

# Rethinking Classroom Instruction and Assessment using an AI Assessment Scale



PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Educators are increasingly expected to navigate the presence of generative AI in schools, yet most classroom assessments remain grounded in assumptions that either ignore or oversimplify AI's impact. This creates a disconnect between what students are asked to do and the tools they realistically have access to—or are restricted from using. Without clear guidance or models, teachers struggle to design assignments that both maintain academic integrity and leverage AI as a potential support for learning. There is a need to rethink assessment practices through a lens that recognizes AI not just as a risk, but as a factor that can reshape how students engage, think, and demonstrate understanding.

**How can educators redesign and implement classroom assessments that account for the presence of AI—supporting student learning and integrity—using the AIAS framework as a model?**





Toronto District School Board

Organization: **Toronto District School Board**

Province: Ontario

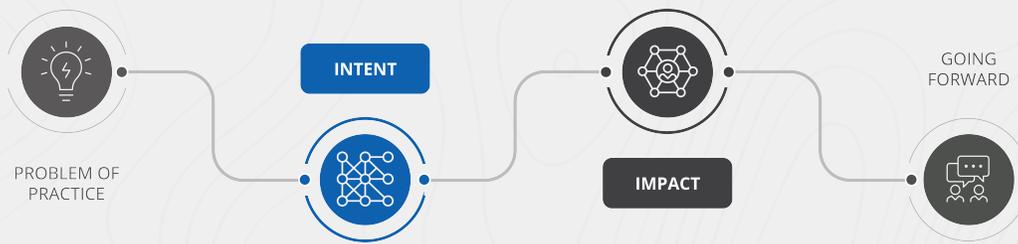
Date: **Spring 2025**

Lead: This Use Case represents a collaborative classroom and teacher inquiry involving a number of teachers in classrooms across the Toronto District School Board

**Rethinking Classroom Instruction and Assessment using an AI Assessment Scale. Toronto District School Board**

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# Intent

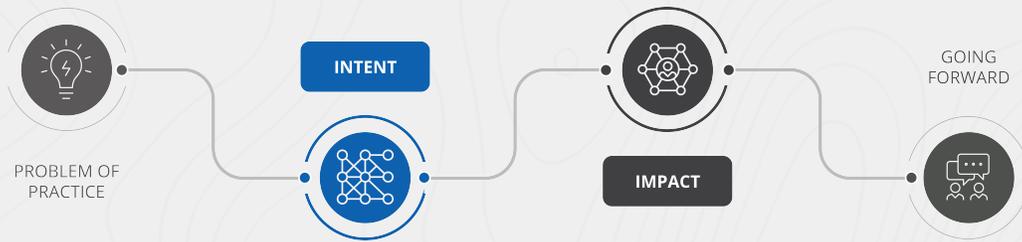
This Use Case began with a focused effort to apply the **AI Assessment Scale (AIAS)** to real-world classroom assessments across grades and subject areas in the Toronto District School Board. The primary goal was to help educators **redesign and implement assignments that explicitly accounted for the presence of AI**—not as a novelty or threat, but as a factor shaping student thinking, learning processes, and questions of academic integrity.

A total of **18 participants** contributed to this summary. The majority work with high school grades (9–12), while a handful support grades ranging from early primary (Grade 1 and 2) to middle years and K–8 divisions. The range of subject areas is equally diverse, including English, History, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science, French, and full elementary coverage, with several participants noting responsibility for multiple or all subject areas. The data reflects a broad cross-section of educators engaged with various grades and disciplines across the K–12 spectrum.

Participants described a wide range of projects they were redesigning or developing, with a strong focus on tasks that deepen student research, writing, and conceptual understanding. Common examples included historical research essays, literary analysis, and complex culminating assignments such as those found in Genocide Studies. Several educators were also developing culturally relevant assessments, integrating AI to create more authentic scenarios, and designing or refining leveled tasks and rubrics. Overall, these projects highlighted a commitment to clearer demonstration of knowledge, more meaningful learning experiences, and modernized assessment practices.

Educators quickly realized that to redesign responsibly, they also needed to **revisit fundamental assumptions about assessment**. Much of the work uncovered how existing assignments—especially at the middle and secondary levels—often emphasized **compliance, formatting, or executive functioning skills** as proxies for deeper learning. For example, one teacher noted that students who struggle with organization or managing large assignments often falter—not because they haven't learned the content, but because the task design doesn't support them in demonstrating it.

