TECHNOLOGY TOOLKIT

Website Proposal

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Introduction

My name is Liezl van Wyk. I am a passionate educator, curriculum developer, and current graduate student in Instructional Design and Technology at Walden University. I am from South Africa but live and teach in Ningbo, China. I bring over 14+ years of international teaching experience across the foundation phase, English as a Second Language (ESL), phonics, STEAM, and leadership skills.

Throughout my career, I have worn many hats, including those of teacher, mentor, team lead, play therapist, and curriculum designer. Whether in bustling classrooms or quiet moments with struggling learners, my driving motivation has always been to inspire minds and make learning a joyful, inclusive, and accessible experience.

Over the past several years, I have led professional development sessions, supported new teachers, and helped integrate digital tools into daily teaching. This firsthand experience with the challenges and possibilities of education technology has fueled my desire to bridge the gap between innovation and practicality, especially in the era of AI.

As I shift into the world of instructional design, I bring a deep respect for educators, a love of playful and purposeful learning, and a mission to simplify complex tools so that teachers can focus on what they do best, connecting with their students.

This proposal reflects the heart of that mission. 'AI in Action: Smart Tools for Smarter Classrooms' is more than a class project; it is a personal and professional response to the growing need for clarity, support, and inspiration in tech-infused teaching. It is my way of giving back to a community that has given me so much.

Problem

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly reshaping the educational landscape. Still, many educators are being left behind, not due to a lack of interest but due to a **lack of guidance, clarity, and time**. Despite AI's promise to enhance personalization, streamline workflows, and support inclusive practices, its potential often goes untapped in real classrooms.

The core challenges teachers face include:

- **Overwhelmed by rapid tech advancement**

Many teachers feel swamped by the flood of new tools and terminology. They do not know where to begin, what is safe, or how AI can align with best practices.

- **Lack of practical, classroom-tested examples**

Existing resources are often too abstract, theoretical, or tech-heavy. Teachers need examples that feel real and relatable, not research papers or vague overviews.

- **Ethical and data privacy concerns**

Educators are rightfully cautious about student data and AI's decision-making. There is confusion about what tools are appropriate, especially for younger learners.

- **Inconsistent access to professional development**

Not all schools offer training or mentorship around emerging technologies. Teachers are expected to integrate tools without proper onboarding or sufficient time to explore them.

- **Difficulty in differentiating AI's role**

There is a common misconception that AI will replace teachers. Instead, teachers need help understanding how AI can assist rather than automate their expertise.

Purpose

"AI in Action: Smart Tools for Smarter Classrooms" aims to create an accessible, empowering, and visually engaging website that helps educators confidently integrate artificial intelligence into their teaching practice. The site will serve as both a practical toolkit and a source of inspiration, designed to demystify AI and make it usable in everyday classroom contexts.

This toolkit will:

- Equip teachers with practical, time-saving tools for lesson planning, grading, content creation, and personalized learning, allowing them to spend more time teaching and connecting with students.
- Provide clear, step-by-step tutorials, classroom examples, and adaptable templates to bridge the gap between curiosity and confidence.
- Showcase AI as a teaching assistant, not a replacement, that can help educators meet diverse learner needs, differentiate instruction, and personalize feedback.
- Encourage ethical, age-appropriate use of AI by highlighting privacy considerations, digital citizenship, and responsible prompt engineering.
- Serve as a living resource that evolves with the field, allowing educators to return for updates, new tools, and community-shared practices.

The website will be shared and used through:

- School-based professional development sessions.

- Resource hubs such as SharePoint or Google Drive shared folders.
- QR codes on posters, the staff room, meeting rooms, teacher handbooks, or teacher offices link to key toolkit pages.

Whether educators are exploring AI for the first time or seeking fresh ways to use familiar tools, **AI in Action** will meet them where they are and grow with them.

Audience

The primary audience for "AI in Action: Smart Tools for Smarter Classrooms" is K–12 educators, especially those working in bilingual, international, or technologically transitioning school environments. These teachers are passionate about their students and open to innovation, but often feel overwhelmed, under-resourced, or unsure about where to begin with artificial intelligence in education.

This toolkit also has secondary audiences:

- Curriculum developers are seeking to enhance instruction through AI-infused content.
- Instructional coaches and school leaders who support teacher development.
- Pre-service teachers and education students are learning how to integrate emerging technologies.

Audience needs the toolkit to address:

- **Clarity in a complex digital world**

  Teachers want straightforward explanations of what AI is and how it can support their work, not complicate it.

- **Real-world relevance**

  Educators seek tools that are not just "cool" but also usable for classroom tasks such as lesson planning, grading, and content creation.

- **Time-saving resources**

  With already-packed schedules, teachers appreciate quick-start guides, editable templates, and tutorials that allow them to implement tools without a steep learning curve.

- **Student-centered applications**

  Educators are increasingly focused on meeting the needs of diverse learners. They need technology that helps personalize instruction, boosts engagement, and fosters inclusion.

- **Ongoing professional growth**

  Many teachers are eager to learn, explore, and grow, but often lack access to AI-focused professional development opportunities. This site provides that in a digestible, teacher-friendly format.

