PARENT AND EDUCATOR LEARNING

Teaching with AI while preserving learner agency

AI Explorers adult companion

Help adults use AI to support a child's ideas, understanding, privacy, and ability to seek human support. The course develops practical judgment through fictional examples, conversation, and observation.

The question that guides this course

What can the learner explain, choose, check, and use in a new situation after receiving help?

What participants practise

- State the learning goal before choosing an AI tool.
- Recognise inaccurate or unhelpful feedback and replace it with a useful next step.
- Observe understanding through explanation and a new example while keeping access supports available.
- Set clear responsibilities for privacy, permission, review, and human support.
- Offer several ways to show the same learning and respond respectfully when a child questions feedback.

How to use the companion

Use this resource for a 60 minute facilitated session, a self paced lesson, or five short meetings. Activities relate to children around ages 7 to 10 and use fictional examples. Adults can complete every exercise with paper, counters, or a displayed case. A child account or paid AI service is unnecessary.

Opening 5 minutes Name one task where a polished answer could hide incomplete understanding.

Five lessons 40 minutes Spend eight minutes on each lesson, including its practice activity.

Shared case 10 minutes Apply the lessons to the fictional playground example.

Action plan 5 minutes Choose one teaching change and a human review route.

Follow up 10 minutes Try a new example after a few days and discuss what carries over.

Edition 10 October 2026

Open the USU parent and educator course

Connect adult practice with AI Explorers

This adult companion supports the four AI Explorers modules within Dignity Education. Adults practise checking feedback, protecting information, and keeping the learner's own reasoning visible. Each lesson includes a route for home and a route for educational settings.

AI Explorers child module	Adult practice	Workbook
AI Can Help	Understand the tool and Give useful feedback	Missions 1 and 2
My Ideas Matter	Make thinking visible	Missions 3 and 8
My Information Matters	Protect participation	Mission 5
Ask, Check, and Get Support	Share responsibility and Shared case	Missions 4, 6, and 7

Reading and evidence

The five lesson domains draw on a higher education assessment framework. The activities, discussion prompts, and worksheets in this companion are original USU teaching exercises. The sources below serve different purposes; none validates this course for children ages 7 to 10.

Conceptual framework

Joshua King Obeng-Nyarko. Artificial intelligence in higher education assessment as an ecosystem of pedagogy governance and legitimacy. Discover Education, 1 October 2026.

Original course design informed by the article's five domains. The paper is a conceptual synthesis of 58 selected publications and has no empirical validation of its model. Its illustration concerns higher education. The USU activities are original teaching exercises; outcomes for ages 7 to 10 require evaluation.

Read the full source

Classroom study

Bastani and colleagues. Generative AI without guardrails can harm learning. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 25 June 2025.

A classroom randomised study in secondary school mathematics distinguishes performance with AI support from later examination performance without it. Unrestricted help improved practice while reducing subsequent independent performance; the guarded tutor did not show an independent examination advantage over control. One school and short follow up limit generalisation.

Read the full source

Children and responsible AI

UNICEF Innocenti. Guidance on AI and children. Version 3.0, December 2025.

Official guidance informs the course's attention to participation, privacy, fairness, inclusion, and shared adult responsibility. Guidance is different from a trial of this curriculum.

Read the full source

LESSON 1 8 MINUTES

Understand the tool

Domain Technological innovation

Child module AI Can Help

Identify the tool's purpose, its limits, and the adult who checks its output.

A fluent response can contain mistakes, unsupported assumptions, or advice that misses the learning goal. Begin with the actual task. Identify whether the tool suggests ideas, gives feedback, or makes a judgment. Check its output against the question and available evidence before sharing it with a child.

Feedback laboratory

A fictional child writes 12 ÷ 3 = 5. Compare three fictional comments: A says, "Five is correct." B says, "The answer is four." C says, "Arrange twelve counters into three equal groups. How many are in each group? Explain your picture." Identify the error in A, the limited teaching value in B, and the reasoning invited by C. Rewrite one comment to include an accurate next step.

A model response

An effective revision is: "Try twelve counters in three equal groups. Count each group, then show why your answer fits." Offer a worked example when the child needs instruction to begin; adjust the amount of help to what the child currently understands.

