

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO CATER FOR LEARNER DIVERSITY IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

**Workshops for English Language Teachers to Enhance their Capacity in
Implementing e-Learning in the English Language Curriculum for the 2025/26
School Year**

PATRICK LAM



Workshop intended learning outcomes

By the end of the workshop, you should be able to

- Apply key principles of catering for learner diversity (i.e. differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning, UDL) on designing English learning tasks
 - Apply appropriate technology-enhanced scaffolding strategies to motivate students and cater for diverse learning needs
- 

Main ideas

1. Key theory and discussion
2. CLD through **differentiated representation**
 1. Listening to the text (NaturalReaders.com)
 2. Making a mindmap (MindMapAi.app)
 3. Making a slideshow (Gamma.app)
3. CLD through **differentiated means of engagement**
 1. Chatting about a text (Grok Voice Mode)
4. CLD through **differentiated actions and expressions**
 1. Poster presentation + lobbying (Nano Banana 2)

The Core of Differentiated Instruction



Addressing Variability



Language proficiency



Background knowledge



Learning pace



Confidence in using English



Technical readiness*



The 4 Levers

Teachers adjust:



CONTENT – what students learn



PROCESS – how they learn



PRODUCT – how they show learning



ENVIRONMENT – the learning space



The Mindset

Effective DI is:



Proactive



Flexible



Based on clear learning goals



“Technology helps us differentiate without creating 5 separate lesson plans.”

*using technology for CLD

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The 3 UDL Principles:



Multiple means of Representation
→ How information is presented



Multiple means of Action & Expression
→ How students show learning



Multiple means of Engagement
→ How students stay motivated

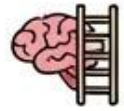
Why UDL matters in ESL:

- ✓ Reduces **language barriers**
- ✓ Supports **mixed proficiency** classes
- ✓ Benefits all learners, not just weaker ones

Key takeaway: “Good UDL reduces the need for ‘special’ accommodations later.”

ZPD & Scaffolding: Supporting Learning Towards Independence

Key Ideas:



Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

→ Learning happens when tasks are slightly beyond what students can do alone, but possible with support



Scaffolding is NOT just making tasks easier

- ✓ It is about **adjusting** the **level and type of support**
- ✗ Not simply simplifying language or lowering expectations

Why this matters in ESL (PPP framework):



Presentation:

More **support** (models, examples, visuals)



Practice:

Guided support (sentence starters, prompts, feedback)



Production:

- ✓ Students use language **independently**
- ✗ Not relying on templates, word banks, or teacher prompts forever

Key takeaway: Scaffolding should be **temporary, not permanent, to build independence.**

Discuss and share: does this design agree with Differentiated Instruction Principles?

	“Weaker students”	“Stronger students”
Input	• 1 sample essay on the impact of smartphone • 1 video on the impact of AI with transcription • 1 vocabulary list with sample sentences	• 3 sample cause-and-effect essays • 1 sample essay on the impact of smartphone • 1 video on the impact of AI with transcription
Product	• Scaffolded worksheet with suggested vocabulary or phrases	• Full essay writing, focused marking

Case study: Ms Choi’s Class Argumentative essay on the impact of AI

S4 students, noticeable diversity in language proficiency and motivation

English Language
Education
Key Learning Area
Curriculum Guide
(Primary 1 -
Secondary 6)
(CDC, 2017)



Teachers are encouraged to:

- adopt **learner-centred approaches**
- use **IT to provide flexible access to learning**
- support students with **diverse abilities, interests, and learning needs**

Technology is positioned as a means to:

- provide **multiple modes of input**
- facilitate **self-paced learning**
- support **independent learning**, rather than replacing pedagogy

Relevant pages:

- pp. 72–77 – Catering for Learner Diversity
- pp. 8 & 62–63 – Information Technology for Interactive Learning

