



From Linguistic Correction to Maieutic Support

Effects of Generative AI on Academic Writing Support

The Case of CPU Lyon — University Helping Hand
(Coup de Pouce Université)

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Can be downloaded from
<https://www.laurini.net/ftp/Clermont2.pdf>

General Context

Generative AI is profoundly disrupting academic practices in higher education on a global scale. Its rapid spread raises unprecedented questions for institutions, faculty, and academic advisors.



Explosion in Usage

Generative AI is now integrated into student writing, translation, and research practices all over the world.

Institutional Recommendations

Many organizations have published reference frameworks: UNESCO, UCL, University of Birmingham, Université Laval, and many others.

A Lack of Concrete Feedback

Despite this activity, documented feedback in French remains rare, particularly in contexts involving hands-on academic support.

CPU: University Boost



Founded in 2010 in Lyon, the CPU association supports international students in mastering academic French and drafting their research work.

309

Students supported

International
students mentored
in 2025

70

Volunteers engaged

Plus 2 permanent
employees

3

Areas of activity

Basic French,
Academic
(DELFD/DALF), support
for dissertations

Common Challenges for Allophone Students

International students face specific obstacles that go well beyond simple mastery of the French language. These difficulties relate to both linguistic competencies and cultural expectations regarding academic writing.

→ Insufficient mastery of written language

Even at a C1 level, the subtleties of the French academic register remain difficult to fully master in writing.

→ Little training in academic writing

Academic writing is rarely taught explicitly in training programs, whether in France or abroad.

→ Culturally situated writing habits

University writing conventions vary significantly from one country to another, frequently creating gaps with French expectations.

→ Limited university supervision

Thesis and dissertation supervisors often lack the time or the tools to support the linguistic and writing aspects of international students.

Traditional Role of Coaches

Before the rise of AI, CPU coaches played a role that was simultaneously linguistic, methodological, and cultural for students. Their intervention covered a huge part of the process of producing scientific writing.

Mastery of the Academic Style

Vocabulary

Syntax

Logic

Presentation

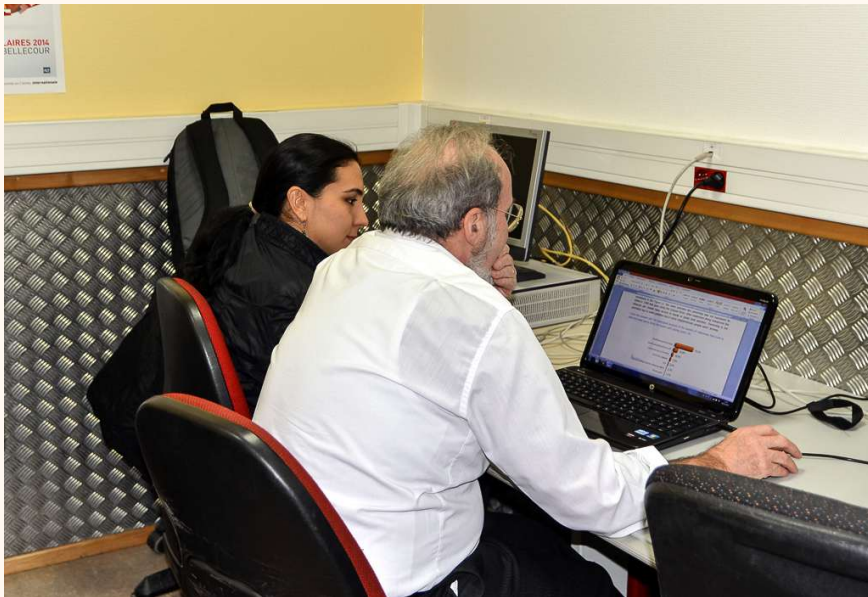
Beyond Language

- Structuring scientific reasoning
- Linguistic and intercultural nuances
- Preparation for oral defenses

Comprehensive support, from conceptualizing the outline to the final defense before a jury.

Examples of difficulties encountered

In this field, CPU coaches identify significant patterns in the writings of non-native students. These difficulties reveal challenges that go beyond simple grammar.



