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Reframing Prompting Competence as a New Direction for CALL in the Age of AI

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ABSTRACT

Generative AI is changing language learning and academic writing, leading higher education to choose between resisting AI-mediated writing or adapting curricula to help learners use AI responsibly and effectively. Based on established CALL principles that learning outcomes depend on interaction design, mediation, and learner agency, this paper argues that prompting competence should be seen as a key twenty-first-century communicative skill in AI-mediated settings. It introduces a Prompting Competence Framework (PCF) with six assessable dimensions (intent, contextual grounding, linguistic and rhetorical control, output evaluation and verification, iteration and repair, and ethical responsibility) and a three-phase classroom model (Model, Prompt Studio, Transfer) that makes prompting visible, teachable, and assessable. The paper encourages empirical research on the framework and model across different language skills and contexts.

KEYWORDS

AI

AI Literacy

CALL

ChatGPT

Generative AI

Prompt Competence

Prompting Literacy

Introduction

Large language models (LLMs) have significantly impacted higher education, influencing students' approaches to drafting, revising, translating, summarizing, and brainstorming in language learning. In language education, a central question is whether curricula will prepare students to use these tools effectively and responsibly. UNESCO's global guidance on generative AI highlights pressing concerns, including privacy, validation, and institutional readiness, and advocates for human-centered capacity building and the safeguarding of human agency (UNESCO, *Guidance*).

The pace of change is rapid. Since the public launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, students have increasingly used chatbots for grammar checking, rephrasing, vocabulary lookup, and speaking practice. Initial reports indicate that LLM-based tools are now present in nearly every area of language teaching (Xiao et al. 301). Many students adopted these tools before teachers had determined appropriate responses. Consequently, AI-mediated learning often occurs privately, without teacher input or observable traces.

This gap between what students do and how institutions prepare for AI use is the focus of this article. In EFL/ESL, Jeon (523) notes both opportunities (like more practice time, quick

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feedback, personalization, and less anxiety for some learners) and challenges (such as hallucinated information, uneven feedback, overreliance, and integrity issues).

These issues have led institutions to respond in different ways, from trying to ban AI to allowing it freely. However, research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) shows that tools alone do not guarantee learning; outcomes depend on task design, mediation, feedback, learner agency, and assessment alignment (Mohamed Ahmed 159).

CALL is well suited to address these issues. For over forty years, CALL researchers have studied how technology changes language learning, showing that a tool's value depends on how it is used (Chapelle 83). Bax (23) described CALL's evolution as moving toward "normalisation," where technology is so integrated that teachers and learners barely notice it. Generative AI is quickly reaching this point. As technology becomes normal, the main question shifts from "Should we allow it?" to "What do learners need to know and do to use it well?"

This study suggests a curriculum response: prompting competence, meaning the ability to create, interpret, evaluate, and refine prompts and outputs, should be taught and assessed as part of communicative competence in AI settings. Prompting is not just about getting better results; it is a language-based practice involving setting goals, adapting to the audience, negotiating meaning, and being careful about truth and accuracy. This paper brings together a theoretical basis for treating prompting as an assessable CALL outcome and proposes a framework and classroom model.

The article is guided by three questions: (1) How can prompting be described as a communicative competence, not just a technical skill? (2) Which parts of this competence can teachers observe and assess in language classrooms? (3) How can a course organize teaching, practice, and assessment to make AI use visible and accountable? The article is conceptual and does not present new data. Instead, it uses research in CALL, applied linguistics, AI in education, and human–computer interaction to build its argument and proposal.

The rest of the article includes a literature review on why prompting belongs in CALL and its links to mediation, communicative competence, prompt literacy, and AI literacy. Later sections introduce the Prompting Competence Framework (PCF), a three-phase classroom model, and an analytic rubric. The article ends with discussions of academic integrity, teaching implications, limitations, and future research directions.

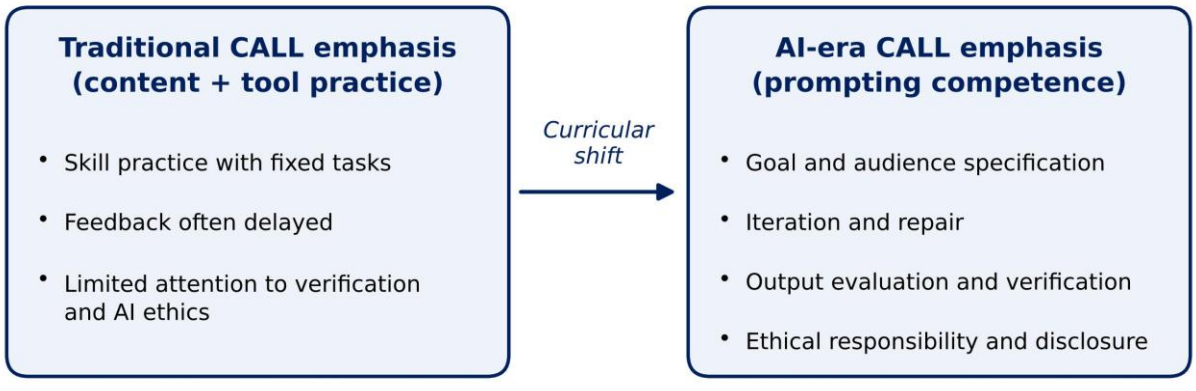


Fig. 1. From Teaching Content to Prompting Competence in CALL

Literature Review

The Growing Case for Prompting in CALL

CALL has long questioned the idea that technology alone drives learning, instead arguing that learners benefit most when technology-based tasks match teaching goals, encourage real interaction, and include feedback and reflection (Oliver 375). The situation with LLM chat is similar: while interaction increases, so do risks. Outputs can be wrong, sources may be missing or made up, and the interaction may not be practical. This means learners must learn to manage AI as a partner while staying responsible for meaning, evidence, and ethics (Ling and Jan 17).

