



Collaborative Practitioner Research Reveals GenAI Integration Challenges in L2 Writing

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While most research on generative AI (GenAI) in L2 writing focuses on students' written products, teaching practice itself is largely ignored. To examine how GenAI integration affects L2 writing instruction in practice, two instructors taught parallel English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses at a Japanese university. One used GenAI while the other maintained the normal approach. Through collaborative practitioner research, we identified three key challenges: (1) significant changes to planning and preparation, (2) unexpected technical implementation challenges, and (3) disrupted classroom interactions and teacher roles. These findings show that GenAI's impact extends far beyond student products, reshaping course design, classroom interactions, teacher identity, and the underlying rhythms of pedagogical practice. Our collaborative inquiry illustrates how practitioner research can uncover implementation complexities invisible to studies that mainly focus on assessable writing products, offering useful insights for teachers considering GenAI adoption.

L2ライティング分野のGenAI研究の多くは学生の成果物に焦点をあわせているが、教育実践そのものはどのように変容するのだろうか。本研究では、日本の大学で並行してEAPコースを担当する2名の教員——一方はGenAIを導入し、もう一方は従来の手法を維持する——が協働的実践研究を通じ、GenAI統合がL2ライティング指導の現場にもたらす影響を検証した。その結果、(1) 授業設計・準備の大幅な変容、(2) 導入時の予期せぬ技術的課題、(3) 教室内相互作用と教師役割の攪乱という三つの主要課題が明らかになった。これらの知見は、GenAIの影響が学生の成果物を超えてコース設計、教室内相互作用、教師のア

イデンティティ、さらには教育実践のあり方そのものを再編することを示している。本協働的実践研究は、成果重視の研究では捉えきれない導入過程の複雑性を可視化し、GenAI導入を検討する教員に重要な示唆を提供するものである。

Since the public release of generative AI (GenAI) tools in late 2022, researchers have extensively investigated their applications in L2 writing instruction. Most studies to date focus on written products such as automated feedback, writing enhancement, and plagiarism detection. Far fewer investigate how GenAI transforms teaching at every stage—before, during, and after class. Because our approach to teaching writing relies on collaborative learning, scaffolded activities, and teacher-student interaction, this gap is of particular concern to us.

To address this gap, we conducted a collaborative practitioner study in two parallel English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses at a Japanese university. Using identical syllabi, one instructor (Senna) integrated GenAI tools while the other instructor (Dalziel) maintained conventional methods. Through this comparison, we traced how the GenAI addition disrupted course planning, task design, and classroom interaction. Our findings reveal unforeseen tensions and underscore the value of teacher-led, collaborative inquiry for understanding pedagogical change in real classroom contexts.

Literature Review

Research on GenAI in L2 writing is still emerging. Our reading of the literature to date suggests a focus on student products—automated feedback (Carlson et al., 2024; Escalante et al., 2023), revision assistance (Koltovskaia et al., 2024; Su et al., 2023), and assessment (Mizumoto et al., 2024; Pack et al., 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into writing instruction, they share two limitations. First, they focus predominantly on assessable writing products rather than the diverse pedagogical activities and scaffolding that lead to those gradable outcomes. This product focus parallels popular discourses about AI “dependency” and “deskilling” (Bai et al., 2023;

Barrot, 2023; Chan & Colloton, 2024). These fears echo in many ways the moral panic that accompanied the introduction of the calculator into the classroom (Hattie, 2023). However, such concerns often overlook the multitude of “backstage” activities through which learning occurs. Second, both lenses tend to overlook how introducing GenAI into the classroom can change core teaching practices, classroom management, and instructional decision-making.

This neglect of pedagogical activity mirrors broader sociological insights. In his book *Art Worlds*, sociologist Howard Becker (2008/1982) discussed how a focus on the aesthetic merits of cultural products led to overlooking the “support personnel” whose labor makes art possible. Just as Becker argued that stagehands and technicians are essential to opera, in writing classrooms the preparatory discussions, scaffolding activities, and collaborative interactions are central to learning—not mere backdrop to producing texts. The concept of orchestration captures this complexity—teachers, like conductors, facilitate students’ learning in real-time by regulating multiple activities at different levels (Hakami et al., 2024; Tchounikine, 2013).

