



## **The Invisible Co-Teacher: Mapping the Unseen Role of AI in Primary Education: A Case Study in One Private School**

**<sup>1</sup>Madiha Saeed\***

<sup>1</sup>Academic Coordinator, Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan School

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### **\*Correspondence Author:**

[Madiha91@gmail.com](mailto:Madiha91@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Artificial intelligence (AI) has quietly become part of the everyday learning tools that children use in primary classrooms, particularly in writing tasks. Many writing programs now suggest alternate words, restructure sentences, or highlight possible errors as students' type. Because these prompts appear to be routine features of digital platforms, their influence often goes unnoticed. This study was conducted in a private primary school that was implementing a technology innovation initiative, where a Grade 4 teacher used an AI-supported writing tool during a personal narrative unit. The purpose was to observe how the tool shaped students' writing choices and how the teacher helped students respond to this automated feedback.

The study found that when students accepted the AI suggestions immediately, their writing appeared more refined in terms of grammar and sentence structure. However, some of the warmth, individuality, and lived emotion present in their original drafts became muted. The tone shifted toward a more formal and generalized style, which did not always represent the child's actual voice or memory. When the teacher introduced reflective discussions asking students what emotion they were trying to convey, or whether the suggestion still "sounded like them" students began to think more carefully about language. The students began to judge whether they would accept, modify, or reject an AI's suggestion, based on its content rather than its accuracy.

This data suggests that AI can support the development of technical writing, as long as there is teacher guidance toward making intentional decisions about the use of AI technology. This research indicates that it is essential for educators to have a level of agency in supporting emerging writers, and through dialogue, be able to enable them to remain authors of their own voice and expression.

AI can support students' learning if they are aware of its role. Teacher education and professional development should provide the opportunity to develop awareness of how AI impacts writing and how to enable students to retain authorship of their own voice and expression. Teachers need to give students the tools to evaluate the use of AI in their writing.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, primary education has been a place where there is a growing trend toward incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into digital learning spaces that students use for literacy and writing instruction. Most modern software packages designed specifically for writing now have many ways to assist students with their writing such as using predictive text to help them complete sentences or words; enhancing their vocabulary; automatically reorganizing their sentences; and providing students with grammatically correct responses to the things they write. These writing tools are usually viewed as objective aids to assist students with their writing skills.

But when developing writers (and particularly those who are trying to establish their own personal narrative identity or voice), AI-generated suggestions may create issues for these writers (related to authorship, agency and the development of meaning) in how they are able to express themselves using language. Elementary students write to create a developmental space where they can share

with others how they think, feel and what they have experienced; additionally, they write to document their memory of an event.

Recent research highlights how AI-integrated writing environments shape student linguistic choices even when unnoticed (Rahman & Stevens, 2024; Zhou & Patel, 2022).

While research has focused on how students use AI assisted writing tools for academic purposes, few studies have examined the influence that accepting AI generated ideas has upon the emotional content, tone, and/or voice that is inherent in a student's writing. Students who do not assess AI generated ideas critically to use are likely to gain in terms of organization (e.g., structure) but ultimately lose their original voice with which to express their writing. Young writers benefit from early schooling as it provides the opportunity for developing the child's expressive language which assists in establishing both identity and confidence, in expressing themselves through their writing. Teachers have a pedagogical dilemma. What ways can teachers enable students to use AI tools in their writing processes while enabling the students to express their thoughts with original and personal expressions.

The primary aim of this study was to investigate how Grade 4 students from a private school utilized AI generated writing prompts to increase their quality of writing in the context of a personal narrative unit. A second focus of this study included the impact of both student decision-making processes, as well as the role of the teacher (as a mediator), on the relationship between student utilization of AI generated writing prompts and writing quality in an actual classroom environment.

