

Chinese EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices after Implementing an Emotional Scaffolding-Integrated Writing Module: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study

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Received: April 10, 2026

Accepted: May 11, 2026

Online Published: May 25, 2026

doi:10.5430/wjel.v16n5p239

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v16n5p239>

Abstract

Recent trends in EFL writing instruction have shown a shift from purely cognitive approaches to pedagogies that integrate emotional support into teaching and learning. However, little is known about how a GBA-ES-integrated writing module may reshape Chinese EFL teachers' beliefs and practices. The study examined how teachers' beliefs and practices shifted following the implementation of a genre-based approach and emotional scaffolding (GBA-ES) writing module. Adopting a qualitative multiple-case study design, the research drew on three sources of data: semi-structured interviews (pre- and post- implementation), classroom observations, and teachers' reflective journals. Data were collected from four Chinese EFL teachers over a six-week implementation period and analysed thematically across the three data sources. The analysis suggests that the teachers came to recognize emotional scaffolding as pedagogically valuable and developed more integrated beliefs about genre-based writing instruction and emotional support. They also came to see themselves more as emotional facilitators and enacted more explicit genre-cycle practices, emotionally supportive strategies, and adaptive reflective teaching. These findings contribute to a better understanding of teacher emotional support in EFL writing instruction and offer implications for teacher development and emotionally responsive pedagogy.

Keywords: emotional scaffolding; EFL; teacher beliefs; teacher practices; teaching approach

1. Introduction

Teachers' beliefs (TB) play a central role in shaping their classroom practices and, ultimately, the effectiveness of instruction (Al-Breiki et al., 2025). In teacher cognition research, beliefs are commonly understood as dynamic constructs that include both cognitive and affective dimensions and guide teachers' interpretations of teaching, learning, student roles, and their own professional identities (Sipayung et al., 2024). They are often associated with beliefs about the self, students, content, teaching practices, teaching approaches, and context (Han & Cumming, 2024). In line with Clark and Peterson's (1986) model of teacher thought and action, teachers' practices (TP) can be viewed as the practical manifestations of their beliefs, instructional reasoning, and contextual decision-making (Robinson & Bond, 2025). Given the close relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, examining how the two interact has become increasingly important.

In recent years, scholars have paid increasing attention to the emotional dimension of teaching rather than focusing on cognition alone (Yao et al., 2025). Teachers' emotional support is now widely seen as contributing to students' academic and affective outcomes (Zhang & Krishnasamy, 2024). Given this trend, teachers act as vital agents in the field integrated with dimensions from cognition and emotion (Chen & Badolato, 2025). During and after the pandemic, this concern became more pronounced, particularly as teachers were expected to create classrooms that were both supportive and emotionally secure (Wu & Liu, 2024). This, in turn, highlights the importance of building positive teacher-student relationships (Meyer & Turner, 2007). In this study, Emotional scaffolding (ES) is treated as a pedagogical strategy that shapes students' learning experiences while also influencing teachers' beliefs and practices.

Even so, the influence of an ES-integrated writing module on teachers' beliefs and practices remains underexplored in Chinese EFL contexts (Wong et al., 2024). Although previous studies have examined ES in EFL instruction, less attention has been paid to how teachers' beliefs and practices change after a module has been implemented. Accordingly, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- (a) What changes occurred in teachers' beliefs after the implementation of the ES-integrated writing module?
- (b) What changes occurred in teachers' practices after the implementation of the ES-integrated writing module?

In this study, ES was integrated into genre-based writing instruction, with GBA providing the instructional cycle and ES addressing the affective conditions that support student participation (Westerlund, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2024; H. Zeng, 2024). By examining how an ES-integrated writing module reshapes teachers' beliefs and practices, this study contributes to teacher development, EFL writing

pedagogy, and emotionally responsive language education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teachers' Beliefs

Early studies have suggested that the interpretation of teaching, learning, student roles, and their own professional identities is consequential for teachers (Badash, 2024). As a result, teachers' beliefs (TB) have been widely discussed in the fields of pedagogy and psychology (Sun et al., 2024; Tong et al., 2026). Additionally, existing research indicates that TB is closely related to instructional decision-making and teachers' willingness to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches (Mostafavi et al., 2026). In this study, TB is used to describe how teachers understand themselves, their students, teaching content, and pedagogical approaches from both cognitive and affective perspectives.

TB influences the way teachers understand pedagogical goals and adapt to classroom change (Moore & Cohen, 2026). This is particularly important in the context of EFL writing instruction. For example, the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy partly depends on whether teachers view writing as a socially situated process that requires explicit guidance, modelling, and scaffolded support. Similarly, ES depends on teachers' beliefs about the role of emotion in learning (Mingjia & Xian, 2025). If emotions are regarded as integral to cognition and participation, teachers are more likely to incorporate supportive affective strategies into classroom instruction. By contrast, if emotion is treated as secondary or peripheral, emotionally responsive teaching may remain limited.

In the present study, teachers' beliefs are conceptualized as a dynamic and context-sensitive system of cognition, emotion, and value orientation that shapes how CHVE English teachers understand and implement a GBA-ES writing module. Within the CHVE writing context, such beliefs influence not only pedagogical decision-making but also teachers' perceptions of student engagement, emotional well-being, and the overall conditions necessary for effective writing instruction.

2.2 Teachers' Practice

Teachers' practices (TP) in this study refer to the observable instructional behaviors, pedagogical decisions, and emotional interactions enacted by teachers during classroom teaching (Fekete et al., 2026). Consistent with Clark and Peterson's model of teacher thought and action, practices can be understood as the practical manifestations of TB, pedagogical reasoning, contextual awareness, and affective considerations (Bi et al., 2026). In other words, what teachers do in the classroom is closely related to what they believe about teaching, students, and learning.