Articulating achievement progression for curriculum and/or materials design

Language Progression Framework



Reading Skills

The Learning Progression Framework for ENGLISH LANGUAGE (READING SKILLS)							
Reading - ATM 1	Reading - ATM 2	Reading - ATM 3	Reading - ATM 4	Reading - ATM 5	Reading - ATM 6	Reading - ATM 7	Reading - ATM 8
Understanding information and ideas in some short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate	Understanding information, ideas and feelings in a small range of short simple texts, using some reading strategies as appropriate
Underlying Principles							
5. Language development strategies, generic skills, and positive values and attitudes are essential to English Language learning and form an integral part of the learning teaching assessment cycle. 6. Learners are exposed to a variety of text types and reading purposes (e.g. reading for academic development, reading for pleasure) in preparation for real life applications. 7. Selection of a wide range of texts of appropriate lengths and different topics, including authentic texts, is crucial to the development of reading skills and strategies (e.g. scanning for specific information, skimming for gist, using contextual clues) as well as learners' awareness of different cultures. 8. The interplay between tasks and texts is a factor for consideration when teachers design a range of tasks for learners to demonstrate their understanding of the texts. In principle, task demand increases with text complexity as learners progress in the development of reading skills and strategies. To cater for learner diversity, simple tasks can be included for complex texts to cultivate learners' confidence, and difficult tasks for simple texts to stretch their abilities. 9. Teacher support is essential to helping learners understand the text and demonstrate their understanding during the learning and teaching process. Teachers are also expected to help learners activate their prior knowledge and questions in the process of interacting with the text. As learners progress, the amount of support provided is gradually reduced to promote learner independence.							

ATM - Attachment Milestone

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Listening Skills

The Learning Progression Framework for ENGLISH LANGUAGE (LISTENING SKILLS)								
Listening - ATM 1	Listening - ATM 2	Listening - ATM 3	Listening - ATM 4	Listening - ATM 5	Listening - ATM 6	Listening - ATM 7	Listening - ATM 8	
Understanding key words in some short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	Understanding key words and phrases in a small range of short simple texts, using some listening strategies as appropriate	
Underlying Principles								
1. Language development strategies, generic skills, and positive values and attitudes are essential to English Language learning and form an integral part of the learning teaching assessment cycle. 2. Learners are exposed to a variety of text types and listening purposes (e.g. listening for academic development, listening for interactive conversational exchanges, listening for enjoyment) in preparation for real life applications. 3. Selection of a wide range of texts of appropriate lengths and different topics, including authentic texts (e.g. radio programs, audio books) delivered in familiar and non-familiar accents, could be gradually introduced to help learners become familiar with the characteristics of spoken English (e.g. overlapping tones, hesitation, redundancy). 4. The development of some basic listening strategies does not readily lead itself to descriptions of the learning outcomes in terms of right attainment milestones, for example, • being attentive; • activating prior knowledge; • anticipating the likely development of spoken texts; and • being selective while listening (e.g. discriminating relevant from irrelevant information based on individual circumstances or task requirements). 5. The interplay between tasks and texts is a factor for consideration when teachers design a range of tasks for learners to demonstrate their understanding of the texts. In principle, task demand increases with text complexity as learners progress in the development of listening skills and strategies. To cater for learner diversity, simple tasks can be included for complex texts to activate the learners' confidence, and difficult tasks for simple texts to stretch their abilities. 6. Classroom interactions are crucial to the development of listening skills and strategies, particularly at the early stage of learning. Teacher support is essential to helping learners process the text and demonstrate their understanding during the learning and teaching process. As learners progress, the amount of support provided is gradually reduced to promote learner independence.								
ATM - Attainment Milestone			© English Language Education Service, Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau, The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014. All rights reserved.					

