



Building AI Literacy: Helping Students Use Tools Thoughtfully and Transparently

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Today's Session

“

Together we will explore the evolving landscape of AI literacy in higher education—what it is, why it matters, and how it intersects with student agency, academic integrity, and disciplinary expectations.

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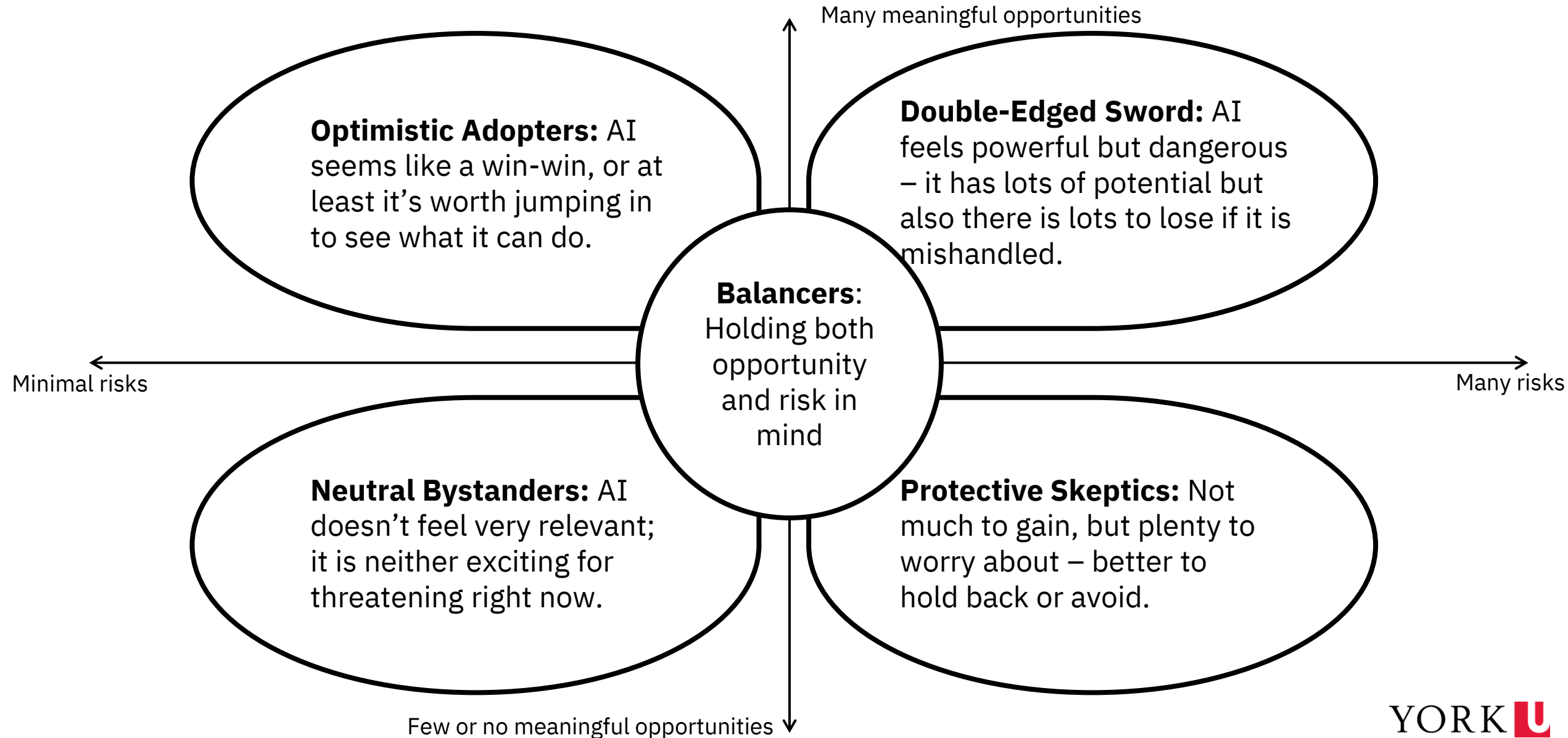


