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Inspired and guided by the words of the world-famous iconic Nelson Mandela, Pro.Ed was borne of the belief that high quality educational expertise can transform a society for the better. We are obsessed with providing cutting edge educational services for our clients with the idea that they will bring out the best in their learners.

At Pro.Ed, we also believe that high-quality education is for everyone, not only for the privileged. Pro.Ed CSR activities offer frequent free of charge opportunities for all people to access the latest and most practical educational expertise to promote education equity and a culture of learning in society.

By providing a deep reservoir of educational expertise and experience, we aim **for the betterment of all.**

# Eduverse

PD NETWORK

**Welcome to EduVerse PD Network,  
an initiative by Pro.Ed Education Solutions!**

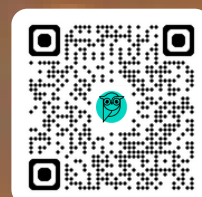
In this dynamic era of learning, staying ahead requires a constant thirst for knowledge and an openness to exploring new frontiers. That's why we created EduVerse PD Network, committed to offering valuable professional development resources for educators globally, our platform aids teachers in exploring educational trends, advancements, EdTech insights, and practical teaching tips—all at no cost.

With a dedicated focus on the needs and aspirations of educators, we curate a diverse range of best practices to support your teaching journey. From cutting-edge pedagogical strategies to engaging classroom activities, we are here to equip you with the tools and inspiration you need to ignite curiosity, foster creativity, and cultivate lifelong learners.



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(Columns in charge: Teaching Techniques,  
Lesson of the Month, and Tech Tips and Tools)
- Designed by EduVerse Design team

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***BETTER TOGETHER:***

# DEMOCRATIZING GLOBAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGE OF AI

Dr. Ilka Kostka, Dr. Rachel Toncelli, Dr. Sara Ratner

Today, there is no shortage of discussions and resources about generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) at all levels of education. To keep up, teachers need AI literacy skills to make sense of the whirlwind of information and to be able to use GenAI ethically and responsibly in their work. They also need access to AI tools and professional learning that is contextualized within their unique educational settings. Considering the call to recast teachers as collaborators (UNESCO, 2021), it is worth reimagining how educators learn and share information about GenAI both now and in the future. Democratizing teacher development presents a path forward to ensure that professional learning about teaching in the age of AI is available to all educators. When teachers have access to the resources they need and work together, there is tremendous potential for idea exchange, increased goodwill, and diplomacy both locally and globally.

## ENCOURAGE BOTTOM-UP LEARNING

One way of democratizing professional learning is to minimize top-down approaches where governing agencies and/or administrators mandate what and how teachers learn. Instead, teachers should work together and ask questions about their teaching practices, assignments, assessments, and students' learning goals and needs. From there, they can advocate for the tools and resources they need and thus engage in professional learning that is experiential, contextualized, and directly relevant to them. Administrators and policymakers can support grassroots professional development by offering curricular flexibility to explore AI tools and common planning time to encourage idea exchange among colleagues. By supporting teachers' efforts, they can foster a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability as GenAI evolves and enhance teachers' agency to lead their professional learning.

Inviting students to be thought partners is another way to democratize teacher development. As GenAI continues to quickly evolve, there is little time for teachers to gain full expertise before integrating it into teaching and learning. Instead, they can explore AI with students, creating an inclusive class environment where teachers and students learn from each other. For example, teachers can discuss AI-generated output in class to foster critical thinking and disrupt a common student assumption that AI output is better than their original work. Co-creating guidelines for GenAI use by both teachers and students in class can also open important conversations that give teachers rich insights into students' perspectives. Lastly, reading news reports about AI developments can encourage discourse around ethical AI policy and integration. In these ways, teachers can create a community of learners who continue to explore, ask questions, and reach a shared understanding of AI's impact on teaching, learning, and society.

## BUILD LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Creating communities of practice will be key to advancing teachers' ability to integrate GenAI and innovate. We have seen firsthand how communities of practice can be built with minimal resources in teachers' local settings. For instance, we created a book club for university English language teachers and administrators (Kostka & Toncelli, 2025). Participants first set personal learning goals for AI literacy and integration into their educational roles. Next, they read a book about using AI to teach multilingual students, reflected on the book's ideas, experimented with new uses of AI, and reconvened as a group to share their insights. This project concluded with strategies for continued learning from each other's experimentation and reflections, and it could be easily replicated with books and/or open-access resources and multimodal texts that are freely available.

Communities of practice can also be built on a global scale. At the University of Oxford, such an approach was operationalized as AI in Education at Oxford University (AIEOU), an interdisciplinary research hub hosted in the Department of Education. Informed by systems theory to embrace the interconnected systems that are a feature of the global education landscape, AIEOU promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst a community of stakeholders as diverse as the society being supported (Ratner et al., 2025). Additionally, AIEOU reflects a research-informed, ethical, human-centered approach to AI in education. This community of practice is inclusive and free for educators, academics, students, technologists, and governments around the world and invites them all to learn from and with each other.

# SHARE **TEACHING PRACTICES** BEYOND PAYWALLS AND BORDERS

While bottom-up experiential learning and expanded communities of practice are essential, their value is exponentially increased when teachers can quickly disseminate new knowledge. As such, future teacher development will require faster and non-traditional ways of sharing classroom-based research and teaching with AI both outside educators' institutions and beyond existing paywalls. For instance, publishing in journals is often a lengthy process, which can set educators behind as AI marches on. Attending conferences and reading peer-reviewed journals are also valuable for teachers, but their associated costs can be prohibitive. As educators' ideas about teaching and learning with AI take shape through classroom experimentation and research, the global educational community will need timely and equitable access to it. Prioritizing inclusive sharing of AI-driven educational research and practice is therefore critical to advancing teacher development worldwide.

## ENSURE THAT HUMANS REMAIN **THE ANCHOR** THROUGH CHANGE

Education is inherently human, and though we may explore the potential of AI as we look to the future, there is an overwhelming need to exchange knowledge in a manner that facilitates a sense of belonging, collegiality, and humanity amongst collaborators (Ratner et al., 2025). When humans remain at the center of AI integration, it is possible to foster "human flourishing" (Azeez & Rana, 2025, para. 4) and nurture student-teacher relationships. Keeping humans at the center also empowers teachers and students to actively participate in AI integration, giving everyone a voice in the process.

Teachers will need to continue thinking through many open questions as their roles evolve alongside GenAI: How can we protect the human aspects of teaching in the age of AI? How can we make sure that critical thinking, creativity, and the struggle often required by learning are strengthened when AI is used? How can we ensure that distinct human qualities, such as empathy and emotional intelligence, are not lost? How can we leverage AI tools to enhance but not replace what they already do well in classrooms? We have more questions than answers at the moment, and teachers will need to collectively explore them to preserve the human touch that makes learning meaningful.



A key component of future teacher development will also need to involve change management. We have found that the tremendous changes to traditional teaching have caused mixed feelings among educators, as they are both excited and worried about GenAI in schooling, work, and life (Toncelli & Kostka, 2024). Educators have other concerns, including the need to overhaul common assessment practices and even rethink the purpose and methods of education more broadly. Communicating change with empathy, developing a shared vision for AI integration, and preparing educators for evolving uses of GenAI will be critical to recognizing their humanity. Thoughtfully managing change will also ensure that access to AI tools and teacher readiness to adapt are in place, which in turn can reduce opportunity gaps and promote equitable use.

**Teachers often consider themselves lifelong learners, an adage which has now become truer than ever. Like their own learners, they will benefit from engaging in supportive communities to withstand AI disruption and tackle new challenges that arise. They will also benefit from using the local and global resources they have in order to collaborate, innovate, and develop their knowledge of generative AI. While the future remains uncertain, it is safe to say that AI will continue to impact education in ways we do not yet understand. Teachers must remain resilient and ready to adapt as AI reshapes how we live, teach, and work. Teachers must also lean on each other to create thoughtful human-centered educational experiences that are enhanced but not replaced by AI. In sum, a sustainable way forward calls for educators to redefine education while sharing innovative practices and fostering goodwill and solidarity across geopolitical boundaries in an increasingly AI-rich world.**

