



BEST AI COURSES FOR TEACHERS

A Practical Guide

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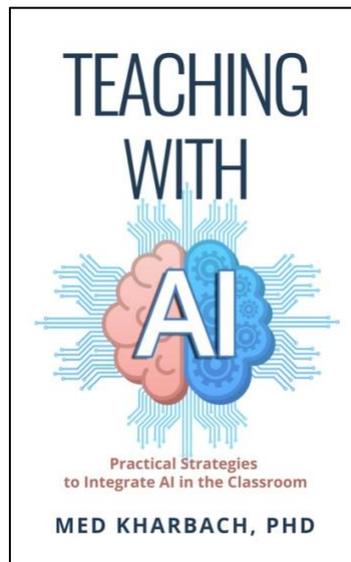
Teaching with AI

Practical Strategies to Integrate AI in The Classroom

In [Teaching with AI](#), I speak directly to you as a teacher working through real classroom questions about AI. The book helps you build strong AI literacy so you understand how these systems work, where they help, and where caution is needed.

I share concrete classroom strategies, examples drawn from practice, and ways to align AI use with sound pedagogy and professional judgment. My goal is to support you in using AI thoughtfully as part of your teaching, in ways that deepen learning and keep human expertise at the center.

Grab your copy [here](#).



Introduction

One of the questions I get asked most often through Educators Technology is some version of: where should I start learning about AI? The question usually comes from teachers who feel the urgency but don't know which course is worth their limited time. And it's a fair question, because the number of AI training options has exploded over the past year. Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, ISTE, Khan Academy, Coursera, and dozens of smaller providers are all running programs aimed at educators, and they range from 30-minute overviews to multi-week graduate-credit courses.

I've been tracking edtech professional development since 2011, and I can say with confidence that no single topic has generated this many free training programs this quickly. The challenge is no longer finding a course. The challenge is finding the right one for where you are right now. A teacher who has never used ChatGPT needs a different starting point than someone who's already prompting daily and wants to think more critically about AI ethics or curriculum design.

For this guide, I am sharing the result of an extensive AI-backed search for the best AI courses I would recommend for teachers. This is a curated list of both free and paid options

Please note that I am not affiliated with any course, platform, or provider mentioned here and its inclusion in this guide does not necessarily mean endorsement!

What These Courses Cover

AI professional development for teachers typically falls into a few categories, and most courses focus on one or two of them.

1. AI fundamentals and literacy

These courses explain what AI is, how large language models work, and why it matters for education. They're ideal for teachers who want a solid foundation before jumping into any tools.

2. Hands-on tool training

These are the courses that walk you through specific platforms like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, or Khanmigo. You learn prompt engineering, lesson planning with AI, and how to use AI for grading, differentiation, and feedback.

3. Responsible and ethical AI use

These programs focus on data privacy, algorithmic bias, student safety, and creating classroom policies around AI. They're particularly useful for teachers and administrators who need to set guidelines for their schools.

4. Curriculum integration and pedagogy

The most advanced courses help you rethink assignments, assessments, and learning experiences in light of AI. They go beyond tool training and ask you to reconsider what good teaching looks like when students have access to AI.

5. AI certification and credentials

Several providers now offer formal certificates or micro-credentials that you can add to your professional portfolio or submit for PD credit. Some are quick badges; others carry graduate credit from accredited universities.



Figure 1 Image source Grow with Google

Free AI Courses for Teachers

The good news is that the strongest AI courses for educators right now cost nothing. Major tech companies and education organizations have invested heavily in free training, and several of these programs are backed by partnerships with ISTE, ASCD, or university systems.

◆ Comprehensive AI Foundations

[AI 101 for Teachers](#) | Code.org + ISTE + Khan Academy

Free • 5 sessions (or 15-hour ISTE option)

A five-session professional learning series built by Code.org in partnership with ETS, ISTE, and Khan Academy. Sessions cover AI classroom integration, responsible use, and practical implementation. However, the 15-hour ISTE version costs \$186 and offers optional graduate credit through Dominican University for an additional \$95. Strong foundational program with expert-led discussions.