In EFL writing instruction, TP typically include lesson planning, task design, modelling, classroom interaction, feedback provision, and the management of classroom atmosphere (Hardiningsih et al., 2024; H. Zeng, 2024). Within genre pedagogy, such practices are commonly structured around the teaching-learning cycle (TLC) (Chang, 2024). In this instructional cycle, teachers are usually involved in analyzing content, constructing genre models, and scaffolding students' independent writing (Koenig et al., 2025). Such practices can strengthen students' classroom engagement, increase their willingness to participate, and support the development of writing skills.

The literature has consistently highlighted both verbal and nonverbal ES strategies (Ji & Zhang, 2025). In the present study, TP also includes affective forms of support such as verbal encouragement, empathetic responses, patient guidance, supportive nonverbal behaviors, and the creation of a psychologically safe classroom environment. TP is viewed as comprising both cognitive and emotional dimensions during module implementation.

2.3 Genre-Based Approach in EFL Writing Instruction

Genre is framed as literary forms including narrative texts, argumentative texts, expository texts and applied texts (Zeng, 2023). Over time, the term expanded to encompass nearly all types of writing (Zhai & Razali, 2023). Then linguistics pointed out its communicative purpose in specific contexts (Abdelhalim, 2024). Against this background, the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) has been widely recognized in EFL writing instruction because it offers explicit support for teaching learners how to write for academic, professional, and vocational purposes (Baxromovna, 2024).

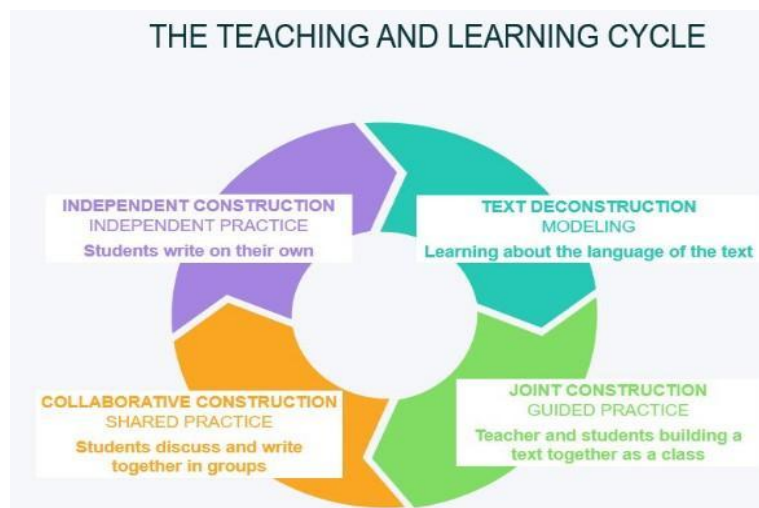


Figure 1. The Teaching-learning Cycle

The teaching–learning cycle (TLC), first developed in Australian school contexts, has become a widely used instructional framework within genre pedagogy (Liu et al., 2023). The instructional cycle usually includes text demonstration, joint construction, collaborative construction, and independent construction (see Figure 2).

The de Oliveira and Smith model (2019) presents the TLC as a staged process that includes text deconstruction, joint construction, collaborative construction, and independent construction. Across these stages, students receive progressively reduced support as they move toward greater writing autonomy. In this sense, GBA provides a clear genre-based writing structure together with sustained teacher guidance. (de Oliveira et al., 2023).

However, traditional GBA instruction may face challenges when students’ emotional support needs become more visible in the classroom. The students’ emotional states, especially negative ones, such as anxiety, hesitation, and low confidence all point to the gap of emotional teaching strategies (Sampson, 2025). For the present study, GBA refers to the cognitive and rhetorical dimensions of writing, while ES functions as an affective support mechanism embedded within the genre-based teaching cycle.

2.4 Emotional Scaffolding

Teaching and learning involve both rational and emotional dimensions (Pan et al., 2023; Romo-Escudero et al., 2024). Earlier research in EFL settings suggests that anxiety, hesitation, and other negative emotions may restrict students’ academic development (Song et al., 2022). Appropriate emotionally responsive teaching strategies may help address this situation. In responding to the situation, Meyer and Turner (2007) introduced the idea that teachers can intentionally support students’ emotional needs during classroom learning. Teachers may use both verbal and nonverbal strategies, such as relatable metaphors, empathetic responses to student difficulty, and supportive interaction, in order to reduce reticence and build positive teacher–student relationships (Cheng, 2022; Song & Park, 2021; Wong et al., 2024). ES works through classroom interaction, especially when teachers respond promptly to students’ affective needs.

Writing skills play a vital role among language training abilities (Westerlund, 2024). Because writing demands vocabulary, expression, and grammatical control, learners may easily experience self-doubt and anxiety, especially when they feel unsupported (Boeriswati et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2024). In the context of EFL writing pedagogy classroom, ES highlights teachers’ affective actions, such as praise, reassurance, humour, and patient feedback, which can be used to respond promptly to students’ emotional difficulties. This becomes particularly meaningful when ES is combined with a cognitive teaching approach such as GBA, which provides structured support for both writing development and learning experience.

Taken together, existing studies indicate that changes in teachers’ beliefs are often reflected in changes in teaching practice. In EFL writing classrooms, students often experience stress that may hinder academic performance, which makes both cognitive and emotional teacher support important. For this reason, greater attention should be paid to teachers’ beliefs and practices when an ES-integrated GBA writing module is introduced.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Guided by an interpretivist paradigm, this study adopted a qualitative multiple-case design to examine changes in Chinese EFL teachers’ beliefs and practices during the implementation of a GBA–ES writing module (Seuring et al., 2021). A multiple-case study was considered appropriate because it allowed the study to examine pedagogical change in depth (Yin, 2009). It allowed both within-case and cross-case analysis. Each teacher was treated as an individual case, while the shared instructional setting provided a common framework

for examining similarities and differences in how the module was enacted.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

Creswell (2017) suggested that access granted by institutional gatekeepers ensures ethical compliance and prevents disruption to normal teaching. Four in-service EFL teachers from one college in eastern China were recruited through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling helped identify cases that were especially suitable for exploring both the implementation of the GBA–ES module and changes in TB and TP. The selection criteria were as follows:

- (a) holding a master's degree or above.
- (b) having at least five years of EFL teaching experience.
- (c) holding at least the rank of Lecturer; and
- (d) ensuring some gender variation across cases.