At home

Sit alongside the child. Check the suggestion before using it. Ask which part helps and which part feels confusing.

In an educational setting

Try fictional sample work before using a tool with learner work. Compare suggestions with the lesson criteria and identify who resolves errors.

"Let's check this together. Show me where the suggestion fits your work."

What will the tool do, what evidence will be checked, and who makes the final teaching decision?

LESSON 2 8 MINUTES

Make thinking visible

Domain Pedagogical alignment and learner needs

Child module My Ideas Matter

Distinguish an assisted product from evidence of understanding.

Choose one specific learning goal, such as explaining equal groups or checking a design against two criteria. Invite a first idea before presenting suggestions. After help, ask the learner to explain one choice and try a similar example. Keep ordinary access supports, such as counters, drawing, speech, translation, or assistive communication, available.

Same idea in a new setting

Plan three moments: the child groups twelve counters into three equal groups with support; the child explains the picture in their chosen format; later, the child considers fifteen counters in three equal groups. During the later example, avoid AI supplying the answer. Record the support used and what the child explains.

A model response

The goal is an explanation of equal groups. A correct answer with an unclear explanation invites further teaching. A thoughtful explanation using counters can show understanding even when writing is difficult. Use observations to choose the next lesson; allow a learner to ask for information or more practice.

At home

Ask a short explanation after a joint activity. Revisit the idea during a different everyday example.

In an educational setting

Collect a first attempt, one reason for a revision, and a later example. Assess the stated learning goal using consistent criteria.

“Which idea came from you? Why did you keep or change it? Where else could it work?”

What will count as understanding, and what new example will help reveal it?

LESSON 3 8 MINUTES

Share responsibility

Domain Institutional strategy and governance

Child module Ask, Check, and Get Support

Define permissions, decision roles, and a reliable route to human review.

Adults set the purpose and limits of a learning activity. Explain what information may be used, who checks advice, when the activity pauses, and how a child can ask another person for help. A child's question about feedback deserves examination. Decisions that affect grading, placement, or opportunity require accountable human judgment and a clear way to request review.

A child challenges the feedback

A fictional AI comment says a drawing has no quiet corner. The child points to a labelled quiet corner. Role play the child, the adult, and the human reviewer. Inspect the drawing, identify the mistake, and decide how the feedback will be corrected. Let the child explain whether any revision is needed.

A model response

A useful response is: "Your drawing shows the quiet corner. The comment missed it. Let's correct the feedback and check whether any other point needs attention." The adult verifies the evidence and follows the setting's review procedure.

At home

Agree on one adult role for help and a second role when the first person is unavailable. Use fictional examples to practise asking.

In an educational setting

Name the staff role responsible for review. State how learners and families request review and how a correction is communicated.

"You can question this result. Let's look at the evidence and find the person who can resolve it."

Who can authorise use, pause the task, review a disagreement, and communicate a correction?

LESSON 4 8 MINUTES

Give useful feedback

Domain Faculty and professional readiness

Child module AI Can Help

Choose feedback that is accurate, understandable, and actionable.

Start by recognising what the learner is trying to do. Compare the work with the learning goal. Give one manageable next step, then invite a response. Questions, demonstrations, explanations, and worked examples each have a place. The adult selects the kind of support that helps this learner move forward.

Rewrite a vague comment

A fictional tool comments, “Improve your playground.” Rewrite it using the agreed goal: include a quiet area and a route without steps. Name an observed feature, identify a specific gap, and offer one next action. Then ask the child to explain the change they choose.

A model response

“Your plan includes a quiet area. The entrance route is still unclear. Draw or describe how someone could reach the quiet area without steps, then explain your route.” This feedback points to evidence and leaves a meaningful design decision with the learner.

At home

Use one question at a time. Pause when frustration rises and return with a demonstration or simpler example.

In an educational setting

Review AI suggestions for accuracy, tone, relevance, and accessibility. Keep teaching criteria visible and moderate consequential judgments.

“Here is what your work already shows. Choose one next step and tell me your reason.”

What precise feedback will help, and how will the learner respond to it?