In writing classrooms, much of the important pedagogical work happens outside the assessed text. Teaching is the practice of cultivating the conditions that enable students to grow—often in ways that may never show up in graded writing. This includes guiding students to analyze rhetorical patterns rather than only reading for meaning, developing metalinguistic awareness through concepts like “moves” and discourse markers, and fostering learner autonomy—the capacity to independently analyze and adapt to new writing contexts (Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022; Warner, 2019). This reflects teachers’ often implicit theory of change: that our work helps students grow beyond a single course or assignment (Caplan & Johns, 2022; Johns, 2004).

Genre-based writing pedagogy exemplifies the kind of complex pedagogical orchestration that current GenAI research overlooks. This approach, by its very nature, emphasizes the social and collaborative dimensions of writing development (Nagao, 2014, 2018; Tardy et al., 2022). Rather than focusing solely on written products, genre pedagogy structures learning around activities that help students develop metalanguage for understanding how writing patterns emerge from social contexts—providing both practical experience and analytical tools to recognize how context shapes writing (Caplan & Johns, 2022; Swales, 1990).

This involves the teaching-learning cycle (Hyland, 2007; Rose & Martin, 2012), where instructors model analyzing a text before students conduct their own investigations, individually and in groups. We introduce students to a variety of texts that may increase in complexity and familiarity—from everyday to academic genres—and guide them

through close reading of such texts to look for discursive, rhetorical, and linguistic features (“move analysis”). These activities extend beyond traditional writing tasks to include collaborative discussions, peer analysis, and reflective work that builds understanding of how genres function in their social contexts (Rose & Martin, 2012).

Therefore, to understand what current GenAI research misses about pedagogical adaptation, we adopted a collaborative and reflexive research methodology rooted in teacher inquiry. Our methodology draws on principles of collaborative reflexive inquiry (Antonacopoulou et al., 2023; Burns, 2010) and collaborative autoethnography (Adamson & Muller, 2018; Chang et al., 2013; Dalziel et al., 2024), positioning ourselves as both researchers and participants. This approach allows teachers to systematically examine their own practices and extend scholarship on teaching and learning (Enfield & Stasz, 2011; Mathieson, 2019). When teachers research together rather than alone, they can document how technology integration affects not just measurable outcomes but the entire activity system of classrooms—from interaction patterns to the distribution of expertise. This collaborative, teacher-focused perspective reveals the ripple effects of GenAI integration—changes that reshape classroom dynamics, teacher roles, and pedagogical practices in ways that product-focused research cannot capture.

Our study addresses an important gap that can help teachers in our community: examining how GenAI reshapes classroom orchestration and teacher identity within genre-based pedagogy, moving beyond static analyses of student products to understand the dynamic processes of pedagogical adaptation.

Methods

Both authors taught compulsory EAP courses for 1st-year students at a Japanese university in 2024 (13 weekly 90-minute classes). We designed parallel courses and developed shared materials to enable systematic comparison between GenAI and non-GenAI approaches (see Appendix for more details of the parallel course and task design). The typical requirement for students in the humanities and social sciences is a 1,500-word argumentative essay that makes use of outside sources. There are common course objectives centered around reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, but teachers have significant autonomy in lesson design. The first author (Dalziel) taught 26 students in the non-GenAI group, whereas the second author (Senna) taught 13 students in the GenAI group. As part of a broader study, we collected student writing samples and reflections under institutional ethics approval and informed consent; however, this paper’s analysis draws exclusively from our teacher-generated data.

We documented our teaching experiences through multiple forms of data collection: recording planning meetings where we designed the broader research study and created materials, keeping observation notes during teaching sessions, writing reflections after each class, and holding regular dialogues to make sense of emerging patterns. We analyzed these materials—transcripts, notes, reflections, email exchanges, and teaching artifacts—to understand how GenAI integration affected our teaching practices. We worked together to analyze and identify recurring patterns, themes, and challenges across our parallel courses. This collaborative analysis revealed that the act of researching transformed our teaching as much as the technology itself.