These criteria were intended to ensure richness, relevance, and comparability across cases. As all four teachers worked within the same college and implemented the same module, the study was able to examine how teachers with comparable professional backgrounds responded differently or similarly to the intervention. Table 1 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Master or PhD degree	Bachelor and below it
5 years EFL teaching experience or above	Less than 5 years EFL classroom teaching experience
Lecture, Associate- Professor, Professor title	No title
Both male and female instructors	Sole gender

The demographic characteristics of the four participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Set	Gender	In-service year	Title	Age
R1	Male	8	Lecturer	27
R2	Female	16	Associate Professor	42
R3	Female	10	Lecturer	34
R4	Male	8	Associate Professor	35

As shown in Table 2, the sample included two female teachers and two male teachers. The four participants had more than eight years of teaching experience, with professional titles ranging from Lecturer to Associate Professor. Such sampling could provide reflective and informed accounts of their pedagogical beliefs and practices.

3.3 Research Instruments

Data were gathered through three sources to examine changes in TB and TP: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teachers' reflective journals (Merriam, 1998). Two rounds of interviews captured their self-reported beliefs, understandings, and reflections before and after implementation. Classroom observations documented teachers' enacted practices and students' immediate classroom responses, whereas reflective journals provided longitudinal accounts of teachers' evolving thoughts, emotions, and pedagogical adjustments during the process of module implementation. The three sources were combined because each provided access to a different dimension of teachers' change, thereby strengthening the depth of interpretation.

Table 3. Research Instruments

Instrument	Purpose	Frequency	Data Collected	Format
Semi- structured Interviews	Explore beliefs, practices, and reflections	2 per teacher	Audio-recorded, transcribed text	Semi-structured guide
Classroom Observations	Capture in-situ use of GBA+ES strategies and student engagement	2 per teacher	Field notes, structured observation sheet	Non-participant
Reflective Journals	Document teacher's evolving thoughts and emotions	6 per teacher (weekly)	Narrative written text	Semi-guided journal prompts

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews (see Table 4) were carried out in two rounds, one before the implementation and one after the completion of the GBA–ES module. This arrangement allowed the researchers to compare teachers' accounts across time and to examine how their reported beliefs and practices developed after the intervention. A semi-structured format was selected because it gave participants enough space to explain their experiences, interpretations, and teaching understandings in detail, while still keeping the interviews closely tied to

the research questions (Creswell, 2013). The interview guide was prepared in direct relation to the two research questions and the study's major conceptual domains. More specifically, the question clusters were designed to elicit data on teachers' beliefs, classroom practices, understandings of genre-based pedagogy, and perceptions of emotional scaffolding.

These domains were organized into three broad areas so that construct coverage could be maintained and responses from the two interview rounds could later be compared more systematically.

- (1) teachers' beliefs about EFL writing instruction.
- (2) teachers' understandings and enactment of genre-based pedagogy; and
- (3) teachers' perceptions and use of emotional scaffolding strategies.

Before the formal interviews began, the protocol was first reviewed by experts and then piloted in order to identify weaknesses in wording, sequencing, and conceptual fit. This process was intended not only to strengthen the content validity of the instrument, but also to improve the consistency of its administration across participants. The draft protocol was examined by experts in EFL writing pedagogy and educational research methodology, who commented on item wording, conceptual relevance, overlap between prompts, and the overall flow of the interview. This review helped ensure that the questions were sufficiently aligned with the intended constructs and were capable of generating relevant evidence for answering the research questions. Following this stage, some prompts were reworded for clarity, overlapping questions were merged, and several items were repositioned so that the interview could proceed in a more natural sequence.

The pilot interview also revealed practical issues in administration. Some questions turned out to be too broad, and a small number of follow-up probes had to be added in order to encourage more concrete classroom-based responses. These adjustments were completed before the formal interviews started.

Although the delivery mode varied, the same core interview guide was used across both rounds and all participants so that procedural consistency could be maintained. Such consistency in administration helped reduce unnecessary variation in questioning and made the interview data more comparable across cases. At the same time, limited follow-up questions were used only when clarification or elaboration was needed, so that coverage remained comparable without making the interview mechanically rigid.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim across the pre- and post-implementation rounds. This procedure reduced the risk of selective recall and provided a stable textual basis for later coding and interpretation

Table 4. Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Constructs	Variables	Illustrative Items	Items
Back ground	Professional background	Your name/age/gender	6
GBA-related beliefs and practices	Beliefs about writing instruction; understanding of GBA	When did you start to learn English? What do you think effective writing instruction should involve? How do you understand the role of joint construction in writing instruction?	10
ES-related beliefs and practices	Understanding and use of emotional scaffolding strategies; classroom support practices; problem-solving responses	What teaching methods or strategies can be used in writing instruction?	3

In addition, summaries of the interview interpretations were later shared with participants during the member-checking stage, providing an additional layer of credibility for how their responses were understood.

3.3.2 Classroom Observations

Classroom observation was used to capture teachers' enacted classroom practices and students' immediate responses from the researcher's perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Teachers' beliefs and practices could not be understood solely through self-report. Observation data recorded teachers' actual classroom practices and students' real-time responses during module implementation.

A structured observation checklist was designed by the researchers and reviewed by experts to ensure its relevance to the study focus. There were six dimensions reported in the checklist: student engagement, writing-task involvement, peer interaction, emotional expression, response to emotional support, and classroom environment.

Classroom observation was used to document the actual enactment of the GBA-ES module and to capture teacher-student interaction, writing-task participation, emotional support, and classroom climate. Observation was especially important in this study because teachers' beliefs and practices could not be understood solely through self-report. These data made it possible to capture enacted classroom practices and students' immediate reactions across module implementation (refer to Table 5).