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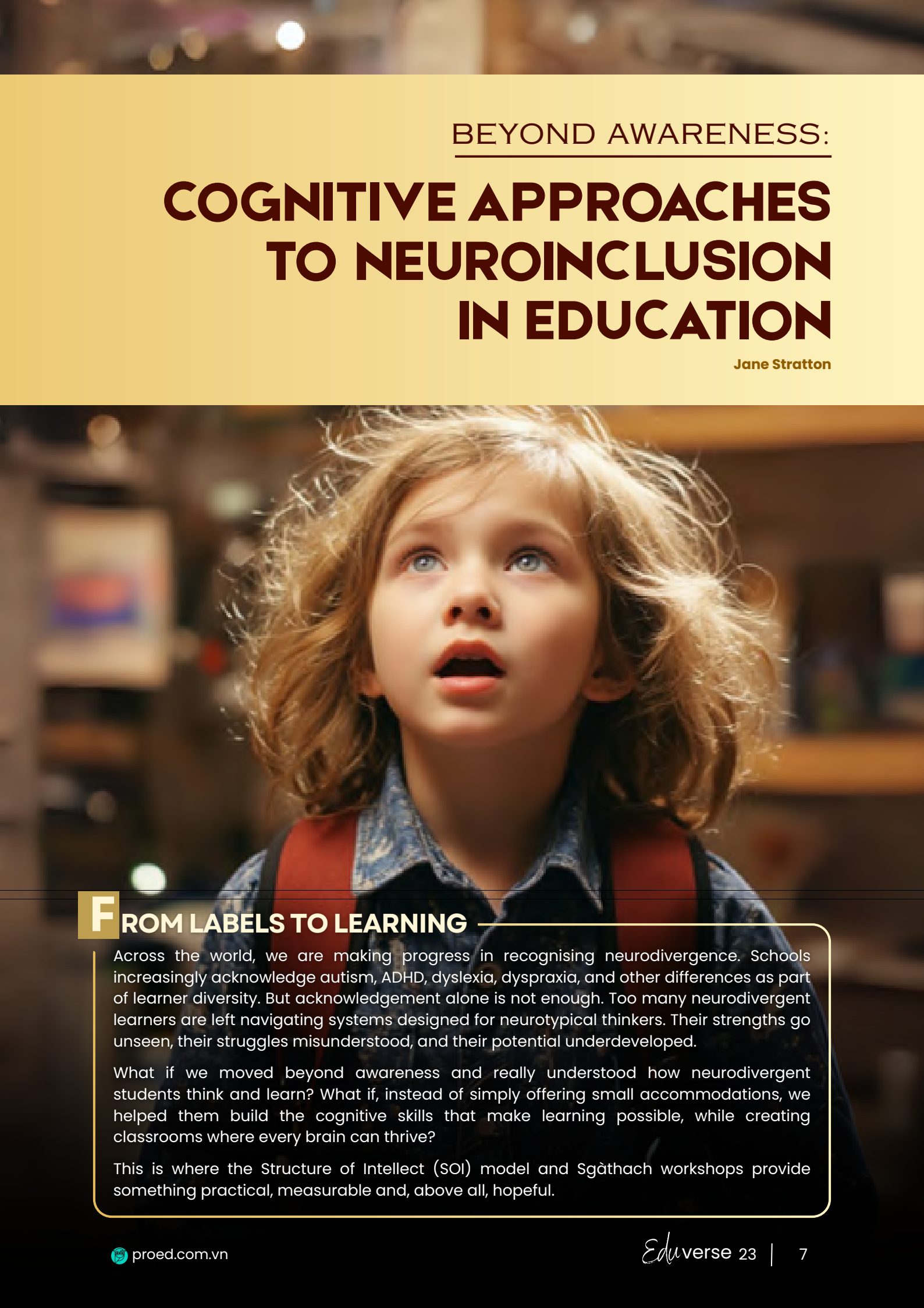
**Dr. Ilka Kostka** is a Teaching Professor and Academic Director of the NU Immerse and Global Pathways Programs at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Her current work focuses on developing professional learning opportunities that empower educators to integrate AI tools ethically and effectively into their practice.



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**Dr. Sara Ratner** is the Principal Investigator, AI in Education at Oxford University (AIEOU) and a researcher in the Department of Education, University of Oxford. She is also a JR Research Fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford.



BEYOND AWARENESS:

# COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO NEUROINCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Jane Stratton

## FROM LABELS TO LEARNING

Across the world, we are making progress in recognising neurodivergence. Schools increasingly acknowledge autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other differences as part of learner diversity. But acknowledgement alone is not enough. Too many neurodivergent learners are left navigating systems designed for neurotypical thinkers. Their strengths go unseen, their struggles misunderstood, and their potential underdeveloped.

What if we moved beyond awareness and really understood how neurodivergent students think and learn? What if, instead of simply offering small accommodations, we helped them build the cognitive skills that make learning possible, while creating classrooms where every brain can thrive?

This is where the Structure of Intellect (SOI) model and Sgàthach workshops provide something practical, measurable and, above all, hopeful.

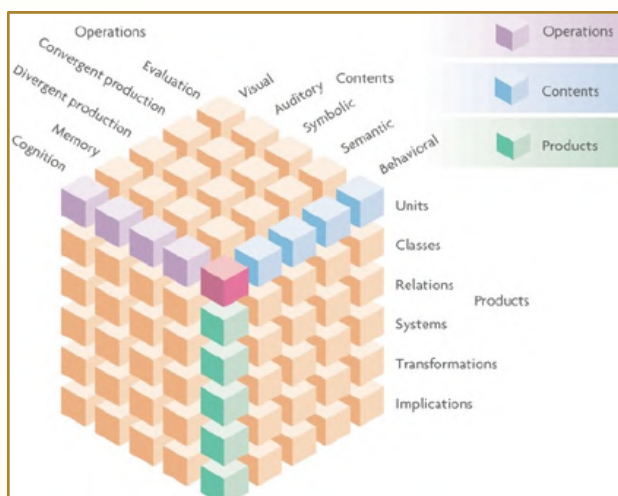
## THE INVISIBLE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Teachers often see bright learners underachieve. A pupil may appear distracted, avoidant or disruptive, but behind those behaviours there may be very specific cognitive challenges. Short-term memory, sequencing, processing speed, or attention control can all make even simple tasks overwhelming.

Traditional measures rarely reveal this. Exams show outcomes, not the underlying skills. Behaviour reports record symptoms, not causes. This is how students are written off as lazy or unteachable when in truth they are facing barriers that can be identified and improved.

*The SOI assessment maps an individual's cognitive strengths and weaknesses. But crucially, it does not stop there.*

## THE STRUCTURE OF INTELLECT (SOI) MODEL: A DIFFERENT LENS



(Image source: Teacher's Alley, 2017)



The SOI model, based on Guilford's research on intelligence, examines more than 90 separate cognitive skills across three areas: operations (such as memory or evaluation), contents (symbolic, semantic), and products (relations, systems).

The SOI assessment maps an individual's cognitive strengths and weaknesses. But crucially, it does not stop there. Each profile leads to a programme of targeted training that strengthens weaker areas through structured, progressive tasks. It is like a training plan for the brain.

### CASE STUDY:

A zoology undergraduate came to me on the verge of dropping out. He was disengaged academically, socially withdrawn, and doubting his future. His SOI profile showed weaknesses in processing speed and organisation. After a year of training, his comparative assessment placed him in the exceptional range for 17 out of 30 skills. He is now thriving: volunteering in conservation, leading fundraising, and excelling in his degree.

This was not chance. It was the result of shifting the focus from behaviour to capacity, and from labels to potential.

# S GÀTHACH: WALKING IN THEIR SHOES

While SOI strengthens individuals, Sgàthach workshops focus on systems.



Rather than explaining neurodivergence in theory, these workshops give staff the experience of it. Activities recreate the stress of sensory overload, the frustration of unclear instructions, and the exhaustion of constant effort.

As one participant said:

“What seemed like simple activities quickly became a powerful insight into the stress and cognitive load neurodivergent students navigate daily.

The aim is not to overwhelm but to help staff understand and respond. Participants leave with practical strategies such as clearer communication, more structured tasks, flexible timing, and small sensory adjustments. These changes are simple but they ripple outwards, improving learning environments for everyone.

## WHY THIS MATTERS FOR EDUCATORS

Every classroom is already neurodiverse, whether teachers are aware of it or not. At least one in five students are neurodivergent, but many will never disclose this. That means most teachers are already teaching neurodivergent learners every day.

Imagine this: You are teaching a science lesson. You explain the instructions once. One student asks repeatedly, “What do I do next?” Another has forgotten their equipment. A third seems to drift away mid-task. It can feel like laziness or lack of effort. But SOI shows a different picture. One child may be struggling with short-term memory, another with planning, and another with attention control. Without this understanding, teachers risk frustration and misinterpretation.

Recognising these invisible patterns changes everything. Teachers become more confident. Students feel capable rather than ashamed. Classrooms become calmer, and schools prevent unnecessary exclusions.

## PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Here are five practical ways schools can move from good intentions to meaningful impact:

### 1 Screen beyond grades

- ♦ **What to do:** Notice patterns behind behaviour and attainment.
- ♦ **Why it matters:** Behaviours that look like carelessness may signal cognitive gaps.
- ♦ **How:** Ask, “Which skills might be holding this student back?” instead of “Why won’t they try?”
- ♦ **Example:** A pupil repeatedly confuses “their” and “there”. Instead of marking it wrong each time, the teacher uses colour coding and imagery to build visual discrimination.

### 2 Teach how to think

- ♦ **What to do:** Build cognitive strategies into daily lessons.
- ♦ **Why it matters:** Strengthening memory, sequencing and attention helps all learners, not just neurodivergent ones.
- ♦ **How:** Use activities such as memory match games, sequential recall, story-building with hidden prompts, or even a more complex version of Simon Says. These develop memory, focus, and problem-solving while still supporting subject content.

### 3 Use clear structures

♦ **What to do:** Break down instructions into small steps and present them visually.

♦ **Example:** Instead of saying, "Do the experiment and hand in your work," show five steps: form groups, gather materials, run the test, record results, tidy up. Display the list so pupils can check it independently.

### 4 Embed empathy in training

♦ **What to do:** Let staff experience what overload feels like.

♦ **How:** Ask teachers to take notes while listening to background noise, then reflect on how frustrating it felt. Discuss strategies such as quiet areas, reduced distractions, or offering ear defenders.

### 5 Celebrate different operating systems

♦ **What to do:** Focus on strengths, not just challenges.

♦ **How:** Allow alternative ways of showing learning: presentations, videos, artwork. Use strength-based feedback such as "You are excellent at explaining ideas aloud," rather than only pointing out errors.

These are not sweeping reforms. They are small but consistent shifts that, over time, transform learning environments for everyone.

## C ONCLUSION: BEYOND LIMITS

**The theme of this year's EduExpo, Reimagine. Rethink. Reinvent Teaching and Learning, could not be more relevant to neuroinclusion. We cannot keep forcing neurodivergent learners into neurotypical moulds and calling it inclusion.**

**With SOI, we help individuals develop their own cognitive skills. With Sgàthach, we support schools to remove systemic barriers. Together, these approaches give us a practical and hopeful path forward where every learner can thrive.**

**True education beyond limits begins when we choose to see the unseen, understand the invisible, and unlock potential instead of containing it.**

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**Jane Stratton** is a Cognitive Learning Specialist, founder of CognitiveSpecialist.co.uk and partner of Sgàthach. She is Scotland's only certified SOI practitioner and works with schools, universities, and businesses to unlock cognitive potential in neurodivergent learners and to train educators in inclusive practice. As a mother of three neurodivergent children, Jane brings both professional expertise and lived experience to her mission: helping others see beyond the label and unlock real potential.





