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Synergising Dialogic Teaching With Competencies-Trained GenAI Dialoguing for Critical Thinking and Communication Competencies

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Abstract

This paper presents a synergistic approach to enhancing students' critical thinking and communication competencies by integrating a critical dialogic approach with competencies-trained dialoguing with GenAI tools like ChatGPT as multidisciplinary, more knowledgeable others. It suggests that students acquire at least a developing level of the target competencies through the critical dialogic approach and apply them in dialoguing with GenAI tools to further enhance their competencies. This paper also discusses the potential issues with the accuracy and reliability of ChatGPT's responses and the importance of critical thinking and communication competencies in dialoguing with GenAI tools. Moreover, it provides a worked example for developing resources to implement the synergistic approach. It presents a professional proposal competencies framework, an associated rubric, and key guiding questions. The primary objective is to expand the repertoire of principles, strategies, and resources available to educators and researchers for making informed, context-appropriate pedagogical judgments that enhance students' critical engagement and learning outcomes.

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Practitioner Notes

- Explore the potential of combining dialogic teaching with competencies-based dialoguing using GenAI tools such as ChatGPT.
- Support students to develop and apply critical dialogic competencies when interacting with GenAI tools, both within and beyond the classroom context.
- Design inclusive learning experiences that engage all students regardless of learning profiles in authentic, purposeful human-to-human and human-to-GenAI dialogue.
- Use the proposed competencies framework and rubric to guide the design, facilitation, and assessment of students' critical dialogic learning.
- Discuss the limitations and reliability concerns of GenAI tools with students and scaffold their use of critical questioning and dialogic strategies during AI interactions.

Keywords

dialogic teaching, dialoguing with GenAI, critical thinking, communication, frameworks, rubrics

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Introduction

Researchers have explored the potential of integrating generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools into education (e.g., Dimitrakopoulos, 2024; Stojanov, 2023) and proposed pedagogical innovations, scales, and guidelines for its effective integration (e.g., August et al., 2024; Perkins et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2024). For instance, Stojanov (2023) proposed that GenAI tools be used as More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs) for learning. According to Vygotsky (1986), learning from More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs) entails guided support from someone with greater expertise. MKOs may include educators, parents, peers, or even digital tools. While human MKOs typically offer expert guidance, they show limitations in multidisciplinary areas and availability. GenAI tools as virtual MKOs may address these shortcomings. However, despite their advantages, their current shortcomings, such as biased, illogical, inaccurate, and inconsistent responses (Hartmann et al., 2023; Stojanov, 2023; Sue et al., 2023), suggest their limited suitability for beginners.

On the other hand, learners with at least developing critical thinking, communication, and subject-area competencies may benefit more from dialoguing with GenAI tools. By applying these skills to craft effective prompts and engage in critical dialogue, they can move beyond superficial information generation and uncritical use of outputs toward asking meaningful questions and critically evaluating responses. Sue et al. (2023) also suggest providing scaffolding and feedback to students when incorporating ChatGPT into writing classroom. Even if GenAI's current shortcomings are addressed, effective learning from these digital MKOs requires critical, dialogic engagement with them through critical discursive moves. Tang et al. (2024) identify such moves for authentic interaction with GenAI tools, including prompting ChatGPT to explain, elaborate, expand, clarify, contextualise, and verify its outputs.

While acknowledging GenAI's limitations, researchers have started examining its role in enhancing student learning as a dialogic agent, dialogic partner, and collaborator in writing, all aligned with the concept of learning from MKOs through dialogic interactions (Vygotsky, 1986). For instance, Tang et al. (2024) studied the impact of training students to use GenAI to improve their critical reasoning in a secondary school. Building upon these developments, I propose a synergistic approach that involves teaching dialogic discursive moves and task-specific/subject-area competencies dialogically, followed by students' use of these moves and competencies in dialoguing with GenAI tools to enhance the breadth and depth of their developing competencies. Although my proposed pedagogical approach seems to be linear, it is intended to be iterative and recursive; students may engage in dialoguing with GenAI tools before, during, and after classroom dialogic engagement to enhance their competencies. The goal is to equip students with the necessary competencies to accelerate their learning process, in line with Vygotsky's perspective on effective teaching (Vygotsky, 1986), rather than leaving them to navigate GenAI tools without essential professional guidance. By adopting the proposed synergistic approach, educators can prepare students to engage in authentic critical learner-learner, learner-educator, and learner–GenAI interactions. Extant evidence shows that authentic dialogic interactions enhance student engagement and accelerate the learning process (e.g., Alexander, 2020) and improve critical thinking, communication skills, and critical reasoning ((Paul-Elder, 2019; Tang et al., 2024), while one-way, monologic lectures are increasingly shown to be ineffective (e.g., Alexander, 2020; Cohen, 2018; Skidmore, 2016).

