LEVERAGING AI FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING INSTRUCTION: BEST PRACTICES FOR ENHANCING EFL LEARNERS' SKILLS AND CRITICAL THINKING

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Abstract: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction has emerged as a powerful strategy in boosting learners' literacy skills, especially in EFL contexts. This study delves best practices in teaching and learning writing through AI-powered writing tools, highlighting the importance of treating AI as a supportive aid in writing process rather than replacement. Implementing AI within a process writing framework—planning, drafting, revising, and editing—promotes a deeper understanding of writing as a recursive and reflective process. Additionally, students are encouraged to think critically by evaluating AI-generated suggestions, fostering analytical skills and active engagement. Personalized feedback from AI applications further supports differentiated learning, allowing students to identify and address their unique areas for improvement. Collaborative writing with AI, combined with ethical and responsible use guidelines, also enhances creativity and digital literacy. These practices not only improve writing proficiency but also cultivate critical thinking, autonomy, and technological competence among learners, making AI a valuable tool in modern writing pedagogy.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; technique; writing, EFL

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recent years has transformed various sectors, including education (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). In the field of language teaching, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL), AI is increasingly utilized to support teaching and learning processes (Wang & Vasquez, 2022). Among the four language skills, writing—often perceived as the most complex and cognitively demanding—has seen remarkable innovations through AI-based applications (Muslimin et al., 2024). These technologies are designed not only to correct grammatical mistakes but also to provide constructive feedback that supports learners' development (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

AI writing tools, such as ChatGPT and other automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems, have become powerful aids in the writing process (Wang & Vasquez, 2022). By

offering immediate, context-sensitive suggestions and explanations, these tools help learners refine their drafts at various stages: planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing (Li & Hafner, 2023; Wang & Vasquez, 2022). This supports the notion that writing is a recursive, multi-step process that can benefit from continual feedback and revision (Wang & Vasquez, 2022).

The integration of AI into writing instruction has also facilitated learner autonomy (Li & Hafner, 2023). Instead of relying solely on teachers for feedback, students can now access AI tools anytime to reflect on their language use, explore alternatives, and make independent improvements (Li & Hafner, 2023). This shift empowers learners to take control of their own writing development, making learning more flexible and individualized (Li & Hafner, 2023).

Another important contribution of AI-powered tools is their role in developing students' critical thinking (Muslimin et al., 2024). When learners are encouraged to evaluate AI-generated feedback—deciding which suggestions to accept, modify, or reject—they engage in higher-order thinking skills (Muslimin et al., 2024). This evaluative process fosters metacognition, as learners must analyze both the feedback and their own writing (Muslimin et al., 2024). Such engagement supports not just better writing but deeper learning (Muslimin et al., 2024).

In addition to improving individual performance, AI can facilitate collaborative writing (Gozali et al., 2024). Group tasks involving AI feedback have been shown to enhance students' creativity, peer learning, and digital literacy (Gozali et al., 2024). Learners co-construct meaning, discuss AI suggestions, and negotiate revisions, which aligns with social constructivist principles in language learning (Gozali et al., 2024). These interactions further reinforce communication and teamwork in EFL classrooms (Gozali et al., 2024).

Despite these benefits, researchers have also identified challenges (Sheng & Teng, 2024). Over-reliance on AI tools may hinder language development if learners become passive recipients of suggestions rather than active participants in the revision process (Sheng & Teng, 2024). There are also ethical concerns regarding academic integrity and the potential misuse of AI-generated content (Sheng & Teng, 2024). Therefore, educators must guide students to use AI responsibly, integrating digital ethics and critical awareness into writing instruction (Sheng & Teng, 2024).

The literature reveals that while many studies have highlighted the advantages of AI-assisted writing tools, fewer have synthesized best practices or provided a clear framework for pedagogical integration in EFL settings (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Wang & Vasquez, 2022). As such, there is a need for research that consolidates findings across studies to inform practical implementation (Li & Hafner, 2023). A review of previous literature can help educators understand how AI tools can be effectively used to enhance both writing proficiency and critical thinking skills (Muslimin et al., 2024; Gozali et al., 2024).

