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INTEGRATING GENERATIVE AI IN EAL/D EDUCATION

Teacher Prioritisation in Curriculum Support for Indigenous and L2 Learners

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ROADMAP

Two studies, one message

How do EAL/D teachers make technology work for linguistically diverse learners — and what changes when teachers are in control?

1

The cautionary tale

Corpora, constructive alignment, and the Australian EAL/D context — why one intervention failed while its sibling succeeded

2

The new study

Teacher prioritisation of GenAI in EAL/D support planning — support plans, MaxDiff, prompt logs, interviews

3

The message

How GenAI lets teachers do what corpora alone found hard: stay learner-centred, culturally responsive, and in control

EAL/D education in Australia

English is the de facto national language — government, law, the entire curriculum (F–12), and every NAPLAN test. EAL/D learners must succeed through, not just in, English.

20–25%

of Australian school students are EAL/D (Hammond, 2014)

700K–1M

estimated EAL/D students nationally today

6.24%

EAL/D enrolment at the study school

- EAL/D learners span refugees, home-heritage-language speakers born in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (English alongside Indigenous languages/dialects), and international students
- Outcomes are “uneven, and often correlate with socioeconomic background” (Hammond, 2014) — though even high-SES students are not guaranteed success
- Initial teacher education often lacks explicit EAL/D training, and can hold a deficit view — “language as a problem” rather than “language as a resource” (Vo & Choi, 2025)
- Very little is known about how Australian EAL/D teachers actually use technology: a 2026 review found only 12 empirical studies in a decade, mostly researcher-supported rather than everyday practice (Bui et al., 2026)

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PART ONE

When corpora met the classroom

Crosthwaite & Meunier (2025), The EuroCALL Review — constructive alignment and DDL

PRECURSOR STUDY

Constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996) and corpus-based data-driven learning?

CA - Learning outcomes, teaching/learning activities, and assessment must all point at the same target.

Done well, DDL is a powerful constructivist tool: learners build their own understanding through corpus consultation (Flowerdew, 2015, O'Keeffe, 2024).
Done poorly, DDL leaves teachers and learners at the mercy of the technology.
This is not a critique of corpora as a technology — it's about whether a given design is aligned to a given cohort's goals.
The question is always: consultation toward WHAT outcome, assessed HOW?

The test case: two DDL interventions run in parallel at an all-female Queensland secondary school, summer 2020 — same tools, same platform, same practitioner, two very different learner populations (Crosthwaite & Meunier, 2025)

One thrived, one struggled — same materials

SCIENCE COHORT ✓ SUCCESS

24 students, mix of monolingual L1 with some EAL/D - Years 7–12

Target: passive voice for research report writing

- Discrete, grammar-focused activities — matched the goal
- SKELL concordances e.g., “X is measured” → match with corresponding function in students’ written reports for ATAR
- Single clear linguistic target (the passive voice)
- Result: empirical learning gains, positive feedback (Crosthwaite & Steeples, 2024)

EAL/D COHORT ✗ STRUGGLED

7 students, B1–B2 CEFR, Indigenous & L2 backgrounds

Target: function of 6 cognitive verbs (judge, justify…)

- Reused the SAME discrete, grammar-style template as the science cohort
- Goal was functional/cultural understanding, not discrete items (see next slide)
- Highly diverse cohort — Indigenous and multiple L2 backgrounds had different wants/needs/expectations
- Result: materials misaligned with this cohort's actual needs (Crosthwaite & Sanhueza, 2025)

Example - “Judge” in SKELL: a discrete item, not a function

Teachers intended to use corpora to query ‘cognitive verbs’, which feature heavily in NAPLAN
Students queried “judge” as a single word — three verb forms, ten things that 'can be judged’.
The intended outcome (how to make a judgement in writing) never surfaced.