Table 5. Classroom Observation List

Constructs	Variables	Sample Items	Items
Checklist	Student Engagement	Maintains eye contact with teacher	5
	Writing Task Involvement	Follows writing stages (planning, drafting, revising)	5
	Peer Interaction	Participates in pair/group discussions	3
	Emotional Expression/Signs	Smiles or laughs appropriately during the lesson	5
	Response to Emotional Support	Responds positively to teacher's praise	5
	Classroom Environment	Atmosphere is relaxed and respectful	5
Comment section	Reasons and suggestions	Please explain the observed behavior or provide contextual notes	2

The observations were conducted in a non-participant format. Two observations were planned for each case, with the observed lessons selected from the six module units. The observation process did not interfere with normal teaching.

3.3.3 Teachers' Reflective Journal

As the third qualitative data source, teachers' reflective journals were used to trace longitudinal changes in TB and TP during and after the implementation of the writing module (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The journals recorded the ongoing development of TB and TP across the six-week implementation period. In this way, the journals captured teachers' reflections on experience, emotion, and pedagogy in close connection with the teaching moment.

Table 6. Teachers Reflective Journal

Constructs	Variables	Sample Items	Items
Lists	Writing Instruction Goals	What is the plan to improve what is already happening? What were today's genre-based writing goals?	1
	Writing Task Implementation and Strategies	How will the plan be implemented? How did students respond emotionally and cognitively? What emotional scaffolding strategies did you apply? Which strategies worked well? Which didn't?	1
	Personal Reflection	How did you feel during the lesson? Any challenges faced?	1
	Future Planning and Improvement	Reflections on further learning, further planning and action. What would you improve in the next lesson?	1
Comments	Open Comments	Comments	1

Each respondent teacher was required to complete six journal entries (refer to Table 6). They were encouraged to record their own beliefs, practices, and observations under conditions of confidentiality.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Several strategies were used to ensure and enhance trustworthiness based on the philosophy of interpretivism (Seuring et al., 2021). To strengthen trustworthiness in this multi-case qualitative study, triangulation, audit trail, dependability and coding consistency, member checking, and inter-coder agreement were used. They are introduced in this section.

3.4.1 Triangulation

In this work, multiple data sources were applied to achieve triangulation (George, 2021). Three qualitative sources were used in this study, namely: interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals. Different forms of data were used to allow cross-comparison, especially because TB and TP involve subjective and affective dimensions. Furthermore, the credibility of the interpretations was further strengthened by drawing on data collected across different stages of the implementation. For example, journals were included to document change over time.

3.4.2 Audit Trail

An audit trail was adopted as another trustworthiness approach. It included records of participant recruitment, instrument revision, data collection, and coding decisions (Soicher et al., 2024). Credibility was strengthened through such transparency in the research process. Additionally, the researchers were able to trace the findings back to the original data sources.

3.4.3 Dependability and Coding Consistency

An inductive thematic approach was used to analyse the interview, observation, and journal data, with attention to patterns related to changes in teachers' beliefs and practices (Wang et al., 2024). To improve dependability, the coding proceeded in several stages rather than as a single interpretive act. The researcher first read and reread the transcripts, observation notes, and reflective journals so as to

become familiar with the dataset and identify preliminary meaning units. Initial codes were generated inductively, with attention to recurring ideas, teacher reflections, enacted practices, and references to emotional support and genre-based instruction. At this stage, the coding remained open and exploratory so that potentially relevant patterns would not be excluded too early. Before independent coding began, the researcher and the assistant discussed the coding framework, the boundaries of each category, and the meanings of the key constructs so that the criteria could be applied more consistently. After the first cycle of coding, a trained assistant was invited to code part of the dataset independently using the same coding protocol. The researcher and the assistant then compared their coding decisions across the selected data. This comparison made it possible to identify places where the coding criteria remained too broad or where the boundaries between categories were still unclear. Where discrepancies emerged, they were discussed carefully and resolved through agreement, and the code definitions were revised accordingly. After this stage, closely related codes were brought together into broader categories, and these categories were later developed into final themes through repeated checking against the original data. This repeated return to the raw data helped ensure that the final themes remained grounded in participants' accounts rather than in the researchers' assumptions alone. This helped reduce the possibility of forcing isolated codes into themes that were not sufficiently supported by the dataset. Dependability, therefore, was supported not only through coder agreement, but also through repeated review, revision of code definitions, and continual checking of themes against the original dataset.

3.4.4 Member Checking

Member checking was used as an additional procedure to strengthen the credibility of the interpretations (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). Before data collection started, participants were informed that they might later be invited to review brief summaries of the interview interpretations and emerging themes. Once preliminary interpretation had been completed, the researchers prepared short summaries of the interview accounts and the emerging themes and sent them to participants before the agreed deadline. Participants were invited to indicate whether the summaries accurately reflected their views, experiences, and intended meanings. They were also given an opportunity to point out anything they felt had been overlooked, overstated, or phrased in a way that did not fully match their original intent. Participants who responded confirmed the overall accuracy of the summaries, and minor clarifications were incorporated where necessary. No substantial disagreement was raised regarding the central interpretation of the interview data. Where clarification was offered, the relevant interpretation was adjusted so that it stayed closer to the participants' intended meaning. Member checking therefore contributed not only to interpretive credibility, but also to a clearer and more transparent representation of participants' views in the final analysis.

3.4.5 Inter-coder Agreement

Because the study involved coding by both the researcher and a trained assistant, inter-coder agreement was calculated using Cohen's Kappa (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Coding agreements and disagreements across multiple themes were summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Calculation of Coding for Cohen's Kappa

Coding Category	Agreement (A)	Disagreement (D)	Total Coding Units
Theme 1: Teachers' Understanding of GBA	168	14	182
Theme 2: Emotional Scaffolding Practices	216	31	247
Theme 3: Instructional Challenges	196	15	211
Theme 4: Pedagogical Reflection and Adaptation	189	24	213
Total	769	84	853

Based on the common alignment on Cohen's Kappa value range, the result above 0.7 can be viewed as acceptable. If the number of values is greater than 0.8, the inter coding interpretation is excellent. And the result of Cohen's Kappa value was 0.91, which suggested sufficient reliability for qualitative interpretation.

