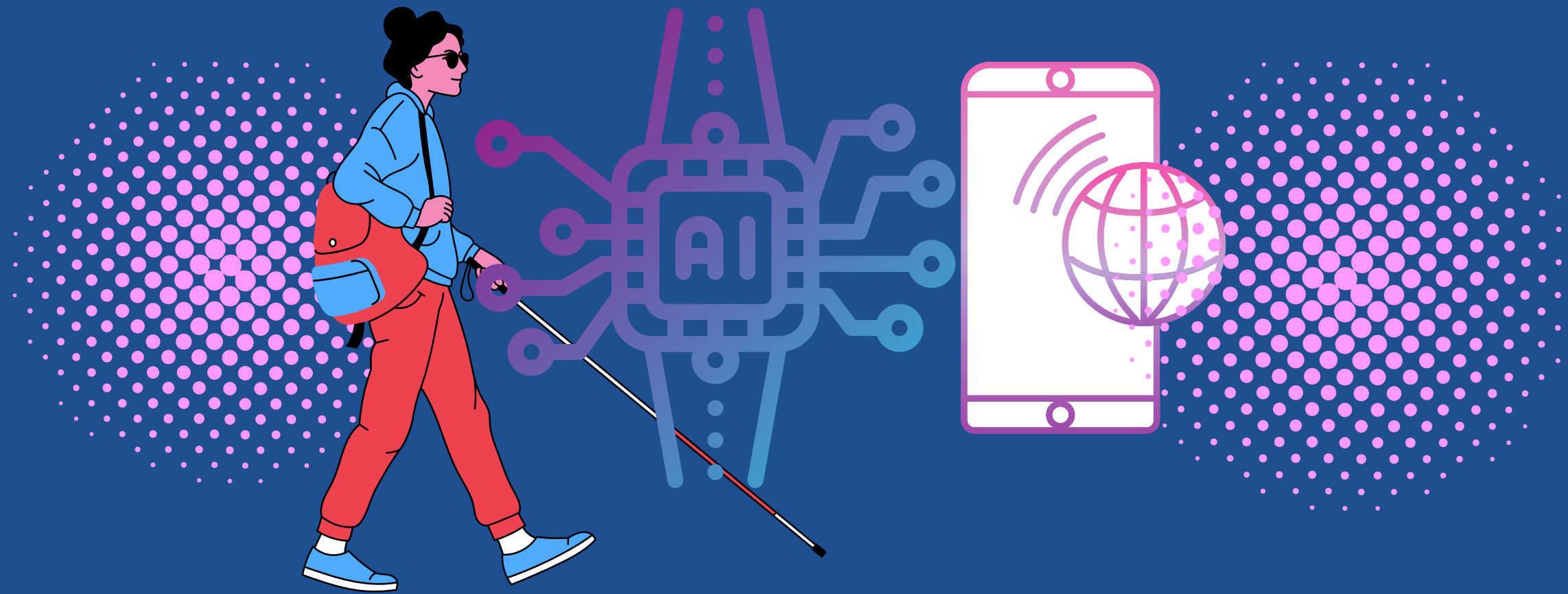


**Visions of Collaboration Conference MCB
May 2026**

**Presented by Lauren Coen, COMS, TVI
Perkins School for the Blind, Community Programs**

Upgrade Your Instruction: A Hands-On Guide to AI-Assisted O&M



Objectives

Participants will:

- 1. Deepen understanding of current trends of AI use in O&M practice, including tips and precautions**
- 2. Learn about leading apps with AI features and prompts to try during O&M lessons**
- 3. Gain knowledge of tools and methods for practitioner support**

Disclaimer

Not employed by or affiliated with any of the companies or developers discussed in this presentation.

As with any AI tool, it should be used with caution and common sense and I do not endorse it for situations with high stakes decisions. Does not replace professional judgement. Refer to your organization's policies regarding its use.

Several AI tools have statements and policies regarding data sharing, privacy, and safety.

**Consider it a secondary confirmation
(a "digital second opinion").**

**We still recommend relying on standard O&M skills
as primary source during routine navigation.**



**However, the power of AI
is real.**

**We are just scratching the surface of
it's applications for O&M practice and
it is evolving constantly**



Inform and Augment your Practice!

