2026

Top AI Tools for Teachers

EXPLORE OUR CURATED COLLECTION OF EDUCATIONAL AI TOOLS FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

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Introduction

I often say that I feel lucky to be living in this moment and witnessing the scale of change unfolding around us. Few fields feel this shift as sharply as education, which happens to be where I work. Generative AI has pushed us to revisit some of the most basic assumptions that shaped schooling for decades. Assessment, feedback, authorship, and even what counts as learning now demand closer attention.

Many of us have reached a point where "business as usual" no longer makes sense. The elephant in the room keeps redrawing the boundaries and ignoring it does not make it disappear. Conversations about AI in education have grown intense, and I have taken part in many of them, especially on LinkedIn. My position, however, has stayed fairly steady: Embrace AI in your work and help your students develop a solid AI literacy foundation.

I strongly believe that resisting the AI-instigated shift is counter-intuitive to say the least especially given the genuine possibilities AI introduces. Blind enthusiasm misses the point as well. What education needs is a way to bring AI into the fold on its own terms. I often use the word "tame" deliberately. In its raw form, as it circulates across consumer platforms, AI can feel unruly for educational settings. Teaching requires pruning, shaping, and aligning tools with pedagogical goals. That work does not happen on its own.

This is where AI pedagogy comes in. By this I mean a broad instructional blueprint that guides how AI fits into teaching, learning, and assessment. Integration needs structure and grounding. Grabbing tools at random and dropping them into classrooms rarely leads to meaningful outcomes. Pedagogical intent has to lead.

In my book *Teaching with AI: Practical Strategies for Integrating Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom*, I outlined a roadmap for building this kind of foundation. I drew on familiar educational frameworks such as Bloom's revised taxonomy, the SAMR model, TPACK and its AI extensions, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge. These frameworks give educators a way to situate AI use within existing professional practice.

AI literacy plays a central role in this pedagogical picture. At a broad level, AI literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to engage thoughtfully with AI systems. In our forthcoming book, The BEARA Framework for Pedagogical AI Integration, co-authored with Dr. Johanathan Woodworth and published by the University of Toronto Press, we unpack this concept into more concrete components. One of those components focuses on familiarity with AI tools and practical access to them in instructional contexts.

This guide zooms in on that single, modest piece of the puzzle.

Based on my work as an AI researcher and long-time educational technology reviewer, I spend a great deal of time testing tools, tracking new features, and weighing their classroom relevance. Experience does count here. Teachers already carry full workloads, and few have the time or energy to sift through

the growing flood of AI products. A curated collection shaped by classroom realities can help narrow the field.

I still teach part time at Mount Saint Vincent University in Canada, which keeps me connected to day-to-day instructional constraints. That perspective matters. Recommendations coming from someone still working within these conditions tend to land differently.

For this guide, I revisited the collection I shared last year. Some tools no longer felt useful and were removed. Others earned a place because recent updates made them more relevant. New tools entered the list as well. Broadly speaking, much of the momentum in educational AI continues to come from two major players: OpenAI and Google. Both released features over the past year that have real implications for teaching and learning.

The guide opens with a brief review of some of these newer features. From there, you will find organized lists of AI tools across categories such as lesson planning, presentation creation, educational visuals, video recording, video editing, and related tasks teachers regularly face.

A quick note on transparency. I am not sponsored by, nor formally affiliated with, any of the tools featured here. I previously collaborated with Edcafe, but that partnership ended last year. Edcafe still appears in this guide because I continue to see strong educational value in the platform.

If you would like to learn more about my work, both academic and practitioner-focused, you can visit my website at www.medkharbach.com. If you have ideas around AI in education, collaborative research projects, or publication opportunities, feel free to reach out. I remain open to conversations that push this work forward.

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Montreal, Canada

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1. Major AI Updates Shaping Teaching and Learning

The world of AI has seen the introduction of several new features that carry direct relevance for us in education. Most of these updates, as I mentioned previously, come from two dominant players: Google and OpenAI. I am fully aware that other platforms have also evolved. Claude by Anthropic, Perplexity AI, and to a lesser extent Microsoft Copilot, have all introduced improvements worth noting. Still, this guide focuses only on features that I consider genuinely consequential for teaching and learning. At the moment, those features come largely from Google and OpenAI.