3.5 Research Procedures

Before implementation, the writing module had been developed with reference to the Kemp model as a guiding framework for instructional design. This development phase informed the sequencing of genre activities, the integration of emotional scaffolding strategies, and the overall organisation of the module. For this reason, later analysis of teachers' classroom enactment was also considered in relation to the module's original design.

The study research procedures consisted of four main phases.

At the beginning of the study, the instruments were developed and the participants were selected. All instruments were developed by the researchers with reference to current MOE documentation and were revised based on expert feedback. Then the volunteer teachers were recruited and trained before the implementation. The training session was carried out for one week before the new semester. The training period included discussion of the module structure, teaching procedures, and relevant student background.

The second phase involved pre-implementation interviews and training on how to complete the required journal records. The module was implemented over six weeks, with one unit taught in each week of the intervention. A reflective journal entry was completed by each teacher after class.

In phase three, classroom observations were conducted during the implementation period. Each teacher was observed twice during selected units, and observation data was recorded using the structured checklist and field notes. At the same time, each participant completed one reflective journal after each unit, resulting in six journal entries per teacher.

Finally, after the completion of the six-week implementation, second round semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher. All interviews, observations, and journal data were then compiled, transcribed where necessary, and prepared for thematic analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 Changes of Teachers' Beliefs after Module Implementation

Data were drawn from 24 reflective narratives written by four participating teachers, each producing six reflections corresponding to six genre units (Email, Invitation Letter, Itinerary, Activity Poster, Complaint Letter, and Resume). These reflections captured teachers' immediate perceptions, emotions, and pedagogical reasoning during and after each unit's instruction. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify belief patterns emerging from their reflective accounts. Table 8 错误!未找到引用源。 summarises belief-related themes that emerged from the analysis: the pedagogical value of ES, integrative beliefs about GBA and emotion, teacher identity reconstruction, and a renewed understanding of student engagement and well-being.

Table 8. Changes in Teachers' Beliefs after Module Implementation

Theme	Nature of belief change	Notes	Data source
Recognizing the pedagogical value of ES	From viewing emotion as auxiliary to seeing it as pedagogically necessary	Teachers increasingly interpreted ES as instructionally meaningful, particularly in supporting writing motivation, classroom participation, and understanding of genre purpose.	Journals
Integrative GBA–ES beliefs	From separating genre and emotion to integrating them	Teachers came to perceive genre instruction and emotional support as complementary rather than separate, with emotion serving to strengthen authenticity and communicative meaning in writing tasks.	Journals / Interviews
Reconstructing teacher identity	From language instructor to emotional facilitator	Teachers' self-perceptions shifted toward a more empathetic and relational role, in which emotional support was treated as a legitimate and rewarding part of pedagogy.	Journals
Reframing engagement and well-being	From secondary concern to core condition for writing participation	Student engagement and emotional well-being were increasingly viewed as central conditions for participation in writing activities, especially for students who initially showed hesitation or anxiety.	Journals / Interviews

4.1.1 Recognizing the Pedagogical Value of ES

Teachers' beliefs about ES shifted noticeably after the implementation of the module. At the beginning, most participants treated teachers' emotional support as a supplementary aspect of classroom instruction. As R4 explained in the first interview round, *"how to accomplish TLC teaching in GBA class challenges me... emotion? I would give them(students) credit when they successfully answered my questions...nowadays students were spoiled in certain degree that was the reason they did not work hard in EFL class."* By the end of the six-week implementation, his journal entries showed a different view, with ES now seen as helpful to classroom instruction. He placed greater emphasis on the value of ES, increasingly viewing it as a strategic means of enhancing writing motivation, engagement, and understanding of genre purpose. As R4 explained in his journal, *"students wrote more fluently when they were emotionally encouraged and felt understood... the module unit helped me see that emotion is really part of language learning, not just the grammar itself."*

4.1.2 Beliefs toward Integrative GBA - ES

Another sub-theme concerned teachers' beliefs about the integration of GBA and ES. Before implementation, teachers tended to separate the cognitive and emotional dimensions of teaching, viewing GBA mainly as a form of linguistic instruction rooted in the cognitive domain. However, the post-implementation interviews and journal reflections revealed a growing belief in the complementarity of GBA and ES. As R3 remarked, *"Emotional scaffolding reduced writing anxiety."* A similar view was expressed by R1, who noted that *"Incorporating visual prompts may help lower anxiety and stimulate creativity. Continuous reflection will refine my approach to differentiated instruction."*

The data showed that teachers increasingly saw emotional prompts, empathetic modelling, and affective feedback as fitting naturally within genre writing tasks. For instance, R1 stated that *"I implemented group analysis and brainstorming sessions. Students were curious and cooperative; emotional scaffolding with humour encouraged discussion. Some groups digressed from topic"*. And R2 highlighted that *"teaching the complaint letter was no longer just about format—it became a lesson in expressing feelings appropriately."* Taken together, these comments suggest that teachers were beginning to connect emotional resonance with more meaningful genre instruction.

4.1.3 Reconstructing Teacher Identity as Emotional Facilitators

A noticeable change in belief was related to how teachers perceived themselves. In their reflections, teachers frequently described becoming more empathetic, responsive, and reflective. R3 wrote that *"I used to focus on correcting mistakes; now I focus on connecting with students."* The teachers also became more aware of the benefits of fostering positive relationships with students. R4 stated, *"This unit made me realize how emotional scaffolding can shape not just linguistic competence but also interpersonal maturity."*

The module experience allowed teachers to reconstruct their professional identity—from language transmitters to emotional facilitators who co-construct meaning and motivation with learners. A similar sense of change appeared in R1's reflection *"I felt proud of the progress — the teaching method had fully taken root."*

The pattern also reflects a view of teaching in which emotional support is not separate from pedagogical effectiveness. R2 highlighted that *"The plan integrates skill - building with emotional support, helping students make HR - attractive resumes and boosting their confidence."* The change also reflects increased professional agency, as teachers perceived emotional work not as an additional burden but as a legitimate and rewarding aspect of their teaching practice.

