The AI Readiness Initiative at Northeastern University

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Why AI readiness — and why now

Students

"I'm grateful I learned to think before AI, but now my brain feels like mush."

Employers & founders

Want graduates who direct AI, not just use it — today's entry-level task is tomorrow's automation

The institution

President, Provost, Chancellor, Deans and faculty: amplify human agency; orchestrators, not passive users



AI Readiness: defined and implemented by faculty

Built by a faculty task force

Faculty from every college developed the framework — a deliberately bottom-up process.

One framework, many disciplines

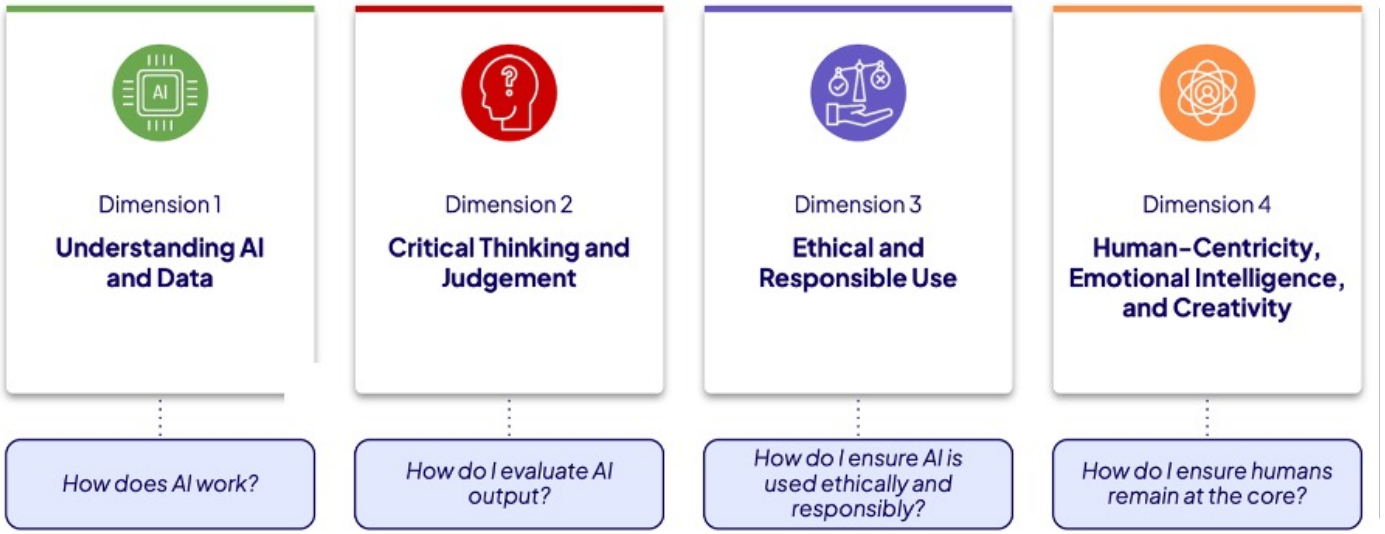
A shared structure across the university; what readiness means in practice is defined by each discipline.

Implemented through faculty-led plans

Every college has two plans — curricular transformation, and teaching & research innovation.

Colleges own their plans. The framework gives us a common language — not a common syllabus.