Moving toward prompting competence is a natural extension of CALL's focus on interaction quality, mediation, learner autonomy, and digital literacy in the AI context (Walter 21). Prompts are not just technical commands; prompting is a communicative act that needs clarity, context, rhetorical choices, and the ability to revise.

Earlier research on chatbots in language learning supports this view. Xiao et al. (303) reviewed studies on conversational agents and found they can give learners extra practice but require careful teaching design. Huang et al. (4) found similar results: chatbots can help language learning, but success depends on design, and some positive results may just be due to the tool's novelty. LLMs are much more flexible than earlier chatbots, able to produce fluent text for almost any request. This flexibility is a strength, but it also means that the quality of interaction depends even more on what and how the user asks.

Another reason to include prompting in CALL is the need for learner training. Hubbard (166) argued that learners often do not know how to use technology for language learning, even if they use it daily. Being a regular user of a device or app does not mean being skilled at using it for learning. This is especially true for AI chat. Many students are used to messaging and social media, but may not know how to prompt an LLM with enough context, ask for evidence, or critically evaluate an answer that appears confident. Prompting competence thus emerges as a necessary and timely form of learner training.

Evidence on Generative AI in Language Learning

Recent studies describe both promise and concern. Kohnke et al. (537) argued that ChatGPT can help language teaching through personalized practice, model texts, and creating materials, but it must be used carefully due to issues with accuracy, bias, and overreliance. Barrot (3) looked at ChatGPT in second language writing and found benefits like idea generation, feedback, and translation help, but also problems such as inaccurate content, limited critical thinking, and risks to academic integrity. Hockly (445) gave a balanced view of AI in English language teaching, stressing that teachers need to understand both the strengths and limits of these tools.

Other researchers have asked how learners should use such tools. Godwin-Jones ("Partnering" 5) found that learners need guidance to use AI to improve their own language, not just to get a better text. Tseng and Warschauer (258) argued that since AI writing tools are here to stay, teachers should help learners use them thoughtfully, not just try to ban them, while being aware that overreliance may limit language growth.

Overall, this research suggests two things. First, the benefits of AI for language learners depend on how they use it. Second, the main risks, like overreliance, uncritical acceptance, and misuse, also depend on learner behavior. If both benefits and risks depend on how learners interact with the tool, then teaching them how to do so becomes a clear priority. This is the gap the PCF aims to fill.

Prompting as Mediation and Meaning-Making

The CEFR Companion Volume expands an action-oriented view of language competence through mediation. It emphasizes the learner's role in reprocessing, reformulating, and negotiating meaning for particular audiences and purposes (Council of Europe; Piccardo 288). Prompting can be seen as a form of contemporary mediation: the learner takes the task goal and translates it into constraints for the AI system, evaluates the output for appropriateness and truthfulness, and iteratively works to resolve any misunderstandings. Prompting is therefore linguistic (pragmatics, register, cohesion), rhetorical (purpose, audience, genre), and epistemic (verification and accountability).

Sociocultural theory provides further underpinning for this. Vygotsky argued that human thinking and learning are mediated by tools and signs and that language is the most important of these. Subsequent work in CALL has used this to explore how digital tools can shape what learners are able to do (Thorne 39). From this perspective, the LLM is a new kind of cultural tool and the prompt is the means by which the learner acts upon it. The concept of scaffolding (Wood et al. 89) is also relevant in that an AI system can scaffold language learning by enabling the learner to do what they otherwise could not do on their own. Examples, explanations, and feedback are all possible, but only if the learner is asking for the right kind of support. A learner who types "correct my text" is going to get a very different kind of support from a learner who types "underline the grammar errors in my text, state the rule for each one and don't rewrite the sentences." Godwin-Jones ("Distributed Agency" 7) calls this distributed agency (control over the learning process is shared between the learner, the teacher, and the AI). Prompting competence is the skill that enables the learner to maintain a reasonable degree of that agency.

Prompting and Communicative Competence

The notion that language ability is more than just grammar has been around for a long time. Hymes (280) postulated that speakers need to know not just what is grammatically correct but also what is appropriate and feasible, and what people in fact do in a given situation. Canale and Swain (28) took that concept and developed a model which had grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic components, with Canale (11) later adding discourse competence. These models go some way to explaining why prompting is a language skill. A good prompt has to be grammatical (grammatical competence), appropriate to the purpose and audience (sociolinguistic competence), well structured so that the instructions and context make sense (discourse competence) and be capable of repairing a breakdown if the system has misunderstood (strategic competence). When a learner writes "Rewrite this paragraph for a first-year student who is completely new to the topic, keep the technical terms and explain each one in one sentence," the learner is making decisions about register, audience, and purpose. Those are precisely the decisions that communicative language teaching has always sought to develop.