On a related note, the pace of AI development has not followed the trajectory many predicted. Toward the end of 2024, there was strong speculation that 2025 would mark the rise of agentic AI. That did not materialize. We remain far from that stage, and even further from any serious discussion of artificial general intelligence. What we have seen instead is consolidation, refinement, and selective expansion of existing capabilities.

I have also noticed a shift in momentum. Google has, for now, taken the lead in setting the direction of educationally relevant AI features. Many of the most consequential updates now appear in Gemini and NotebookLM, especially from the perspective of teaching, learning, and academic work. OpenAI continues to play a major role, but the center of gravity feels different than it did a year ago.

At the same time, I remain unconvinced that we are seeing meaningful advances in the linguistic or creative capacities of general-purpose chatbots. Systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude appear to have reached, or are very close to reaching, their current ceiling in this area.

Recent versions still produce language that carries recognizable patterns of machine-generated writing. Some surface-level issues have been addressed, such as the reduction of overly repetitive stylistic markers, but these changes reflect design interventions rather than deeper gains in intelligence.

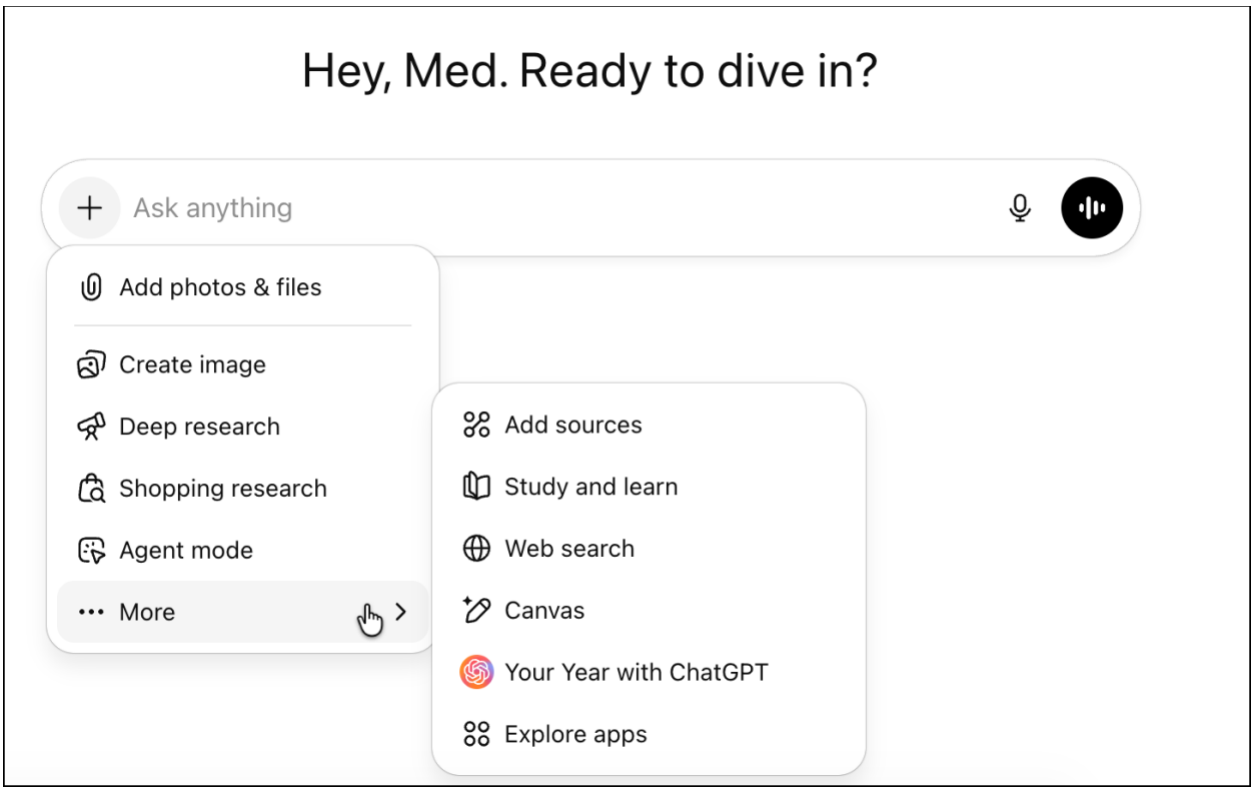
In practical terms, we remain at something like an undergraduate level of writing quality. I have argued elsewhere that this ceiling will remain in place unless major AI companies gain access to large bodies of high-quality, copyrighted academic work for training purposes. That path, however, raises serious ethical and legal concerns. Ongoing political shifts, particularly in the United States, suggest a possible loosening of restrictions and guardrails around training data. How far this will go remains uncertain, and its consequences are still unfolding.

