



The double-edged sword of artificial intelligence: Gifted college students' use of ChatGPT in academic writing

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of artificial intelligence-powered large language models has revolutionized academic writing and transformed conventional practices into richer experiences, which has opened new avenues for brainstorming, drafting, and revising written work. This study examined how academically gifted college students used ChatGPT in academic writing. The participants were nine academically gifted students enrolled in a freshman English course at a tier-one public university in Türkiye. To examine the purposes and stages of use, we subjected students' ChatGPT conversations to content analysis. Drawing on 52 chat prompts and a structured focus group, we mapped when and why gifted students deployed ChatGPT across planning, drafting, and revision. The findings identified several potential contributions (i.e., efficiency, adaptability, and incidental learning) and risks (i.e., integrity, reliability, originality, and dependence) of using the large language model tools, informing AI literacy, and assessment design in higher education.

Keywords: ChatGPT, academically gifted, academic writing, college students, gifted

INTRODUCTION

Society 5.0, first introduced in 2016, envisions a human-centered future driven by globalization and the lightning-fast development of artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and the Internet of things, and has already been transforming our ways of life (Pan et al., 2023). Promising to resolve societal challenges by incorporating the advancements of the 4th Industrial Revolution into every facet of life, this perspective dedicates itself to "the various needs of people, regardless of region, age, sex, language, etc. by providing necessary items and services" (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 48). A notable example of this vision is undoubtedly ChatGPT, a generative (Gen) large language model and an AI-powered chatbot that has become the fastest-growing technology in history. The groundbreaking arrival of ChatGPT has rapidly garnered attention for its remarkable capabilities in many disciplines, including education (Hongxia & Razali, 2025; Siegle, 2023).

AI-driven solutions implemented in educational settings have already demonstrated promise in innovating education, including in writing practices (Deep et al., 2025). AI-powered writing aids such as ChatGPT have the potential to improve students' writing abilities, productivity, and confidence (Aljuaid, 2024) by offering the ability to brainstorm ideas, generate content, organize arguments, and revise drafts. Such tools might also be rewarding for gifted students (Guilbault et al., 2025); however, research concerning their use in gifted education remains scarce. Academic writing focuses on various competencies such as generating ideas, organising arguments, reviewing literature, using proper citations, following academic style, upholding

academic integrity, practicing critical thinking, and many more (Aljuaid, 2024), which might be challenging for even the most talented students.

AI and Academic Writing

Academic writing is a critical element of research and education and requires a structured approach to expressing ideas (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024). It is a multi-faceted endeavor, “a set of distinctive thinking processes which orchestrates and organizes during the act of composing” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 366). This process is inherently idiosyncratic because students contribute distinctive characteristics, reflecting their linguistic and literacy backgrounds, prior domain knowledge, and affective factors such as attitudes towards writing and task engagement (Kim et al., 2024). It is the unique *identity* of the student that determines the success of the writing performance.

With the latest breakthroughs in GenAI, tools and applications, such as Grammarly, Quillbot, DeepL, and Google Translate, have profoundly contributed to technology-enhanced writing by digitizing the writing process and augmenting writing experiences (Yan, 2023). The recent arrival of conversational GenAI has marked a significant milestone and proves to be a “Gutenberg moment” across education because GenAI now makes it possible for users to produce novel content through a conversational interface, “using natural language to generate outputs fine-tuned to their needs” (Choudhuri et al., 2023, p. 1). Its potential to meet the specific needs of writers suggests that GenAI tools might serve as virtual teachers in academic writing, where writers differ from one another in their identities.

As one of the most heavily used GenAI tools, ChatGPT offers comprehensive writing assistance by providing feedback and flagging issues, including grammar, syntax, coherence, and conventions, while simultaneously generating grammatically correct and coherent texts (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023; Zimmerman, 2023). It also facilitates the generation and refinement of user-selected essay topics and the creation of outlines in various formats, thereby enabling the effective organization of thoughts. Furthermore, its capacity to provide sample outlines and facilitate topic narrowing is particularly advantageous for second language learners, making it a valuable instrument for improving academic writing and overcoming obstacles in the writing process (Barrot, 2023). Its conversational format enriches the learning experience of students with special needs or those who face challenges with traditional instructional techniques (Mogavi et al., 2024).

While ChatGPT offers considerable benefits, its use also raises issues for careful consideration (Aljuaid, 2024; Kosmyrna et al., 2025; Nguyen et al., 2024; Sain et al., 2025). One such issue is the “homogenization of thought;” that is, as trained on pre-existing data, ChatGPT might lead to the standardization of knowledge and thinking patterns and undermine creativity and uniqueness (Mogavi et al., 2024, p. 14), which comes “at a cognitive cost, diminishing users’ inclination to critically evaluate” the output and leading to a likely decrease in learning skills (Kosmyrna et al., 2025, p. 143). Additionally, it challenges the traditional conceptions of knowledge and learning by introducing risks such as academic dishonesty and dissemination of misinformation (Mogavi et al., 2024, p. 14). Furthermore, ethical issues associated with its use in academic writing, including biases in training, privacy risks, security issues, authorship, and plagiarism discussions, further complicate its role in academic writing (Zhou et al., 2024).

