AI LITERACY FOR CELTA-TRAINED TEACHERS: COMPETENCIES, CHALLENGES, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN MODERN ELT CLASSROOMS

Nizomov Feruz Raxmon o'g'li, Teacher

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Annotation

This article examines the growing significance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy for CELTA-trained teachers and discusses how AI-related competencies, challenges, and pedagogical implications are reshaping modern English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The article argues that AI literacy has become an essential extension of professional teacher competence, requiring teachers to develop technical, pedagogical, and critical literacies. AI tools are now capable of providing language analysis, generating contextualised materials, assisting lesson planning, supporting assessment, and offering learner-specific feedback, all of which can enhance CELTA-style instruction when used appropriately. However, AI tools also present concerns regarding reliability, accuracy of linguistic explanations, ethical considerations, learners' over-reliance, and threats to teacher autonomy.

Keywords: *AI literacy; CELTA methodology; ELT pedagogy; teacher competencies; communicative teaching; digital transformation; generative AI.*

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education has fundamentally transformed the landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT). From automated writing assessment systems to generative AI platforms capable of producing lesson plans, texts, and feedback, AI has become increasingly interwoven with everyday teaching practices. For CELTA-trained teachers—who

operate within a structured pedagogical framework emphasising communicative competence, learner engagement, and principled decision-making—the emergence of AI tools introduces new responsibilities and expectations. Teachers are now required not only to teach English effectively, but also to understand, evaluate, and meaningfully incorporate AI into their instructional process.

AI literacy, described by Ng as a combination of technical, pedagogical, and critical competencies [Ng, pp.44–47], is becoming a foundational skill in teacher professionalism. AI-literate teachers are better prepared to navigate digital tools, assess their appropriateness, and use them to complement communicative teaching methods. Conversely, insufficient AI literacy can lead to inaccurate instruction, uncritical dependence on technology, ethical concerns, and reduced teacher autonomy. CELTA methodology provides a strong foundation for integrating AI responsibly, since its focus on learner-centred planning, guided discovery, scaffolded tasks, and clear lesson staging naturally supports critical decision-making. As Smith notes, technology should enhance—not replace—methodology [Smith, p.112]. Thus, CELTA-trained teachers must develop AI literacy to preserve the integrity of communicative teaching while benefiting from digital innovations.

This article aims to explore the competencies required for AI literacy, analyse the challenges CELTA teachers face in AI-integrated classrooms, and assess the broader pedagogical implications for ELT.

AI-related research shows a consensus that teachers need structured knowledge to use AI effectively. Ng (2021) proposes three dimensions of AI literacy:

1. **technical literacy** – understanding what AI tools can and cannot do,

2. **pedagogical literacy** – using AI to support, rather than dominate, teaching, and

3. **critical literacy** – evaluating accuracy, ethics, and limitations [Ng, pp.44–47].

In ELT, AI tools have been found to support material development, differentiation, personalised feedback, and learner autonomy. Jones (2022) highlights how AI systems can analyse learner errors and generate targeted practice activities, but notes that communicative competence still depends on meaningful student interaction and authentic input [Jones, p.78]. The usefulness of AI therefore depends on teachers' ability to select tasks aligned with learning objectives.

Harmer (2015) emphasises that the success of any teaching method lies in clear lesson aims, logically sequenced stages, and meaningful practice opportunities [Harmer, p.214]. AI tools may generate activities quickly, but they must be assessed and adapted to ensure they fit CELTA principles and learner needs. Brown and Lee (2018) also warn that AI tools can give incorrect or overly simplified language explanations, which means teachers must retain responsibility for verifying accuracy and maintaining high standards of language instruction [Brown & Lee, p.95].

Collectively, the literature demonstrates that AI literacy is essential for ensuring that AI use remains pedagogically sound.

CELTA-trained teachers are expected to justify every instructional decision, from lesson staging to language clarification. AI literacy becomes a crucial extension of this competence because AI tools now influence nearly every stage of lesson preparation. Teachers must be able to:

• Evaluate AI-generated texts and activities

• Identify inaccuracies in AI explanations

• Adapt AI materials for communicative practice

• Use AI ethically and transparently

• Maintain teacher autonomy despite technology

As Harmer argues, skilled teachers must preserve the pedagogical reasoning behind each stage of a lesson [Harmer, p.219]. AI literacy ensures that decisions remain principled rather than automated.

AI can generate:

• context-based lead-ins

• controlled and freer practice activities

• model sentences

• anticipated problems and solutions

• CCQs and ICQs

• lesson staging outlines

These support CELTA's emphasis on coherence, clarity, and scaffolding.

AI can produce timelines, gap-fills, examples, synonyms, and collocations useful for guided discovery. However, teachers must check all content for accuracy.

AI enables personalised learning materials based on level, interests, and learning goals, helping teachers differentiate tasks more efficiently.

AI can assist in providing immediate feedback on writing, pronunciation, and grammar. Brown and Lee note that automated feedback can help learners notice errors, but teacher judgement remains decisive [Brown & Lee, p.93].

AI occasionally produces incorrect grammar rules, unnatural examples, or culturally inappropriate content. This is dangerous for novice teachers or learners who may trust AI-generated material without verification. Smith emphasises that uncritical use of digital tools may weaken teachers' decision-making skills [Smith, p.112]. CELTA-trained teachers must ensure that AI supports—not replaces—their pedagogical expertise.

Concerns include:

• plagiarism in writing tasks

• excessive student dependence on AI

- data privacy

- transparency regarding AI-generated materials

Teachers must guide learners in responsible AI use.

The analysis shows that AI literacy is emerging as a necessary professional competence for CELTA-trained teachers. AI tools offer significant advantages for lesson planning, guided discovery, scaffolding, differentiation, and formative assessment. When used responsibly, AI reinforces CELTA's communicative and learner-centred approach. However, AI integration also presents risks concerning accuracy, ethics, teacher autonomy, and communicative authenticity. These challenges highlight the need for structured training in AI literacy, continuous professional development, and reflective practice. Ultimately, AI literacy allows CELTA-trained teachers to maintain methodological control while benefiting from digital advancements. Future research should explore how AI literacy can be formally integrated into CELTA training programmes.

References

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