



Writing Toward the Workplace: Vocational Students' Experience with LinkedIn in a Genre-Based Classroom

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-08-16 Revised: 2026-09-01 Accepted: 2026-09-12 Keywords: <i>job application letters;</i> <i>professional writing;</i> <i>genre-based pedagogy;</i> <i>LinkedIn;</i> <i>vocational education</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12309 Corresponding Author: Dini Majidah dinimajidah@gmail.com Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia	<i>Writing job application letters remain a major challenge for vocational high school students in learning English as a foreign language. Students must use proper grammar, professional language, and genre appropriate writing style as they prepare to enter the workforce. This qualitative case study examines the use of LinkedIn as an authentic professional learning environment. This use shapes the writing process, classroom engagement, and the challenges students face. The study involved 31 of 11th-grade Hospitality students at a vocational high school in Yogyakarta over two genre-based learning cycles. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, and analysis of students' writing drafts in order. Data were analysed thematically following Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The study's credibility was supported by triangulation of sources and time. Triangulation also included the investigator and theory. These procedures align with the five established criteria for the validity of action research found in the action research literature. The findings indicate that LinkedIn helped students' progress from generic self-introductions to more organized and professional letters. Class participation increased, and students became more willing to revise their writing. Some students began to demonstrate an awareness of professional identity while reviewing authentic profiles. Students found that viewing real professional writing was more helpful for understanding formal vocabulary and organizing information than textbook exercises. But, the challenges remained in four areas. Linguistic and cognitive difficulties were reflected in limited grammar and trouble constructing coherent paragraphs. Technological and affective difficulties were reflected in unfamiliarity with the platform and limited peer feedback. These findings suggest that authentic digital platforms like LinkedIn can enrich writing instruction in vocational schools. These benefits are maximized when accompanied by ongoing support that addresses all four challenges together.</i>

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most challenging language skills in vocational schools. This challenge does not derive from the difficulty of constructing grammatically correct sentences. It arises because writing requires students to do several things at once. Students must organize their ideas coherently, choose vocabulary appropriate to the context, and adjust the level of formality to target readers (Hyland, 2019). These three challenges seem simple when considered individually. But in practice, they overlap and are difficult to manage together, especially for students who are still learning English as a foreign language.

In general English classes, this complexity is still manageable because writing assignments usually end at the teacher's desk without any real-world implications outside the classroom. For vocational high school students, the implications of these challenges extend far behind the classroom walls. Within the next one to two years, most students will be writing for real readers. These readers might be business owners, internship supervisors, or hotel managers who must screen hundreds of applications within a limited timeframe. In this context, writing is no longer simply an academic exercise in the classroom. Writing becomes a determining factor in whether a student will be hired or disqualified simply because of an unconvincing first impression.

Among the various genres that vocational high school students have to master, the job application letter holds a special place because it is usually the first written impression received by a potential employer, long before a face-to-face interview takes place. Because of its function as an initial introduction, a job application letter required a level of persuasion, formality, and sensitivity toward the reader that is rarely demanded in typical school writing assignments (Guffey & Loewy, 2018; Rohayati, 2018). This is where the fundamental difference between vocational English and general English comes in. The focus is not simply on English proficiency, but on the effective use of the language to communicate and perform specific tasks in the workplace (Basturkmen, 2025).

This genre which is intended to be used in the workplace, remains difficult for English learners in vocational programs to master. Students actually already understand the general components that must be included in a job application letter, such as an opening paragraph, educational background, work experience, and a closing. Unfortunately, this general knowledge does not automatically result in a document that feels professional. The letters they produce are often still disorganized. Their vocabulary tends to be generic and repetitive. The tone of their writing is also inconsistent. For example, sometimes it is too casual, like a personal message, and other times too formal, relying on memorized phrases copied from examples found online.