With that context in mind, the rest of this section focuses on concrete updates that matter for educators. What follows is not a survey of everything new, but a selective look at features that change instructional possibilities in tangible ways.

I will begin with updates from OpenAI.

1.1. ChatGPT Updates Worth Noticing

ChatGPT remains my preferred general-purpose AI chatbot for everyday use. I find its creative writing capabilities stronger than those of Claude and Gemini. When it comes to academic prose, though, I still turn to Claude. It handles structure and tone more reliably in that context. That said, ChatGPT continues to introduce features worth paying attention to. Some matter more than others. Below are the updates I find most relevant.



1.1.1. ChatGPT 5.2

At the time of writing, ChatGPT 5.2 is the latest version of ChatGPT. Compared to earlier releases, it shows modest gains in areas such as coding support and mathematical reasoning. In creative writing, however, I do not see meaningful improvement. The same machine-like linguistic patterns remain

visible. Repetitive lexical choices persist, along with familiar structures such as overused contrast formulas and formulaic framing. These feel more like stylistic habits than signs of deeper linguistic growth.

1.1.2. Image Generator

This is where the most noticeable progress appears. The image generation capabilities in ChatGPT 5.2 are genuinely impressive. With carefully written prompts, the system produces high-quality visuals that can support instructional materials, presentations, and conceptual explanations. For teachers who rely on visual supports, this feature opens useful possibilities.

1.1.3. Deep Research

Although introduced toward the end of 2024, Deep Research effectively carried into 2025. I have tested it multiple times, including after recent updates. My experience remains consistent. For general inquiries, it performs reasonably well. For academic research, it falls short.

In areas related to my own research specialization, the reports it generates rely heavily on freely available sources surfaced through standard web searches. Foundational and seminal texts rarely appear in Deep Research outputs. For serious scholarly work, this limitation matters. Grey literature alone does not support strong research design or argumentation.

1.1.4. Agent Mode

Agent Mode, first introduced by OpenAI in July 2025, marks a more substantive shift. Here, ChatGPT moves beyond simple prompt-response interaction and begins to operate with a degree of task autonomy. This is still early-stage agentic AI, and its full potential remains ahead of us.

In educational contexts, I find Agent Mode particularly useful for synthesis tasks. One example I return to involves assigning it the task of scanning current discussions about AI use by teachers across platforms such as Reddit, LinkedIn, Facebook, and X. It does a solid job pulling together themes, tensions, and recurring concerns. I do see huge educational potential in this tool in the near future.

1.1.5. Study and Learn

Study and Learn is another noteworthy addition. It brings structured learning supports directly into ChatGPT. One of the most practical elements here is quizzes. At last, we have built-in quiz