Writing Skills

The Learning Progression Framework for ENGLISH LANGUAGE (WRITING SKILLS)							
Writing - ATM 1	Writing - ATM 2	Writing - ATM 3	Writing - ATM 4	Writing - ATM 5	Writing - ATM 6	Writing - ATM 7	Writing - ATM 8
Learning Outcomes							
Content							
Completing blanks in short texts to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics	Writing texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some elaboration	Writing texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with elaboration	Writing texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with elaboration	Writing texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with substantial elaboration
Organisation							
Putting words under appropriate headings/ topics	Putting ideas about a topic in sentences	Putting ideas about a topic coherently in a short text, or showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas	Putting ideas coherently in a short text, or showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas	Putting ideas coherently in a short text, or showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas	Putting ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing effective overall organisation of ideas	Putting ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing effective overall organisation of ideas	Putting ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing effective overall organisation of ideas
Language and style							
Using some simple words, phrases and functions, and showing an awareness of some simple formats	Using some simple words, phrases and functions, and showing an awareness of some simple formats	Using simple language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some simple formats	Using a small range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some text types	Using a range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some text types	Using a range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some text types	Using a range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some text types	Using a wide range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and showing an awareness of some text types
Underlying Principles							
1. Language development strategies, generic skills, and positive values and attitudes are essential to English Language learning and form an integral part of the learning teaching assessment cycle. 2. The meanings/phases and appropriateness of the written texts to the context, purpose and audience are implicit in and apply across all the learning outcomes. 3. The development of writing strategies does not readily lead itself to descriptions of the learning outcomes in terms of right attainment milestones, for example, - writing legibly; generally, being able to use task prior and review stages; - generating ideas by brainstorming or working and selecting information and ideas from different sources; - using knowledge of letter and word formation; - adding questions to clarify and ask information for correction; - adding details by correcting errors in language (e.g. spelling, punctuation and grammar) items with or without using references; - revising drafts by adding, deleting, substituting or linking ideas; and - reflecting on one's writing based on feedback from teachers or peers. Teachers are expected to help learners develop these strategies with learning opportunities. 4. Teacher support is essential to helping learners express and organise their ideas during the learning and teaching process. As learners progress, the amount of support provided is gradually reduced to promote learner independence.							
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Speaking Skills

The Learning Progression Framework for ENGLISH LANGUAGE (SPEAKING SKILLS)							
Speaking - ATM 1	Speaking - ATM 2	Speaking - ATM 3	Speaking - ATM 4	Speaking - ATM 5	Speaking - ATM 6	Speaking - ATM 7	Speaking - ATM 8
Content, organisation and communication strategies Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some verbal organisation Expressing, presenting and exchanging simple information, 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HKDSE 2022 Paper 1 Part B2