This issue has also been documented in several previous studies. Nova and Koerniawaty (2021) examined job application letters written by students at IPB International. They found that grammatical errors are one of the most common problems in this genre, even among writers who are actually quite competent in general language use. Diana (2019) reported a similar pattern among vocational high school students. The job application letters examined generally met the basic structure of the genre but were weak in terms of content, particularly in convincing the reader that the writer is worth considering. Both studies point to two factors: students' limited exposure to real-world examples of this genre and a lack of opportunities to write for actual readers.

To bridge the gap between writing in the classroom and writing for the real working world, several research approaches have been developed. The first approach focuses on the writing process itself. Liu and Chen (2012) examined a genre-based approach in EFL writing classes. They found that the success of this approach strongly depended on explicit

and gradual teacher scaffolding, starting with the analysis of model texts and progressing to guiding students in composing their own writing.

The second approach focuses on the role of digital tools in making the writing process more collaborative and motivating students to engage actively. Damayanti et al. (2021) found that when students provided feedback to one another via Google Docs, they became significantly more actively engaged with their own drafts. Lina (2022) reported a similar pattern in the context of job application letters and resumes. The writing process using shared digital documents not only improves the quality of the final product but also changes the way students view the writing task itself.

The third approach utilizes professional networking platforms as a source of authentic workplace languages. Using rhetorical movement analysis, Nursani and Hardjanto (2024) found that LinkedIn profile summaries followed a specific genre structure. In this genre, the presentation of personal strengths served as a necessary movement that typically included experience, skills, educational background, and position. Optional elements can be used to highlight achievements, goals, and personal uniqueness. Aguado et al. (2019) as well as van de Ven and Bogaert (2017) demonstrated that the specific choices an individual makes when creating a LinkedIn profile can influence others' professional perceptions of them.

These findings suggest that LinkedIn is a real-life example of professional persuasive writing that students can observe directly. Unlike typical online job postings, which are static and one-way, LinkedIn functions as a constantly updated professional discourse. Within this discourse, several elements are actively at work namely authenticity, audience awareness, the construction of professional identity, genre conventions, and situational workplace communication. It these affordances of LinkedIn that set it apart pedagogically from other platforms commonly used to teach workplace writing (Nursani & Hardjanto, 2024).

These three pathways together form a coherent conceptual framework. Genre-based pedagogy provides the learning structure for this intervention. Exposure to authentic LinkedIn content situates that structure within a real-world professional context. This context then sharpens students' audience and genre awareness. This awareness supports the development of professional self-presentation, which ultimately contributes to the development of workplace-oriented writing. This study is structured along these lines, treating LinkedIn not only as a digital tool but as an authentic site where audience awareness, professional identity, and genre knowledge can be observed as they develop.

These three lines of research indicate that authentic materials and digital platforms including LinkedIn can support writing instruction in vocational schools. One aspect that has not been explored in depth is what students actually experience during the learning process. Most of the existing evidence comes from test scores and comparisons of pre- and post-intervention results. Such data can show whether students' writing skills have improved, but it does not explain why the improvement occurred or how students experienced the process. It remains unclear whether students are truly engaged in the writing process or just following the assignment format without understanding its purpose. It is also unclear whether students understood the logic behind professional self-presentation or only copied templates without understanding the reasoning behind them. Another question concerns what specific difficulties remained after the novelty of the platform diminished.

These questions relate to students' daily processes and experiences aspects that cannot be fully captured by numerical measures of learning outcomes. These are the points where a gap in the literature becomes clearer. Research that deeply explores how

vocational high school students experience the process of learning to write for the workplace through authentic digital platforms like LinkedIn remains very limited.

This study is designed to directly address this gap. Using a qualitative case study approach within a genre-based classroom action research framework over two cycles, this study deeply explores how LinkedIn functions as an authentic professional learning environment for vocational high school students learning to write job application letters. Three research questions guide this study.

RQ1. How do students' job application letter writing skills develop throughout LinkedIn-based learning?

RQ2. How does student engagement in learning change during the intervention?

RQ3. What challenges do students face when writing for the workplace through this platform?