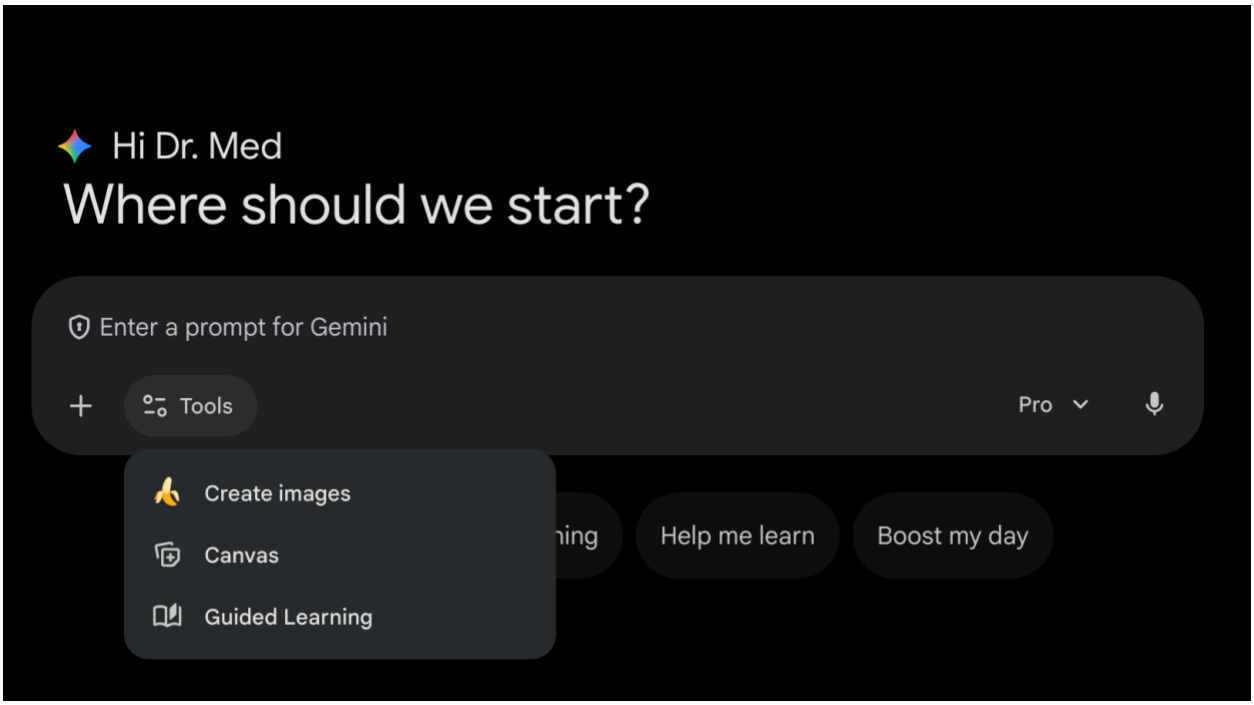
functionality. Teachers can use this feature to generate practice questions, quick checks for understanding, or informal review activities without leaving the interface.

Other new features added to ChatGPT in 2025 such as shopping-related research features, also exist, but they fall outside the scope of this guide and offer little relevance for educational use.

2. Gemini Updates Worth Noticing

Gemini has introduced several new features over the past year, including its latest version, Gemini 3. However, similar to ChatGPT's most recent release, the gains here appear mainly in logical and mathematical reasoning. I do not see noticeable improvement in expressive or creative writing. The language still carries familiar machine-like patterns which suggests that this area has reached a temporary ceiling across most general-purpose chatbots.

Where Gemini truly distinguishes itself is elsewhere.



2.1. Nano Banana Pro

Nano Banana Pro is a genuinely powerful feature and, in my view, clearly ahead of ChatGPT's image generator. It produces higher-resolution images and handles visual detail with greater consistency. Beyond generation, it also functions as a capable photo editor. Simple edits, refinements, and visual

adjustments feel more intuitive and, in many cases, easier than working through professional photo-editing software. For teachers who create visuals regularly, this feature alone makes Gemini worth serious attention.

2.2. Interactive Images

The Gemini app now allows users to create interactive images. These are not static visuals. Parts of an image can respond to clicks or taps, revealing explanations, labels, or additional information. Teachers can use this feature to support concept exploration in subjects such as science, geography, anatomy, or technical fields. Instead of presenting a finished diagram, instructors can invite students to explore it. This shifts visual materials from passive reference to active learning support.

