AI in OT/OTA Education: From Policy to Practice

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AOTA Academic Leadership Council
10/23/26

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Today's priorities

- Understand different forms of AI engagement and their implications for OT/OTA education.
- Translate principles into program, course, assignment, and fieldwork expectations.
- Explore teaching, assessment, and academic integrity strategies.
- Consider essential AI-related capabilities for future OT/OTA practitioners.
- Share approaches, challenges, and actionable next steps.

Where are OT/OTA programs now?

What is your program's current status regarding AI policies?

- We have a program-specific AI policy.
- We primarily follow institutional guidance.
- We are developing program-specific guidance.
- We do not yet have formal guidance.
- I'm not sure.

What is your program's most pressing AI-related challenge?

- Policy development and implementation
- Academic integrity and assessment
- Faculty readiness and consistency
- Fieldwork education
- Preparing graduates for practice
- Other

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AI Stewardship in OT/OTA Education

What must students and practitioners continue to know, notice, question, interpret, and justify - even when AI provides a fluent, plausible answer?

Why occupational therapy needs clearer language for AI

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- **AI is changing the work of OT**
  - It can create content, simulate conversations, interpret data, suggest actions, and automate workflow steps.
- **"AI use" can mean very different things**
  - Discussions often treat all AI uses alike and focus mainly on accuracy or efficiency.
- **Professional reasoning is at stake**
  - We also need to ask how AI affects judgment, accountability, context, and occupation.

Accuracy and efficiency tell only part of the story.

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Stewardship: a thoughtful middle path

Stewardship: Guiding, evaluating, and overseeing AI use to support appropriate benefits while protecting professional accountability and occupational participation.

Use thoughtfully

- AI may improve accessibility or reduce unnecessary work.

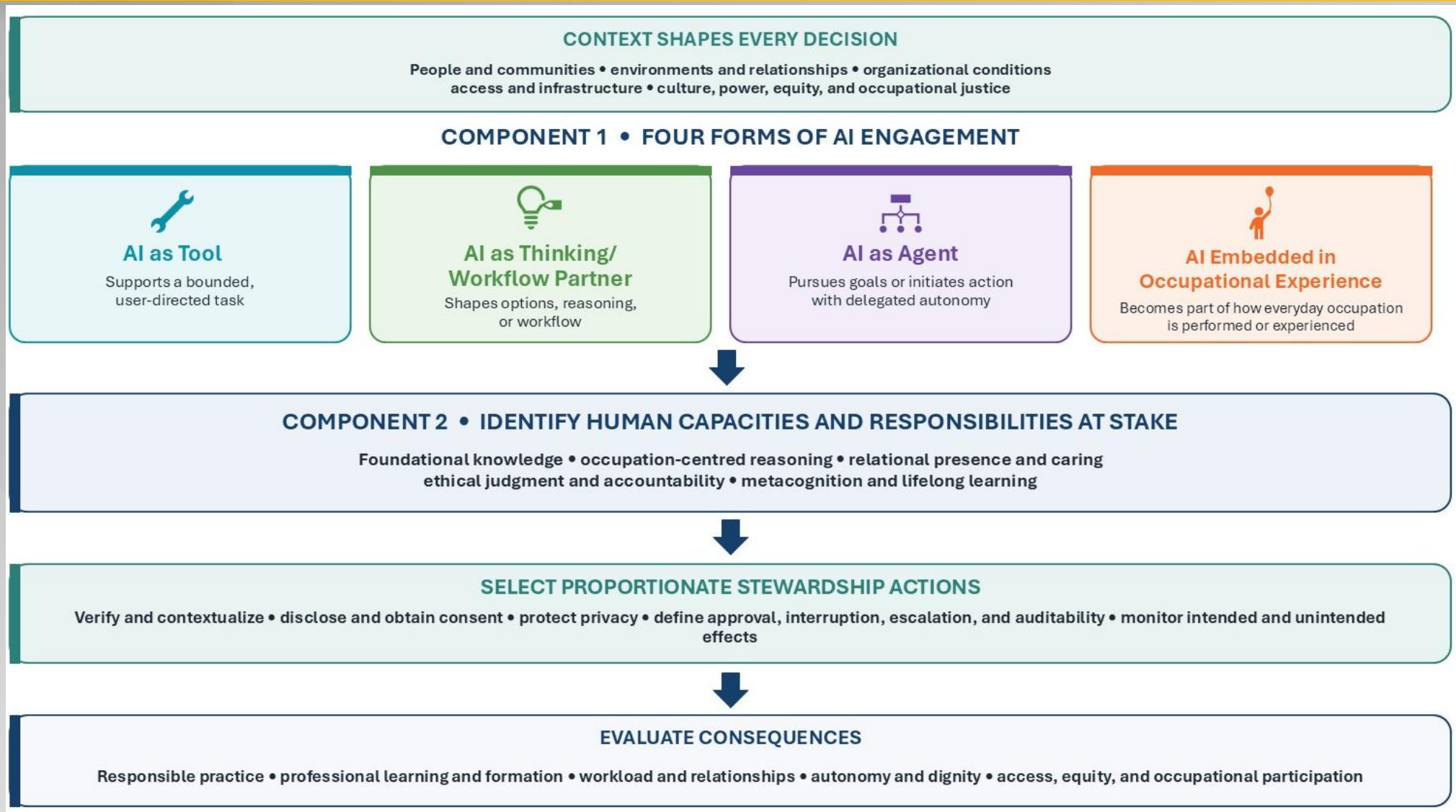
- **Question actively**
  - AI can mislead, narrow attention, or replace reasoning that **people** still need to do.
- **Keep people responsible**
  - People remain responsible for interpretation, relationships, ethics, and decisions.