Brainstorming: *Ethical concerns of AI in decision-making*

Aligning with UDL principles

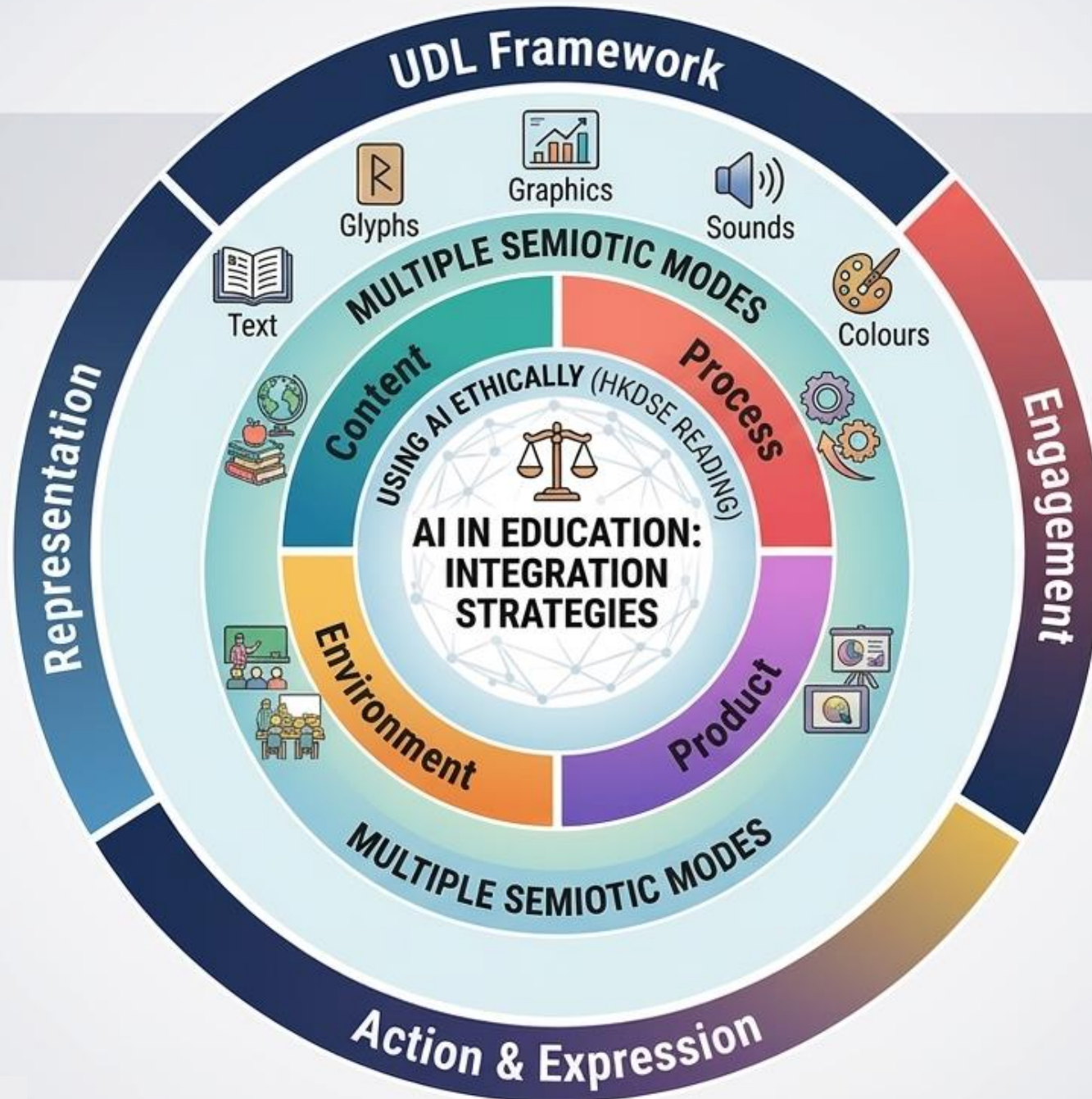
- The **text remains the same**.
- The **learning goal remains the same**.
- We are reducing barriers in:
 - Decoding (audio support)
 - Language processing (visual vocabulary)
 - Working memory (graphic organizers)
 - Expression (alternative response formats)
- We are not lowering complexity — we are widening access.

Supporting Learners Across the Three UDL Components

UDL Component	Without Technology	With Technology
Representation (Accessing the text)	• Visual preview (images, concept map) • Vocabulary cards with visuals • Teacher read-aloud + think-aloud • Colour-code text structure • Graphic organizer aligned to text	• Audio/ text-to-speech with highlighting • Adjustable font/ spacing • Clickable glossaries • Digital annotation • Short background video
Engagement (Sustaining effort with the text)	• Clear reading purpose • Chunked reading with checkpoints • Small group reading (e.g. summarizer, questioner, clarifier) • Jigsaw reading	• Interactive polls/ quizzes • Collaborative annotation • Immediate feedback tools
Action & Expression (Showing understanding of the text)	• Oral summary • Timeline/ concept map • Role-play a character/debate	• Audio/video response • Digital concept map • Slide or short presentation

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Action & Expression (Showing understanding of the text)	• Oral summary • Timeline/ concept map • Role-play a character/debate	• Audio/video response • Digital concept map • Slide or short presentation



Audio
(NaturalReaders)



Mindmap
(MindMap AI)



Slideshow
(Gamma)



Podcast*
(Podify)



Conversation
(Grok Voice Mode)



Infographic
(Nano Banana 2)



Presentation



Interactive Quizzes*
(Kahoot AI Quiz)



Annotation*
(Hypothes.is)



Guided Reading*
(MagicSchool)