4.1.4 Recognizing the Role of Student Engagement and Well-Being in Writing Instruction

Evidence from the journals and post-implementation interviews indicated that teachers increasingly recognised the importance of student engagement and emotional well-being in writing instruction. Before the module was introduced, engagement was generally not treated as a core feature of writing instruction. Over time, engagement came to be understood as essential to meaningful participation in genre-based writing instruction.

Across the journals, teachers increasingly focused on how students' emotional states affected their willingness to engage in writing tasks. For example, R3 noted in the resume-writing unit that *"Emotional scaffolding reduced resume anxiety, but 'achievement quantification' and 'position adaptation' need optimization—continue focusing on students with little experience"*. R4 expressed a similar view in her reflection, commenting that when she intentionally opened space for students to discuss their feelings about writing, *"students who were shy in the beginning became willing to share their drafts after we discussed their feelings in class."* She interpreted this as evidence that emotional openness encouraged greater participation in writing activities. These reflections demonstrate teachers' evolving belief that a supportive emotional climate facilitates engagement.

A comparison between the pre-intervention interviews and the later reflections suggests that teachers' affective–pedagogical understanding developed over time. At the pre-intervention stage, teachers were already aware that writing instruction lacked systematic emotional support. Their understanding of ES changed after implementation, with ES more clearly viewed as central to engagement and well-being. This shift reflects a transformation from merely possessing affective awareness to adopting the role of an affective facilitator within the writing classroom.

Overall, the study suggests that TB broadened to include a more holistic view of engagement and well-being as essential components of writing instruction.

4.2 Changes of Teachers' Practices Using the GBA–ES Module

This section explores how CHVE teachers enacted genre-based and emotionally scaffolded pedagogies in practice while implementing the GBA-ES module. While the former section focused on teachers' conceptual and affective belief changes, this section examines their practices—the ways they designed, delivered, and adapted classroom activities to support students' writing learning and emotional engagement.

Three sources informed this part of the analysis: reflective narratives, interviews, and classroom observations collected during the implementation period. The triangulation of these sources provided a comprehensive understanding of teachers' pedagogical approaches from self-reported, interpretive, and behavioural perspectives. Thematic analysis in NVivo revealed four major themes: (1) practice of the genre-based instructional cycle; (2) practice of ES pedagogy; (3) integration of GBA and ES practices; and (4) adaptive and reflective teaching.

Table 9. Changes in Teachers' Practices during the GBA–ES Module Implementation

Theme	Nature of practice change	Notes	Data source
Practice of the genre-based instructional cycle	From procedural use of genre stages to more purposeful and flexible enactment	Teachers followed the genre cycle across units, but varied the emphasis of each stage according to task type, student familiarity, and instructional purpose.	Journals / Observations
Practice of ES pedagogy	From occasional encouragement to more explicit and sustained emotional support	Emotional support became more visible in classroom interaction through praise, humour, reassurance, non-verbal care, and personalised feedback.	Journals / Interviews / Observations
Integration of GBA and ES	From parallel use of genre and emotion to deliberate instructional integration	Genre activities were increasingly framed through emotional relevance, personal experience, and affective entry tasks that made writing feel more meaningful.	Journals / Interviews
Adaptive and reflective teaching	From fixed implementation to context-sensitive adjustment	Teachers modified pacing, task difficulty, grouping, and support strategies in response to students' emotional and cognitive reactions during instruction.	Journals / Observations

4.2.1 Practice of the Genre-Based Instructional Cycle

Across reflections and observations, teachers followed the core phases of the genre-based pedagogical cycle: building knowledge of the field, modelling and joint construction, independent writing, and feedback revision. R1 described the Unit 2 teaching process as follows:

"1. Deconstruction: Trigger resonance with *"Have you received a memorable invitation?"* then analyse a *"guest speaker invitation" model*; 2. Joint Construction: Collaboratively draft a *"corporate visit invitation,"* focusing on *"event value (e.g., 'communicate with industry experts')"*; 3. Collaborative Construction: Groups write *"club holiday invitations,"* using a *"tone/detail feedback form"*; 4. Independent Writing: Offer *"formal dinner/academic lecture" scenarios.*" Other teachers also followed this cycle. As R2 explained, *"Implemented through deconstruction, joint construction, collaborative construction, and independent writing."*

However, the emphasis and duration of each phase varied. In the Itinerary and Activity Poster units, for instance, teachers spent more time on modelling to demonstrate genre structure visually, using samples and mind maps to scaffold comprehension. R2 noted in her reflection that: *"Implementation involves modelling, collaborative drafting with visual scaffolds."* In contrast, R4, based on the previous performance of class, decided to glance over the familiar part quickly and allocate more time to the priorities. He wrote the following statement: *"By now, they already understood the routine — deconstruction first, then joint and collaborative construction, and finally independent writing — so we could move smoothly from one stage to another without spending much time explaining the process."*

Classroom observations confirmed that teachers frequently shifted between teacher-led demonstration and student-led practice, indicating a dynamic approach to joint construction. R1 reflected: *"I learned to use examples and questioning to help students see the purpose behind each genre stage."* Such actions reflect a growing pedagogical awareness of explicit genre teaching and student participation.

4.2.2 Practice of ES pedagogy

Across cases, the teachers followed the ES-embedded writing module and used verbal as well as non-verbal strategies to establish supportive teacher–student relationships. Friendly reinforcement, humour, and personalised feedback appeared frequently across the dataset as part of a supportive classroom climate. As R4 explained in interview, *"They gave each other feedback politely and even encouraged weaker classmates with kind words like 'You have good experience too!'"* This was echoed by R2, who noted that *"I gave small gestures of encouragement, and they really responded."*

Non-verbal behaviours such as smiling, nodding, and tone modulation were observed as consistent signals of encouragement. R3 described the situation in the following way: *"When students hesitated to write, I sat next to them and spoke gently about their ideas—this made them feel safe to try."* Interview data explained that teachers saw these strategies as bridges between cognitive tasks and emotional security. R4 commented that: *"The emotional scaffolding techniques—like using small gestures, smiles, and verbal praise—now came naturally to me. I didn't even think about them consciously anymore"*.