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The Occupation-centered AI Stewardship Framework (Jozkowski et al., under review)

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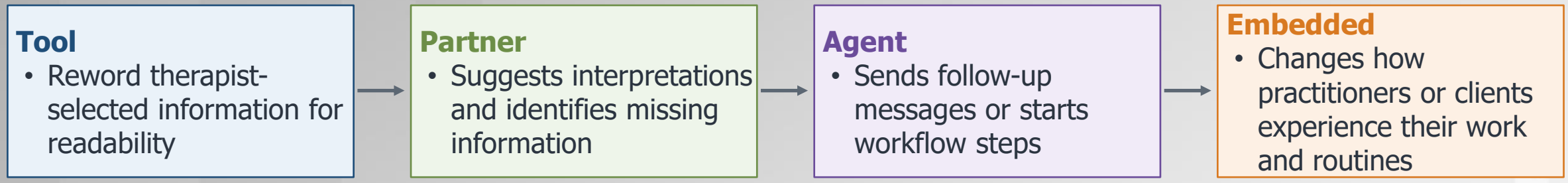


Form	Primary function	Main concern
AI as Tool	Supports a bounded task	Accuracy, privacy, contextual fit
AI as Thinking/ Workflow Partner	Shapes reasoning, options, or workflow	Cognitive offloading and automation bias
AI as Agent	Pursues goals or initiates actions with delegated autonomy	Accountability and unsafe actions
AI Embedded in Occupational Experience	Becomes part of everyday activities and participation	Meaning, autonomy, relationships, and equity

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One system can perform several roles

Example: AI-supported documentation system



Key question: At what point does AI begin influencing reasoning or taking action?

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Risks to professional reasoning

The concern goes beyond wrong answers. AI can quietly replace parts of the reasoning process.

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- **Automation bias:** Accepting plausible output without enough questioning.
- **Cognitive offloading:** Giving AI mental work that a learner or practitioner still needs to do.
- **Evidence-like error:** Claims sound evidence-based even when they are unsupported.
- **Loss of context:** Output overlooks the person's story, culture, environment, goals, or constraints.

Agentic AI can act across several steps

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Generative AI

Produces content in response to prompts
Drafts, summaries, explanations,
plans, and feedback

→

Agentic AI

Works toward goals across multiple steps
Monitoring conditions, scheduling,
initiating messages, adapting actions,
or triggering workflows

Key questions:

1. Who authorizes and supervises actions?
2. Can actions be reviewed, corrected, or stopped?
3. What happens if an early error influences later decisions?

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When AI becomes part of everyday occupation

AI may change both how an activity is done and how it feels or matters to the person.

- **Routines** - medication reminders, scheduling, self-management
- **Meaning** - autonomy, privacy, dignity, independence
- **Communication** - AI-supported writing, scripts, companions
- **Co-occupation** - changes in roles and responsibilities among clients, families, caregivers, and practitioners

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Key question: What does AI change about participation, choice, meaning, and relationships?