In sum, as the partnership of ChatGPT and academic writing strengthens, debates over its implications for higher education are likely to intensify. Thus, it is of utmost importance to recognize the opportunities and risks to ensure ChatGPT empowers students rather than undermines their learning.

Gifted Students, ChatGPT, and Academic Writing

Mastering academic writing is often a complex process because it is “a mental and cognitive activity,” which is “a product of the mind” (Al Fadda, 2012, p. 124). It is often considered a challenge to acquire by many college students, including the academically gifted ones (Almumen & Jouhar, 2025; Yong et al., 2024). This population’s drive for perfection might lead to writer’s block, hindering their ability to express ideas and causing frustration. Because writing tends to progress independently of other cognitive skills, gifted students might experience a mismatch between the task requirements and their skills, and the highly prescribed and formal nature of academic writing might contrast with their creative nature (Yong et al., 2024). Furthermore, due to their asynchronous development, some gifted students, who might be proficient in the language, might not show the same level of performance in writing (Yong et al., 2024). Because cognitive and physical maturation

might not always align, particularly in this population, academic writing tasks might harm the self-esteem of these students (Yong et al., 2024). Factors such as lack of mental maturity, dual and multiple exceptionalities, and unproductive writing personalities combined with academic writing demands might exacerbate struggles with planning and organization, leading to frustration and emotional distress.

ChatGPT is an *always-on* writing assistant ready to help all students, including gifted students facing these challenges. Offering “a complete package from ideas [sic] generation to final proofreading and editing of writing material” (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023, p. 2), ChatGPT can help gifted students throughout their writing journey. By offering new topics, arguments, and perspectives (Zohery, 2023), it might ease the initial stages of academic writing. Helping them generate new ideas and assisting in topic selection and literature review (Huang & Tan, 2023), ChatGPT might help gifted students overcome writer's block. For gifted students, who cannot successfully cope with the rigid writing conventions and format, ChatGPT might also act as a writing assistant and help eliminate frustration and distress. By providing targeted feedback and suggestions in organization, coherence, language, and content (Huang & Tan, 2023; Zohery, 2023), it might help gifted students navigate the writing process more efficiently.

Another notable benefit of ChatGPT is its potential to cater to individual needs and adapt to different learning styles by providing additional explanations, examples, and materials. This makes it possible to create an individualized learning environment with increased efficiency, which might not be available in conventional learning environments (Dhananjaya et al., 2024). Offering an individualized learning environment, ChatGPT might serve as a platform for differentiated instruction in academic writing and enable gifted students to learn and practice at their ability level (Inocencio et al., 2025). Using this adaptive system, gifted students might experience the four key components of personalized learning: content (different forms of information responding to various educational needs), tasks (dynamically adjusted tasks in line with students' progress and proficiency), interaction (user-friendly communication with educators, mentors, and peers), and feedback/assessment (personalized assessment and real-time feedback) (Dumitru, 2024). ChatGPT integration into academic writing might nurture a supportive learning environment and address the diverse needs of gifted students while fostering their academic growth and skill development.

ChatGPT can also enhance students' ability to critique, evaluate, analyze, and conclude, enriching learning experiences (Guo & Lee, 2023). Incorporating higher-order thinking skills such as creative and/or critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving is essential in educational programs (Kaynar & Kurnaz, 2024). ChatGPT might offer a valuable platform for the development of higher-order thinking skills by assisting students in the critical analysis of their arguments, the refinement of their reasoning, and the exploration of alternative perspectives. It might provide feedback on students' grammar, coherence, and logic, suggest alternative organizational patterns, and pose questions to deepen understanding. Through this interactive process, gifted students might improve their critical and creative writing skills.

Purpose

The promising potential of GenAI in academic writing has been receiving attention in recent years (e.g., Song & Song, 2023; William, 2024); however, research on its integration into gifted education, more specifically academic writing, is limited. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to investigate how gifted college students used ChatGPT in academic writing by answering the following research questions:

1. For what purpose(s) did academically gifted college students use ChatGPT in academic writing?
2. What were the perceptions of gifted college students regarding the use of ChatGPT in academic writing?

Therefore, our contribution is twofold:

- (1) we analyzed authentic, full chat interactions during an assessed writing task and
- (2) we triangulated these with a focus group, generating a fine-grained account specific to academically gifted first-year undergraduates.