Inconsistent chapter order

The logic of reasoning progression—from the state of the art to conclusions—is not always intuitive for students trained in other academic traditions.

Weak logical transitions

The connections between parts, sub-parts, and paragraphs often lack fluidity, making the reasoning difficult for the reader to follow.

Cultural translation issues

Certain concepts or phrasings, translated literally from another language, lose their meaning or acquire an incorrect connotation in academic French.

The Arrival of Generative AI

The emergence of generative AI tools in student practices has profoundly changed the nature of the texts submitted coaches. visible, sometimes confusing shift with multiple consequences.

Texts are suddenly very accurate

Written assignments now show very few linguistic errors. The apparent grammatical quality has increased significantly, blurring the benchmarks for coaches.

Sometimes clandestine usage

Some students use AI without disclosing it, sometimes for fear of reprimand, and sometimes due to a lack of knowledge regarding the rules in effect at their institution.

Drafting in the native language, then AI translation

A common practice consists of drafting first in one's native language—often with more ease—then using an AI to obtain a fluent and structured French version.

Student Profiles in the Era of AI



Advanced PhD Students

Distrustful of AI, they fear a loss of intellectual authenticity and remain attached to their established working methods.



New PhD Students

Frequent and open usage. AI is perceived as a natural tool, integrated from the start into their writing process.



Master's Students

Sometimes subject to an explicit prohibition from their institution, they navigate between institutional rules and actual practices.



Autonomous Students

Strategic and thoughtful usage: they use AI as a tool for rephrasing or verification, while maintaining control over their own thought process.

Effects on the role of coaches

Generative AI does not eliminate the need for support, but it profoundly transforms its nature. The focus of coaches shifts toward what the machine cannot do.



1

Less linguistic correction

Surface errors—grammar, spelling, syntax—are largely resolved by AI before the advising session even takes place.

2

More comprehension verification

The coach ensures that the students truly understand what they have written, and that the produced text (even with AI) accurately reflects their own thinking.

3

Support for coherence and thought

The emphasis is placed on the logic of the reasoning, the argumentative coherence, and the student's ability to defend their own ideas.

CPU Adaptations to AI

In response to this transformation in practices, the CPU has initiated a collective reflection and implemented several concrete actions to adapt its support model.



Coach Training

Coaches are trained to understand AI tools, their actual use by students, and their implications for coaching practices.



AI Workshops for Students

Dedicated workshops allow students to discover and appropriate AI tools in a critical, ethical, and effective manner.



Reflection on the Maieutic Role

The association is collectively questioning its mission: how can we support thinking rather than just textual production?

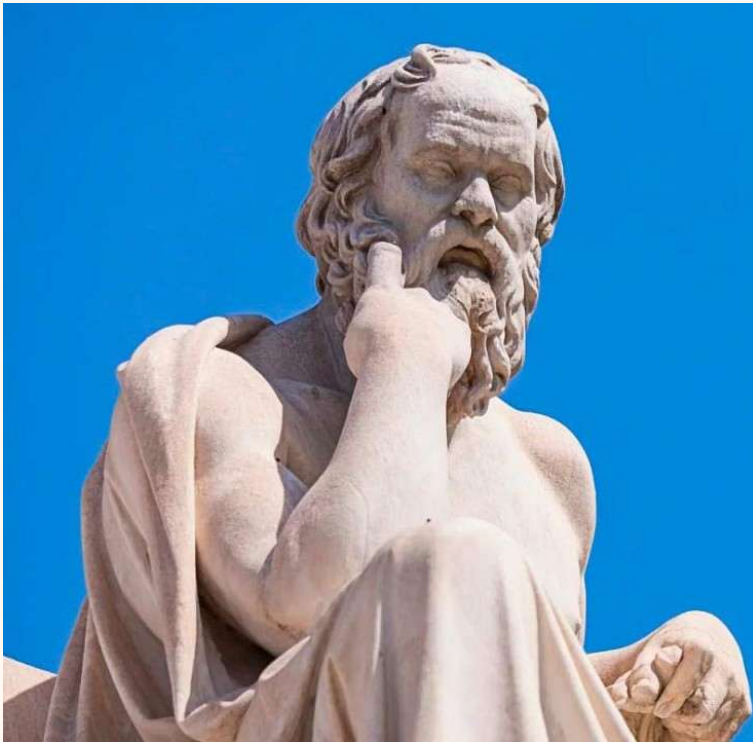


Monitoring Specialized Tools

Active monitoring of new AI tools adapted for academic writing allows for anticipating developments and providing better advice to students.