Therefore, this article aims to review and synthesize existing research related to the use of AI-powered writing tools in EFL instruction (Wang & Vasquez, 2022; Li & Hafner, 2023). The review focuses on identifying best practices, understanding the pedagogical implications, and highlighting how AI can support writing development in meaningful, ethical, and learner-centered ways (Muslimin et al., 2024; Sheng & Teng, 2024). By doing so, it provides a foundation for future research and innovation in AI-

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceedings
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training – Open University
UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May ¹⁵ 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 146 –156
ISSN: 3046 – 594X

integrated writing pedagogy (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Gozali et al., 2024).

METHOD

A qualitative research approach using a literature review methodology was employed in this study, as elaborated by Charli et al. (2022). The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction in EFL settings. This study was carried out in several steps: (1). Source Identification and Selection Process; The first step in this study involved identifying and selecting literature related to the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction in EFL settings. We collected research articles relevant to this topic from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Emerald (Rasheed et al., 2019). Keywords used included "AI in EFL Writing," "AI-Powered Writing," and "AI in Writing Instruction." The selection of articles was based on relevance, quality, and publication year, with a focus on articles published within the last decade (Fink, 2019), (2). Data Collection; The second step was data collection. We conducted a comprehensive reading and recorded important information regarding the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction in EFL settings. These aspects included the implementation of AI in writing classrooms, its benefits, challenges, and implications for future research.

The collected information was then systematically categorized and interpreted. The most frequently emerging themes aimed to identify best practices in applying AI to writing instruction for EFL learners, as well as its benefits, challenges, and implications for future research. The final step involved revising and refining the manuscript comprehensively. The researchers ensured an in-depth review to achieve clarity, completeness, and accuracy of the content. The depth of the review was intended to provide a broad and comprehensive understanding of previous studies related to the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction in EFL settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into writing instruction, particularly for EFL learners, has shown a notable influence on students' writing abilities and overall quality. Based on existing studies, key findings and related discussions are presented below.

Table 1. Research Result

Article Title (Author)	Research Focus
Under the world of AI-generated feedback on writing: mirroring motivation, foreign language peace of mind, trait emotional intelligence, and writing development (Mohammed & Khalid, 2025)	The aim of this study is to examine the effects of AI-generated feedback on EFL learners' motivation, foreign language peace of mind (FLPoM), trait emotional intelligence (EI), and writing proficiency within an online writing instructional context.
The impact of integrating ChatGPT with teachers' feedback on EFL writing skills (Ashadi, et al., 2025)	The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of integrating ChatGPT with teacher feedback in enhancing EFL

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceedings
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training – Open University
UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May [15] 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 146 –156
ISSN: 3046 – 594X

	learners' essay writing performance and to explore teachers' perspectives on the ethical and practical considerations of using AI tools in writing instruction.
The Impact of ChatGPT on Academic Writing Skills and Knowledge: An Investigation of Its Use in Argumentative Essays (Khampusaen, 2025)	This study aims to examine the impact of ChatGPT integration on the development of EFL students' argumentative writing by analyzing writing improvements, student perceptions, and usage patterns over a 16-week period using a mixed-methods approach.
Investigating students' cognitive processes in generative AI-assisted digital multimodal composing and traditional writing (Liu, et al., 2024)	This study concludes that generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Bing Chat can effectively support EFL students' multimodal writing by enhancing idea development, textual elaboration, and image generation, offering valuable pedagogical insights for future integration.
Enhancing L2 Writing Skills: ChatGPT as An Automated Feedback Tool (Kurt & Kurt, 2024)	This study aims to investigate Turkish pre-service English teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT as an AI-powered feedback tool in academic writing, comparing its effectiveness to peer and teacher feedback within a higher education context.
The Digitisation of Writing in Higher Education: Exploring the Use of Wordtune as an AI Writing Assistant (Zhao, et. al., 2023)	This study aims to investigate the use of Wordtune as an AI-powered writing assistant in EFL writing instruction to explore its practical and cognitive benefits, challenges, and pedagogical implications for enhancing students' writing development in higher education.
Investigating EFL Students' Writing Skills Through Artificial Intelligence: Wordtune Application as a Tool (Fawaz, 2023)	This study aims to investigate whether and to what extent the AI-powered writing tool Wordtune facilitates the writing development of Saudi EFL students across gender groups.
Artificial intelligence in language instruction: impact on English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning (Wei, 2023)	This study aims to examine the effects of AI-mediated language instruction on EFL learners' English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning.