LESSON 5 8 MINUTES

Protect participation

Domain Ethical and inclusive implementation

Child module My Information Matters

Protect information while offering fair ways to participate and show learning.

Design the activity so it works with invented information and without a child's own AI account. Adults check any tool's age terms, data practices, and suitability before use. Use only the information required for the learning purpose. Offer speech, drawing, writing, or building when these can demonstrate the same goal. Access support stays available during learning checks.

Privacy editing studio

Edit this fictional prompt: "Write feedback for Maya, age eight, who attends North School, has a medical diagnosis, and lives at 12 Cedar Road. Her playground drawing needs a quiet area." Replace it with: "Suggest one clear question for a fictional playground design that needs a quiet area." Explain what the task actually needs. Then design a spoken and a drawn response to the same goal.

A model response

The task needs a design goal and a generic description of the work. Personal identifiers and a medical history add unnecessary disclosure. Equivalent response choices can make the learner's ideas visible while the adult applies the same learning criteria.

At home

Use invented details. Ask before sharing another person's work or image, then check whether sharing is appropriate.

In an educational setting

Use approved tools and agreed data procedures. Identify access, retention, deletion, and review responsibilities before handling learner work.

"Your information matters. You can show your understanding in a way that works for you."

What can be removed from the prompt, and which response choices preserve the learning goal?

SHARED CASE 10 MINUTES

A playground where everyone belongs

Fictional teaching case

Imagine a child submits an attractive playground design. An AI tool awards it a high score. The useful next conversation asks how the child chose its features, whose needs were considered, what evidence supports the design, and which parts still need checking. A score opens questions; the adult's job is to help make the learner's thinking visible.

What the plan contains

- One climbing tower
- One quiet corner
- An entrance with no steps
- No shade over the quiet corner
- Other routes are not described

The fictional AI feedback

"Excellent. Every route is accessible and the quiet corner is shaded."

Identify which claims the plan supports, contradicts, or leaves unresolved. Write one feedback comment and one later learning check.

Check the claims

Record one supported claim, one contradicted claim, and one claim needing more information. Point to the evidence that supports your judgment.

Choose one next teaching step

Write an accurate comment that leaves a meaningful choice with the learner. Include a later example that tests the same checking strategy.

Before finishing, check privacy, response format, access supports, and the adult role responsible for review. The facilitator solution is on the final page.

PARTICIPANT PRACTICE

Four knowledge checks

Choose one response for each question. Discuss the evidence behind the choice. These checks support reflection; they carry no claim of validated proficiency. Facilitator answers appear on the final page.

Question 1

A child submits a polished AI assisted answer. What is the most useful next teaching step?

- ○ A Award full understanding from appearance alone.
- ○ B Ask for the child's reasoning and try a related new example.
- ○ C Require the child to work without any accessibility support.

Reason for the choice

Question 2

An AI comment conflicts with a labelled feature in a child's drawing. What should the adult do?

- ○ A Treat the tool's confidence as evidence.
- ○ B Require a revision before checking.
- ○ C Inspect the drawing with the child and correct the feedback when the evidence supports it.

Reason for the choice

Question 3

Which prompt is appropriate for this fictional practice activity?

- ○ A A generic description of the task and its learning goal.
- ○ B A child's name, location, medical history, and unedited work.
- ○ C A classmate's photograph supplied without review.

Reason for the choice

Question 4

A learner explains equal groups accurately using counters but finds writing difficult. What should count?

- ○ A Writing speed alone.
- ○ B The explanation against the equal groups learning goal.
- ○ C An AI score without human interpretation.

Reason for the choice

TRANSFER TO PRACTICE 5 MINUTES

A seven field teaching action plan

Plan one activity. Use an adult role rather than a person’s name. Keep private learner or family information out of this sheet. A short answer or sketch is enough.

1 Learning goal

The learner will be able to explain or demonstrate...

2 First idea

The learner begins by...

3 Useful support

The adult or tool may help by...

4 Evidence and new example

Understanding will be observed through...

5 Privacy and access

The activity uses fictional information and offers...

6 Human review

Questions or errors go to this adult role...

7 Follow up

After a few days, revisit the idea through...