> *NO, because it just talk about how judge use. … It was just talking about how to use 'JUDGE' and where to put it in a sentence.*
>
> **— EAL/D student, discussion forum**

> *'JUDGE' usually comes in where something needs to be discussed between top people… something that is between laws.*
>
> **— EAL/D student, on what 'judge' means**

> *Like, whereas in Google, like you simply search up the definition, which is easier. … in SKELL you have to search it up and then catch up with what you want to say.*
>
> **— EAL/D students, post-intervention interview: why they returned to Google**

Why? Four context-specific pressures

Diversity, not deficit

The 7 EAL/D students spanned Indigenous Australian and multiple L2 language backgrounds — a single generic template that worked for one cohort could not be culturally responsive to all of them at once

Discrete tool, functional goal

Corpus concordancing is naturally bottom-up and word-focused; the EAL/D goal was top-down and functional (how to MAKE a judgement) — a genuine mismatch, not a flaw in DDL itself

Compressed timeline

A lengthy school-ethics review process left almost no time to redesign materials for the EAL/D cohort once approvals came through. By the time re-alignment was attempted (corpus-assisted essay revision), COVID disruption and lost momentum meant “the damage had been done”

Teachers sidelined at the design stage

EAL/D teachers were “largely out of the loop” on the decision to reuse the Science template — exactly the kind of teacher exclusion this talk's second study addresses

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PART TWO

Enter GenAI

Crosthwaite & Grosvenor (2026), Artificial Intelligence in Language Education

THE NEW STUDY

From corpora to GenAI as pedagogical partner

If corpora alone struggled to stay culturally responsive and functionally aligned for a diverse EAL/D cohort — can GenAI, mediated by an expert teacher, do better?

RQ1 How do teachers prioritise key pedagogical, ethical, and contextual considerations when using GenAI to support EAL/D students?

RQ2 How are these priorities reflected in teachers' planning and prompting practices when using GenAI for EAL/D student support?

Two teachers, two very different student profiles to work with

L

Teacher L — Case 1

Head of Extension & Intervention, 25+ yrs teaching (incl. 10 yrs EAL/D, UK & Australia)

- Focal student: a proud Torres Strait Islander learner, home language Torres Strait Creole (Broken)
- Below Year Level; Tier 1 QDTP + Teacher Aide; NLLIA Bandscale Level 5 target, working at Level 2–3
- Priority: additive bilingual pedagogy, oral/yarning-style learning, cultural connection

E

Teacher E — Case 2

2.5 yrs teaching, English & Humanities, 1 yr with an EAL/D class

- Focal student: born in China, L1 Chinese, 6 years at the school
- Target CEFR B2; currently mid-range B1 — gaps in grammar, academic vocabulary, extended writing
- Priority: scaffolded academic language, explicit grammar, sentence-level writing

Independent girls' secondary school, Queensland (~6.24% EAL/D). GenAI used only in a teacher-facing capacity — students never interacted with GenAI directly.

METHODS

Four data sources, one convergent design

1

Student Support Plans

Created independently of GenAI — established learner profiles & priorities

2

MaxDiff Scaling

8 considerations, 6 choice sets — best/worst prioritisation, per teacher

3

Joint Semi-Structured Interview

Reasoning behind priorities; reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021)

4

GenAI Prompt & Reflection Logs

Context → prompt → output → kept/changed → impact → ethics → usefulness rating

Plans → established priorities ➔ MaxDiff + Interview elicited stated priorities ➔ Prompt logs show priorities enacted

CONFIDENTIAL - Personal Support Plan

IPSWICH GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN

Office Use:
☒ Personalised Learning
☒ SWD
☐ Imputed Disability
☒ EAL/D
☐ International Visa
☐ High Potential/Achieving

	Name	Age	D.O.B.	Year Level	Case Manager	Start Date	Review Date	Finish Date
				7		Week 1 T1 2025	Week 8 T4 2025	Term 1 2026

Critical Information:	Standardised Data:	SPA/AARA
ES is a proud Torres Strait Islander student whose first/home language is Torres Strait Creole (Broken). She is currently working below Year Level Standards and receives Tier 1 Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice (QDTP) along with in-class support from a Teacher Aide. She has completed two cycles of Tier 2 intervention in Mathematics and Literacy, with small gains noted; however, it is difficult to determine progress due to periods of absenteeism. She will commence an individualised Tier 3 cycle in Term 4 to address identified gaps. Ongoing support will prioritise explicit teaching of Standard Australian English (SAE), scaffolded tasks, visual supports, and targeted literacy and numeracy development, with progress monitored closely through teacher observations and assessment reviews.	**Band Scales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Learner: Middle primary and Middle Schooling*** Reading: L2 showing some emerging features of Level 3 Writing: L2 showing some emerging features of Level 3 Speaking: L4 showing some emerging features of L5 Listening: L4 showing some emerging features of L5 PAT Maths Adaptive: Scale score: 106.0, 2nd %tile PAT Reading Adaptive: Scale score: 103.6, 1st %tile AGAT: Scale score: 116.2, 6.7%tile Maths Basic 1: E, 2:D+, 3: D-	ES is to remain the main venue and is permitted to access extra time of 5 minutes per 30 minutes. She may have access to a dictionary.