The article titled "Under the World of AI-Generated Feedback on Writing:

Mirroring Motivation, Foreign Language Peace of Mind, Trait Emotional Intelligence, and Writing Development" by Mohammed and Khalid (2023) investigated the impact of AI-generated feedback on EFL learners' motivation, writing proficiency, Foreign Language Peace of Mind (FLPoM), and trait emotional intelligence. In this research, best practices in applying AI to writing instruction for EFL learners include providing immediate, specific, and personalized feedback that targets individual strengths and weaknesses, supports self-regulated learning, and reduces anxiety through a non-judgmental tone. These practices enhance learners' writing proficiency, motivation, emotional intelligence (EI), and Foreign Language Peace of Mind (FLPoM). The benefits of AI-generated feedback include increased engagement, improved self-efficacy, better emotional regulation, and more efficient learning outcomes. However, challenges remain, such as ensuring feedback quality, preventing over-reliance on AI, addressing ethical concerns like data privacy, and aligning AI tools with diverse learner needs. Future research should explore long-term effects of AI integration, its impact across varying proficiency levels and cultural contexts, and the development of AI systems that support both linguistic and emotional growth in language learners. As for pedagogical recommendations, English writing instruction should integrate AI tools as supplementary feedback mechanisms, encourage reflective writing practices, combine AI feedback with teacher scaffolding to enhance critical thinking, and ensure students receive digital literacy training to interpret and apply AI-generated suggestions effectively.

The study entitled "The Impact of Integrating ChatGPT with Teachers' Feedback on EFL Writing Skills" by Ashadi, et al., (2025) scrutinized the effectiveness of combining AI-generated feedback from ChatGPT with traditional teacher feedback on improving EFL learners' essay writing skills. The integration of AI in writing instruction for EFL learners requires a contextualized and blended approach. One best practice is combining ChatGPT feedback with teacher feedback. This dual feedback system allows students to receive instant, personalized input from AI while still benefiting from the depth and contextual understanding that only teachers can provide. Encouraging students to engage critically with AI-generated feedback is also essential—they should be taught to evaluate suggestions selectively rather than accepting them at face value. ChatGPT can also be used to support pre-writing stages such as idea generation, outlining, and vocabulary enrichment. To implement this effectively, teachers need professional development that equips them with an understanding of AI's strengths and limitations, enabling them to integrate it meaningfully into the writing process. In terms of benefits, ChatGPT offers individualized support, catering to students with varying levels of language proficiency. Its ability to provide instant feedback accelerates the revision process, enhances learner engagement, and fosters autonomous learning. When guided by teachers, AI can also help promote students' critical thinking and significantly improve writing skills, including content development, coherence, lexical resource, and grammatical accuracy. However, several challenges must be addressed. One major issue is authorship and plagiarism, as students might rely on AI-generated texts that do not reflect their original ideas. Moreover, ChatGPT lacks the ability to fully understand cultural context, subtle language nuances, and complex argumentative structures, particularly in academic writing. Over-reliance on AI could also hinder the development of independent thinking skills. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to ensure AI is used critically and responsibly, while also enhancing their digital literacy to bridge the gap

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceedings
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UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May [15] 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 146 –156
ISSN: 3046 – 594X

between technological innovation and pedagogical needs.