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**Crucial English: The 7 Principles to Think English the Way They Do** is a breakthrough guide for learners and educators who want to move beyond “good enough” English into the realm of true bilingual mastery. Written by **Clay Lee**—translator, educator, and trainer with decades of cross-cultural experience—this book is part memoir, part manifesto, and part practical guide to activating the English you already know.

At its core, **Crucial English** reframes bilingualism as more than grammar drills or vocabulary lists. Through seven interconnected principles—ranging from beginning with culture to re-imagining the verb world—Lee shows how fluency is not about chasing perfection, but about shifting mindsets, unlearning bad habits, and learning to think in English the way native speakers do. His message is clear: English is not just a subject to study, but a tool for clarity, impact, and connection.

Drawing on his journey from conference interpreter in Korea to educator in Vietnam, Clay Lee weaves real-life stories, classroom insights, and professional lessons into strategies that are both deeply relatable and highly actionable. He challenges myths around translation, redefines grammar as a tool rather than a prison, and warns against over-reliance on AI shortcuts that risk “spoiling” literacy.

*Whether you are a learner struggling with the “yo-yo effect” of temporary improvement, or an educator searching for new ways to unlock student potential, **Crucial English** offers a fresh framework that blends cultural intelligence, language activation, and practical wisdom. It’s not just a book about English—it’s a call to embrace the art of bilingualism as a lifelong skill.*



**Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc**  
Head of EduVerse

**The EduVerse Newsletter** is honored to feature an exclusive interview with **Clay Lee**, where he shares the story behind **Crucial English**, the principles that drive his teaching philosophy, and his vision for empowering learners worldwide to break free from survival English and achieve true fluency.



# ASK

## THE EXPERTS

Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, the ultimate column dedicated to professional development in the field of education. In this dynamic and ever-evolving field, continuous growth and learning are paramount. In each issue, we explore the most commonly asked topic by interviewing invited experts for their insights, experiences, and strategies.

EXCLUSIVE

# THE ART OF BILINGUALISM

## THINK ENGLISH THE WAY THEY DO

With CLAY LEE

**EduVerse:** Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, our exclusive interview series where we spotlight the voices shaping the future of education. Today, we are delighted to feature **Clay Lee**, translator-turned-educator and the author of **Crucial English: The 7 Principles to Think English the Way They Do**. With a career spanning international conference interpreting, business leadership, and over a decade of teaching in Vietnam, Clay brings a uniquely global perspective to the art of bilingualism.

In our conversation today, he shares the inspiration behind **Crucial English**, his insights into breaking free from “stuck” English learning, and why culture, mindset, and even translation play such vital roles in mastering a language. Drawing from his experiences across Korea, Finland, Silicon Valley, and Southeast Asia, Clay offers practical wisdom for learners, educators, and anyone seeking to move beyond survival English into true bilingual communication.





# JOURNEY & INSPIRATION

## PART 1

1

**Welcome, Clay! You began as a translator and interpreter, then moved into business leadership, and later education across Korea and Vietnam. How did these diverse experiences come together to inspire *Crucial English* and what moments in this journey most shaped your vision of it?**

Thank you for having me. Like any professional translator and interpreter, I had always explored various ways to navigate between the two languages seamlessly, and many techniques came out along the way. The same kind of inquiry stayed with me when I worked with business people as their counterparts, not as their interpreters. Different perspectives helped me understand why people used their language the way they did.

For instance, (as I mentioned in the book) I had a boss (who by the way was an eloquent speaker of both languages) who had a distinct language habit of starting his words by saying, “for example.” As his primary notetaker, I noticed that the phrase didn’t mean anything; it was just a filler word to pause, grab attention, or control the pace. Little things like that, examples after examples taught me many lessons about how the languages are used in the actual business settings.

Overtime, I developed this mental habit of noting down what I find interesting in people’s use of languages, and I have tried to put them all in patterns, and come up with ways to tackle challenges and improve outcomes. Those ways are materialized in *The 7 Principles*.

**Clay Lee** is a translator-turned-educator with a focus on bilingual communication. He began as a conference interpreter after graduating from Hankuk University and later earned an MBA in Finland. He held roles in business development and marketing at ThinkFree Corp. in California.

In Korea, he served as Education Director at the Institute of Industrial Policy Studies, helped establish the Seoul School of Integrated Sciences and Technologies, and lectured at Hansung University. He trained in Crucial Conversations, developed the GBC MasterPack™ with FranklinCovey, and authored “Crucial English.” For over a decade in Ho Chi Minh City, he has taught English and various subjects for international programs like IBDP, AP, and TOEFL.



## 2

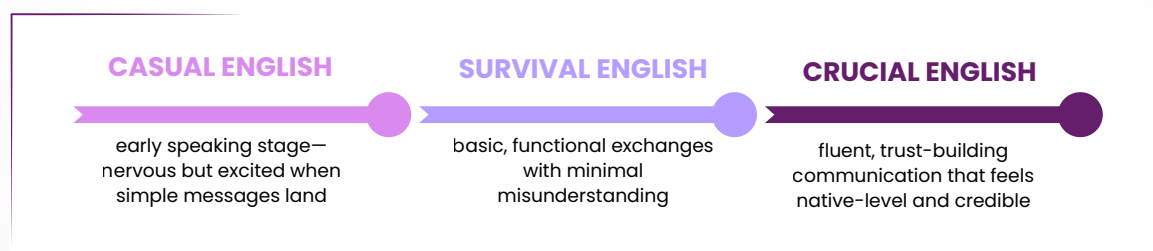
**That's fascinating—love those real-world insights. Now, in the book, you draw a line between *Casual English*, *Survival English*, and *Crucial English*. Can you describe what it is and how it can shape language learning?**

Let me start with *Crucial English*. *Crucial English* is when your English really matters. In my case, many of my business partners and clients tended to picture me as American-educated before we actually met in person. They got the impression through emails and conference calls, (there was no such thing as AI-assisted translation apps back then) and in their minds, I came across as someone who'd grown up or studied extensively in the U.S. or U.K. That perception was a huge boost in business, especially when they learned I'd never actually lived there before starting my career. That is *Crucial English*, communicating at a level that builds trust, not the level where you barely manage to establish communication.

*Survival English*, on the other hand, is where you're just managing basic communication without major misunderstandings or without clarification – where you have a very basic understanding of what the other side wants.

Then there's *Casual English* is when you have just started practicing speaking English. This is the stage where you feel both the fear and excitement of speaking to foreigners. On one hand, you feel worried about misunderstanding or not being understood; on the other hand, you feel fulfilled and even proud if you could get across your message and understand their message. When you see the other side making the kind of reaction that fits what you say, you feel satisfied and even proud.

Most people reach the level of *Survival English*, and settle for it. My book urges you to break through to reach the level of *Crucial English* by offering the practical ways to achieve it. *The 7 Principles* are meant to guide you to change your way of practicing and using English, and in that sense, it's a way of "paradigm shift" in improving English, although I personally don't like the cliché.



## 3

**Haha, paradigm shift—guilty as charged, we all say it! But seriously, many learners feel their English gets “stuck” after years of study. From your view, what mindset shift is needed to move forward and break through this plateau?**

Yeah, I've heard that "stuck" complaint from so many people—I've seen it firsthand too. Many of them even blame themselves for it; others blame the Asian-style education system. But I don't like the "blame game." I was born, raised and educated in one of the most gruelingly strict education systems in the world, but I have made it through. I believe that blaming yourself or anyone else for that matter isn't helpful or necessary.

In fact, *Crucial English* is all about achieving the Art of Bilingualism, which by definition comes from both languages. It is important to remember that our passive English skills—like reading and listening—are actually pretty strong. Think about it: Americans find it really hard to make a perfect score on the Korean test equivalent of SAT, and I believe that it's the same for Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, or other Asian systems. It proves that our passive language skills are way above our active language. To get "unstuck," we have to learn how to "activate" our passive English, and that is what is called "language activation." It builds on both languages, and it builds on our passive language. And that's exactly what *The 7 Principles* is designed to do: help you "activate" your passive language.



# THE PRINCIPLES OF CRUCIAL ENGLISH

## PART 2

4

**Alright, let's explore those 7 principles that are at the core of your book. One that really stands out is "Begin with the Culture." Why do you say the cultural mindset is just as crucial as nailing grammar or building vocab when it comes to true fluency?**

Great question—culture is everything. My daughter used to go to this bilingual school a few years ago. As a parent, I received various emails from the school's administration and marketing teams – mostly Vietnamese staff, I assume. In most cases, the emails were very formal, polite and indirect. They used a lot of colourful, flowery and honorary salutations, elaborations and acknowledgements, most of which were simply not necessary. In fact, too much formality could compromise the sincerity of the message in a foreigner's mind. As an Asian, I totally understand the cultural tone that the politeness was meant to deliver, but the fact remains that the message, even though written in English, didn't sound like English. I trust that many institutions are now using AI-assisted writing for such messages, which may have closed the cultural gap to an extent, but I'm not sure how much. Many people seem to think that we have to "close" the gap between two cultures. I beg to disagree. If we are to respect both cultures, we should not try and "close" the gap, and it's practically impossible to close the gap. Instead, we have to try and "bridge" the gap, in a way that our message would have the same effect on the intended audience, all the while respecting the other side's culture.

**Love that bridge analogy—makes total sense. Another principle that intrigued me is "Re-imagining the Verb World." Some learners feel like English is all about nouns because of those common phrases like "make a decision" instead of just "decide." How do you balance this idea with the quirky, idiomatic side of English?**

5

It is a good question. Nouns are often used as powerful tools to deliver the message in English. In fact, in the sixth principle of *The 7 Principles*, one of the techniques to "Look the Other Way" is to use what I call "Killer Nouns." In the third principle, "Re-imagine the Verb World," I'm urging you to explore the "basic verbs and prepositional adverbs." You just took an example of "make a decision" and "decide," right? The former usage, "make a decision," will be useful and powerful when you would want to add modifications like "make a quick decision of great importance," or "make a decision that will have a long-lasting impact on us." However, "re-imagining the verb world" directs your attention to "make" in this example. So often, we focus on the noun, "decision," overlooking the basic verb "make." Still, English can't do without basic verbs like "make" and "break." These verbs may have a long list of definitions in the dictionary, but there is a single core concept for each of these basic verbs and prepositional adverbs. I ask you to pay extra attention to them in order to grasp the look and feel of their core concepts. It is a very crucial part of achieving Crucial English, or activating your passive English.