* Not demonstrated today

Ways of Representing the text

Part 1

Method 1: Listening to the text

1

Copy the full text

2

Go to
NaturalReaders.com
→ Choose **Personal**
→ Login using Gmail

3

Delete the
placeholder text →
paste the reading
passage

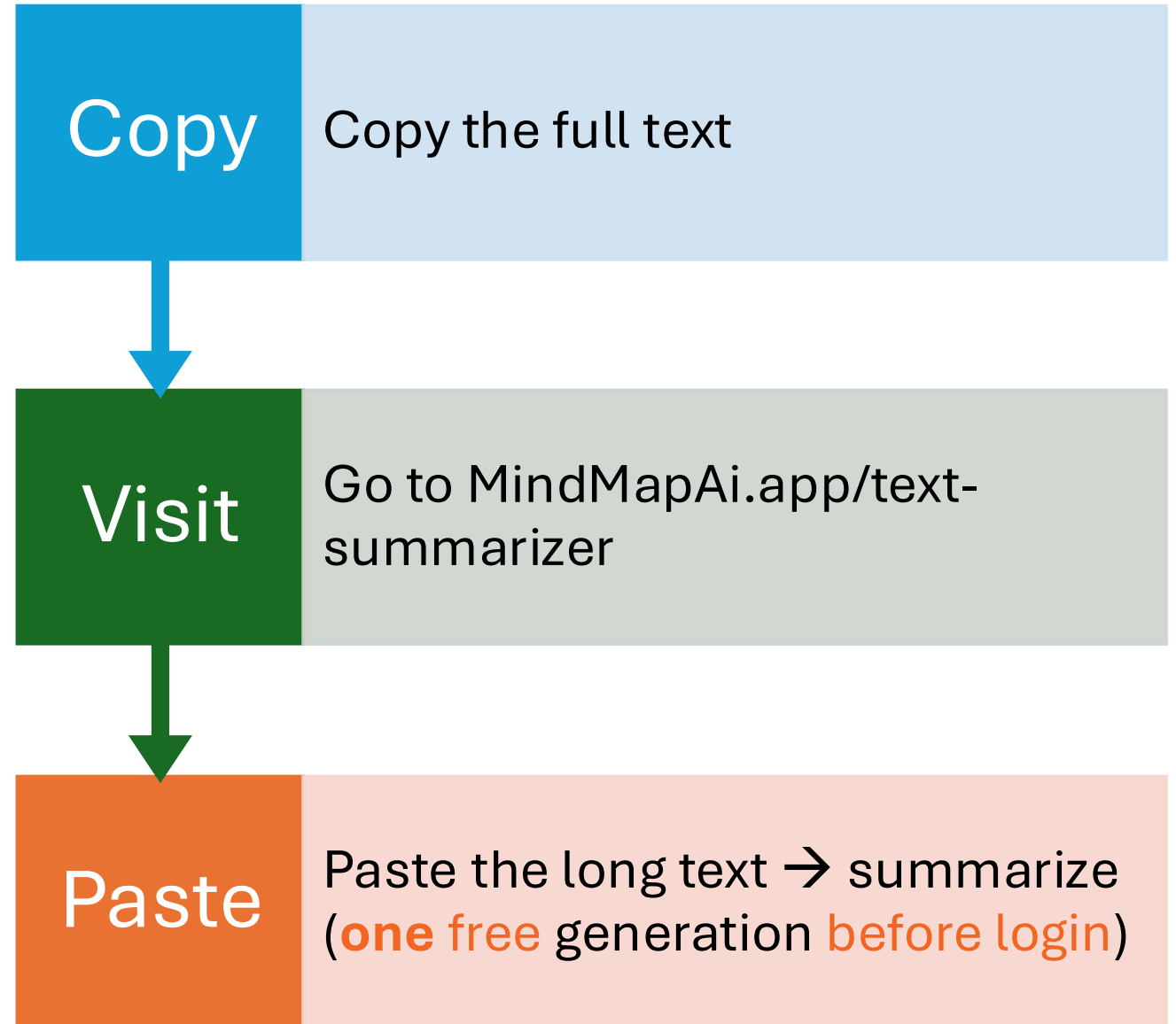
4

Select a voice +
speed

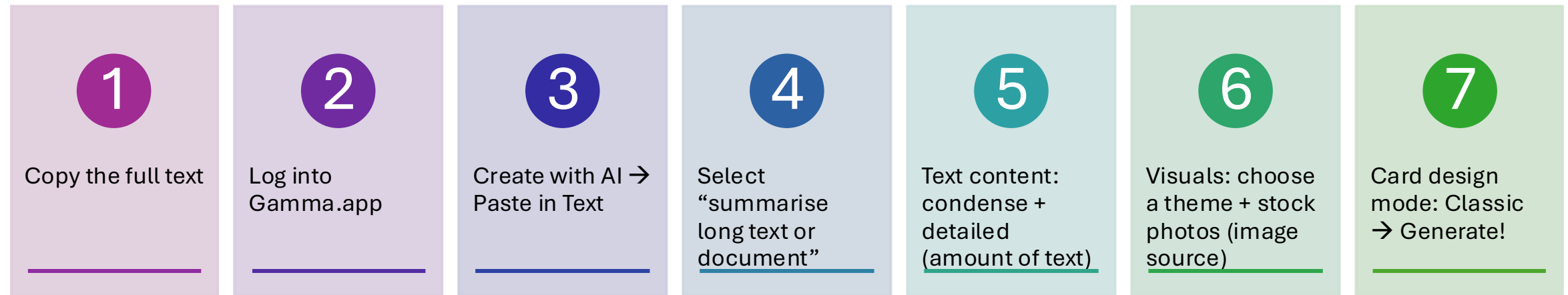
5

Press play

Method 2: Use MindMapAI



Method 3: Making a slideshow on Gamma (Advanced!)



Discuss and share

- We have learned three alternative methods of representing the text
 - Podcast (with NaturalReaders)
 - Mindmap (with MindMapAi)
 - Slideshow (with Gamma)
- Which is the best method for your students to understand the text?
- How do these means of representation cater for learning diversity?
- What are the limitations/ points to note with these tools?

Considerations When Adopting Different Means of Representation

1 Alignment First

- Does the adapted representation serve the **same learning objective**?
- Are we supporting access or changing the task demand?
- Is the representation aligned with **curriculum goals and assessment criteria**?

2 Quality & Accuracy

- Verify the **accuracy of AI-generated content**
- Check for oversimplification or distortion of meaning
- Ensure key concepts and text nuances are preserved
- Avoid adding irrelevant or misleading visual

3 Ethical & Professional Use of AI

- Be transparent about AI use where appropriate
- Protect student data and privacy