We hope that our findings help fill a gap in the literature.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The participants in the current study were first-year college students at a tier-one state university in Türkiye, an English-medium university renowned for admitting academically gifted students as a result of the university entrance examination (UEE), which comprises four batteries: mathematics and science, Turkish and mathematics, Turkish and social sciences, and foreign languages (Aydin & Birgili, 2023). The participants were students who had taken the mathematics and science battery of the UEE, which assesses mathematical reasoning, spatial skills, and scientific aptitude. Research suggests that mathematical skills and numerical and spatial reasoning are often regarded as critical indicators of a high level of intelligence (Juter & Sriraman, 2011). Participating students ranked in the top 3000 ($\approx 0.1\%$) among over 3.5 million test-takers. With this selectivity, we assumed that the participating students were academically gifted, having exceptional potential and distinct cognitive and analytical skills.

Thirteen eligible students were invited but nine consented and completed the task (response rate = 69.2%). Participation was voluntary and uncompensated. Participants were enrolled in the college of engineering from three departments: the department of electrical and electronics engineering ($n = 6$), department of aerospace engineering ($n = 1$), and department of computer engineering ($n = 2$).

All participants were English as a second language (ESL) students enrolled in an academic writing skills course, which aimed to equip them with the basics of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in English. As part of this course, the students were introduced to and given practice in academic writing conventions, citation rules, paragraph organization, and academic integrity. In addition, they received a structured training session on GenAI use, in which they were introduced to the ethical and effective uses of ChatGPT in academic writing. This training included a variety of awareness-raising activities on prompt design, idea generation, and editing, which were intended to ensure a clear understanding of the responsible use of AI.

Participants did not use any GenAI tool in the academic writing tasks that they completed before this study. Although all participants were quite familiar with the use of ChatGPT for their academic studies, this was the first time they were asked to practice GenAI-assisted writing. None had access to ChatGPT Plus; therefore, they used ChatGPT-4o. Each participant opened a new conversation thread with ChatGPT-4o (free tier). Auxiliary tools (e.g., Grammarly, QuillBot, DeepL, web search, etc.) were not permitted.

Upon the approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board, we collected the data outside class time. Students used ChatGPT to write a 300-word passage on “the top skills employers look for in fresh graduates.” They were given 10 minutes for planning and 60 minutes to finish their work. While writing, they used ChatGPT as an assistant. After completing their writing, students anonymously shared the links to their ChatGPT conversations with one of the researchers in a Google Document.

We conducted a focus group interview with the participants to obtain their reflections on the writing experiences to answer the question, “What were the advantages and disadvantages of using ChatGPT in academic writing?” The first author took detailed notes during the interview and later shared them with the group at the end to ensure accuracy and obtain confirmation from the participants.

Ethics

Written informed consent covered the collection of chat transcripts and focus group notes. URLs and usernames were anonymized. Data were stored on an institutional, access-controlled server (encrypted at rest) and will be retained for 24 months before secure deletion.

Data Analysis

We used a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). An initial codebook, drafted deductively from the research questions, was extended inductively from a pilot subset. Two coders independently double-coded 25% of prompts/utterances. After discrepancies were resolved by consensus, inter-coder agreement was perfect (Cohen’s $\kappa = 1.00$ for advantages; $\kappa = 1.00$ for disadvantages). The reconciled codebook guided single coding of the remainder.

Table 1. Academically gifted students' use of ChatGPT in academic writing

| Student | Pre-writing stage | During-writing stage | Post-writing stage |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| Student 1 | 4 prompts (2*idea-generation + 2*academic-style questions) | - | - |
| Student 2 | - | - | 4 prompts (4*feedback-related questions) |
| Student 3 | 6 prompts (6*idea-generation questions) | 1 prompt (1*idea-generation question) | 3 prompts (3*feedback-related questions) |
| Student 4 | - | - | 1 prompt (1*feedback-related question) |
| Student 5 | 3 prompts (2*idea-generation + 1*vocabulary-related question) | 3 prompts (1*vocabulary-related + 1*citation-related + 1*idea-generation question) | 5 prompts (5*feedback-related questions) |
| Student 6 | - | - | 2 prompts (2*feedback-related questions) |
| Student 7 | 6 prompts (4*vocabulary-related + 2*idea-generation questions) | - | - |
| Student 8 | 7 prompts (4*idea-generation + 3*feedback-related questions) | - | 2 prompts (2*feedback-related questions) |
| Student 9 | 2 prompts (1*idea-generation + 1*citation-related question) | - | 3 prompts (3*feedback-related questions) |

