

# AI Tools for ESL and ELL Teachers

Supporting Language Learners

A Practical Guide for Educators

Med Kharbach, PhD | [educatorstechnology.com](http://educatorstechnology.com)

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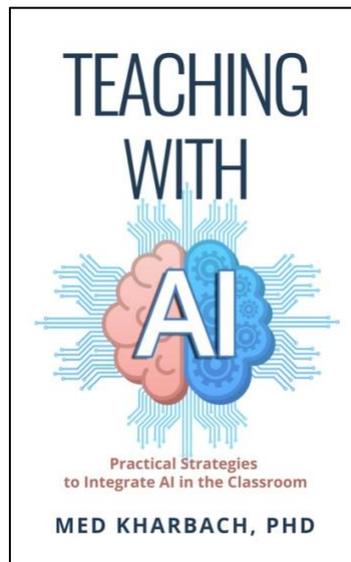
# Teaching with AI

## 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

If you teach English learners, you already know the daily puzzle: a classroom full of students at five or six different proficiency levels, all needing different kinds of support at the same time. You might have a newcomer who arrived last month next to a student who's been in the country for three years and reads grade-level text with ease. AI tools won't solve every part of that puzzle, but they are starting to close some of the gaps that used to feel impossible to manage alone.

The current generation of AI tools covers a lot of ground. Some focus on pronunciation and speaking practice, giving students a low-pressure conversation partner that never runs out of patience. Others rewrite complex texts at multiple reading levels in seconds, or translate materials into a student's home language with a single click. A few are built specifically with ESL classrooms in mind, producing exercises aligned to CEFR levels and targeting grammar, vocabulary, and fluency skills with real precision.

I've been reviewing edtech tools since 2011, and language learning apps are one area where the improvement over the past two years has been hard to miss. For this guide, I spent time reading through ESL teacher forums, Reddit threads on r/ESL and r/TEFL, and professional community discussions. I also used AI to help me sort through dozens of recommendations and cross-reference what teachers were actually praising versus what was just marketing noise. The result is this collection featuring some of the best tools that language teachers use and recommend, along with practical tips from educators who've tested them with real students.

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

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## What Teachers Can Do with These AI Tools

Language learning touches every skill at once: speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. AI tools are showing up across all of these areas, and the most useful ones let you target specific needs without spending hours on preparation.

### 1. Give every student a speaking partner

AI conversation apps let students practice pronunciation and fluency with a patient, always-available partner that adjusts to their level. A beginner can work through simple greetings; an intermediate learner can practice ordering food at a restaurant or asking for directions. The AI listens, scores their pronunciation at the phoneme level, and offers corrections in real time. Students get the repetition they need without the anxiety of performing in front of classmates.

### 2. Adjust any text to any reading level

AI tools can take a science article, a news story, or a primary source document and rewrite it at multiple proficiency levels in seconds. You can hand the same topic to a newcomer and an advanced learner, and both walk away with something they can actually read. Some tools also generate vocabulary lists and comprehension questions to go with each version, saving you even more preparation time.

### 3. Get writing feedback to students quickly

AI essay graders can provide grammar corrections, vocabulary suggestions, and rubric-aligned feedback to an entire class overnight. A few tools even translate their feedback into the student's home language, so a learner who struggles in English can still understand exactly what to improve.

### 4. Translate materials for families and students

AI translation tools now cover 100+ languages with surprising accuracy, and the education-specific platforms handle school vocabulary and formatting better than general-purpose translators. You can translate newsletters, report cards, parent letters, and classroom materials in minutes.

### **5. Build grammar and vocabulary exercises on demand**

AI lesson generators create gap-fill exercises, matching activities, flashcards, and reading passages aligned to specific CEFR levels. You type in a topic and a proficiency level, and the tool produces classroom-ready materials you can use that same day.

### **6. Read aloud in natural voices across dozens of languages**

Text-to-speech tools convert written materials into audio, letting students listen and follow along simultaneously. For learners who need auditory reinforcement, this kind of dual-input reading can make a real difference in comprehension.