Strengths/Competencies
(including self-management, social, communicative skills):

ES is a friendly and bubbly student who is well liked by her peers, staff, and the boarding community. She brings warmth and positivity to her interactions and is developing her independence as a learner, showing a strong desire to take responsibility for her own progress. With continued encouragement to actively listen to advice and make use of the supports available to her, she will further strengthen her skills and confidence as an independent learner.

Domain	Current Level	Target (Level 5)	Support Strategies for Language and Learning Growth
Reading	L2 (emerging L3)	Read a wide range of texts, including subject-specific, with some depth of comprehension	☒ Pre-teach vocabulary and cultural references before reading. ☒ Use context-enhanced texts (pictures, diagrams, glossaries). ☒ Model and practise strategies: skimming, scanning, inferencing. ☒ Build background knowledge in Home Language (HL) first, then Standard Australian English (SAE). ☒ Provide bilingual support for academic texts. ☒ Pre-teach key mathematical terms with visuals and HL explanations. ☒ Model scanning word problems for numbers, key words, and relationships. ☒ Pre-teach science vocabulary with diagrams/real-life examples. ☒ Provide bilingual glossaries with key terms. ☒ Use scaffolded worksheets with visuals.

Support plans: Priorities set BEFORE any GenAI was involved

Both plans were authored by Teacher L, independently of GenAI — no AI evidence in either document. They establish the learner profiles and priorities that GenAI use was later measured against.

Indigenous support plan

Additive bilingual pedagogy, multimodal scaffolding, explicit instruction

- "Build background knowledge in Home Language (HL) first, then Standard Australian English (SAE)"
- "Allow stories in HL as a bridge to SAE"
- "Pre-teach vocabulary and cultural references before reading"
- "Deliver instructions in clear, logical steps with repetition"

Low-proficiency L2 support plan

Structured pedagogical support, incremental language development

- "Pre-teach vocabulary for each unit (academic + subject-specific)"
- "Jointly construct sentences in class before independent use"
- "Provide sentence starters and writing frames"
- "Use Quizlet/flashcards to practise" — tech for linguistic remediation, not cultural/identity work

Content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) coded both plans for prompt design, pedagogical decisions, learner-centred differentiation, cultural responsiveness, and practical/ethical considerations — the same scheme later applied to the GenAI prompt logs.

Set 1

Attribute	Most (✓)	Least (×)
Aligns with curriculum requirements	■	■ X
Saves teacher time	■	■
Provides culturally and linguistically responsive suggestions	■ ✓	■
Supports student autonomy	■	■

Set 2

Attribute	Most (✓)	Least (×)
Saves teacher time	■	■
Adapts to different student proficiency levels	■	■
Offers accurate and useful feedback	■ ✓	■
Prepares students for tertiary study pathways	■	■ X