In this research study, qualitative case study methodology was utilized to analyze student writing samples, classroom observation data, and the reflective commentary from the teacher. The findings of this research study will provide a better understanding of the role of teacher support in enabling students to critically evaluate AI generated writing prompts and foster a student's own unique writing voice within a primary writing classroom context. This study also has practical applications that can be used in developing teacher education programs; improving students' digital literacy; and thoughtfully integrating AI technology with the teaching of primary writing.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretical foundations for this study include Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) where technology and tools influence how people create meaning; and Authorial Voice (Haroutunian-Gordon, 2021) where Children's Narrative Writing creates connections to Identity Formation, Emotional Memory, and Personal Meaning. The role of teachers in Mediating Student Writing using Artificial Intelligence (AI), is to support Students in creating Authentic Voice and Preserving Authorial Voice while developing Critical Digital Literacy skills that promote questioning of Technological Authority and Automated Suggestions and encourage Students to accept suggestions from AI Systems as Correct. Overall, these Theories support the reason why AI Functions as an "Invisible Co-Teacher" and Why Teacher Intervention is Necessary to Support Student Agency, Authorship, and Authentic Voice.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

In the past ten years AI based resources to aid with both teaching and learning of primary school children have been developed at an incredible rate and can be found in almost every primary school today. Examples of AI based resources that can be used in a variety of ways include autocorrect (spelling correction) and grammar/spelling checkers, adaptive writing feedback and automatic grading. Since most AI-based tools are embedded into very common digital tools that students use regularly to practice their writing, reading and math, students do

not perceive them as tools. Additionally, because the AI-based tools look and feel just like many other tools that students use on a regular basis, the impacts they have on students' thinking and language practices may also go unnoticed. While they may function as a "behind the scenes" tool in the classroom that influence the way students are writing, planning and editing, many teachers or students have no idea that AI is functioning.

A single study in this collection looks at one school which has launched a School Wide Digital Innovation Initiative (DI). The DI focuses on increasing the levels of student agency, creativity and self-confidence with respect to digital literacy. The DI prompts teachers to think about new ways to utilize technology to foster independence and reflective thinking for their students. The DI also provided teachers with access to several AI-based writing platforms. These platforms can give teachers real-time feedback on students' vocabulary usage, sentence construction and grammar. Although teachers were encouraged to make use of the tools, the DI did not offer much professional development to help teachers consider the implications of using AI to mediate writing.

The participating teacher, Ms. A was teaching a fourth-grade classroom as a component of a personal narrative writing unit where she asked her students to tell her stories about their memories, emotional experiences and identity through storytelling. As a teacher, Ms. A had many years of supporting her students' writing development but none of the school staff including Ms. A had previously discussed the impact of AI's writing suggestions on the narrative voice of the student's writing. In addition, there were no shared guidelines developed by the school regarding the position of AI tools in relation to the writing instructional practices of the teachers.

Thusly, the instructional environment was formed with three primary features.

- Ai was a component of the students' writing process,
- Students reacted to the Ais generated responses and
- Teachers had never studied the role of Ai in writing instruction.

All of this allowed for AI to function as de facto pedagogy (as a source of linguistic authority that students typically take as fact).

Ms. A led the writing instruction, while the AI tool was also guiding the students in terms of language, tone and how they represented themselves through their personal writing experiences at the same time.

This dual factor created the foundation for defining the concept of an "invisible co-teacher" in relation to AI. The term "invisible co-teacher" illustrates the unobtrusive and influential role that AI is taking in student learning when students accept AI's recommendations as neutral or factual. Although the AI tool did not supplant Ms. A's instructional leadership, but rather existed simultaneously with the students and the instructional directions of the teacher, its presence to the students went unseen because there was no definition nor communication to the students about the influence of the AI tool on their voices, meanings and authorship of their writing.

Therefore, the motivation behind conducting this study developed as a result of an interest in understanding the capabilities of AI so that we could gain a greater understanding of the types of suggestions that AI would make; how students respond to those suggestions; and ultimately, how teachers can assist students with retaining control of the meaning within their writing.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

While the writing tool helped with correcting grammar in many ways, the students began to rely on the AI's vocabulary and sentence structure instead of reflecting their own voice and style. The students' stories were no longer the raw and emotional accounts of who they were, but polished and grammatically correct. This aligns with research showing that automated feedback often replaces expressive language with standardized forms, reducing children's narrative authenticity (Haroutunian-Gordon, 2021). This loss of authenticity came about due to there being no mechanism for the teacher to guide the students to reflect on how the AI's suggestions affected the meaning of their stories. The main issue here is not the tool itself; it is the lack of a reflective process in which the teacher guides the student to understand and evaluate the use of AI-generated writing suggestions to preserve the student's voice and meaning. Thus, the problem being studied within this case study is: How can educators provide an opportunity for students to recognize, reflect upon, and assess the implications of AI-generated writing suggestions for preserving their personal voice and meaning?

