 - 650 words)

Educators analyze three distinct examples of AI use from their professional or personal life through the ethical lenses of fairness, transparency, and privacy as described in the method of components.

Instructions:
Organize your submission into three short sections (Example 1, Example 2, Example 3). Each section should follow the same structure below. For each example, include:

1. Brief Situational Description:

   Provide one to two sentences explaining when and how the AI tool was used.

2. Ethical Analysis—Address all three principles for *each* example:
   - Fairness: How did this situation demonstrate or challenge equitable treatment or outcomes?
   - Transparency: Would students or stakeholders understand how AI assisted or how decisions were made?
   - Privacy: What data was collected, used, or shared? Were any risks present?

3. Evaluation of Use—Assess whether AI use in this situation was:
   - appropriate
   - beneficial
   - potentially harmful

Provide reasoning grounded in your professional values.

4. Personal Reflection:

Explain how your beliefs about technology and/or student learning influenced your actions or judgments in this situation. Provide specific examples to clarify your thinking.

Artifact 2: Classroom Lesson Plan with Embedded Ethical AI Guidelines

Educators design and implement a lesson that models ethical AI use by applying the values of fairness, transparency, and privacy within a real instructional context. Your submission should include a completed lesson plan with annotations showing where and how these ethical principles are addressed, as well as two anonymized student work samples that demonstrate how learners engaged with the activity.

Your lesson plan should clearly show:

- The instructional purpose of the lesson and where AI is used
- How fairness, transparency, and privacy are taught, modeled, or discussed
- Annotations indicating your decisions and the ethical considerations behind them
- The guidelines students followed for responsible AI use

Your student samples should illustrate:

- How students interacted with the AI tool
- How they applied or responded to fairness, transparency, or privacy guidelines
- Evidence of learning connected to the ethical focus of the lesson

The preferred format is a single PDF containing the annotated lesson plan followed by two student work samples.

NOTE: Your lesson may use any template you, your school, or district uses, as long as all required elements are clearly addressed.

Components:

1. Lesson Identifiers
   Provide only the essentials needed for reviewers to understand the lesson:
   - Grade level
   - Subject
   - Lesson title or brief description
   - Learning goals and/or objectives

2. AI Tool Description
   Identify:
   - The district-approved AI tool used

- Its purpose in the lesson
- Why you chose it for this activity

3. Embedded Ethical Analysis (Annotations Required)

   Annotate your lesson plan to show how you address:
   - Fairness (equity, bias mitigation, accessible participation)
   - Transparency (how students understand AI's role and limitations)
   - Privacy (data protection, safe use practices)
   - Evaluation of Use (why AI is appropriate and/or beneficial in this context and how you mitigate risks)

4. Classroom Guidelines for Responsible AI Use
   Provide the guidelines students will follow during the lesson (appropriate prompts, privacy expectations, responsible use behaviors).

5. Two Student Work Samples
   Submit two **anonymized** student artifacts that show learning from the lesson (Such as, written responses, screenshots, reflections, or products created with AI).

Include annotations on each sample pointing to specific evidence of learning, such as how the student applied the fairness, transparency, or privacy guidelines or how they interpreted the AI tool's output.

Artifact 3: AI Ethics Action Plan

Educators create a concise, practical plan for a target audience of their colleagues - presented as an action plan, checklist, or infographic - that outlines how they will integrate ethical AI practices into their classroom or instructional setting. The final product should be ready for sharing with colleagues. Please combine all components into a single file. The preferred format is PDF.

Components:

1. Purpose and Instructional Setting

   Provide a one- or two-sentence description of the setting in which this action plan will be used. (such as, "sixth-grade science classroom," "high school ELA team," "K–5 library media center").

2. Ethical Principles Overview

   Define what the three guiding values mean in your instructional setting:

   - Fairness: How will equitable AI use be ensured
   - Transparency: How AI's role will be communicated clearly to students

- Privacy: How student data will be protected and used responsibly

This section should reflect the educator's understanding of these principles in practice.

3. Bias and Equity Considerations

   Outline two or more strategies you will use to:

   - Identify or evaluate bias in AI tools or outputs
   - Ensure equitable participation and outcomes for all students
   - Address concerns students may have about monitoring, feedback, or automated decisions

4. Guidelines for Appropriate AI Use

   Identify conditions under which AI use is:

   - Appropriate
   - Beneficial
   - Potentially harmful or not recommended

   Include at least three practical guidelines you will follow when selecting or using AI tools with students.

