



Engaging Japanese Pre-Service Teachers in EFL Through Creative Writing and Service Learning : Lessons from a Book Project

メタデータ	言語: Japanese 出版者: 兵庫教育大学 公開日: 2025-10-01 キーワード: reflective practice, reluctant learners, project-based learning, service learning 作成者: Kuroda, Joan McGinley メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15117/0002000656

Engaging Japanese Pre-Service Teachers in EFL Through Creative Writing and Service Learning: Lessons from a Book Project

Kuroda Joan McGinley*

This paper documents an action research project conducted in a compulsory university English writing course for pre-service teachers. Aiming to engage reluctant learners, the course centered on a collaborative project in which students created original choose your own adventure books—also known as gamebooks—for elementary school children in Cambodia. While the project revealed significant challenges—including low English proficiency, uneven group dynamics, and overreliance on AI—student reflections also uncovered unexpected motivation, creativity, and a strong sense of audience awareness. Using a reflective practice framework, the author analyzes both student outcomes and personal teaching growth, highlighting the emotional and pedagogical tensions of teaching disengaged learners. The paper concludes with planned modifications for future iterations of the project, including a simplified story design, increased language scaffolding, and clearer bilingual support. This study demonstrates the value of reflection and practitioner inquiry in navigating the complex realities of language teaching and in reimagining writing instruction as a purposeful and human-centered process.

Key words : reflective practice, reluctant learners, project-based learning, service learning

1. Introduction

Each semester, I walk into a classroom full of students who clearly do not want to be there. They are often disruptive, rude and have difficulty with completing and submitting simple assignments. As the instructor, I often find myself asking, 'What am I doing here?' especially as someone teaching English as native speaker. Teaching English writing to reluctant learners in a compulsory university course presents a dilemma for instructors: how to engage students in learning a skill they do not seem to value. Traditional methods— such as memorizing vocabulary and grammar— have contributed to varying degrees of linguistic resources in students who have studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL), however there seems to be a lack of opportunities for students to use this knowledge in meaningful, communicative ways.

These courses can be disheartening for both students and instructors. In an attempt to reframe English writing as a purposeful and communicative act, a project-based learning approach incorporating a service-learning component was implemented. The aim of this compulsory writing course for second-year university students was to create a choose your own adventure¹ (CYOA) book—otherwise known as a gamebook—for an underfunded elementary school in rural Cambodia. Service learning, in this context, refers to learning activities designed to meet real community needs (Felten & Clayton, 2011) while fostering student engagement and reflection.

The idea for this book project was introduced to me by a colleague who had previously participated in a volunteer initiative with the school and continued to support it after the official project concluded. As the instructor of these compulsory writing courses—teaching students who are less than enthusiastic about learning English writing skills and increasingly reliant on AI translation— I saw this project as a chance to engage learners. The project not only provided a real audience and purpose for their writing, but also served as a small form of humanitarian aid. As pre-service teachers, I hoped students would see a meaningful connection between developing their English writing skills and their future role as educators.

This project was also personally significant. It helped alleviate a creeping sense of burnout that can come from repeatedly teaching students who show little interest in the course content. Burnout is often characterized as mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion (Mahmoodi-Sharebabaki, 2019; Watts & Robertson, 2011), but it also stems from a lack of perceived meaning in one's work (van Manen, 1990). When students show satisfaction with their learning, teachers also experience greater satisfaction with their work (Lackritz, 2004). Conversely, persistent student disengagement may lead educators to question the purpose of their teaching, contributing to teacher burnout.

Difficult teaching situations—such as working with reluctant learners— can lead teachers to question their

* 兵庫教育大学大学院教育実践高度化専攻言語系教科マネジメントコース 講師

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practices, professional skills, and even career choices. While this doubt may feel discouraging, it can also serve as the catalyst for a reflective inquiry. It is through the process of investigating and making sense of such uncertainty that meaning is added to experience. In this way, reflective thinking becomes not only a personal practice but also a method of inquiry—one that resembles research in its systematic search for understanding.

Reflective practice is an approach to professional development and classroom inquiry that foregrounds the teacher's lived experience. While theory plays an important role, it primarily serves to inform future actions and to clarify questions teacher-researchers have about their environment and practices; it does not dictate decisions made in the classroom. Reflective practice can function as a stand-alone process for examining long-held beliefs (Mezirow, 1990), a medium for connecting practice with theory (Schön, 1983), or a method of gathering and interpreting data within research frameworks such as in action research (Rodgers, 2002; Finlay, 2002). Ultimately, the role reflective practice plays is determined by the teacher-researcher.

