

# **Between Prompt and Judgment: Rethinking Critical Thinking in the Age of AI Co-authorship**

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## **Abstract**

The increasing use of generative artificial intelligence in educational settings is reshaping how teachers plan, design, and evaluate learning content. This paper introduces the concept of *didactic co-authorship*, a framework that reconceptualizes teacher–AI interaction not merely as technical support, but as a critical and epistemic partnership. Based on qualitative data from a teacher education program focused on AI-assisted lesson planning, we explore how future educators respond to pedagogically misleading yet linguistically fluent AI-generated materials. The study reveals three core dimensions of critical thinking in this new context: *prompt literacy* (the ability to frame questions that elicit meaningful AI responses), *response skepticism* (the capacity to identify surface-level adequacy versus deep pedagogical relevance), and *didactic discernment* (the professional judgment needed to adapt, reject, or reframe AI outputs). These findings suggest that fostering critical thinking in AI-rich environments requires more than traditional reasoning skills—it calls for reflective, value-based evaluation of content co-produced with non-human agents. We propose a triadic model of critical didactic judgment to guide educators in navigating the affordances and limitations of AI in education. By reframing AI as both a collaborator and a challenge to professional agency, this paper contributes an innovative perspective on how to cultivate critical, responsible, and creative thinkers in digital-age classrooms.

**Keywords:** didactic co-authorship, education technology, epistemic partnership, professional judgment, teacher training