2.3. Guided Learning

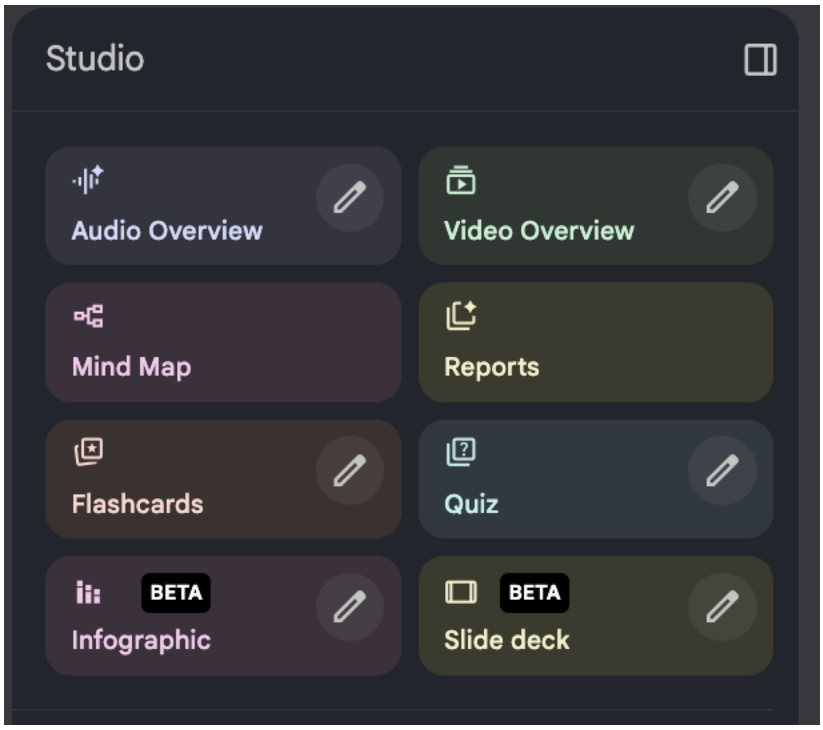
Guided Learning is another meaningful addition. This feature structures learning interactions step by step. Gemini asks clarifying questions, adjusts difficulty, and offers feedback based on user responses. Students can use it to support independent study, revision, or concept reinforcement. It is also equally helpful for teachers by offering them a way to model scaffolded instruction and guided practice without building everything from scratch.

Generally speaking, these features show where Gemini currently helps. The platform may not lead in creative language production, but it is setting the pace in visual learning, interactive content, and guided instructional support.

3. NotebookLM

If one tool has clearly pulled ahead this year, it is NotebookLM. In many ways, it has taken the spotlight from other platforms, especially for educators and researchers. The updates introduced in 2025 feel focused, practical, and closely aligned with how teachers actually work with content.

NotebookLM continues to build around a simple but powerful idea: your sources come first. The new features deepen that approach and extend it in directions that are very helpful for us in teaching, learning, and academic work.



3.1. Generate Slide Decks

NotebookLM can now turn your sources into complete slide decks ready for presentation. These slides are not generic summaries. They stay anchored in the materials you upload. Everything remains editable, which makes it easy to adjust language, structure, or depth based on grade level or audience. For teachers who already work from articles, notes, or course readings, this feature can save you a lot of time.

3.2. Create Infographics

Another strong addition is infographic generation. NotebookLM can produce clean, high-quality visual summaries drawn directly from your uploaded materials. Key ideas are highlighted in a clear and student-friendly format. This works well for concept overviews, revision materials, or visual explanations that support understanding.

3.3. Run Deep Research

NotebookLM's approach to deep research differs from what we see in general-purpose chatbots. It builds structured reports based strictly on your sources, not the open web. Citations stay visible, and connections between ideas remain traceable. You can pull everything directly into your notebook for

further analysis, annotation, or expansion. For academic work and serious inquiry, this source-grounded model makes a real difference.

3.4. Upload Photos

NotebookLM now supports photo uploads, including handwritten notes, diagrams, charts, and textbook pages. Once uploaded, the system reads and integrates this material into your notebook. You can then ask questions, request summaries, or explore connections across your notes. This feature bridges the gap between paper-based work and digital analysis in a very natural way.