My proposed approach may also address concerns regarding GenAI's impact on restricting student autonomy (Roe & Perkins, 2024) by empowering students to exercise their agency by crafting effective prompts and applying reasoned judgments in their critical dialogic engagement with GenAI outputs. This approach may also be useful for mitigating the limitations of lecturing in cases, where, due to the diverse constraints such as immensely large classes, it is the only practical method for content delivery. If students are trained in dialogic engagement with GenAI, they may choose to engage critically with GenAI by using the knowledge gained from lectures and applying dialogic moves to enhance their developing competencies.

The critical dialogic approach refers to educator-with-whole-class, peer-with-peer, small-group, and educator-with-an-individual-student critical dialoguing (Alexander, 2020). It extends to critical dialoguing with the self, texts, and GenAI tools (Bakhtin, 1986; Stojanov, 2023). The approach emphasises asking authentic questions, rather than display or recitation questions, focusing on discussing the concepts, skills, and attitudes (competencies) to be developed and enhanced. Authentic questions may include analytical ones that aim to identify the components of ideas, concepts, or skills and explore how these components are related, as well as evaluative ones that assess both the credibility and validity of ideas or conclusions. Brief explanations, summaries, and discussions of settled or unresolved issues are also acceptable parts of the process. However, even these brief episodes should actively engage students, rather than rely on one-way, monologic lectures, which are increasingly regarded ineffective (e.g., Alexander, 2020; Cohen, 2018; Skidmore, 2016).

The synergistic approach also advocates engaging all students and valuing their contributions to foster ongoing dialogue. To achieve this goal, educators who implement the approach should critically examine their practices and adopt a reflective stance, aiming to foster dialogue with all students, irrespective of their abilities or backgrounds. This well aligns with critical dialogic education, which aims to advance equitable participation and inclusivity in education (e.g., Kibler et al., 2021). It advances inclusivity by avoiding minoritising students due to their ability levels, personality traits, backgrounds, or any other reasons. Additionally, the synergistic approach necessitates providing appropriate support to accelerate the development of students' dialogic skills and desired target competencies (Alexander, 2001). Thus, it is a critical scaffolded dialogic approach.

I propose that students first develop critical thinking and communication competencies through a scaffolded, dialogic teaching approach, and then apply these competencies in structured interactions with GenAI tools such as ChatGPT to further extend their learning. This approach intentionally rejects the notion of treating GenAI tools as passive "knowledge banks" that deposit information into students' minds—what Freire (1993) critiques as the "banking model" of education. Such a model often leads to superficial learning and undermines deeper educational and social outcomes. For example, prompting ChatGPT to generate an argumentative essay and submitting it without critical engagement bypasses the very competencies students are meant to develop. In contrast, when students engage in dialogic interactions with ChatGPT after achieving at least a developing level of critical thinking and communication, these tools can serve as platforms for further enhancement. Students should learn to calibrate the strength of their claims and conclusions based on the quality, type, and quantity of evidence, using language features such as hedges and boosters. Those who understand these concepts are more likely to engage

productively in critical dialogues with GenAI tools, using the interactions to test, challenge, and refine their reasoning. This process can not only deepen their conceptual understanding but also improve their ability to apply these competencies in authentic academic and professional contexts.

To implement this synergistic approach effectively, educators must begin by identifying the target task and the specific competencies required for its successful completion. These competencies both task specific and more general critical thinking and communication skills, can be developed through the critical dialogic teaching approach and further enhanced through competencies trained dialoguing with GenAI tools such as ChatGPT which act as a multidisciplinary, more knowledgeable others. Students will need explicit training in all of these competency areas. The critical dialogic approach provides a foundation, while structured interactions with GenAI tools offer opportunities for refinement and application.
Guided by the principles of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), I first identified the intended learning outcomes, and the evidence needed to demonstrate achievement. I then adapted an authentic assessment task—developing a professional proposal—to align with these outcomes. Finally, I adopted a blended instructional strategy that combines critical dialogic teaching with competencies-based GenAI dialoguing to support students in meeting the learning goals.

Moreover, enhancing students' engagement and accelerating their learning require the clear identification and communication of the intended expectations and learning outcomes to students and constructive alignment of the teaching and learning as well as the assessment practices with these desired expectations and outcomes (Biggs, 1999; Biggs & Tang, 2011). In our case, the task is an authentic professional proposal whose successful completion requires acquiring and applying critical thinking and communication competencies. I selected the proposal task as it creates an authentic context for teaching and learning critical thinking and communication competencies (for details, see Rahimi, 2023). For undergraduate programmes, I propose implementing the approach in the first semester to help students acquire these competencies that can be transferred and used in other modules. I identified the target competencies necessary for the successful completion of the proposal task and developed a framework, rubric, and key guiding questions to support the critical dialogic teaching and learning of these competencies, competences-informed dialoguing with GenAI tools to enhance them, and their dialogic assessment.

