"This book is packed, racked, stacked, and organized for busy language educators. As a decade-long world language teacher, I know the value of practical and engaging language activities. In this book, you can literally turn to any page and get something for class tomorrow. True language teachers will appreciate the book's organization into language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. And the cherry on top? It all comes from Brent Warner, someone I have admired for tech-inspired language learning for years. You can't go wrong with this book."

—Matt Miller, Creator of *Ditch That Textbook*, Author, Speaker, and Spanish Teacher

"I've followed Brent Warner for years, so I'm delighted to have this book of activities. Brent makes edtech so practical that I could begin implementing suggestions immediately. Any teacher of multilingual learners will love this resource!"

—Dr. Carol Salva, Lead Consultant, Seidlitz Education

"As a longtime language educator and someone deeply immersed in AI in education, I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Edtech for Multilingual Learners*. Brent Warner doesn't just talk about edtech; he focuses on multilingual learners in every recommendation he makes. What I love about this book is that it's full of intentionally designed strategies that move beyond translation and vocabulary apps. It's about helping students find their voice, build confidence, and thrive throughout their learning journey. Every activity is grounded in strong pedagogy and aligned with the ISTE Standards, making this book a true bridge between tech innovation and effective teaching practice. A great resource for language educators seeking to embrace emerging technology and support student learning!"

—Dr. Rachelle Dené Poth, Spanish, French, and STEAM Educator, Consultant, ISTE Author

"I am pleased to recommend Brent's insightful book of practical tips! Combining encouragement, examples, and clever commentary, Brent elucidates savvy choices and possible classroom applications based on his own explorations and DIESOL interviews. While many caring educators are learning by doing and experimenting with different AI tools to engage students, accelerate English language acquisition, and increase learner autonomy, few possess Brent's intense curiosity or depth of edtech knowledge."

—Eric H. Roth, Master Lecturer, The American Language Institute at the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, University of Southern California

"While the ability to speak and understand diverse languages is often seen as a superpower globally, multilingual learners and their families in the United States frequently struggle to access the tools they need to feel seen and heard in classrooms. This guide offers culturally responsive strategies and ideas designed to equip English language learners, teachers, and families with the necessary resources to not only thrive in the classroom but also to be future-ready. Brent Warner presents guided lessons and easy-to-implement activities that encourage creativity and exploration in all classrooms. From innovative podcasting ideas to the effective use of AI, this book is packed with strategic tips for engaging students and ensuring their inclusion in the learning experience."

—Yaritza Villalba, CEO, McKenzie's Adventures LLC

"If you're a busy English language teacher looking for new ways to teach with technology, you'll find this book an indispensable resource. All the activities are clearly described, easy to implement, and ready to use. Thank you, Brent Warner, for creating such a gold mine of tech-driven teaching strategies!"

—Ilka Kostka, Ph.D., Teaching Professor, Northeastern University

INTRODUCTION

While I hope that this book serves as a valuable resource to English language teachers across the world, it's worth noting that English learners are not served only in English Language Development (ELD) classes. According to the US Department of Education, "English learners (ELs) are one of the fastest growing student demographics in the United States, and are a diverse group, representing over 400 different language backgrounds" (US Department of Education, 2019). Meanwhile, the National Center for Education Statistics tell us that in the United States, 10.6% of enrolled students are ELs, and some states like California and Texas are on course to double that number (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). These numbers represent statistics only in the US. Looking across the globe, we can see even more need for direct support for teachers to integrate technology for ELs. The 48 activities in this book are meant to help you do that, whether you're just starting to play with more tech tools or if you've got an established routine for digitally enhanced learning. I hope they serve you well.

About the Resources

As you will see, every chapter of this book comes with a QR code and a link to relevant resources. It only takes a few seconds to create an account, and anyone who bought the book will get access to the full set of resources for the book—absolutely free.

brentgwarner.com/register/

I've provided a **slide deck** for every activity in the form of Google Slides to keep things as universally accessible as possible. The intention was to make it as close to plug and play as I could, so you can simply pull up the slide deck and walk the students through your chosen activity. You are also able to create your own copy of each slide deck and edit your copy to your heart's content, so if the way I set it up needs fine-tuning for your classroom needs, please copy, delete, edit, and add as needed.

Additionally, many of the resources include sample activities from the primary tool I suggested for that activity. In all cases where possible, I've also made the sample activities replicable so you can only be a click away from your own copy to use as you please.

Finally, since edtech moves so quickly, having the resources online will allow me to update content to better match the changing availability of tools. If one of the providers closes shop, as we see too often, I'll be able to go in and make alternate suggestions.

I hope you find that the resource section explodes the value of this book from "excellent" to "astronomical."

A Guide to Links

While this book is focused on pedagogical activities, you can't really talk edtech without sharing links to resources. Ebooks make it easy enough to provide direct links, but printed material still requires us to take some action to access recommended tools and materials. In order to simplify the process, you will see three different types of links.

Same Name URLs

When a resource has a URL that matches its name with a .com, .org, or other domain name directly tagged onto the end, I've written the name of the resource as its website.

For example: iste.org

Simple Links

Some resources have links that are easy enough to remember and type into your browser. If they're only one subfolder or subdomain away, I included the link in parentheses.

