

When AI does the thinking: Keep your own judgment

Adaptive module

~20 min

AI answers in seconds, and recent research (Swiss Business School, Microsoft Research) shows the price of that speed: the more people rely on it, the less they exercise critical thinking, known as “cognitive offloading.” This module turns the usual view around: the protective factor is not distrust of the machine, but self-confidence. It provides concrete prompts for making AI a critical partner and uses the Kodak example as a reminder that listening to critical voices is a team matter.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Understand cognitive offloading: what heavy use of AI does to our critical thinking.
- 02 Rely on the real protective factor for judgment: self-confidence, not distrust of the machine.
- 03 Turn AI into a critical partner, using prompts that widen perspectives instead of confirming them.
- 04 Make critical thinking a team resource: welcome objections as a gift and listen to those who raise warnings.

WHO IT'S FOR

Professionals who rely on AI to analyze and decide, and who want their judgment to remain their own.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

After two days of analysis, Kenji thinks he has found out why processing times have doubled. He asks AI to confirm his conclusion; AI confidently contradicts it and puts forward three new arguments. Kenji presents his analysis tomorrow. How can Kenji decide what he will defend?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Cognitive offloading – Michael Gerlich, Swiss Business School (2025)
- Critical thinking in 3 questions that widen our view – Afthonios method
- Algorithmic echo chamber and confirmation bias – related to Eli Pariser's filter bubbles (2011)

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Microsoft Research, Lee et al., “The Impact of Generative AI on Critical Thinking” (CHI 2025): trust in AI's answers reduces critical thinking
- Harvard Business Review: AI as an amplifier of existing biases, and the algorithmic echo chamber
- Michael Gerlich, Swiss Business School, “AI Tools in Society” (the journal Societies, 2025): strong negative correlation between AI use and critical thinking
- Paul C. Nutt, “Why Decisions Fail” (2002): of more than 400 executive decisions studied, about half fail, notably because decision-makers impose their solution without exploring objections or stakeholders' interests