Building on the proposed approach, I recommend that educators adopt a synergistic model that integrates a critical dialogic teaching approach with competencies-based dialoguing using GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, positioned as multidisciplinary, more knowledgeable others. Where classroom implementation of dialogic teaching is constrained, students can still be trained to engage in structured, critical interactions with GenAI tools beyond the classroom—an approach that can help address the limitations of one-way lecturing. It is also essential to design inclusive learning experiences that involve all students, regardless of their learning profiles, in authentic human-to-human and human-to-GenAI dialogue. To guide this process, educators can use the provided competencies framework and accompanying rubric to support and assess students'

development of critical thinking, communication, and subject-specific competencies. Finally, explicit discussion of GenAI's limitations should be embedded into instruction, encouraging students to adopt critical dialogic strategies in their interactions with these tools.

This paper aims to build on the existing body of research by presenting a synergistic approach to enhancing students' critical thinking and communication competencies, along with the essential resources required for its practical implementation within a module. While the preceding section outlined the theoretical foundations and pedagogical rationale for the approach, the following section focuses on the specific tools and frameworks that support its integration into teaching practice.

Communication Competencies Framework and Rubric

Researchers have developed writing competencies frameworks and rubrics that help identify desired learning outcomes and inform teaching and assessment practices (e.g., Connor & Mbaye, 2002; Barkaoui & Hadidi, 2020; Uludag & McDonough, 2022; Stapleton & Wu, 2015). Building upon previous research, I have developed a competencies framework and an associated rubric for professional proposals. As mentioned in the previous section, these resources can be used to create clear learning outcomes, develop materials for the dialogic teaching and learning of the target competencies, support critical dialoguing with ChatGPT, and assess students' learning achievements. Developing effective professional proposals requires strong critical thinking, communication competencies, and the judicious use of argument elements. I have incorporated these into an existing writing competencies framework (Barkaoui & Hadidi, 2020) and developed a professional proposal competencies framework, rubric, and key guiding questions.

The competencies-based rubric I propose can serve as a practical tool to identify evidence of students' learning through authentic assessment tasks. In addition to assessing take home assignments, educators can apply this rubric during classroom-based dialogic activities and when reviewing students' interaction logs with ChatGPT, the rubric can be used to evaluate the extent to which students apply the competencies. This assessment approach may provide meaningful validity evidence for genuine mastery of the target competencies by triangulating data, (drawing from multiple sources) an essential practice in the GenAI age, rather than relying solely on evidence from students' take-home assignments. Educators can also use the accompanying guiding questions during dialogic assessments to evaluate the breadth and depth of students' critical thinking and communication competency development and to provide necessary constructive feedback (see Beck et al., 2020, for discussion on dialogic assessment).

Now, let's discuss the competencies essential to the successful completion of professional proposals, a task that many students need to complete during their studies and later in their workplaces. In the Introduction, students need to provide the background information and present, explain, and establish the significance of the problem or the unrealised opportunity that the proposal intends to address, the objectives of the proposal, as well as the scope of the proposal project. In the literature review, students are required to critically review all the major relevant solutions including those from other industries and contexts to decide if they can be adopted or adapted to address the problem in their local context. They can combine the existing solutions to create a solution or develop novel ones. Whichever approach they adopt will need justifying. For

this purpose, they need to critically review the literature and develop evaluation criteria for evaluating the existing solutions and defending their final proposed solution. The extensive presentation and evaluation of the proposed solution happens in the body of the proposal. In the conclusion, students summarise the key takeaways and include calls to action for the audience. As is evident, the successful completion of professional proposals requires critical thinking and communication competencies. I have incorporated these competencies into the framework, rubric, and guiding questions. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly discuss each before presenting them in detail.

1. Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking is an essential transferable 21st century skill (Wang et al., 2021). Its importance has been furthered by the emergence of GenAI tools, as these tools rapidly generate content, requiring evaluation and reasoned judgment. Different definitions of critical thinking exist; it is concisely defined as “reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis,1993, p.180). However, developing critical and creative thinkers is one of the five grand challenges in education according to the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL; Scharff et al., 2023). Taxonomies/models have been proposed that can be useful in addressing this challenge by informing teaching, learning, and assessing critical thinking skills (e.g., Paul-Elder, 2019; Ennis, 2011a; 2011b; Pierce’s categories as cited in Chiasson, 2005; Toulmin, 2003). I used the Paul-Elder Framework (2019) in developing the framework, rubric, and questions for two main reasons. Firstly, it provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the concept. It covers critical thinking elements, standards, and traits/dispositions. Secondly, it is more appropriate for communication courses in higher education, as its intellectual standards present criteria for effective communication, such as clarity, significance, and precision. I also used Toulmin’s (2003) model of argumentation, as it presents the elements for effective argumentative communication essential for developing effective professional proposals.

