



EVALUATION TOOL

# A Human-Centered Evaluation Tool for Educational AI Agents

*Reviewing whether design intent becomes an immersive learner experience.*

Educational AI is often evaluated based on accuracy, functionality, or efficiency. This tool focuses on a different question: *What is the learner's experience while interacting with the AI?*

The tool evaluates ten dimensions across three areas: **Engagement Dynamics**, **Experiential Dimensions**, and **Learning Orientation Dimensions**. Together, these dimensions help assess whether an experience is primarily **Transactional**, **Emerging**, or **Immersive**.

This tool can be used during design reviews, prototyping, pilot testing, classroom observations, or retrospective reflection. Its purpose is to guide discussion, identify strengths and gaps, and support continuous improvement of educational AI experiences.

THE THREE-POINT SCALE · SCORE 1 TO 3

1

**Transactional**

Disconnected, agent-led exchanges. The learner mostly receives.

2

**Emerging**

Some continuity and agency, with dips, limits, or drift.

3

**Immersive**

A coherent partner the learner steers, owns, and grows with.

APP OR AGENT

---

LEARNER & CONTEXT

---

SESSION REVIEWED

---

REVIEWER & DATE

---

Part A Engagement Dynamics

The engagement arc — attraction, adoption, and persistence.

1 Attraction

FIRST PULL

Does the experience give a first-time learner an immediately clear reason to try it — a felt need or curiosity in the first moments?

LOOK FOR

- Is the value or invitation clear within the first 30 seconds?
- Does it meet a real need or spark genuine curiosity?
- Does the first moment feel worth the learner's time?

1 Transactional

The opening is unclear or generic, with little reason to try it and nothing felt in the first moments.

2 Emerging

There is a hook, but the value takes effort to find, or only some learners feel pulled in.

3 Immersive

The need or curiosity lands immediately, and within moments the learner feels it is worth trying.

EVIDENCE & NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

2 Adoption

ROUTINE

Does the experience connect to a recurring need so it becomes a go-to the learner folds into how they already work or think?

LOOK FOR

- Is there a recurring moment or need the experience clearly serves?
- Does it fit how the learner already works, rather than adding friction?
- Would the learner return without being prompted?

1 Transactional

It stays a one-off, and nothing brings the learner back or fits it into their routine.

2 Emerging

The learner returns sometimes, but it has not yet become a dependable habit.

3 Immersive

It earns a regular place in the learner's routine and becomes a natural go-to.

EVIDENCE & NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

3

## Persistence

DEEPENING

Does the experience get richer the longer the learner stays with it, continuing to develop rather than hitting a plateau?

LOOK FOR

- Does the experience deepen with continued use?
- Does the learner keep growing rather than plateauing?
- Does it adapt as the learner's needs and skill change?

1

### Transactional

The experience stays flat or repetitive, and the learner plateaus quickly.

2

### Emerging

It deepens for a while, then levels off or stops adapting to the learner's growth.

3

### Immersive

It keeps getting richer and more personalized, growing alongside the learner over time.

EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

## Part B What is the experience like?

**Experiential dimensions** — relational presence, learner agency, engagement, and coherence.

4

## Relational presence

CONTINUITY

Does the AI feel like a coherent, responsive learning partner over time, rather than a string of disconnected replies?

LOOK FOR

- Does the agent carry context across turns?
- Does it acknowledge the learner's intent and earlier contributions?
- Does it feel like one relationship or many separate exchanges?

1

### Transactional

Each reply stands alone, and the agent forgets earlier turns.

2

### Emerging

The agent recalls some context, though continuity breaks under depth or across sessions.

3

### Immersive

The agent sustains a coherent thread and builds on what the learner shared, feeling like one continuous partner.

EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

5

## Learner agency

DIRECTION &amp; PACE

How much can the learner shape the direction, depth, and pace of the interaction, exercising judgment rather than following a fixed path?

LOOK FOR

- Can the learner steer where the conversation goes?
- Can they slow down, go deeper, or change course?
- Who is leading — the learner or the agent?