Results

Our collaborative analysis revealed how GenAI integration affected teaching and learning far beyond student writing. While some effects stemmed from a degree of artificiality imposed by the quasi-experimental design of our broader research, the process of implementing parallel courses surfaced tensions about pedagogical values, the learning environment in the classroom, and the teacher's role and identity. Three interconnected challenges emerged that illuminate these broader aspects: planning and preparation changes, task implementation and technical challenges, and interactions and teacher role.

Planning and Preparation Changes

An immediate effect of collaboration and research design was that simply introducing GenAI tools into the classroom changed the scaffolding needs and thus our lesson planning and scheduling. For example, we realized from prior experience that the GenAI students could complete a planned activity within a single class period. The non-GenAI class, on the other hand, would require a different approach: the instructor had to spend part of one class modeling a film review analysis and then have students read and analyze the reviews as a homework assignment before the following class.

This disruption to timing became our first indication that implementing GenAI was not simply a matter of tool substitution. Although we began with identical syllabi for comparison, the courses diverged once we accounted for the different preparation times required for GenAI-enhanced versus traditional activities. The close collaboration required by our research design made visible what might have remained hidden in a solo effort: our practices and activities were not just about efficiency but also represented our beliefs about teaching and learning.

Another hidden assumption revolved around the simplicity of implementing this technology into the classroom. Both authors discovered effectively using tools like ChatGPT in the classroom was time intensive. Teachers transitioning to GenAI face a new set of logistical hurdles that require more time and effort than expected. This includes things like prompt engineering for students unaccustomed to interacting with GenAI interfaces, text cleaning—stripping ads, sidebars, and other noise from online film reviews and sharing a streamlined version so students could copy-paste cleanly—and planning additional contingency activities. GenAI's analytical power can save time, but necessary front-loaded preparation might cancel out these savings.

Task Implementation and Technical Challenges

While the time-saving nature of GenAI tools is commonly heralded as a benefit, little concern is given to what extra class time means not only for the flow of the lesson but also for in-class troubleshooting. These tools seemed likely to accelerate tasks, allowing time for additional activities.

Two concerns prompted Senna to design additional tasks for the GenAI class: the timing issue and the worry that students may not engage in close reading when just using ChatGPT. The main additional task had students first prompt ChatGPT to generate a review for a different film, then revise this output using their understanding of the film review genre. This revision activity ensured that students actively applied their genre knowledge rather than passively receiving GenAI-generated analyses. While the time saved was enough to introduce this additional activity, Senna had originally anticipated being able to do even more across the semester. In any case, extra time was needed to prepare for this task.

The implementation of GenAI tasks in the classroom was also more challenging than anticipated. In a follow-up meeting between the authors, Senna commented that “lots of in-class time [was] used for training, for triage when ChatGPT does not generate what the students expect.” The use of the word “triage” here is illustrative of the way Senna felt conducting the activity as designed and emphasizes the unforeseen demands on class time due to technical issues and student confusion. This included helping students learn how to use the ChatGPT interface and how to input text with line breaks without entering a prompt. While the students completed both in-class activities, Senna's perception of student proficiency in using ChatGPT autonomously led to a change in plans. They dropped another pre-planned activity that would have given students a chance to analyze a different everyday text genre.

Interactions and Teacher Role

Both the experimental design and GenAI introduction affected the classroom environment and teacher experience. The GenAI-assisted activities visibly reduced expected student interaction, creating an atmosphere described by Senna as “dead silence.” Typically, Senna structured tasks to encourage peer-to-peer collaboration: students read texts, discussed rhetorical moves, and refined their analyses together. But with GenAI, along with our research design, students worked individually—inputting text into ChatGPT and recording the outputs into their grids—which left Senna feeling “outside of the room,” unsure whether to intervene or let them continue. ChatGPT seemingly took over the role of the “expert” in the classroom, displacing the teacher’s usual sense of authority.

