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THE AI CO-TEACHER: STRATEGIC INTEGRATION FOR MODERN EDUCATOR WORKLOAD RELIEF

Teachers aren't running out of time because they are ineffective; they are running out of time because the scope of the job simply never stops expanding. Between administrative duties, grading, and adapting materials, the actual time left for lesson preparation and reflection is shrinking.

In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer perceived as a distant innovation, but rather as a practical tool that can support everyday teaching tasks. The *aim of this paper* is to explore how AI tools can help teachers save time, particularly in lesson planning and material design, while maintaining pedagogical quality.

While the growing role of AI in education is a hot topic in academic research [1; 3; 4], what teachers actually need isn't high-level theory. They need practical, easy-to-use solutions that can be integrated into their daily routines.

Our own analysis of practical tools revealed that AI can be viewed as a support system that assists teachers at different stages of lesson preparation. In this regard, we would like to brief on the potential of such time-saving tools as *MagicSchool AI, Eduaide.AI, LessonUp* and *Brisk Teaching* that truly stand out.

MagicSchool AI is widely popular for its vast array of built-in generators for lesson plans, quizzes, and differentiated tasks. Its main advantage is not the final product itself, but the sheer speed with which a workable draft can be created and adapted.

Similarly, *Eduaide.AI*, which focuses on generating lesson objectives, worksheets, and assessment criteria or rubrics, is a lifesaver. It provides a more streamlined approach, which is particularly valuable when time is limited.

For interactive lesson delivery, platforms such as *LessonUp* allow teachers to design engaging presentations and classroom activities. These tools are especially effective in maintaining student attention and encouraging participation.

Meanwhile, *Brisk Teaching* integrates directly into existing workflows, enabling teachers to generate feedback, adapt texts, and create assignments without switching between platforms. This significantly reduces both preparation time and cognitive load.

Despite the clear benefits, integrating these tools is not without challenges. The most crucial realization a teacher can have is that AI-generated materials are drafts, not final copies. There is a very real risk of over-reliance, which can strip the creativity and personal flair out of a curriculum leading to highly standardized materials. Ethical concerns, including data privacy and responsible use, should also be taken into account. As Ben Williamson and Rebecca Eynon note, AI doesn't just change how we teach; it influences broader educational values [5, p. 231].

The most productive mindset is to treat AI as an enthusiastic teacher's assistant that can handle the repetitive tasks like drafting instructions, building a baseline worksheet, or formatting a rubric. But the complex pedagogical decisions, the nuance, and the final polish must remain teacher-driven without depriving lessons of professional judgment.

To save time without compromising quality, educators should develop well-considered strategies:

1. AI should be used as a starting point rather than a final product. Generated materials should always be adapted to the specific context and learners.
2. it is important to formulate clear and specific prompts, as this directly affects the relevance and quality of the output.
3. teachers should combine AI-generated content with their own expertise and experience, adjusting complexity where necessary.

AI tools are most effective when used selectively and purposefully. They are especially valuable in high-pressure situations – whether that involves last-minute lesson preparation, tailoring materials to diverse student levels, or even restructuring a curriculum for a flipped classroom model [2, p. 28].

At the same time, their integration requires a new competence, AI literacy, that lies in understanding when and why to use AI tools as well as the ability to critically evaluate and adapt generated content. Thus, the real value of AI is not in automation itself, but in the flexibility it provides, allowing teachers to focus more on meaningful interaction with students.

To sum up, successful integration of AI in education requires a balance between technological innovation and pedagogical awareness. Teachers who are able to combine both will be better prepared to meet the demands of modern education.

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