3.5. Create Custom Video Overview Styles

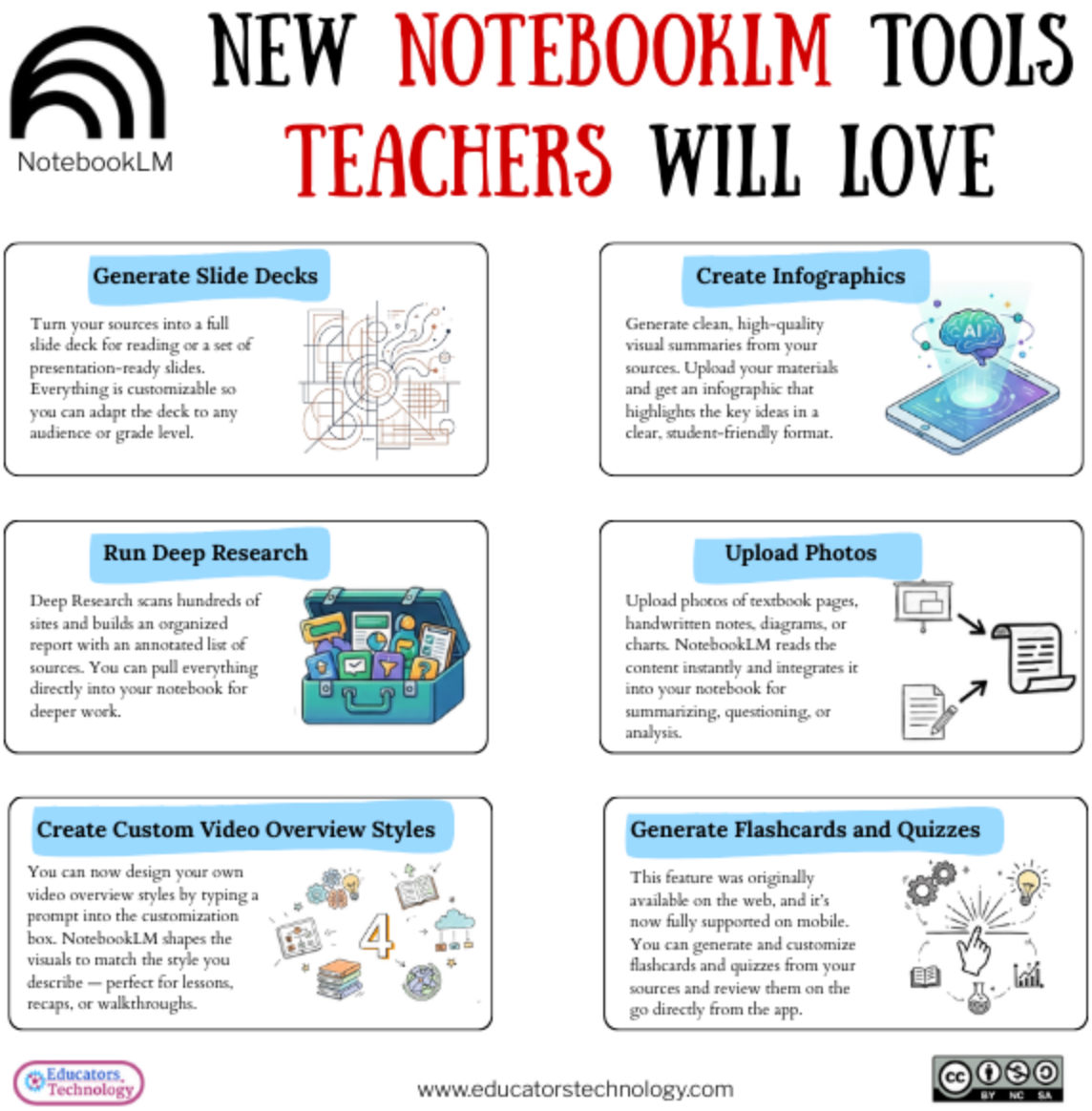
Another notable update allows you to generate video overviews using customizable visual styles. Teachers can shape the tone and structure of these videos to match lessons, recaps, or walkthroughs. This works particularly well for short explanations or flipped classroom materials built directly from existing notes and sources.

3.6. Generate Flashcards and Quizzes

NotebookLM now includes built-in flashcard and quiz generation. These are created directly from your materials and are fully supported on mobile devices. Students can study, review, and test themselves from the app, while teachers can quickly create formative practice aligned with course content. This feature ties content creation and assessment together in a way that feels seamless.

All of these updates show that NotebookLM is becoming a central tool in education. It is refining a source-centered workflow that supports thinking, teaching, and learning in ways no other AI-enabled tool can do. And when it comes to clarity, traceability, and control over sourced materials, NotebookLM currently sets a very high bar.

Now, let's move to the part most of you are looking forward to: curated AI tools!