For example: (iste.org/standards)

Edushare.ing for Longer Links

Some links have complicated structures or multiple subfolders or subdomains. To accommodate these, I created https://edushare.ing. This is an open-source URL shortener I built to help teachers share links. Many of the best-known URL shorteners are starting to slide in advertisements, so to eliminate that kind of tomfoolery, I built my own. This guarantees that you won't be tracked, redirected in weird ways, or advertised to when you just want to go to a certain resource.

E.g. iste.org/learning-library/books would be (edushare.ing/istebooks)

By the way, I also made Edushare.ing public facing and open access, so if you've got long links (I'm thinking online **slide decks**, etc.), and you're a bit leery of the ways the prominent URL shorteners are redirecting your traffic, please feel free to use Edushare.ing to your heart's content. Just a small gift as a thank you for all the teachers out there trying to share out and help one another.

Glossary of Terms

Terms that appear in **bold** when they're introduced later in the book are in this glossary.

1:1 Classroom. A room where every student has a device (computer/tablet) for themselves.

CALL. Computer Assisted Language Learning. A subfield of language acquisition focused on using technology to help language learners.

slide deck. A generalized term for a given file used for presentations. Often referred to as a PowerPoint, PPT, slides, etc.

word processor. Any software program used primarily for writing. Commonly recognized through programs like Microsoft Word or Google Docs, though there are many choices out there.

podcatcher. This is a program or app with the specific goal of playing podcasts. While many podcast listeners stick with the basic version they got on their computer or phone, there's a whole world of custom-built podcatchers. If you're looking for a "which is better" argument to get into with edtech nerds, podcatchers aren't a bad place to start.

SIDE NOTES: Most chapters have a side note or two, indicated with this megaphone icon. These side notes may be tips, things to be aware of, variations, or anything else that I thought was worth sharing but that didn't quite fit into the flow of the activity. They're not necessary to run the activities, but I hope you find them helpful nonetheless.

open source. A software program whose code is made to be transparent and fully accessible to the users. Most teachers don't have the time to develop their own programs, but open source software is generally considered to be positive because anyone can go in and see if there's malicious coding. If you're going to start experimenting with lesser-known products, seeing that it's open source is typically a good sign.

synchronous classes. Classes where students gather together and work at the same time. These can be traditional in-person classes or online via platforms like Zoom.

asynchronous classes. Classes run online where students are free to complete the work at any time that suits their schedule. Students will typically watch videos and do readings in place of a live lecture.

File Types

We won't go into the long and storied history of file types, especially those around images, but needless to say we've all felt frustration around trying to move images around from one program to another only to find it no longer displays. It seems that every company is trying to make their own high-resolution/small-file-size image, typically ending in forcing us, the end users, to find a way to convert it back to the classics:

- **JPG.** The most common image file type. Useful for displaying online or for printing, but remember that JPGs with small file sizes do not print well.
- **PNG.** The preferred file type for images you'll only use online. PNGs also allow for transparent backgrounds so you can fit them into a thoughtfully designed document with ease.
- **GIF.** These are graphics which are most commonly used these days as animated images pulled from pop culture. This is absolutely, positively pronounced "gif" and anybody who argues the point is a bad, bad person.

AI Terms

- **LLM (Large Language Model).** This is a type of AI that is specifically trained to recognize, interpret, and generate text. When I say large, I mean LARGE. Most companies are hesitant to spill the beans, but some estimate the dataset of the old ChatGPT 3.0 model to be between 570 GB to 45 TB. To put that in perspective, it would take the average human about 500 days to read through 1 GB of text if they didn't take the time to eat, sleep, or binge all those British police dramas instead of grading students' papers I was supposed to.
- **Prompts.** We're living in a world with a low tolerance for trends, especially when it comes to tech. There are already people out there hyping the "end of prompt engineering" as quickly as the same people hyped it as the next big thing. When I talk about prompts, I'm simply referring to the words that you use to ask a chatbot to do something. Regardless of the semantics, building quality prompts is simply the skill of being a good communicator. As teachers, we do our students a great service if we teach them that better language skills lead to better prompts.
- **Chatbot.** Throughout the book you will see me refer to "chatbots" as a catchall for most AI platforms. If you can type into it and it responds to you automatically, it's a chatbot. At the time of publication, popular chatbots include ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity, among others.

Linguistic Terms

While this book may be used by many language teachers, the hope is that other content-area teachers can see the value of these activities for their own language learners and apply them in history, science, and all the other classes out there—yes,

even math! (And if you're a math teacher who uses any of these ideas, please let me know!) With that in mind, I'll share a few linguistic terms that might come up, but for the most part, I'm trying to drop the language acquisition lingo.

- **L1.** A student's first language.
- **L2.** A student's second language, though this starts to get fraught with arguments about how many languages a student speaks and other well-meaning concerns from us language nerds who may be a little too concerned with semantics. Typically, L2 is the language you're teaching your language learners in.
- **Prescriptivism.** An approach to linguistics that is heavily focused on using language "correctly." This can be valuable for teaching grammar or pronunciation that causes confusion if not carefully constructed.
- **Descriptivism.** An approach to linguistics that focuses much more on how language is actually used rather than the rules (which may or may not be followed in the real world). This can be valuable to help students focus on fluency over accuracy. Note that both prescriptivism and descriptivism are on a spectrum, and it's a good idea to take an open-minded approach to both. Sometimes we need the rules, and other times we're just being nitpicky because of our own biases around language.