Building AI Literacy: Helping Students Use Tools Thoughtfully and Transparently

- State of the field
- Framework(s)
- Practical strategies

Overview

Where do you stand? AI in Higher Ed Risks & Opportunities

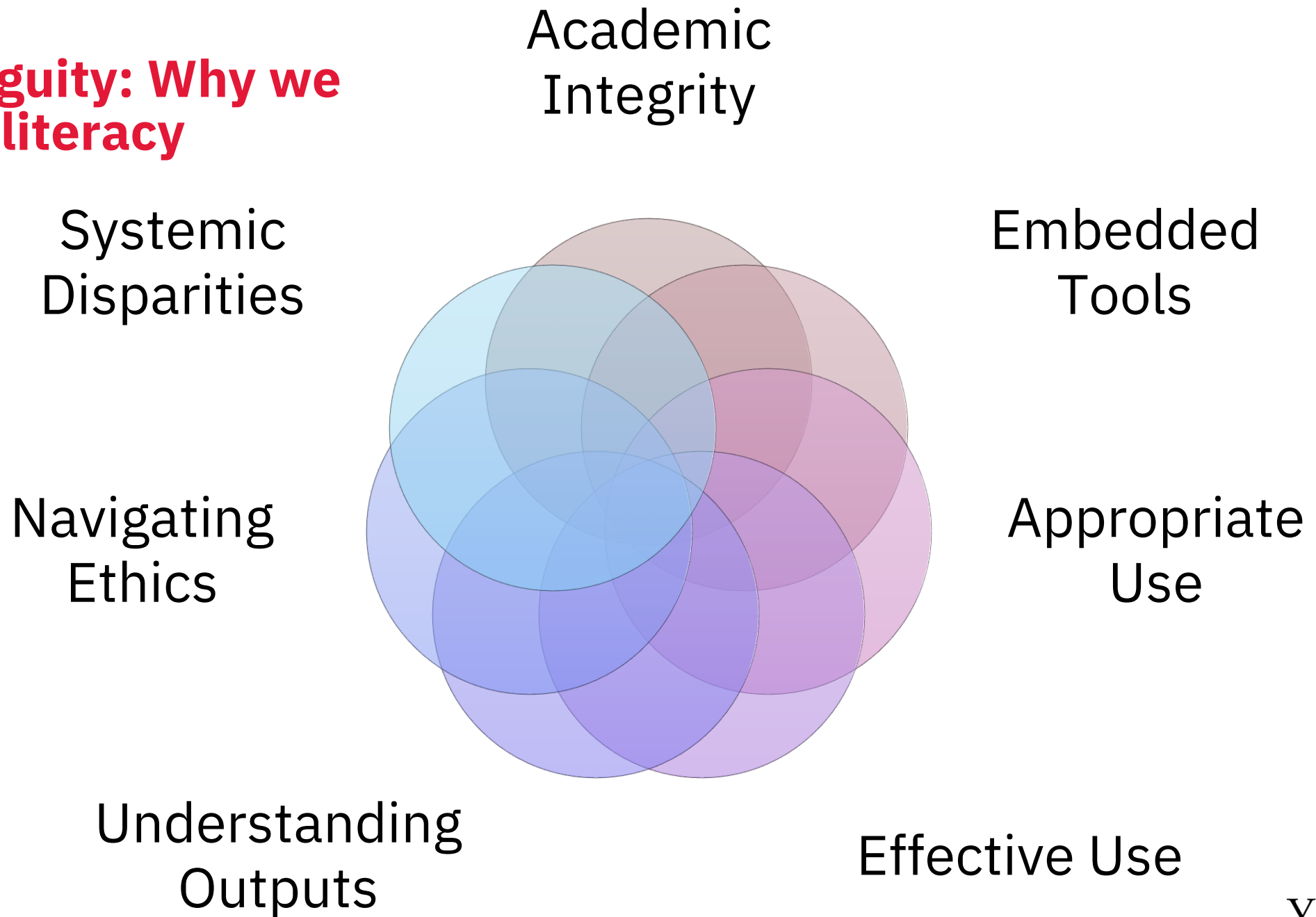


State of the Field

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AI Ambiguity: Why we need AI literacy