Senna’s observation of “dead silence” during the GenAI-supported task reveals how this experience challenged expectations about when silence should occur in the classroom. Neither author considered silence inherently problematic, and both authors regularly incorporated quiet periods into their teaching, such as during writing workshops where students focused on drafting and revision. The issue was not silence itself, but silence at this point in the semester. Over time, teachers develop expectations for when different types of interaction should occur (Truong et al., 2025). At that early point in the semester, Senna anticipated active student interaction as they grappled with new concepts. Instead, the GenAI-induced silence disrupted their expectations.

This shift in the classroom environment also impacted the teacher’s role. Where we typically circulated among groups, monitored groupwork, and facilitated discussions, the introduction of a GenAI interface seemed to render our expertise unnecessary. Thus, Senna described feeling “outside of the room,” uncertain whether to intervene as students consulted their digital assistant rather than their instructor or peers. This echoes Sullivan and Porter’s (1997) observation about computers in writing classrooms: “No longer is the teacher automatically the center of classroom talk” (p. 170).

This “dead silence” was the teacher’s response to a clash with their usual emphasis on collaborative learning, and not necessarily one that should be taken with judgment on the students or their learning processes. Indeed, classroom silence may signal deep engagement as students concentrate on mastering GenAI interfaces or focus on writing. Contemplative pedagogy and mindfulness-based approaches to learning suggest that focused, quiet engagement can support deep learning processes (Featherstone, 2020; Hanh & Weare, 2017).

The research design itself also shaped these dynamics. The experimental protocol required students to complete tasks individually and mechanically—different from how Senna would normally integrate such tools through interactive, collaborative activities. This artificial constraint, necessary for our comparative study, may have amplified the silence and isolation. In his regular teaching practice, Senna used GenAI as a springboard for discussion rather than a replacement for it, incorporating opportunities for students to compare outputs, debate their accuracy, and collaboratively refine prompts.

Discussion

These implementation challenges suggest some specific strategies for teachers considering GenAI integration in L2 writing classroom contexts. Each finding points to specific adaptations needed in course design, teaching practice, and professional development.

Managing Preparation and Planning Demands

GenAI can automate and expedite certain tasks such as annotation and move labeling, but this automation can remove the need for students to interact with their peers. Instructors who value collaborative approaches should design follow-up activities that promote group discussion and reflection. In our setting, even after GenAI produces a move analysis, students could compare their results in small groups and critique the correctness or comprehensiveness of the labels produced. When activities require students to work alone with a GenAI interface, treating the output as a “first pass”—one that can act as a springboard for discussion—helps ensure that these tools do not displace student-to-student interaction.

Addressing Implementation and Technical Challenges

We expected that if ChatGPT could quickly handle rote aspects of rhetorical move labeling, then we would have extra class time to use for discussing rhetorical strategies or peer feedback. However, the free time might be illusory. Front-loaded preparation is substantial, including prompt design, text formatting, and contingency and extension exercises. Given this extensive preparation required to effectively use GenAI in teaching, institutions and programs promoting GenAI adoption should consider allocating professional development hours and technical support so that teachers are not bearing these costs alone.

Preserving Collaborative Learning and Teacher Presence

Assisting students with the inevitable technical glitches that arise can reposition the teacher's role from knowledge provider to facilitator or technician. This change can be unsettling for teachers used to guiding the class in a more hands-on way, or for teachers uncomfortable with long stretches of silence in an otherwise active learning environment.

Besides student unfamiliarity with these tools and interfaces, the underlying architecture of GenAI algorithms means that its output can vary, even when prompts are repeated (Mollick, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). A colleague recently shared how they had carefully prepared for an in-class demonstration using GenAI to illustrate a particular teaching point, yet when running the demonstration live in class, the output was different from what they had prepared for. This feature can turn the teacher into an ad-hoc “technician” or “content-moderator” who must diagnose unexpected model output on the spot.