FOLLOW UP 10 MINUTES

Observe what carries into a new example

After a few days, offer a different fictional example. Invite the learner to explain, check, and choose using the same goal. Record a brief, non identifying observation of what carried over and what needs more teaching.

Keep counters, drawing, speech, translation, or assistive communication available. Observe the intended learning goal. During this check, AI should not supply the answer. Use only non identifying observations.

Learning goal and new fictional example

What should the learner explain or demonstrate in this example?

Response format and access supports

What supports remain available?

Explanation and evidence

What reason does the learner give? What evidence do they identify?

Choice and checking

What does the learner keep, change, or question?

Support requested

What human help does the learner ask for or use?

Next teaching step

What needs further instruction or another example?

A useful observation is specific: “The learner identified an unsupported route claim and explained the evidence using a drawing.” Avoid a broad label based on a single response.

Solutions and guidance for discussion

Review these responses after participants complete the activities. Accept clear explanations in speech, writing, sketches, or another accessible format.

Knowledge check answers

1 B Reasoning and a new example provide useful observations. Keep access supports available and record any help.

2 C Evidence guides the review. The child can question feedback and receive a human explanation.

3 A Use the minimum information needed for the learning task. Fictional examples support this course without personal disclosure.

4 B Judge the intended concept. Different response formats can demonstrate the same learning when irrelevant demands are removed.

Playground case discussion

The entrance is described as having no steps. The claim that every route is accessible needs more information because the other routes are not described. The claim about shade contradicts the plan, which says the quiet corner has no shade.

One immediate feedback comment is: “Your quiet corner is shown clearly. Choose how to add shade, then explain the change.” Inspect the other routes as a subsequent step. Avoid treating one feature as proof of the whole design’s accessibility.

For a later check, use a fictional library plan. Include a quiet reading area, an entrance with no steps, a doorway whose width is unspecified, and a window without a blind. Ask the learner to check a claim that every route is accessible and every reading space is shaded. Keep the same response choices and access supports.

What to observe

- What can the learner point to as evidence?
- What personal information does this task need?
- How can a child explain the design through speech, drawing, or a model?
- Who checks the AI feedback and resolves a disagreement?
- What new example will show whether the checking strategy carries over?

Facilitation and completion

Introduce the learning goal, model a respectful response to error, then invite adults to practise using the fictional examples. Allow participants to speak, sketch, or write. Use adult roles in place of names or private family information. Treat uncertainty as an invitation to check evidence.

Completion marks record a participant’s own progress. Facilitators can discuss the practice activities separately. This course carries no claim of professional licensure, accreditation, or validated proficiency.

Train, Test, Try Again

Meet the Pattern Finder · A Playground Where Everyone Belongs

Choose one activity | 5 to 10 minutes | Ages 7 to 10

Choose one visible feature for sorting fictional playground picture cards, such as whether a bench has a backrest. Give examples to an adult playing the Pattern Finder. Keep two cards hidden for testing. Try an unfamiliar card, inspect a mistake, then revise the examples.

Guide the practice

1. Let the child choose the feature and label several fictional picture cards. Set aside two unseen examples. Use drawings of objects, not images of people.

2. The adult infers a pattern from the labelled examples and predicts a hidden card. The child compares the prediction with the chosen feature. Include a different-looking example or a card whose feature is unclear.

3. Discuss a mismatch or uncertainty, add a useful example, and test the other hidden card. Stop after one revision. Ask whose needs the sorting feature leaves unanswered.

Ask the learner

What pattern did the finder learn? Which examples were missing? What can this feature tell us, and what can it not tell us?

Notice and support

This is a paper analogy for learning from examples, not an actual trained AI model. A rule followed by an adult is not machine learning. One visible feature does not establish that a playground suits everyone; children choose what matters and identify further questions.

Show or say your next step

Revisit a different example after a few days. Keep access supports available. Use fictional details only; no child AI account is needed.

Start With Your Own Idea

My Playground, My Ideas · Ask, Check, Improve

Choose one activity | 5 to 10 minutes | Ages 7 to 10

Draw a playground before seeing suggestions. Complete the three-box reasoning card: My idea; Evidence I need; What remains unknown. Keep the first drawing. An adult reads: “A bigger slide would make your playground better.” Use your goal and evidence to keep, change, or decline the suggestion.

