GENERATIVE AI-SUPPORTED FEEDBACK IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING: A PROCESS-ORIENTED MODEL FOR UNIVERSITY EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. This conceptual and instructional-design study examines how generative artificial intelligence can be integrated into the teaching of English academic writing without displacing learner authorship or teacher judgment. Drawing on process writing, formative assessment, feedback literacy, and recent ethical guidance, it proposes a six-stage cycle linking task interpretation, independent drafting, diagnostic feedback, selective revision, source verification, and reflection. The analysis distinguishes language-level assistance from argument development and disciplinary knowledge, identifies risks associated with inaccurate suggestions and inappropriate dependency, and offers a practical feedback protocol and assessment rubric. The model is a pedagogical proposal; no intervention, participants, or measured learning gains are claimed.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, academic writing, generative artificial intelligence, formative feedback, feedback literacy, revision, academic integrity.

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing in English requires writers to coordinate linguistic resources with rhetorical purpose, disciplinary expectations and responsible use of evidence. University students often experience the task as a sequence of isolated corrections: grammar is revised after the text is complete, while argument structure and reader orientation receive little explicit attention. This separation can produce surface accuracy without communicative effectiveness. A process-oriented approach instead regards writing as recursive decision making in which planning, drafting, feedback and revision interact throughout the development of a text.

Generative artificial intelligence has introduced an additional source of language suggestions into this process. A system may propose alternative transitions, explain apparent grammatical problems, imitate a peer reviewer or produce a summary of a student paragraph. Yet plausible linguistic output does not guarantee factual accuracy, interpretive adequacy or appropriate citation practice. Instructors therefore face a double task: to make constructive use of responsive feedback and to ensure that learners remain responsible for the claims, sources and rhetorical decisions represented in submitted work.

The present article develops a practical instructional model for English as a foreign language (EFL) academic writing in higher education. It asks what kinds of AI-mediated feedback can support revision, how teachers can distinguish assistance from substitution, and how learning can be assessed when drafts and revisions are produced with digital support. The argument is restricted to the design and evaluation criteria of a proposed model; it does not report classroom experimentation or statistically verified outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Process-oriented composition research conceptualizes effective writing as an activity that moves among planning, translating ideas into text, and reviewing. Flower and Hayes (1981) emphasize that these operations are not simply consecutive phases. Their account is especially relevant to digitally mediated instruction because a student can request feedback during planning, while drafting a paragraph, or after comparing a revision with the initial version. A useful technological intervention should therefore be located within an intelligible writing purpose rather than added as a final proofreading service.

Hyland (2003) demonstrates that second-language writing instruction must attend to genre, audience and the social conventions shaping texts. An introduction to a research paper does different rhetorical work from a reflective response or a short professional report. Generic requests to make prose more academic risk flattening these distinctions. The teacher must first establish the target genre and clarify what readers expect from the organization of claims, literature engagement and evidence before an automated suggestion can be evaluated.

Feedback research complicates the assumption that a greater volume of commentary necessarily improves learning. Hattie and Timperley (2007) locate effective feedback in relationships among intended goals, present performance and subsequent action. Carless and Boud (2018) further describe student feedback literacy as the capacity to appreciate, interpret and use feedback productively. These insights imply that AI output is not itself learning: students must diagnose the issue, decide whether the advice is justified, and demonstrate an independent revision rationale.

The emergence of generative AI changes the speed and accessibility of revision support. UNESCO (2023) recommends a human-centred approach emphasizing privacy, inclusion, human agency and institutional oversight. Kasneci et al. (2023) identify opportunities as well as challenges for large language models in education, including unreliable outputs, bias and the need for critical literacy. These cautions suggest that a pedagogically credible approach should specify permitted uses, data handling requirements and methods of verifying substantive claims.

A CEFR-informed perspective also makes writing a social practice. The Council of Europe (2020) highlights mediation and the capacity to process and relay information for others. In academic writing, these activities include selecting relevant ideas, integrating multiple viewpoints, acknowledging uncertainty and communicating complex material to a specified reader. Automated correction of sentence form can support these operations, but cannot replace the intellectual judgment they require.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses conceptual synthesis and task-based instructional design. Its materials are established scholarly publications on writing processes, feedback, second-language composition, and policy guidance on generative AI. No student scripts, interviews, institutional datasets or classroom outcomes were collected. The procedure first identifies recurrent writing decisions; next maps potentially useful AI interactions to those decisions; and finally specifies safeguards and observable assessment evidence for each stage.

The resulting unit is intended for undergraduate EFL learners preparing a 600- to 900-word evidence-based academic response. A teacher provides a disciplinary question and a small set of approved scholarly readings. Learners must prepare an argument, distinguish interpretation from source claims, and submit an initial draft, a revised draft, a short revision log and a source-check note. The exact prompt, text length and scoring criteria may be adapted to departmental requirements and students' proficiency levels.

For transparency, the proposed AI prompts are illustrative rather than records of real interactions. Feedback is classified into four categories: local linguistic form, rhetorical clarity, reasoning and evidence, and integrity-related concerns. Local form includes agreement and sentence-level comprehensibility; rhetoric concerns cohesion and audience orientation; reasoning addresses warrants, counterarguments and paragraph logic; and integrity concerns the provenance of quotations, references and generated language.

The model is assessed analytically by asking whether each stage preserves student decision making, provides a checkable record of revision and aligns teacher evaluation with course goals. It is not evaluated through causal claims. A future empirical test would require baseline writing tasks, an appropriate comparison condition, ethical review where applicable, independent scoring and explicit reporting of the reliability of assessment.