Research into interaction provides a second pillar. The interaction hypothesis (Long 453) states that learners benefit from communication breaking down and having to negotiate meaning through clarification requests, confirmation checks, and rephrasing. The output hypothesis (Swain 101) adds that the act of producing language itself will lead the learner to become aware of gaps in their knowledge. Prompting incorporates both of these processes. If the output of the system is not what the learner wanted then the learner has to work out what has gone wrong, rephrase the prompt, and try again. An LLM, however, does not show the same level of confusion as a human and will often produce a perfectly fluent response even when it

has completely misunderstood the request. For this reason, negotiation of meaning in prompting is in part the learner's responsibility (the learner has to notice the mismatch as the system will not always signal it). This is also why Wagner et al. (3) are so cautious about assuming that ChatGPT has any real grasp of pragmatics, commonsense, or cultural knowledge.

From Prompt Literacy to Prompting Competence

Prompt Literacy as an Emergent Literacy

Prompt literacy is defined as the ability to write effective prompts, understand the outputs, and then iterate on the prompts to get the desired result. In the context of language education, it can be seen as a progression from random experimentation to a more strategic and accountable form of engagement with an AI tool (Hwang et al. 7). Guided prompting projects provide a clear way of demonstrating how the framing of a task, the imposition of constraints, and the specification of audience all impact the language that is produced and the learning value for EFL learners.

The technical literature on prompts is replete with the notion that the wording of the prompt is important. Brown et al. (1888) demonstrated that large language models can be induced to perform new tasks simply by being given a few examples in the prompt, with no further training required. Reynolds and McDonell (3) characterized prompt design as a form of programming in natural language, where minor changes in wording can significantly influence model behavior. Liu et al. (5) surveyed this rapidly expanding field and highlighted the diversity of prompting techniques developed to date. While these computer science studies focus on optimizing model performance, language educators pursue different goals. The objective is not to identify a single optimal prompt, but to enable learners to understand why certain prompts are more effective than others and to cultivate adaptable thinking strategies for evolving tools.

Research on actual users indicates that prompting is a complex skill. Zamfirescu-Pereira et al. (13) found that novice users designing chatbot prompts often worked inconsistently, drew strong conclusions from isolated successes or failures, and struggled to predict the effects of small changes. The title of their paper, "Why Johnny can't prompt," underscores the challenges faced by untrained users. This evidence supports the need for explicit instruction. In language learning contexts, Hwang et al. (9) examined how learners develop prompt literacy as a new skill when engaging with generative AI. Their findings suggest that prompt literacy can be fostered through structured activities rather than relying solely on trial and error.

For clarity, in this article, prompt literacy refers to the knowledge and awareness necessary to compose and interpret prompts. Prompting competence is a broader construct, encompassing prompt literacy as well as the ability to apply prompts in authentic tasks, assess outputs, address issues, and act responsibly in observable and evaluable ways. This distinction aligns with established language education principles differentiating between knowledge about language and the ability to use it (Council of Europe). Competence, in this context, is defined as competence in action.

AI Literacy as a Supporting Competency Layer

Prompting competence is very much a subset of what we might call AI literacy, which would encompass an understanding of the affordances and limitations of AI, an awareness of the risks and biases that exist, and the ability to act ethically (Kasneci et al. 5). Students need to have a basic mental model of what LLMs can and can't do and a practical routine for assessing claims (Bender et al. 617; Ji et al. 21). In the context of language education, AI literacy would also

include the ability to know when AI feedback should be treated as suggestions rather than as corrections (Kohnke et al. 546).

Long and Magerko (3) define AI literacy as a set of competencies that allow people to assess AI critically, to communicate and collaborate with AI, and to use AI as a tool at home, at work, and online. Ng et al. (4) in their literature review identify four aspects of AI literacy: knowing and understanding AI, using and applying AI, evaluating and creating AI, and AI ethics. Both of these definitions include the ability to communicate with AI and an element of ethical awareness which are, of course, at the heart of prompting. In the PCF, AI literacy is treated as background knowledge and prompting competence as the visible, task-based application of that knowledge.

Why Verification Matters

Verification is absolutely core to AI literacy as LLMs are designed to generate plausible text rather than necessarily true text. Bender et al. (616) described such systems as "stochastic parrots" that just take patterns from their training data and put them together without any actual understanding of what the text means. Ji et al. (4) looked at hallucination in NLP and found it occurs in a wide variety of tasks and models. Floridi and Chiriatti (686) pointed out that systems like GPT-3 can generate text that appears to be meaningful without any actual basis in truth. For language learners this has real world implications in that an invented citation, a wrong grammar rule, or a culturally inappropriate phrase can all be generated in what will be perfectly grammatical and coherent English. Heersmink et al. (12) note the opacity of LLMs makes it very difficult for users to assess whether or not they can be trusted and they call for a very conscious approach to trustworthiness. Sperber et al. (363) use the term "epistemic vigilance" to describe the mechanisms we use to protect ourselves against being misled by others. In the context of AI-mediated learning, epistemic vigilance has to be taught and learned. Prompting is a good place to do this as learners can incorporate verification into the prompt itself (e.g., asking the system to separate out the claims that would require checking from those that are less problematic). The answer to such a prompt will of course still need to be checked, but the habit of asking is a useful first step.