About AI

You can't open an app on your phone without being inundated with think pieces, tutorials, apocalyptic doomsayers, or bright-eyed futurists talking about artificial intelligence. I personally love it and fear it, embrace it and push it away. I believe that the only reasonable approach is a combination of hopeful curiosity and healthy skepticism. I experiment with it a lot, and overall I tend to be optimistic about its use in language learning. I also tend to question what will happen to the world of language teaching because of it. Pluses and minuses, all together.

AI Is Powerful.

If you're not experimenting with how AI can help your students learn a language, it's time to get on the boat! There's an endless world of creative opportunities here, and I share some ideas throughout the book of ways you can play with it. The speed at which it is improving is hard to keep track of, so just remember to take baby steps. You'll get there!

For those who are looking to experiment with AI in language learning, please visit AIforMLLs.com, where we share explorations and discoveries. It's also an open invitation to post, so please send me a message there if you'd like to share your own experiences.

AI Makes Mistakes

Despite the fact that I'm encouraging you to explore AI, it's important to know that different versions of it have different strengths and weaknesses. While they may look similar on the surface, the updates are regular and can be significant. Make sure to check how well it completes assignments before you give them to students, so you can be aware of problem areas.

Why Isn't This Book an AI for Language Learners Book?

Artificial intelligence is a wonderful and powerful (as well as sometimes fraught and problematic) part of the edtech world. But as much as it may be on people's minds, AI falls under the edtech umbrella, and not the other way around. It is great at generating content and helping us explore creative approaches, but it (currently) struggles with one of the great strengths traditional computer software has always had: consistency and reliability. If I made a very basic multiple-choice quiz using any traditional edtech tool, I could safely rely on a very predictable outcome with accurate assessments. Any mistakes would likely come from me as the teacher who set up the quiz, and not the quizzing platform. AI, on the other hand, doesn't have "logic" as we understand it. **Chatbots** are simply predicting the next most likely word (or part of a word) based on the request made of it. Think of it as the difference between going to McDonald's and having a personal chef. McDonald's entire goal is to ensure consistency across the planet, so no matter where you go, you'll always know that the Big Mac you ordered will be the Big Mac you desired. The personal chef has a much wider repertoire, but depending on their mood, the ingredients available to them on that day and what they understand about your preferences, you may end up with wildly different meals from day to day. Neither of these are right or wrong (I can hear some people screaming at me that absolutely one of these is wrong, but you get my point), it's a question of what you're looking for at the moment.

This book is about using tech to engage students in the process of language learning. AI is a part of that, but it will only be treated as a part. As teachers, we need both the consistency of traditional software and the unpredictable nature of AI to best engage our students. With that in mind, AI-based activities are included as a given. They are peppered throughout the book with the same goals as the rest of the activities: to engage students and to help you see some ways of working with tech that you might not have considered before. That said, I do write and share a LOT about AI outside of this book, so if you want to keep up with that side of things, please feel free to join my mailing list or find me across the internet, starting at BrentGWarner.com.

The Fundamentals of Edtech

You don't have to be an expert on technology to use this book. Still, as we're already well into the 21st century, I do have some broad-level ideas people will need to know in general:

Assumptions

Throughout this book I'm making a number of assumptions about your technology setup. While I recognize that the world does not equally have access to the same tech, this book is focused on the goal of using widely available tech to increase engagement, track work, and develop language skills. Not every activity in this book requires the most modern tech or that every student has a computer with all the bells and whistles, but in order to avoid repetition and writing accommodations for every situation, I'm making a few assumptions about mindset, digital competency, and tech.

Mindset

Nobody writing any book for teachers can fairly claim to cover all needs or understand the dynamics of each campus and classroom. My hope is that you'll view these activities as inspirational and not as **prescriptive**. My assumption is that you're looking at these activities and making changes to suit the needs of your particular classroom. Perhaps you'll come across an activity that requires computers for every student, but you don't have a **1:1 classroom**. In such a situation, it's worth asking yourself if everybody can do the work on their phones, or on a few shared laptops. These are the types of situations where flexibility is key. If you ever find yourself wondering "I wonder if it's OK to do _____ instead," the answer is a resounding "Yes!"—so give it a try!

Digital Competency

We live in a digital world. There's simply no doubt about it, and things are not slowing down on this front. In a 2023 report on the digital divide, the National Skills Coalition argued that across industries, 92% of jobs require digital skills (Bergson-Shilcock et al., 2023). Using technology in the classroom is not just about shiny toys and blinky screens. Building an understanding of how to use online tools and communicate to be prepared to live in the modern world is a cornerstone of the ISTE Standards.

Tech

With that clarified (and it really is more important than anything else!), let's look at the basic tech I'm assuming you and your students have.

Internet

- Students have reliable access to the internet at home and at school.

- Internet speeds are high enough to allow for uploading and downloading of video as needed.
- All devices and setups below have access to the internet.

Computers

- Students have access to laptops or desktops on campus. Ideally, classrooms have options for 1:1 setups (one computer per student), but sometimes this requires going to a computer lab or for students to bring their own computers.
- Students have access to a laptop or desktop at home.
- Any computer students have access to includes a camera and a microphone.