1

### Transactional

The agent drives a fixed path and the learner mostly follows.

2

### Emerging

The learner can make some choices, within limits the agent sets.

3

### Immersive

The learner clearly steers direction, depth, and pace, and the agent supports their lead.

EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

6

## Cognitive–emotional engagement

ATTENTION &amp; CHALLENGE

Does the interaction hold attention, curiosity, and intellectual engagement without overwhelming or disengaging the learner?

LOOK FOR

- Does the experience invite curiosity?
- Is the challenge level right, neither flat nor overwhelming?
- Does the learner stay involved over time?

1

### Transactional

The exchange feels flat or draining, or it overwhelms the learner.

2

### Emerging

The experience holds attention in parts, with some dips or strain.

3

### Immersive

The experience sustains curiosity and engagement at a challenge level that feels right.

EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

7

## Contextual coherence

### ALIGNMENT TO PURPOSE

Does the AI stay aligned with the learning purpose, task, and the learner's goals across exchanges?

#### LOOK FOR

- Does the agent keep the learning purpose in view?
- Does it stay on task from one turn to the next?
- Does it adapt to the learner's goals without drifting?

1

#### Transactional

The agent drifts off purpose or loses the thread of the task.

2

#### Emerging

The agent mostly stays aligned, with occasional drift the learner must correct.

3

#### Immersive

The agent holds the learning purpose and goals steadily across the whole exchange.

#### EVIDENCE & NOTES

#### REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

## Part C Does it support meaningful learning?

Learning orientation — reflection, creation, and application.

8

## Reflective depth

### REFLECTION

Does the AI help the learner interpret experience, make sense of feedback, and connect learning to broader understanding?

#### LOOK FOR

- Does the agent invite the learner to notice their own thinking?
- Does it mirror patterns and assumptions back to them?
- Does it deepen interpretation rather than hand over answers?

1

#### Transactional

The agent gives answers, with little room for the learner to reflect.

2

#### Emerging

The agent prompts some reflection, though it often returns to answers.

3

#### Immersive

The agent consistently helps the learner interpret, notice patterns, and make meaning.

#### EVIDENCE & NOTES

#### REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

## 9

## Creative authorship

## CREATION

Does the learner generate, shape, and own the work, with AI as a collaborator rather than the author?

## LOOK FOR

- Does the learner produce and revise their own ideas?
- Does the agent expand possibilities without taking over?
- Whose voice carries the final work?

## 1 Transactional

The agent produces finished work and the learner mostly selects from it.

## 2 Emerging

The learner shapes the work, though the agent's voice still leads at times.

## 3 Immersive

The learner authors and owns the work, and the agent expands options while protecting their voice.

## EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

## REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY



## 10

## Applied judgment

## APPLICATION

Does the learner carry the learning into a real decision or context, with responsibility staying human?

## LOOK FOR

- Does the agent connect ideas to real situations and choices?
- Does it support weighing options and consequences?
- Does the learner keep responsibility for decisions?

## 1 Transactional

The agent makes recommendations or decisions for the learner.

## 2 Emerging

The agent supports decision-making, though it nudges toward its own answers.

## 3 Immersive

The agent helps the learner weigh options and consequences while the learner decides.

## EVIDENCE &amp; NOTES

## REFINEMENT OPPORTUNITY

# Overall Reflection

\_\_\_ / 30

Transactional · Emerging · Immersive

10-16 Transactional · 17-23 Emerging · 24-30 Immersive

1 Transactional

2 Emerging

3 Immersive

Across all ten dimensions, where is this experience strongest, where does it feel most transactional, and what one change would move it most toward immersive?

**A note on scope:** This tool reviews the designed experience — the work you can see during design and prototyping. Whether the learner's core outcome actually grew is a separate question that belongs to implementation and longitudinal study.



© 2026 Lisa Dawley, Ph.D. · RootHuman.ai is a trade name of Lisa Dawley. All rights reserved.