**Fascinating how it flips the focus. You also bust this common myth that learners should avoid translating at all costs. How do you see the role of the mother tongue and translation in building strong bilingual skills?**

6

So many people, teachers especially, tell us to stop translating. However, it is simply misspoken. What they really mean is they don't like the outcome that looks like translated. No one likes English sentences that sound like another language. But they don't have any other way to explain that, so they just say "do not to translate." I suspect that most of the people who say not to translate don't have much experience of translating for themselves. The problem lies in the outcome, not the process. If we fix the process (of translating), then the outcome will get better, and the problem will be solved. And when fixing the process, our knowledge of the mother language is very important. In any language, we have to be clear about what to say, or the meaning, and not the surface. Once we're clear about the meaning in our native language, the process of getting it across in English will be much easier.

**So many people, teachers especially, tell us to stop translating. However, it is simply misspoken. What they really mean is they don't like the outcome that looks like translated. No one likes English sentences that sound like another language.**

- Clay Lee -

7

**That's a refreshing flip on the usual advice. Finally, your book lays out these seven principles. How do these principles connect to one another in helping learners develop full language competence, rather than just isolated skills?**

Absolutely, they're interconnected, building like a roadmap. The first two principles set the standards for English as it should be. The next three principles help you "break" the old paradigm. For example, I believe most grammar books and teachers tell you that there are at least "three" tenses in English (if not twelve tenses). The knowledge of the twelve English tenses might have been necessary for certain exams, but in reality, all you have to care about in terms of English tenses is the fact that there are only two tenses in English. It's not my claim, but it's universally true in advanced syntax. Likewise, there are many things that we take for granted, but we shouldn't. The third, fourth and fifth principles show you what and how to break the old knowledge. The final two principles are about "how" to make new ways of activating English. Again, these principles show you how to take the most out of your passive language skills, instead of adding something new. So, these seven principles build on three steps, even though any single principle can be useful independently.



# TEACHING, GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & GALACY

## PART 3

8

**Shifting gears to your teaching experiences, Clay—you've worked with students in both Korea and Vietnam. What similarities and differences have you spotted in how Asian learners tackle English, compared to folks from other regions like Africa or Europe?**

Well, to be honest, I'm not sure that I have taught anyone from Africa or Europe, but from what I experienced with many Europeans, *The 7 Principles* might be redundant because these principles often deal with the cultural and linguistic differences between English and Asian languages and cultures. To my knowledge, European cultures and languages share a lot of traits, both linguistic and cultural, with English. However, *The 7 Principles* may be most effective for the speakers of languages that have adopted Chinese roots in terms of linguistics, and for the speakers from what we call "high-context cultures" including Vietnam and Korea, where communication styles can differ a lot more.

**Interesting how context plays into it. Now, a lot of educators might pick up your book thinking about their classrooms. What are some hands-on ways teachers can weave in your principles to help students really activate their English?**

9

I sure hope they do. What is adding to the issue today is AI getting involved in everything. I personally believe that an outright ban of AI use won't work and won't be necessary. AI or no AI, the goal should be improving your native language and English side by side, not in isolation. It might be tricky to build full classroom activities around this, but at the very least, I'd love for teachers to push students to not dodge translation altogether—instead, teach them to translate right. That shift alone can make a huge difference.

**AI or no AI, the goal should be improving your native language and English side by side, not in isolation.**

- Clay Lee -

**What a solid piece of advice! Your personal motto revolves around those four "L's": Learn more, laugh more, love more, and leave more. How does that philosophy shape your teaching and the legacy you're building for future generations?**

10

I try to make my class as fun as possible. I'm known by my students to be funny, even silly. Being serious is good, but all too often, learning over laughter works better for me, as well as for my students, I believe. One of the things that I keep telling my students is that they're allowed to do things to make others laugh, or sometimes challenge me, "as long as learning takes place."

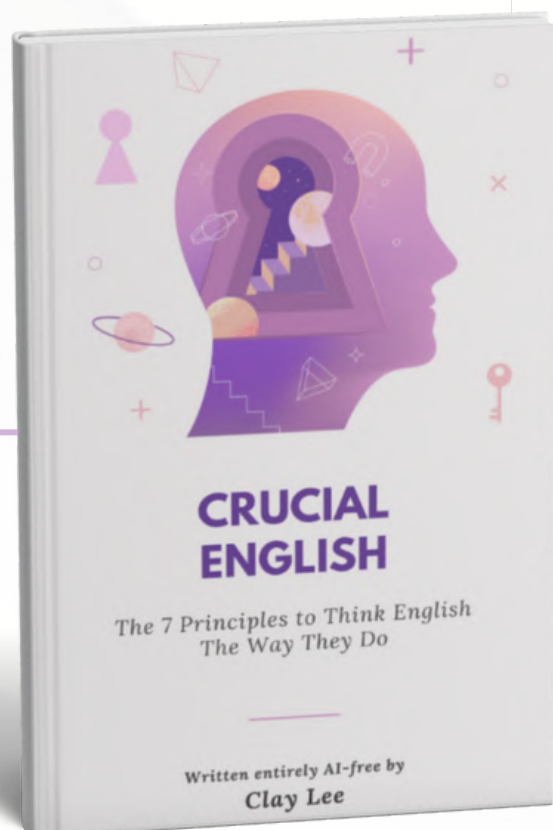
Down the road, I believe that teachers have a new challenge to tackle: AI tools. I believe that we are living at a time of war for literacy—mainly due to tech tools. AI has already surpassed humans in many areas of learning including language learning. Still, many teachers and experts fear that AI tools are dumbing down our youth. Again, I don't condemn the use of AI. However, I hope that our future generations will use AI NOT to produce output for them, BUT to provoke them to THINK for themselves. That's why I love things like ChatGPT's "Study Mode," where it throws thought-provoking questions back at you instead of spoon-feeding solutions. I want to stress this to today's learners: don't use AI to produce output for you; use AI to provoke you to "think critically, think courageously and think creatively." Thinking is something AI can't do for us, and thinking is the backbone of literacy, and I think it is key to our future.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

**If readers could take away just one key lesson from *Crucial English*, what would you want it to be?**

It'd be this: Crucial English, or true bilingualism, is a learnable skill, not a trait endowed by surroundings. It builds on both languages, and on your existing knowledge of English. With the right principles in mind, you will master the art of bilingualism sooner than later.

Order it from  
 **GUMROAD**



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Crucial English** separates itself from Survival English and Casual English. It elevates beyond basic excitement or minimal communication to impactful, professional-level English.
- Crucial English is another name of true bilingualism. It enables seamless language **navigation** with **cultural depth**.
- The art of bilingualism is about **activating the passive knowledge** of English. This turns strong reading/listening skills into active speaking/writing.
- ***The 7 Principles to Think English The Way They Do*** guides you to activate your English. They offer steps like cultural bridging and verb focus for intuitive use.
- **The art of bilingualism**, manifested in the form of Crucial English, through the activation of passive language skills, guided by *The 7 Principles*, is about changing the way we use English, or about “**a paradigm shift.**”
- The paradigm shift cannot come without thinking, which is the backbone of literacy now at risk in the AI era. **Use AI to spark critical thinking, not replace it.**

*Learn more, laugh more,*

*love more, and leave more.*



CONNECT TO LEARN:

THE POWER OF

# CONCEPT MAPS

Mona Sawan



In today's fast-paced world, one of the greatest challenges in modern education is helping learners truly understand and retain information. Many instructional strategies still rely heavily on rote learning, which often leads to shallow comprehension and short-term memory. This is where concept maps offer a meaningful alternative. Simple yet powerful, concept maps help both students and teachers by visually organizing relationships between ideas. They transform abstract content into clear, connected visuals, making learning more engaging, memorable, and effective.

## WHAT IS A CONCEPT MAP?



Dr. Joseph D. Novak

Concept maps are diagrams that portray relationships between several information in a given area. They depict the hierarchy of subjects and include both main concepts and sub-concepts, typically arranged in rectangles or ovals. They usually begin with a central idea enclosed in a box or circle, from which related sub-concepts branch out, labelled and connected by lines or arrows. The final result resembles a web of ideas that visually deconstructs the topic.

Joseph Novak and his colleagues developed the techniques in the 1970s building on David Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning. Ausubel's argument was that learning is made better when new information is related to what the person learning already possesses (Novak & Gowin, 1984).

## THE CORE BENEFITS OF CONCEPT MAPS

### 1. Encourages deeper understanding

One of the advantages of concept maps is promoting deep learning. Students are required to go beyond just memorizing important information by analyzing how concepts connect, relate, and impact each other. Active engagement of this kind always yields better retention and comprehension over time.

For instance, a student in an ecosystem class may learn about "producers," "consumers," and "decomposers." He can use a concept map to show the energy flow in the ecosystem using arrows. He does not just have to repeat key ideas; he needs to understand the concepts.

### 2. Supports visual learning

Every individual has a different approach to learning, and for visual learners, concept maps are especially effective. With all the information, these learners can use the concept maps to create a graphic representation of the structure of the information. Students who learn better through images, colors, and spatial arrangements stand to benefit greatly from concept maps.

Even those who do not consider themselves to be visual learners can benefit. As Nesbit and Adesope (2006) put it, concept mapping improved performance across many groups of students, which is regardless of the learning style students preferred.

### 3. Helps with note-explanation and review

Note taking is an important part of any education system, but notes taken in a linear manner do not capture the multilayered nature of matters. Different subjects like Biology, History, and Literature are interlinked and concept maps allow flexible and wholistic ways to take notes.