RESULTS AND PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS

The principal result of this design exercise is a six-stage teaching cycle. Stage one, task interpretation, requires students to restate the writing question, audience and genre criteria in their own words. AI may be used to ask clarifying questions about assignment wording, but it must not replace reading the assignment. A short learner-authored task map identifies the thesis to be defended, expected evidence and restrictions on source use. This creates an explicit benchmark against which later feedback can be judged.

Stage two, independent planning and drafting, protects initial intellectual work. Students construct an outline and produce a first version before receiving substantive machine suggestions. This sequence does not assume that unaided writing is always superior. It establishes a visible baseline of the learner's argument and language choices, allowing an instructor to see the difference between an original plan and a later technologically mediated text. An initial draft should be preserved with its date and a short statement of sources consulted.

Stage three, diagnostic feedback, permits narrowly targeted prompts. For instance, a learner might request: Identify the two sentences in this paragraph where the relationship between a claim and its evidence is least clear; explain the problem without rewriting the paragraph. The restricted request prompts metalinguistic analysis rather than wholesale production. Students can compare the response with a teacher-generated checklist and mark suggestions as accepted, rejected or unresolved. A system-generated comment remains a hypothesis requiring verification.

Stage four, selective revision, turns feedback into an observable learning activity. For each major change, the writer notes the original difficulty, the proposed revision and the reason for adopting it. Language-level revisions may improve collocation or remove ambiguity, while higher-order revisions may alter the sequence of supporting evidence or the scope of a claim. Students are encouraged to reject fluent-looking suggestions when these change meaning, erase disciplinary qualifications or introduce unsupported generalizations.

Stage five, evidence and source verification, addresses a distinctive weakness of generative systems. Students return to the provided readings and verify the existence, wording and relevance of any cited evidence. A reference produced by a model must not be included unless independently located in a reliable bibliographic record or original publication. Paraphrases should be checked against their sources to avoid distorted attribution. Instructors can require an evidence table showing claim, supporting passage, source and page or section location where available.

Stage six, reflection and accountable submission, makes the feedback process auditable. The student submits the two drafts, a brief revision log, a source-check note and an AI-use declaration that specifies the type rather than the private content of assistance. An example declaration might state that automated comments were consulted for cohesion and sentence clarity but that all source selection and substantive arguments were checked by the author. The purpose is formative transparency, not surveillance or collection of unnecessary personal data.

A practical rubric can allocate 30 percent to argument and critical reasoning, 25 percent to evidence integration, 20 percent to organization and genre, 15 percent to linguistic control and 10 percent to documented revision practice. These weights are illustrative, not empirically optimized. They deliberately prevent perfect surface fluency from overwhelming evidence of academic reasoning. A course may alter the proportions to reflect the task; whatever scheme is selected should be provided before drafting begins.

For instructors, the model suggests an intervention hierarchy. First address a text whose thesis or sources are unworkable; then address paragraph structure and reader guidance; finally attend to sentence-level errors that impede comprehension. AI feedback may be most straightforward in the final category, but extensive rewriting should not be

treated as a shortcut to the earlier categories. When a student cannot explain a revised sentence, the teacher should treat that discrepancy as a prompt for learning-focused dialogue.

DISCUSSION

The proposed sequence shifts attention from the apparent quality of generated language to the quality of the learner's decisions. This distinction is critical in contexts where polished English may conceal fragile reasoning. By asking students to preserve the initial draft and explain their revisions, the instructor can assess the relation between feedback, comprehension and authorship. The approach also recognizes that language learners benefit from explicit alternatives and examples when they can examine rather than merely reproduce them.

Several constraints limit practical implementation. AI tools may handle specialized terms inconsistently and may produce feedback that is too confident, too general or culturally insensitive. Differences in access to devices, connectivity and paid functions may create inequitable conditions. Privacy concerns become especially pronounced when students paste identifiable data or unpublished research into external services. Institutions should publish permitted-use rules, establish accessible non-AI alternatives and prohibit the disclosure of confidential materials.

Teacher preparation is also necessary. A teacher who cannot distinguish a grammatical recommendation from a rhetorical transformation may unintentionally reward automated homogenization. Professional development should therefore include prompt design, verification of citations, evaluation of model limitations, and discussion of disciplinary writing expectations. Feedback literacy must apply to instructors as well as learners. Teacher moderation remains indispensable when grading claims of intellectual originality or academic integrity.

The proposed model is not evidence that AI support improves academic writing outcomes. Its value is to articulate testable instructional mechanisms. Future research might compare a teacher-feedback-only condition with a carefully constrained hybrid-feedback condition, examine revision quality using blinded assessors, and collect learner explanations of accepted and rejected suggestions. Such work should separate perceived convenience from demonstrated writing development and report limitations without attributing all changes to technology.

CONCLUSION

Generative AI can be integrated into EFL academic writing instruction as a structured source of provisional feedback rather than an unaccountable substitute for the student writer. The six-stage cycle developed here connects task interpretation, independent drafting, targeted diagnosis, selective revision, evidence verification and reflective submission. Its central pedagogical principle is that feedback becomes educational when learners can evaluate it and justify subsequent action.

The framework places argument quality, source integrity and feedback literacy ahead of stylistic polish. It provides teachers with an adaptable sequence of tasks and evidence for assessment, while acknowledging the limits of a conceptual study. Empirical evaluation across proficiency levels and subject areas is required before claims can be made about its effectiveness, transferability or impact on learning outcomes.

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