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

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The objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the nature of AI-generated feedback and its influence on students' narrative writing
2. To analyse the ways that students attempt to mediate their own linguistic representation and an AI suggested revision during their writing activity.
3. To examine the way teachers can intervene to shape students' critical thinking about an AI generated feedback process.
4. To develop recommendations for teacher education and classroom practices as to how AI writing tools may be effectively incorporated into the development of early literacy skills.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The importance of this study is due to its contributions to current debates concerning the pedagogical effects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Primary Education. Presently, most studies have focused primarily on the advantages and error correcting capabilities of AI supported writing tools while very few have looked at the effects on children's narrative voice and their developing identities through writing.

During the early stages of writing development, children make significant connections between language, memory, emotion, and personal meaning. As such, the methods in which AI supports, replaces, or modifies children's written expression will be of great interest to researchers and educators.

This study will provide insights into the ways in which young writers may unknowingly rely on AI as a source of authority with regard to linguistic expressions, often favouring the AI generated suggestions over their own expressions. These patterns of reliance have serious implications for students' sense of authorship and agency. This study will also illustrate the importance of teacher mediation as a method by which to support students to view writing as a form of intentional communication, and not simply a series of technical corrections. Additionally, when teachers

reflect with students regarding tone, purpose, and emotional nuances of their writing, they are more likely to maintain ownership of their ideas and voices.

In documenting how guided reflection affects students' use of AI-generated feedback, this study will demonstrate the need to incorporate critical AI literacy and reflective writing pedagogy within teacher preparation programs. The study will offer both theoretical perspectives and practical guidance for educators who wish to utilize AI tools in ways that retain the authentic voice of students, promote thoughtful decision making and allow students to express themselves through their writing.

## **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

### **AI in Primary Writing Instruction**

Recent advancements in natural language processing (NLP) have allowed educational tools to generate automated written feedback, vocabulary enhancements, and sentence restructuring recommendations. The NLP technology is typically integrated into typing platforms or browser-based writing environments in primary education (Rahman & Stevens, 2024). The primary purpose of this integration is to enable young writers to simplify revision and receive real-time support. However, while AI systems are extremely successful in identifying surface-level correctness (grammar, spelling, syntax), they cannot identify the intended meaning, tone, personal experience, or cultural voice behind student writing. Ultimately, meaning making is a social, relational, and human process.

Research has consistently shown that Writing Development in Children is Directly Tied to Identity Formation, Emotional Memory, and Personal Storytelling (Haroutunian-Gordon, 2021). By Pressuring Students to Conform to Standardized Language Forms, Automated Writing Feedback Systems Can Reduce Opportunities for Students to Express Themselves Linguistically. Therefore, the role of AI in the writing development of students should be Mediated Rather Than Allowed to Guide the Writing of Students without Criticism.

### **The Idea of “Voice” in Writing and Why AI Struggles with It**

Voice isn't simply the selection of words; it reflects point-of-view, rhythm, lived experiences and an individual's or group's narrative identity. Consequently, AI based writing models are trained on vast amounts of publicly available data, as such, they will often produce generic, de-personalized and mid-level, standardized versions of written English (Zhou & Patel, 2022). As a result of this, in primary education where children are developing their ability to express themselves, the use of AI generated suggestions could lead to:

Voice isn't simply the selection of words; it is a reflection of point-of-view, rhythm, lived experiences and an individual's or group's narrative identity. Consequently, AI based writing models are trained on vast amounts of publicly available data, as such, they will often produce generic, de-personalized and mid-level, standardized versions of written English (Zhou & Patel, 2022). As a result of this, in primary education where children are developing their ability to express themselves, the use of AI generated suggestions could lead to:

- Loss of emotional tone
- Overly formal writing that is not suitable to the child's age
- Erasure of culturally and family-based linguistic forms
- Reduced sense of ownership of meaning

Thus, if teachers do not mediate between student ideas and AI generated text, then the potential exists for AI to inadvertently create a "standard" form of expression among all users.

### **Teacher Agency in Technology-Supported Learning**

Teacher Agency is a term that defines how capable teachers are of making purposeful decisions based on the needs of students, the goals of instruction, and the circumstances at hand. Teachers' ability to exercise their professional judgment increases when they use technology and will continue to do so with or without AI. The amount of agency a teacher has also depends on whether the AI generated feedback is simply taken by the teacher (therefore reducing teacher agency) or if the teacher uses it as input for them to then interpret, question and place into context. Therefore, educators should frame AI as a tool for supporting decisions, not making them.