According to Paul and Elder (2019), critical thinking skills concern applying universal intellectual standards (i.e., clarity, accuracy, relevance, logic, depth, breadth, precision, significance, and fairness) on the elements of thought (i.e., purposes, questions, points of views, information, inferences, concepts, implications, and assumptions) to improve the quality of thinking. Universal intellectual standards can serve as a valuable guide for effective communication. Clarity underscores the necessity of clear communication. Accuracy requires factual correctness. Relevance refers to staying focused on the issue at hand and avoiding irrelevant information. Depth involves delving into the complexity of issues and considering causes and implications. Breadth entails considering multiple viewpoints. Precision requires exactness in thinking and communication. Logic requires avoiding logical fallacies and aligning the strength of a claim with that of the provided evidence. Fairness emphasises impartiality and the consideration of all relevant viewpoints, including opposition and reservations.

Toulmin’s (2003) model deconstructs arguments into distinct components to assess their effectiveness. It consists of three primary components: the claim, representing the central statement or thesis; data (evidence), providing the foundational information supporting the claim; and the warrant, serving as the underlying assumption or reasoning that connects the data to the claim. Three secondary elements include: backing, supplying extra evidence to reinforce the

warrant; qualifier, introducing words or phrases to indicate the argument's strengths or limitations; and rebuttal, acknowledging and responding to opposing viewpoints/counterarguments. Together, these components offer a structured framework for analysing and constructing persuasive arguments.

I incorporated the universal intellectual standards (Paul & Elder, 2019), the elements of argumentation (Toulmin, 2003), as well as essential information elements of professional proposals into an existing framework (Barkaoui & Hadidi, 2020). My extended framework constitutes six competencies: content, source use, discourse, strategic, grammatical, and sociolinguistic. I also developed a rubric based on the extended framework. In the rubric, I first explained the meaning of each level and then listed the specific descriptors for the competencies. The explanation reads as follows:

This is a communication competencies rubric, encompassing advanced (A), intermediate (B), basic (C), and limited (F) ability levels. A suggests a high-level, thorough mastery of competencies, with no gaps or issues. B indicates a good level of understanding and application of competencies, with minor gaps and/or issues. C suggests a basic understanding and application of the competencies, with some notable gaps and/or issues. F indicates a very limited level of understanding and application of competencies, conveying a fundamental lack of mastery or many significant gaps and issues. Gaps refer to the absence of the required target competencies in students' performance, whereas issues pertain to difficulties in applying these competencies, indicating incomplete mastery.

The competencies and associated descriptors of the rubric are explicated in the succeeding paragraphs.

2. Content and Source Use Competencies

Content competency pertains to the ability in producing content of high quality and comprehensive coverage (Plakans, 2014) and source use competency to the individuals' skills in summarising, evaluating, and synthesising relevant sources (Knoch & Sitajalabhorn, 2013). As discussed previously, these competencies can be better assessed by using Paul and Elder's (2019) universal intellectual standards and Toulmin's (2003) elements of argumentations. I also included descriptors to assess argument elements, such as thesis statement and supporting evidence, under content competency, as they are integral content components of professional proposals. In view of this understanding, I applied the intellectual standards and argumentation elements in developing the following descriptors to assess the content and source use competencies.

- Critically reviews all major credible sources covering all relevant aspects of the topic (A), a good range of relevant credible sources but might miss some key areas or recent developments (B), a limited range of relevant credible sources, missing significant parts of the topic(C), or very few or no relevant credible sources, or the sources do not cover the topic adequately (F).
- Identifies all (A), some (B), or a few (C), or struggles to identify (F), relevant and significant common ideas and links within and across source texts.

- Paraphrasing, summarising, and synthesising are entirely (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) accurate, clear, logical, and fair.
- Analysis and evaluation show a strong (A), moderate (B), basic (C), or limited (F) level of relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
- The thesis statement is entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) relevant, significant, accurate, clear, logical, and fair.
- Supports the thesis statement with entirely (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) relevant, significant, accurate, clear, precise, logical, and fair supporting evidence, with a substantial (A), some (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) depth and breadth.
- The ideas are entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) relevant, significant, accurate, clear, precise, logical, and fair throughout the paper/section.
- Supports the ideas with entirely (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) relevant, significant, accurate, clear, precise, logical, and fair supporting evidence, with a substantial (A), some (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) depth and breadth.
- Acknowledges all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of relevant reservations or opposition/alternative perspectives and their supporting evidence with a strong (A), moderate (B), basic (C), or limited (F) level of accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
- Responds (e.g., places limits on the strength of their own claim, refutes the counterclaim/reservations, or provides mitigation strategies) to all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of relevant reservations or opposition/alternative perspectives with entirely (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) significant, accurate, clear, precise, logical, and fair supporting evidence, with a substantial (A), some (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) depth and breadth.