Human capacities that must be developed and protected

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Generally increasing AI influence and delegated autonomy

Bloom/Fink-informed capacity What OT practitioners must still develop, exercise, or protect	AI as Tool Bounded task support	AI as Thinking/ Workflow Partner Shapes options, reasoning, or workflow	AI as Agent Acts with delegated autonomy	AI Embedded in Occupational Experience Becomes part of how occupation is performed or experienced
Remember Foundational knowledge	Retrieves or summarizes selected information	Quizzes recall and identifies knowledge gaps	Tracks progress and schedules review	Voice prompts become part of a medication routine
Understand Significance & context	Rephrases concepts for clarity	Compares concepts and tests interpretation	Adjusts explanations based on performance	AI explanations shape understanding of health and daily choices
Apply Real-world use	Adapts clinician-selected resources	Works through application to a case	Triggers context-specific prompts or supports	Smart-home support is incorporated into meal preparation or personal care
Analyze Professional reasoning	Organizes case information for review	Surfaces patterns, omissions, and alternatives	Monitors patterns and flags meaningful changes	AI-informed patterns affect routines, supports, and family roles
Evaluate Judgment and ethics	Applies a clinician-selected checklist	Challenges assumptions and compares options	Applies defined thresholds/benchmarks and escalates concerns	The person weighs safety and convenience against privacy or autonomy
Create Innovation and adaptation	Drafts clinician-directed materials	Generates and refines possible approaches	Adapts supports within approved parameters	AI enables new ways to communicate, participate, or express identity
Learning how to learn	Records reflections and learning notes	Prompts self-assessment and reflection	Personalizes learning pathways over time	AI feedback helps adapt routines and strategies over time
Human dimension & caring	Supports accessible communication	Explores perspectives and relational effects	Prompts human follow-up when concerns arise	AI-mediated activity changes relationships, co-occupation, dignity, or independence

Five stewardship questions for reviewing AI use

1. What role is AI performing?
2. How is AI changing occupation, participation, or practice?
3. What must remain human-led?
4. What safeguards are proportionate to AI's influence and possible consequences?
5. What outcomes and unintended effects should we monitor?

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Application of the Framework

Case: A student preparing an intervention plan

An OT student is assigned to develop an occupation-centered intervention plan for an older adult returning home following hospitalization.

- The student uses generative AI to identify occupational performance concerns and recommend interventions.
- The AI produces a polished plan featuring home modifications, adaptive equipment, and fall-prevention strategies.
- However, it gives limited attention to the person's daily routines, priorities, family relationships, financial circumstances, or understanding of independence.

The student incorporates several recommendations into the assignment.

Applying the five stewardship questions

Question	Application
What is AI doing?	Shaping the student's interpretation and intervention recommendations
What is changing?	How the student approaches reasoning and considers context
What must remain human-led?	Occupational interpretation, judgment, and justification
What safeguards are needed?	Independent initial analysis, verification, and review
What should we evaluate?	Whether the student can demonstrate and transfer independent reasoning

From Principles to Program Policies

From professional principles to educational decisions

AOTA Policy E.19 (2025)

- Supports ethical AI development and integration across OT practice, education, and research while maintaining professional judgment, safety, transparency, and accountability.

AOTA Commission on Education Guidance (2026)

- Addresses educational implementation, including policies, oversight, disclosure, academic rigor, AI literacy, and fieldwork education.

Leadership question: How do we translate these principles into clear expectations for our programs?

AI guidance operates at several levels

Level	Primary responsibilities
Institution	Academic integrity, security, privacy, approved platforms
Program	Professional expectations, consistency, graduate readiness
Course	Learning goals and general AI-use expectations
Assignment	Specific permitted uses, restrictions, disclosure, verification
Fieldwork site	Site policies, clinical confidentiality, supervision, safe use

Key question: Where do responsibilities overlap, and where is additional clarification needed?

Not every AI use requires the same response

- **Supportive:** permit with clear expectations and appropriate verification
- **Substitutive:** restrict when AI replaces essential student learning or judgment
- **Context-dependent:** Specify conditions according to the learning objective
- **Sensitive or consequential:** Require authorization, safeguards, or prohibition

Key question: What work must the student demonstrate independently?