The AI Readiness Framework

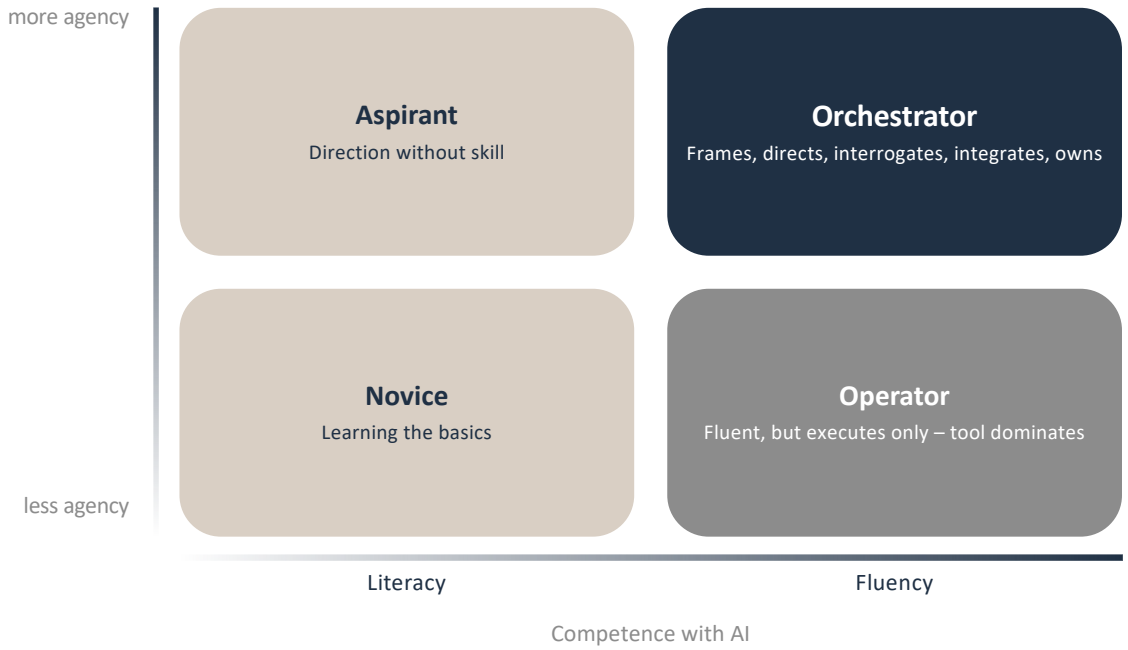


Four dimensions, each at two competency levels — Literacy and Fluency

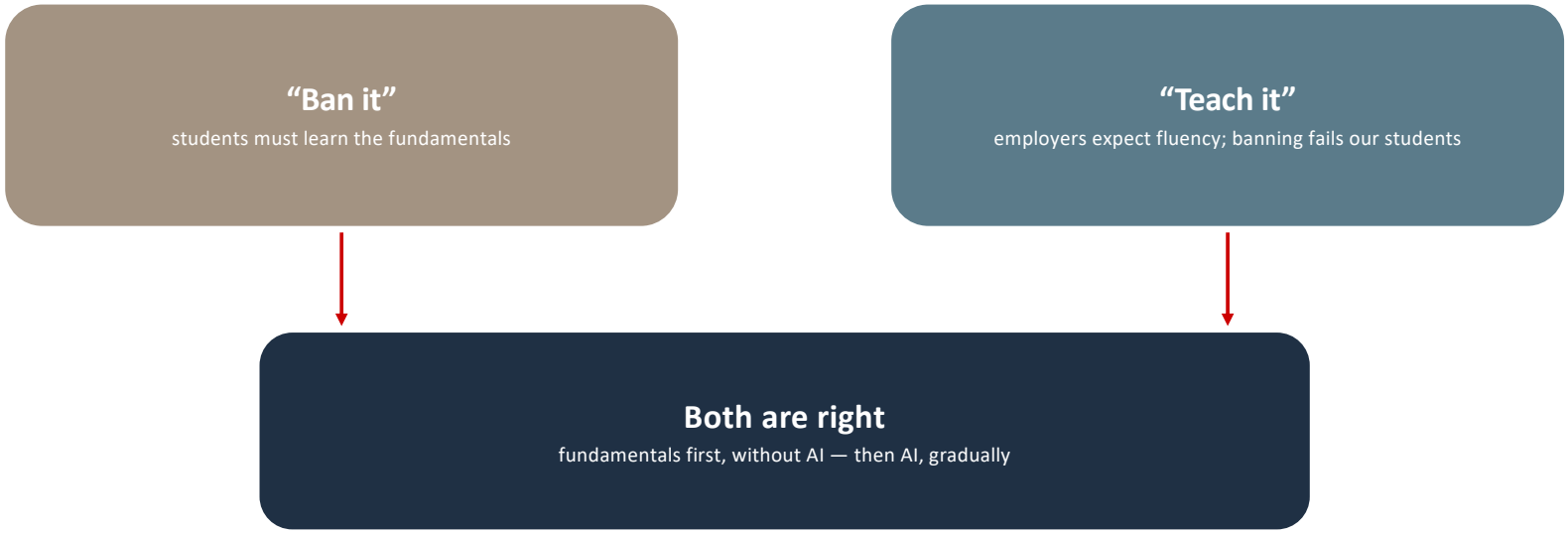
Two levels: AI Literacy and AI Fluency

	Level 1 AI Literacy	Level 2 AI Fluency
Understanding AI and Data	Recognize AI's role in a changing society and its impact on young professionals. Recognize how data quality, bias, and representations affect AI performance and accuracy.	Use field-specific AI tools for learning, factual research, and productivity while understanding their limitations and biases. Apply effective prompting techniques and iteratively refine AI interactions to achieve desired outcomes with appropriate data inputs. Integrate AI insights with human expertise to support academic work and decision-making.
Critical Thinking and Judgement	Understand the importance of verifying AI-driven insights with human judgement and recognize that AI-generated content may contain biases, errors, or inconsistencies. Identify key evaluation criteria for AI-generated content such as accuracy, relevance, and source reliability. Explain why cross-referencing AI outputs with authoritative sources is essential for making informed decisions.	Apply systematic evaluation methods to assess AI-generated content using multiple verification sources and established criteria. Analyze AI outputs to identify and address potential biases, inconsistencies, or gaps in reasoning. Compare and synthesize AI-generated insights with human expertise in field-specific contexts.
Ethical and Responsible Use	Define fundamental AI ethics principles such as fairness, transparency, accountability, and privacy. Recognize how AI systems can perpetuate bias and inequality. Identify potential ethical concerns in AI-driven decision-making. Understand institutional policies and guidelines for responsible AI use in academic and professional contexts.	Apply ethical principles and frameworks when using AI tools in coursework, factual research, and professional contexts. Assess AI outputs for potential bias, discrimination, or privacy concerns and implement strategies to mitigate identified risks. Use AI tools responsibly while maintaining academic integrity and adhering to institutional guidelines.
Creativity and Innovation	Recognize AI's potential as a creative collaborator and innovation catalyst. Understand how AI can enhance human creativity rather than replace it. Identify opportunities for AI-assisted creative problem-solving in their field.	Use field-specific AI tools to generate novel ideas, designs, and solutions. Collaborate effectively with AI systems in creative processes. Adapt and refine AI-generated creative outputs to meet specific goals. Integrate AI-assisted creativity into professional workflows and projects