3. Discourse and Strategic Competencies

Discourse competency concerns the skills of creating cohesive and coherent oral and written texts (Connor & Mbaye, 2002). Cohesion is embodied in the use of specific clues in the text to link ideas at the local level of words and sentences (Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Coherence refers to organising ideas and establishing the connection between them at the macrolevel to create unity in a text. Coherence is created by using explicit and implicit cohesive devices and by considering the audience's familiarity with the topic and their text comprehension skills (Crossley & McNamara, 2016). Additionally, skilful inclusion and sequencing of main and supporting ideas (i.e., argument elements) create the text structure/organisation (Plakans, 2014) that can significantly enhance text coherence (Hirose, 2003).

Strategic competency deals with the skills in using metadiscourse to organise the content and interact with the audience (Connor & Mbaye, 2002; Hyland, 2005). Hyland's (2005) model comprises interactive and interactional metadiscourse categories. The first one includes code glosses as well as endophoric, evidential, transition, and frame markers used to organise propositional information and guide the audience to generate coherent and convincing texts. Code glosses (e.g., for instance, that is) explicate propositions, endophoric markers (e.g., discussed below, see Table x) direct the audience to information in the text, evidentials cite content from

other sources (e.g., according to, x observed), frame markers allude to sequences, stages, and topic shifts (e.g., firstly, to conclude), and transition markers establish relations between the ideas (e.g., in addition, but). Interactional metadiscourse refers to self-mentions, hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and engagement markers that permit the writer/presenter to draw the audience's attention to their perspectives and to themselves (Hyland, 2004). Self-mentions show the presenter's/author's obvious presence in the oral/written text providing information on his/her character and stance (e.g., I, the author, we). Hedges indicate the writer's/presenter's decisions to acknowledge opposing viewpoints or possibilities and openness to negotiation with the audience (e.g., typically, suggest). Opposed to hedges, by using boosters, writers/presenters anticipate and disqualify opposing arguments by demonstrating certainty (e.g., clearly, prove). Writers/presenters overtly engage the audience in the discussion by using engagement markers, such as inclusive pronouns (e.g., we, our, and us), audience pronouns (e.g., you and your), and asking questions and offering suggestions (Hyland, 2005). Attitude markers show the writer's/presenter's views on or evaluation of a proposition (e.g., correctly, hopefully, luckily). The skilful use of these strategies can improve the quality of oral/written texts immensely. Informed by the discourse structure and discourse moves of effective communication, intellectual standards, argument elements, and interactive and interactional metadiscourse strategies, I developed the succeeding descriptors for assessing discourse and strategic competences.

- There is a strong (A), some (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) level of logical progression, with entirely (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) clear and effective connections between ideas throughout the text/speech.
- Transitional phrases are used with a strong (A), some (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) level of skill and effectiveness, creating an entirely seamless (A), moderate (B), basic (C), or minimal (F) flow.
- The skilful (A), satisfactory (B), basic (C), or unskilful (F) deployment and logical sequencing of argument elements creates a highly (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) coherent text/speech.
- The skilful (A), satisfactory (B), basic (C), or unskilful (F) deployment of code glosses (e.g., for instance, that is), evidentials (e.g., according to, x observed), and endophoric (e.g., discussed above, see Table x), frame (e.g., firstly, to conclude), and transition markers (e.g., in addition, but) creates a highly (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) coherent text/speech.
- The skilful (A), satisfactory (B), basic (C), or unskilful (F) deployment of self-mention (e.g., I, the author, we), hedges (e.g., typically, suggest), boosters (e.g., clearly, prove), attitude markers (e.g., correctly, hopefully, luckily), and engagement markers (e.g., inclusive pronouns: we, our, and us; audience pronouns: you and your; asking questions; and offering suggestions) creates a clear (A), inconsistent (B), limited (C), or extremely weak (F) authorial presence and audience engagement.