Synthesis helps evaluate note understanding in a much deeper manner rather than rote memorization at basic levels. In terms of revision, concept maps are incredibly effective at identifying gaps and reinforcing connections among different concepts relative to instructions, supporting students with seeing the entire scope of the material needed.



#### 4. Enhances evaluation and assessment skills

Self-explanatory and sub-explanatory relationships enhance critical thinking and problem solving. These steps are achieved through idea retrieval and brainstorming through concept maps, which aids in problem solving and encourages learners to think at deeper levels.

Within medical and engineering education, self-directed learning enhances complex barriers which aids with problem identification, intervention design, and system reflection. In these scenarios, maps do not simply act as studying aids, but stimulate forward thinking differently.

#### 5. Fosters active and collaborative learning

Group work features prominently within concept mapping strategies. While students are working on maps in groups, they participate in discussions and negotiations, as well as reasoning. These social interactions assist learning. Collaboration in concept maps promotes a sense of collective understanding, as well as peer teaching where students explain concepts to each other.

In addition to supporting student collaboration, concept maps also enable instructors to take an active role in the learning process. Using them as a formative assessment tool, instructors can gain insights into students' thinking and uncover misconceptions during group activities. This allows teachers to provide timely feedback and adjust instruction to better support collaborative learning goals.

#### 6. Connects prior knowledge and new information

Concept maps are powerful tools for scaffolded learning, helping students build on their existing knowledge and mental frameworks. By visually linking prior understanding with new concepts, learners reinforce their comprehension and deepen their grasp of the material. This makes concept maps especially effective when introducing new topics or revisiting previously covered content.

Additionally, concept maps support interdisciplinary learning by illustrating how ideas from different fields connect. For example, a concept map on climate change might integrate scientific, economic, and geographical perspectives, helping students see the complexity and interconnectedness of real-world issues.

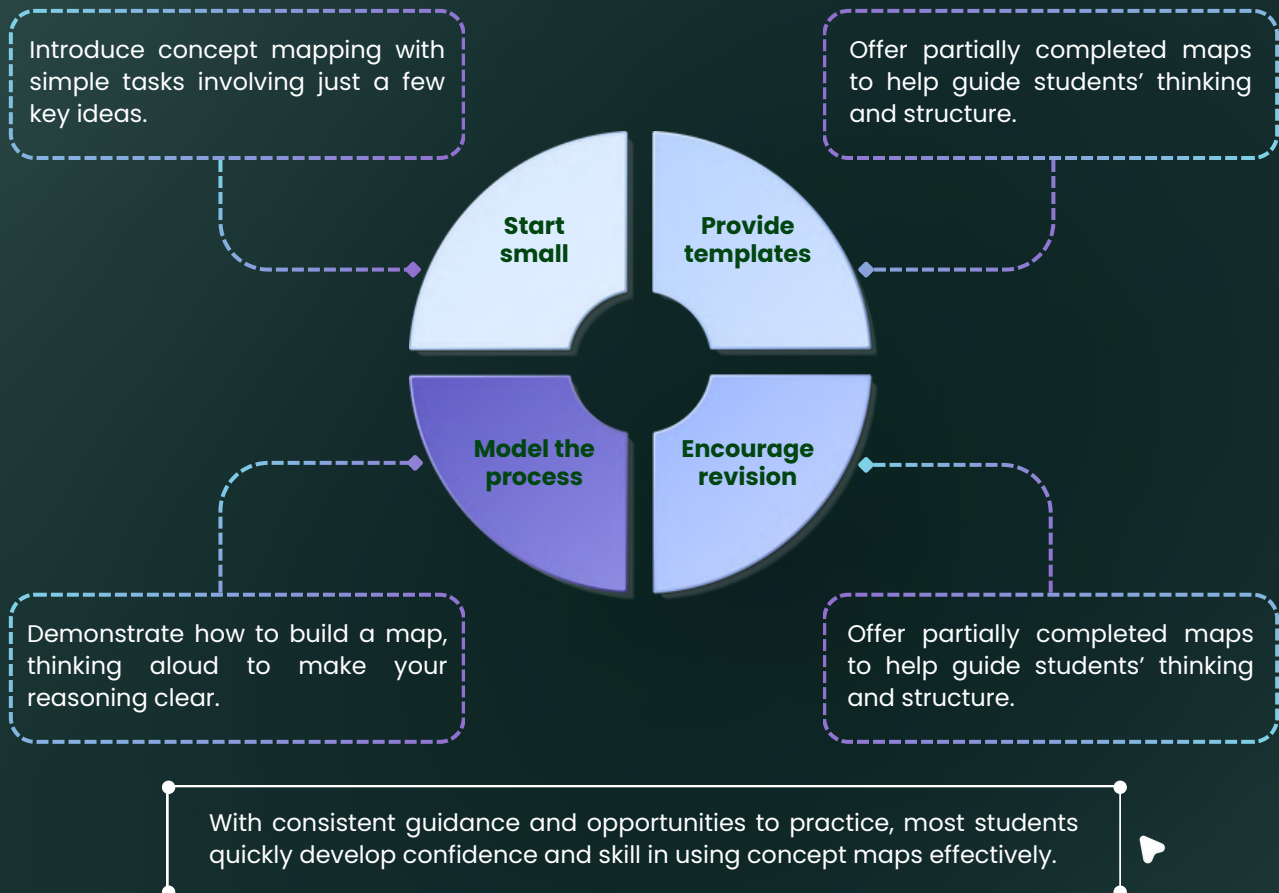
#### 7. Encourages metacognition and self evaluation

Concept mapping actively promotes metacognition by encouraging students to think about how they think and learn. As they organize and connect ideas on a map, students must identify what they already know and how new information fits into that framework. This process heightens their awareness of their own learning strategies and thought patterns.

Additionally, when students review and revise their concept maps, they engage in self-assessment and reflection—key habits for developing as independent, lifelong learners.

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Like any learning tool, concept maps come with their own set of challenges. Some students may initially find it difficult to grasp how to visually organize ideas or understand how different concepts relate to one another. Others might feel overwhelmed by the open-ended nature of creating connections. To address these issues:



## DIGITAL TOOLS

### FOR CONCEPT MAPPING

Technology has made concept mapping more accessible and dynamic. Students can now create, edit, and share maps using digital tools like Coggle, MindMeister, Lucidchart, and XMind—many of which are free or offer educational discounts.

These tools offer a range of benefits, including real-time collaboration, automatic saving, and even AI-generated suggestions for branches and categories. Such features are particularly valuable in remote or hybrid learning environments, making concept mapping more efficient and engaging.



## ACROSS SUBJECTS



### Science

Concept maps help students visualize complex systems and processes. For example, when studying **cell division**, students can map out stages like interphase, prophase, metaphase, and so on, linking them to key cellular changes. This not only reinforces content knowledge but also supports systems thinking.

Concept maps are remarkably adaptable and can be used across a wide range of subjects to promote deeper understanding, critical thinking, and connections between ideas. Here's how they can be applied in different areas:



### Literature

In literature, concept maps can be used to explore **themes, character development, and plot structure**. Students might create a map that links characters to key events, motivations, and conflicts. They can also map relationships between multiple themes (e.g., identity, power, loss) and how they evolve across a narrative.



### Language Learning

Language learners can use concept maps to **organize vocabulary** by topics (e.g., food, travel, emotions) or **grammatical structures** (e.g., verb tenses, sentence types). Visualizing language elements helps with retention and meaningful usage.



### Mathematics

In math, concept maps can demonstrate the **relationships between formulas, principles, and applications**. For example, a student studying geometry might connect properties of different shapes to theorems and real-life applications like architecture or engineering. This approach supports conceptual understanding rather than rote memorization.



### History

Concept mapping supports chronological and causal thinking in history. Students can visually represent the **causes and effects** of major events, such as the World Wars or social revolutions. They might link economic, political, and social factors to historical outcomes, helping them grasp the interconnectedness of historical developments and better retain key information.

Overall, concept maps serve as versatile tools that support learning across content areas by encouraging learners to make meaningful connections, visualize complexity, and organize their thinking in a structured way.



By enabling students to visualize concepts and their relationships, engage critically with content, and actively participate in their own learning, concept maps support the development of higher-order thinking skills. Far more than just educational aids, they transform how information is organized, understood, and applied.

Whether used for collaboration, self-reflection, assessment, or note-taking, concept maps empower learners across all ages and academic levels—enhancing comprehension, retention, and overall academic achievement.

Students will no longer depend on rote memorization or teaching into the test—it is important to guide them towards understanding the purpose of their learning, and the use of concept maps will help with that integration.

With information developing at a fast pace in the modern age, educators need to be innovative, flexible and receptive to changes. Integrating concept maps into the curriculum can help students outdo expectations.

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**Mona Sawan** is an accomplished education leader and certified international trainer with deep expertise in educational management, AI integration, and professional development. She is dedicated to creating innovative learning environments and equipping educators with the latest EdTech tools to enhance teaching and learning. With a strong foundation in instructional coaching, curriculum design, and digital transformation, Mona brings a dynamic and student-centered approach to education. A published author and active voice in the global education community, she contributes thought leadership on AI in education, leadership strategies, and sustainable development in schools.



# PROJECT

SHOWCASE

# LEAP

## WHERE ENGLISH MEETS AI

Burak YILDIZ

Teaching English as a foreign language has always been an exciting yet challenging mission for teachers. While teachers aim to enhance students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, they also need to provide authentic, motivating, and engaging contexts. In today's digital era, AI opens up new horizons for language learning. It provides students with personalized feedback, authentic materials, and interactive tools, making the process more dynamic and student-centered.



# PROJECT GOALS

With this in mind, we launched an international eTwinning project titled **Learning English with AI Practices (LEAP)**. From December 2024 to April 2025, LEAP brought together 8 teachers and around 110 students, aged 14 – 17, from Türkiye, Spain, Greece, Poland, and Czechia. The project's main goal was to explore how AI tools can support the development of the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—while fostering creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy.