Policy dilemma: AI-supported writing and accessibility

An OT student independently develops an occupational analysis, then uses an AI writing assistant to improve the organization and clarity of the submission.

- The student is responsible for the original reasoning and reviews all revisions.

Should this use be allowed?

A. Generally permitted

B. Permitted with conditions or disclosure

C. Generally prohibited

D. Depends on the assignment's learning objectives

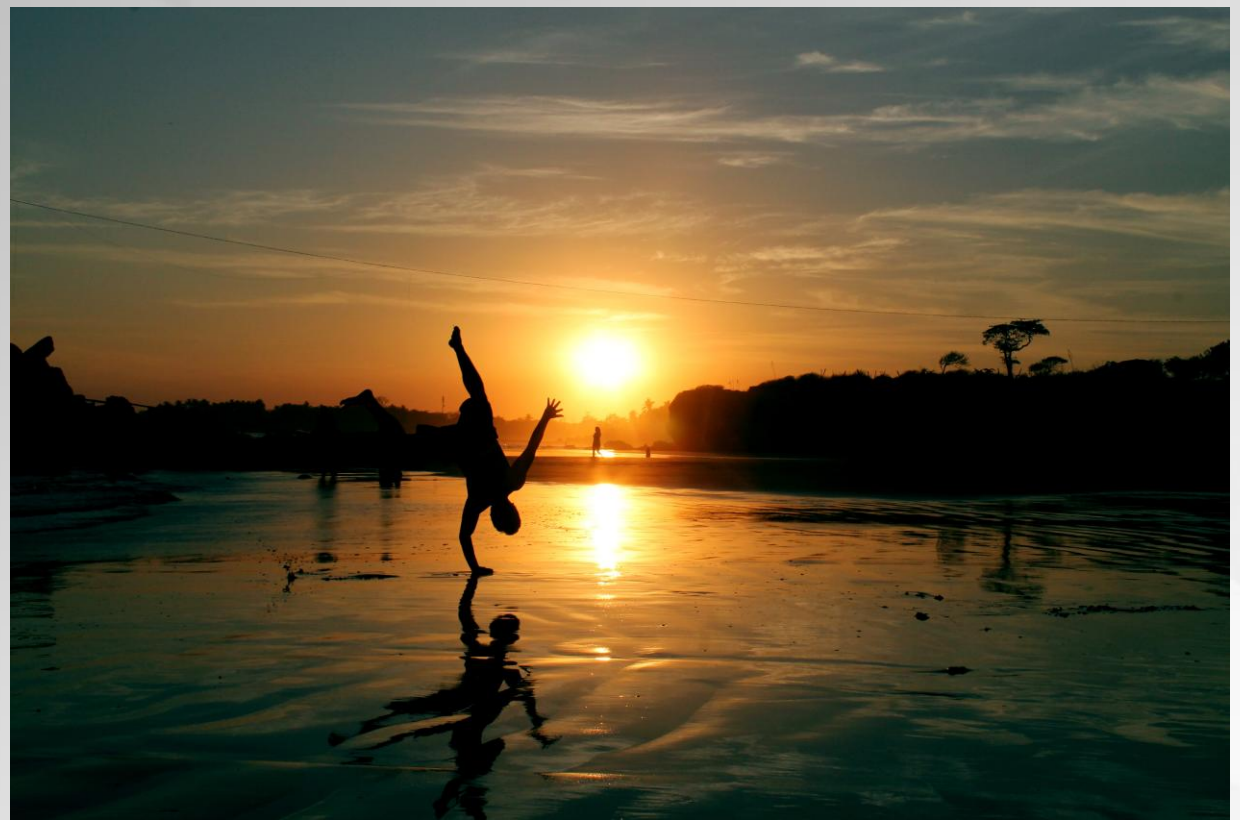
What might change a policy decision?

- Is the learning goal clinical reasoning, professional communication, or both?
- Who generated the ideas, interpretation, and final conclusions?
- Did AI change only the presentation—or also the meaning?
- Are expectations clear about disclosure, approved tools, and verification?
- How do we protect accessibility without removing essential learning opportunities?

Additional question: Would your answer change if the assignment specifically assessed professional writing?

Break

- We will resume in 5 minutes
- Next: Teaching, Assessment, and Academic Integrity



Teaching, Assessment, and Academic Integrity

From policing AI to designing for learning

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The question is not simply whether students used AI.