GenAI as a Disruptive Co-Instructor

These implementation challenges reveal that GenAI functions less as a tool and more as a disruptive co-instructor. The additional planning and preparation time contrasted with the smooth workflow of our non-GenAI classes, where students followed predictable sequences. While GenAI reduced cognitive load for some analytical tasks, it increased demands for troubleshooting and training. Successful integration requires changes not only to student tasks but also teacher roles and basic aspects of lesson planning.

Conclusion

Our experience conducting practitioner research implementing GenAI in parallel writing courses highlights often-overlooked challenges that extend beyond technical integration and assessable outputs. Integrating GenAI tools can be beneficial for students and teachers, but learning involves more than graded products. Teachers considering GenAI in the L2 writing class should anticipate disruptions in student collaboration patterns. In addition, teachers might consider time needed for preparation, logistical planning, and shifts in their classroom role.

Conducting classroom research together—documenting, reflecting, discussing, and analyzing our parallel implementations—revealed insights that would have remained

invisible if we had been doing it alone. The consequences of our research design, which redirected focus from student outcomes toward teacher practices, only became apparent through sustained collaborative dialogue. While research is important for teacher development and well-being (Burns et al., 2022; Mason et al., 2023), we often hold idealized views of how research happens (Knorr Cetina, 1999; Mellor, 2001). Friction points and frustration in classroom research—when examined in partnership with a trusted other—can become opportunities for developing insight into assumptions and values about teaching and learning.

There is a clear need for further pedagogical research that centers teachers' experiences with GenAI integration into the classroom. As these tools become more embedded in writing instruction, we must investigate their effects on teaching practices, course design, and teacher identity. Through teacher-focused practitioner research—ideally conducted collaboratively with others—we can develop sustainable approaches to GenAI integration that preserve what we value most in L2 writing pedagogy.

Bio Data

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Appendix

Task Design

Both groups of students completed identical genre analysis tasks (see Table 1). The first task (GA1) involved analyzing "request for extension" emails, with both sets of groups seeing students work in small groups without computers. The goal was to familiarize students with genre analysis-metalanguage and rhetorical move identification.

The second task (GA2) revealed the divergence in our approaches. Here students were to familiarize themselves with the genre of film reviews. Both groups analyzed reviews of *Godzilla Minus One*. The non-GenAI class followed a traditional sequence: instructor demonstration, individual homework analysis, and then small-group and class discussion. The GenAI class used ChatGPT with provided prompts to identify rhetorical moves and evidence, transferring outputs to analysis worksheets. GenAI students also generated and revised film reviews using their genre understanding.

Subsequent tasks followed similar patterns: GA3 was an analysis of essay introductions to support students' own draft writing (see WT1 in Table 1), and GA4 was an analysis of

essay body sections. For the final task, both groups worked without GenAI (see WT2 in Table 1). This final step was part of our original research focus on knowledge transfer.

Table 1

Parallel Course Task Design

Task name	Genre	Description
Genre Analysis 1 (GA1)	Request for assignment extension email	Both classes used same approach, without GenAI tools. Introduction to the concept of rhetorical moves in a short, familiar, and useful genre. Teacher modeling, student reading, group discussions, and manual moves labeling.
Genre Analysis 2 (GA2)	Film reviews (three film reviews of <i>Godzilla Minus One</i>)	GenAI class: use of ChatGPT to analyze film reviews and generate a list of move labels and representative quotes. Students then copy and pasted into a worksheet. Non-GenAI class: Individual close reading of film reviews; manual labeling of moves and examples into worksheet; comparison of findings in small groups; class discussion.
Genre Analysis 3 (GA3)	Introduction sections of prior student essays	GenAI class: same procedure as in GA2. Non-GenAI class: same procedure as in GA2.
Writing Task 1 (WT1)	Students write draft Introduction for own research paper	Students write drafts and label the moves of their own drafts without GenAI.
Genre Analysis 4 (GA4)	Main body section of prior student essays	Both classes conduct moves analysis without GenAI tools.
Writing Task 2 (WT2)	Students write their own draft body section	Students write drafts and label the moves of their own drafts without GenAI tools.