Mobile Devices

- Students have access to a smartphone or tablet. Any mobile device students have access to includes a camera and a microphone.

Classroom

- Physical classrooms are "Connected Classrooms," meaning they typically have the following resources:
  - a teacher station with a teacher's own computer (also with a camera and a microphone)
  - a projector that can display the content on the teacher's computer screen
  - speakers to play audio to the classroom
- Online classrooms in the context of this book refer to **synchronous** classes, which the teacher is presenting live to their students through platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams. Regardless of the platform, you will typically have the following resources:
  - a fully functional computer with a working camera and microphone
  - the ability to share your screen, so that it serves as an online projector
  - the ability to play audio from your computer through the meeting platform
- I'll still clarify what materials I'm suggesting for each activity, but remember that your needs and resources are invariably different from your fellow teachers in different districts, states, or countries, and that's part of what makes this all so interesting to figure out!

Software

One of the perils of writing an edtech book is that companies go out of business, get bought out, rebrand, or (infamously in the case of Google's suite of tools) get shut down when teachers start to love them. On top of the things that happen to the companies, they also change their pricing plans or shift availability. While we'd all love a world where we could wave a golden ticket saying, "I'm a TEACHER!" and simply get access to whatever we want, edtech companies do not tend to bend to our whims.

Still, I'm assuming that the recommendations I give here are taken only as suggestions with a firm understanding that I cannot see into the future. Free software may become paid, and (less likely) paid software may become free. Likewise, freemium models may change what you get access to. Finally, as language teachers many of us are working from different places around the world, and licensing, firewalls, and more may be very different from country to country. Please take the time to look into the recommended software and if you need more hints and alternatives, check out the ELT Toolkit I built for the TESOL International Association at www.tesol.org/elt-toolkit.

Many of the activities can also be used in asynchronous settings. Feel free to get creative and figure out ways to adjust to your needs!

For more on pricing, please see "Cost of Services."

There's also the question of whether you should use your school email address to make accounts. If you're very confident you aren't going to be leaving your school anytime soon, yes. Your school accounts are much more likely to conform to school requirements. But if you tend to switch schools from year to year, or need to move semi-regularly, you will need to determine for yourself if using a custom email account (YourName-Teacher@gmail.com or something to that effect) is the right choice for you.

Hardware

While there are other interesting gadgets and doodads that I'd love more people to experiment with in the classroom, I'm avoiding talking about anything but the most ubiquitous of resources. In short, we're talking about the computers, the mobile devices, and the classroom setup as mentioned above. While it might be (definitely would be) cool, you will not suddenly see an activity in this book that requires a $20,000 robot on wheels or even a class set of throwable microphones. Still, if you're getting grants and finding uses for those things, share it with me online at @BrentGWarner because I do want to see how you're using them with your language learners!

Sharing and Collecting Digital Documents

Sharing and collecting digital documents can be different across platforms and resources. There are typically a few things that need to be considered:

- Will every student have their own copy of the document, or will everybody work together on one large, shared document?
- Is the document distributed through an LMS (Canvas, Schoology, Google Classroom, etc.) or shared directly by the teacher through links?
- How are students expected to return the documents? Submitting inside the LMS? Sending a link back? Showing the completed work directly to the teacher by calling them over to look at it?

As there are so many different approaches and not all schools run tech solutions in the same way, this book assumes you can work with your instructional technologist, tech coach, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), or equivalent on campus to make sure you can distribute and collect documents in the best way.

Things You Need to Know How to Do

- Manage your LMS. More and more, we're seeing students holding their teachers to higher standards of expectations in the way they control the distribution of information online. In other words, you've gotta get a lock on how to use your Learning Management System. While it would be nice if I could give full instructions on how to manage your LMS, the variety of systems and individual ways to make features work is beyond the capacity of any one resource and would only leave a page or two for the real goal of this book. This book is designed to provide activities that you can use regardless of whether your school dictates that you use Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, Google Classroom, or any of the other systems available. If you're not comfortable with your LMS, but you find yourself wanting to use some of the activities in this book, I suggest you show the activity you'd like to try to your instructional technologist (or a nerdy teacher friend), who should be able to get you started. This will also be a good way to help you become more comfortable with your LMS.
  - Things you need to know how to do inside your LMS:
    - Distribute documents to your students. This may be in the form of a single shared document for your whole class, to small groups, or to individual students.
    - Collect assignments. Do you want students to send you links to their outside work? Should they upload files for you to access? What's the process for doing that? No one solution is best for everyone, though I tend to be of the

mindset that fewer clicks and less need to organize files on my part before I get started on feedback makes me a much happier camper. Note that on most assignments, I don't provide you with techniques on how students should submit their work, so please make sure you figure out the best way for you to receive their assignments before you start the activity.

- Embed HTML. I know this sounds a little scary, but usually it's just copying and pasting.
- Connect outside apps. You may have heard some of the techy people on campus talk about an LTI. This stands for Learning Tools Interoperability and is basically a fancy way to say "bringing an app into your LMS." In the activities in this book, I don't specifically ask you to connect apps into your LMS, but you may find that doing so rather than linking students to outside websites all the time creates an easier workflow for you in the long run.