### **The Need for AI Literacy and Reflective Pedagogy**

It is not about learning to program for teachers; it is about:

- Learning what you can and can't expect an artificial intelligence to understand
- Expecting where AI will distort meaning
- Aiding students in their critical evaluation of AI feedback

Thinking as reflective practitioners about the influence of tools on learning, i.e., how we influence our students with these tools, is necessary (Freire, 1970). In addition to using AI tools in class, teachers need to be able to think through and discuss how the tools affect student learning, and to be transparent about those effects.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

<b>AI Can Support</b>	<b>But Cannot Replace</b>
Immediate feedback	Human interpretation
Pattern recognition	Understanding intention
Technical correction	Emotional expression
Practice scaffolding	Identity formation

Therefore, the literature supports a view of AI as an invisible co-teacher with which teachers must recognize and mediate in order to protect the authenticity and human quality of student writing.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive qualitative case study methodology was employed to investigate how AI-assisted writing feedback impacted student expression and how the mediating role of the teacher affected student responses to that feedback. This design was selected because the instructional situation one Grade 4 class using AI during a narrative unit constituted a bounded system suitable for case study research. This research sought to provide insight into the interactions among teachers, students and an AI tool within the context of an authentic classroom, while excluding any extrinsic variables.

### **Site**

This study took place in an urban public elementary school that has been working on developing a digital innovation program since its inception to determine how to intentionally incorporate technology into the instructional process. As part of the school's mission, it sought to help children become independent thinkers, express themselves creatively and foster self-expression. To assist the school in its pursuit, a number of teachers were asked to use AI-enabled digital writing tools as part of their instructional practices.

### **Participants**

The focus group consisted of a single, fourth-grade class of twenty-five students (aged 9-10), and their teacher (Ms. A.). These students represented the linguistic and culturally diverse population typical of an urban school setting, including multilingual students and students who vary greatly in terms of writing ability. Although personally identifiable information is being kept anonymous, the diversity of these students added complexity to the results of this study regarding voice and identity in writing and how they interpret, accept or resist suggestions generated by the AI.

### AI Writing Platform

The digital AI writing platform utilized in this study was a commercially available cloud-based AI writing platform that has been widely implemented in educational settings (the name of the platform was omitted for anonymity). The features of the platform included: real-time grammar correction; vocabulary enhancements; sentence restructuring prompts; and automated fluency scores. Additionally, the feedback provided by the platform relies on pre-trained language models and statistical patterns and does not incorporate contextual awareness or emotional intelligence - both of which are significant in developing student meaning in writing.

### Procedure

The case study occurred over a three-week period, in the spring of a school year, when the fourth-grade students in Ms. A.'s classroom wrote a series of personal narratives. The sequence of events included:

Stage	Description
<b>Initial Drafting</b>	Students composed personal narratives on laptops without teacher correction.
<b>AI-Supported Revision</b>	Students reviewed AI-generated suggestions that appeared as highlighted text and recommended substitutions.
<b>Teacher Mediation Sessions</b>	Ms. A facilitated whole-class and small-group discussions on evaluating AI suggestions.
<b>Reflection and Final Drafting</b>	Students revised their writing a second time, making intentional decisions about language use.

### Data Sources

The researcher gathered data using three naturalistic classroom sources:

#### 1. Student Writing Examples

- first drafts prior to use of AI in student writing examples
- suggested revisions by AI.
- final versions after Ms. A mediated between student and AI generated revision suggestions.

#### 2. Corresponding Classroom Observations

- verbal guidance from Ms. A to students
- reactions from students toward feedback from Ms. A
- group discussions with students about their own writing decisions

#### 3. Teacher Reflection Data

- Ms. A's reflective notes documented during weekly innovation team meetings.
- No surveys, interviews, or testing was done for this research; the focus was on authentic educational practices.

### Data Analysis Approach

Data were analyzed through **thematic analysis**, following three steps:

Step	Description
<b>Identifying Meaning Shifts</b>	Instances where AI suggestions altered tone, emotional

	expression, or narrative authenticity were highlighted.
<b>Tracing Teacher Mediation</b>	Teacher prompts, questioning strategies, and modeling were coded.
<b>Examining Student Decision-Making</b>	Student choices in final drafts were compared to initial reactions to AI suggestions.