The purpose of this article is not to measure whether LinkedIn-based learning improves test scores. This article offers a process-oriented qualitative account of how vocational high school students transition from writing in the classroom to an awareness of professional genres through an authentic digital environment, including aspects of the process that do not always run smoothly. The novelty of this research lies in this process-oriented qualitative study, rather than in the use of LinkedIn itself which has been documented in previous research at the level of learning outcomes.

2. Method

The broader learning intervention was designed as a genre-based classroom action research study spanning two cycles, following a sequence of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Burns, 1999). This article reports on a qualitative case study that analysed students' experiences, engagement, and writing development throughout these cycles. Classroom action research provided the pedagogical framework for the intervention. The case study served as the analytical lens used in this article. This article focuses on qualitative data, namely classroom observations, interviews, and the sequential analysis of students' writing drafts.

The research was conducted at SMKN 4 Yogyakarta for approximately one month in early 2025. The participants consisted of 31 of 11th-grade students in the Hospitality Department, selected through purposive sampling. This class was chosen for two reasons. First, all students were about to begin internships in the hospitality industry, making the instruction in professional written communication relevant to their needs. Second, the English teacher in this class was willing to participate as an observer and collaborator throughout the study. This teacher had never used LinkedIn or other digital platforms to teach writing before. Initial observations revealed several issues, such as disorganized ideas, inconsistent levels of formality, and a lack of awareness towards professional readers.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. First, observation sheets and field notes documented student engagement and participation throughout the two cycles (Cohen et al., 2018). Second, semi-structured group interviews were conducted with six students and the collaborating teacher. These six students were selected based on variations in writing ability on pre-test, including students with low, moderate, and high ability, to obtain a broad range of experiences. Each interview session lasted approximately 40 to 50 minutes. The interviews took place before the intervention on February 4th 2025, after the intervention on March 21st 2025 for students and March 6th 2025 for teachers. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian so the students could feel free to express themselves.

Each interview was recorded, transcribed word for word, and translated into English for analysis (Bryman, 2016). Third, document analysis was conducted on the students' drafts at three time points: the pre-test, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2. Each draft was examined based on five qualitative aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and writing mechanics (Jacobs et al., 1981).

The intervention consisted of one reconnaissance phase and two learning cycles. The following table summarizes the schedule, duration, focus, and outcomes of each session.

Table 1. Summary of The Schedule, Duration, Focus and Outcome of The Sessions

Stages	Meeting	Date	Duration	Focus	Output
Reconnaissance	-	4th Feb 2025	-	Initial observation, pre-test, pre-interview	Pre-test draft
Cycle 1	1	10th Feb 2025	120 minutes	Building Knowledge in related fields	-
Cycle 1	2	11th Feb 2025	120 minutes	Text modelling, creating a LinkedIn profile	-
Cycle 1	3	13th Feb 2025	120 minutes	Collaborative text construction	Post-test 1 draft
Cycle 2	4	18th Feb 2025	120 minutes	Tailoring cover letters to job openings	-
Cycle 2	5	20 Feb 2025	120 minutes	Independent text construction	-
Cycle 2	6	24th Feb 2025	120 minutes	Revision, peer review, and self-assessment	Post-test 2 draft

As shown in the table, each cycle develops students' knowledge step by step before guiding them toward more independent writing.

The data were analysed thematically following the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), supported coding procedures by Saldaña (2021) and the criteria of (Nowell et al. (2017). For example, student quotes regarding the differences between digital resumes and cover letters were initially coded as "contrasts between general and specific self-presentation." This code was grouped into the category "audience awareness." This category contributed to the theme "from generic writing to audience-conscious writing."

The study's credibility was strengthened through triangulation of sources, time, investigators, and theory. Investigator triangulation involved the researcher and collaborating teachers collecting and analysing data independently before discussing the results together. This procedure aligns with the five criteria for action research validity according to Anderson et al. (1994) as cited in Burns (1999), namely democratic, outcome, process, catalytic, and dialogic validity.