Research conducted by Khampusaen (2025) discuses "The Impact of ChatGPT on Academic Writing Skills And Knowledge: An Investigation Of Its Use In Argumentative Essays". The integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into EFL writing instruction presents a set of best practices that can significantly enhance learners' writing development. Among these, the systematic integration of AI into the writing process—particularly in argumentative essay writing—yields measurable improvements in students' thesis construction, use of evidence, structural organization, and academic tone. Best practices include embedding AI use within a structured pedagogical framework that promotes transparency, critical thinking, and originality while preserving student agency. Effective use of AI tools also requires ongoing guidance from instructors, integration with reflective activities, and institutional support mechanisms such as clear guidelines and professional development. The benefits of such integration include improved writing performance, especially in content quality (63.2% improvement), structural organization, and language use, as well as increased efficiency in idea generation and time management. However, notable challenges arise in relation to academic integrity, over-reliance on AI-generated content, and the ethical use of these tools. Students and educators alike have expressed concern about maintaining scholarly standards and ensuring AI is used as a complement to—not a replacement for—human thought and creativity. These challenges underscore the need for balanced implementation strategies and institutional policies that regulate AI usage. The implications for future research are profound: there is a need to explore the long-term effects of AI on learners' independent writing capabilities and to refine pedagogical models that foster autonomous, critical engagement with AI. Future studies should also investigate scalable monitoring systems that ensure responsible AI use and adapt assessment criteria to reflect new writing processes.

Research conducted by Liu, et al., (2024) discussed "Investigating Students' Cognitive Processes in Generative AI-Assisted Digital Multimodal Composing And Traditional Writing". Based on the findings of the study, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in writing instruction for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners can be effectively implemented through the integration of digital multimodal tasks utilizing generative tools such as ChatGPT and Bing Chat. Tasks like PowerPoint presentations allow students to meaningfully combine text and images, thereby enhancing audience awareness and the ability to construct bridge texts. ChatGPT can be used to assist students in developing linguistic elements such as grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph coherence. Meanwhile, Bing Chat is more reliable for generating source-based content with reference links, as well as for producing images via Bing Image Creator. However, there are challenges that need to be considered. One of them is the "hallucination" phenomenon in ChatGPT, where it may generate false references. Therefore, students need to be trained to independently verify information. In addition, students often struggle to clearly express their stylistic or content preferences when writing prompts to generate images, which leads to a mismatch between the image and the text content. For this reason, it is important to equip students with basic prompt engineering skills, such as using the pattern "<subject> in the style of <style>" to produce images that better match their expectations in terms of both aesthetics and content. On the other hand, student involvement in critically evaluating AI-generated outputs—both texts and images—can foster the development of higher-order thinking skills, especially

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceedings
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UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May [15] 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 146 –156
ISSN: 3046 – 594X

in terms of meaning coherence, subject relevance, and the effectiveness of visual interaction between images and the audience. This highlights the importance of raising student awareness that AI is merely a support tool in the writing process, not a substitute for the writer's creativity and responsibility. The implications of these findings for writing instruction in EFL classrooms include the need for AI literacy training, the implementation of AI-based multimodal projects, and the integration of workshops to build skills in prompt creation and critical evaluation of AI outputs. Teachers are advised to design writing activities that involve AI assistance during prewriting, idea development, and the creation of visual support.