Teacher and Student Competency Frameworks

International guidance is increasingly positioning AI engagement as a competency rather than a tool skill. UNESCO's teacher and student competency frameworks both take a human-centered, ethical, and inclusive approach and include progression levels which can be used to inform curriculum design (UNESCO, *Framework for Students*; UNESCO, *Framework for Teachers*). This is consistent with the view that prompting competence should be a teachable and assessable practice, with a clear focus on agency, privacy, and integrity (Kasneci et al. 5).

More recent UNESCO documents are also pertinent. The UNESCO student AI competency framework (UNESCO, *Framework for Students*) covers a human-centered mindset, the ethics of AI, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design with progression from understanding to applying to creating. The accompanying teacher AI competency framework (UNESCO, *Framework for Teachers*) includes a focus on AI pedagogy and teacher professional development. Neither of these documents refers to prompting competence specifically, but the emphasis on human agency, ethical use, and progression over time is very much in line with the PCF. Language educators can therefore present prompting competence as part of a wider

international endeavor to define what people should know and be able to do in an AI-enabled society rather than as some isolated classroom concept.

The Prompting Competence Framework (PCF)

To make prompting teachable and assessable in language education, this study proposes the Prompting Competence Framework (PCF) with six dimensions. The PCF is designed as a practical rubric in itself: each of the dimensions can be observed in the prompt logs, the revisions, the verification notes, and the reflective rationales (Council of Europe).

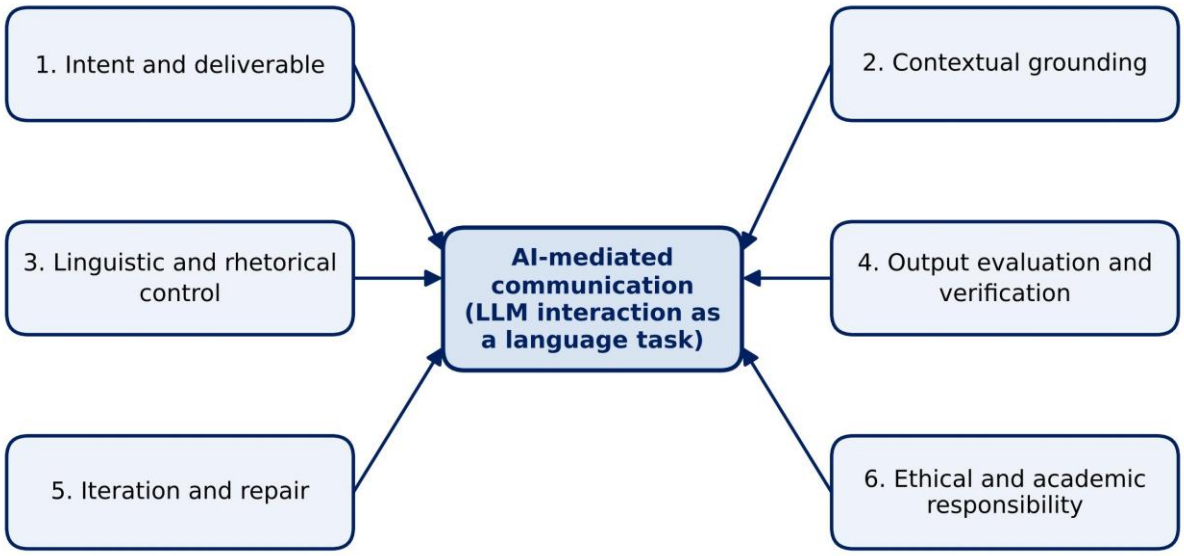


Fig. 2. Prompting Competence Framework (PCF): Six Assessable Dimensions

Figure 2 provides a conceptual overview of the six dimensions and how they relate to one another around a common core of AI-mediated communication. Table 1 then takes that framework and turns it into a practical rubric, with a definition and observable indicators for each dimension so that it can be identified in the prompt logs, the revisions, and the reflective rationales.

Table 1
Prompting Competence Framework (PCF)

Dimension	Definition	Observable indicators (examples)
Intent and deliverable	Clarifies communicative goal and task type	Purpose; genre; audience; success criteria; required format
Contextual grounding	Supplies relevant background and constraints	Topic scope; stance; source text; length; proficiency level
Linguistic and rhetorical control	Controls register, structure, and discourse moves	Tone/register; cohesion; rhetorical moves; hedging; modality

Dimension	Definition	Observable indicators (examples)
Output evaluation and verification	Judges accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness	Flags hallucinations; requests evidence; checks logic; revises claims
Iteration and repair	Improves prompts based on output	Versioning; targeted constraint edits; rationale for changes; repair strategies
Ethical and academic responsibility	Uses AI transparently and safely	Disclosure (if required); privacy protection; avoids plagiarism; attribution practices

The Six Dimensions in More Detail

The six dimensions are explained below. They are not in any fixed order. In actual practice learners will move between them and a single revision of a prompt may well involve more than one of the dimensions.

