WHITE PAPER

Why TopKpop.io Matters for Educator AI Literacy

Professional Development for Teachers, Instructional Aides, and School Leaders — Disguised as a K-Pop Mystery

Who this is for

Audience: classroom teachers, instructional aides, instructional coaches, principals, and assistant principals.

Format: a self-paced, project-based AI literacy experience completed individually or in small school teams.

Submission: work is submitted directly through the TopKpop.io website. A private, opt-in Instagram page is available for educators who want to share, discuss, and showcase their work with peers in the program.

Executive Summary

On the surface, *TopKpop.io* looks like a fan-driven K-Pop event: educators step into the role of a "trainee," follow clues across three Treasure Troves, and unlock progressively richer creative challenges. Beneath that wrapper, it is a carefully sequenced AI literacy curriculum built specifically for the people responsible for delivering instruction — classroom teachers, aides, and the principals and assistant principals who lead them.

Each Trove engages educators in a different mode of generative AI work: image generation and prompt iteration, multilingual creative writing using Custom GPTs and AI music tools, and finally a full standards-aligned lesson design cycle. Each Trove ends with an "Oracle of the Rubric" — a custom GPT that scores the educator's work against a teacher-authored rubric and returns formative feedback before the work is ever submitted.

The K-Pop wrapper is doing real professional development work. It lowers the resistance educators often bring to AI training, and once inside the activity they are practicing the exact competencies that ISTE, AAAS, and emerging state AI guidance call essential: **prompting, iterating, evaluating outputs, integrating multiple AI tools, and judging quality against a rubric.**

This paper unpacks the value of each Treasure Trove, names the AI competencies it builds, and explains why the rubric system in particular — far from being a gimmick that just spits out a number — models the most important AI skill educators can take back to their classrooms: **how to evaluate AI work critically and how to give students faster, better feedback using AI as a force multiplier.**

The Problem TopKpop.io Solves

Most AI professional development for educators fails for one of three reasons:

- **It is abstract.** Sessions on "prompt engineering" without a real artifact to produce leave educators with no muscle memory and nothing to show their colleagues.
- **It is narrow.** Educators learn one tool — usually ChatGPT for lesson plans — and never see the broader AI ecosystem (image, music, video, custom GPTs, evaluators) that their students are already using.
- **It is decoupled from standards and outcomes.** Engaging AI projects rarely connect back to ELA standards, language acquisition research, or measurable instructional gains, so administrators cannot justify the seat time.

TopKpop.io was built to address all three. It is project-based, multi-tool, and standards-anchored. Educators leave with usable artifacts — a personal AI workflow, a multilingual classroom resource, a full lesson plan — not a certificate of attendance.

Pedagogical Foundation

The design rests on five evidence-based principles drawn from adult learning theory and instructional design research:

- **Engagement before instruction.** The mystery format and creative tasks generate intrinsic motivation. Educators acquire skills in pursuit of a goal they personally care about, the same principle they apply with their own students.
- **Iteration as a habit.** Every activity explicitly directs the participant to review the AI's first output and request changes. Iteration is built into the steps, not left to chance.
- **Multimodal AI fluency.** Participants do not just type prompts. They generate images, rewrite song lyrics, produce music with Suno, animate avatars, build karaoke videos, and unpack academic standards — across at least six distinct AI tools.

- **Cultural and linguistic integration.** Korean and Spanish vocabulary are required, not decorative. Educators experience firsthand how AI can serve as a bridge into language and culture for the students they serve.
- **Rubric-mediated feedback.** Each Trove's Oracle of the Rubric provides instant, criterion-referenced feedback before the work is submitted. Educators revise, then post — modeling exactly the formative feedback cycle they should be running with students.

Treasure Trove 1: Encore Ghost — AI Identity & Visual Composition

What educators do

Create a personal K-Pop "trainee" avatar (from a photo or a description) and compose a group poster placing the avatar into a chosen scene with cinematic lighting, multilingual taglines, and group branding. Both pieces are pre-scored by the Oracle of the Rubric, revised, and then submitted through the website. Participants who choose to may also share their work on the program's private Instagram page for peer discussion.

