

# *RETAIN*

## *Overview*

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**Empowering Students to Navigate AI While Preserving Learning**

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# Who We Are

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**RETAIN** is a university student-led nonprofit. We offer free workshops teaching students the basics of AI literacy and responsible learning.

**Our mission:** Empower young students to preserve cognitive autonomy and career readiness in an AI-driven world.

**Our team** is a diverse group of engineers, educators, and public administrators.

We took our experience in technical and policy research to develop our evidence-based curriculum.

- Experience: UNESCO; California Congress; Research with Harvard Medical School

LETS GET STARTED



# The Challenge We're Addressing

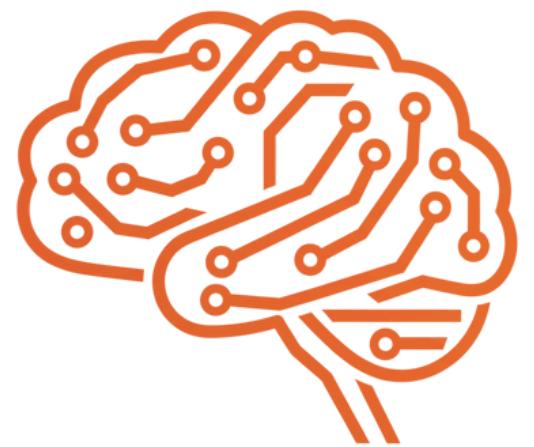
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## The Reality of AI

Students today face unprecedented access to AI tools that can:

- Complete assignments instantly
- Solve problems without understanding
- Create the illusion of learning without building actual skills

**The question isn't whether students use AI: it's whether they use it strategically and responsibly.**



# The Challenge We're Addressing

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## Why It Matters Now

AI tools are evolving faster than educational responses.

Students need frameworks for strategic use now

The skills students build (or don't build) will impact:

- Academic performance
- College readiness
- Career competitiveness
- Lifelong learning capacity

**Early intervention creates lasting impact.**

# Our Approach



**We don't shame students for using AI, but instead:**

We explain:

- How AI affects cognitive learning processes
- When AI helps vs. when it hinders understanding
- Strategic frameworks for responsible AI usage
- Why this matters for their future





# Our Workshops (In-person & Virtual Available)

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## Target Audience

### Middle School (Grades 7-8)

- Foundation for AI literacy
- Age-appropriate consequences
- Simplified learning concepts

### High School (Grades 9-12)

- Full curriculum complexity
- Career and college readiness focus
- Advanced strategic frameworks



# Our Workshops (In-person & Virtual Available)

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## Implementation Options: (Flexible)

### One-Time Workshop (60-90 minutes)

- Seminar-style with interactive elements
- Ideal for assemblies, classrooms

### Multi-Week Program (5 sessions)

- In-depth curriculum complexity
- Potential career and college readiness focus

# Curriculum Overview

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## Modules

**Module 1:** Introduction

**Module 2:** Understanding AI & the Learning Process

**Module 3:** Stakes & Consequences: Career and Academic Implications

**Module 4:** Building Cognitive Resilience: Practical Strategies & Healthy AI Usage

**Module 5:** Integration & Commitment: Creating Personal Protocols

## Educational Foundation

**Cognitive Load Theory**

**Desirable Difficulties**

**Metacognitive Development**

**Neuroplasticity**

**Memory consolidation**

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Assess their personal AI usage patterns
- Determine appropriate AI usage for different contexts
- Create personalized protocols for strategic AI use
- Articulate AI's impact on learning and career readiness



# Module 1

## Introduction

- Understanding AI's role in education and society today
- Defining shared vocabulary and values
- Establishing importance of AI literacy
- Setting workshop goals

