



Key Terms Important for Understanding Artificial Intelligence

ODE Digital Learning: GenAI in K-12 Classrooms Guidance

Summary: A reference glossary of foundational AI terms for educators, covering instructional concepts, data privacy, cognitive risks, and student safety considerations related to genAI.

- **Artificial Intelligence:** “Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy.”²
- **Agentic AI:** Agentic AI, or AGI, refers to autonomous systems that perceive, reason, and act *independently* to complete multi-step tasks with minimal human oversight.
- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI):** Generative AI is a type of AI that can create new content, or output, like text, images, video, audio, or computer code. It often responds in a human-like manner in response to user input.
- **AI Literacy:** [Digital Promise](#) defines AI literacy as “the knowledge and skills that enable humans to critically understand, evaluate, and use AI systems and tools to safely and ethically participate in an increasingly digital world.”
- **Chatbots:** GenAI tools which have been designed to simulate human-like conversation with users through text or voice interactions. Chatbots are typically used to answer questions, provide information, or assist with tasks. Unlike AI companions, chatbots are generally task- or information-oriented rather than focused on building ongoing personal or emotional relationships, though they are often capable of this behavior as well.
- **Cognitive Offloading / Atrophy:** Cognitive offloading is the practice of relying on external tools to “offload” mental tasks. AI is one tool to offload tasks to, but using things like wooden blocks and other math manipulatives is considered offloading. Cognitive atrophy can occur when a person has a decline in their internal cognitive abilities due to too much offloading of thinking tasks.^{3,4}
- **Durable Skills:** Sometimes called transferable skills or soft skills, these skills are the lifelong skills that will help to enable a student to be successful throughout various aspects of their lives, including in their professional work. Ideally, they will continue to be important skills to have regardless of how technologies and other facets change the future workforce.⁵
- **Large Language Models (LLMs):** Large Language Models (LLMs) are the backbone of genAI systems that are trained on massive datasets to recognize language patterns and generate human-like text by predicting the next “token” or piece of text in a sequence.
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Through [ORS 339.329\(c\)](#) the state of Oregon defines PII as “any information that would permit the identification of a person... and is not limited to name, phone number, physical address, electronic mail address, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability designation, religious affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, school of attendance, city, county or any geographic identifier included in information conveyed... or information identifying the machine or device used by the person...”
- **Synthetic Media:** Digital content (i.e., images, videos, or audio recordings) that is fully or partially created or altered using genAI tools. **Deepfakes** are synthetic media developed specifically for the goal of appearing real (i.e., photorealistic) and/or authentic (i.e., portraying known people, events, etc.) with the purpose of deceiving the viewer, often with the purpose of spreading mis or disinformation.
- **Misinformation and Disinformation:** Misinformation is false or inaccurate information, simply

getting the facts wrong, but passing it on anyway. Disinformation is the purposeful, deliberate spread of false information, intentionally misstating facts.⁶

- **AI Companions:** GenAI tools like chatbots or digital avatars that are specifically designed to mimic human-like interactions, often meant to hold life-like personal conversations, offer emotional support and companionship. Popular genAI companion tools include Character.ai, Anima, and Kindroid.
- **Sextortion:** A serious crime that occurs when someone threatens to distribute your private and sensitive material if you don't provide them images of a sexual nature, sexual favors, or money.⁷
- **Image-based Sexual Abuse (IBSA):** The *nonconsensual* creating, taking, or sharing of intimate images and threatening to share images. It can also include coercing someone into sharing intimate images, or sending unwanted intimate images.⁸
- **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM):** Any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a person less than 18 years old.⁹
- **Non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII):** The act of sharing intimate images or videos of someone, either on or offline, without their consent. This does include manipulated images/deepfakes.¹⁰

Explore and Apply 1: In pairs, educators identify which terms students need to understand and brainstorm how to introduce each through age-appropriate instruction.

Explore and Apply 2: Teams select three unfamiliar terms, find real-world examples, and discuss how each connects to existing district policy or practice.