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## **AI Tools Worth Trying**

I've organized the tools by function: speaking, writing, reading, lesson planning, translation, and accessibility. Each entry includes a brief description and a link so you can test things out on your own terms. Pick the category that matches your biggest classroom challenge and go from there.

### **Speaking and Pronunciation**

[ELSA Speak](#) analyzes pronunciation at the phoneme level and provides real-time feedback on fluency, intonation, and accuracy. It builds personalized learning plans aligned to CEFR levels (A1 through C1), and teachers can track student progress

through a class dashboard. Free plan available, with premium options for classrooms.

[TalkPal](#) offers AI-powered conversation practice in 80+ languages through gamified speaking prompts and voice recognition. Students work through real-world scenarios like job interviews, travel situations, and daily routines. Free version allows 10 minutes of daily practice; premium plans remove the limit.

[Glish](#) focuses on speaking speed and clarity through timed challenges and roleplay scenarios. The AI acts as a teacher, guiding students through listening drills and quick-response dialogues that simulate the pressure of real conversation. A good fit for beginners who need structured speaking practice.

## Writing and Grammar Feedback

[Grammarly for Education](#) provides AI-powered feedback on grammar, tone, clarity, and style with plagiarism detection and citation help. Schools can control whether students access the generative AI features. Widely used in ESL classrooms for both writing support and self-editing skills.

[Olex.AI](#) is an award-winning writing assessment platform built with multilingual learners in mind. It includes an automated translation module that delivers feedback in the student's home language, helping them understand corrections without needing fluent English. The tool marks entire classes of essays in about two minutes.

[QuillBot](#) combines paraphrasing, summarizing, grammar checking, and translation in 50+ languages. ESL students can use the paraphrasing tool to rework complex

sentences and build vocabulary through exposure to alternative phrasing. Free version available with limited features.

## Reading and Text Adaptation

[Diffit](#) adjusts any text to different reading levels and generates comprehension questions, vocabulary lists, and discussion prompts. It translates materials into students' home languages and works with PDFs, links, videos, and pasted text. Especially valuable for newcomer students who need grade-level content adapted to their proficiency.

[Rewordify](#) is a free tool that simplifies complex text to five reading levels, highlights difficult words, and provides click-to-define vocabulary support. It includes 350+ classic texts with adjustable difficulty and generates vocabulary challenges from adapted passages. No installation required.

**Microsoft Immersive Reader** is built into Word, OneNote, Teams, and Edge at no cost. It reads text aloud in 68 languages with adjustable speed, highlights each word as it's spoken, and offers picture definitions when students click on unfamiliar vocabulary. One of the most accessible reading tools available for language learners.

## Lesson Planning for Language Teachers

[Twee](#) was built specifically for English language teachers. It includes 20+ AI tools covering grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. You can

generate dialogues, gap-fill exercises, stories, and comprehension questions aligned to CEFR levels in minutes. Free plan available; paid tiers offer expanded access.

[MagicSchool AI](#) includes 80+ teaching tools with a text leveler, vocabulary list generator, and lesson plan builder. You can customize materials for English learners by specifying proficiency level and target skills. Free tier available.

[Eduaide.ai](#) offers 110+ resource types organized by pedagogical frameworks like UDL and Understanding by Design. One-click differentiation adapts any lesson for varying proficiency levels. Free tier allows 15 generations per month.

[Curipod](#) creates interactive lessons with polls, word clouds, and drawing activities that get language learners participating at any level. The premium plan includes a Bilingual ESL/ELL content package and a lesson translation feature.

## Translation and Family Communication

[Brisk Teaching](#) is a free Chrome extension that translates content into 48+ languages, levels text for different proficiencies, and provides writing feedback in multiple languages. It works directly inside Google Docs and Slides, fitting naturally into the tools you already use.

[TalkingPoints](#) provides two-way automatic translation in 150+ languages, designed specifically for school-to-family communication. It handles school-specific vocabulary and context better than general-purpose translators, reducing the mistranslations that frustrate families.