What the audience can expect from the toolkit:

- A carefully curated collection of AI tools organized by real classroom use cases.
- Short video tutorials, use guides, and best practices.
- A consistent focus on ethics, student safety, and accessibility.
- A community-driven feel, with resources that speak the language of educators, not engineers.

Whether users are tech novices or early adopters, this toolkit will meet teachers where they are and empower them to grow, one tool and one spark of curiosity at a time.

Tool Categories

Each category will feature AI-powered tools selected based on usability, accessibility, ethical use, and classroom relevance:

Category	Relevance & Sample Tools
Communication and collaboration	Tools like Google Classroom, Canva, Curipod, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom to generate discussions, feedback, and collaborative prompts.
Lesson planning and content creation	Tools like Canva AI, ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Eduaide.ai, Curipod, Diffit, and Brisk to help teachers plan and adapt lessons
Multimedia	Tools like Canva AI, Pictory, and DALL·E to create custom visuals, videos, and stories.
Online and Blended Learning	Tools like Conker.ai and Khanmigo support flipped learning and formative assessments.
Games and Simulations	AI-based quiz builders and storytelling games from Brisk Teaching, Quizizz AI, Padlett, Edpuzzle, Quizlet, Kahoot! and TinyTap AI to enhance student engagement and make learning fun and accessible to all learning needs.
Virtual Reality	Use of ThingLink AI, Nearpod, or Google VR Tour Creator to allow AI-assisted immersive learning.
Additional Resources	AI prompt libraries, student safety guidelines, and critical thinking tasks on AI ethics are designed to support teachers and help them use the correct language to achieve the best possible outcome for their specific needs.

Tool selection criteria will include:

- Ease of use
- Cost (free or freemium)
- Data privacy and ethical use in K–12 settings
- Impact on student engagement and differentiation

Goals

"AI in Action: Smart Tools for Smarter Classrooms" aims to equip educators with the tools, confidence, and ethical understanding needed to integrate AI meaningfully into their teaching practice. This is more than just a digital collection; it is a launchpad for transformative instruction that saves time, supports personalization, and sparks creativity.

- **Promote Equity**

  Ensure all teachers, regardless of their tech skill level, have access to practical tools that support diverse learners, including English language learners, neurodivergent students, and students with varying reading levels.

- **Empower Educators**

  This toolkit reduces cognitive load by offering ready-to-use resources that streamline lesson planning, grading, and assessment. It allows teachers to focus more on student engagement and relationships. It empowers educators, giving them the confidence and capability to navigate the digital landscape easily.

- **Foster Innovation**

  Inspire teachers to experiment with AI storytelling, design, and interactivity tools, encouraging creative risk-taking and the development of 21st-century skills.

- **Encourage Ethical Use**

  Guide data privacy, academic honesty, and age-appropriate use of AI tools. Help teachers become role models for responsible digital citizenship.

- **Promote Lifelong Learning**

  Encourage teachers to continuously build their digital fluency by exploring and revisiting the toolkit as their needs evolve.

- **Build a Community of Practice**

  This website is not just a collection of tools, but a collaborative hub where teachers can share experiences, suggest tools, and co-create lesson ideas based on the AI tools showcased. It fosters a sense of community, connecting educators and providing a platform for shared learning and growth.

Action Plan for Sharing the Toolkit:

To ensure maximum impact and usability, the toolkit will be shared in various formats and platforms across different touchpoints in my professional and academic networks.

1. Internal Launch at School

i. Introduce the site during a staff meeting or professional development session.
ii. Host a "Tech Try Day" where teachers can explore a tool live and reflect on implementation.
iii. Create QR codes or print-ready handouts that link directly to specific toolkit pages (e.g., "5 AI tools for lesson planning in 15 minutes").

2. Integration with Mentorship and Coaching

i. Share the toolkit with curriculum leads and new teacher mentors to support onboarding.
ii. Embed it into shared planning folders (e.g., via SharePoint or Google Drive) for easy access during collaborative planning.

3. Sustainability and Updates

i. Maintain the site by adding new tools, success stories, and teacher-tested lesson examples.
ii. Survey users periodically to identify needs and refine the toolkit's relevance and accessibility.

Conclusion

AI in Action: Smart Tools for Smarter Classrooms" is more than just a website—it's a movement toward empowerment, innovation, and equity in education. In an era when artificial intelligence can feel overwhelming or even intimidating, this toolkit presents a different narrative: one of possibility, practicality, and purpose.

By combining accessible tutorials, real-life classroom examples, and ethically guided tool selection, this project provides a bridge between curiosity and confident implementation. It invites educators to explore AI not as a distant future, but as a present-day partner in lesson planning, differentiation, collaboration, and creativity.

This toolkit aims to:

- Spark joy and curiosity in exploring new digital tools.
- Reduce the mental load that many teachers carry around technology integration.
- Celebrate the educator's role as a designer of learning, not just a content deliverer.
- Promote digital equity by ensuring free or freemium access to practical and effective tools.
- Foster meaningful professional growth and peer collaboration.

Ultimately, this project reflects my belief that **technology, especially AI, should never replace teachers, but elevate their brilliance.**

With this proposal, I'm not just building a toolkit. I'm helping build a future where every educator feels supported, and every student benefits from thoughtful, engaging, and inclusive digital learning experiences.