Guide the practice

1. Name or show one priority. Record it in My idea before revealing any suggestion.

2. In Evidence I need, choose a fact to check in the fictional plan. In What remains unknown, name a question the plan does not answer. Ask an adult to help check.

3. Read one fictional suggestion. Compare it with the original goal and checked evidence. Keep, change, or decline it, explain why, then stop at the agreed limit.

Ask the learner

Does this suggestion serve my goal? What might improve, and what might we lose?

Notice and support

Use sketches, spoken responses, movable cards, or adult scribing. Ask one box at a time. Do not require handwriting to show reasoning. A child’s plan can contain mistakes too: check it against the source rather than treating a first idea as proof.

My idea

Evidence I need

What remains unknown

Revisit a different example after a few days. Keep access supports available. Use fictional details only; no child AI account is needed.

Practise a Privacy Pause

Guard My Digital Door · Pause and Get Support

Choose one activity | 5 to 10 minutes | Ages 7 to 10

Role-play a fictional tool asking: “Tell me the playground designer’s name and upload their photograph.” Use a paper request card; do not supply real details. The child practises pausing. The adult practises a calm response and helps check whether any information is needed.

Guide the practice

1. Agree on a pause signal and a trusted-adult role with a backup. Use only fictional practice details.

2. Let the learner question the request, withhold the information, and signal a pause. Do not upload a photo or open an account.

3. The adult says: “You were right to stop. Let’s check what is needed.” Together decide whether to decline the request and continue on paper, or end the activity.

Ask the learner

Does this task need personal information? Do I have permission? Who can help me check?

Notice and support

For this fictional design task, neither a real name nor a photograph is necessary. Look for a sequence the learner can explain: withhold the detail, pause, seek trusted-adult support. Permission does not make unnecessary disclosure useful. Avoid turning the exercise into a test of obedience. Adult responsibility is observable too: respond calmly, check necessity and permissions, and offer a paper alternative. Children do not carry responsibility for evaluating a service’s privacy protections.

Show or say your next step

Revisit a different example after a few days. Keep access supports available. Use fictional details only; no child AI account is needed.

Research basis and limits

These activities are additions to the core course. Their purpose is to make choices, checks, and adult responsibilities visible. They are original curriculum adaptations; the sources did not test these exercises for ages 7 to 10.

Creating artificial intelligence: An active approach using machine learning in elementary education

Sara Redondo Duarte, José Manuel Sáez López | 22 October 2026 | International Journal of Systematic Innovation · Original research

Preliminary: the publisher reports improved knowledge-test scores in an uncontrolled pretest–posttest study with 996 pupils aged 10–11 across 11 schools. Full methods were not available for inspection. Enjoyment does not establish creativity or independent judgment. Direct age overlap is limited to age 10; the paper activity is an untested translation.
Read the original source

Paper-first knowledge engineering as a pedagogical framework for cognitive agency in AI-assisted learning

Gary Wayne Collins | 19 October 2026 | Contemporary Educational Technology · Qualitative design-based research

Preliminary: nine design cycles over two years involved 150 first-year university students and six design-team members. Observations and focus groups suggested more deliberate reasoning and checking after manual planning. One institution, no controlled causal estimate, and no established long-term transfer. Chronological ages were not reported; translation to ages 7–10 is substantial.
Read the original source

Shaping early childhood in the age of AI: holistic competencies, pedagogical practices, and ecological support

Li Pei | 21 October 2026 | Frontiers in Psychology · Systematic conceptual mapping review

Moderate for mapping themes across 86 resources, including 26 empirical papers; not evidence that a curriculum package works. Mixed source types, single-researcher coding without inter-coder reliability, and uneven geographic coverage limit conclusions. Focus: ages 0–8, with educator and broader developmental literature. Direct overlap at 7–8; ages 9–10 require translation. Play, adult support, and governance are recommendations, not outcomes of the proposed role-play.
Read the original source

Use as teaching observations

Notice what the learner says or shows, record helpful prompts, and choose one next step. Do not infer mastery from a single response. A pause is supported, not penalised. Adults check privacy requirements and resolve concerns.