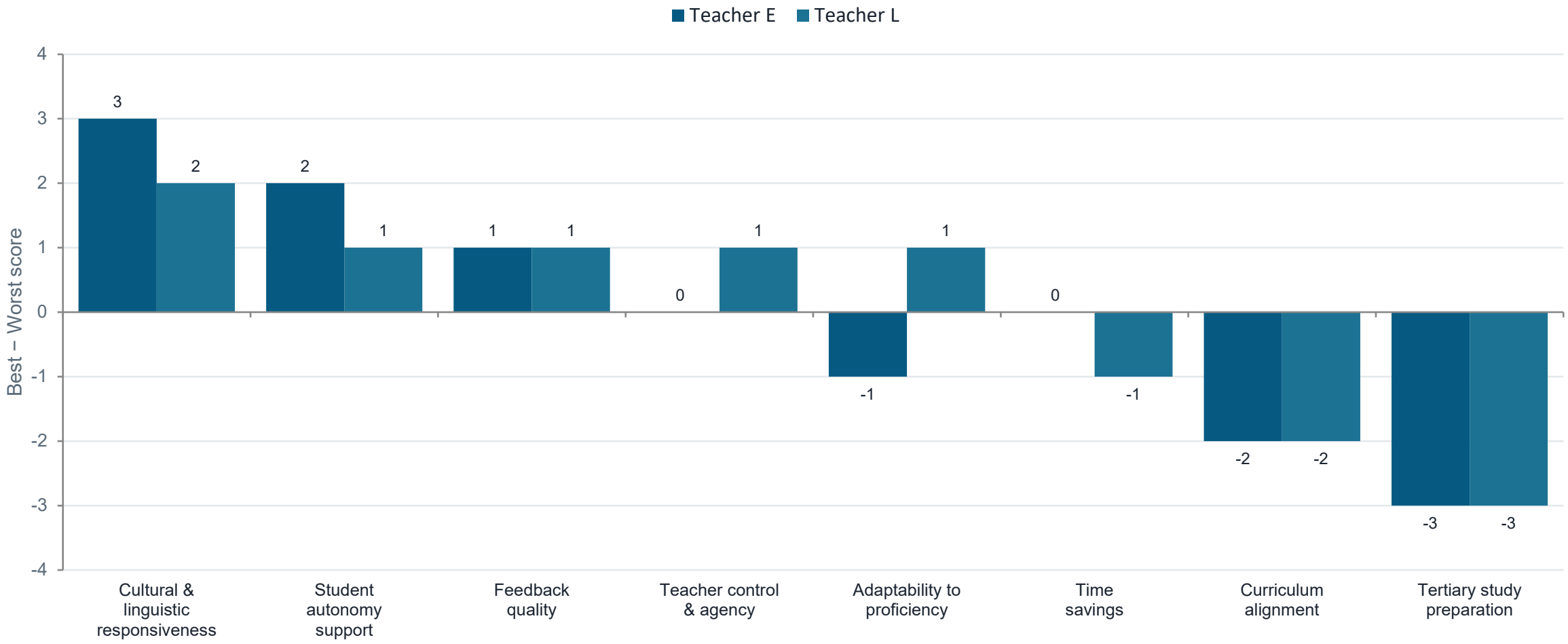
Set 3

Attribute	Most (✓)	Least (×)
Provides culturally and linguistically responsive suggestions	■ ✓	■
Maintains teacher control and agency	■	■
Aligns with curriculum requirements	■	■ X
Offers accurate and useful feedback	■	■

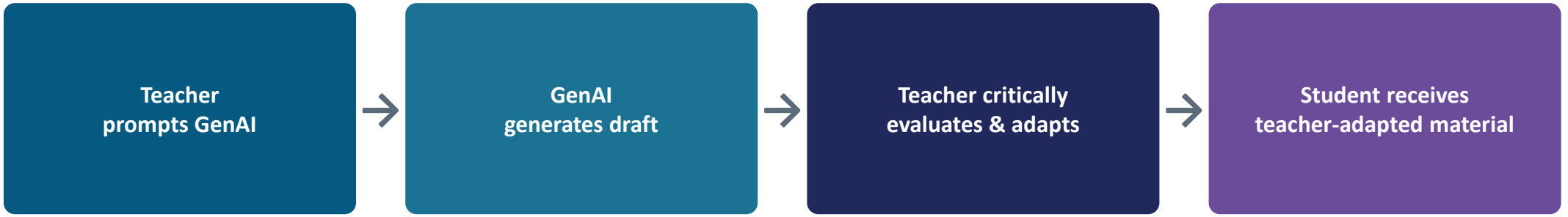
Set 4

Attribute	Most (✓)	Least (×)
Adapts to different student proficiency levels	■	■ X
Supports student autonomy	■ ✓	■
Saves teacher time	■	■
Maintains teacher control and agency	■	■

MaxDiff: What did teachers prioritise? Best–worst scores



Prompting: GenAI was teacher-facing throughout



Teachers filled out a prompt log asking 1) Context of use, 2) Prompt(s) used, 3) Output from AI, 4) What you kept/changed?, 5) Impact on practice, 6) Impact on learning, 7) Challenges, 8) Overall evaluation

Students never interacted directly with GenAI.
This distinction — planning support vs. student-facing use — is a key boundary condition of every finding that follows.