Intent and Deliverable

The first dimension is the learner's ability to state what they want to say and why. This is about the purpose of the text, the genre, the audience, and the criteria for success. In language learning terms, this is task analysis. Research into task-based language teaching has shown that tasks which have a clear communicative outcome lead learners to focus their language use on meaning (Ellis 27). A learner who writes the prompt "Write about climate change" has not specified an audience or a purpose and as a result the piece will tend to be rather general and unengaging. A learner who writes "Write a 200-word introduction to a persuasive essay for first-year university students arguing that cities should reduce car use" has made a number of decisions which can be discussed, critiqued, and improved.

Contextual Grounding

The second dimension is the ability to give the system the information it needs. The LLM doesn't have any knowledge of the learner's course, level, or source material unless it is explicitly told. Grounding involves the topic scope, the learner's position, the level of proficiency, length constraints, and, where appropriate, some snippets from the source text. Good grounding requires selection. Too little context leads to rather generic responses; too much irrelevant detail can be a distraction for both the system and the learner. Making the decision as to what is relevant is a form of academic judgment and it's directly related to the skills of summarization and selection that are part of the language course. The learner will also need to consider privacy when providing the context which is of course a connection to the sixth dimension.

Linguistic and Rhetorical Control

The third dimension is the language specificity of prompting. The learner has to be able to control register, tone, and structure in both their prompt and in the output they're asking for.

They might be asking for careful hedging in an academic text, a polite but unambiguous email, or a summary that follows a problem/solution pattern. Genre knowledge is key here. Genre in applied linguistics is the way in which texts are used to achieve a social purpose through the use of identifiable stages and language (Hyland 149). A learner who can identify these features can ask for them and can also check that the output has them. Prompting is thus a way of putting metalinguistic knowledge into practice.

Output Evaluation and Verification

The fourth dimension is probably the most important one for both learning and for integrity. That's the dimension of judging whether the output is accurate, relevant, and appropriate and checking the claims against some external source. A learner might check the facts against a reputable reference, test a grammatical explanation against a dictionary or a corpus, ask a peer or a teacher, or compare the answers they get from different prompts. Triangulation (using more than one source) is a useful principle. Evaluation should also be about language quality. The output might be perfectly grammatical and yet be completely wrong in tone, too general for the task, or simply not something that a learner could actually say. This links in with the research into feedback literacy which argues that the learner has to be able to assess the feedback and decide how to use it (Carless and Boud 1322).

Iteration and Repair

The fifth dimension is the one that acknowledges that good outcomes are very rarely the result of the very first prompt. The learner has to look at the output, work out what's wrong, and then decide what aspect of the prompt to alter. It's about effective iteration. Rather than re-prompting from scratch, the learner will change one constraint, add an example, or ask for a different structure. The process of keeping the various versions (v1, v2, v3, etc.) is part of the process. This is very much in the spirit of strategic competence as defined by Canale and Swain (30) (their notion of strategies for dealing with breakdowns in communication) and is also very much in keeping with the concept of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman 67) where the learner plans, monitors, and reflects on their own learning.

Ethical and Academic Responsibility

The sixth dimension is about transparent, safe, and fair use. This involves adhering to the relevant course and institutional rules regarding AI use, disclosing when AI assistance has been used (where required), not entering any private or sensitive data and giving due credit. It also includes an awareness of bias as LLMs will reflect the social and cultural patterns present in their training data (Bender et al. 614). Ethical responsibility is embedded within the framework as a dimension to be assessed rather than just as a caveat. It is something that students need to be given practice in doing and in explaining their decisions about. An example of this would be the decision as to whether a suggested paragraph could legitimately be described as their own.

The dimensions together describe a cycle rather than a checklist. The learner defines the task, grounds it, shapes the language, evaluates the outcome, repairs the prompt, and takes responsibility for the final piece. The PCF does not purport to be complete or definitive. It is offered as a starting point for teachers and researchers to test, adapt, and extend.

Pedagogical Integration Model

A major curricular issue is making prompting competence visible as learning rather than allowing AI use to become a private, invisible shortcut. The model proposed here is a three-stage model (Model→Prompt Studio→Transfer) which links instruction, practice, and assessment evidence. The model explicitly addresses mediation, verification, iteration, and ethical responsibility (Council of Europe).

The three stages follow a very familiar pedagogical pattern. The teacher models in stage one, the students practice with support in stage two and then work more independently in stage three. This is of course the "gradual release of responsibility" (Pearson and Gallagher 334) and the "scaffolding" concept (Wood et al. 89) in action. The model also adheres to the principle of constructive alignment (Biggs 348) in that the intended learning outcome, the teaching activities, and the assessment all relate to the same skill. If a course says it wants students to use AI responsibly but only assesses the final product, then the assessment is misaligned with the intended outcome. The model avoids this misalignment by assessing both the process and the product.