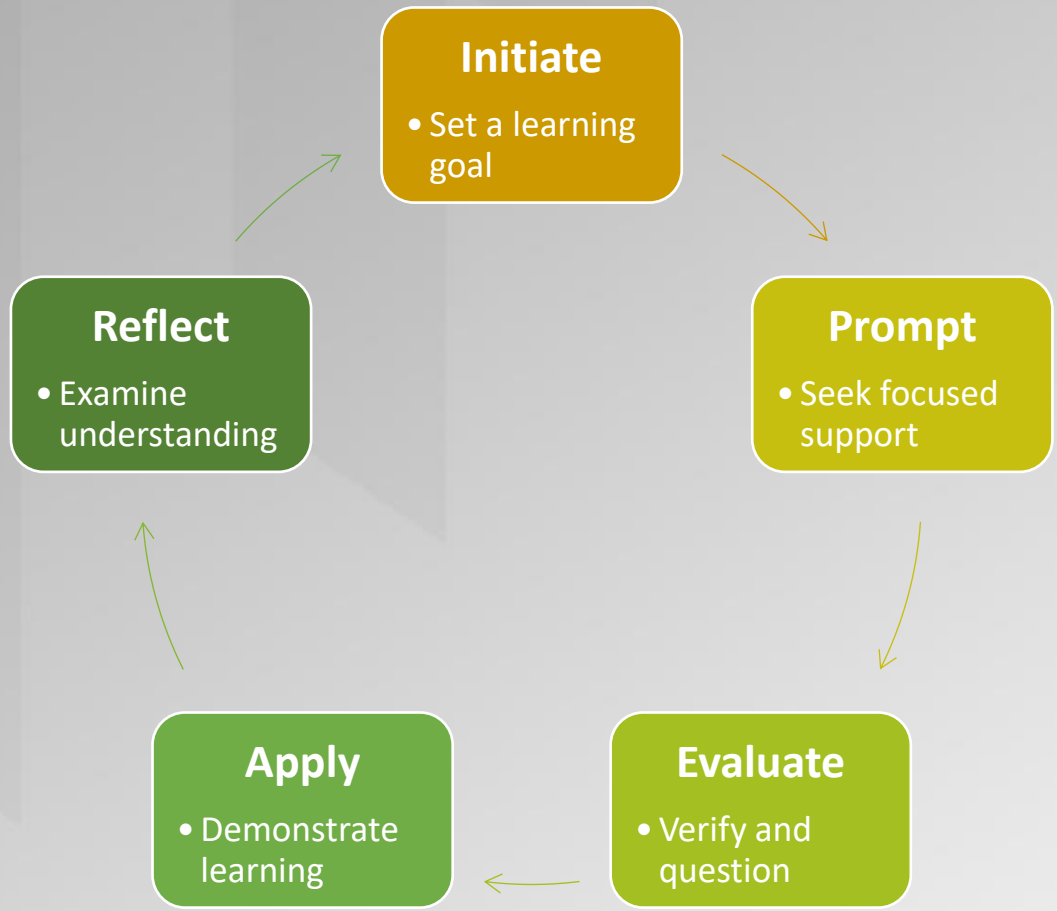
It is whether AI supported or substituted for the learning we intended.

- What must students know or do independently?
- Where might AI provide useful scaffolding?
- What boundaries protect the learning process?
- How will students demonstrate understanding and judgment?

Supporting learning, not substitution

ARISE: AI-Responsive Instruction for Student Engagement

The GenAI Learning Partner uses five phases:



The learner remains responsible for understanding, verification, application, and judgment

(Jozkowski, 2026; Jozkowski & Tabak, 2026)

Supportive, substitutive, or context-dependent?

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Supportive

- Ask AI to quiz me on concepts I have studied.
- Ask for questions that help me critique an article.
- Ask AI to identify missing considerations in my initial case analysis.
- Ask for feedback on clarity in my own writing.

Substitutive

- Ask AI to complete a graded knowledge assessment.
- Ask AI to write the article critique.
- Ask AI to generate the complete case analysis before I attempt it.
- Submit extensively rewritten work without the required independent writing.

Some uses depend on the learning objective, the student's preparation, and the assignment expectations.

What does a polished product actually demonstrate?