[Wordly AI](#) offers live AI-powered translation for meetings, parent conferences, and classroom instruction without requiring human interpreters. A practical solution for schools with many language groups and limited translation staff.

## Text-to-Speech and Accessibility

[NaturalReader](#) converts PDFs, Google Docs, webpages, and scanned images into natural-sounding audio in 90+ languages. Students can listen and follow along with word-by-word highlighting. Adjustable accents and reading speed let you match the audio to each learner's needs.

**Microsoft Reading Coach** is a free AI tool that listens to students read aloud in 81 languages and provides personalized feedback on pronunciation, pacing, and accuracy. Built into Microsoft education tools, it gives language learners low-stakes reading practice with immediate, encouraging feedback.

[Speechify](#) converts text to natural-sounding audio in 70+ languages. Helpful for creating audio versions of classroom texts, homework instructions, and study guides. Free version available.

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## Tips for Getting Started

What I found most useful during research were the candid suggestions from language teachers who had already gone through the trial-and-error phase. Here are the ones that came up repeatedly across forums and professional discussions.

## ★ Practical Tips from Language Teachers

**1. Be aware of bias in AI feedback.** Most AI writing tools were trained on native English patterns. They can penalize the non-standard grammar and sentence structures that are completely normal for multilingual learners. Always review AI feedback through your own ELL expertise before passing it along to students.

**2. Use translation as a scaffold.** Translation tools are powerful, but they work best when paired with instruction. Ask yourself whether the translation is helping the student access the content and build language skills, or just letting them bypass the learning altogether.

**3. Be specific when you prompt AI tools.** Vague prompts produce generic results. Include the student's proficiency level (beginner, intermediate, advanced, or a CEFR level), the target skill, and the topic. A prompt like "Create a fill-in-the-blank exercise on past tense verbs for A2 learners about daily routines" will give you something you can actually use.

**4. Mix AI feedback with your own.** AI can handle grammar corrections and vocabulary suggestions quickly. Your feedback adds the nuance, encouragement, and cultural understanding that the tool cannot. The combination works better than either one alone.

**5. Recommend speaking apps for practice outside class.** Tools like ELSA Speak, TalkPal, and Gliglish give students low-pressure pronunciation practice they can do at home. That extra repetition builds the confidence that shows up in classroom participation.

**6. Choose education-specific translation tools for families.** TalkingPoints and ParentSquare handle school context and vocabulary much better than Google Translate. The difference matters when you're communicating about grades, behavior, IEPs, or enrollment.

**7. Teach students that AI makes mistakes.** Build a habit of checking AI-generated text for errors in grammar, vocabulary, and cultural accuracy. This turns AI from a crutch into a critical thinking exercise, and it reinforces the language skills your class is designed to develop.

**8. Check your district's approved list first.** Before introducing any AI tool, confirm it meets your district's data privacy requirements. Never input personally identifiable student information into any AI platform, even one that looks safe.

**9. Connect with other ESL teachers online.** Communities like r/ESL and r/TEFL on Reddit, the British Council's TeachingEnglish forums, and the #TESOL and #ELL hashtags on X are where language teachers share what's working and what's not. The conversations are practical, and you'll find tool recommendations you won't see anywhere else.

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## Conclusion

AI tools for language learning have come a long way in a short time. The pronunciation coaches give students practice they can do anywhere. The text-leveling tools make grade-level content accessible across proficiency levels. The writing feedback platforms speed up the response cycle from weeks to hours. And the translation tools bring families into the conversation in ways that weren't possible a few years ago.

What makes these tools genuinely valuable for ESL and ELL classrooms is the way they handle the thing you can never have enough of: personalization. Every student gets a reading passage at their level, writing feedback they can understand, speaking practice at their own pace. You still bring the expertise, the cultural awareness, and the human connection that language learning depends on. The AI just helps you stretch that expertise across a room full of learners who all need something a little different.

## 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](http://www.medkharbach.com).

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