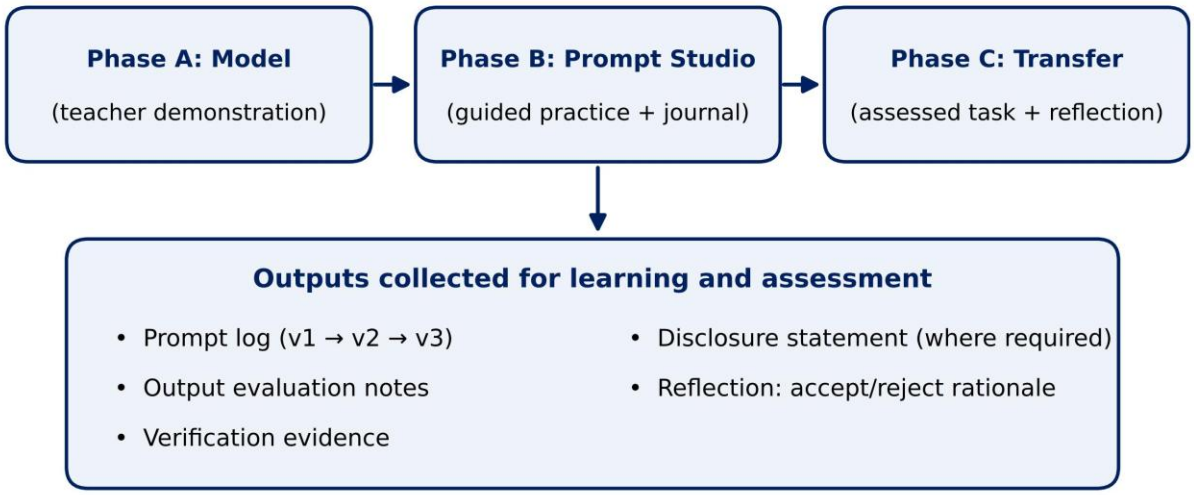


Fig. 3. Classroom Integration Model: Model, Prompt Studio, Transfer

Phase A: Model (Teacher Demonstration)

In Phase A, the teacher demonstrates the effect of changes to prompt structure on both output quality and epistemic risk. A practical approach would be to work through the anatomy of the prompt (instruction, context, constraints, format, verification request) and compare outputs from a poorly specified prompt to a well-specified one. The intention is not to teach a set of rules, but to establish cause and effect.

The teacher might simply project two prompts for the same task. One might read "Write about my internship." The other might read "Write a 150-word paragraph in a formal register for a university application letter about my internship at a software company. Mention teamwork and problem solving. Use first person. Avoid clichés." The students would then look at the two outputs and discuss what had changed and why. The teacher could then point out that even the second output may contain invented content or a tone that is not appropriate to the student, and model how to interrogate it (e.g., "Which of the sentences describe things I didn't

tell you?"). The point is that the quality of the prompt has an effect on the quality of the output, but a good prompt does not in any way eliminate the need for checking.

Phase B: Prompt Studio (Guided Practice and Journals)

Phase B sees students working in pairs using a prompt journal which records the various prompt versions (v1/v2/v3). They record what changes they have made and why, their evaluation of the output, and the verification steps they have taken. This phase is all about building awareness of how the various language choices in the prompt (tone, audience, stance, constraints) affect the interaction.

The pair work in this phase has a very specific purpose. By having to explain their choices to a partner they are forced to articulate their reasoning, which in turn promotes metacognition (Flavell 906) and provides the teacher with material for feedback. The prompt journal is the record of that thinking. The teacher could ask the pairs to swap journals and suggest one improvement or simply have a short whole class discussion about a couple of interesting cases (e.g., a prompt that has failed in a useful way). The prompt studio sessions should be low stakes so that students are able to try, fail, and report honestly. If every journal entry is going to be marked harshly, then students may be inclined to hide their mistakes or simply invent neat stories of their process. Formative feedback (which tells the learner where they are and how to improve) is the more appropriate type of feedback at this stage.

Phase C: Transfer (Assessed Task)

Phase C sees students complete an assessed writing or ESP task using a set of marking criteria which include process evidence (prompt log, verification notes, and a brief reflection). This in turn reduces the incentive to produce untraceable AI submissions and ensures the assessment is in line with the competence we are trying to develop.

The task can be tailored to suit the particular course. In an academic writing course, it could be a problem/solution paragraph based on three sources. In an ESP course, it could be a short technical report or a client email. In a mediation course it could be a summary of a policy text for a particular audience (see Appendix C). The key thing is that the task requires the student to make their decisions visible in the process, i.e. which AI suggestions they have used, which they have rejected, and what they have checked. Where the teacher wants further assurance that the work is actually the student's own, it is possible to add a short oral follow-up or some in-class drafting. Students can also be asked to reflect on what they have learned about audience and tone which brings the task back to the language learning objectives of the course.

Assessment: PCF Analytic Rubric

To support classroom implementation, the present study provides an abbreviated 4-level analytic rubric. In practice, the rubric is applied to the prompt log and a brief reflective memo which records the evaluation and verification steps.

