



Great Lakes AI
INSTITUTE

FREE RESOURCE · THE AI ADOPTION STACK

The Three Layers of AI Adoption

Moving beyond tool access to engineer better work

AI adoption is not complete when people get access to a tool.
Access is only the beginning.



THE GOAL

The goal is not more AI usage. The goal is better work.

THE ILLUSION OF COMPLETION

Access is only the beginning

AI adoption is not complete when people get access to a tool. True value requires confidence, human judgment, habits, and workflow design.

The AI adoption stack

3

Workflow fluency

The organization can redesign work around AI.

INTEGRATION AND APPLICATION

2

Cognitive fluency

People can think with AI.

REASONING AND ANALYSIS

1

Mechanical fluency

People can use AI.

TOOL ACCESS AND BASICS

Most organizations struggle because they stop at basic usage and never build the deeper habits and leadership practices needed for AI to create real value.

HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

Each layer builds on the one below it. The pages that follow describe what each layer looks like, how it fails, what people need, and the question a leader should ask. The guide closes with an adoption audit, questions for leaders, and a practical playbook.

NOTES

LAYER 1 OF 3

Mechanical Fluency

CORE QUESTION

Can people use the tool?

FAILURE MODE

“I do not know what to type.”

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

People are curious but unsure how to begin. They lack the ability to open the tool, write a useful prompt, upload a document, or request a revision.

Common needs

- ✓ Basic tool training
- ✓ Prompting fundamentals
- ✓ Examples of practical use
- ✓ Clear do's and don'ts
- ✓ Safe practice opportunities

LEADER DIAGNOSTIC

Do our people have enough basic confidence to use AI without feeling lost?

NOTES

LAYER 2: COGNITIVE FLUENCY

 PARTNER RESOURCE

The rest of this guide is for partner organizations

You have read the introduction and the first layer. The remaining pages cover:

- Layer 2: Cognitive Fluency
- Layer 3: Workflow Fluency
- The AI adoption maturity matrix
- A team adoption audit and questions for leaders
- A practical playbook for redesigning one workflow

The full guide, along with other tools and resources, is available to organizations that partner with Great Lakes AI Institute.

The first step is a 20-minute AI Reality Check: a short conversation about your organization, where work is getting stuck, and how your team uses AI today.

Schedule an AI Reality Check

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PARTNER RESOURCE

Layer 3: Workflow Fluency

Available to Great Lakes AI Institute partner organizations.
Start with a 20-minute AI Reality Check.

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The AI Adoption Maturity Matrix

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The Adoption Audit

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PARTNER RESOURCE

The Practical Playbook

Available to Great Lakes AI Institute partner organizations.
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