This paper presents the first iteration of an action research study exploring the effects of a gamebook-writing project in a compulsory English writing course for pre-service teachers. It aims to document how project-based learning with a service component can shift student engagement, provide purpose to writing, and support teacher well-being through meaningful classroom practice.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Reflective Practice as Inquiry

Reflection questions—and transforms—the way we think by uncovering and challenging hidden beliefs, habits, and routines that often go unrecognized until disrupted by an unexpected outcome. According to Dewey (1910), reflective thinking begins with “a state of perplexity, hesitation, [and] doubt” and leads to “an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief” (p.9). Contrary to the common assumption that growth and transformation must be marked by change, reflective practice aims for deeper understanding even when long-held beliefs and routines remain intact.

Dewey was also a proponent of localized research by teachers investigating their teaching environments and he is considered one of the originators of the concept of action research. In fact, he criticized the overreliance of theory in research, particularly with standardized measurement

overriding experience in education (Cunningham, 2017).

However, not all experiences are meaningful. Dewey (1916) points out that some experiences are little more than “trial and error”—actions taken without much thought that don't lead to deeper understanding. In contrast, reflective experience involves thinking carefully about what happened and why. He outlines five key features of this kind of thinking: it begins with uncertainty, moves toward an initial interpretation (hypothesis), carefully examining the situation, considering alternative explanations, and coming up with an action plan (p. 176). In short, not all action leads to real learning, and not all experience is significant—only experiences that are reflected upon can become sources of insight.

2.2 Experiential learning

John Dewey (1916) argues that teaching methods should prioritize students' ability to think. By contextualizing learning as a practical endeavor, students are able to connect previous skills, information, and training to develop the ability to think. To facilitate this type of learning experience, Dewey proposes an approach that “give[s] the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connections; learning naturally results” (p. 181).

Task-based learning, project-based learning, and service learning are pedagogical approaches that emphasize the core features of experiential learning through participation, active engagement, and real-world content.

3. Teaching Context

3.1 Course Profile

Reflective thinking has been an integral part of my teaching practice for several years which has helped me become more attuned to the needs of the reluctant learners who enroll in this compulsory English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course year after year. While each cohort of students is different, they tend to share some common characteristics: they are cheerful, a bit rambunctious, creative, and have limited practical English skills. Although a few students may hold an Eiken Level 2 certificate—at least one student in this class did—the overall confidence and ability to produce English was quite low.

Students in this course often struggled to understand English, and their receptive skills roughly matched the CEFR A1 descriptor for understanding announcements and instructions: “Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 51). However, it was not always clear whether their difficulty was due to comprehension issues

or a lack of confidence.

In terms of written production, the students' abilities aligned more closely with the CEFR A2 descriptor: "Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 66). It should be noted that their writing consistently contained grammatical errors, including the usage of these connectors.

The class was relatively large, with 27 second-year students, which added an additional layer of complexity in terms of classroom management, feedback, and individual support.

English communication courses are typically skills-based: students learn how to use English for communicative purposes. However, for many, these courses may be one of the first times they are asked to apply their skills in authentic contexts. In an effort to provide students with a more personal and meaningful experience—one that positions English as a tool for a greater purpose—I designed a project-based course in which students created an original gamebook in English.

Since the students were not beginning English learners, and had sufficient linguistic resources to "produce simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they lived and what they do" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 67), they were capable of meeting the CEFR A1 creative writing descriptors. Theoretically, this meant they should be able to produce short, simple stories for elementary school-aged children.

As pre-service teachers who will graduate with a license to teach in Japanese elementary schools—where English is part of the national curriculum—I wanted to create an opportunity for students to connect their English learning efforts with a tangible goal. The project culminated in a book to be gifted to an underserved elementary school in Cambodia offering a sense of purpose and audience beyond the classroom.

As mentioned earlier, I was introduced to the book project by a colleague and was grateful for the opportunity to adapt the content to fit the goals of my English communication class for pre-service elementary school teachers.

3.2 Storytelling and Gamebooks

Many scholars have argued that storytelling is central to human experience (Bruner, 1986; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). I, too, believe that to tell a story is to be human.

For EFL students who see English as a way to connect with people from around the world, to share their culture, and broaden their horizons, storytelling through creative writing offers a way to express themselves. It makes grammar and

vocabulary more meaningful and enjoyable, thereby engaging learners who may be frustrated by traditional approaches.

Gamebooks are a type of interactive fiction that allows readers to make choices throughout the story that affect the outcome. The structure of a gamebook demonstrates cause-and-effect relationships, as each decision leads to a different storyline or ending.

Gamebooks were chosen for this project because the elementary school in Cambodia, which was the intended recipient, did not have books for their library. The interactive format increases the likelihood that children would read the books multiple times, as each reading could offer a new experience.

