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Fire, aim, ready…
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Education has always been a field where change can feel slow, weighed down by caution and tradition. Yet, in an era where artificial intelligence is reshaping industries and transforming daily life, teachers and school leaders have a unique opportunity to lead with courage and curiosity.

AI tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot offer practical ways to enhance teaching, streamline workloads, and engage students in new and exciting ways. However, waiting for permission or mandates to explore these tools risks missing out on the valuable, context-specific solutions that grassroots innovation can bring.

Consider the story of a principal at a small rural school in Australia who decided to pilot AI tools for generating academic report comments. By working with his staff to use ChatGPT to craft consistent, student-specific feedback based on teacher input, the school saved over 40 hours of the principal's own time - time that could now be redirected toward classroom visits, coaching, and strategic planning.

The results didn't stop there: parent queries and complaints about reports dropped significantly, thanks to clearer, more consistent comments across the school. What began as a small experiment had a profound impact, enhancing the school's efficiency and building trust within the community. This is a true story.

By taking small, thoughtful steps to experiment with AI, educators can identify ethical boundaries, refine their professional judgment, and uncover practical benefits that fit their unique contexts.

The 25 tips that follow are designed to inspire you to try at least one idea, no matter how small. Let this be the spark that lights your journey toward harnessing AI, not just as a futuristic concept, but as a grounded, effective tool for education today. The first step is yours to take - bravely.

25 ideas to start '25

A   For School Leaders

Draft a Strategic Plan: Get AI to outline a first draft for your school improvement plan based on key focus areas

Email Templates: Quickly create professional responses to common parent inquiries.

Meeting Agendas: Generate tailored agendas for staff or board meetings based on your goals.

Policy Starter: [Draft a policy on emerging issues like AI ethics or digital well-being.](#)

Vision Statements: [Brainstorm creative and inspiring language for your school's mission and vision.](#)

B   For Teachers

Lesson Planning: Type in your topic and get instant outlines, activities, or worksheets.

Student Feedback: Generate personalised and constructive comments for report cards or assignments.

Icebreaker Activities: Create engaging warm-up tasks or trivia for your subject.

Rubrics: Build assessment rubrics tailored to your tasks in seconds.

Differentiation Ideas: Ask for ways to adjust a lesson for students with varying needs.

[You might also like to try tools like [AmplifyU](#) for more tailored experiences for teachers]

C   For Admin Staff

Automated Replies: Draft polite responses to common inquiries about enrolments or events.

Event Planning: Use AI to brainstorm themes, checklists, or schedules for school events.

Social Media Posts: Create engaging captions and content ideas for your school's Instagram or Facebook.

Policy Summaries: Summarise lengthy policies or procedures into bullet points for quick reference.

Forms and Flyers: Generate the wording for permission slips, flyers, or newsletters.

D   For Students

Study Notes: Turn a dense paragraph into bullet-point notes for easier revision. Then add these to Cornell notes by hand.

Practice Questions: Create multiple-choice or short-answer questions for self-assessment. Ask AI to be the quizmaster.

Brainstorming Support: Get quick ideas for projects, essays, or creative writing tasks.

Language Help: Translate, simplify, or explain tricky vocabulary or concepts.

Time Management Tips: Ask for tips on balancing homework, study, and relaxation.

E   For Parents

Homework Help: Clarify challenging homework by asking AI to explain the idea or problem in relation to a sport or other activity your child knows well. Top tip: sit beside your children so you can both learn how AI can (and can't) help!

Conversation Starters: Ask for questions to spark meaningful dinner table conversations about learning.

Parent-Teacher Night Prep: Draft questions to ask teachers at the next school event.

Summer Activities: Get suggestions for fun, educational activities for holidays that require household items and no technology at all.

F   For Fun!

25. **Write a Poem or Story**: Create a compelling poem about my school [insert school name and location] to include in a speech to staff to begin the school year, including at least one reference to a Australian song, artist or band.

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These are just a few examples of how AI can save you time, spark ideas, and make daily tasks a bit easier. At **The Next Word**, we're here to help you make the most of these tools, whether through workshops, one-on-one coaching, or tailored solutions for your school.

Matt Esterman has over 15 years working in schools and beyond as a leading voice in the thoughtful adoption of technology. Matt has founded The Next Word, a consultancy that seeks to leverage AI and other technologies to help shape a better future.