Why?

Supplementary 21st Century tools- AI is everywhere

Inclusion and Equal Access

We have learners using these tools widely.

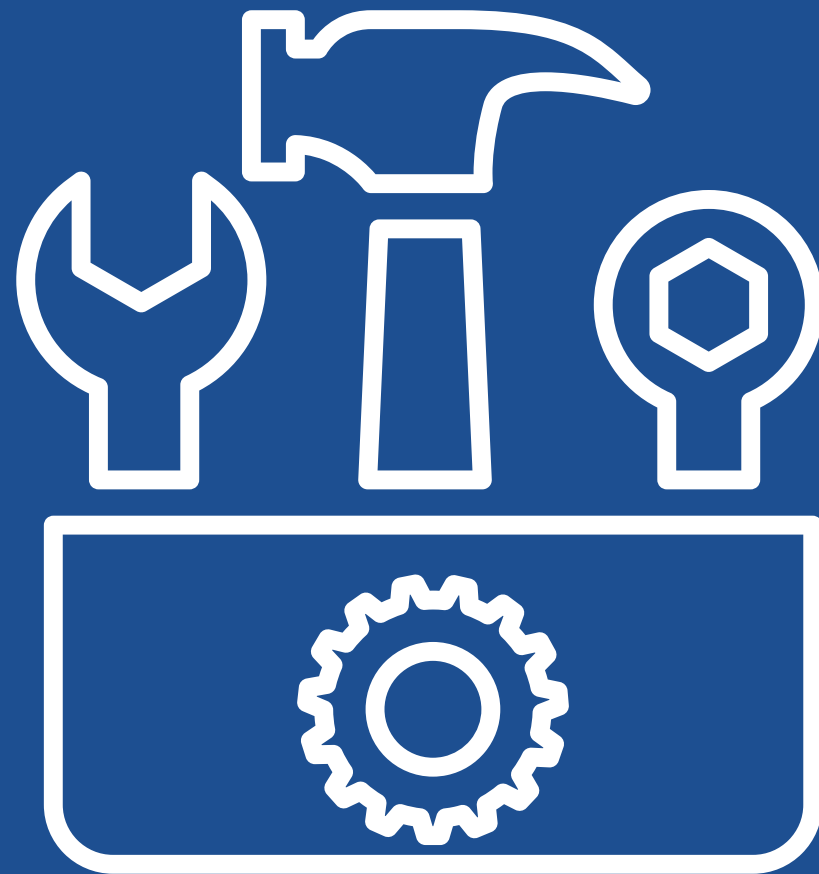
MA has 30 districts piloting a new AI Curriculum

Will likely be included in future revisions to the

Frameworks- currently nested in Digital Literacy &

Computer Science Curriculum Framework

Adding tools to our professional toolkit



ECC Crossover

Access areas

Compensatory
Sensory
Efficiency
Assistive Tech

Community Readiness areas

Orientation &
Mobility
Self-Determination
Career Education

Independent Living areas

Recreation &
Leisure
Independent
Living Skills
Social Interaction

Based on the work of Karen Wolffe | 9MoreThanCore

Consumer Use #1:

Picture analyzation and image description

MULTIMODAL VISION

where the AI doesn't just see an object but understands its context and answers questions about it. Typically accessed through phone or smart glasses cameras

How it works:

1. **Image submission:** A user takes a picture using the app or wearables' camera, or selects an image from their photo library, and sends it to the AI.
2. **AI analysis:** The AI analyzes the image and provides a response, either a direct answer or a detailed description.
3. **Conversational interaction:** Users can ask follow-up questions to get more information about the image, making the interaction conversational.