AI Readiness: Agency & Competence

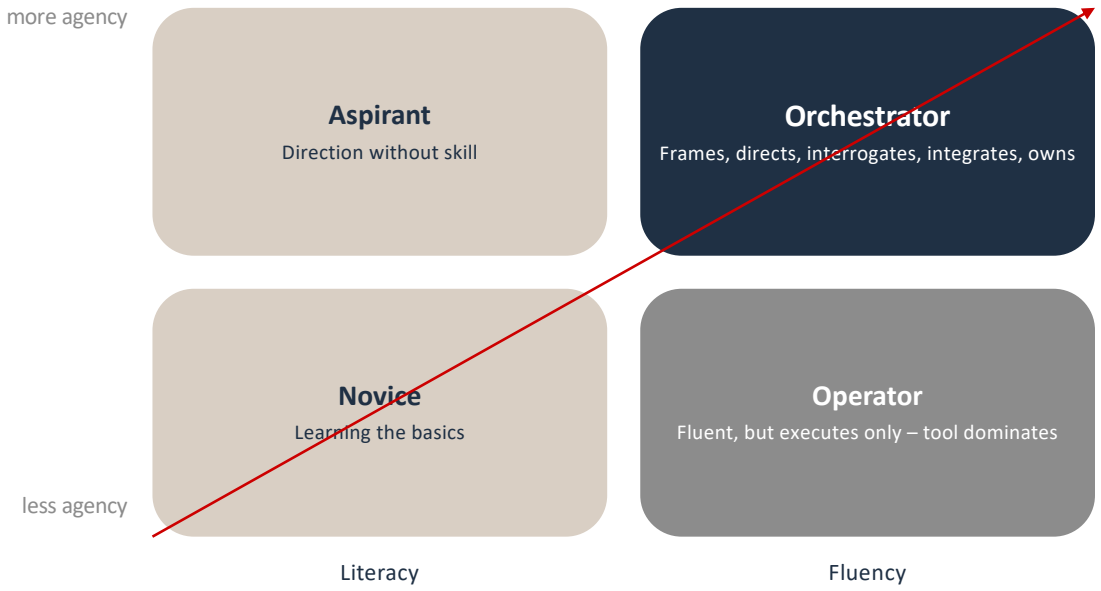


How do we get there? A faculty debate, resolved



That sequence became crutch → coach → colleague.