In analyzing students' ChatGPT conversations, we grouped them under three stages of writing: pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing. The prompts within each category were tabulated and the purpose of each prompt was identified (see [Table 1](#) for details). This analysis revealed the stages at which students used ChatGPT as an assistant and the specific purposes for this assistance. Careful readings of students' responses to the research questions posed in the interview and the consideration of the meanings inherent in the responses informed the inductive coding. Recurring codes under the headings of *advantages* and *disadvantages* helped create themes essential to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Data collected from students were analyzed to answer two research questions: "For what purpose(s) did academically gifted college students use ChatGPT in academic writing?" and "What were the perceptions of the students regarding the use of ChatGPT in academic writing?" Results showed that participants collectively asked ChatGPT for a total of 52 prompts. Across nine students, the median number of prompts per participant was 5 (inter-quartile range = 6.5), with a mean of 5.78 (standard deviation = 3.53). Prompts clustered primarily at the pre-writing stage (53.8%), followed by revision (38.5%) and during-writing stage (7.7%).

Analysis of the questions at each stage of writing revealed that 28 questions were posed in the pre-writing stage, four in the during-writing stage, and the remaining 20 in the post-writing stage ([Table 1](#)).

The examination of the purposes behind each prompt showed that 23 prompts were for seeking feedback, 19 for generating ideas, six for ensuring correct vocabulary usage, two for requesting citations, and two for addressing academic style. A further examination of the prompts revealed that in the pre-writing stage, 17 were used for idea generation, five for proper vocabulary usage, three for outline feedback, two for academic style usage, and one for finding a relevant citation. Of the four prompts in the during-writing stage, two were for idea generation, one for citation request, and one for appropriate vocabulary use. In the post-writing stage, all 20 prompts aimed at receiving feedback on their writing. We also examined individual tendencies of the students. Two students used ChatGPT in all three stages of writing, with 10 to 11 prompts in total and these students accounted for the highest number of questions. Additionally, two students used ChatGPT in the pre-writing stage only, three students limited their use to the post-writing stage, and two students used the tool during both the pre-and-post-writing stages (see [Appendix A](#) for the full list of student prompts at each stage).

In the focus group interview, participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using ChatGPT and reflected on their writing experiences. Whereas each gifted student shared the benefits associated with the use of ChatGPT in academic writing, discussions predominantly focused on their concerns about the use of this tool in writing. [Figure 1](#) shows the distribution of prompt purposes across writing stages.

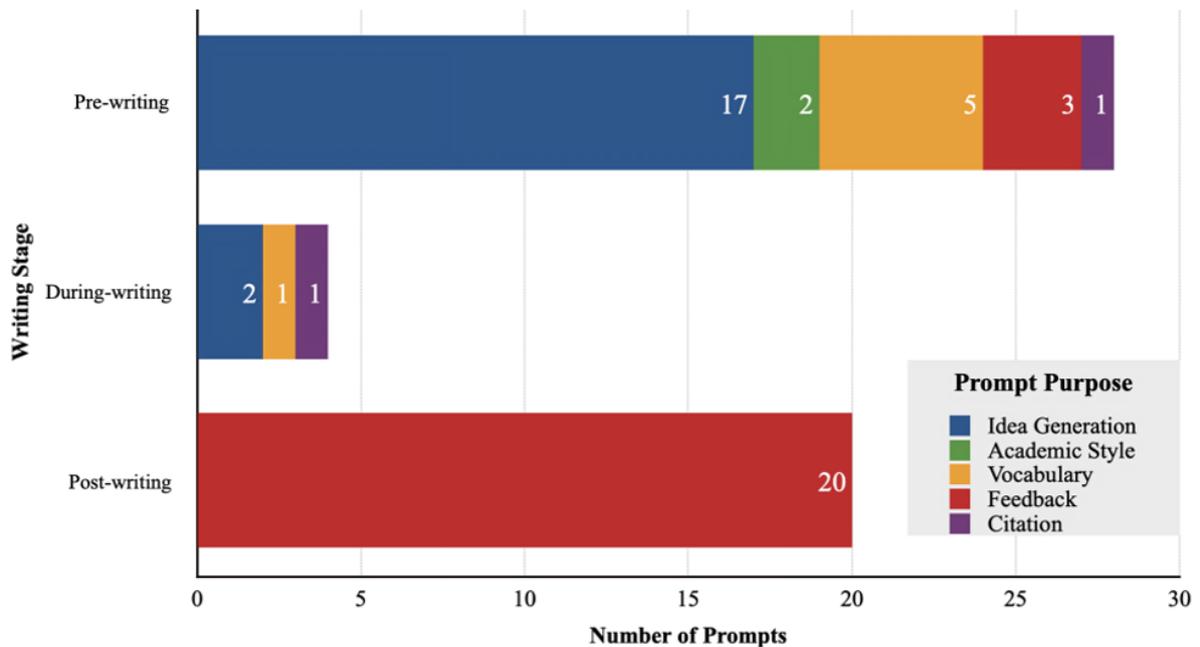


Figure 1. Distribution of prompt purposes across writing stages (Generated by authors from the collected data)

Advantages

All gifted students agreed that ChatGPT had great potential as a supportive tool for academic writing. They highlighted several benefits and emphasized its efficiency, adaptability, and ability to enhance the writing and learning process.