This study was authorized by the university and SMKN 4 Yogyakarta prior to data collection. Before the interviews and data collection began, students were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to decline participation without any consequences for their grades. Verbal permission was obtained directly from the students before the interviews took place. Participation in the interviews and the use of draft writings for research purposes were part of regular classroom learning activities. Student identities were protected using numerical code names, such as Student 1 through Student 31.

3. Result

This section presents findings organized according to the three research questions. Writing development for RQ1 was investigated from the pre-intervention stage through Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Classroom participation for RQ2 is discussed in the subsection on improvement in participation. Challenges that remained for RQ3 are discussed in the final

subsection. Document analysis was conducted on students' drafts at three time points: the pre-test, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2. Each draft was examined across five qualitative aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and writing mechanics.

The process of data reduction and categorization resulted in five main themes. The following table summarizes these themes along with their patterns and sources of evidence.

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Illustrative Evidence from Thematic Analysis

Theme	Key Patterns	Illustrative Source
Generic to audience-aware writing	Content became more organized and audience-focused	Document analysis (pre-test, Cycle 1, Cycle 2 drafts)
Growing classroom engagement	Participation moved from passive to active peer discussion	Classroom observation
Emerging professional identity	Greater awareness of audience and the job market	Interviews (teacher and student)
Persistent linguistic difficulty	Grammar and vocabulary were still limited	Document analysis (Cycle 2 drafts)
Technological and affective barriers	LinkedIn unfamiliarity and hesitation to write independently	Semi-structured interviews (students)

As shown in the table, these five themes are interrelated and develop over time, as described in the following subsections.

Before LinkedIn: Uncertainty and Undifferentiated Writing

Before the intervention began, classroom observations revealed a quiet but largely passive learning atmosphere. Students appeared to pay close attention to the teacher's explanations. Their attitudes changed drastically once they were asked to write on their own. Only a few students dared to share their ideas voluntarily. Some chose to wait for the teacher to provide example sentences first. No digital tools were used at this stage where students wrote entirely in their notebooks.

In pre-intervention interviews, several students admitted they did not yet understand the difference between a cover letter and a resume. All students interviewed reported that they had never written a cover letter, either in Indonesian or in English. When asked which part was the most difficult, the students' answers consistently pointed to the English language itself. One student estimated his confidence level at only 40 percent, which he related to his lack of prior experience.

This uncertainty was also evident in the students' pre-test drafts. Most of the writing resembled brief self-introductions rather than structured letters. The writings included only the student's name, age, school, and a general desire to work, without mentioning the position being applied for or formal elements such as an address and date. The vocabulary used was still limited to everyday words. Grammatical errors included the omission of articles and verb forms that did not fit the context.

Creating Professional Content Through LinkedIn Profiles

In Cycle 1, students were introduced to this genre through model texts before creating a LinkedIn account and drafting a profile that included their educational background and internship experience. Document analysis in this cycle showed a relatively clear improvement compared to the pre-test. Many drafts began to include an address, date, and opening salutation, bringing the format closer to that of a business letter. Despite this, the main content of the letters was still relatively brief, limited to mentioning internship duties

without further explanation. Vocabulary began to reflect the professional world, such as “internship,” “receptionist,” “Front Office,” and “housekeeping,” though these terms were still repeated in simple sentences.

Interview data showed that students viewed the process of translating information from their LinkedIn profiles into cover letters as something that clarified their understanding. One student explained that digital profiles like LinkedIn feel general, while cover letters require a more specific self-description.

“A digital resume is general in content. So, when we write a cover letter, we become more specific in describing ourselves.” (Student 2, item 14)

A Progress from Templates to a Professional Voice

In Cycle 2, students worked in groups to adjust their cover letters to specific job positions on LinkedIn, followed by peer and self-assessments before submitting their final drafts. Analysis of the final drafts revealed the most significant progress during the study. The 28 students or we could say in 90 percent out of the 31 analysed produced final letters with all required components. The remaining three students still failed to include a formal closing or signature in their final drafts.