“ Some teachers also expressed a strong desire to model AI use more intentionally—not just assigning revised tasks, but making their own reasoning visible when engaging with tools like ChatGPT or Copilot in class. This shift reflects a recognition that critical engagement with AI must be taught, not assumed. ”



# Intent

The AIAS gave educators a language and structure to name these challenges and explore how AI could play a supportive role. This included:

- **A Middle School teacher** using Copilot to give **immediate feedback** on geography assignments, then guiding students to reflect on that feedback before revising their work. They began designing tasks where AI helped students clarify their thinking, not replace it.
- **A Grade 12 Economics teacher** embedded AI into weekly current events presentations. He modeled how to use AI as a drafting and feedback partner, then assessed students on their “**ownership of the presentation**”—a rubric category developed specifically to separate student thinking from AI assistance.
- **A Grade 9 English and History teacher** had students compile teacher feedback and use Gemini to generate **personalized revision strategies**. His goal was to foster metacognition and agency—having students “learn how to learn” using AI, rather than offload the work to it.
- **A K-6 Vice Principal** focused on supporting teachers in modifying assessments for **students with special needs**, piloting tools like Diffit and Copilot to reduce the burden of differentiation.

This intentional, reflective use of AI in assessment wasn’t about innovation for its own sake. It was about building **more valid, accessible, and responsive assessments**, especially in classrooms where students’ needs and tools are rapidly changing.



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# Impact

The nearly 20 teachers involved in the Use Case wrestled with where and how to invite AI into the learning process, and what kinds of student choices and reflections should be visible in a final product. Some participants were still developing confidence in applying the full AIAS framework, but most described their evolving practice using terms like **Augment** (supporting student feedback cycles) or **Adapt** (modifying task structures or rubrics). Importantly, these shifts were not technology-driven alone; they emerged from **professional dialogue about learning, fairness, and how to prepare students to work with AI thoughtfully.**

While implementation across classrooms varied due to a shifting understanding of district policy, particularly around student use of generative AI, this Use Case had a significant impact on how the educators **design, critique, and talk about assessment.** For some, the redesigned tasks could not be fully implemented; yet even in those cases, the design process itself prompted critical reflection and instructional shifts.

## 1. Shifting the Assessment Mindset

The AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) served as a practical tool for educators to unpack their assumptions about assessment. It highlighted the tension between task compliance and authentic learning, prompting teachers to reconsider what their assignments were truly asking of students.

One teacher noted that the **purpose of the assignment needs to be made more explicit**, both for themselves and for students. Rather than focusing on surface-level deliverables, tasks should clarify what thinking, skills, or competencies students are meant to demonstrate. This helped guide the use of AI as a **support tool for learning**, not just production.

Another educator observed that **AI-generated rubrics often overemphasize the final product**—a reminder that human input remains essential in defining meaningful assessment criteria. These observations helped educators refine how and when AI should be used in the design of assignments, not just their execution.

## 2. Redefining Feedback Practices

One of the most immediate impacts came from teachers experimenting with **AI-assisted feedback loops.** In middle years classrooms, for example, a teacher adjusted her entire feedback approach after noticing how students **engaged more actively and independently** when given AI-generated feedback to review alongside teacher comments. This dual-layered process encouraged students to reflect before revising, and it improved turnaround time without compromising instructional intent.

Another teacher found that when students received quick, automated feedback first, their questions and revisions became **more targeted and thoughtful.** Rather than replacing teacher input, the AI supported **student self-regulation and metacognition.**

## 3. Modeling AI Use & Analyzing AI Output

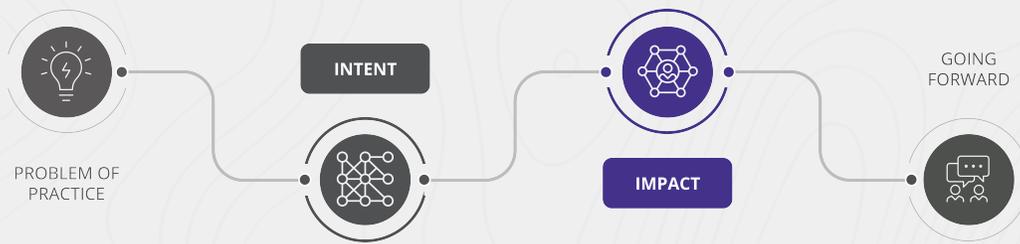
Even when students were not permitted to use AI directly, teachers recognized the importance of **modeling its use transparently.** In one high school course, the teacher demonstrated how to prompt AI, analyze its suggestions, and revise accordingly—turning the interaction into a teachable moment about **critical engagement and tool awareness.**

In several classrooms, AI outputs were **reviewed as a class**, helping students see both the strengths and limitations of AI-generated content. These shared analyses supported conversations about **bias, accuracy, tone, and clarity**—extending digital literacy skills while reinforcing subject-specific learning.