AI Literacy – an evolution

➤ **Pre-AI approaches to digital literacy emphasized:**

- Meaningful use of digital tools to navigate digital info & participate in digital culture
- Establishment of baseline competencies in digital skills for work, civics, media awareness
- Multiliteracies/transliteracies - literacy across media, global contexts, platforms

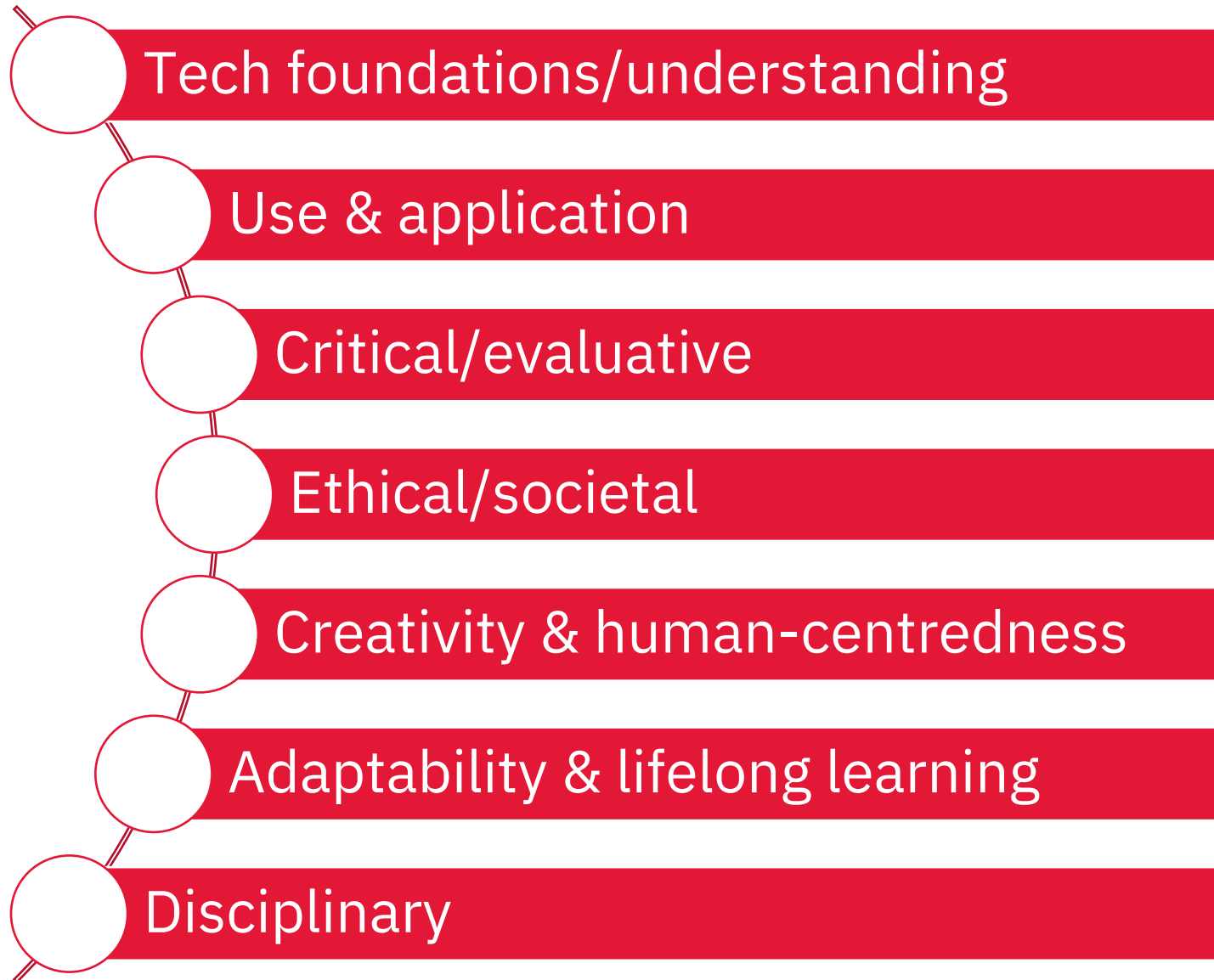
➤ **AI literacy continues:**

- Importance of information/media literacy & critical evaluation
- Content creation skills
- Safety/privacy as a core competency
- Centrality of communication and collaboration