Efficiency

Gifted students who valued time as a critical resource described ChatGPT as “a lifesaver.” In the words of a student, *“ChatGPT is a lifesaver because it is an all-inclusive service.”* It significantly reduced the time for writing because it provided instant access to a dictionary, thesaurus, or collocation dictionary in one place. Another student stated: *“Using ChatGPT as a dictionary is faster than using a physical dictionary. It provides synonyms and phrases that fit the context.”* Yet another student agreed and added that *“ChatGPT reduces the time I spend searching for definitions or alternatives. It allows me to focus more on the content of my work.”* A similar comment was that

“When I write, I make mistakes such as punctuation and spelling mistakes. I correct my mistakes by using ChatGPT. If I had checked my words one by one, I would have wasted a lot of time. ChatGPT is a very important tool for me because time is the most important thing for me.”

Adaptability

Gifted students appreciated the adaptive role of ChatGPT and highlighted its capability to adapt to various commands effortlessly. They stated that the possibility to assign roles and tasks and change them later depending on their needs helped decrease the demands of academic writing. A student, for example, noted: *“I can ask ChatGPT to grade my writing using a rubric or request feedback on particular sections. It is a great tool for academic work.”* Gifted students valued their power to tailor feedback according to their individual needs.

Enhanced writing opportunities

Gifted students agreed that ChatGPT served as a writing assistant and helped them refine their writing skills. Assisting students throughout the writing process, ChatGPT was reported to ease students’ work, especially in the pre- and post-writing stages. They found it quite useful in the pre-writing stage because they needed help brainstorming ideas. It helped them in the post-writing stage as well by giving detailed feedback on grammar, vocabulary, content, and organization, and it provided the revised version of their drafts. Gifted

students also stated that with its “delicate tone,” ChatGPT was always positive, even when it was focusing on an error. For instance, a student shared that *“ChatGPT is like a friend that you would like to have to ask for feedback on your writing. With a delicate tone, it gives you advice to help improve your language or content.”* Another student added:

“After writing my text, I needed feedback to see the areas for improvement. It gave me valuable feedback on especially grammar and punctuation. Also, it helped me avoid unnecessary repetition. And it is always positive while doing all these things.”

Another student commented: *“The language it uses is so positive that it’s like everything is ok in my writing. I feel proud of myself while reading its responses.”*

Enhanced learning opportunities

Two gifted students stated that ChatGPT helped not only to correct their mistakes but also to develop their language and writing skills. A student explained: *“It helps you correct things by showing you the right or improved version and this helps you learn something new. I learn new words thanks to ChatGPT.”* Another student added: *“It suggests alternatives, new words, or even examples. Or it gives you a suggestion about your style. I feel that if I use it regularly, my writing might improve over time.”*

Disadvantages

Despite its numerous advantages, gifted students acknowledged several major drawbacks of using ChatGPT in academic writing and expressed their concerns about its application. Their concerns revolved around four main points.

Ethical concerns

Participants shared their deep concerns about unintentional plagiarism due to ChatGPT’s reliance on online platforms. A student stated: *“It is possible to plagiarize unintentionally because all the information ChatGPT gives you is from online sources but there are no in-text citations.”* Another student added: *“What information can I borrow? What information should I cite? To what extent is it considered plagiarism? If I paraphrase it, can I use it? If yes, how?”* Gifted students were highly concerned about violating the principles of academic integrity, which they had been trained on during their freshman year. For example, a student noted:

“Although we were given training on the ethical uses of ChatGPT in academic writing this year, I was still not so sure. May I use the information suggested by ChatGPT? What if I develop an idea given by ChatGPT? Is it still plagiarism?”

Another student noted: *“I did not use it in the pre-writing stage because I could have unintentionally copied its response, which is worded more successfully than mine.”*

Concerns about reliability

Gifted students reported some challenges in communicating with ChatGPT, resulting in confusion or misunderstanding. They felt that ChatGPT sometimes failed to fully understand the prompt or the concept, leading to an off-topic or irrelevant response. A student explained:

“ChatGPT does not understand some of the concepts, so it is possible for it to give wrong information. Because of that, we cannot and should not trust its responses. In most complex subjects, I observe that ChatGPT gives lots of misinformation. It occasionally confuses terms or subtopics.”