- Record yourself. Before we get to the technical side, let's talk about the human side of why this is important. Many teachers try to save time by trying to find a YouTube video that teaches a concept they're covering in class, but this is missing a key opportunity to connect with students. The more students hear your voice and understand *your* way of explaining things, the easier it will be for them to form a bond with you and to learn from you when you're working together. Hopefully part of the reason you became a teacher is because you believe that you can help students, so lean into it!
  - Types of recordings you need to be able to do:
    - Video: This may be a quick and dirty video recorded on the fly right inside your LMS, or it may be a full-on production made through a system like Camtasia (techsmith.com/camtasia). Don't worry—there are a LOT of options for teachers that land in the middle, including ScreenPal.com, Screencastify.com, Loom.com, and more. And if, by chance, my opinion on which tools to use matters to you, check out the companion ELT Toolkit, built to help teachers out at tesol.org/elt-toolkit.
    - Audio: There's a whole world of audio-related tech, but there's surprisingly little to work with for beginners or even intermediate users. Many teachers choose video options and simply turn off the camera (a fine choice, by the way!), but after years of podcasting, I'm a bit of a purist, and I personally will go to the effort to record audio either right on the web with something super simple like Vocaroo.com or online-voice-recorder.com, or step it up a bit and record in a dedicated app like GarageBand (edushare.ing/GarageBand) on Mac or Audacity (audacityteam.org) across platforms (free and **open source**, so they'll always have a piece of my heart).

Cost of Services

One persistent issue with edtech tools is the tug-of-war between teachers, who are often underfunded and already pay for too many supplies on their own, and companies who need to pay the bills and hire programmers to make their visions for students come to life. Or put more simply: Teachers want free services, while companies want to charge.

There are a lot of dynamics at play when it comes to costs involved, and debating the merits and pitfalls of all these dynamics isn't going to change the fact that most teachers will have to pick and choose what they pay for, if they can afford to pay anything at all.

Most of the tools in this book try to keep an option for teachers to explore or work with a product without having to pay for it. That said, companies change how they work, so let's look at my best effort to keep things from sending you into financial despair.

Straight-Up Free

This is the most ideal. You will notice that I focus on a number of tools by major companies like Google, Microsoft, Canva, etc. This is because they offer their services for free, and they generally have the resources to continue updating and offering expansions. This doesn't mean these are perfect companies, and yes—the old adage that if something is free, then you are the product is worth keeping in mind. Still, at the end of the day, most of us are just trying to help our students, and free is free.

Also remember that there's a whole world of open-source tools made by people (tinkerers, teachers, and more) who just wanted to create something because they saw a need, and they figured that they could create it. These are often not as shiny or polished, but they are my absolute favorite kind of tool and they represent the best of what humanity and the internet have to offer. Most of these sites have a tiny donation button, and I do my best to send some money their way as a thanks for their efforts.

Freemium

Some cases follow the freemium model, where you get a limited number of features for free. In the cases where the tools have a freemium model, I've done my best to focus on what you can do with the freely available features, and not on features you have to pay to get. This can get sticky as some services rotate their free features, which can be frustrating if you haven't checked in for a bit. More frustrating still is when companies begin to bottleneck their free features, starting off with a decent number of useable features then slowly shrinking it down to three, then two, then one … all while paying lip service to the idea that "we will always have a free option." Mmhmm. We see you.

Trial Service

A lot of companies love to "give" teachers 30 days, or 60 days, or 90 days of full access to their platform. Here's my problem with free trials: They require you to induct your students into the use of the tool, making you spend a lot of time getting used to it, and just when things seem to be working, it cuts you off—right in the middle of the semester! To me, that's a hard no. If I can't trial it for at least a full semester, it's not something I want to invest my time and energy into. I haven't included anything in this book that asks you to sign up for a service just long enough to do the activity and then run out the door. That said, I have found it can be effective to reach out to companies with a limited free trial and explain to them that you need a full semester.

Premium / Plus / Enterprise

Finally, we get to the bank breakers: paying full price for a product. To be clear, I'm all in favor of paying for useful services. Sometimes it's just a simple question of math: If this product is $8 a month and it's going to save me four hours a week, do I consider my time more valuable than 50 cents an hour? OK, then perhaps this is a worthwhile investment. Still, these things can add up, and a lot of companies are betting that you'll forget you have a recurring payment going (there are VERY few single payment options these days, much to my chagrin), so you have to go through and clear out your subscriptions every once in a while.

At the end of the day, though, I'm doing my best to avoid activities that require a premium service. This does, admittedly, limit some of the options I share. In fact, it means that there are some really cool activities you could do, and that the technology is there for, but that I didn't include because there are only one or two services that let you do it, and they're behind paywalls. If you have some funds or if your school is willing to invest in pilot programs, I highly recommend you experiment with some of the premium products out there as they can offer some very cool ways to help your students grow their language skills. It's my hope that the mostly free activities in this book work as a launchpad to more explorations.

The ISTE Standards

In this book, you will find references to the ISTE Standards for Students on every activity. The ISTE Standards are a framework that allow educators to ensure that the work they're doing creates "high-impact, sustainable, scalable and equitable learning experiences for all learners" (iste.org/standards).