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# Impact

## 4. Authenticity Through Performance & Voice

In a senior physical education course, a teacher redesigned a warm-up planning task using the AIAS to allow AI-supported planning while ensuring students demonstrated learning in multiple ways. Students used AI to help organize their plan but then had to lead and explain the routine in person, providing direct evidence of understanding and skill. This use of multiple assessment measures, both written and performance assessment, reinforced good assessment practice and reduced over-reliance on AI by showing authentic student thinking.

## 5. Building Professional Learning Communities

Across the participating schools, educators began to share revised rubrics, prompt logs, and draft assignments that reflected new **understandings of learning and AI use**. Some began documenting their use of AI at specific AIAS levels and created accompanying guidance for colleagues. This grassroots sharing helped shift the culture from unsure and reluctant in some buildings to interested inquiry.

Leaders and PL consultants facilitated these shifts by offering **just-in-time coaching**, helping educators choose tools aligned with their context, and scaffolding the redesign process. As one teacher shared, “It wasn’t just about the AI—it was about seeing assessment differently.”

### Professional Learning insights

Professional learning throughout this Use Case was layered and adaptive, combining expert-led sessions, one-on-one coaching, and resource sharing to support educators as they explored the AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) and its application in classroom assessment design.

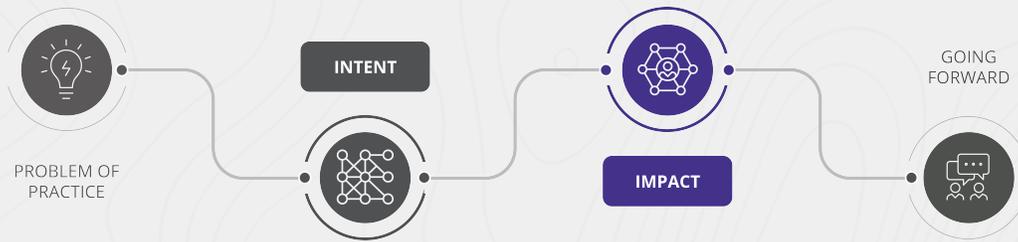
### What Worked Well

- **Expert Sessions with Leon Furze:** Multiple sessions were offered with AIAS co-author Leon Furze. Many educators reported that they helped clarify the **core purpose and structure of the AIAS**, particularly in understanding how levels like Augment, Adapt, and Integrate could guide classroom decision-making.
- **One-on-One Coaching:** The most consistently effective support came from **individual coaching sessions**, where educators received personalized guidance on aligning assignments to AIAS levels, navigating tool selection (e.g., Copilot vs. ChatGPT), or refining rubrics to reflect student agency and AI-supported thinking. While time-intensive, these sessions built trust and allowed educators to **surface practical challenges** in context.
- **Peer-Led Sharing:** Structured moments for educators to share their work—during presentation sessions or informal peer-led showcases—provided valuable insight into how others were experimenting and adapting. This helped normalize iteration, reduced isolation, and seeded **cross-pollination of ideas** between schools.
- **Targeted Resources:** The PL consultant created a set of on-demand videos and linked materials to deepen understanding of both assessment theory and AI tool use. These included planning prompts, rubric examples, and frameworks to support ethical decision-making. Several educators appreciated that these resources helped them reconnect **core assessment principles with the realities of AI presence**.

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# Impact

## Professional Learning insights

### What Could Be Improved

- **Access Barriers:** Despite the range of materials available, many educators had difficulty accessing the shared online platform (e.g., Teams space), whether due to technical issues or limited time. This reduced the usefulness of asynchronous resources and may have contributed to inconsistent engagement across participants.
- **Mismatch Between Needs and Structure:** While one-on-one coaching was effective, the structure may not have been scalable. **Small group sessions** could have provided similar support while fostering shared learning and reducing the demand on coaching time. Some educators expressed a desire for **more scheduled, synchronous opportunities**, even though attendance at the ones offered was inconsistent.
- **Clarifying Scope and Expectations:** Several participants expected the Use Case to offer **more foundational AI** learning alongside assessment design. While the emphasis was on redesigning tasks using the AIAS, educators also wanted time to explore AI tools more generally—to develop basic literacy and compare affordances across platforms.



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# Going Forward

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FORWARD



This Use Case was distinct from others in the initiative in that it was entirely **grassroots**—an educator-led effort supported through this initiative from outside the district, rather than a centrally coordinated board initiative. While some site-based leadership was involved, the core work came from **teachers designing, testing, and reflecting on AI-integrated assessment in their own classrooms**.

Because of this structure, the next steps fall into two parallel tracks: what **educators themselves** plan to do in their classrooms, and what **the field as a whole**—including professional learning providers, researchers, and tool developers—might need to take on in response.