Toward a Maieutic Role

“AI can correct, rephrase, and structure — but it cannot think in the student's place.”



The Socratic figure of maieutics — the art of helping ideas to be born — finds all its relevance in the age of AI. The coaches are no longer primarily correctors: they become a **cognitive facilitator**, whose role is to help the student clarify, deepen, and take ownership of their own thinking.

AI: A production tool

It corrects, rephrases, translates, and structures. It is effective on the form of the text.

The coach: A guide for thought

They inquire, question, and help verbalize. They work on the substance, on intellectual authenticity.

Current Limitations of AI

While generative AI is a powerful tool for text production, it quickly reaches its limits when venturing into the strictly human dimensions of academic writing.



Poorly Handled Cultural Nuances

AI struggles to convey cultural implicits, subtext, complex transliterations, and rhetorical conventions specific to each disciplinary or national context.



Normalization and Lack of Creativity

AI often provides consensus-based and standardized texts. Students are expected to produce personal and original work.



Complex Reasoning

Constructing nuanced arguments that integrate contradictory positions remains difficult to delegate entirely to a machine.



Need for Human Interaction

Dialogue, guided reformulation, encouragement, and adaptation to each student's profile are irreplaceable in true mentoring.

Challenges for Universities

Generative AI challenges the very foundations of academic institutions: how do we define, evaluate, and ensure the authenticity of student intellectual work at a time when text production can be largely automated?

Institutions slow to respond

Many universities have not yet defined a clear policy on AI usage, leaving faculty and students without a shared frame of reference.

Need for clear guidelines

AI usage policies, co-constructed with stakeholders, are essential to establish shared, legitimate, and enforceable rules.

Risk of unethical shifts

Without oversight, the shift toward completely delegating writing to a machine—and thus toward a form of intellectual fraud—is a real risk.

Rethinking academic writing

This may be the opportunity to redefine what we really expect from academic writing: what is its value, its function, and what should it prove?

Fundamental Questions

Beyond the practical challenges, generative AI raises profound questions about the purpose of higher education, the nature of intellectual competence, and the very meaning of learning.

1 What should we still be learning?

If AI can draft, edit, and structure text, which skills are still essential to teach? What defines a successful education?

3 How do we integrate human skills with AI?

What constructive complementarity can we create between what humans do best and what machines do best?

2 Does AI diminish cognitive abilities?

By delegating intellectual tasks to the machine, do we risk impoverishing students' reasoning, memorization, and expression capabilities?

4 How do we guarantee independent thought?

What pedagogical practices and assessment methods still ensure that students are truly thinking for themselves?

Conclusion

“AI transforms the tools, but it is always the human who provides the meaning.”

This transformation is not a threat to coaches: it is an invitation to refocus their role on what is irreducibly human — listening, questioning, and guiding the process of thought as it is being constructed.

A Profound Transformation

The guidance of academic writing is being durably reconfigured by generative AI at every level.

From Corrector to Maieutic Guide

The shift from a role of linguistic correction to one of cognitive facilitator is both a challenge and an opportunity.

An Essential Ethical Framework

Ethical reflection — on authenticity, responsibility, and intellectual rights — is at the heart of the challenges ahead.

The Human Remains Indispensable

The relationship of guidance, the caring gaze, and the ability to trust the student cannot be delegated to any algorithm.



Boostez vos compétences en IA

Thèses, mémoires, ...

Samedi 25 avril 2026 9h30-12h30

Usage raisonné et éthique
Outils IA disponibles
L'art du prompt
Comment déclarer l'usage de l'IA



Image générée par Leonardo.ai



Places limitées

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Intervenants : 2 professeurs émérites d'université en Informatique et sciences sociales.