Since this book is focused on student activities, the specific focuses applied to each activity fall under the category of ISTE Standards for Students. Aligning language learning skills with technology standards means that some standards got a lot more

attention (I'm looking at you, 1.1.c, 1.3.d, and 1.6.d) and others got less (sorry, 1.5.d—I've still got love for you, just not here!).

As ISTE has recently implemented a new approach to the standards, with more frequent updates and iterations, the appendix to this book includes the standards as they stood at the time of writing. If you're interested in the ISTE Standards and want to make sure that the alignment is up-to-date, you're encouraged to review the Standards and perhaps even consider taking the self-paced course (edushare.ing/ISTEStandardsIntro) to learn how to utilize the standards for your own activities.

At the back of the book, you will find a full cross-referenced grid, showing which activities hit which standards.

About Saving Time

One thing edtech proponents always like to claim is that doing things with tech will save you time. This is not true. It's not false, but it's not true. Tech can save you time, but often you won't notice it because learning new tools, setting up assignments, etc., all take time in the beginning. If you only plan to do something once, you might in fact spend more time setting it up in an edtech environment than you would just doing it on the fly for your students in an analog situation. One example that comes to mind is that it's much faster to play audio tracks from your phone or desktop (or even a CD player) than it is to convert the same audio to video, upload it to YouTube, then embed the video on pages where students can access it. But remember, once you've gone through the setup once, you've already got your content ready to go the next time you need it. So if you use those same recordings for three classes a semester for the next five years, you might not feel that you're saving time up front, but I can guarantee you're saving time on the back end. Also, once you have things set up, students can access the materials you've created anytime that works for them. This gives them the chance to revisit content they might have struggled with in class, or review it before a quiz. When I was a student, the only thing I had access to was my textbooks, which did their best to weigh me down and give me scoliosis, and if I wanted supplemental materials I had to haul my butt to the library or the listening lab to check out audio samples in the form of cassette tapes, which I was then responsible for not losing. What a miserable process.

Edtech does save you time if you're consistent and thoughtful with it, but jumping from one tool to the next with no plan for recycling your work will defeat the purpose. Saving time, though, should not always be the goal. Consider whether the work you're putting in makes things more equitable for students; when you're using edtech thoughtfully, the answer is almost always yes. I don't know about you, but I'd rather lose a little time up front and make sure my students have the opportunity to succeed

than be constantly frazzled with last-minute prep and end up sending students out the door with no further access to resources.

Finally, I'm reminded of Parkinson's Law, which states, "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." In other words, you may end up saving time by using tech, but then reallocating that time to work that was previously left incomplete, or possibly you might end up stretching out the time of completion for work that previously didn't take much time at all. This isn't a criticism, just a cruel trick of human nature. However, if you are intentional about how your time is spent, you will certainly find you've made gains over time, even though it may not be immediately apparent.

The Not-So-Secret Secret

Throughout this book you'll see me encourage you to think of different ways to apply the activities to match your context. I regularly ask you to consider changing or even throwing away things that don't work for you. I slide in encouragement to add or revise to accommodate your students. To let the cat out of the bag, one major goal of this book is to encourage all of us as teachers to build our own creative muscles and try new things in our classes. My dream is that we all start finding new ways to build more of our own engaging activities for our students, and I hope that this book points you toward a path of experimentation and fun. Let the explorations begin!

LISTENING

To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to one another, is an exercise in recognition.

— bell hooks

Technology has opened the world to more opportunities for authentic listening than any time in history. With the rise of YouTube, podcasts, streaming internet radio, and more, people from all walks of life are sharing about every topic under the sun in their own, authentic voice.

Traditional listening activities in language learning are about the furthest thing from authentic listening you can get. Actors or teachers diligently went into studios to record slow, enunciated, and simplified versions of the language they taught to help scaffold the listening and make it more accessible to students. But as listening skills specialist Sheila Thorn points out, most scaffolded listening doesn't teach students how to listen, but instead checks their comprehension of language, grammar, etc. Today, though, capturing and having students work with authentic listening samples is easier than ever; we just need to work on keeping our teaching up with the tech!

There is, of course, a place for scaffolded listening, as is clear when we're working with beginners. The great thing about living in the modern world is that we all have the resources we need just a few clicks away: fully authentic audio from everyday people, natural-seeming dialogues from professional actors, and yes—even over-enunciated readings from well-meaning language teachers.

Keep an ear out for interesting audio and save it somewhere that you can access later. The world is becoming more and more audio-friendly, and with AI being so good at transcribing audio to text, we've never been in a more media-rich environment for language learners.

The activities in this section are only scratching the surface, and I hope they give you some inspiration to see what you come up with for your own listening activities.

JEOPARDISTINCTIONS

Students will enhance their listening skills by identifying minimal pair or matching sounds in a Jeopardy-style game.

ISTE STANDARDS
1.1.c / 1.5.c / 1.7.b / 1.7.c

RESOURCES
brentgwarner.com/jeopardistinctions

Introduction

Students who are just beginning their English learning journey often struggle to distinguish the difference between phonemes that native speakers take for granted. Linguist and celebrated English teacher Penny Ur's simple "Same or Different" activity is a classic way to compare minimal pairs, and we can update it with some fun tech and make a gamified Jeopardy-style activity.

After you've explained the sound you're focusing on and how to distinguish between the minimal pairs you're working on, launch the game for a fun and engaging way to practice and review.