The analysis was concerned with the role of a teacher as mediator in the way that students could evaluate (rather than accept) an AI recommendation.

### **Ethical Considerations**

- School administrators allowed the documentation of this case.
- Avoiding identification of specific students, student assignments were included in an anonymous manner with a descriptive approach.
- The teacher volunteered to be involved in this study and read and agreed on the summary of the case prior to its inclusion.
- This study did not affect the normal pace of instruction, assessments or curricula.
- Respect for student identity, privacy and a genuine classroom environment was the focus of this study's design.

### **CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION**

In the narrative writing unit, students created a personal story about a significant experience they had with a family member. To assist students' ability to create and convey descriptive details, emotional expression and a cohesive narrative structure, students initially wrote their narratives independently from the instructor prior to receiving feedback on their work. Students were allowed to write freely while using an AI supported digital tool to provide them with real time assistance. The tool provided students with alternative word choices, sentence restructurings and grammatically correct sentence structures; however, while many of the students used this tool to revise their writing, many students did not use the tool to critically evaluate the revisions they received.

The students generally took the recommendations made by the AI with little thought (often accepting the recommendation at face value with one click). There were some students who saw the AI as a "writing assistant" which is what students are expected to do when they receive feedback or suggestions regarding their writing; however, there were also students who saw the AI as an "expert" in writing. Many of the students' revised writing was more grammatically polished than their original draft, but the emotional tone and personal feel of the students' writing was lost in the revision process.

Student Comment About Voice Shift

Student's Original Draft

"My grandmother cooked food for me and we laughed a lot."

AI Suggestion

"My grandmother prepared the meal for me, and we shared hearty laughter together."

A student stated:

"It looks fancier, but it does not sound like I would have written."

This example demonstrates that the student recognized that the AI could alter both the meaning and tone of their writing. Nevertheless, many of the students continued to follow the AI



suggestions without critically evaluating them, illustrating the need for teachers to explicitly model the writing process for their students.

#### Teacher Support

After these examples, the instructor started a class discussion concerning what writing is for and how revision is often a matter of choosing intentionally with respect to meaning.

The instructor asked her students the following questions:

- What emotion do you want to express?
- Does the AI's idea support your desire to express this feeling?
- Which version has a better representation of my true memory?

Following this process, students then went through their thought processes individually at each student writing conference. Students were able to view the revision process as opportunities to create meaning using language and not just as a way to correct their work. The instructor was also successful in positioning the students as authors who have the ability to determine if their language meets their intended meanings/purposes (as opposed to editors who simply edit to remove mistakes).

#### Comparison of Tone and Decision-Making

Stage	Sentence Example	Tone and Meaning	Student Behaviour
<b>Original Draft</b>	"My grandmother cooked food for me and we laughed a lot."	Warm, personal, child-authentic	Natural expression without external shaping
<b>AI Suggestion</b>	"My grandmother prepared the meal for me, and we shared hearty laughter together."	More formal, distant, adult-sounding	Accepted automatically because it appears "more correct"
<b>After Mediation</b>	"My grandmother made my favourite food and we laughed until our stomachs hurt."	Personal, vivid, emotionally specific	Student evaluates language intentionally and preserves voice

This comparison shows that teacher mediation does not discourage the use of AI, but helps students interpret and adapt suggestions thoughtfully. The process strengthens agency, voice awareness, and ownership of meaning in writing.

#### FINDINGS

Student writing samples, as well as teacher reflections and classroom observations, revealed three primary findings. These were based on how teachers mediate their students' use of AI in the writing process; and how students make informed decisions using the suggestions generated by AI for their writing. Both student writing samples, as well as teacher reflections and classroom observations, revealed three primary findings.

**Findings 1:** Initially, students tended to accept AI-generated feedback unconditionally, and did not consider the potential implications for the meaning they intended to convey in their writing.

While most students reviewed the initial drafts of their writing, with the vocabulary and/or sentence structure recommendations provided by the AI, a large number of them accepted the recommendations; however, few reflected on whether those suggested modifications would either, impact the intended message or personal voice for which they were striving. The numerous students who viewed AI suggestions as inherently "correct," merely due to their algorithmic nature

is a direct result of the lack of teacher guidance that promotes critical thinking when making language choices.