AI competencies practiced

- **Generative image prompting.** Specifying style, lighting, and visual vibe — the descriptive vocabulary professionals use to direct AI image tools.
- **Image-to-image transformation.** Uploading a real photo and directing AI to stylize it teaches educators how reference images steer model output, a skill they can transfer directly to producing classroom visuals.
- **Compositional reasoning.** The poster step requires combining multiple inputs (avatars, background, text overlays) into one coherent scene — an early form of multimodal orchestration.
- **Caption generation.** Asking ChatGPT to draft a caption introduces educators to AI as a communications collaborator — useful for parent newsletters, classroom announcements, and school social media.

Why this matters in education

Visual generative AI is the entry point most students will meet first, and the one most educators feel least equipped to discuss. Teaching educators to art-direct an AI — rather than accept its first output — is the single most transferable skill in this Trove. The same prompting discipline used to refine an idol avatar transfers directly to creating instructional graphics, social-emotional learning visuals, multilingual classroom posters, and student-friendly infographics. A principal who has done this exercise is also far better positioned to evaluate AI-generated work students bring in.

Treasure Trove 2: The Blade of Bitterness — Multilingual Creative Writing & AI Music

What educators do

Choose a cover song, select 7–12 vocabulary words in Korean or Spanish, and use a Custom GPT (the "Multilingual Karaoke Song Rewriter") to rewrite the lyrics around a chosen theme while preserving rhythm and melody. Then choose one of three pathways: submit the lyrics, generate an original song using Suno AI, or build a complete karaoke video. A bonus mission animates an AI avatar performing the song. Final work is submitted through the website; the private Instagram page is available for those who want to share their finished pieces with peers.

AI competencies practiced

- **Constraint-based prompting.** Required vocabulary, theme, melody, and rhythm are all hard constraints — teaching educators that prompts work best when they specify what must be preserved and what may be changed.
- **Custom GPT use.** Participants encounter a purpose-built GPT, not the generic chat. They learn that AI tools can be specialized — and how a teacher might one day build their own GPT for a specific instructional task.
- **Cross-tool AI workflows.** Lyrics flow from a Custom GPT into Suno, then into a karaoke generator, then to the website. This is the realistic shape of modern AI work: a pipeline, not a single chatbot.
- **Image-to-video AI.** The bonus mission introduces OpenArt, Pika, and Runway — exposing educators to the rapidly growing video-generation category their students are already encountering on social media.

Why this matters in education — beyond "translation"

Yes, it is fun. But it is not just translation. That distinction is the core of the activity. A simple translation tool turns one sentence into another. This activity asks the educator to do something AI alone cannot: choose a theme, select target vocabulary, judge whether the new lyrics carry the original emotional weight, and decide whether the language sits naturally inside the rhythm of the music.

For a world language teacher or dual-immersion educator, this is a complete second-language acquisition cycle. Students must encounter target vocabulary in context, manipulate it, hear it in song, and produce something with it — exactly the four modalities (input, interaction, output, performance) that SLA research has long identified as essential. The AI removes the technical barriers (composing music, syncing karaoke timing, generating performance video) so the teacher can focus on the language learning itself.

For an ELA teacher, the same activity teaches voice, theme, register, and craft revision — using AI not as the writer but as a draft partner the educator must critique. For instructional

aides supporting English learners, the multilingual song rewrite becomes a template for differentiated vocabulary practice that can be redeployed across units and grade levels.

For principals and assistant principals, completing this Trove gives them firsthand experience evaluating what an AI-assisted multilingual learning artifact looks like — essential context when reviewing teacher lessons or student work that uses these same tools.

Treasure Trove 3: Operation School Spirit — AI for Instructional Design

What educators do

Three deliverables: (1) Use AI to unpack a grade-level California ELA standard into teachable sub-skills. (2) Design an interdisciplinary lesson that integrates the chosen sub-skill, a Korean or Latin cultural dance tradition, and at least three Korean or Spanish movement phrases. (3) Submit a team performance of a custom choreography by Joyce of BbCat — live, by AI avatar, or hybrid. All three deliverables are submitted through the website, with the private Instagram available as an optional showcase channel.