Activity Outline

Setup

- Record audio of minimal pairs.
- Build the Jeopardy game. Note that the goal here is just to distinguish minimal pairs, so there's no need to build categories unless you want to expand on the game in your own way.
- Insert the audio into the game. Online, you can embed audio, while in PowerPoint you can put it into your slides directly.

Activity

- Introduce the Jeopardy game format to the students. For students familiar with the game, you may want to clarify that this version doesn't require giving their answer in the form of a question.
- Separate students into groups as you see fit.
- Have the first group select a category and point value, then everybody listens to the recorded sound clue. Groups need to discuss

their decision before answering, so be prepared for ambitious students who don't wait to raise their hand or shout out the answer.

- When groups are ready, their leader or all group members should raise their hand.
- Note that they are only listening for whether the sound is the same or different, so there is no opportunity for other groups to guess if the guessing group got it wrong.
- Give or take away points to each group depending on their answers.

Teacher's Role

- Put on your best Game Show Host persona.
- Facilitate the game, ensuring smooth progress and adherence to the rules.
- Help students review the sounds as they move through the game.
- Depending on your class, you may want to make rules like "no choosing from the 200-point rows until all of the 100-point questions have been answered."

Reflection

- After completing the game, have students discuss how often they agreed or disagreed with their groups.
- Have students share which words they're still struggling to hear the difference between.

Extensions

- If you're using an online game, share the link with students to visit and review on their own time.
- Share a list of the minimal pairs and encourage students to use an online dictionary to listen to the sounds at home.
- Record a combination of the minimal pair three times ("pat," "pat," "pet") and have students determine which, if any, sounds different from the others.

Materials/Tools

There are a lot of options out there for Jeopardy templates. Some are free and others cost a few dollars. As is usually the case, you get what you pay for. Here are the options I trust:

JeopardyLabs.com is a clean and easy way to make templates online. They're great because they're always available wherever you have online access. It's free to use and

play with, but you have to keep track of your bookmarks and whatever you make is public. For a very reasonable one-time fee, you can get a lifetime membership that lets you manage your templates and make your games private.

If you want to up the level a bit, high school teacher Ryan O'Donnell makes outstanding gameshow templates at CreativeEdtech.com, and they're priced for teacher's budgets. This is much fancier and filled with sound effects, so it's a great way to get students in the spirit of things. Having a real PowerPoint file rather than an online game also means you don't need to worry when the internet goes out!

Write or Draw Your Own Ideas

Speaking

All the great speakers were bad speakers at first.

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Whenever I ask students what skill they want to improve, they inevitably say "speaking"!

I love working with students on their speaking, but from my point of view, using tech in speech and conversation classes has always been one of the clunkiest edtech experiences. Whether it's too many students trying to record in a room with bad acoustics, or people being unable to find where their audio file saved to, there are always little fires to put out.

But still! The enthusiasm I see from students when they're able to communicate with teachers, classmates, and perhaps most importantly, native speakers in daily life makes the little frustrations of tech evaporate.

Every day, the tech for speaking is getting easier and easier. During the COVID lockdown, a lot of social media platforms started experimenting with chat forums. Phones now let you record your voice instead of typing out a text message. Anybody can launch a podcast from the digital device in their pocket. The list goes on.

As with all the activities, start simple and work your way up. If you're not sure how the tech works, you might also consider enrolling an "edtech buddy," who will play the role of your student and tell you what they struggle with in accessing apps and services.

There are a number of companies working on using AI to help evaluate speaking, so keep an eye out!

AI CHATTERBOX

Enhance conversational English skills through dynamic AI voice interactions.

Introduction

While the AI revolution has sparked a lot of conversations and innovations on ways to improve the language learning experience, perhaps nothing is more powerful than the fact that students can now have an endlessly patient tutor right in their pocket, available to speak at any time.

AI Chatterbox is an easy approach to enhancing language learners' conversational skills by leveraging the capabilities of artificial intelligence. Through engaging with AI voice features in platforms like ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot, students encounter realistic and dynamic interactions, getting closer than ever to mimicking conversations in English with other people. Even living in an English-speaking country, many English language learners (ELLs) complain that they don't get opportunities to speak English, or (more realistically) that they lack the confidence to get into a conversation in the first place. AI's ability to simulate natural conversation not only boosts linguistic fluency but also cultural competence, as students navigate through various topics and scenarios and focus in on language features that are important to them. The practicality of AI Chatterbox lies in its adaptability to individual learning needs, allowing for personalized feedback and scaffolding. Plugging in a simple **prompt** and beginning the speaking process allows students to practice whenever and wherever they want.

ISTE STANDARDS

1.1.a / 1.2.d / 1.4.a / 1.6.d / 1.7.c

RESOURCES

brentgwarner.com/aichatterbox

Activity Outline

Setup

- Check your AI chatbot of choice and confirm that it has voice chat compatibility. Some have this only on mobile devices, others have them available on desktop browsers. This technology is always changing and becoming easier to access, so make sure you're aware of the features available on whatever system you use.

- Teach your students how to access and activate the voice feature.
- Typically, this is by clicking or tapping on the microphone option on the main screen.