RQ2 — PROMPT LOG · TEACHER L

A structured Goal–Context–Steps–Example prompt (Indigenous)

Goal:	Develop a culturally responsive reading lesson that supports an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student to progress from Bandscales Level 2 (emerging Level 3) to Level 5 in Reading.
Context:	The student is in middle school, enjoys storytelling and oral learning, and engages best with texts that reflect community, environment, and cultural connection. She needs scaffolding to identify main ideas, interpret meaning across sentences, and make inferences.
Steps:	(1) Generate short familiar-setting text (2) literal + inferential Qs at Level 3–5 (3) vocab/visual support (4) oral & yarning-style discussion before writing (5) extension linking to own experience
Example:	“Create a short text featuring Country, family, or community connections with guided questions that move from literal to inferential comprehension.”

The AI produced a reading lesson outline with a short descriptive passage about life on Country, accompanied by comprehension questions, a vocabulary list, and a creative response activity. It also included guidance for sequencing the tasks from oral discussion to written reflection

“I kept the overall lesson structure and question sequence but adapted the text to reflect the student’s connection to Thupinul + Peidu Country and the Frill-Necked Lizard totem (as stated in her Personal Support Plan). The story was then rewritten to include local landscape features, language patterns, and cultural elements relevant to her community, ensuring authenticity and a sense of belonging.

I replaced abstract or unfamiliar vocabulary with words drawn from everyday experiences on Country and added visual story mapping to support comprehension and meaning-making. The oral discussion prompts were reshaped into a guided yarning circle format, encouraging storytelling, reflection, and cultural voice. I also added a shared reading phase to model fluency and comprehension strategies before the student moved into independent practice, promoting confidence and understanding through culturally grounded literacy learning.”

> *Overall usefulness: 5/5 — but the draft was substantially adapted before use: cultural references were rewritten to Thupinul and Peidu Country and the Frill-Necked Lizard totem.*
>
> **— Teacher L, reflection log**

Structured prompting generates the scaffold. The teacher's local cultural knowledge — not the AI's — makes it true to this student and her Country.

A concise, level-specified linguistic prompt (L2 EAL)

> *Create a short, scaffolded writing activity for a Year 9 EAL/D student at CEFR B1 level to help improve control of run-on sentences and move toward B2. Include a clear learning goal, model text, identification task, guided practice, and independent writing extension.*
>
> **— Teacher E, prompt log, Excerpt 2**

AI output: a full lesson sequence — model text → identification task → guided practice → independent writing — matching the specified progression exactly.

- "I kept the model text and guided practice but adapted the content to include Australian-curriculum topics ("My weekend at the park") and visual supports for conjunctions (e.g., because, so, although, however). I simplified the identification task using colour-coding and added a self-reflection checklist ("Did I use commas and full stops correctly?")."
- Saved ~40 minutes of planning time
- Reported gains: "The student demonstrated clearer sentence boundaries after two weeks and was able to self-correct run-on sentences in later drafts with support. Her writing showed improved awareness of punctuation and greater syntactic variety, aligning with CEFR B2 descriptors (e.g., "Can produce clear, detailed text with appropriate linking devices")"

Same pattern, different priority

Teacher L foregrounded cultural & contextual responsiveness.

Teacher E emphasised linguistic remediation & structural accuracy.

"The AI's initial examples used unfamiliar cultural contexts (e.g., U.S. sports), requiring localisation for engagement. I also verified that the generated text was age-appropriate and maintained student data privacy by not entering identifiable details."

Both: generate → critically evaluate → adapt. Neither used GenAI output unedited, and GenAI never touched a student directly.

Interviews: Five themes, grounded in the MaxDiff priorities

1

AI as Reflective & Validation Tool

→ *Feedback quality*

2

Cultural Responsiveness & Localisation

→ *Cultural responsiveness*

3

Meta-Prompting & Professional Learning

→ *Adaptability*

4

Efficiency & Constraints

→ *Time savings*

5

Preserving Student Voice & Autonomy

→ *Student autonomy*

The next five slides take each theme in turn.

THEME 1 OF 5

AI as a reflective and validation tool

A shift from product-oriented use (generating materials) to process-oriented use (evaluating decisions) — GenAI augments pedagogical reasoning rather than replacing it.
Links to: feedback quality / instructional effectiveness.

> *We've gone from using it to produce things to actually using it as a reflective tool. … We wanted to make sure there weren't any gaps in what we were thinking, so we were looking to cross-check [our thoughts].*
>
> **— Teacher L**

> *It's not using it like, 'oh well this is what AI has told me'… [rather] it's this kind of sounding board.*
>
> **— Teacher E**

> *Research I have read keeps saying that 'AI now should be the coach on the side'… making us question our choices and our strategies … to see if they are the most effective [ones] for a student at a certain level.*
>
> **— Teacher L**

THEME 2 OF 5

Cultural responsiveness and localisation

The MaxDiff top priority, enacted: GenAI used as a verification and extension tool to cross-check culturally responsive practice — not as a source of it.
Links to: cultural & linguistic responsiveness.