It is important to use the rubric appropriately. First, it should be applied to evidence of process (the prompt log, the verification notes, and the reflections) as well as to the final product as the final product alone will not reveal how the learner has worked. Second, the criteria should be made available to students in advance and ideally discussed with the students, with examples, as students do improve when they understand the criteria by which their work will be assessed. Third, teachers should expect that students will not make progress at the same rate across all of the criteria. A student may be quite advanced in terms of task specification and still be at an early stage in terms of verification. Such profiles are of course very useful for feedback and that

is one of the reasons why the rubric is analytic rather than holistic. Finally, descriptors such as "systematic" or "strategic" need to be interpreted in the context of the course. Teachers can improve reliability and fairness by double marking a sample of the journals and discussing any discrepancies.

Table 2
PCF Analytic Rubric (Abridged)

Criterion	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Task specification	Vague goal	Goal stated	Goal + deliverable clear	Goal + audience + success criteria
Context and constraints	Minimal context	Some constraints	Adequate grounding	Optimized constraints + relevance
Evaluation and verification	Accepts output	Spots surface issues	Checks logic + key facts	Systematic verification + triangulation
Iteration quality	Few revisions	Minor tweaks	Targeted improvement	Strategic experimentation + repair
Ethical responsibility	Unclear boundaries	Partial transparency	Follows course policy	Models best-practice privacy/disclosure

Academic Integrity by Design

Academic integrity in the GenAI era is increasingly a governance and assessment design issue rather than a detection issue (Kasneci et al. 5). When AI is a common drafting partner, an "AI vs. no AI" policy is not really viable. The way forward is integrity by design with assessment design that (a) makes the process visible, (b) values justification and verification, and (c) promotes student agency.

Integrity by design would involve grading both the process evidence (prompt logs and verification notes) and the final product, the use of secure checkpoints (in-class outlines, oral defenses, supervised drafting), requiring disclosure in line with institutional policy and teaching privacy hygiene (e.g., not including any sensitive data in prompts) (UNESCO, *Guidance*).

Early institutional responses point in this direction. Moorhouse et al. looked at the policies of the top universities and found that the majority of their guidance was about academic integrity and advice to staff on assessment design. Cotton et al. (234) looked at how institutions could respond to ChatGPT and recommended clear policies, education for students on academic integrity and assessment design that is difficult to complete using AI alone. Rudolph et al. (355) similarly argued that the arrival of ChatGPT should lead to a rethinking of assessment rather than simply to better detection.

Detection tools on their own are a poor solution. Liang et al. (2) found that several of the most widely used AI detectors actually misclassified writing by non-native English speakers as AI-generated more often than writing by native speakers. For EFL learners this means a detection-based approach is not only unreliable but could be potentially unfair. Integrity by design also requires an honest discussion about what constitutes legitimate help. Students already use dictionaries, spell checkers, and their peers. The question is where to draw the line and that will be different for different tasks. For a grammar exercise whose purpose is to practice

a particular form, AI correction would be entirely inappropriate. For a task on audience adaptation however, AI drafting might be acceptable if the student is able to evaluate and revise the output and can explain how it was used. Course teams should state these boundaries for each task and explain the rationale for them.

Discussion

This study views the use of generative AI in language education as a way to build competence, not just to add new tools. By making prompting competence a main goal in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), educators can better match classroom practices to the needs of AI-based academic and professional communication. The Prompting Competence Framework (PCF) shows that using AI well means more than producing fluent text; it requires clear goals, audience awareness, rhetorical control, and careful evaluation and checking.

The classroom model supports academic integrity by making the learning process open and assessable. When assessment values process evidence and reflection, AI becomes a support rather than a hidden shortcut. The model also changes the teacher's role to that of a designer and guide, responsible for creating tasks, setting ethical standards, teaching how to check AI outputs, and building a classroom culture that values agency and responsibility.

The framework has important implications for teacher development. Teaching prompting competence means teachers need to understand how large language models (LLMs) work, design tasks that make AI use visible, and give feedback on process evidence. Many teachers are not yet trained in these areas. Kohnke et al. (545) noted that both teachers and learners need new skills to use these tools well, while Jeon and Lee (15874) described the teacher–ChatGPT relationship as complementary, with each having a different role. Teacher education should include practice in writing and evaluating prompts, critically reviewing AI outputs, and designing assessment tasks like those in Appendix C. Without enough support, prompting competence could become an extra burden for teachers who lack time or training.

Equity is also important. Unequal access to devices, internet, and paid AI tools can affect students' ability to develop prompting skills. In multilingual settings like Morocco, students may use several languages, and LLMs may work differently in each, leading to different levels of support. Classrooms should ensure access, offer low-tech options like printed prompt journals, and encourage students to compare outputs in different languages. The same applies to the rubric: if it focuses too much on polished language, it may disadvantage students with lower proficiency if teachers confuse language accuracy with strategic quality. A prompt with some grammar mistakes can still show clear goals, good grounding, and careful checking.

Pedagogical and Academic Implications

First, language programs can embed prompting-competence outcomes in syllabi alongside writing and speaking outcomes, making the competence explicit. Second, teachers can adopt prompt studios and prompt journals to cultivate iteration and metacognition. Third, evaluation should reward verification, repair, and audience-appropriate language skills that matter in both academic communication and professional contexts.