- Model responsible and critical use of AI tools
- Avoid over-reliance: teacher judgment remains central

4 Recognising Limitations

- More modes ≠ better learning
- Too many representations may increase cognitive load
- Technology can distract from close reading
- Not all learners benefit equally from every format

Differentiating means of engagement

Part 2

Ways to engage with the text using Technology

Ways to engage with the text	Platform
Chatting about the text	Grok Voice Mode/ Gemini Live (app only)
Guided reading of the text	Gemini Gem/ Gemini Canvas App/ MagicSchool Study Bot
Gamified comprehension checks	Kahoot AI quiz
Interactive annotations	Hypothes.is/ Google Doc
Reading comprehension exercise	Tiered comprehension exercises: - Ask ChatGPT-5-instant to analyse questions corresponding to students' ability - Ask ChatGPT-5-instant to generate new questions based on Language Progression Framework

Method 4: Chat with AI (Grok Voice Mode)



Copy prompt + full text



Paste onto Grok (tip: work better on Phone App or logged in than website than not logged in)



Send



Start voice mode

Need a moment to connect
Once connect, do not need to press send



Setting:

Personality: Storyteller
Voice: Eve (soothing female) or Rex (calm male)
Voice activation: Default
Speed: Your choice

CATER FOR LD FOR MORE CAPABLE STUDENTS TOO!

Prompt to Grok

I would like to use voice mode to discuss a long text with you so I can deeply understand it.