➤ **AI literacy adds:**

- Understanding of models, data, training (technical competency)
- Generative/co-creative capabilities (human-machine interaction)
- Algorithmic bias, fairness, and justice
- Ethical, legal, policy implications
- Preparing for emergent/unknown
- Systemic/structural literacy

Common dimensions of AI Literacy

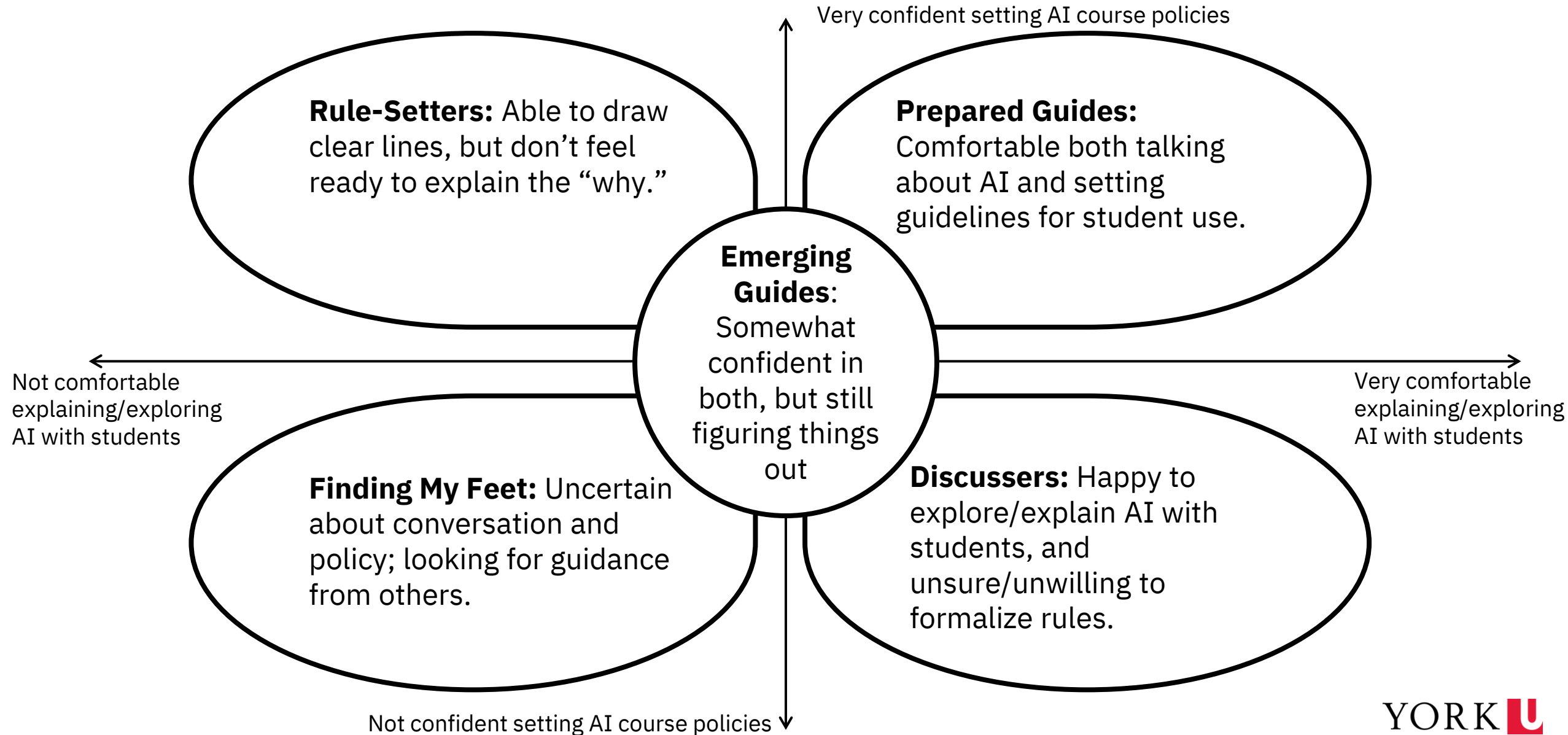


Go deeper: [Click here to access this handout on AI literacy definitions and dimensions.](#)

AI Literacy: Questions and considerations

- Does AI literacy *require* the use of AI technology?
- How much technical depth is really needed? (E.g. algorithmic detail, data analysis, ability to create AI chatbots)
 - Does a highly technical definition of AI literacy exclude some learners and disciplines/contexts?
- How do we balance the importance of AI skill development (prompt writing, output assessment) with that of ethical/social awareness?
- What metrics and competencies can/should measure AI literacy within and across disciplines?

How do you feel? AI Guidance & Policy



Framework(s)

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AI Frameworks: Something for everyone

➤ Competency/skills

- Most common type of framework; helpful for course design, assessment, aligning with accreditation
- E.g. [EDUCAUSE's ALTL framework](#)

➤ Critical/ethical

- AI literacy goes beyond skills; helpful for use in disciplines/programs where values & equity are central
- E.g. [Allen & Kendeou, 2023.](#)

➤ Institutional/strategic

- AI literacy beyond the classroom; helpful for deans, teaching & learning centres, strategic planning
- E.g. [WCET's AI Literacies in Focus](#)

➤ Curriculum integration

- AI literacy transfers across fields/curricular levels; helpful for program review, curriculum mapping
- E.g. [Barnard's Framework for AI Literacy](#)

➤ Practice/task

- *Less common; very pragmatic; helpful for workshops, applied research contexts*
- E.g. [Newman-Griffis, D., 2025.](#)

➤ Hybrid/holistic

- *Less common; aim to be comprehensive & interdisciplinary; helpful for frameworks useful for multiple audiences/purposes*
- E.g. [DEC AI Literacy Framework](#)