Student Quote:

"If the computer says it, then it has to be right."

The student's quote illustrates that many students will likely give precedence to the authority of algorithms prior to the direction of their educators in evaluating their own personal voice in their written communication.

**Findings 2:** The teacher facilitated a transition for the student from passive acceptance of AI's generated suggestions to active consideration of which of those generated suggestions would be appropriate to use in his/her writing, and why he/she wanted to do so, by giving students reflective questions that they could ask themselves as they were evaluating AI-generated suggestions for their writing.

Once the teacher began asking the students to reflect on their own writing intentions (e.g., What emotional tone am I trying to create with my writing?, Is this revised sentence creating a tone consistent with what I am trying to create?), and then had the students compare their original sentences or paragraphs to the revised ones created by the AI, students then began to review each of the suggestions on how accurately the suggestion represented the intent of the students' own writing.

The student quote is: "I made the changes myself and left my original wording for the memory in which I wrote this (my own) because I liked the way it sounded."

Student's growing awareness of their own writing voice, intentional choices of vocabulary to help the reader understand their thoughts, and awareness of the writing process as a thoughtful series of decisions that the writer chooses to make.

**Findings 3:** The teacher's initial perception of the AI as a neutral tool to support the writing process, gradually shifted to viewing AI as an instructional actor that needs direction, to ensure students are able to effectively critique and utilize AI-generated suggestions.

Initially, the teacher perceived the AI as a helpful tool to assist students in generating writing suggestions to improve their writing. After observing how the students' narrative voices had been altered through their adoption of the AI-generated suggestions, the teacher began to realize that the AI was having a direct impact on the students' ability to express themselves authentically, and therefore needed to address the issue of AI-generated suggestions during the instructional process.

Teacher Quote:

"The AI does not understand their memories...I realized I have to teach them how to make decisions, not just how to fix things."

This realization prompted the teacher to:

Discuss the influence of AI-generated suggestions on students' writing,

Model the process of critiquing the suggestions generated by AI,

Highlighting student ownership of the content they write.

**The findings of 3:** Demonstrate a major transformation in the teacher's perception of using AI-generated writing suggestions; originally, the teacher viewed AI as a neutral tool for providing support with writing, however, currently the teacher views AI-generated suggestions as an invisible "co-teacher" that has an indirect impact on students learning and that the teacher must use their own professional judgment to protect the true expression by students.

Highlighting student ownership of the content they write.

The findings of 3 demonstrate a major transformation in the teacher's perception of using AI-generated writing suggestions; originally, the teacher viewed AI as a neutral tool for providing support with writing, however, currently the teacher views AI-generated suggestions as an invisible "co-teacher" that has an indirect impact on students learning and that the teacher must use their own professional judgment to protect the true expression by students.

**Table 3. Synthesis of Findings**

<b>Core Insight</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Implication for Practice</b>
Students tend to trust AI without question.	Automatic acceptance of suggestions.	Students need instruction in evaluating digital feedback.
Reflection enables students to preserve personal voice.	Revised drafts showed intentional language choice.	Teacher mediation fosters authorship identity.
Teachers must recognize AI's subtle influence.	Teacher began naming AI as part of instruction.	AI should be treated as a tool requiring interpretation, not authority.

### **Key Takeaway**

Teacher mediation is required for students to ensure their voice, meaning, and emotional authenticity are maintained in their work.

## **DISCUSSION**

Research from this project indicated the impact of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into the writing process in terms of how primary students develop and articulate their unique narrative voice. At the beginning of the study, the students did not seem to critically evaluate the suggestions generated by AI, and instead accepted them without much thought, indicating they believed the suggested revisions generated by the technology were more correct, or more academically acceptable than what they had originally composed. This supports prior studies showing that younger learners tend to give credence to digital output in academic settings, especially if it is viewed as being more polished or technically "correct".

The teacher had a direct impact on the students' overall approach to writing by providing support in the form of modeling, questioning students about their work, and holding reflective discussions with students about the students' writing in terms of intent and meaning. The student's shift from thinking primarily about the grammar that would enhance the quality of their writing to thinking about the use of language to describe emotions, settings, and experiences was evidence of the teacher as a facilitator of the digital tools as well as a translator of the writing process.

