BRITISH COUNCIL

TeachingEnglish

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Different learners, shared goals: Adapting materials with generative AI

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1. Start with the classroom

A familiar situation: You have one reading lesson, one learning goal and one set of materials. Different learners experience the lesson differently. Some struggle with the language, some need support to participate, and some need greater challenge.

Ask yourself:

- What differences do I notice among learners working on the same lesson?
- What do I already adapt in response?
- What am I trying to make more accessible, more participatory, or more challenging?

2. Make the teaching decision first

Protect the purpose. Before changing a text or task, identify what learners should achieve and what needs to remain common.

WHAT MUST STAY?	WHAT IS THE BARRIER?	WHAT COULD CHANGE?
Learning goal	Language	Support
Key content	Access	Material
Communicative purpose	Participation	Task
	Challenge	Interaction

3. Think before you use AI

Why use it?

To generate possibilities, explore alternatives, or reduce preparation time for a clearly defined adaptation.

When is it worth using?

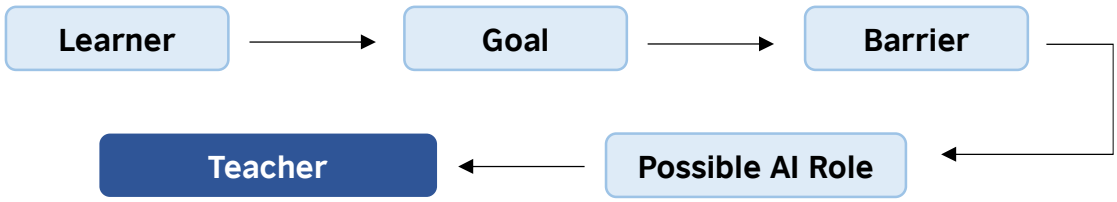
- The learner need is clear.
- The adaptation is specific.
- Generating several options would be useful.
- I can evaluate and edit what it produces.

When might I step away?

When the change is clearer or quicker for me to make myself or when the information involved should not be entered into an AI system.

4. Use AI for a defined job, not for the whole lesson

A useful principle: the teacher defines the problem and the purpose; AI can produce possible options for consideration.



Examples of teacher tasks where AI may produce useful options:

- Draft a short glossary for a reading text and adjust the language for the learners.
- Suggest alternative ways to scaffold a comprehension task.
- Generate several versions of a discussion question at different levels of challenge.
- Offer possible adaptations to unnecessary language difficulty while preserving the learning purpose.

These are options, not finished teaching decisions.

5. Evaluate before anything reaches learners

EVALUATION CRITERIA	GUIDING QUESTIONS
Learning goal	Does the adaptation still serve what I want learners to achieve?
Learners	Is it appropriate for this particular group?
Language	Is it accurate, clear and suitable for their level?
Context	Does it fit the learners, topic and classroom context?
Bias	Does it contain stereotypes, assumptions or unsuitable perspectives?
Privacy + IP	Have I protected learner data and intellectual property?

AI produces an option. I remain responsible for the teaching decision.

6. A quick reflection for your next lesson

The learning goal I want to protect:

_____

The barrier I notice for some learners:

_____

The change I am considering:

_____

Would AI be useful here? Why or why not?

_____

Recommended resource

Peachey, N., & Crichton, R. (Eds.). (2024). AI activities and resources for English language teachers. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books/ai-activities-and-resources-english-language-teachers