4. Grammatical Competency

Four constructs comprise grammatical competency: syntactic complexity, accuracy, lexical complexity, and fluency (Barkaoui & Hadidi, 2020; Connor & Mbaye, 2002; Cumming et al., 2005; Rahimi, 2016; Rahimi & Zhang, 2022). Syntactic complexity refers to the variety and

sophistication of structures and accuracy to using error-free language (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998; Polio & Shea, 2014). In Barkaoui and Hadidi's (2020) framework, lexical density, lexical variation, lexical sophistication, and lexical bundles are listed as measures of lexical complexity. Lexical density concerns the ratio of lexical words – consisting of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs – to the total number of words in a text (cf. Laufer & Nation, 1995; Lu, 2012). Lexical variation refers to the ratio of the types (the number of different types of words used) to the tokens (the total number of words used) in a text (e.g., Laufer & Nation, 1995; Lu, 2012). Lexical sophistication and lexical bundles are defined as the proportion of relatively advanced or infrequency occurring words to frequent words used in a text (e.g., Laufer & Nation, 1995) and commonly used word-combinations (Hyland, 2008), respectively. Fluency refers to text length (e.g., Cumming et al., 2005). I did not make any extension to grammatical competency. Informed by the framework, I developed the following descriptors for assessing the grammatical competency.

- Utilises a variety (A), good range (B), basic range (C), or minimal range (F) of highly (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) well-chosen grammatical structures, conveying the meaning with variety and precision (A), communicating ideas generally effectively (B), somewhat impeding understanding (C), or significantly hindering understanding (F).
- Makes no (A), few (B), some (C), or significant (F) grammar and mechanics errors, conveying the meaning skilfully (A), not significantly impeding understanding (B), somewhat obscuring the meaning (C), or significantly impeding understanding (F).
- Uses a variety (A), good range (B), basic range (C), or minimal range (F) of highly (A), moderately (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) well-chosen words and expressions, conveying the meaning with variety and precision (A), communicating ideas generally effectively (B), somewhat impeding understanding (C), or significantly hindering understanding (F).
- Makes no (A), few (B), some (C), or significant (F) lexical errors, conveying the meaning skilfully (A), not significantly impeding understanding (B), somewhat obscuring the meaning (C), or significantly impeding understanding (F).
- There is no (A), minor (B), noticeable (C), or significant (F) deviation from the specified word count.

5. Sociolinguistic Competency

Sociolinguistic competency refers to the ability to employ language appropriate to a particular genre by considering the audience, purpose, and topic (Bachman & Palmer, 2010) and observing the conventions of the discourse community, such as including the expected argument elements (e.g., Rahimi, 2024). In view of the existing conceptualisation of the sociolinguistic competency, I suggest using the following descriptors to assess the sociolinguistics competency in terms of the appropriacy of source integration, tone, and style to the context and purpose of communication.

- Integrates information from relevant major credible sources highly (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) effectively, using the required guidelines entirely accurately

(A), with a few lapses (B), with noticeable issues (C), or with significant errors (F) in both in-text and end-of-text citations.

- The tone and style of are highly (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), or minimally (F) well aligned with the context and purpose of the task.

6. Professional Communication Competencies

In addition to competencies discussed so far, specific competencies can be identified for a particular genre. Genre is defined as a type of oral or written communication with its own distinguishable sections, components, language features that intend to realise specific communicative goals (Rahimi, 2024). Introduction, Literature Review, Body, and Conclusion constitute the key sections of a professional proposal. The Introduction includes the background, problem statement, objectives, and scope. The Literature Review involves a critical review of existing solutions and their adaptability assessment. The Body presents the proposed solution, justifies the solution, outlines the evaluation criteria, and details the implementation plan. The Conclusion summarises key points, reinforces the significance of the proposal, and includes calls to action. With this understanding, I created the following descriptors to assess the key competencies for each section

Introduction

Background	Provides all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of relevant significant background information with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth. The information may include historical context, current state, relevant facts and data, previous work, key terms, and identification of stakeholders.
Problem Statement	Defines a relevant, significant problem with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth. Establishes the relevant problem's significance by discussing its urgency (e.g., inaction consequences) and immediate and long-term impacts with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
Objectives	Objectives are entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) significant and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) and show excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) alignment with the problem.
Scope	Scope is established with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth, covering all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of aspects (tasks and activities) directly relevant to project goals and stakeholders.

Literature Review

Review of Existing Solutions	Provides a critical review of all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of major existing solutions highlighting their strengths and weaknesses with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
Adaptability Assessment	Evaluates the adaptability of all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of the reviewed existing solutions into their context with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.

Body

Proposed Solution	Proposes an innovative solution, a creative combination of existing ones, or improvement on an existing solution/s and justifications for their decision with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
	Provides a detailed presentation and insightful analysis of the proposed solution's components with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
	Evaluates the impacts of their proposed solution with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth. Justifies why the proposed solution is optimal with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.
	Acknowledges and addresses potential challenges or risks of their proposed solution with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) relevance, significance, accuracy, clarity, precision, logic, fairness, depth, and breadth.

Evaluation Criteria and Methods

	Presents entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) effective evaluation criteria and methods entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) aligned with the project objectives.