The classroom observations suggested that emotional support was not separate from instruction but integrated into it. The classroom observations further suggested that emotional support was integrated into instruction rather than separated from it. Teachers did not rely only on verbal encouragement; non-verbal forms of support also became increasingly visible. In one observation of R4's classroom, the researcher noted that the teacher's eye contact and humorous language appeared to reduce students' tension and make participation easier. Similar patterns were observed in R2's lesson, where hotel-specific scenarios and feedback rubrics were used to make writing tasks more relevant and supportive. In R1's class, targeted ES strategies such as affirming comments on students' professional expression were used to reinforce confidence and vocational awareness. Taken together, these observations suggest that teachers were becoming more skilful in enacting ES while also building more supportive teacher–student relationships..

4.2.3 Integration of Genre-Based and Emotional Practices

The data also revealed a strong pattern of integration between genre pedagogy and ES, especially in activities that connected students' emotions with genre purpose. For instance, before teaching the Complaint Letter, R2 invited students to share personal experiences of dissatisfaction and discuss how to express feelings politely in English. R4 explained this practice in relation to Unit 5 in the following way: *"At the beginning, when I asked if they had ever felt disappointed with a product or service, almost everyone raised their hand and laughed."*

This activity established empathy and authentic context for genre learning. R1 commented in his journal of Unit 6 as: *"The reflective writing session enhanced self-awareness and empathy. More structured timing will optimize future reflection practices."* In the Resume unit, teachers guided students to write self-introductions expressing confidence and hope, thus embedding positive emotional framing within the writing task. Observation notes indicated that students showed higher engagement when genre tasks were connected to their personal feelings and career aspirations. As R4 summarized in his interview, *"Combining emotion and genre made writing feel real and personal."* This integration marked a pedagogical shift from technical genre instruction to holistic affective teaching.

4.2.4 Adaptive and Reflective Teaching

Teachers demonstrated adaptive decision-making based on students' affective feedback and classroom responses. R2 noticed the limited feedback support during peer work, as *"some struggled with evidence coherence"*. As a result, they adjusted task difficulty, group composition, and instructional pacing in order to sustain motivation. For example, R1 noted that after observing students' fatigue during the Resume lesson, she introduced short energizer activities to refresh attention.

Observation data supported these claims: teachers paused writing tasks to ask about students' feelings or reflect on what made writing challenging. Such practices illustrate a growing habit of reflective pedagogy in which teachers respond to students' emotional and cognitive needs in real time. Interviews further revealed that teachers regarded this responsiveness as evidence of professional growth and contextual pedagogical knowledge. After reviewing the entire teaching experiment experience, R4 sighed that *"I felt grateful to see both*

my students' progress and my own development through this journey." This kind of response was also evident in R2's teaching, and concluded *"I felt deeply connected with students' reflections."*

Comparing these findings with the module's original design (Kemp model development phase) shows both alignment and contextual adaptation. Teachers implemented most of the planned genre activities but often modified them to address students' emotional responses or time constraints. The classroom observations demonstrated that pedagogical implementation was not a mechanical transfer of design but a situated process of interpretation and re-creation. Teachers translated abstract design principles into practical actions—using eye contact instead of textual feedback or emphasizing group discussion over individual writing—to enhance affective engagement.

5. Discussion

5.1 From Emotional Awareness to Pedagogical Belief Change

One notable pattern in the findings is that teachers' initial emotional awareness gradually developed into a more pedagogically grounded understanding of emotional support after the implementation of the ES-embedded writing module. At the early stage of the intervention, most participants treated emotional support as something supplementary rather than central to EFL writing instruction. That position is understandable. In many writing classrooms, teaching is still organised primarily around genre structure, language form, and task completion, which tends to leave the emotional dimension in the background. As the module unfolded, however, teachers began to attach greater value to the emotional side of classroom guidance, particularly when ES strategies appeared to improve students' participation and engagement in writing tasks.

This change became more visible when teachers no longer viewed emotional scaffolding as a personal teaching style or an additional interpersonal gesture, but as something instructionally meaningful and closely linked to students' needs. In this respect, the findings are broadly in line with Meyer and Turner's (2007) argument that emotion is not external to classroom learning, but part of how instructional goals are achieved. This kind of shift is also in line with the understanding of teachers' beliefs as dynamic and context-sensitive, especially when new classroom experience leads teachers to reinterpret both instruction and learner participation. The results also resonate with the wider literature on teacher cognition, which suggests that classroom experience can reshape how teachers understand their role, their students, and the instructional process itself. Seen in this light, the shift observed in the present study points to a deeper pedagogical recognition of emotional support within EFL writing instruction.

This is especially important in writing classrooms, where students often experience anxiety, hesitation, and low confidence. Within the GBA-ES framework, teacher emotional support appears to reposition writing instruction as both cognitive and affective in nature. This also reflects the close relationship between teacher thinking and classroom action, since changes in how teachers interpret emotional support are likely to affect how instruction is enacted. Writing, therefore, cannot be understood only in terms of rhetorical structure, genre control, or linguistic accuracy. It also depends on whether students feel sufficiently supported to participate, take risks, and remain engaged throughout the writing process. What emerged here is not simply a more positive attitude toward emotion, but a more integrated understanding of how emotional support functions in pedagogy.

5.2 Scaffolding Emotional Support within Writing Pedagogy Practice

The pre-intervention interviews already pointed to the perceived importance of teacher emotional support. What seemed to be missing, however, was a coherent classroom approach through which such support could be enacted systematically. After implementation, the post-interviews and reflective journals suggested that ES strategies were no longer treated as separate additions to teaching, but were increasingly woven into the GBA instructional cycle itself. Encouragement, humour, empathy, and supportive interaction did not appear only at the edge of classroom activity; rather, they were embedded within modelling, joint construction, collaborative writing, and independent writing.

