



THE STARTING POINT

Are You Building a Tool or a Teacher?

Most educational AI gets people to an answer faster. The best AI changes how people think and do along the way. Before you design a single feature, start here.

THE CORE DESIGN QUESTION

"After someone uses this AI, what is different about how they understand themselves, express their ideas, or act in the world?"

The Four Ways People Learn & Work With AI

Most apps live in the first three. Real learning shows up when you design the fourth one on purpose.

Productivity & Efficiency

01

AI speeds up tasks and reduces effort. Helpful, but it doesn't always grow the learner.

Drafting · summarizing · planning · automating

Tutoring & Guided Support

02

AI explains concepts and builds skills, often aimed at the correct answer.

Explanations · step-by-step help · practice with feedback

Personalization & Feedback

03

AI adapts to the user and reflects progress, with a focus on performance.

Recommendations · monitoring · insights

THE DIFFERENTIATOR

04

Human-Centered Learning

AI supports reflection, creation, and application as core human processes. Here it becomes a partner in growth.

Sense-making · judgment · design · real-world action

The quick test: After someone uses your app, did they just finish a task faster, or did something grow in how they understand, create, or act? If you can't answer that yet, you're designing a tool. The full method shows you how to design a teacher.