Limitations

This article has several limitations. First, it is conceptual. The PCF is based on a reading of the literature and on pedagogical reasoning, but it has not yet been tested with learners. The six dimensions and four levels may well need to be tweaked as a result of empirical work (for example, we may find that raters are unable to apply the framework reliably or that the

dimensions aren't actually distinct in practice). LLMs are constantly changing. The capabilities around memory, web search, and document upload all change what a prompt needs to contain and which tasks are achievable. Tasks which were quite difficult a year ago may now be trivial. The PCF is therefore focused on the communicative and evaluative skills which are likely to be enduring rather than on any particular tool or technique. It was written with a specific set of contexts in mind (university EFL/ESL and ESP) and younger learners, other languages, and other systems may require different tasks and descriptors. Finally, there is a cost to assessing process evidence. Prompt logs and reflections add to the teacher's workload. Students can falsify their records. The model reduces some risks of misuse but cannot remove them entirely.

Future research should test the PCF in practice and see if its benefits extend beyond writing to skills like speaking, listening, mediation, and teamwork. It should also consider fairness, such as students' access to devices, comfort with technology, and prior skills. A mixed-methods approach is useful because it connects measured results to actual prompting behaviors and students' reasoning.

Some research questions include: Do students who use prompt studios write better prompts and check more? Is prompting competence linked to writing skill, digital literacy, or critical thinking? Do students at different skill levels benefit equally? How do teachers' views on AI affect their use of the model? Research with teachers can help improve the model over time. Studies could compare classes using the PCF with those using AI without guidance. Methods like think-alouds, screen recordings, and prompt log analysis can show how students reason as they revise prompts, helping to refine the rubric.

Conclusion

As AI becomes common in academic and professional life, language teaching must go beyond teaching content and help learners use AI as a communication partner. The PCF and classroom model in this paper give a practical way to teach and assess prompting competence, while still supporting human agency and academic integrity. There is now a need to test the impact, methods, and transfer of these ideas across different skills and settings.

The main point is simple: learners will use AI whether or not the curriculum covers it. What the curriculum can shape is whether learners use AI with purpose, critical thinking, and responsibility. By defining prompting competence, explaining how to assess it, and showing how to teach it, the PCF helps teachers move from worry about AI to active planning. In CALL, the key question is not what technology can do, but what learners can do with it and how teachers can help.

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Appendix A. Prompt Journal Template (PCF-Aligned)

Course: _____ Task: _____ Date: _____

Prompt v1:

- Instruction (what do you want?):
- Context (background, source text, stance):
- Constraints (length, level, tone, audience, format):
- Verification request (what must be checked?):

AI output summary (not copied):

Evaluation notes (accuracy, relevance, tone, risks):

Verification step (how did you check? what changed?):

Prompt v2 (what did you change and why?):

Evaluation + verification notes:

Prompt v3 (optional):

Final reflection (5–8 lines): What did you accept/reject and why? What did you learn about audience/tone/argumentation?

Appendix B. Full PCF Rubric (Expanded Descriptors)

Institutions can of course adapt these descriptors to their own policies and task types. The fundamental principle is that students are being assessed on accountable interaction: goal clarity, grounding, rhetorical control, evaluation and verification, iteration, and ethical responsibility.

Dimension	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Intent and deliverable	Prompt gives no indication of intention or required output.	Purpose stated, output type not clear.	Purpose and deliverable are clear. Audience is defined.	Purpose, audience, criteria, and constraints fully specified; anticipates evaluation criteria.
Contextual grounding	Very little or no background at all; no source information provided.	Some background given, key constraints not really there.	Relevant background and constraints provided; scope is controlled.	Grounding is task relevant and precise. It contains the required source excerpts and contains no noise.
Linguistic and rhetorical control	No control of register/structure.	Basic tone/register requested; structure partially specified.	Register, tone, and discourse moves specified; cohesive structure requested.	Fine-grained rhetorical control (hedging, stance, cohesion); genre conventions explicitly targeted.
Output evaluation and verification	Accepts output without checking.	Identifies obvious errors; limited checking.	Checks key claims and logic; requests citations/uncertainty markers.	Systematic triangulation and revision; documents checks and updates claims responsibly.

Dimension	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Iteration and repair	Minimal revisions; changes not purposeful.	Some revisions; weak rationale.	Targeted iterative improvement; explains why changes were made.	Strategic experimentation, repair, and refinement; compares alternatives and selects based on criteria.
Ethical and academic responsibility	Unclear boundaries; risks privacy or plagiarism.	Partial transparency; inconsistent attribution/disclosure.	Follows course policy; avoids sensitive data; disclosure where required.	Models responsible practice; clear disclosure; privacy hygiene; explains ethical choices and responsibility.

Appendix C. Sample Task Set (Academic Writing + Mediation)

Task C1 (Genre transfer/mediation): Produce a 250-word student version of a 900-word policy extract. Required: audience adaptation, definitions of key terms, and a verification note.

Task C2 (Argument development): Write a problem/solution paragraph based on three provided sources. Required: a claim/evidence map and an AI-use disclosure.

Task C3 (Peer review with AI): Use AI to generate two alternative pieces of feedback on the revision, then decide which one you would take on board and why, with reference to the rubric.