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Creating Interactive Digital Materials in the Paperless Era

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Language teachers have long used paper-based handouts and worksheets in their classrooms for a range of purposes, including setting up and running communicative activities, delivering lesson content, and providing practice exercises. However, there has been a recent shift away from using paper in class in favor of electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets. In response, teachers have had to re-think how they approach classroom activities that traditionally relied on handouts. How can a teacher, for instance, best set up a find-someone-who interview activity without the use of paper? In this presentation, we provide an introduction and walkthrough of the powerful, versatile, and simple method of creating fillable PDF files. As we demonstrate, fillable PDFs overcome many of the limitations found in trying to deliver materials digitally through online learning management systems or by distributing digital word processing files to students. They allow teachers to easily implement the kind of interactive, communicative activities that have long been at the center of the language classroom. Furthermore, we demonstrate how generative AI tools such as ChatGPT can be used to quickly create properly-formatted classroom activities that can then be converted to fillable PDFs. The coupling of generative AI and fillable PDFs provides a powerful tool to teachers who may feel stranded in the paperless era.

Keywords

Teacher-Made Materials, Materials Design, Paperless Classroom, Fillable PDFs, Generative AI

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