*Creating foundation for honest, judgment-free exploration*



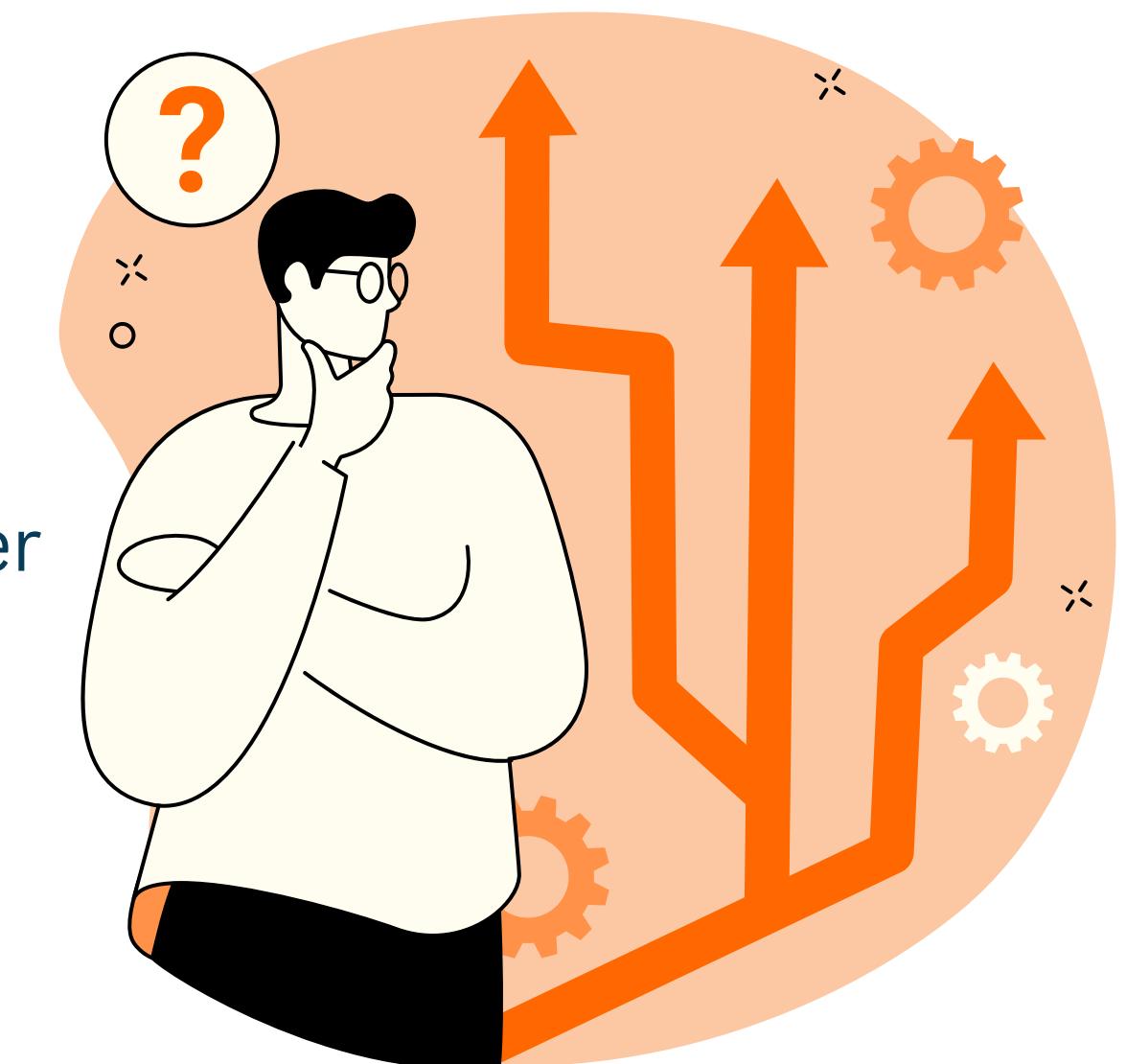


# Module 2

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## Understanding Learning

- Introduce learning topics
  - Memory retention, cognitive offloading, trust transfer
  - Desirable difficulties: how practice rewires the brain
  - Bloom's Taxonomy in practice
- Identify the mechanisms through which AI tools can interfere with these processes



*Students compare firsthand AI-assisted and independent learning.*



# Module 3A

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## Stakes & Consequences

- Discuss academic & cognitive consequences
  - Performance decline in unassisted contexts
  - Difficulty with complex problem-solving
- Discuss career readiness implications
  - Gap between AI-assisted and independent capability
  - Employer expectations for foundational skills
  - Work scenarios requiring real-time thinking



*Real case studies of students facing these challenges*



# Module 3B (Extended for 9-12)

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## AI in College & Careers

- Understand how AI is currently integrated in higher education and professional environments
- Recognize what colleges and employers value in AI-literate applicants
- Explore specific career pathways in AI and related fields
  - AI safety, AI-integrated careers, AI policy



*Students explore opportunities in an AI-integrated world.*



# Module 4

## Practical Strategies & Healthy AI Usage

- Strategic Use Guidelines
  - Appropriate vs problematic use cases
  - The "struggle threshold": Recognizing productive vs. unproductive difficulty
- The AI Augmentation Ladder
  - Learn with minimal AI assistance, increase use for collaborative and advanced applications of knowledge





# Module 5

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## Personal Protocols: Accountability & Reflection

- Synthesize workshop learning into actionable personal commitments
- Create individualized AI usage protocols aligned with learning goals
- Encourage metacognitive check-ins and accountability structures



*Outcome: Actionable changes every student can implement immediately*

# Measurable Outcomes

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## Behavior Changes

- 30-50% reduction in immediate AI usage for initial learning
- Increased independent problem-solving attempts
- Improved willingness to interact with AI on more complex level

## Learning Improvements

- Long-term improvements on understanding and comprehension
- Enhanced metacognitive skills

## Attitudinal Shifts

- Increased confidence in independent abilities
- More positive relationship with academic challenges and struggles
- Reduced anxiety: AI unavailability & AI impact on career readiness



# Our Value

## For Students, By Students

We are a team of university students and recent graduates, with fresh insight on the workforce. We resonate with younger students as their more experienced peers. We understand the youth perspective.

## Flexible Implementation

We have experience tailoring our content and implementation options for the unique needs of every school. We also have experience collaborating with schools on long-term AI literacy and learning goals.

## Student and Educator Resources

We invite students to join a **RETAIN** chapter, join projects with mentors and industry professionals. Educators and parents can receive regular updates on AI news, fact sheets, other support materials.

## Completely Free

We began this project out of concern for our younger siblings, friends, and mentees. We do not take a fee. All complete curriculum guide, presentation material, facilitation scripts, pre/post assessment tools, student handouts are also provided.

# Next Steps

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*Interested in bringing  
RETAIN to your school?*



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