3. AI Tools for Teachers

As I mentioned above, As I mentioned in the introduction to this guide, my work in the field of AI puts me in regular contact with a wide range of tools. Some come my way through fellow teachers and researchers. Others surface through professional discussions, forums, and communities where educators share what they are experimenting with in real classrooms.

Over the past few years, I have developed a simple habit. At the start of each year, I step back and share a curated collection of AI tools that I believe can genuinely support teachers' work. This guide continues that practice.

The selection is, of course, subjective. Still, it is not arbitrary. It reflects a pedagogical lens shaped by long-term classroom experience and more than fifteen years of reviewing educational technology tools. I pay close attention to how tools fit into teaching routines, how they support learning goals, and how sustainable they feel once the initial excitement fades.

The tools that follow are not chosen because they are new or trendy. They are included because they solve real instructional problems, save time where it matters, and align with the kinds of pedagogical decisions teachers make every day.

Presentation Making Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
Edcafe	Generates complete slide decks from topics, texts, or uploaded materials. Teachers can choose slide counts, tones, and visuals.
NotebookLM	AI-powered tool that works with your sources to create summaries, slide decks, quizzes, infographics, and study materials grounded in uploaded texts and notes.
Diffit	Generates detailed educational resources, including customizable slides, from topics or standards.
Canva AI	Easy-to-use tool for creating visually rich presentations using Magic Design and Magic Write features.
MagicSlides	AI platform offering tools to create PowerPoint slides from various sources like PDFs, keywords, and YouTube videos.
SlidesAI	Slides add-on for creating AI-generated presentations with editable text and images.
Google Slides	Cloud-based presentation tool with built-in AI features that help generate slide content, refine text, suggest layouts, and support collaboration in real time.
Gamma	Turns outlines or written content into engaging, scrollable presentations. Offers smart formatting, quick theme adjustments, and web-based sharing options.

Lesson Planning Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
Almanack	Generates full lesson plans with slides, worksheets, and classroom activities aligned with instructional goals.
Diffit	Creates differentiated instructional materials such as worksheets, quizzes, and readings tailored to different learning levels.
Curipod	Builds interactive lessons from a topic or uploaded document, including questions, polls, and student engagement prompts.
Brisk Teaching	Turns online resources into ready-to-use lessons, presentations, and classroom activities.
Eduaide	Offers a large collection of AI-powered tools to create lesson plans, activities, assessments, and instructional supports.
MagicSchool	Provides access to dozens of teacher-focused AI tools, including lesson planning, rubric creation, and classroom communication.
Edcafe	Creates structured, ready-to-use lesson plans with objectives, activities, assessments, and supporting materials in minutes.
Claude	Helps draft clear, structured lesson plans with well-defined objectives, activities, and assessments.
ChatGPT	Supports quick creation of customizable lesson plans aligned with learning goals and classroom needs.

AI Image Generation Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
Nano Banana	High-resolution image generator and photo editor that supports detailed visuals and quick edits for instructional materials.
ChatGPT Image Generator	Creates classroom-ready images from text prompts, useful for presentations, worksheets, and visual explanations.
Midjourney	Generates highly detailed and artistic images suited for creative projects, visual storytelling, and design-focused lessons.
Napkin AI	Specialized tool for creating diagrams, flowcharts, concept maps, and structured visual explanations.
Adobe Firefly	Generates images and design elements with strong control over style and layout, well suited for educational and branded content.
Ideogram	Text-focused image generator that produces visuals with accurate typography, useful for posters, labels, and instructional graphics.

Video Creation Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
NotebookLM Video Overviews	Creates short video overviews directly from your uploaded notes and sources, allowing teachers to explain key ideas while staying grounded in course materials.
Sora	Transforms text prompts into short, animated video scenes, useful for concept illustration and storytelling.
Vidnoz AI	Generates videos with customizable virtual characters, voiceovers, and presentation-style layouts.
Lumen5	Turns text into videos using ready-made templates, visuals, and simple collaboration features.
Invideo	Converts text or blog content into videos with automated scene selection and editable templates.
Veed	Edits and enhances videos with subtitles, text-to-video tools, and classroom-friendly templates.
Fliki	Converts text into professional videos with realistic voiceovers and simple visual layouts.
Pictory	Creates instructional videos from text or web content and adds captions and summaries automatically
Synthesia	Creates videos with AI avatars and natural-sounding voiceovers in multiple languages, useful for lectures and explainers.