Some practical use tips:

1. Start with Good lighting
2. Center the Object or target in your frame- if on a flat surface, pull camera up and away. If in front, pull phone back toward you
3. Pan and Tilt to adjust your shot. Panning is side to side, tilting is moving the camera up or down
4. Don't be afraid to try again
5. Ask follow up questions

Skills to assess and target

- 1. Device use/access mode, airpods**
- 2. Directionality Concepts**
- 3. Camera use**
- 4. Prior Environmental Knowledge**
- 5. Critical Thinking & Focus**
- 6. Frustrational tolerance
& Problem solving**

Cautions

1. Privacy and data sharing
2. Some users avoid using AI camera applications in situations where other people's faces may be visible, and point cameras away from people as much as possible
3. Hallucinations and inaccuracies are possible, add prompt "Do not hallucinate"

Aira Access AI



What is it?

a feature within the Aira Explorer app that uses AI to provide image descriptions and can request to be verified either on chat or through a call to a trained visual interpreter (5 free call minutes per day)

Aira Access AI



AI Preferences Settings:

Verbosity: Select your preferred level of detail in the AI response

Short, Medium, Long

Vocabulary: Default, Everyday Language, Formal Language

Be My AI



What is it?

a feature within the Be My Eyes app that uses AI to provide visual assistance to blind and low vision users- option to use free volunteer visual interpreting service

Siri shortcuts



- Call a volunteer with Be My Eyes
- Ask Be My Eyes
- Read with Be My Eyes
- Describe with Be My Eyes
- Describe Quickly with Be My Eyes
- Describe fully with Be My Eyes

Siri shortcuts



- "Hey Siri, call Aira with message": Prompts you for a message (e.g., "give me directions to..."), then calls an agent to discuss it.
- "Hey Siri, connect to Aira agent":
- Directly opens the app and initiates a call.
- "Hey Siri, describe picture with Aira": Uses the app to describe

General and “Indoor” Prompts

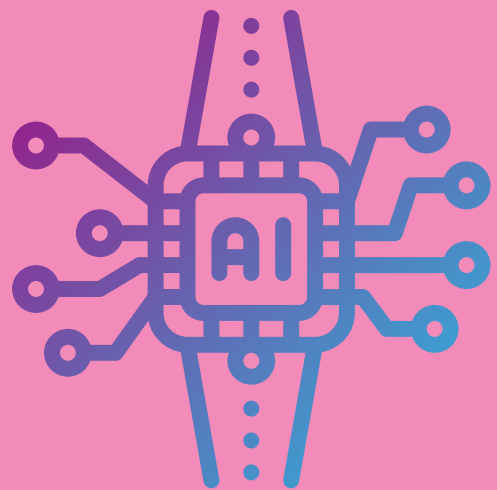
- “What’s in front of me?”
- “Describe room layout”
- “Where is the door/exit in this room?”
- “Describe this science lab setup”
- “Where are my keys?”
- “Read the menu”
- “Read the ingredients”
- “Read this Museum plaque”
- “Describe this piece of art”

Now YOU try!

With your table mates, choose 3 image description prompts to try.

Ask at least one follow up question about the image.

Share!



You can move around



Outdoor Navigational Prompts

- "Where am I?"
- "What street am I on?"
- "Describe this intersection"
- "Are there any obstacles on the sidewalk ahead of me?"
- "What store am I in front of?"
- "How can I enter this building?"
- "Read the street sign"

Public Transportation Prompts

- "Read the bus number"
- "Read the bus sign"
- "Transcribe this printed timetable schedule"
- "Read the arrivals and departures board"
- "Read this train station entrance sign"
- "Where is the turnstile?"

Consumer Use #2:

Route planning and Information gathering

Can supplement other apps such as Transit

Example tools: Gemini, Siri, ChatGpt

Prompts

- “Transcribe the morning weekday MBTA train schedule of departing trains from Rockport, MA to Boston, MA”
- “Are there any current service alerts for this timeframe?”

Advanced Route Planning Prompts

- "How many lanes of traffic do I have to cross at [Street Name]?"
- Tell me about the walking route from ____ to ____
- "Describe the geometry of the intersection at [Street A] and [Street B]. Is it a standard plus-sign, a T-junction, or offset?"
- "Are there any crosswalks at the intersection of [Street A] and [Street B]?"

Advanced Route Planning Prompts

- "Are there any traffic controls (stop signs, accessible pedestrian signals at the intersection of [Street A] and [Street B])?"
- "Describe the inner shoreline (building side) and outer shoreline (curb side) for the 200 block of [Street Name]. Is it a continuous wall, or are there recessed entryways?"
- **Most Important:** "How do I get to the closest Dunkin in this airport?"