Activity

- Provide students with the prompt below to cut and paste into their chatbot.
  - **Prompt:** Let's play a game where you ask me questions about my weekend, and I answer using the past tense. If I use the past tense correctly one time, you give me one point. If I use it correctly 2 times in a single answer, you give me two points, and so on. If I use the past tense incorrectly or fail to use the past tense, you will take away 1 point. In the case where I use the past tense incorrectly, please give me brief feedback about the problem before continuing the conversation. The goal is for me to get to 5 points total. In order to keep the conversation as natural as possible, you will use my answers to guide your follow-up questions. Please do not remind me of the rules of the game, and do not offer any suggestions for me to answer with. When I get to 5 points, ask if I want to keep practicing, or if I am done with the conversation.

As always, you're encouraged to change and adjust prompts and activities to your own needs. Feel free to change parts of the prompt to customize the experience, or add/subtract rules or expectations to meet the needs of your students learning outcomes.

- Students will listen to and respond to the bot, keeping their language focus in mind.
- When students get to five points, they may choose to continue with the conversation or end the activity.

Teacher's Role

- Monitor progress, offer technical and linguistic support.
- Keep an eye out for times when pronunciation issues may impede the chatbot from understanding a grammatically correct sentence.
- Remind students that like humans, AI won't necessarily understand everything they said. These are the moments to raise their hands and ask for support and clarification.

Reflection

- At the end of the activity, have students ask the chatbot to give overall feedback on how they did and what they can do in the future to continue to improve.
  - **Prompt:** `Can you give me feedback on my strengths and weaknesses?`

Extensions

- Students can be tasked with building their own prompts to gamify a conversation. Consider setting this challenge with no further examples than the prompt above and see what they come up with. Then put them in pairs or small groups and ask them to work on original prompts that make fun conversation games anyone in the class can use.

Materials/Tools

The AI chatbot world moves at breakneck speeds, so by the time this book goes to press things may have changed and options may vary. Major players like ChatGPT.com and Microsoft Copilot (copilot.microsoft.com) are likely to be more stable choices for a long time but keep an eye out for other choices as they become available.

Note that at the time of this writing, most verbal chatbots cleverly convert to and from text, so while the pronunciation of "read" as present tense vs. past tense may be clear to a human in a conversation, the chatbot may not recognize the change at all, assuming that the student got the verb tense right using the prompt above. In the grand scheme of things, small mistakes (and even big ones) get missed and skipped in the language learning process all the time, but it's something to be aware of and keep an eye out for.

If you have headphones available, providing them for privacy and focus may help your students as they get into their conversations.

ISTE Standards for Students by Activity

	1.1.a	1.1.b	1.1.c	1.1.d	1.2.a	1.2.b	1.2.c	1.2.d	1.3.a	1.3.b	1.3.c	1.3.d	
Jeopardistinctions			○										
Transcription Tracker	○							○					
Podcast Explorer's Log	○	○										○	
Whaddyaeer			○					○		○			
Lyric Lover		○					○		○	○			
Sketch & Guess			○			○							
Orderly Listening				○					○	○			
Behind the Curtains													
Voice Vibe			○										
Opinion Quest										○		○	
De-Silent Films	○			○				○					
Fiberoptic Fishbowl Forum			○	○		○				○			
Podcast Pulse	○							○				○	
AI Chatterbox	○							○					
Deb(AI)te Practice	○							○					
Role Play Roulette			○										
Storyboard Scenes		○		○		○					○		
Drawn to Reading	○	○		○						○		○	
Social Readia		○	○		○	○				○		○	
Trending Takeaways			○	○	○	○				○		○	
Custom Extensive Readers		○		○									
Paragraph Puzzle				○						○			
Character Chat		○	○							○	○		
Long Reading Snowball	○	○	○										

	1.4.a	1.4.b	1.4.c	1.4.d	1.5.a	1.5.b	1.5.c	1.5.d	1.6.a	1.6.b	1.6.c	1.6.d	1.7.a	1.7.b	1.7.c	1.7.d
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Make a Meme		o		o			o						
Snap 'n' Scribble	o					o							
A Rose by Any Other N(AI)m							o						
CollaborEssays	o	o	o							o			
Newsroom Bloggers	o		o			o		o	o	o	o	o	
Reverse Analysis Revision	o		o							o			
Automated Ideation	o	o		o					o	o	o		
Unusual Pairings	o	o		o	o				o	o	o	o	
Synonym Searcher		o								o	o		
Idiomaginative Explorations			o	o		o		o		o			
ChatVCB		o	o	o						o			
The Infinite Content Bot	o	o								o		o	
Magic Picture Dictionary		o		o			o				o		
Phrasal Frenzy			o							o			
Corpus Clash			o						o	o			
Antonyms on a Log			o	o				o		o		o	
Words in the Wild		o		o	o		o					o	
Investigated, Used, and Discussed			o	o		o							
Sound Symbol Memory Match			o	o						o			
Minimal Pairs Cascade	o		o			o							
Say It Right			o							o			
Speak and See			o			o				o			
A Stress-Full Quiz			o							o			
CrossSound Puzzle	o			o		o							
aMAZEing emPHAsis			o	o						o			

	1.4.a	1.4.b	1.4.c	1.4.d	1.5.a	1.5.b	1.5.c	1.5.d	1.6.a	1.6.b	1.6.c	1.6.d	1.7.a	1.7.b	1.7.c	1.7.d
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