Traditional case assignment: Students receive an occupational profile and submit a written intervention plan that includes

- Occupational performance concerns
- Intervention goals
- Recommended interventions
- Clinical rationale

The challenge: A completed plan may not show how the student reached those decisions.

Redesigning assessment to make reasoning visible

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A possible revised case assignment -

- **Independent analysis:** Identify occupational priorities, relevant information, initial hypotheses, and a proposed plan.
- **Structured AI consultation (if permitted):** Explore alternative possibilities or overlooked considerations.
- **Verification:** Compare AI contributions with case information, occupational therapy theory, and evidence.
- **Justification:** Explain which suggestions were accepted, changed, or rejected, and why.
- **Demonstration of competence:** Defend the plan or apply the reasoning to a new scenario.

Assess the reasoning process, not only the final product.

Practical strategies for AI-responsive assessment

You don't necessarily need to redesign an assignment. Start by making learning and reasoning more visible.

- **Require an initial attempt:** Students develop their own interpretation, hypothesis, or plan before consulting AI.
- **Build in checkpoints:** Collect an outline, initial analysis, draft, or preliminary decision before the final submission.
- **Ask students to justify decisions:** Require an explanation of why particular conclusions or interventions were selected.
- **Introduce new information:** Ask students to adapt their interpretation or plan when the case or conditions change.
- **Assess independent understanding:** Use brief oral explanations, in-class application, or follow-up questions.
- **Make AI use transparent:** Specify permitted uses and require targeted disclosure, verification, or reflection when relevant.

What might this look like in OT/OTA education?

Assignment	Possible adjustment
Occupational profile	Have students identify occupational priorities independently and explain how client information informed their interpretation.
Intervention plan	Introduce a change in the client's circumstances and ask students to revise and justify their plan.
Research critique	Require students to identify and explain one methodological limitation using evidence from the article.
Documentation assignment	Have students explain the clinical reasoning underlying their documentation choices.
Fieldwork reflection	Use guided questions or a brief conversation to assess the student's own interpretation and learning.

An example

- **Original assignment:** Develop an intervention plan for an older adult returning home following hospitalization.

- **New information introduced during class:** The client tells you that they cannot afford the recommended bathroom modifications and are unwilling to move their bedroom to the first floor because maintaining their existing routines is important to them.

- **Follow-up assessment:** What would you change in your plan? What additional information would you need? How would you justify your decisions?

What is one change you could make?

Think of an assignment you currently use in your program.

Which of these strategies might help students better demonstrate their learning?

- An initial independent attempt
- A checkpoint or draft
- An explanation of key decisions
- A new case detail requiring adaptation
- A brief independent demonstration
- Clearer expectations for AI use and verification

Share in the Zoom chat: One strategy you might try and the assignment where you would use it.

Academic integrity: Responding to suspected misuse

When questions arise:

- Do not treat AI detection results or writing style as proof of misconduct.
- Review the assignment expectations and available evidence.
- Ask the student to explain their process, sources, and decisions.
- Distinguish misunderstanding from possible intentional circumvention.
- Follow established institutional procedures when concerns remain.
- An authorship conversation should verify learning and process—not begin with an accusation.

(AOTA, 2026; Jozkowski, 2026)

Preparing AI-Ready OT/OTA Graduates

What does AI readiness mean for OT/OTA graduates?

AI readiness is more than knowing how to use a tool.

Future practitioners need to:

- Understand what AI can and cannot do.
- Evaluate information and recommendations critically.
- Recognize when professional judgment must remain independent.
- Understand ethical, privacy, and accountability obligations.
- Consider how AI affects occupation, participation, and relationships.
- Recognize when AI should not be used.

What does the AOTA COE guidance ask programs to consider?

The 2026 Commission on Education guidance emphasizes:

- Preparing learners to understand AI functions and limitations.
- Preserving professional reasoning and evidence-based practice.
- Teaching transparent, ethical, and appropriately supervised AI use.
- Evaluating student learning and readiness.
- Preparing students for AI-related situations in professional practice and fieldwork.

Key distinction: Preparing students to make informed AI-related decisions does not require universal AI adoption.