Implementation Plan

	Presents a detailed and feasible implementation plan with entirely (A), mostly (B), somewhat (C), minimally (F) clear timelines and resource requirements.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Points	Summarises all (A), some (B), a few (C), or none (F) of main points with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) accuracy, clarity, and logic.
Reinforcement of Proposal Significance	Articulates the significance of the proposal effectively with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) insights and implications.
Calls to Action	Presents specific calls to action and associated benefits for stakeholders with excellent (A), strong (B), basic (C), or very limited (F) clarity and reasoning.

Additionally, informed by my competencies framework, rubric, and dialogic moves, I created the following key questions for the sections of the professional proposal for use in the dialogic teaching and learning of the sections and in students' dialoguing with the GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT. The questions can also be used in the classroom and consultation sessions to gain a deeper understanding of the degree of students' mastery in competencies and provide constructive feedback if needed. This approach is well-aligned with the dialogic assessment proposed by Beck et al. (2020):

Introduction

Background Information

- What specific problem or opportunity does this proposal seek to address?
- What events, concepts, theories, or previous research are relevant to understanding the problem or opportunity?

Significance of the Problem

- Why is this problem important in the current context?
- Who are the primary stakeholders affected by this problem, and in what ways are they affected?
- What are the main causes and contributing factors of this problem?
- What might happen if this problem is not addressed?

- How does this problem impact the organisation, community, or field as a whole?
- What evidence (e.g., key facts and data) can you provide to support the urgency and importance of addressing this problem or opportunity?
- What are the broader implications of this problem for the industry or society at large?

Objectives of the Proposal

- What are the primary objectives of this proposal, and why are they important?
- How do these objectives align with the strategic goals of the organisation or field?
- How will these objectives effectively address the identified problem or opportunity?

Scope of the Proposal Project

- What are the boundaries and limitations of this proposal?
- What specific tasks and activities will be undertaken as part of this project?

Literature Review

Reviewing Existing Solutions

- What existing solutions have been proposed or implemented so far?
- How do these solutions address similar problems or opportunities?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each existing solution?

Evaluating Adaptability to Our Context

- How relevant are these existing solutions to our context?
- What are the potential barriers to implementing these solutions in our context?
- What modifications or adaptations would be necessary to apply these solutions?

Combining or Innovating Solutions

- Is there one existing solution that can effectively address our problem? How can we justify this solution?
- Can elements of the existing solutions be combined to create a new solution? How can we justify the combination of these solutions?
- Is there a need for a totally novel solution? How can we justify the need and the solution? Can we develop one based on the critical review of the existing solutions?

Developing Evaluation Criteria

- What criteria can we use to evaluate the effectiveness of existing solutions?
- How can we measure the success of these solutions?
- Why are these criteria important for evaluating the solutions?

Body

Proposed Solution

- What specific problem does our proposed solution address?
- What are the key components of our proposed solution?
- How does our solution build upon or differ from existing solutions?

Justification of Proposed Solution

- Why do we believe our proposed solution is the best approach?
- What makes our solution feasible and practical in our context?
- How will we ensure the sustainability of our solution?
- What are the potential short- and long-term impacts of our solution?
- How have we addressed potential risks and challenges in our proposed solution?

Evaluation Criteria and Methods for Proposed Solution

- What evaluation criteria and methods can we use to evaluate the success of our proposed solution?
- How will these criteria help in assessing the effectiveness and impact of our solution?
- Why are these criteria relevant and important for our evaluation?

Implementation and Impact

- What is the implementation plan for our proposed solution?
- What resources (e.g., personnel, budget, technology) are required for implementation?
- What is the timeline for achieving our proposal's objectives?
- What are the key deliverables and milestones for this project?

Conclusion

Summarising Key Points

- What are the main points we want our audience to remember from our proposal?
- How does our proposed solution effectively address the problem or opportunity identified?
- What evidence supports the feasibility and potential success of our solution?
- What are the expected benefits and outcomes of implementing our solution?

Reinforcing the Significance

- Why is it important for the audience to consider our proposal seriously?
- What makes our solution stand out compared to other existing solutions?
- How will our solution impact the organisation, community, or industry in the long term?
- What are the broader implications of our proposal for the field or society?

Calls to Action

- What specific actions are we asking the audience to take?
- How can the audience contribute to the success of our proposal?
- What are the potential benefits for the audience if they support our proposal?
- How will we ensure a successful partnership or investment if the audience decides to proceed?
- What are the next steps for collaboration, and how can the audience get involved?

More questions based on the Paul-Elder's (2019) Intellectual Standards:

Clarity: Have we elaborated on all points? Are all points clear?

Accuracy: Is all the information accurate? Have we cited all necessary sources for the audience to verify the accuracy of the information/data/claims/ideas? How do we know this information is accurate? How can we verify this data or evidence?

