

Empowering the Analogue Teacher: AI as enabler of evidence-based language teaching

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1 – The Knowing-Doing Tension: Barriers to best practice implementation in language teaching

Teacher's expertise	vs	Implementation barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practice in language learning is well-documented and easy to access• Expertise = core professional value• Growing emphasis on educational scholarship in UK HE		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inherently time-intensive research-backed practices• Insufficient preparation time allocated in workload models• Resource gap, especially in HE, compounds the issue
→ Compromised standards / Teacher burnout; AI as solution?		

2 – Harnessing AI to embed time-intensive best practice in analogue teaching (e.g. grammar)

Aspect	Before AI	With AI	Teacher's critical role
Example quality	Grammar textbooks = decontextualised + uncontrolled cognitive load	Model sentences for inductive learning tailored to prior knowledge	Identify hidden accessibility barriers in AI output
Scaffolding	Fixed progression regardless of mastery	Incremental learning blocks ; learners can move according to progress	Identify crucial steps missed by AI
Context	Isolated grammar points/ irrelevant topic	Embedded language recycling	Input previously learnt lexis
Differentiation	One-size-fits all textbook approach	Self-paced with multiple iterations, including for VLE (self-learning)	Define pace (classroom), ensure logical progression
Drills	Limited + mismatched to class progress and topics	Unlimited iterations + potential interleaved practice	Plan spaced learning + pitch at correct level

3 – Impact

On Course : Ab initio and post-GCSE courses fully rewritten in a year:

- **Best practice systematically incorporated** in all skills
- Better CEFR alignment
- Eased tension between A2/B1 proficiency and
 - young adult interests (**cocurriculum development**)
 - graduate attribute imperative (e.g. **critical thinking** < easy consistent scaffolding to access challenging material)
- Bypassed textbooks = **tailored curriculum**

The grammar worksheets helped me to focus on each block **without getting overwhelmed**.

Vocabulary was easy to pick up and **retain** because it was **frequently incorporated** over the year

Being able to **pick our own** topics allowed me to be **more engaged** and focused as it was something I thought was important to me and helped me learn new aspects of the topic.

On Teacher

- ↘ knowing-doing dissonance = ↗ energy in classroom
- ↗ **job satisfaction** = ↗ motivation = ↗ **scholarship** = virtuous
- ↗ confidence in ability to build wholly original teaching units = ↗ **experimentation** (e.g. cocurriculum development)
- ↗ mental space = ↗ creativity

On Students

4 – Limitations

- **Error-prone output**: flawed examples, misjudged prior knowledge or cognitive load = **vigilant oversight** + iterative prompt refinement
- Limited capacity for creative planning + temporal sequencing

→ Workload redistribution, not reduction

5 – Conclusions

- AI's humble yet powerful role as behind-the-scenes **partner** making **best practice** implementation **more realistic** should not be overlooked.
- AI = catalyst for **virtuous cycle** reinforcing teacher's expertise and experimentation. AI **augments** and cannot (yet?) replace teacher expertise
- In HE context, **powerful tool to bypass textbooks** + tailor approach to cohorts, scholarship interests and institutional priorities.