For the university students creating the books, the project presented a unique challenge: they had to imagine and write multiple interconnected short stories rather than a single linear narrative. Working in groups of three, students were provided with a branching diagram that guided them in planning eight different endings. This structure encouraged collaboration, careful planning, and creativity.

4. Action Research

4.1 Definition and Purpose

Action research is a form of practitioner research and professional development that supports teachers in solving real classroom problems through systematic reflection and iterative change. Kemmis (2009) explains the aims of action research as to "change practices, people's understandings of their practices, and the conditions under which they practice" (p.2), by prioritizing classroom experiences. Nunan (2001) describes action research as an inside-out approach to professional development with teacher-researchers engaging in inquiry over the medium to long-term. In contrast to positivist research, which focuses on prediction or prescribing solutions, action research, as a kind of localized research, aims to bridge theory and practice for teacher-researchers. Indeed, Nunan (2001) argues that "...classrooms are too complex for us to control all the variables in the manner prescribed by experimental research." (p. 201).

4.2 Action Research Cycle

Action research begins with a problem or a troubling situation. Initial data such as classroom observations or student work is collected to better understand the issue which can be developed into a hypothesis. Once the problem is more clearly defined, an intervention or change in teaching practice can be applied and the effects evaluated. The action research cycle closely mirrors the reflective practice cycle including

the formulation of a hypothesis and ongoing evaluation. In this way, reflective thinking as described by John Dewey, shares important features with scientific inquiry (Rodgers, 2002). The final step of the research cycle involves reporting on outcomes and making further adjustments continuing the cycle of inquiry and improvement.

4.3 Book Project and Data Collection

Faced with a compulsory writing course of reluctant, low-proficiency learners, I turned to action research to make sense of the challenges I was experiencing in the classroom.

This approach aligned with my ongoing commitment to reflective practice and offered a structured yet flexible framework to explore how meaningful, student-centered activities might improve engagement and learning outcomes.

As I was most concerned with students' engagement with creating original stories and their attitude about learning English, I am using their weekly reflection papers, final reflection report and my classroom observations to answer the following research questions.

1. How does engaging in project-based and service learning influence the attitudes of reluctant learners in a compulsory EFL writing course?
2. How do students describe their engagement and sense of purpose during the project?
3. How can reflective action research support teachers in designing meaningful learning experiences for reluctant learners?

5. Implementation of the Project

5.1 Project Timeline and Preparation

Over the course of 15 weeks, students worked in small groups to create original gamebooks designed for elementary school EFL learners in Cambodia. The project aimed to foster creativity, ownership, and collaboration while reinforcing basic English writing skills.

To support this goal, students were guided through lessons on narrative structure, storymapping, and branching storyline design. Each class scaffolded the process with focused instruction and time for project development. The timeline below outlines the weekly content:

- Class 1: Introduction of course, student perspective about the purpose of learning English, class rules
- Class 2: Cambodia book project guest speaker
- Class 3: Brainstorm book ideas
- Class 4: Book proposal
- Class 5: Narrative structure, branching storyline

Class 6: Grammar and language

Class 7: Descriptive language

Class 8: Add supporting characters & repeating phrases

Class 9: Add visual aids

Class 10: Add hyperlinks to electronic copy

Class 11: Submit electronic copy for teacher and peer review

Class 12: Peer review

Class 13: Edit books

Class 14: Submit paper books for reading and discussion

Class 15: Course overview and discussion for reflection

5.2 Classroom Dynamics and Learner Beliefs

Before students began working on their book project, I designed early class activities to uncover their beliefs about learning English and to set a collaborative tone for the course. In the first class, I asked three guiding questions: "Why should you learn English?", "What is the best way to learn how to write in English?", and "What rules should we have about using translation apps and AI for writing assignments?"

As expected, many students emphasized traditional views of English learning. They recognized the benefits of English for their future jobs, international communication, and travel. When asked about learning methods, they focused on grammar study, vocabulary practice, and re-writing drafts. One group wrote about using their own ideas to write stories, one group suggested writing to pen pals, and one group suggested using apps to learn English writing skills.

When asked about class rules and how we can support our learning in this class, students responded with fairly typical answers about not laughing at mistakes, helping each other and doing their best. However, one student loudly and confidently announced to the class 「単位なし (x)」 that a class rule should be that everyone receives credit so that no one fails the course. The class erupted in a loud and surprised reaction, perhaps due to her boldness in saying aloud what they were all thinking. Her confidence surprised me too, but I cannot say that I disagreed with her. For me, as long as the students showed their effort, participated actively and actually created their gamebook, I could find no reason to fail them, especially since I was piloting a new approach and was not certain the level matched their needs.