This suggests that emotional support was not simply added as a reaction to student need. Instead, it began to function as part of the instructional logic of genre teaching. This is especially important in light of the teaching-learning cycle outlined earlier, because the findings suggest that emotional support did not replace the staged structure of genre pedagogy, but operated from within it. In that sense, the study extends earlier discussions of genre pedagogy, which have often focused on modelling, scaffolding, and staged support, by showing that the affective dimension of teaching may also need to be built into the cycle rather than left outside it. The findings therefore extend the discussion by indicating that genre teaching becomes more effective when its cognitive structure is accompanied by emotionally responsive interaction.

A combined GBA-ES framework appears useful because it allows teachers to deliver systematic genre instruction while also responding to the emotional and motivational demands of EFL writing classrooms. Its value lies in this dual function. GBA offers rhetorical and structural guidance; ES, by contrast, helps create confidence, participation, and emotional safety during writing. In other words, the findings support the earlier view that ES is complementary to cognitive scaffolding rather than independent of it. In this respect, the present findings are compatible with work that treats emotional scaffolding as complementary to academic support rather than separate from it. GBA helps organise the cognitive side of teaching, while ES creates the affective conditions that make meaningful participation more likely. This becomes particularly relevant in classrooms where students show low engagement or limited confidence, since emotionally responsive support may make writing tasks feel more manageable, more relevant, and less threatening. Overall, the study points to the value of integrating the genre-based instructional cycle with structured emotional support from teachers.

5.3 Implications for CHVE Teacher Development

The findings also suggest that the module influenced how teachers understood their own professional development. Rather than relying only on accumulated classroom experience, teachers appeared to develop affectively responsive pedagogy through a more structured process of module implementation. This points to a broader view of teacher development, one that includes not only cognitive and technical growth, but also emotional and relational dimensions of pedagogy. Such a perspective moves beyond a narrow emphasis on instructional technique alone. It implies that teacher growth also involves changes in awareness, responsiveness, judgment, and the ability to interpret students' emotional reactions as part of the teaching process.

Put differently, writing teachers need to attend not only to genre knowledge and instructional technique, but also to the emotional responses students bring into the classroom. From a CHVE perspective, this is especially significant. Vocational writing instruction is expected to prepare students for purposeful communication in future professional settings, yet that preparation may remain limited if learners' confidence and willingness to participate are not sufficiently supported. In this sense, emotionally responsive pedagogy is not peripheral to vocational language teaching; it is part of what makes such teaching workable and meaningful.

Pedagogically, the findings indicate that ES does not need to stand apart from writing instruction, but can be built into it in a purposeful way. The study also speaks to earlier work on teacher beliefs and practices by showing that change is more likely when teachers are supported by a structured pedagogical framework rather than left to rely mainly on intuition or personal teaching habit. For this reason, the present study may offer a useful direction for curriculum design, module development, and further research in Chinese EFL writing contexts.

6. Conclusion and Limitations

6.1 Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the influence of an ES-embedded writing instruction module on Chinese EFL teachers' TB and TP. What emerged from the data was a shift in teachers' beliefs: emotion was no longer treated as merely supportive or personal, but as a meaningful component of classroom pedagogy. The findings also show that, within the integrated GBA-ES module, emotional scaffolding was embedded into lesson organisation, classroom interaction, and feedback practices rather than treated as an additional layer of support. The results reveal a pattern in how teachers understood writing instruction and enacted it in practice. Taken together, these findings suggest that emotionally responsive writing pedagogy may support not only changes in classroom practice, but also shifts in how teachers understand the nature of writing instruction itself.

6.2 Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was limited to four EFL teachers from one college. Accordingly, the findings cannot be generalized to all Chinese EFL writing classrooms. Second, the study focused on a six-week implementation period. While this made it possible to capture immediate changes in teachers' beliefs and practices, it did not allow for examination of whether these changes were sustained over a longer period of time. Third, much of the analysis relied on teachers' reflective journals and post-implementation interviews, which may have been influenced by self-reporting tendencies. Although classroom observations were used to strengthen triangulation, participants' reflections may still have been shaped by personal interpretation and contextual sensitivity. Finally, emotional scaffolding is itself a context-dependent and culturally mediated construct. The way teachers understood and enacted emotional support in this study was closely tied to the local institutional, pedagogical, and interpersonal context. The findings therefore need to be interpreted with attention to the situated nature of emotional support in classroom practice.

6.3 Future Research Recommendations

The present findings also open up several directions for future research. First, similar research could be conducted with a larger sample across different institutions and regions in order to examine whether comparable patterns of teacher belief and practice change emerge in other EFL contexts. Second, longitudinal studies would be valuable for exploring whether the changes observed in this study can be sustained over time and how teachers continue to develop emotionally responsive pedagogies after the formal intervention ends. Third, future studies could include students' perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how GBA-ES pedagogy is experienced by both teachers and learners. Fourth, researchers may further investigate specific emotional scaffolding strategies in different genre units or writing tasks in order to identify which forms of support are most effective in particular instructional situations. Finally, with the increasing use of digital and AI-assisted teaching tools in language education, future research may also explore how emotionally responsive pedagogy can be supported, adapted, or challenged in technology-enhanced writing classrooms.

Acknowledgments

We greatly appreciate the valuable contributions from Dr. Hanita and Prof. Melor. We also like to thank the Tongling Polytechnic Foundation and every team member who took the time to participate in this study.

Authors' contributions

Yao Yao was responsible for study design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript drafting .

Dr. Hanita were responsible for study design and revising.

Prof. Melor revised it.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding

This study was also supported by the following:

Research on Synergistic Mechanism and Strategies of Digital Competence and Psychological Resilience Empowerment for Teacher Role Transformation in Higher Vocational Colleges, (Grant No.: 2025AHGXSK30008);

Research on Digital Empowerment, Psychological Resilience and Collaborative Development of Local Service Capacity among Vocational Education Teachers under the Perspective of "Creating High-Quality Institutions and Advancing Undergraduate Education" Construction, (Grant No.: TZY25RWZD03);

Tongling Polytechnic advanced teacher programme (Grant Candidate: Yao Yao).

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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