These changes were evident in individual drafts. One student’s pre-test opening read, “I want to work in a hotel. My name is Aura. I am a student at SMKN 4 Yogyakarta.” This text did not mention any internship experience. In the final draft, the same student wrote, “I completed a six-month internship at -In Hotel in the Food and Beverage Service department. I serve food and drinks, prepare tables before breakfast, and help guests when they need something.” This change reflects a shift from a generic self-introduction to a more organized, experience-based letter. However, grammatical errors still appear, such as the phrase “prepare table” and the use of “responsibility” instead of “responsible.”

A similar pattern is evident in another student’s draft. In the pre-test, the student simply wrote, “I want a job in a hotel. My name is Azka. I study at SMKN 4 Yogyakarta.” In the final draft, the writing improved to, “I had an internship at Victoria Hotel in the Front Office for six months. My job was helping guests check in, answering telephone calls, and giving information to guests.” This development demonstrates a more complete structure as well as a more evidence-based argument about the student’s relevance to the position applied for.

The students’ vocabulary developed to cover more appropriate terms, such as “customer service” and “communication.” Grammatical accuracy improved but still presented a challenge, with common errors including the lack of articles and the use of singular forms for nouns that should be plural.

Some students described this stage as the point when the connection between LinkedIn and the cover letter felt truly useful, since they were writing for real job openings.

“It was very helpful. We learned what the structure and content should be like.” (Student 4, item 11)

Increased Engagement Throughout the Cycle

Classroom observations documented a change in participation that aligned with changes in students’ writing. During the reconnaissance stage, student participation was still minimal and entirely teacher-directed. Entering Cycle 1, students began to feel confident enough to ask questions and engage in discussions, and were willing to revise their drafts based on feedback. By Cycle 2, most students were able to compose and revise cover letters with significantly less guidance from the teacher.

“The class has become more active. They ask each other questions and help one another. There’s cooperation, teamwork, and peer feedback. That’s also good for their character.” (Teacher, item 9)

Students attributed this increased participation to the relevance of the assignment. Some noted that learning through a real-world platform made this activity feel different from typical school assignments.

"It's fun and helpful because we'll definitely use this technology in the future."
(Student 4, item 13)

"Learning with technology isn't boring." (Student 1, item 13)

Students' Perceptions of Professional Self-Presentation

Students also described a broader shift in their understanding of professional communication. Some students stated that they were beginning to realize the extent of the working environment, a change that was also directly observed by the teacher.

"They're starting to understand that the working world is wide. They see that there aren't just one or two types of jobs, and that extends their perspective." (Teacher, item 16)

Students also related LinkedIn to future benefits, such as job searches and resume preparation. A number of students reported that awareness of the visibility of their LinkedIn profiles has made them pay closer attention to how they present themselves professionally.

"Since our LinkedIn profiles can be seen by many people, we have to present ourselves better and more professionally." (Student 5, item 13)

By the end of the intervention, students who had previously been confused about the difference between a cover letter and a resume were now able to explain the differences between the two on their own.

"Now we know how to properly create a cover letter and a digital resume, including their structure." (Student 3, item 16)

These findings indicate an awareness of professional identity that is beginning to develop, though it does not necessarily reflect a profound transformation of identity.

Persistent Challenges

Although significant progress was made, several difficulties remained unresolved by the end of Cycle 2. Grammatical accuracy remained the most persistent issue, particularly regarding tense consistency and article usage. Students' vocabulary remained relatively limited, though it had become more relevant to the professional world. The ability to expand on arguments also presented a challenge, as many drafts merely listed qualifications briefly without supporting details.

A second difficulty relates to technology and the writing process. Some students were not yet familiar with LinkedIn, so they required additional assistance to sign up and understand English-language job postings. Translating profile information into coherent paragraphs proved more difficult than initially anticipated. Peer feedback, which was intended to support revisions, was in practice often superficial and focused more on grammar than on the content of ideas.