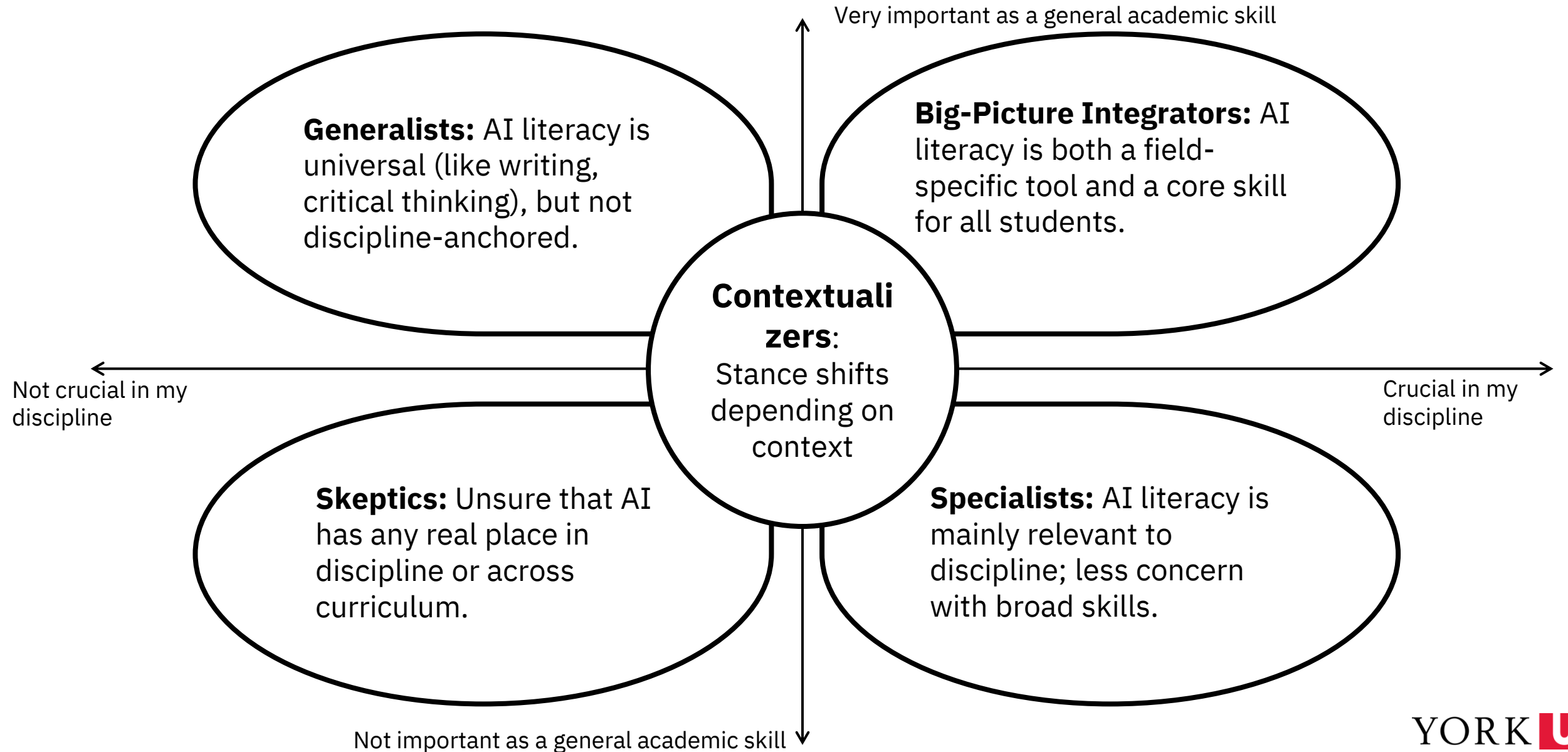
AI Frameworks: Recommendations

- Digital Education Council. (2025). [DEC AI Literacy Framework](#)
 - Includes human-centricity, competency levels, need for separate treatment of domain expertise and faculty vs student competencies
 - Potentially overwhelming!
- University of Toronto Libraries [Framework for AI Literacy](#)
 - Approachable and easy to use: Understand, Use, Evaluate
 - Offers practical classroom suggestions for building AI literacy
 - Might miss some elements (human centredness, disciplinary nuance)
- Also consider: UWO's [Domains of AI Awareness for Education](#)
 - Avoids assumption that AI literacy = AI adoption
 - Begins with questions “What implications does using Generative AI have for myself and society? And what uses (if any) align with my values and beliefs?”

Practical strategies for supporting AI literacy



What do you think: Where does AI literacy matter most?



Practical Classroom Strategies to Build AI Literacy

➤ Which dimension of AI literacy feels most urgent or relevant for you?

- Basic tech foundations/understanding
- Use & application
- Critical/evaluative skills
- Ethical/social awareness
- Human-centredness/creativity
- Adaptability & lifelong learning
- Discipline specifics

In breakout groups, explore the three strategies associated with your AI literacy dimension in the [Google Sheet](#).

Would you use these ideas? How might you adapt them?

You can add any notes or comments in column G, and any new ideas to the bottom of the spreadsheet.



What Next?

- Update your courses to respond to AI in [AI and Education: A Hands-On Approach for Course Transformation \(ONLINE - Oct 27-Nov 28, 2025\)](#)
- Investigate the impact of AI bias in higher education in [Who's At the Table? Bias, Positionality, and Pedagogical Power \(ONLINE- December 2nd, 2025 11-12:30\)](#)
- Learn more about our new [Certificates in AI Pedagogies](#)

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- **Note: these references were, in part, compiled and partially analysed with the assistance of SciSpace, an AI tool for scholarly research.**