## Educator-Driven Next Steps

Across schools and roles, participating educators identified several directions they want to pursue:

- **Refining and implementing redesigned assessments** as guidance around AI use evolves;
- **Collecting student feedback** on AI-assisted learning processes to better understand impact and perceptions;
- **Deepening collaborative design work**, particularly with peers across subjects or grades;
- **Creating classroom-ready tools**, including rubrics, student-facing guidance, and assignment templates that make AI use transparent, ethical, and pedagogically sound.

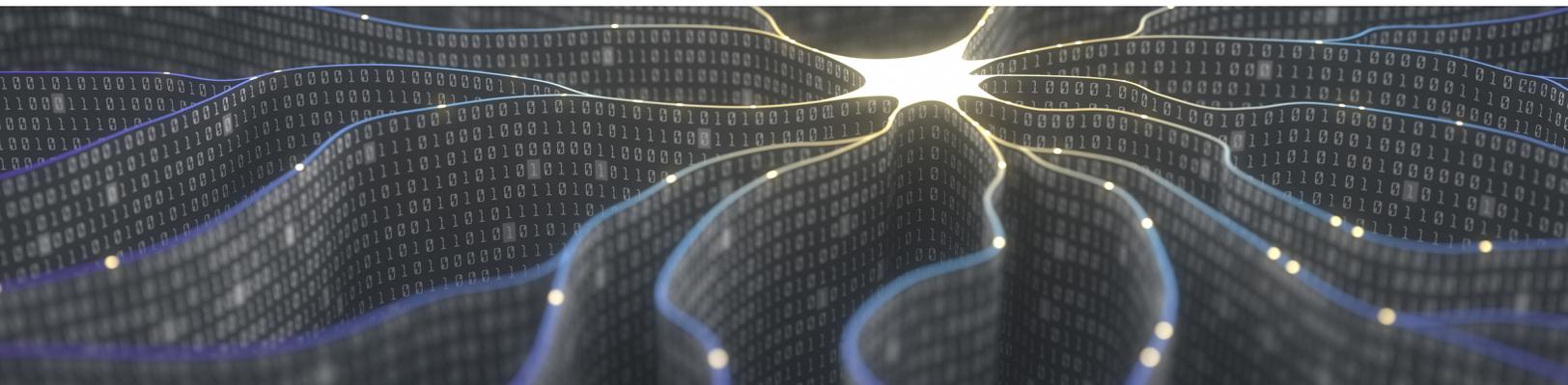
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## Field-Level Implications

As a professional learning organization supporting this initiative, the work has revealed **clear next steps for the field**:

- There is a pressing need to **revisit foundational teaching and learning practices—especially assessment—in light of AI**. Educators cannot be expected to make ethical, meaningful use of AI if the core structures of assignments and evaluations remain outdated or unclear.
- **More practical models are needed**. Teachers repeatedly asked not for theory, but for “what this looks like” in diverse, real-world classrooms. Curated exemplars, annotated student work samples, and rubric adaptations would help ground theory in usable form.
- **Structured spaces for peer learning**—like the ones that organically developed in this project—should be supported and scaled. Teachers benefit most from learning with and from one another, especially when experimenting with emerging tools.
- The field also needs to **acknowledge and support the double load** that educators carry: learning new technologies while also unlearning assumptions about how teaching and learning happen. AI is not just a tool challenge; it’s a **pedagogical design challenge**.

This Use Case signals that educators are ready to explore this space—but they need scaffolding that respects their context, honours their questions, and builds on the expertise they already bring.



# Going Forward

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## Resources:

- The Teacher's Stories have been combined into a single document found [here](#).

Resources developed in collaboration with the teachers as they did their projects to use in their own buildings and with others.

- [Using AI for Feedback](#)
- [Things to Consider: AI and Assessment](#)
- [Questions to Ask Yourself When Using AI](#)
- [AI Assessment and Multiple Measures Recommendations](#)

Videos developed for this group

- [Overview of AIAS](#) (5:28)
- [Rethinking Assessment in Education](#) (4:46)
- [Multiple Measures](#) (3:56)
- [Feedback with AI](#) (3:57)

Additional Resources collected by the group

- [Basics of Assessment](#)
- [Assessment “for Learning” and “as Learning”](#)
- [Assessment Strategies](#) (University of BC)
- [Types of Assessment in Education](#) (some different ideas and approaches) [4:21]
- [Dylan Williams on assessment](#) (Long but thorough) [21:44]
- [Thinking about assessment as a part of the learning and development process](#) John Spencer [3:52]
- [Assessment and Swiss Cheese](#) Podcast [36:01]

Overview videos

- [Ignite video 1](#)
- [Ignite video 2](#)

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