AI-based writing tools in the EFL classroom

Indicative time: 35 minutes

Situation
As a language teacher, you take part in an online professional forum on foreign language teaching. Two colleagues have posted contrasting opinions on using AI-based writing tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DeepL Write) in the EFL classroom.

Task
First, read the two forum posts below. Then, write your own forum contribution (200–250 words) in which you:

- evaluate the arguments in both colleagues' posts,
- justify your own professional position,
- illustrate your points with relevant, specific examples from your teaching experience.

Use a professional register appropriate for a public forum of teaching professionals.

Text #1 – Lea Hoffmann
Forum post: "AI tools – a valuable resource for language teachers"

In my view, we should embrace the pedagogical opportunities that AI-based writing tools offer in the EFL classroom. These applications can provide learners with immediate, individualised feedback on grammar, style, and vocabulary – a level of responsiveness that even the most dedicated teacher cannot feasibly deliver to every student at all times. This kind of instant support can foster greater learner autonomy and motivation, especially in large or mixed-ability classrooms.

Moreover, AI tools can facilitate differentiated instruction: less confident writers receive targeted support, while more advanced students can be challenged with increasingly sophisticated tasks. Crucially, the ability to work effectively with such technology is becoming a core 21st-century skill; in many professions, AI-assisted writing is already part of everyday practice. By integrating these tools into our teaching, we help students develop digital literacy that aligns with real-world communication demands. For example, students may use AI to help draft emails for school projects, create scripts for video presentations, or write blog posts for class websites—tasks that mirror the kinds of digital communication they will encounter in both academic and everyday contexts.

Admittedly, there is a need to guide students towards critical and responsible use, ensuring they understand both the benefits and limitations of these tools. Nevertheless, when integrated thoughtfully, AI can enhance rather than replace the teacher's role, adding a versatile and future-oriented dimension to our teaching repertoire. Teachers remain essential in fostering creativity, ethical awareness, and deeper language understanding that AI alone cannot provide.

Text #2 – Farhan Khan
Forum post: "AI tools – a threat to real language learning?"

Lea, while I acknowledge your points, I remain unconvinced. In my experience, introducing AI writing tools into the EFL classroom risks undermining the very skills we aim to cultivate. If students can instantly produce fluent sentences with minimal effort, they may bypass the cognitive struggle that is essential for developing both accuracy and personal voice in writing. While fostering learner autonomy and motivation is valuable, I worry that instant support may encourage dependency rather than resilience in the writing process.

Writing is not merely the mechanical production of error-free text; it is an iterative process of trial, reflection, and refinement. If AI automates too much of that process, we risk creating competent editors of machine-generated output rather than independent thinkers in the target language. Digital literacy is indeed important, but it should not come at the expense of deeper linguistic engagement and authentic self-expression. Students must learn to wrestle with language, not just manipulate it through tools.

There is also the matter of assessment integrity: without clear safeguards, it becomes difficult to determine which aspects of a text reflect the learner's own ability. In the long run, such tools may accelerate writing speed, but I question whether they can genuinely deepen communicative competence. I agree that teachers play a vital role in fostering creativity and ethical awareness, but I remain skeptical that AI can truly complement this role without diluting the pedagogical value of struggle and discovery.

Hinweis zur Bewertung:

Ihre Leistung wird anhand folgender Kriterien beurteilt:

- **Erfüllung der Aufgabenstellung** – Vollständige und präzise Umsetzung aller Aufgabenteile; klar strukturierter Aufbau und wirksame Erfüllung des Kommunikationszwecks.

- **Sprachliches Spektrum** – Verwendung eines breiten, auch fachlich differenzierten Wortschatzes und vielfältiger grammatikalischer Strukturen.

- **Sprachrichtigkeit allgemein** – Hohe Korrektheit in Grammatik, Wortwahl, Rechtschreibung und Zeichensetzung – auch bei komplexeren Formulierungen.