AI competencies practiced

- **AI as a curriculum partner.** Educators prompt AI to unpack a standard, refine sub-skills, generate three lesson ideas, and then expand the chosen idea into a full plan in a named instructional model (5E, Direct Instruction, PBL, Cooperative Learning).
- **Source-of-truth thinking.** The standard itself — with its exact code — is the anchor. Educators practice using AI without letting it drift away from the official source. This is the single most important habit in AI-assisted professional work.
- **Differentiation prompting.** Refining sub-skills, asking for student-friendly language, and requesting supports and extensions all model how AI can compress hours of differentiation work into minutes.
- **AI-assisted performance media.** Avatar and hybrid performance options surface a question every educator now faces: when is AI an authentic substitute for embodied work, and when is it not? Wrestling with that question is itself part of AI literacy.

Why this is the most important Trove for educators and school leaders

Trove 3 reframes AI from "thing my students are using" to "thing I use to do my job better." It walks educators through a complete planning cycle — standard, sub-skill, lesson, assessment — entirely with AI in the loop, then asks them to be evaluated against a 100-point lesson design rubric. By the end, the participant has a culturally grounded, standards-aligned, multilingual lesson plan they can teach next week. That is professional development that produces a usable artifact, not a certificate.

For principals and assistant principals, this Trove is also a calibration exercise. Walking through the lesson-design cycle with AI gives instructional leaders the context they need to

evaluate and coach teacher use of AI fairly — distinguishing surface-level shortcuts from genuine instructional improvement.

The Oracle of the Rubric: Why This Is More Than a Score

Each Trove ends with a custom GPT — an "Oracle of the Rubric" — that scores the participant's work against a teacher-authored rubric. It is tempting to dismiss this as a numerical gimmick. **It is the most pedagogically sophisticated piece of the entire site.**

Three things the rubric does that a score alone cannot

- **It externalizes quality criteria.** Before an educator submits, they see exactly what "good" looks like. Cognitive science calls this "making success criteria visible" — and it is among the highest-leverage instructional moves an educator can make with their own students.
- **It enables formative revision.** The Oracle returns three strengths, two improvement steps, and a 50-word feedback paragraph. Educators revise before submitting. This is the rapid feedback loop that traditional grading cannot give because the teacher cannot read 150 drafts in real time.
- **It teaches AI evaluation literacy.** Using a rubric-bound GPT to judge AI-assisted work models the most important AI skill of the next decade: how to apply explicit criteria to AI output rather than trusting it implicitly. Educators are not just receiving a score — they are watching a structured evaluation in action and learning the move themselves.

Why educators should use AI-driven rubrics in their own classrooms

An educator who watches the Oracle of the Rubric work through a song lyric or lesson plan walks away with a model they can rebuild for any assignment. Once that move is internalized — load criteria into a Custom GPT, score student drafts, return strengths-and-steps feedback — the educator has effectively cloned themselves for the formative-feedback step of student writing. That is hours of weekly grading returned to the teacher and, more importantly, faster feedback returned to the student.

This is what distinguishes the Oracle from a translator or a generic chatbot. A translator gives an answer. The Oracle teaches educators a transferable evaluation pattern they can deploy across every subject, every grade level, and every assignment for the rest of their careers. For instructional coaches and school leaders, the same pattern can be used to give teachers consistent, criterion-based feedback on lesson plans and observations.

AI Skills Mapped Across the Three Troves

The site is not a sampler in the sense of being shallow. It is a sampler in the sense of being deliberately broad — designed so an educator who completes all three Troves has touched every major category of generative AI now used in professional work.