(AOTA, 2026)

Six candidate graduate capabilities*

- **Foundational AI literacy:** Explain common functions, limitations, and sources of error
- **Critical evaluation:** Recognize inaccurate, biased, incomplete, or unsupported information
- **Occupation-centered reasoning:** Evaluate consequences for participation, meaning, and context
- **Ethical and digital professionalism:** Apply privacy, consent, disclosure, and accountability principles
- **Human-AI collaboration:** Determine when AI assistance is appropriate and when human judgment is essential
- **Professional adaptability:** Evaluate emerging tools and recognize when consultation or additional learning is needed

*Proposed capabilities for discussion; not formal accreditation standards.

Where/how should these capabilities be taught and assessed?

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Discussion

- What must every entry-level OT or OTA practitioner know or be able to do when encountering AI in practice?
- Where are these capabilities currently addressed in your curriculum?
- How would you know whether students can demonstrate them independently?

Consider: Coursework, simulation, practical examinations, fieldwork preparation, and clinical education.

Leadership discussions: Choose your focus

Room 1: Program policies

Facilitator: Amanda

Translating institutional guidance into consistent, practical, and equitable program expectations.

Room 2: Fieldwork education

Facilitator: Dana

Preparing students and coordinating expectations with clinical education partners.

Both groups will identify:

- A promising strategy
- A persistent challenge
- An area where further guidance or collaboration would be useful

Breakout 1: Program-Level AI Policies and Implementation

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Discussion questions

- What policies or implementation strategies are working in your program?
- Where do institutional requirements and OT/OTA educational needs create uncertainty?
- How do you support faculty consistency while allowing appropriate instructional discretion?
- What guidance or support would make implementation more effective?

Before returning: Identify one promising strategy and one unresolved challenge.

Breakout 2: Fieldwork Education and Clinical Partnerships

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Discussion questions

- What AI-related situations are emerging in fieldwork education?
- How are academic and clinical-site expectations communicated and coordinated?
- How do we ensure students demonstrate independent professional reasoning?
- What resources or guidance would better support fieldwork educators?

Before returning: Identify one promising strategy and one unresolved challenge.

Report-Back, Synthesis, and Next Steps

What did we learn from the leadership discussions?

- Room 1: Program-Level Policies
  - What promising strategy emerged?
  - What challenge is still unresolved?
  - Where would shared guidance be valuable?

- Room 2: Fieldwork Education
  - What promising strategy emerged?
  - What challenge is still unresolved?
  - Where would shared guidance be valuable?

Five ideas to take back to your program

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- **Policy clarity must extend into practice:** General principles need specific educational expectations.
- **Academic integrity is connected to professional formation:** Students must demonstrate their own learning and reasoning.
- **Readiness is developmental and contextual:** Appropriate AI support depends on the learner and task.
- **Occupation is still at the heart of our profession:** Evaluate consequences for meaning, relationships, autonomy, and participation.
- **Responsible AI literacy includes the decision not to use AI.**

Questions for the profession and for our programs

- What responsibilities should academic programs and fieldwork partners address together?
- What practical guidance would be most useful from AOTA, ACOTE, and NBCOT?
- What should we be most careful not to lose as AI becomes more common in OT/OTA education and practice?

From conversation to action

What is one change or conversation you will initiate in your program?

Possible next steps:

- Clarify one AI policy or assignment expectation.
- Revisit an assessment of professional reasoning.
- Initiate a faculty development conversation.
- Consult fieldwork partners about AI expectations.
- Review where AI-related capabilities are taught and assessed.

In the Zoom chat: Share one next step.

Our responsibility as educators: not just preparation to use AI

We must ensure that, whether AI is involved or not, graduates retain the knowledge, professional reasoning, relational capacities, and ethical accountability necessary for occupation-centered practice.

Resources and Further Reading

AOTA resources

- Commission on Education Guidance for Ethical and Effective AI Use in Occupational Therapy Education (2026)
- AOTA Policy E.19: Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (2025)

Related scholarship

- Jozkowski (2025). Artificial Intelligence and Occupational Therapy: From Emerging Occupation to Educational, Practice, and Policy Imperative
- Jozkowski & Tabak (2026). The GenAI Learning Partner: An Evolving Framework for Personalized and Reflective Artificial Intelligence Use in Occupational Therapy Education

Framework under development

- Jozkowski et al. *The Occupation-Centered AI Stewardship Framework: Supporting Responsible AI Use in Occupational Therapy*.

Thank you!

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