[Generative AI for Educators with Gemini](#) | Google / Grow with Google

Free • 2 hours, self-paced

Covers practical use of Gemini and NotebookLM for lesson planning, personalization, and daily tasks. Awards a professional certificate that many districts accept for PD credit. No technical background needed. Part of a massive Google + ISTE+ASCD initiative to train all U.S. K-12 and higher ed faculty.

[ChatGPT Foundations for K-12 Educators](#) | Common Sense Media + OpenAI

Free • 1 hour, 8-9 lessons

Partnership between Common Sense Media and OpenAI covering ChatGPT fundamentals, data privacy, ethical use, and student safety. Practical and focused. Awards a certificate of completion. Common Sense also offers a separate AI Basics course with 9 lessons for anyone who wants a broader overview.

[ChatGPT Foundations for Teachers](#) | OpenAI + Coursera

Free • Self-paced

Hands-on modules covering prompt writing using a Task-Context-Expectation framework, real classroom workflows (lesson planning, rubrics, communication, student support), and responsible AI use. Awards a Virtual Teacher Certificate upon completion.

[AI for Educators Training Path](#) | Microsoft Learn

Free • Self-paced

Multi-module path covering AI concepts, large language models, generative AI, prompt engineering, and responsible use. Also includes a dedicated Responsible Use of AI in Education pathway focused on ethics, data privacy, and human oversight. Global access.

◆ Quick Certifications (Under 2 Hours)

[AI in the Classroom Certification](#) | Canva

Free • 60 minutes

Covers Magic Write for lesson planning, Magic Media for visuals, translating materials for multilingual classrooms, and automating admin tasks. Awards a professional certification. No tech skills needed. One of the fastest ways to get a recognizable AI credential.

[AI Certification for Educators](#) | MagicSchool AI

Free • Self-paced

Multi-level certification: Foundational (Level 1), Intermediate (advanced prompt writing and tool customization), and an Adobe Express AI module. Awards an official MagicSchool AI Certification. Good for teachers who already use or plan to use MagicSchool in their classrooms.

[AI Course for Educators](#) | AI for Education (aiforeducation.io)

Free • 2 hours

Hands-on course covering ChatGPT fundamentals, time-saving applications, student engagement, and responsible implementation. Awards a certificate. Amanda Bickerstaff's platform is frequently recommended by educators on LinkedIn.

[Generative AI for Educators](#) | Monsha

Free • 20-30 minutes

Quick introduction covering AI basics, lesson planning, resource creation, and student engagement. Awards a badge and certificate. A solid option for teachers who need a fast starting point with minimal time investment.

◆ AI Tools and Platform Training

[AI for Education \(Khan Academy\)](#) | Khan Academy

Free • Self-paced

Three-unit course: getting started with generative AI, preparing to teach with AI, and AI literacy lesson plans. Khanmigo (AI teaching assistant) is free for U.S. K-12 teachers through June 2027 thanks to a Microsoft partnership. Awards an AI certification.

[Experience AI](#) | Google DeepMind + Raspberry Pi Foundation

Free • Self-paced

Middle school program with ready-to-use lesson plans, slide decks, worksheets, and videos on machine learning and AI mechanics. No technical experience required. Strong for teachers who want a full curriculum rather than a single course.

[AI Literacy Skills 101](#) | Toddle

Free • Self-paced

Free course covering AI literacy for both teachers and students. Good supplementary resource for schools building an AI literacy curriculum.

◆ **Ethics and Responsible AI**

[Responsible Use of AI in Education](#) | Microsoft Learn

Free • Self-paced

Dedicated pathway covering ethics frameworks, responsible implementation, data privacy, bias awareness, and human oversight in AI. Good for administrators and teachers who need to build or refine school AI policies.