Another student commented: *“ChatGPT can sometimes give irrelevant responses and can also fail to provide a detailed explanation of my prompts. It might be because of the wording in my prompt or the concept in my prompt. I don’t know.”* Similarly, another student remarked: *“It sometimes misunderstands my prompt. Then, I have to ask another prompt and clarify myself to request corrections.”*

Several gifted students raised concerns about the quality of sources suggested by ChatGPT. Because they wanted to use citations in writing, they asked ChatGPT to find some relevant sources, but it failed to suggest scholarly references. Thus, students doubted the reliability of the information given by ChatGPT. A student explained the problem as: *"When I asked ChatGPT to find me sources to cite, it suggested some irrelevant citations and some unreliable sources."*

Concerns regarding creativity and writing style

For the gifted students, ChatGPT is a potential threat to human creativity. They thought the overuse of ChatGPT might hinder creative writing. Its meticulously constructed responses or perfectly worded suggestions might tempt users and influence their thinking. A student shared: *"I deliberately avoid asking questions about the content of my article because the paragraphs written by ChatGPT are almost perfect and influence my opinions. This hinders my creativity and reduces my sense of ownership over the text."* Another student added: *"Once it gives me a response, I feel I start to think like ChatGPT."*

Several gifted students emphasized how ChatGPT might damage their unique writing style. These students refrained from using ChatGPT because they unintentionally adopted a "robotic" style as they incorporated it into their writing process. A student shared her concerns: *"It kills the personality in our writing if used excessively. Even when you use ChatGPT just for 'borrowing' ideas or checking grammar, you get used to its style in time. Then, when you write something without using ChatGPT, your writing's being like AI chances are high."*

Concerns about overdependence and cognitive decline

One participant raised his concerns about the excessive use of ChatGPT resulting in the decline of cognitive skills. He believed overdependence on ChatGPT causes reduced effort and complacency, gradually declining cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. He explained: *"It can cause laziness and atrophy of manual dexterity because one can think that 'I can make this using ChatGPT all the time.' So, as machines get smarter, humans get dumber if they don't use them properly."*

DISCUSSION

Our findings align with the literature and underline both the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of ChatGPT in foreign language writing (e.g., Feng Teng, 2024). This study adds to the current body of knowledge by offering insights into the unique experiences and perspectives of academically gifted students. The participants identified several advantages of using ChatGPT in academic writing such as efficiency, adaptability, enhanced learning, and writing opportunities. They praised ChatGPT as an all-in-one package, acting as a dictionary, writing assistant, and feedback provider. Several students emphasized the tool as a supporting companion in the writing process, describing it as *"a lifesaver"* or *"an all-inclusive service."* As one participant noted, *"It is always available, so it feels like working with someone who is always there for you and willing to help in the way you like"* (Student 5). By assigning a different task or role through prompts, they benefited from personalized learning, which is a significant advantage in gifted education (Siegle, 2023).

ChatGPT was reported to support students, especially in the pre-and-post-writing stages, when they needed the most support. *"Instead of becoming paralyzed by perfectionism,"* students can initially produce and then refine their work with the help of ChatGPT, transforming the intimidating writing experience into a more manageable task (Siegle, 2025, p. 228). Its supportive and positive tone was appreciated by gifted students and helped boost their confidence. In the words of one student, *"The tone of ChatGPT is very supportive. This is what we need before we start"* (Student 3). This encouraging tone contributes to students' belief in their capabilities and strengthens their self-esteem and well-being (Mo et al., 2024). Gifted students, who might face challenges due to the higher standards they set for themselves, might flourish when they find support in such a non-judgmental space for learning.

Another key advantage of ChatGPT was enhanced learning opportunities due to the incidental learning opportunities it provided. Because *"chatting with a chatbot is a holistic progress of both production and perception,"* ESL students extensively using GenAI are introduced to the target language in each response, which in return increases the likelihood of incidental learning (Liu & Zou, 2024, p. 85). As one participant explained, *"What helps me a lot when I use ChatGPT is the suggestions in the response. I have the chance to compare*

my language with its language and learn about my mistakes" (Student 8). The detailed responses of ChatGPT with "suggested version of students' writing" enabled them to learn beyond the task at hand.

Although gifted students identified several advantages of using ChatGPT in academic writing, they concurrently emphasized their concerns. Many students had serious concerns about the ethics of using AI tools in education. They expressed discomfort with borrowing ideas or vocabulary from ChatGPT's responses. They were highly sensitive about plagiarism and did not want to display academic dishonesty by unintentional plagiarism, presenting AI-generated content as their own (Jarrah et al., 2023). Because ChatGPT's responses, particularly the revised version of the writings, were error-free and quite coherent, students had to struggle with the temptation to copy that version. This concern aligns with the notion that gifted students have an advantage in moral thinking due to their advanced intellectual development (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2007).