Affective factors also influenced students' readiness to work on tasks requiring a higher degree of independence. Some students admitted to feeling hesitant when asked to write without examples and tended to return to a strict template-based approach. This pattern suggests that students' confidence in independent writing still requires ongoing attention, in addition to linguistic and technological support.

4. Discussion

LinkedIn as an Authentic Bridge Between Writing in the Classroom and Writing for the Workplace

The developmental patterns evident in the Results section align with the view that learners develop genre competence most effectively through direct interaction with authentic examples of the target genre. Such competencies are not acquired simply by studying abstract rules (Swales, (1990). This intervention requires students to create a real LinkedIn profile and then adapt its content into a formal letter. In this way, students are placed directly within the communicative context of the genre, rather than working on a cover letter as a single exercise in isolation.

This finding aligns with Nursani and Hardjanto (2024) analysis of rhetorical movements, which identifies the LinkedIn profile summary as a structured genre composed of self-presentation movements. When students create their own profiles, they appear to internalize some of the genre's logic. This logic is carried through, although not yet perfectly, into the cover letters they write. The finding that some students explicitly distinguish between the general nature of self-presentation on a LinkedIn profile and the more specific self-presentation in a cover letter (Student 2, item 14) indicates that this genre awareness is not a coincidence. This awareness appears to be a direct result of the learning activity itself.

This study did not include a control condition. The developments described above therefore should be linked to the entire genre-based learning environment supported by LinkedIn, rather than to LinkedIn as a standalone variable. This environment includes teacher scaffolding, genre modeling, peer collaboration, and repeated writing processes. Without a control condition, it is difficult to determine the separate contribution of LinkedIn relative to these other learning components.

The emerging professional identity awareness among students is evident in the Results section. This awareness is reflected in students' understanding of the career risks related to public profiles and in their broader understanding of the professional world. These findings align with research on LinkedIn profiles outside an educational context, which shows that profile structure helps shape how a person is perceived professionally (Aguado et al., 2019; van de Ven & Bogaert, 2017). The students in this study appear to be beginning to acquire this kind of self-presentation competency, though in a simple form.

This pattern can also be interpreted through the lens of professional identity construction, which explains that learners begin to picture themselves as future members of a professional community and adjust their language to fit that role (Norton, 2013). In other words, students are starting to develop an initial mastery of persuasive skills, namely learning to construct convincing arguments about themselves through writing (Wallace et al., 2019). This skill is closely related to the rhetorical strategies used by professionals in the broader workplace (Zaini et al., 2022).

Engagement as a Result of Authentic, Real-World Tasks

The increase in classroom participation observed in the Results section aligns with research showing that collaborative digital writing environments can improve both performance and motivation together. Damayanti et al. (2021) found that peer feedback via digital platforms encourages more active engagement in writing tasks. Lina (2022) reported a similar pattern, noting that drafting job application materials using digital tools improved both the process and the final outcome.

The findings of this study add a new perspective. Some students related their engagement not only to the novelty of digital tools but also to their usefulness and relevance in the future (Student 4, item 13). This suggests that students' engagement with digital writing platforms may depend just as much on the platform's relevance to the real world as on its interactive nature.

Persistent Linguistic, Cognitive, and Affective Barriers

Although progress was made, the challenges remained at the end of Cycle 2 indicate limitations that cannot be fully resolved by authentic materials and genre exposure alone. These findings are consistent with those of Nova & Koerniawaty (2021) who found that grammatical errors were still present in vocational high school students' job application letters, even though the content and organization of the writing had improved. This finding also aligns with research on genre-based approaches in EFL classrooms, which shows that insufficiently explicit scaffolding can lead students to merely imitate surface structures without understanding the logic behind them (Liu & Chen, 2012).

The lack of depth in most of the peer feedback in this study serves as a clear example. Students were willing to comment on spelling and punctuation but rarely addressed the content or organization of their peers' ideas. Peer assessment therefore requires more explicit guidance to function as a meaningful source of revision.