Precision: Are the information/data/claims/ideas specific? Have we provided figures, examples, and details to enhance specificity? What are the exact parameters or measurements involved?

Relevance: Have we included all major issues/ideas related to the problem/solution at hand? How does the information relate to the problem or solution?

Depth: Have we discussed the complexities of this issue and the factors that make this a difficult problem? Have we discussed the potential risks and challenges that the implementation may cause and strategies to mitigate the impacts? Have we discussed the underlying issues that must be addressed?

Breadth: Have we discussed all points of view or perspectives to consider? What alternative approaches exist? How might different stakeholders view this problem or solution?

Logic: Are the conclusions logical? Do the conclusions follow from evidence? What assumptions are we making, and are they justified? Are the strengths of the claims and conclusions calibrated based on the type, quality, and quantity of evidence? Have we used hedges and boosters appropriately?

Significance: Have we explained why the issue is important and what makes this problem worth solving? Why is this issue worth addressing? What makes this problem significant? What are the broader implications of this problem or solution?

Fairness: Is there any bias in how the problem and solutions are being presented, analysed, or evaluated? Have we ensured a fair evaluation of the solutions?

Conclusion

This paper proposes synergising the critical dialogic approach with competencies-trained dialoguing using GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, as multidisciplinary, more knowledgeable others to accelerate the development of students' critical thinking, communication, and task-specific competencies. It also discusses the potential issues with the accuracy and reliability of ChatGPT's responses and highlights the importance of applying critical thinking and communication competencies when dialoguing with GenAI tools to identify and address these issues. While future advancements in AI may reduce the need for verification of GenAI outputs, students will still need to use dialogic strategies to develop core competencies especially critical thinking and

communication. No one would wish to outsource these foundational abilities to a machine and risk becoming incapable of thinking critically or communicating effectively; I doubt any parent would want that for their child.

In addition, this paper presents a competencies framework, rubric, and key questions for developing professional proposals, offering a practical example of how to implement the proposed approach. These resources are designed to support dialogic teaching, learning, and assessment of the target competencies. The approach is grounded in evidence-informed theoretical conceptualisation, educator-researcher implementation, and professional reflection. I have implemented the synergistic approach with first-year undergraduate students in a critical thinking and communication module and found it to be both practical and effective. This conclusion is based on my interpretation of students' post-learning reflections and feedback at the conclusion of the module, as well as my own reflective observations of their learning behaviours throughout the process. As an educator-researcher with over two decades of teaching experience across diverse contexts, I believe these reflective insights reinforce the potential of the approach.

Recognising that full adoption may be challenging for some educators, I propose a phased implementation strategy. This begins with applying the approach to less complex tasks and evaluating its benefits before moving to broader implementation. In some institutions, large class sizes may limit direct application. However, students can still be trained to use the approach for self-regulated learning, helping to mitigate the limitations of one-way lecturing discussed in this paper. I acknowledge the importance of empirical validation for competency frameworks. However, as stated earlier, this synergistic approach is intended as evidence-informed and supported by practitioner reflection, rather than aimed at formal validation. The presented framework, rubric, and guiding questions serve as model resources for implementing the approach. Educators may adapt these for new tasks or develop new ones aligned with different sets of competencies. For example, the competencies required for writing a gratitude letter differ from those needed for professional proposal writing, the model task used in this paper. Due to space limitations, a full empirical validation of the framework falls outside the scope of this paper and is more appropriate for future study.

I argue that regardless of whether a research design is empirical or evidence-informed with reflective practice, educators should ultimately decide on the adoption and adaptation of instructional strategies. As professionals, they exercise agency to make context-appropriate pedagogical judgments—planned or spontaneous—to enhance student learning and engagement. My research, regardless of method, seeks to expand the repertoire of principles and strategies available to educators for such informed decision-making.I plan to collect more in-depth data from future cohorts of first-year undergraduate students in the same module to gain further insights into their engagement with the approach and its benefits. I recommend that educators apply this approach in a variety of courses, particularly in content-heavy modules with large enrolments, where promoting interactive engagement is often a challenge. Doing so could help determine whether training students in critical dialogic learning, and providing the necessary resources, supports meaningful engagement with GenAI tools and mitigates the limitations of one-way lecturing. I also welcome opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across institutions to

secure funding and conduct broader, multi-programme research in diverse contexts with students from varying educational backgrounds.

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Conflict of Interest

The author discloses no conflict of interest and has not received any funding for this manuscript. The author confirms that he has tested the role of generative artificial intelligence in improving critical thinking and communication competencies while adhering to the ethical standards described by Crawford et al. (2023). The author further confirms compliance with the ethical standards outlined by Purvis and Crawford (2024). The author lists the following CRediT contributions: Dr Muhammad Rahimi: Conceptualisation, Operationalisation, Implementation, Evaluation, & Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

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