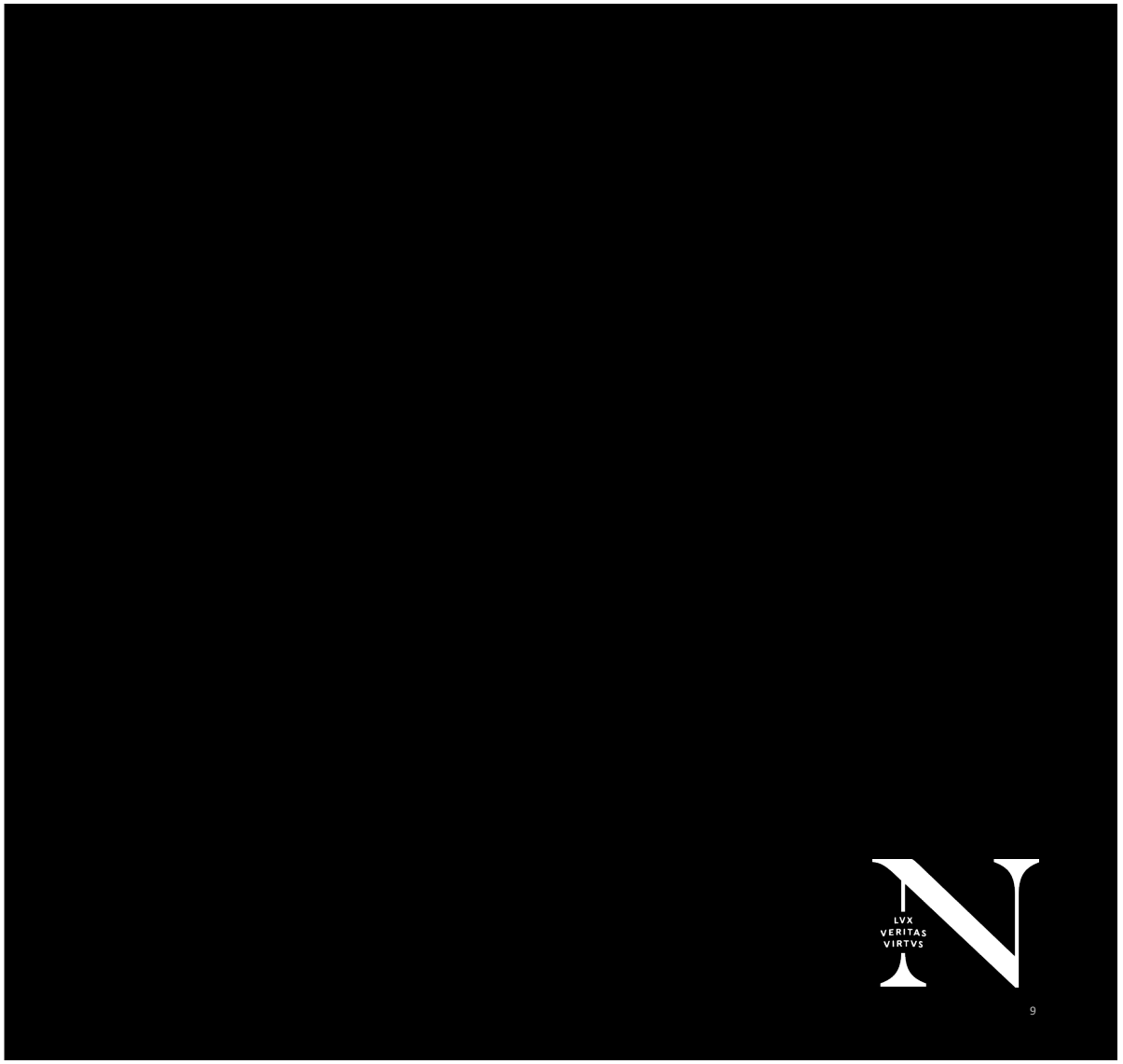
The path meets the map



Crutch → Coach → Colleague rides the diagonal

From plan to practice

- Curriculum Transformation & Readiness Initiative
- AI Innovation Lab
  - experiential AI projects
- Agentic AI Support
- AI Makerspace
- Governance



Curriculum Transformation & Readiness Initiative

1	**Paired faculty Directors in every college** One for curricular transformation, one for teaching & research innovation
2	**Funded time** Course releases for faculty directors leading course updates and innovation
3	**Block grants** Funding for integrating AI readiness into courses and programs
4	**Faculty cohorts** In every college, connected to employers through industry panels and showcases
5	**A working feedback loop** Monthly director meetings; leadership check-ins with directors and associate deans

Principle

Institutionalize the engine and provide support

Curricular change is real work. It needs structure, time and resources.

Every college has moved from plan to practice

20 / 20

college plans in place — two per college

110

high-reach courses being updated for AI readiness

180

faculty participating in cohorts (goal: 400)

Reach first. Most plans are initially integrating AI readiness into the required, multi-section, high-enrollment courses most students take — each shipped as a reusable package (syllabus, rubrics, Canvas shell, design narrative) that outlasts any one instructor.

AI Innovation Lab: experiential AI in every discipline

25

partner-backed AI projects this fall, with 200 students

60

projects in the spring pipeline — 40 in sourcing, 20 in scoping

What it makes possible

Any course, in any college, can host a scoped, partner-backed AI project

Students in every discipline graduate having delivered AI for a real client

Student AI consultant teams build tools for university units

Agentic AI: support for students and faculty

In the course	For faculty and designers	For co-op and career
AVA, an AI teaching assistant, and Lyra, a presentation coach — in 14 D'Amore-McKim courses Bouvé SimBot clinical patient simulations A Socratic tutor for practice in Law	Course-design agents in CPS Library scholarly collections inside the university AI platform Curriculum mapping against employer needs	Co-op advising agent: role matching, applications, interview practice Workplace simulation before a placement

Faculty configure AI rather than commission it. People frame the problem, judge the output and own the outcome.

A place to build: the AI Makerspace

- Build with AI — no coding experience required.
- Open to students, faculty and staff, in Snell Library.
- 375+ launch engagements; Builder Blitzes and workshops.
- Healthcare Builder Blitz with Bouvé: 29 student teams.
- **Principle:** democratize fluency



LVX VERITAS VIRTVS

Governance: the institution as a unit of agency

AI Review Committee

Reviews AI systems before university adoption, including tools used in teaching

Responsible AI Practice

Guidance on how, when and where AI is deployed responsibly

Faculty governance

Curricular and learning-outcome changes follow the normal college and university approval process

Security and privacy

Weekly InfoSec reviews of AI tools and connectors, with a public tracker of what is approved

"Own," at institutional scale: the university decides whether, when, and to what end it adopts AI.

Keep humans at the center

The goal is agency. Questions?