Students' concerns about the credibility and reliability of ChatGPT as a source for academic studies are also in line with the literature. Unlike conventional search engines, ChatGPT relies on itself as the source of information; therefore, it retrieves knowledge from itself and generates responses based on this knowledge, which inevitably threatens the reliability of the responses (Shen et al., 2023). Gifted students in this study seemed to be highly aware of this fact and considered the possibility of ChatGPT making mistakes and giving misleading or unreliable information. They appreciated its immediate and detailed responses but were concerned about the depth of information. As expressed by one student, *"ChatGPT uses perfect English but what about the content? Is it reliable? It also admits: 'ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important information'"* (Student 4). This is consistent with Kocoń et al.'s (2023) argument that *"ChatGPT is Jack of all trades, master of none"* (p. 9), emphasizing its breadth of knowledge but limited depth of expertise.

Concerns about the influence of ChatGPT on students' creativity and unique writing style also merit consideration, as the frequent use of the tool might be a risk to creative thinking and personal writing style. This finding echoes the argument that *"Generative AI, as an assistant to human divergent ideation, while no better than a human assistant, is capable of dragging down elements of creative performance"* (Medeiros et al., 2025, p. 9). To quote one participant, *"The paragraphs written by ChatGPT are almost perfect and influence my opinions. This hinders my creativity and reduces my sense of ownership over the text"* (Student 6). This insight is a clear indicator of the high awareness among gifted students to use ChatGPT as an assistant but not as a substitute for authentic voice.

The final concern raised by one gifted student was related to the implications of overreliance on ChatGPT. He was considerably worried about machines getting smarter because he feared this might make human beings lazier and even dumber. This perspective aligns with the discussions on ChatGPT addiction (Ye et al., 2024; Yankouskaya et al., 2024), which is a relatively fresh phenomenon. Through dynamic exchanges and instant gratification, ChatGPT might lead to over-dependence and diminish critical thinking and productivity in daily tasks (Yankouskaya et al., 2024). The student's recognition of this risk is a distinct representation of the impressive level of awareness and vision associated with gifted students, who demonstrate higher levels of reflective thinking.

Implications

ChatGPT has been a supportive writing assistant in planning, drafting, and reviewing among general student populations (Levine et al., 2024). Findings from the present study suggest that ChatGPT's adaptive, conversational nature can serve as cognitive and socio-emotional scaffolding and offer opportunities for differentiated instruction for gifted students. Overcoming challenges related to perfectionism and asynchronous development boosts gifted students' confidence and contributes to their academic performance.

The benefits of ChatGPT prove that it is a promising tool to integrate into academic writing; however, the challenges noted by the participants need careful consideration. Educators of gifted students who use ChatGPT to practice academic writing might invest in AI literacy to first establish detailed AI use guidelines. They might consider providing AI literacy training on the ethical and effective applications of the tool, mainly focusing on ethical considerations, verification of GenAI-generated content, and prompt engineering. This might help students use it without committing unintentional plagiarism or replacing original thinking, which gifted students in this study showed extreme sensitivity about.

Given the active role of GenAI in gifted students' academic writing experience, it is essential to revisit feedback mechanisms. Rubrics evaluating the final product in academic writing might be replaced by assessment criteria focusing on not only the end-product but also how effectively the student engaged with the GenAI-generated content. This might include giving feedback on students' ability to critically contextualize GenAI suggestions rather than using them verbatim. This approach in writing supports academic integrity and reinforces the value of authentic student voice as well as intellectual effort while embracing the integration of GenAI into students' academic routines.

Because AI tools like ChatGPT help create "personalized learning paths" for gifted students, educators who feel uncomfortable using the tool should enhance their understanding of AI tools and immerse themselves in professional development opportunities such as conferences, online courses, webinars, conventions, and professional development communities so that they can effectively integrate these tools into teaching and learning environments and serve their students (Neal, 2025, p. 186).

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the sample is small and homogeneous ($n = 9$) from a single, highly selective program; external validity is therefore limited. Second, the design involved one short writing task without a control group, constraining claims about transfer and retention. Third, findings are based on usage descriptors and thematic analysis without rubric-based ratings of writing quality. Fourth, behavior may reflect novelty and observation (i.e., Hawthorne effects). Finally, results are tool-/version-specific (ChatGPT-4o, free tier) and may vary with other models or settings. Future work should employ mixed methods, larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal follow-ups, and controlled comparisons across various large language models.