Through international teamwork and innovative use of AI, our students not only improved their English but also co-created meaningful digital outcomes: an international LEAP Magazine, an AI Tools eBook, and a joint AI-Generated Short Film. Beyond language learning, LEAP gave students the opportunity to engage in cross-cultural dialogue, enhance 21st-century skills, and experience the power of technology in education.

# STAGES & STEPS

The LEAP project was designed with a clear month-by-month progression, allowing students to gradually develop their skills while integrating AI into language learning.

In **November 2024**, we launched the project with a welcoming webinar, communication groups, a pre-survey, school introductions, and a logo competition to build a sense of community.

**January** emphasized speaking with AI, engaging students in pronunciation feedback activities, role plays, and chatbot interactions to boost fluency.

In **March**, the theme was writing with AI, where learners experimented with AI text generators, brainstorming assistants, and grammar tools to produce both individual and collaborative texts.

In **December**, the focus shifted to listening with AI, where students explored transcription tools, interactive listening platforms, and voice-based exercises.

In **February**, attention moved to reading with AI, with students practicing comprehension, summarizing texts, and building vocabulary using AI-supported tools.

Finally, in **April**, the project concluded with the creation of common products, a post-survey to measure progress, and dissemination activities to share outcomes with broader educational communities.

# PROJECT KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The LEAP project was built upon four fundamental English language skills—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing—each supported and enriched by innovative AI tools. Every month, a new theme was introduced, allowing students to concentrate on one skill at a time. This structured approach enabled learners to progress step by step, while also experimenting with digital tools that made language practice more engaging and personalized.

## 1 LISTENING WITH AI

During the first month, students explored AI-powered listening platforms such as Playphrase.me, Clozemaster, and Lingolette. These tools allowed them to listen to native-like speech at their own pace, repeat difficult parts, and receive instant feedback. By interacting with AI voices and personalized listening activities, students overcame their hesitation and improved their comprehension skills.

Working on Clozemaster  
IES Alcántara, Spain



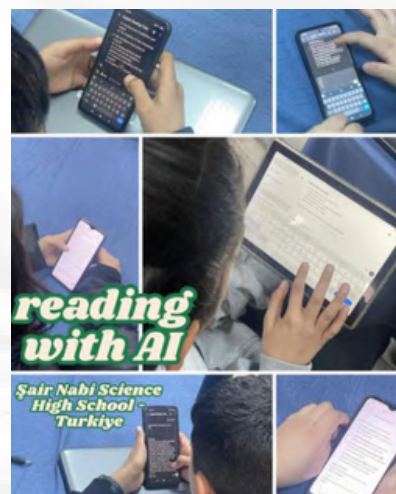
## 2 SPEAKING WITH AI



The second theme focused on enhancing pronunciation and fluency. With tools like Gliglish, GetFluently, and Univerbal, students practiced speaking without the fear of making mistakes. AI provided them with immediate corrections and models for better pronunciation. Role-play scenarios, avatar-based conversations, and AI-driven speaking challenges created a safe and motivating environment for students to express themselves in English.

## 3 READING WITH AI

In the third theme, AI-based reading applications such as Ready.app, Microsoft Reading Coach, and English Reading Tutor were used to guide students through customized reading passages. These tools helped them expand their vocabulary, apply skimming and scanning strategies, and check their understanding with interactive quizzes. Students also worked collaboratively in international teams to analyze texts and share insights about cultural content embedded in reading materials.



## 4 WRITING WITH AI

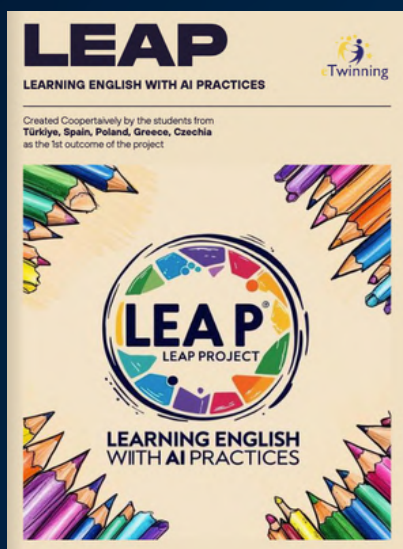
The final theme focused on improving students' writing accuracy and creativity. Tools like Memrise, GoPenPal, and Taboo AI supported students by correcting grammar, suggesting vocabulary, and guiding them in structuring their ideas. From writing blog posts to crafting creative short texts, students experienced how AI could act as a supportive mentor in the writing process. This theme culminated in the preparation of scripts for the final joint product—the AI-based short film.



## PROJECT FINAL PRODUCTS

At the end of the LEAP project, students and teachers proudly presented three major international outcomes. Each product reflected the collaborative spirit of the project, the integration of AI tools, and the creativity of students working together across borders.

### LEAP Magazine



The **LEAP Magazine** was designed by international mixed teams of students, each named after iconic cities from the partner countries. Every team contributed articles, visuals, and reflections based on the monthly themes. The magazine served not only as a record of students' work but also as a cultural bridge, where learners could showcase their perspectives, experiences, and creativity.

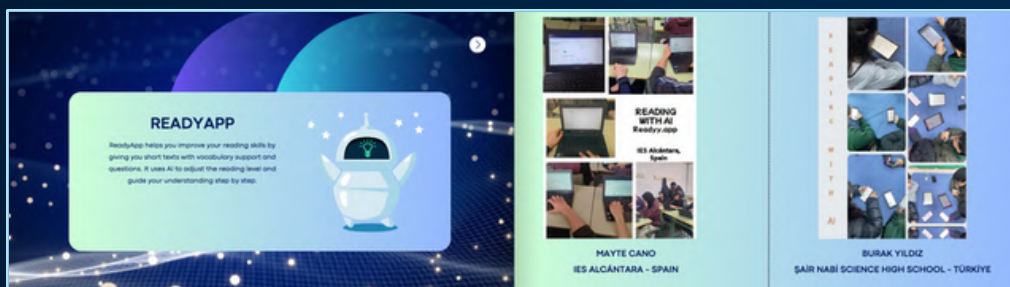


Explore the full magazine here!

## AI Tools eBook



The **AI Tools eBook** collected all the AI-based applications explored during the project. Students tested these tools, shared feedback, and offered practical tips for other learners and teachers who may wish to integrate AI into English learning. The eBook became a practical resource that combined technology with pedagogy, ensuring long-term sustainability of the project outcomes.



Explore the full ebook here!



## AI-Generated Short Film

The highlight of the project was the joint product: an AI-generated short film titled **Time Travelers**. Students collaborated to write the script, design characters, and visualize scenes using AI-based tools such as LTX Studio. With AI-generated voices, avatars, and digital effects, the film showcased not only their language skills but also their imagination and storytelling abilities. This product stands as a unique demonstration of how AI can support creative expression in language education.



## Parent Involvement

One of the most unique aspects of LEAP was the active involvement of parents. To strengthen the sense of community and highlight the inclusive spirit of the project, we organized an International Quiz Night for the parents of our students and partner schools. During this event, parents joined online teams and answered questions related to AI tools, eTwinning, and general knowledge. The quiz not only provided entertainment but also allowed parents to experience first-hand the innovative and collaborative atmosphere their children were engaged in. By becoming part of the process, parents felt more connected to the project, while students gained pride in seeing their families involved in an international educational initiative.

# CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

- Despite the project's successes, several challenges emerged. Some schools experienced limited internet access, which made synchronous work difficult. To overcome this, activities were designed with both online and offline alternatives, and materials were shared asynchronously so no student was left behind.
- Another challenge was students' initial hesitation toward AI tools. Many saw AI as complex or intimidating. Teachers addressed this by introducing tools gradually, starting with simple applications and encouraging peer-to-peer support. Over time, students grew more confident and began to explore AI independently.
- Finally, unequal digital skills among students sometimes slowed collaboration. To address this, international teams were deliberately mixed, allowing tech-savvy students to support their peers. This peer-learning approach

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As dedicated partners in the LEAP project, we are determined to continue expanding its impact and relevance in the field of English Language Teaching. Our first goal is to disseminate the project's innovative practices through workshops, webinars, and conferences, ensuring that more educators can benefit from the integration of AI tools into language learning.

We also plan to embed the project's methods into our school curricula, creating sustainable learning modules that focus on the four essential skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—supported by AI. By doing so, we aim to provide future students with similar opportunities to learn English in authentic, engaging, and technologically enriched contexts.

Feedback from students, parents, and teachers during LEAP will guide us in refining and improving our approaches, making the project model adaptable for different classrooms and cultural contexts. Moreover, we will continue to share our outcomes, such as the LEAP Magazine, AI Tools eBook, and the short film *Time Travelers*, with wider educational communities to inspire new collaborations.

Ultimately, our vision is to ensure that LEAP remains a dynamic, forward-looking, and highly effective resource for English learning—where language education and artificial intelligence come together to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

*\* See the AI Tools eBook for all the AI tools used in this project.*



**Burak Yıldız** is an enthusiastic and dedicated English Language teacher at Şair Nabi Science High School in Türkiye. He graduated from the English Language Teaching Department of Anadolu University in 2014. Since then, he has taught students across various age groups and has been actively involved in eTwinning projects. Through these projects, he has gained extensive international collaboration experience and has received several European Quality Labels.

A photograph of three children of diverse backgrounds looking intently at a laptop screen. The child in the foreground is a young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a red shirt. Behind her is a boy with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue shirt. To the left, another girl with dark skin is partially visible, wearing an orange shirt.

**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**

– Nelson Mandela –

As EduVerse marks its 2nd anniversary, we are proud to introduce the **Editorial Board** — the team behind the vision, voices, and values of our global newsletter. This debut is more than an announcement; it is a celebration of what EduVerse stands for: **diverse perspectives, authentic voices, and hands-on experience** from educators in every corner of the world.