> *We just wanted to make sure that we were being culturally responsive, that we were being inclusive… I don't think it can ever replace us; what it's actually doing is validating the work and the knowledge that we have.*

— Teacher L

> *I think especially for our First Nations students, there's such a variety in terms of what is culturally responsive… it's kind of that cultural responsiveness for each of our students' unique contexts, because they are so unique.*

— Teacher E

"Where [AI] could probably go to for us next is making that AI bot… that has our tone, our language, our community, and knows where we are… to keep building your own community in a bot."

— Teacher L, on a future localised "community bot"

THEME 3 OF 5

Meta-prompting and professional learning

Both teachers describe deliberately refining HOW they prompt — specifying learner characteristics, goals, and task structure — as a form of professional learning in itself.
Links to: adaptability / innovation.

> *I really started to understand the more concise [information] that you put in that meta-prompt, the better the output is. … I've become increasingly aware that if I don't learn to think with AI, then AI will end up thinking for me.*
>
> **— Teacher L**

> *I think I'm starting to get into this meta-prompting thing… working out what is going to be useful for those students, what is going to work best in terms of our prompts, with what we can give and what we can't give.*
>
> **— Teacher E**

Meta-prompting functions as iterative refinement — linking teacher priorities (scaffolding, learner appropriateness) to the practical use of GenAI tools.

THEME 4 OF 5

Efficiency, constraints, and professional workload

Time pressure is real — but framed as secondary to pedagogical quality, matching its low MaxDiff ranking. Stated priorities and operative (in-the-moment) priorities can diverge.
Links to: time savings.

> *It is faster for [GenAI] to give me that output than it is for me to be sitting… for two, three hours, really deep thinking about the student… We are a busy profession… those [individual] stories are being lost.*
>
> **— Teacher L**

> *I did rank 'saving teacher time' quite low… but when I'm in the thick of exam period-like situations and… assessment time, like then I'm kind of like 'I need something that's saving time'.*
>
> **— Teacher E**

Contextual constraints (time, administrative demands) shape WHEN GenAI is used — without displacing the underlying priority on responsiveness to learner needs.

THEME 5 OF 5

Preserving student voice and autonomy

Both teachers insist instructional decisions stay grounded in student perspectives and lived experience, not standardised or generic outputs. Links to: student autonomy support.

> *In the past, when creating Personal Support Plans for our First Nations students, we would sit down with the student and have a yarn… AI can never just draw on what it's like to come from that community; we're basing that on the two-way interaction with the student having a voice in that plan.*

— Teacher L

> *So much of the worry of AI is based around… students losing autonomy, and not having their critical thinking… [we want AI] to uplift and support those abilities, rather than be a 'get quick tool', keeping that autonomy, and that student voice and feeling seen.*

— Teacher E

What GenAI changes for EAL/D: Constructive alignment

2020: corpora, misaligned

Fixed, discrete concordance activities reused across a diverse cohort — hard to redirect toward the actual functional/cultural outcome

Consequence

Materials misaligned with EAL/D goals; students defaulted back to Google & translation tools

2025–26: GenAI, teacher-mediated

Teachers specify learner, goal, and cultural context up front (GCSE / meta-prompting) — alignment is designed IN, not retrofitted

Consequence

Culturally localised, learner-specific materials — but only because the teacher still critically adapts every output

DISCUSSION

Effectiveness depends on the teacher, not the tool

Values-driven adoption

GenAI use is anchored in existing professional priorities (cultural responsiveness, differentiation), not novelty or efficiency

Plans create the conditions

Support plans — written without GenAI — set the parameters that later shape every prompt

Reflective, not authoritative

AI is a co-agent / “coach on the side” that teachers cross-check against their own judgment

Stated ≠ operative priorities

Efficiency ranks low on MaxDiff, yet becomes critical “in the thick of exam period” — context matters

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Thank you

Questions & discussion

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Crosthwaite, P. & Meunier, F. (2025). When DDL Goes Wrong. The EuroCALL Review, 32(1), 45–63.
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