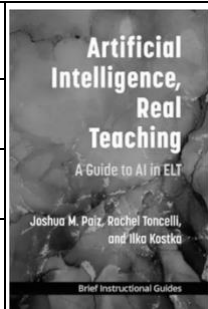


Artificial Intelligence, Real Teaching: A Guide to AI in ELT

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Artificial Intelligence, Real Teaching: A Guide to AI in ELT		
Author:	Joshua M. Paiz, Rachel Toncelli, Ilka Kostka. (2025)	
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Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is often portrayed as the next emerging technology that is about to revolutionize education. There is even a current book titled, “Brave new words: How AI will revolutionize education (and why that’s a good thing)” (Khan, 2024), authored by the founder of Khan Academy, an educational platform that has a global user base of more than 137 million registered users across 190 countries. Similar claims of educational innovations have historically emerged with each new technology, whether radio, television, or social media platforms, or, at present, with GenAI (Pegrum, 2025). When a *revolutionary* new educational tool is introduced, the older system becomes reframed as “traditional” (despite having once been a revolutionary innovation itself), and the pros vs. cons of the new system are weighed against it. Since GenAI’s emergence within academic spheres, peer-reviewed journal articles and books dedicated to exploring GenAI’s educational and societal impact have been widely discussed by the academic community. Unlike other book titles on GenAI (e.g., Bowen & Watson, 2024; Khan, 2024), the book under review titled *Artificial intelligence, real teaching: A guide to AI in ELT*, is a guide for using AI for foreign language instruction, particularly for those who teach English as an additional language. The book authors, Joshua Paiz, Rachel Toncelli, and Ilka Kostka claim that they co-authored this book to “build a robust foundation for English language teachers seeking to understand the nuances of AI, both in terms of risks and rewards, as well as strategies for meaning and ethical integration into professional practice” (p. 76). The entire book is filled with real-world scenarios drawn from their everyday teaching experiences.

This easy-to-read book contains five chapters plus a Prologue. The Prologue provides the background for the creation of the book, summarizes the chapters, and recounts how the authors collaborated to publish this teacher-friendly resource. Chapter 1 defines various AI types, highlights their specific features, and then proceeds to discuss their applications in English language teaching (ELT) and language instruction. Once the unique capabilities of various types of AI tools are explained, Chapter 2 reviews a web of essential interrelated literacies (e.g., tech, digital) and moves on to define *GenAI literacy*, which is “the ability to understand, evaluate, and ethically use artificial intelligence, recognizing its capabilities, limitations, and societal impacts” in the context of foreign language education (p. 20). While Chapter 3 provides teacher-friendly strategies for implementing AI for material and curriculum development, Chapter 4 offers ELT professionals concrete steps for using AI to cultivate creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking among language learners. Finally, chapter 5 lists hands-on suggestions and offers an easy-to-use framework to help teachers evaluate the efficacy and applicability of AI tools in their respective teaching contexts.

For a number of reasons, this 100-page guide is like having a resource shelf on AI at your fingertips. First, the book chapters introduce a variety of AI tools (e.g., Twee, Gamma.App, ResearchRabbit) that extend beyond widely known AI-powered platforms such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Anthropic’s Claude. The authors also humbly acknowledge the idea that “it is likely that there will be [AI] applications that did not exist at the time of writing” the book (p. 3). Second, the authors’ tone is collegial, like colleagues sharing AI related advice over coffee or during a weekly departmental meeting. Such a tone creates a sense that the authors and we (as readers) are colleagues at the same institution, with the authors serving as helpful guides for exploring AI tools and how AI-powered platforms can enhance language instruction and contribute to our professional development in our respective contexts. Third, the entire book is filled with AI-based scenarios involving all three co-authors. These real-world examples address successful or challenging AI applications. What is most compelling about these scenarios is that for each, all three co-authors describe their respective settings, provide their analytical perspectives, explain their individual approaches to address the issues at stake, and share their main takeaways from specific situations.

To reinforce key concepts introduced in the book, each chapter ends with application and reflection activities. While *application activities* offer hands-on experience with newly-introduced AI tools and ideas to implement them for language instruction, *reflection activities* are meant to introspectively examine the processes and challenges encountered in the application step. The reflection boxes include questions such as, “What feelings did you experience when using AI as a supportive tool in material development?” or “... In what ways did the use of AI align with or challenge your fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning?” (p. 59). For an application task, teachers are encouraged to create a summative assessment using an AI-powered tool (see pages 48-49 for more details). Application tasks and reflective questions are integrated to implement AI into their respective contexts and keep track of their progress on their AI literacy journey.

The authors also skillfully address foreign language educators’ growing concerns about students’ reliance on AI tools, particularly the challenge of determining how much of a student’s essays represent the student’s actual contribution versus AI-generated content. Regarding L2 writing instruction, many scholars (Belcher, 2024; Bowen & Watson, 2024) have argued that hybrid writing, which combines human and AI input (e.g., Grammarly; ChatGPT), will inevitably become the norm given AI’s pervasive presence in everyday and academic settings. Eaton (2023) even states, “Trying to determine where the human ends and where the artificial intelligence begins is pointless” (p. 3). While AI-powered plagiarism detection tools are available (e.g., Originality.ai; ZeroGPT), they suffer from a number of limitations and fail

at reliably identifying AI-generated texts (see Bowen & Watson, 2024). This book offers a practical guide for adamant resisters to or enthusiastic embracers of AI by presenting evidence-based strategies that acknowledge potential risks (e.g., equal access; ethical issues) as well as benefits (e.g., real-time feedback, personalization of learning) of AI in foreign language education.

While the book offers valuable insights, the authors do not sufficiently address the challenge of helping lower-proficiency learners understand how overreliance on GenAI assistance can interfere with enhancing their fundamental language skills. For instance, foreign language teacher educators would benefit from practical strategies that help lower-proficiency students develop their own linguistic problem-solving skills before turning to tools like Google Translate or ChatGPT when confronted with challenging tasks. Another minor critique of the book is that the authors claim it is designed exclusively for teachers of English. However, the suggestions and exercises in the book are clearly applicable to language educators and learners across other foreign languages. With minor adaptations and thoughtful consideration of context, the book could serve as a valuable resource for instructors working with learners of any language. Given that GenAI requires digital technology and internet connectivity, the book's recommendations are most feasible in better-resourced education systems rather than in environments marked by significant digital divides (inequalities). Such infrastructural limitations lie beyond the scope of what any textbook can resolve.

Many teachers question whether AI poses a threat to their professional roles. The authors' perspective resonates strongly with conclusions drawn from a recent British Council study of 1,348 teachers from 118 countries participants: “the majority view is that AI will not replace the need for human teachers any time soon and may never” (Edmett et al., 2024, p. 52). The book authors Joshua Paiz, Rachel Toncelli, and Ilka Kostka advocate for “a pedagogical stance toward AI rather than a punitive one” (p. 72), suggesting that foreign language teachers should prioritize developing students' digital literacy and engage in collaborative and professional development opportunities focused on emerging GenAI technologies. In sum, whether one's level of GenAI use is novice, emerging, or expert, *Artificial intelligence, real teaching: A guide to AI in ELT* offers practical tips while providing actionable strategies for transforming AI-informed language instruction.

Editorial Note: A co-author of this book, Rachel Toncelli, also serves as one of the book review editors for *TESL-EJ*. She was recused from the review process, which was completed by other *TESL-EJ* editorial staff.

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