Please follow these guidelines:

- Be conversational and interactive, not lecture-style.
- Act like a patient, thoughtful teacher guiding me step by step.
- Let me start voice mode first.
- Then, give me a clear outline of different parts in 2-3 sentences so I understand the big picture.
- When helpful, quote key words or phrases from the original text and then paraphrase them in simpler language.
- Use multiple teaching approaches: examples, analogies (only if they are directly grounded in the text), summaries, restatements, and thoughtful questions.
- Pause naturally and invite me to reflect or respond, since we're in voice mode.

Prompt to Grok (cont'd)

Very important:

- Take turns naturally. Don't say more than 1-2 lines each time.
- Rely only on the content of the text I provide.
- Do not search for outside information.
- Do not add background knowledge, interpretations, or assumptions that are not directly supported by the text.
- If something is unclear in the text, acknowledge the ambiguity instead of filling gaps.
- Your role is to help me *understand what the text says*, not expand beyond it.

Varying actions and expressions

Part 3

Poster
presentation +
lobbying

Situation: Meeting on AI regulations

- Students work in groups to create an infographic on Nano Banana 2 representing viewpoints of:
 - Big Tech companies
 - Small business owners
 - Bank representatives
 - The government
 - Workers / Job applicants
- Students present their posters + lobby for support (2 minutes per group)
- The meeting members debate and vote to pass or reject the motion

Method 5: Nano Banana Pro

- Google's AI model:
treat it as your personal designer
- You may use words + handwritten layout/ sample infographic to explain your idea

Explain your design to Nano Banana 2



Please create an infographic to help us lobby for our position for a meeting.



We are representing _____.



We believe that ...

NAVIGATING THE AI LANDSCAPE: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND REGULATION

1 AI Improves Efficiency & Productivity

- Brings down costs



- Accelerates R&D



- In employment, AI handles technical tasks

- Enables "hybrid jobs" where humans focus on higher-value work

AI complements workers rather than simply replacing them.



2 Benefits for Small and Large Businesses

Helps small businesses analyse sales, cash flow, inventory, and financial info in real time



- Reduces need to hire outside experts

Supports long-term national economic growth



3 We Recognise Ethical Concerns



Privacy



Security



Discrimination



Reliability



Algorithmic bias



Accountability



4 Bias Is a Shared Challenge



Human decision-making has always contained bias



AI may replicate biases in historical data



Careful calibration and deployment can reduce favouritism



However, AI may also give bias a "scientific credibility"

This highlights the need for careful oversight.

5 Regulation Should Be Thoughtful and Informed



Industry-specific panels could improve oversight



Need for greater urgency in government action



Companies should not avoid responsibility



Market forces alone will not solve the problem



We support balanced and informed regulation.



Tips



Students should be tasked with summarizing the stance and arguments for the parties. This should not be delegated to AI.



Students may work in groups to expand upon these ideas, provided that they align with the stance in the text.



Teachers may give them a demonstration first.



Stance + explanation is better for Nano Banana to understand you than just a headline.



Give examples to help students with the presentation.

Product of understanding

	Further differentiation/ e-learning resources/ tools
Group discussion	Ask DeepSeek or Copilot to generate discussion-worthy questions arising from the text, e.g. Can machines ever truly replace human judgment in important life decisions, or are certain human qualities indispensable? e.g. Who should be primarily responsible for preventing harm caused by AI — governments, corporations, or developers?
Scenario-based discussion	Ask ChatGPT or Gemini to generate scenes for students to apply their understanding and vocabulary on AI regulation, e.g. A company found that 40% of their junior staff could be replaced with AI. Should the company sack these employees?
Argumentative essay	Write a Letter to the Editor expressing concerns about AI regulations. Use ChatGPT or Gemini to structure arguments. Use perplexity.ai to gather evidence. Use Manus Fact Checker to review quality of arguments and evidence.

CAN YOU SUGGEST OTHER ALTERNATIVES?

Extending learning (beyond the classroom)



Reading/ viewing multimodal text: news, online essays (blogs), documentaries ...



Writing/ voicing multimodal text: video project, Instagram infotainment series, assemble drama, AI-related poetry ...



Inquiry-based learning: case study, interviewing AI innovator-alumni ...

Reflection

1

What is the relationship between Universal Design of Learning and learning diversity?

2

What is the role of technology in catering for learning diversity?