The technological and affective challenges identified in the Results section also indicate that authentic digital platforms introduce their own level of complexity as well as educational benefits. This pattern aligns with broader critiques of authentic digital platforms in education. Such critiques highlight that these tools can lead to increased cognitive load, gaps in digital literacy access, and a growing preference for templates over self-generated language (Selwyn, 2017). This critique provides an important context for the findings of this study, as it suggests that the emerging barriers are not simply weaknesses in the intervention's design but rather consequences intrinsic to the use of such authentic platforms.

A genre-based approach provides such structure during the directly guided stages of each cycle. Students' hesitation when working independently suggests that guidance needs to be extended to more self-directed stages of the writing process, particularly for learners with lower initial confidence in English.

Another point to consider is why student engagement increased even though their grammatical accuracy was not yet perfect throughout both cycles. One possible explanation is this engagement was driven not by the ease of the tasks, but by the relevance students experienced. Students who still struggle with tenses and articles still consider this activity worth the effort, as it relates to something they anticipate needing soon. The authenticity in this case is not a shortcut that makes writing easier, but an anchor of motivation that makes the difficulties they face feel more meaningful.

Pedagogical Implications

Teachers considering a similar approach could plan their instruction in three phases: before, during, and after the intervention. Before introducing LinkedIn, teachers should assess students' basic digital literacy. A brief technical orientation should also be provided so that unfamiliarity with the platform did not compete with the writing task itself.

During the intervention, an explicit and structured peer-feedback protocol should accompany peer and self-assessment activities. This protocol can take the form of a structured checklist that addresses content and organization, not just spelling and punctuation. Ongoing and targeted grammar instruction should also be provided, focusing on common error patterns, such as missing articles and tense inconsistencies.

After the intervention, teachers should offer opportunities for independent writing in a step-by-step method. Models and templates should be introduced slowly, so that students' growing engagement and awareness of their audience are balanced by an equal level of independence and confidence in producing original texts.

These findings suggest that LinkedIn functions not as a standalone teaching tool, but as an authentic context where genre-based, feedback-oriented learning become more meaningful for students. Its primary value lies in its ability to close the gap between classroom writing and the communicative challenges of the professional world. Its limitations suggest that explicit language instruction, structured peer-feedback training, and ongoing affective support remain necessary besides the platform itself.

5. Conclusion

This qualitative case study examines how LinkedIn integrated into genre-based learning shaped the development of vocational high school students as writers of job application letters. The study also examined their classroom engagement and the challenges they faced. Over two cycles, students' writing progressed from informal, undifferentiated self-introductions to more complete, logically structured, and reader-responsive letters. Classroom engagement shifted from passive participation to active inquiry, peer support, and the ability to draft independently.

Working with authentic LinkedIn profiles and job postings also fostered a stronger professional identity and audience awareness compared to conventional textbook-based approaches. The challenges related to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, elaboration of qualifications, technological familiarity, the quality of peer feedback, and confidence in independent writing remained difficult to fully achieve even after two cycles.

These findings suggest that authentic digital platforms like LinkedIn could enrich writing instruction in vocational schools. These platforms do not replace explicit language instruction. Instead, they provide real-world communicative contexts made genre-based and feedback-oriented learning more meaningful. Teachers adopted a similar approach need to anticipate the need for clear peer-feedback practice, long-term support for grammar and vocabulary, and structured guidance toward more independent writing. The platform's authenticity alone does not automatically resolve these challenges.

This study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single class at a single vocational school over a relatively short period, limiting the ability to generalize the findings to other contexts. The qualitative case study design also precludes statistical modelling. Close collaboration between the researcher and the classroom teacher was beneficial for triangulation but introduced the potential for shared bias that might not have arisen had an independent observer been introduced.

Future research could expand on this study through long-term interventions, involving more than one class or school, and examining in greater depth how explicit peer-feedback training affects the quality of students' revisions. Combining this process-oriented qualitative approach with more strict quantitative measures would also help clarify the link between increased engagement, identity, and measurable improvements in writing performance.

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