[AI Basics + AI Literacy Lessons \(Grades 6-12\)](#) | Common Sense Education

Free • Self-paced

Includes a one-hour AI Basics course for teachers plus complete lesson collections for grades 6-12. Student-facing materials you can use directly in your classroom to teach AI literacy, critical evaluation, and ethical thinking.

Tips for Getting Started

After reviewing dozens of courses and reading through hundreds of teacher recommendations, a few patterns emerged. These tips reflect what educators who have gone through the training consistently say helped them get the most out of it.

★ Tips for Choosing the Right Course

1. Prioritize courses that include hands-on practice. The most valuable programs give you time to experiment with AI tools, not just watch demos or read slides. Look for courses that ask you to write prompts, create lesson plans with AI, or evaluate AI-generated content as part of the assignments.

2. Start with free options. Google, Microsoft, Code.org, Common Sense Media, Khan Academy, Canva, and MagicSchool all offer strong programs at no cost. You can build a solid foundation across AI literacy, tool proficiency, ethics, and classroom applications without spending a dollar.

3. Find out if the certificate counts for PD credit. Some certificates are recognized by districts for salary advancement or recertification. The ISTE 15-hour course offers optional graduate credit. Google's certificate works for PD credit in many districts. Ask your administrator before enrolling so you can submit documentation.

4. Take the ethics courses seriously. It's tempting to skip straight to the tool training, but the ethics and responsible use programs from Microsoft, Common Sense Media, and ISTE cover data privacy, bias, and student safety topics you'll need when your district asks for an AI policy or when a parent asks what you're doing with AI in your classroom.

5. Don't try to learn everything at once. Pick one course that matches your biggest need right now. Complete it. Apply what you learned for a few weeks. Then take the next one. Teachers who stack three or four courses back-to-back often report feeling overwhelmed and struggle to implement any of it.

6. Look for community and cohort options. Courses with discussion boards, cohort groups, or live sessions tend to produce better outcomes than purely self-paced videos. The ISTE+ASCD programs, Code.org sessions, and Coursera specializations with peer forums all offer this kind of structured support.

7. Use LinkedIn Learning if you have access. Many schools and districts include LinkedIn Learning subscriptions. The Generative AI for L&D Professional Certificate and several other AI courses are free for teachers and students on that platform. Check with your school's IT department.

8. Pay attention to the date. AI tools change rapidly. A course published in early 2024 may reference features that no longer exist or miss tools that launched later. Look for programs updated in late 2025 or 2026. The free courses from Google, Microsoft, and OpenAI tend to update frequently.

10. Share what you learn. The teachers who benefit most from AI training are the ones who bring it back to their colleagues. Start a lunch-and-learn, share a prompt library, or co-plan a lesson with a teammate. The fastest way to make it stick is to teach someone else what you learned.

Conclusion

AI training for teachers has reached a point where the biggest barrier is no longer access or cost. The free programs from Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, Code.org, Common Sense Media, Khan Academy, ISTE, Canva, and MagicSchool cover everything from first-time AI basics to advanced ethics and curriculum redesign. The paid options add depth, university credit, and structured cohort experiences for teachers who want more.

What matters most is that you pick one course and start. The teacher who completes a single two-hour Google course and applies it the next week is ahead of the one who bookmarks fifteen programs and never opens any of them. Find the course that matches where you are right now, work through it, and build from there. The field is moving fast, and the best time to start learning was last year. The second best time is today.

About the Author

Med Kharbach, PhD, is an educator, researcher, and the editor of Educators Technology (educatorstechnology.com). A former K-12 teacher with over a decade of classroom experience, Med currently serves as part-time faculty at Mount Saint Vincent University. He is the author of *Teaching with AI: Practical Strategies to Integrate AI in The Classroom*, and co-author of *The AI Turn in Academic Research* with Dr. Jonathan Woodworth. His work focuses on the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and practical classroom applications. You can read more about Med and his research on his professional website www.medkharbach.com.