5. Responsible Use Expectations for Students

   Provide a brief list of the guidelines students will follow when working with AI, such as:

   - What types of prompts are appropriate
   - How to use AI as support rather than replacement
   - What information should not be shared
   - Expectations for citing AI contributions

6. Professional Reflection and Commitments

   Include a short reflective statement on:

   - How your beliefs about technology influence your approach to ethical AI use
   - What commitments are you making to ensure fairness, transparency, and privacy
   - How will you continue to revisit or refine your ethical AI practices

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	**Basic**	**Developing**
Artifact 1: AI Ethics Reflection and Analysis Journal	Includes three clearly structured examples, each with a brief situational description. Provides a complete analysis of fairness, transparency, and privacy for each example. Clearly evaluates whether AI use was appropriate, beneficial, or potentially harmful with well-supported reasoning. Personal reflection shows a strong connection between beliefs about technology and ethical decision-making. Writing is organized, specific, and demonstrates deep ethical understanding.	Three examples are included, but organization or depth is uneven. Ethical analysis addresses fairness, transparency, and privacy, but may be general or partially developed. Evaluation of use is present but lacks a strong justification. Reflection is included but surface-level or minimally connected to the examples. Writing is understandable but may lack clarity or cohesion.	Fewer than three examples, or required elements (ethical analysis, evaluation, reflection) are missing. Little or inaccurate application of fairness, transparency, or privacy. Minimal or missing evaluation of use. Reflection is incomplete or unrelated to ethical reasoning. Writing is unclear, disorganized, or shows a limited understanding of ethical AI use.
Artifact 2: Lesson Plan with Embedded Ethical AI Guidelines	The lesson plan includes all required identifiers and clearly stated objectives. The AI tool is clearly described	The lesson plan includes required components, but some elements are partially developed or unclear.	The lesson plan is missing key components, annotations, or student work samples. Ethical considerations are

	with a justified instructional purpose. Ethical annotations directly demonstrate fairness, transparency, privacy, and evaluation of use and clearly indicate where and how these principles are addressed in the lesson. Classroom guidelines for responsible AI use are clear and actionable, including expectations for prompts, privacy, and responsible behaviors. Includes two anonymized student work samples with brief annotations pointing to specific evidence of learning related to fairness, transparency, or privacy. Submission is coherent, complete, and demonstrates intentional ethical design.	Ethical annotations address fairness, transparency, privacy, and evaluation of use, but are general, uneven, or lack clarity about where these appear in the lesson. Classroom guidelines are present but limited, or they lack key expectations for responsible AI use. Two student samples included, but lack clear annotations or show only partial evidence of learning related to the ethical focus. Submission is adequate but may lack clarity or depth.	minimally addressed or absent, and annotations do not show how fairness, transparency, privacy, or evaluation of use are embedded in the lesson. Annotations do not show understanding of fairness, transparency, privacy, or evaluation of use. Student samples are missing, unannotated, or not related to ethical learning goals. Submission is unclear, incomplete, or not aligned with the competency.
Artifact 3: AI Ethics Action Plan	Provides a clear, concise action plan appropriate for sharing with colleagues. Defines fairness, transparency,	The action plan includes required components, but some elements are general or lack specificity.	The action plan is missing major components (ethical principles, strategies, guidelines, student expectations, or reflection).

	and privacy in meaningful ways for the instructional setting. Identifies concrete strategies to address bias and promote equity. Includes actionable guidelines for appropriate, beneficial, and potentially harmful AI use. Outlines responsible AI expectations for students. Reflection demonstrates strong professional insight and clear commitments for ongoing ethical practice.	Definitions of fairness, transparency, and privacy are present but surface-level. Bias and/or equity strategies or AI-use guidelines may be limited or partially developed. Student expectations and reflection are included, but lack depth. The plan could be shared but would benefit from refinement.	Definitions or strategies show a limited understanding of ethical AI use. Submission is unclear, incomplete, or not usable in practice. Reflection is absent or unrelated to ethical commitments.

Part 3 Reflection

(250-300 words)

For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:
How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Answer the following questions. Provide specific examples to illustrate each response.

1. Ethical Values Analysis: Reflect on how fairness, transparency, and privacy showed up in both the examples you analyzed and the lesson you designed. How did you work toward equitable access, explainability for students, and protection of student data? What challenges or tensions did you encounter when balancing these principles in practice?

2. Evaluation of Use: Reflect on the AI tool's impact on student learning. Was its use appropriate, beneficial, or potentially harmful? Provide examples of both positive outcomes and potential risks or unintended consequences.

3. Impact on Student Learning: Drawing on the student work samples you collected, reflect on the AI tool's impact on student learning. In what ways was the tool appropriate or beneficial for your students? Where did you observe risks, limitations, or unintended consequences?

4. Personal Beliefs and Decision-Making: How did your beliefs, values, and past experiences shape your decisions about integrating AI? In what ways did your students' diverse needs, identities, or learning contexts influence your choices? Did this experience challenge or reinforce your understanding of responsible AI use?

5. Future Application and Action: Based on your learning, what strategies or changes would you implement in future lessons to ensure ethical AI use? How will you continue to model fairness, transparency, and privacy for students and colleagues?

Passing:

- Address all five reflection questions with clear, specific examples.
- Explain how fairness, transparency, and privacy appeared in both the analyzed examples and the lesson, including any challenges or tensions.

- Evaluate the AI tool's use by identifying appropriate, beneficial, or potentially harmful aspects, supported with concrete evidence.
- Draw on student work samples to describe observable impacts on learning, including both strengths and limitations.
- Explain how the educator's beliefs, values, and past experiences influenced decisions about AI use, and how student needs or identities shaped instructional choices.
- Identify future strategies or changes the educator will make to promote ethical AI use, including modeling fairness, transparency, and privacy for students and colleagues.