AI Tools for Academic Research

AI-enabled Tool	Description
Elicit	Supports literature reviews by finding relevant papers, summarizing key findings, and extracting evidence from research articles.
NotebookLM	Works directly with uploaded papers and notes to generate summaries, comparisons, research questions, and structured insights grounded in your sources.
Consensus	Searches research papers to provide evidence-based answers with direct links to supporting studies.
Julius	Helps analyze research data, interpret results, and generate explanations using natural language prompts.
RDiscovery	Personalized research discovery tool that recommends relevant academic papers based on your interests and reading history.
Scite	Shows how research papers are cited, helping researchers see supporting, contrasting, and contextual citations.
ResearchRabbit	Visualizes research networks and citation relationships to support literature exploration and gap identification.
Connected Papers	Maps relationships between academic papers to help researchers trace foundational works and related studies.
Google Scholar	Google Scholar now includes AI-assisted features that help summarize papers, surface key sections, and suggest related research more efficiently, making literature exploration faster while keeping results grounded in scholarly sources.

Quiz Generation Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
NotebookLM Quizzes	Generates quizzes and practice questions directly from uploaded notes, readings, and documents, allowing teachers to create formative assessments that stay tightly aligned with course materials.
ChatGPT Quizzes	Built-in quiz generation feature that creates practice questions, quick checks, and review quizzes from prompts, topics, or uploaded content.
Gemini Guided Learning	Study-focused tools that generate quizzes, guided questions, and practice activities tied to specific concepts or learning goals.
Wayground AI (formerly Quizizz)	Creates interactive, game-based quizzes with AI support for question generation, differentiation, and real-time student feedback.
Conker	Generates standards-aligned quizzes that teachers can customize and deploy quickly for formative assessment.
Brisk Teaching	Creates quizzes and checks for understanding directly from lesson content, documents, or online resources.
Kahoot! AI	Uses AI to generate quiz questions from topics or uploaded content, with strong support for live, game-based formative assessment.

Text to Speech Tools

AI-enabled Tool	Description
ElevenLabs	High-quality, natural-sounding voice generation useful for narration, lesson audio, and instructional explanations.
Speechify	Turns written content into audio for listening on the go, supporting reading comprehension and accessibility.
NaturalReader	Converts text into clear speech for documents, PDFs, and web pages, helpful for student access and review.
LovoAI	Produces voiceovers for videos, lessons, and podcasts, with multilingual support and voice customization options.
Resemble AI	Focuses on voice cloning and custom voice creation, useful for personalized narration and interactive learning experiences.
Murf AI	Creates AI-generated voiceovers in many languages with adjustable tone and style, useful for instructional videos and narrated presentations.
Play.ht	Text-to-speech tool that converts documents and web content into natural-sounding audio, with support for multiple languages and browser integration.

Conclusion

As I was finishing this guide, I came across a call for papers for a special issue titled *Decolonising AI in Educational Studies: Wayfinding Approaches* in the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*. The idea of wayfinding immediately resonated with me. It captures, better than most labels, where we currently stand with AI in education.

There is no single map. No fixed route. No universal model that works across contexts, disciplines, or classrooms. AI integration today feels less like following a blueprint and more like navigating unfamiliar terrain. As a teacher, you are not a passive user of tools. You are a navigator. You make choices, adjust direction, and respond to the conditions around you.

As you chart your own path, a few signposts can help keep your direction clear. Build your AI pedagogy so your choices have purpose. Strengthen your AI literacy so you understand what tools can and cannot do. Gain access to educational AI tools and use them strategically. Lean on established educational technology frameworks such as Bloom's revised taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge, the SAMR model, or TPACK to guide decisions and maintain pedagogical coherence.

If you are looking for a more detailed and structured roadmap, I invite you to explore my book *Teaching with AI: Practical Strategies for Integrating Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom*, where I lay out these ideas in greater depth and connect them directly to classroom practice.

I wish you all the best as you continue your own AI integration journey. If you need support, have questions, or want to share ideas, I am always open to conversation. You can reach me anytime at info@medkharbach.com.