Research conducted by Kurt & Kurt (2024) explored "Enhancing L2 Writing Skills: ChatGPT as An Automated Feedback Tool". In the study, best practices in applying AI to writing instruction for EFL learners emphasize the need for careful integration, critical engagement, and responsible use. The study reveals that AI tools like ChatGPT are most effective when introduced with adequate training and guided by principles of AI literacy, enabling learners to navigate the tool critically and strategically. Benefits include the provision of immediate, extensive, and adaptive feedback on mechanics, organization, and content, which promotes learner autonomy, self-efficacy, and revision skills. However, challenges persist in terms of feedback accuracy and the risk of over-reliance on AI, potentially undermining learners' critical thinking and writing development if not properly managed. As such, instructors and curriculum designers should integrate AI tools as a supplementary resource alongside teacher and peer feedback, rather than as a standalone evaluator. Future research should explore diverse learner profiles, varying proficiency levels, and feedback performance across different writing genres. It should also compare multiple Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools to identify their strengths and weaknesses in supporting EFL writing. In classroom practice, teachers are recommended to scaffold AI usage through explicit instruction, reflective tasks, and feedback comparison activities. Additionally, establishing guidelines for ethical and purposeful AI use can ensure that learners benefit from its affordances without compromising their writing agency and learning process.

Research conducted by Zhao, et. al., (2023) investigated " The Digitisation of Writing in Higher Education: Exploring the Use of Wordtune as an AI Writing Assistant". Best practices in applying AI to EFL writing instruction involve fostering strategic, informed, and reflective use of AI writing tools, such as Wordtune, in ways that go beyond simple proofreading. Tools like Wordtune support both lower-level functions (grammar, clarity, and phrasing) and higher-order thinking processes, such as overcoming writer's block, generating new ideas, and improving textual coherence. These tools are most beneficial when used by already proficient learners who can select, adapt, and evaluate the suggestions critically, thereby turning AI feedback into opportunities for learning and self-improvement. One key benefit is that such tools enhance fluency, confidence, and the overall writing experience, often helping students engage more deeply with content creation. However, challenges include the potential for tool over-reliance, limited functionality with extended texts, interface limitations, and issues related to cost and digital access. Another concern is that students with lower digital or linguistic literacy may struggle to use these tools effectively, reducing their long-term learning gains. The implications for future research suggest a need for examining how different AI tools are used in authentic writing processes, especially across varying genres,

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ISSN: 3046 – 594X

proficiency levels, and cultural or academic contexts. Moreover, research should investigate the combined use of multiple tools and how learners integrate AI assistance at different stages of writing. Pedagogically, this calls for a shift from banning or resisting AI to embracing it as part of a broader digital literacy strategy. Educators should support learners by guiding them in making deliberate choices about tool use, fostering critical engagement with feedback, and promoting reflection on tool impact—including ethical considerations such as bias, privacy, and sustainability. Rather than focusing narrowly on grammar correction, writing instruction should prioritize strategic tool use as a means to enhance thinking, creativity, and autonomous learning in EFL contexts.

Research conducted by Fawaz (2023) investigated " Investigating EFL Students' Writing Skills Through Artificial Intelligence: Wordtune Application as a Tool". This study investigated the impact of the AI-powered application Wordtune on the academic writing performance of Saudi high school EFL learners, providing insight into best practices, benefits, challenges, and implications for future research and writing instruction. The findings revealed that Wordtune significantly improved students' writing skills, as demonstrated by both quantitative and qualitative data. Statistically significant gains in writing scores were observed through paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests, showing that students who used Wordtune performed better than those in the control group. Qualitative analysis further showed improvements in lexical resourcefulness and syntactic complexity, with students demonstrating more precise use of vocabulary and more complex sentence structures over time. These findings suggest that best practices for AI integration include using Wordtune as a supplementary tool to teacher instruction, promoting self-paced writing, and guiding learners to reflect on the quality of AI-generated rewrites. The benefits of this approach are notable, including improved writing accuracy, increased learner engagement, and enhanced independent writing practices. However, challenges remain, such as the risk of over-reliance on AI tools and a lack of metalinguistic understanding if AI output is accepted uncritically. To mitigate this, instructors should help students analyze and understand AI suggestions and clearly explain the limitations of digital tools. The study recommends that future research explore the impact of AI tools on larger and more diverse populations, compare different AI writing assistants, and investigate how varying practice durations influence writing development. It also suggests examining both teacher and student perceptions to guide effective implementation. Overall, integrating Wordtune into writing classes can support EFL learners in developing stronger writing skills, especially when used strategically and in combination with reflective pedagogical practices.