Together, this board curates and shapes EduVerse with three commitments:

- To honor and amplify the voices of teachers and learners worldwide.
- To bridge research with practice — translating academic insights into classroom-ready strategies.
- To foster inclusivity, innovation, and community through every article, interview, and feature.

## THE DEBUT OF EDUVERSE NEWSLETTERS

# EDITORIAL BOARD

# MEET OUR EDITORS

EduVerse has always been **made by educators, for educators**. That means our board reflects the true spectrum of the teaching profession: from university professors to classroom teachers, from public schools to private institutions, from freelance tutors to edupreneurs building new learning pathways. Each member brings unique expertise and on-the-ground experience — ensuring that the content you read is not only inspiring, but also practical, relevant, and deeply connected to real classrooms and learners



## WIOLETA ANTECKA *Poland*

*Global Partnerships Coordinator  
Avant*

**Wioleta Antecka**, Global Partnerships Coordinator at Avant and an ESL teacher with 18+ years of experience, is passionate about language education and formative assessment. With deep knowledge of the CEFR scale and language proficiency development, she understands the importance of tracking student progress and creating learner-centered pathways to success. Recognized for her creativity, adaptability, and pedagogical innovation, she combines strong expertise in instructional design with hands-on experience in implementing effective teaching solutions. As an advocate for modern teaching methods, she has successfully implemented innovative educational solutions across international initiatives. She thrives in multicultural environments, building strong collaborations that drive global education initiatives. She is also an active conference presenter, sharing insights on modern teaching practices, digital learning solutions, and formative assessment.



**Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.**

– William Butler Yeats –

## MARIO SAMPILO *Philippines*

*Asst. Professor  
Occidental Mindoro State College–Sablayan Campus*

**Mario Sampil** has completed MA in Teaching English, and advanced certifications in TESOL, Universal Design for Learning, 21st-century assessment, and Professional Dev't for Teacher Trainers. Mario's teaching philosophy emphasizes fostering multicultural awareness, lifelong learning, and inclusivity. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Language Education, furthering his commitment to academic excellence. A licensed professional teacher, Mario continuously seeks opportunities to expand his knowledge and inspire others.



# MEET OUR EDITORS



**DR. KAMIL MIELNIK** *Poland*

*Head of Languages  
Ignatianum University in Krakow*



**Dr. Kamil Mielnik** is an expert in competency-based learning, AI-driven teaching, and international training development, with nearly 20 years of experience in language education and digital L&D solutions. He currently serves as Competence Development Manager at InPost, leading strategic learning programs across Europe to enhance skills and operational efficiency. He also heads the Interdepartmental Foreign Language Study Centre at Ignatianum University, where he drives research-based language education initiatives.

**COURTNEY BAILEY** *USA*

*Instructional Designer, Teacher Trainer, Lecturer of English  
University of South Carolina*



**Courtney Bailey** is an instructional designer, English language lecturer and international teacher trainer with over a decade of experience in K-12, higher education and global contexts. She coordinates Intensive English Language Programs and serves in leadership with NAESA: Association of International Educators. Currently a doctoral researcher, her work focuses on native speakerism, teacher identity and equitable practices in ELT. Courtney is passionate about empowering educators through reflective practice, inclusive curriculum design and professional development that values diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

**Awards & Recognition:** Selected by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) as an English Language Fellow, Virtual English Language Educator and invited English Language Specialist.

**Our job is to prepare students for their  
future, not our past.**

- Unknown -



**GÜLBİN ÖZDEMİR** *Türkiye*

*English Teacher, International Speaker  
Serik Science & Art Center*

**Gülbin Özdemir** is a teacher of English who teaches gifted and talented students in Turkey. She has been working as an English teacher for more than 10 years. She is certified TESOL Advanced Practitioner and working as an ambassador for the International English Teachers' Association and Global School Alliance. She's currently working on her Master's thesis in the field of ELT. In 2022 and 2023, she was nominated for the Dedicated Teacher Award from Cambridge University Press.



# MEET OUR EDITORS



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*Associate Professor  
UCSE Universidad Catolica Santiago del Estero- Jujuy*

**Lorena Ojeda** is a dedicated English Language Educator with 10+ years of experience in Argentina and the U.S. She advocates for inclusive education, UDL, SEL, and neurodiversity. With dual degrees in English Teaching and English Studies, she has worked as a teacher trainer, curriculum developer, and leader at Voces Digital. Now an International Neurodiversity Coach, she is committed to empowering educators and promoting meaningful, equitable learning worldwide.



**BEATRIZ ERAZO** *Bolivia*

*Adjunct Professor, Teacher Trainer, Fulbright alumna  
San Pablo Bolivian Catholic University  
Higher University of San Andrés*



**Beatriz Erazo**, a Fulbright alumna with an MA in TESOL, is a committed teacher trainer with more than 30 years of experience in ELT. She teaches English at UCB and oral and written communication at UMSA in La Paz, Bolivia. She is studying for a DProf in TESOL at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Beatriz has been a reviewer for several prestigious journals and published various articles regarding teaching techniques, culture integration, and other topics related to the EFL context.



**We do not learn from experience... we learn  
from reflecting on experience**

– John Dewey –



**DR. NURLANA IMANOVA** *Azerbaijan*

*Senior Lecturer, International Examiner  
British Council, Cambridge University Press and Assessment,  
Baku Higher Oil School*

**Dr. Nurlana Imanova** holds a doctoral degree in Linguistics. She is currently working as a Teacher Trainer with the British Council, where she designs and delivers trainings, webinars as well as professional development programs for national and international educators across diverse ELT and IELTS contexts. Alongside this, her work as an examiner with Cambridge University Press and Assessment provides valuable insight into international assessment standards and learner performance. Furthermore, she serves as a Senior Lecturer at university, where she has been teaching General English, Academic English, and IELTS preparation to adult learners (18+) for over 15 years. In addition, she holds teaching qualifications including TESOL, TEFL, and DELTA Module 1.



And because EduVerse thrives on fresh ideas and diverse voices, each special edition of the newsletter will feature **Guest Editors** — invited experts who will guide issues dedicated to specific forward-thinking themes. This ensures that every edition not only reflects EduVerse’s core values, but also brings unique depth, focus, and creativity to the themes that matter most in education today.

Our editorial board will start their heart work from EduVerse Newsletter 24, the special edition dedicated to **Education for Sustainable Development**, published in November 2025. We invite you to be part of this journey. Share your ideas, submit your stories, and connect with our Editorial Board — and together, we can keep building a community that is equitable, innovative, and future-ready.

**Le Dinh Bao Quoc (Ed.D.)**  
Head of EduVerse  
EduVerse Newsletter Chief Editor



**An intelligent heart acquires knowledge,  
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.**

- Proverbs 18:15 -



## RECORDINGS NOW READY!

If you missed the topnotch Edu361 Expo 2025 last July, here's another chance to join it. With **115 sessions** by **118 speakers** from **47 countries**, the expo is a real treasure trove of insights and inspiration for you to watch anytime, anywhere. Because the future of education isn't built in one moment, it's built in every idea we share, every challenge we rethink, and every connection we make.

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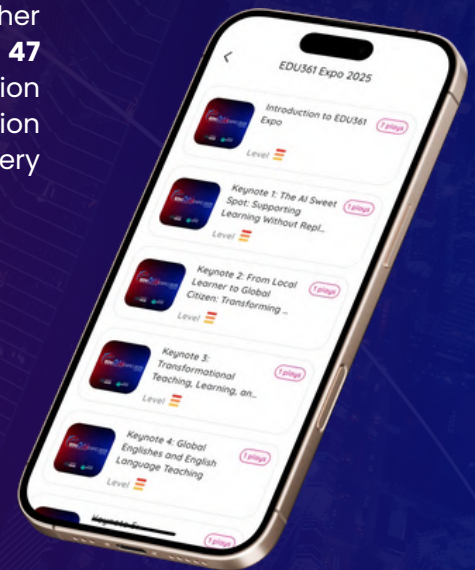
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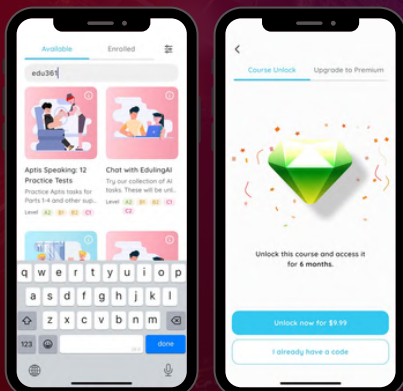
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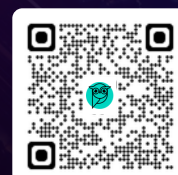
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*\* Scan the QR codes or click on the titles to read more.*



### Using AI to adapt English speaking tasks for mixed-ability ESL classrooms

There are a few ways to make speaking tasks work in mixed-ability classes: change the task, offer support, or group students strategically. These all help, but they also take time. And time is something most teachers don't have. That's where AI can help!



### Explicit, systematic, and sequential reading instruction

A strong reading classroom should include specific instructional time that utilizes explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction as part of your well-rounded reading instruction. Let's delve into each of these instructional components.



### Career-related learning - Help broaden children's aspirations

This article highlights how early career-related learning broadens children's aspirations, challenges stereotypes, and improves future opportunities. Readers can gain practical ways to inspire children and connect learning to the real world.



### Tracking attention in the classroom

Imagine if we could track student brains and measured their electrical activity during classroom lessons? Think, small pads stuck across the head; this research measured brain-to-brain activity, which could help teachers identify when students are attentive – or not.



### 3 ways to help students overcome the forgetting curve

Our brains are wired to forget things unless we take active steps to remember. The good news? You don't have to overhaul your curriculum to beat the forgetting curve. You just need three small, powerful shifts in how you teach.





### A video project that asks students to celebrate their classmates

Help parents see the everyday magic of your classroom by showing them short video clips during conferences. This project goes beyond charts and percentages, giving them a real look at their child's progress and the heart of your classroom community.