AI Skill Category	Trove 1	Trove 2	Trove 3
Image generation & art direction	Avatar + poster	Karaoke visuals	Lesson visuals
Iterative prompting & revision	Required at every step	Required at every step	Required at every step
Custom GPT use	Oracle scoring	Multilingual Lyric Rewriter + Oracle	Oracle for lesson design
Multilingual / cross-cultural prompting	Spanish or Korean tagline	10+ vocabulary words integrated	3+ movement phrases integrated
AI music generation (Suno)	—	Core option	—
AI video / avatar animation	—	Bonus mission	Deliverable 3 option
Standards-anchored AI workflow	—	—	Core deliverable
Rubric-based self-evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Direct submission via website	Yes	Yes	Yes
Optional peer showcase (private Instagram)	Optional	Optional	Optional

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Submission and Community Model

All deliverables are submitted directly through the TopKpop.io website, where they are reviewed for completion and quality. This keeps the program's official pathway simple,

accessible, and FERPA-friendly: educators do not need a social media account to participate or to receive credit.

In addition, the program offers a **private, opt-in Instagram page** reserved exclusively for participating educators. This page exists to extend the PD experience — not replace it — and serves three purposes:

- **Showcase.** Educators who want to celebrate their finished work with peers in the program have a curated space to do so.
- **Cross-pollination.** Seeing how other teachers, aides, and school leaders approached the same Trove sparks ideas educators can adapt for their own classrooms.
- **Community of practice.** Sustained AI literacy growth requires more than a one-time training. The Instagram page gives educators a low-friction way to stay connected with peers after the formal Trove activities are complete.

Participation in the Instagram page is fully optional. Educators who prefer to keep their work private can complete the entire program through direct website submission and still receive full credit. This respects the range of comfort levels educators bring to public-facing AI work, while still offering the benefits of a peer showcase to those who want it.

Why a Broad Sampling Matters

A common objection to project-based AI learning is "why teach so many tools instead of going deep on one?" The answer is structural: the AI tool landscape changes every quarter. Tools that did not exist in 2023 are now standard; tools that were standard in 2023 are now obsolete. Depth in any single tool is a depreciating asset.

What does not depreciate are the underlying habits: prompting with constraints, iterating on output, choosing the right tool for the job, evaluating against criteria, and orchestrating multi-tool workflows. TopKpop.io is built around those durable habits, with current tools as the vehicle. When the tools change, the educator's habits transfer.

This is the same argument behind teaching transferable mathematics rather than a specific calculator, or scientific reasoning rather than a specific lab apparatus. The Treasure Troves teach the AI version of that same durable cognitive toolkit — and they do it for the people responsible for teaching it next.

Outcomes for Educators and School Leaders

For classroom teachers and instructional aides

- A working repertoire of at least six AI tools used for real, classroom-relevant work — not abstract demos.
- A mental model for AI evaluation via rubric-bound Custom GPTs that they can replicate for their own student assignments.
- A culturally grounded, standards-aligned, multilingual lesson plan ready for classroom use.
- Direct experience with the engagement effect of project-based AI work, which becomes evidence they can use in team and department conversations.

For principals and assistant principals

- Calibrated context for evaluating teacher use of AI in lesson plans, observations, and student work.
- A shared language and shared framework with their staff — leaders who have been through the Troves can coach AI use rather than gatekeep it.
- A defensible answer for the question "what is your school doing about AI?" — grounded in completed artifacts, not policy memos.
- A model for site-based PD that produces tangible deliverables, which translates well to board reports and parent communications.

Conclusion

TopKpop.io is an AI literacy curriculum for educators that does not look like one. That is its greatest strength. Teachers, aides, and school leaders engage because the K-Pop mystery, the creative tasks, and the optional peer showcase make the work intrinsically motivating. By the time they have finished all three Treasure Troves, they have practiced image generation, custom GPT use, multilingual creative writing, AI music generation, AI video generation, standards unpacking, AI-assisted lesson design, and rubric-based self-evaluation.

Most importantly, they have internalized the central habit of AI-literate professional work: **never accept the first output, always evaluate against criteria, always iterate.** That habit, once acquired, is the foundation every future AI skill — for the educator and for the students they serve — will be built on.

This is not a fan event with AI sprinkled in. It is a working model for how AI literacy professional development should be designed for K-12 educators — engaging, rigorous, multimodal, anchored in measurable outcomes, and respectful of educators' time and privacy through a flexible submission model. The K-Pop wrapper is what makes it work.

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