Previous research conducted by Wei (2023) discussed "Artificial intelligence in language instruction: impact on English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning". The study by Wei (2023) provides valuable insights into best practices for applying AI to writing instruction for EFL learners, as well as its associated benefits, challenges, and implications for future research. The integration of AI-assisted language learning tools in writing instruction, guided by Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, emphasizes collaborative and personalized learning experiences. Best practices identified include the use of AI platforms to facilitate learner engagement in interactive, student-centered activities, provide immediate and personalized feedback, and promote self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. These practices support learners in improving key writing components such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and content

development. Furthermore, AI tools foster L2 motivation by reducing anxiety, offering autonomy, and tailoring learning content to individual needs. The benefits of AI in writing instruction are evident in its capacity to enhance language learning achievement, motivate learners through engaging content, and cultivate SRL through features like real-time feedback and goal-setting tools. Learners benefit from consistent practice and progress tracking, which fosters a sense of ownership and reflection in their writing process. The flexibility of AI tools also allows for learning beyond classroom boundaries, encouraging autonomous and lifelong learning habits. For teachers, AI provides actionable insights into student performance, enabling more targeted instruction and effective support. However, the integration of AI in writing instruction is not without challenges. These include the potential over-reliance on AI-generated feedback, disparities in learners' digital literacy, and the risk of neglecting human interaction, which remains essential in developing nuanced writing skills. Teachers must therefore balance AI use with pedagogical guidance to ensure critical thinking and creativity are nurtured. Additionally, technical limitations, accessibility issues, and the need for training in AI implementation pose ongoing obstacles. For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term impacts of AI on learners' writing development, its effectiveness across different proficiency levels and cultural contexts, and how AI tools can be optimized for specific writing genres and tasks. Research should also investigate how AI can support peer collaboration and teacher-student interaction in writing instruction. Overall, the study underscores the transformative potential of AI in EFL writing classrooms and calls for strategic integration that enhances, rather than replaces, the pedagogical role of the teacher.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction has significantly transformed the way learners approach writing, offering diverse opportunities for enhancing both writing proficiency and critical thinking. This literature review has revealed that AI-powered writing tools—such as ChatGPT and Wordtune—serve as effective supplements to traditional instruction by providing immediate, personalized, and context-aware feedback throughout various stages of the writing process. These tools empower learners to become more autonomous, reflective, and self-regulated in their learning, while also supporting teachers in delivering individualized feedback at scale.

Best practices identified across studies include combining AI-generated feedback with teacher input, integrating AI into structured pedagogical frameworks, and embedding digital literacy instruction to help learners critically evaluate and responsibly use AI outputs. The reviewed research consistently shows that AI tools can improve students' writing in terms of coherence, accuracy, idea development, and organization. Moreover, collaborative and multimodal AI-assisted writing tasks have been found to foster creativity, peer interaction, and higher-order thinking.

Despite these promising benefits, the findings also highlight several challenges, including risks of over-reliance on AI, concerns about academic integrity, and limitations in AI's ability to understand cultural and contextual nuances in writing. Some AI tools may produce inaccurate or misleading content, underscoring the importance of teacher guidance and critical AI literacy among learners.

Therefore, the pedagogical implication is clear: AI should not replace human input but rather complement it in a well-balanced, ethically responsible manner. Teachers must be equipped with the necessary training to integrate AI tools meaningfully into instruction, and learners must be guided to engage with AI critically and creatively. Future research should continue to explore how AI can be integrated into diverse EFL contexts, assess long-term effects on learner independence, and develop scalable frameworks that ensure responsible AI use in writing education. This synthesis provides a foundation for more informed, effective, and learner-centered applications of AI in EFL writing classrooms.

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