Advanced Travel Planning Prompts

- “I’m taking a field trip to Fenway Park. Tell me about the layout of the stadium and any accessibility features for the visually impaired”
- “I want to go on a trip to Barcelona. Tell me about the public transportation options, the general sidewalk conditions in the city and overall accessibility for blind people”

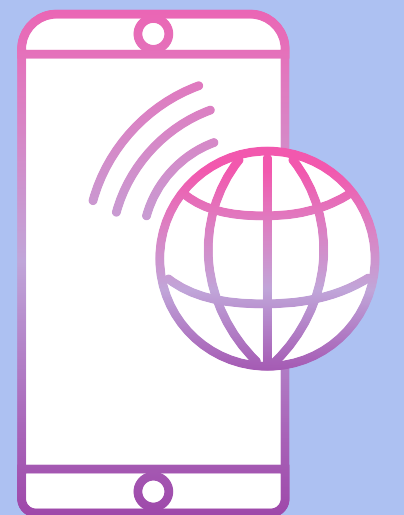
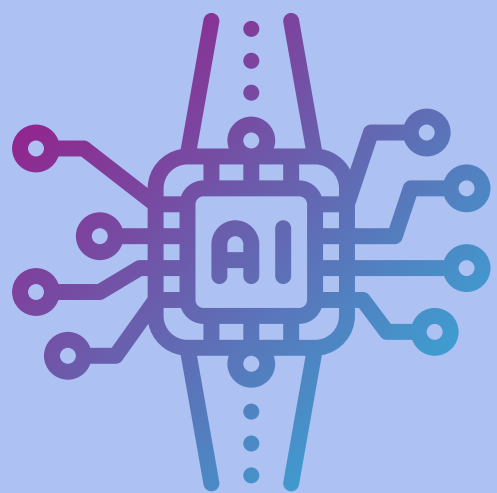
Now YOU try!

**With your table mates, choose 3 route
planning and information gathering**

prompts to try

Ask at least one follow up question.

Share!



General Teaching Strategies

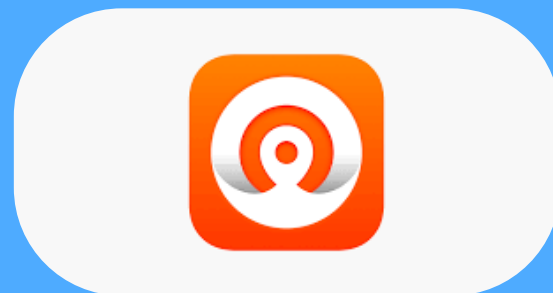
Modeling!! Use it in front of your students

Ask them for input based off the response

Inspire them to come up with prompt ideas

AI for the Practitioner: make it work for YOU

1. Lesson Location Scouting and Public Transportation research
2. Take pictures of an environment- analyze what the salient features are
3. **OKO** app- for analyzing signal crossings in real time



AI for the Practitioner: make it work for YOU

Remember: you're still the one with the credentials!

Again- check your organizations' policies and NEVER include identifying information

Lesson Plans:

Generating ideas for materials, sequence, timing

Create VOCABULARY Lists, Design Games, Long term projects

Evaluations:

Writing summaries

Generating ideas for recommendations

AI for the Practitioner: make it work for YOU

Generating **accommodations**

Generating new **Goals and Objectives**
based on current progress

Direction for **Consultation** meetings- give scenario

Time to Share

What do you use AI for the most in daily life?

What do you use it for in professional life?

Any additional prompts you have found
successful?

AI Tools you recommend for our students and
clients who are visually impaired?

Resources & thought Partners:

DESE AI Guidance

The Blind Life YouTube Channel

Aira Explorer & Be My Eyes Websites and Tutorials, Newsletters

Article: "AI and Our Blind Children: The Potential and the Pitfalls"

by Jonathan Mosen, NFB Future Reflections

Article: "How AI is Revolutionizing Research in Orientation and Mobility"

Society of Exceptional Educators

Personal network of blind friends,
my colleagues including AT and IT specialists,
and of course, my incredible students

THANK
YOU!



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