The findings of this study also suggest that teachers are to recognize that AI can be used as an educational tool regardless of whether it is recognized as such because AI has the ability to influence the vocabulary, tone, and style of writing that students use. Recognizing AI as an "invisible teaching partner" will enable teachers to understand their decision-making options about whether to accept the suggested ideas created by AI or not, and/or to adjust those ideas. Identifying AI as an invisible teaching partner further emphasizes the need for students to develop critical literacy skills and student agency in the early stages of writing instruction.

The way a student expresses themselves through their work will need to be taken into consideration by both professional development programs for teachers and continuing education as AI is incorporated into the learning environment. To create an opportunity for AI to be used in an appropriate and purposeful manner within the classroom, teachers will need to develop instructional practices which allow students to think critically about their own language use while maintaining the authenticity of the story being shared, and the emotion and relationship in the storytelling process.

Thus, the ultimate goal is not to completely replace human teaching with AI, nor to eliminate all forms of technological assistance, but to integrate AI in ways that maintain the creative, imaginative, and relational aspects of storytelling in primary education.

## CONCLUSION

Although the results of this case study are clearly indicative of the role of AI as a co-present force in the classroom writing practices of students (and possibly their teachers) even though they have no explicit acknowledgment of it, the AI tool has clearly affected the students' word choice, tone, and phrasing in somewhat obvious but important ways. Most importantly, these students tended to use language which seemed to appear to be much more advanced than their true writing voice and/or their true emotional intentions; as well, students most often accepted the AI generated suggestions without question or reflection, indicating a rising trend toward dependency on the authority of algorithms during the writing process.

However, when the reflective teacher facilitated the interaction between the students and the AI tool, the students' interactions with the AI suggestions were much more thoughtful than they would have been otherwise. Through using guided questions for dialogue about the purpose of the tone and meaning of the students' choices related to their narratives; the students gained a greater awareness of their options regarding their narrative and showed a significantly greater ability to express themselves in an authentic manner.

The teacher's role in the process has also been modified in order to acknowledge the fact that AI is now perceived as a teaching actor which needs to be interpreted through pedagogical means in terms of its influence on learning.

This study illustrates that AI should be seen as an "invisible co-teacher" that is both present and active in classrooms and therefore requires intentional mediation. While AI can support the development of technical correctness and proficiency of writing skills; however, AI will never be able to interpret lived experiences, the subtleties of emotion and/or the complexities of culture. Writing is predicated on the relationships and experiences of humans.

Therefore, using AI effectively in primary classrooms will depend upon teachers being able to identify and make AI's influence visible, teach students to think critically about suggestions and take steps to maintain the authenticity and individuality of student expression.

In other words, AI supports technical skill-building in writing, while teachers support the human qualities, identities, and meanings of students' writing. Ultimately, the issue is not whether we choose to use AI or the teacher, but rather prepare teachers to guide learning in conjunction with AI with purposeful deliberation, critical analysis, and care.

Consequently, teacher education programs should provide their prospective teachers with the opportunity to learn about developing AI literacy, and teaching practices that are both

reflective of their own pedagogy and assure a student voice is maintained in digital writing classrooms. The teacher developed a model for writing as an intentional and meaningful process through using models, asking questions, and through reflection of how writing communicated context, experience, and feeling; students then were able to begin focusing on how language communicates those elements.

As a result, the teacher's role was identified as a critical interpretive guide in the writing process, rather than simply facilitating access to digital tools. The teacher assisted students in analyzing AI feedback, retaining meaningful components of their original voice, and revising selectively rather than accepting all AI feedback.

When students are using AI without acknowledging it, this is a classroom instructional aide that is influencing students' vocabulary, tone and writing style. Educators have the ability to recognize AI as an "invisible co-teacher" which will help them better understand how AI has a subtle pedagogical presence and what they can do with their students to decide if and when to utilize AI based writing prompts or suggestions, whether to modify these suggestions or to resist these suggestions altogether. The idea of AI as an invisible co-teacher highlights the need for educators to prioritize developing students' critical digital literacy and agency during early writing instruction.

Therefore, as AI is increasingly used in educational settings, teacher preparation and professional development must specifically discuss how AI influences students' writing voices. There must be instructional practices implemented to assist students in reflecting on their language choices and protecting their narrative authenticity. In other words, the goal of using AI in the classroom is not to replace human teaching, nor is it to eliminate the use of technology completely; instead, the goal is to utilize AI in such a way that preserves the personal, emotional, and relational nature of children's stories in primary education.

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