### How to support your children going back to school

The back-to-school transition is a pivotal time for families. As always, encouragement and positivity are important to support your child – and clear, enforceable routines and expectations are the secret to helping your child settle back into school. Set your child up for success with these practical, easy-to-follow steps, tailored for each age group.



### Precision teaching with AI: Aligning GSE objectives with generative AI for targeted materials

This blog post shows how to use AI tools with the Global Scale of English (GSE). You'll learn a practical, research-based way to quickly create accurate and personalized English teaching materials for any level.



### 12 purposeful ways to honour diversity in the classroom

Raising awareness of diversity and inclusion is a vital first step toward building more equitable, peaceful, and just societies. Here are some suggestions for how schools and teachers can meaningfully celebrate cultural diversity and advocate for inclusion.



### Using AI to build learning, not bypass it: 3 ways to focus on process over product

Teachers globally face a challenge: AI can instantly correct language, but what does this mean for true learning? Here are strategies to use AI as a tool for building deeper understanding, critical thinking, and a greater appreciation for genuine language acquisition.



Welcome to our monthly **Classroom Techniques** column, where you can find practical teaching techniques that can be implemented in your classroom right away. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a new teacher full of enthusiasm, this column is designed to supply you with new ideas every month to improve your classroom performance.

MAKE EVERY STUDENT SHINE

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# Differentiated Instruction



In today's diverse classrooms, where students come with varying abilities, interests, and learning paces, **personalized learning** has become essential for fostering engagement and academic growth. Mixed-ability classrooms demand creative strategies to engage students with diverse skills while ensuring equity and motivation. This article explores **7 practical classroom techniques** designed to tackle these pain points head-on. Drawing from established educational strategies, these methods are easy to implement, require minimal preparation, and promote equity by allowing students to learn at their own level.

### DIFFERENTIATED STATIONS

Set up 3-4 classroom stations with tasks for different skill levels. It's great for mixed-ability classes because **it provides scaffolds to help every student progress**. Use this method when introducing complex concepts that require multiple entry points.

#### Steps:

1. Create 3-4 stations (*e.g., basic, applied, creative*) for a lesson.
2. Prepare materials (*worksheets, prompts, visuals*). Include scaffolds (*e.g., templates, guiding questions*) for struggling students at each station.
3. Assign or let them self-select the station with guidance, and rotate every 10-15 minutes.
4. Debrief to share key insights.

### CHOICE BOARDS

Offer a grid of activity options for students to **choose based on interests**, allowing personalized tasks for the same goals. Use at the end of a unit or as a summative task to let students demonstrate understanding creatively.

#### Steps:

1. Design a 3x3 grid with varied tasks (*e.g., draw, write, analyze*).
2. Let students pick 2-3 tasks to complete in 20 minutes.
3. Collect and provide feedback.

**Example:** For a science unit on ecosystems: Draw a food chain, write about adaptations, create a quiz, record a podcast, analyze a chart, or build a model. Students choose based on strengths.

## ROLE-BASED GROUP TASKS

Assign specific roles (e.g., *researcher, presenter, scribe*) within small groups to tackle a shared task, **allowing students to contribute based on strengths** while learning collaboratively. This technique encourages participation and teamwork among all students.

### Steps:

1. Form groups of 4-5 students and assign roles based on skills (e.g., *strong readers as researchers*).
2. Set a 15-minute task with clear role instructions (e.g., *research a topic, summarize findings*).
3. Monitor groups, ensuring all roles contribute.
4. Have groups present results briefly.

## JIGSAW LEARNING

Divide a topic into subtopics, assign each to a group, and have students teach peers, ensuring **all contribute to collective understanding** at their level. Use mid-unit to deepen understanding of a complex topic, when students can benefit from teaching and learning from peers.

### Steps:

1. Split a topic into 4-5 subtopics and assign to groups.
2. Each group researches their subtopic (15 minutes) with provided resources.
3. Regroup so each new group has one "expert" per subtopic to teach others.
4. Assess understanding via a quick quiz or discussion.

## GAMIFIED CHALLENGES

**Turn tasks into games with points or levels**, allowing students to progress at their own pace and ability. Use during review sessions or to reinforce skills, when you want to boost motivation and engagement across abilities or accommodate varied skills.

### Steps:

1. Design a task with tiered challenges (e.g., *easy, medium, hard*).
2. Assign points for completion (e.g., *10 for easy, 20 for hard*).
3. Let students work individually or in teams for 20 minutes.
4. Track scores and celebrate progress.

## VISUAL PROGRESS TRACKERS

**Use visual charts or trackers for students to mark progress on tasks or skills**, motivating them to see growth. Use throughout a unit to monitor ongoing progress, especially when students need motivation or clear goals.

### Steps:

1. Create a tracker (e.g., *chart, checklist*) for a skill or unit.
2. Let students mark completed tasks or milestones (e.g., *stickers, checks*).
3. Review trackers weekly to discuss progress and set next steps.
4. Celebrate milestones with small rewards.

## GOAL-SETTING CHECKPOINTS

Students **set short-term learning goals and track progress with teacher guidance**, personalizing motivation and focus. Use at the start of a unit or after assessments to help students focus on personal growth, especially for long-term skill development.

### Steps:

1. Provide a goal-setting template (e.g., *"I will improve X by doing Y"*).
2. Spend 5 minutes helping students set goals based on recent work.
3. Check progress after 1-2 weeks via quick conferences or written updates.
4. Adjust goals as needed.

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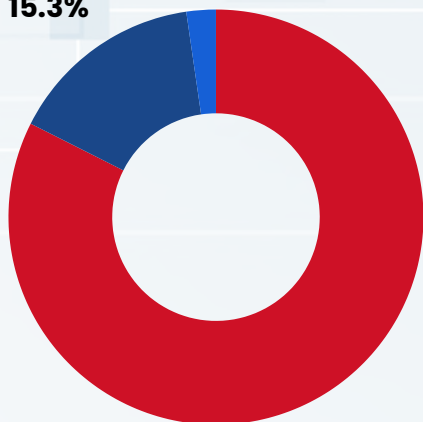
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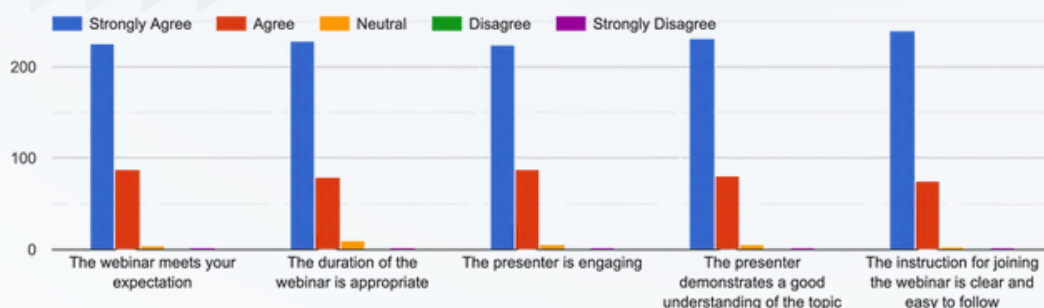


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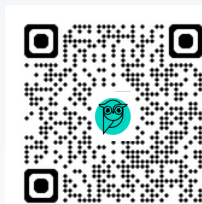


Survey participants: 320 responses

As we wrap up our 13th EduVerse webinar, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us. A special shout-out to **Aslom Ullah** from Qatar his practical insights and deep perspectives on harnessing AI. With **717 registrations** from **60 countries** and **390 participants live**, it was an unforgettable gathering of educators worldwide.



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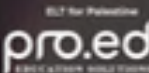
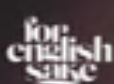
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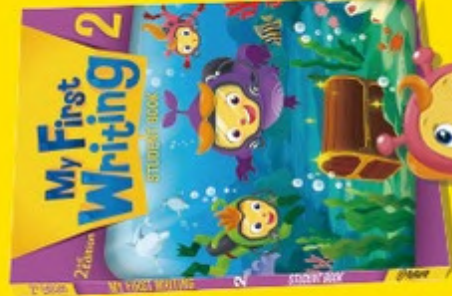
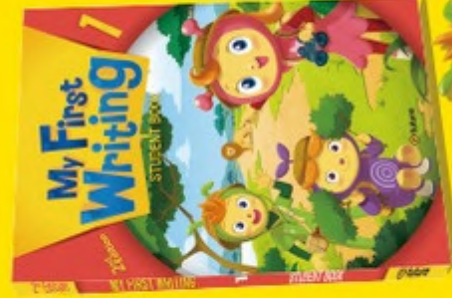
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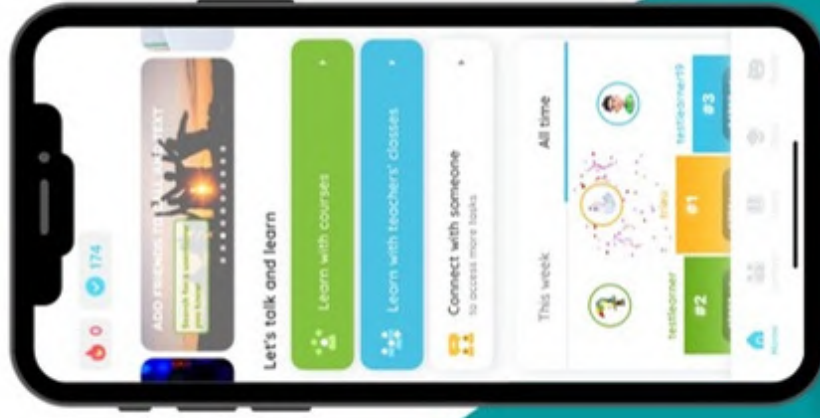
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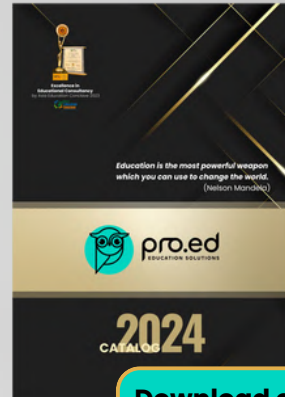
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