CONCLUSION

"Writing is hard, and writing in college may resemble playing a familiar game with completely new rules" (Irvin, 2010, p. 3). Within these constraints, gifted first-year undergraduates used ChatGPT instrumentally at planning and revision for efficiency and ideation, while negotiating risks to integrity, reliability, voice, and originality. Universities should embed GenAI literacy, design transparent assessments, and provide explicit guidance on appropriate use. One-to-one tutoring has long been recognized as a highly effective approach to teaching and learning; however, the availability of the conversational style of chatbots can revolutionize gifted education, where differentiated instruction is pivotal (Santos & Natividad, 2023). Creating individualized learning experiences while providing specific academic feedback, ChatGPT holds promise for student autonomy, engagement, and success in gifted education (Neal, 2025).

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Full list of student prompts

| Student | Pre-writing | During-writing | Post-writing |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| Student 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the top skills employers want in new graduates today? Can you give me 2 main ideas for this topic? • How can I deepen these main ideas? • What methods should I use in my writing? • Which of these methods do you recommend in writing about these topics? | - | - |
| Student 2 | - | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give me advice to make better writing (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • Give me advice. Rewrite the text focusing on grammar, vocabulary, word variety, and proofreading (spelling corrections) while keeping the original intent intact. (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>) • What should I do for tone and style? • Help me with 1 (<i>grammar and vocabulary improvements without changing grammar</i>), 3 (<i>punctuation and capitalization</i>), 4 (<i>improving word variety</i>), and 8 (<i>polishing for typos and redundancies</i>). (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>) |
| Student 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What are the top skills employers want in new graduates today?” Could you give me some sample outlines about this topic? • I want my first major to be about basic human skills like being polite, being able to learn new things, taking responsibility but I couldn’t figure out how in general they are called. Could you give me an example of starting sentence? • Could you give me other examples about core personal skills rather than mine • These examples are too specific for my liking. could you make them simpler • My second topic is about technical skills but again I have the issue about the lack of ideas I got • Could you make them simpler either? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my second major, I gave the main idea and some examples. how may I develop my second major after that? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wrote this writing using some of your advice. Could you fix it if there are any grammar or punctuation mistakes? (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • Are there any changes u would make if you were me? (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>) <p>Write your version of this writing.</p> |
| Student 4 | - | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you correct words and collocation mistakes? (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) |
| Student 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will write a writing around 300 words about the topic “What are the top skills employers want in new graduates today?” Can you give me main ideas and minor ideas related to each main idea? • I will focus on main idea 2 and 3 (refers to ChatGPT’s arguments), so give me more minor ideas related to each. • What can I say instead of new graduates? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find me sources to cite about the stress of work life for new graduates. • What can I write instead of negative impact? • How can I develop the idea that new graduates must be flexible? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can u give me feedback? (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • What can I write instead of resilience under pressure? • Can you give me fb again (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>)? • Don’t forget that this is a 300-word writing while giving feedback. • Can you give fb again? (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>) |

Table A1 (Continued).

| Student | Pre-writing | During-writing | Post-writing |
|-----------|---|----------------|--|
| Student 6 | - | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you fix collocation and grammar mistakes and write it again? (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • Write again without paraphrasing. |
| Student 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most asked questions in job interviews? • Is there any specific name for dealing with the problems successfully? • Same question for being a good member of a team • Which words can be used instead of 'prioritize'? • What is the word that mean a collection of information gained by people? • I wrote a text about the top skills that employers want in new graduates, and I chose two major idea which are adequate social abilities and well-structured CVs. Are these majors parallel or cover each other? | - | - |
| Student 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you analyze the top skills employers want in new graduates today? • Are those technical skills such as coding necessary for all fields? • I am going to write a paragraph of around 300 words. tell me if there is a better way to express the subtopics, based on my layout: the assignment is Write a paragraph of around 300 words answering this question: "What are the top skills employers want in new graduates today?" Firstly, technical skills -these can vary on the field *proficiency in basic digital platforms *knowing how to apply technology (maybe AI) into the field. *ability to research, make (minor) innovations. creativity Secondly, soft skills. -they may not seem necessary to some. but essential *collaboration *problem solving view *ability to lead *project management. Did I miss any point that's essential? • Which one is better: some skills are expected for the new graduates to have when applying for a job some skills are expected the new graduates to have when applying for a job? • Can you define soft skills? • How do you differ soft skills and adaptive skills? • You said that adaptability is a soft skill before. I don't think that should be separated. am I wrong | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you offer me modifications for the mistakes in my writing? (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • Check for minor mistakes (<i>copies the revised paragraph</i>) |
| Student 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give me the headings of the top skills that employers want in new graduates today. • Give the citations in your response in a form from the APA 7th edition guide. | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the academic text below and show grammar mistakes. (<i>copies the paragraph</i>) • What can I do to further improve this academic text? <p><i>Copies of the revised paragraph (no other prompt but apparently asks for feedback)</i></p> |