5.3 Introducing the Project and Creative Process

In Class 2, the originator of the book project gave a lecture about her project and students were able to ask questions about the children and her experiences in facilitating the project. I also showed a short video provided by the guest speaker about the living conditions of the students and school

environment. I regularly shared photos of the children at the school to remind the students about who they were writing their book project for.

The students started working on their books beginning with Class 3, where they brainstormed ideas for their stories, through to Class 14 when they submitted their final paper books. I provided an example of a gamebook graded to the students' level and read the story aloud so they could experience the interactive nature of the format and understand that the reader was the main character of the book.

5.4 Obstacles in Implementation

5.4.1 Student Attitudes & Behavior

The classroom environment created by the students was challenging. Two groups in particular were consistently loud and rambunctious, and I also sensed an undertone of resentment towards me from some other groups. This made it difficult for me to recognize and support the groups who were working diligently to create their original stories. I monitored all the groups and offered encouragement and advice, often repeating the same feedback week after week. Two recurring issues stood out:

1. In many stories, the reader was not the main character.
2. There was an overreliance on AI technology that did not allow for an emotional connection to their writing.

Many groups also struggled with organizing their narratives, even after receiving guidance on creating story maps and setting details. Students were also often late to class, absent, and did not submit homework assignments which were mostly reflection papers and submissions for different stages of the book creation process.

This classroom environment exemplifies what Donald Schön (1983) describes as the “swampy lowlands” of professional practice—a messy, complex place filled with uncertainty in contrast to the “high ground,” a predictable, safe place where problems are solved by applying theory and technical skills. Like Dewey, Schön argues that real professional growth occurs through grappling with uncertainty. In this way, while my students were navigating an unfamiliar learning process, I was learning about reluctant learners and confronting the limitations—and possibilities—of my own teaching beliefs and strategies.

5.4.2 Overreliance on AI

One reason I chose a gamebook-creation project aimed at elementary school students was to activate the students' latent linguistic resources. Having had at least seven years of

English instruction, I believed they possessed the foundational knowledge about English to communicate, even if they lacked practice. I also reassured them regularly that mistakes were acceptable and that I would give a native-speaker check of their books before they were gifted to the children in Cambodia.

However, when reviewing their books during class it became clear that there was significant use of AI translation in their stories. To assess understanding, I asked students to read their sentences aloud. When they were unable to read the passage or had significant difficulty pronouncing the vocabulary, I would remind them that if they couldn't read their own work, beginner learners of English would also struggle to understand and enjoy the books. This was a common occurrence in each lesson.

Paper copies were due in week 14 so students could experience each other's books to replicate the experience of the children in Cambodia. After reading, students were asked to write brief reviews on MS Teams addressing the questions:

1. What do you think the authors want elementary school children to learn? What is their message?
2. What are some activities or ways teachers can use the book to help children learn English?

They were also instructed to choose a different book from the one they peer-reviewed. Although comments were brief, they showed that they had read the books and thought about how they could be incorporated into an English curriculum for elementary schools.

Out of ten groups:

- Five groups submitted their books on time
- Three groups went to print their books during class
- one group did not submit anything.
- one student dropped the class.

Many students used Google Lens to read their peers' stories. Three groups openly admitted to using AI to write their entire stories, and one group also used AI-generated illustrations.

6. Student Engagement and Outcomes

6.1 Final Report: Student reflections

I had observed so much negative and rebellious behavior throughout the course that it was difficult to see how the other students were faring. To better understand how students were experiencing this type of language learning, I assigned a final reflection report. Students were asked to answer six questions:

1. What was the most difficult part of this project for you?
2. How did you and your group decide on the story?
3. How did you use AI or translation tools?
4. Do you think you learned English from this project? Why or why not?
5. How do you feel about the book your group made?
6. What would you do differently next time?

Not surprisingly, the students wrote mostly about the difficulties they encountered, their use of AI, and how they felt about their final gamebook. They were quite forthcoming in their reflections, and their answers gave me some much-needed information and insight into how they experienced the course.

6.1.1 Difficulties

Few students mentioned using English as the main difficulty; instead, they focused on the challenge of actually creating a story—especially with a branching storyline design that required them to develop eight different endings.

“The most difficult part of this project for me was the story part. It is not that difficult just to think of a story, but thinking of 8 endings...It was interesting to branch out within the story, but it was difficult.” (TA)

Although only one student mentioned group dynamics, I suspect that more than one group experienced uneven collaboration. I was also surprised to learn from their reflections that most of their university assignments are usually individual tasks.

“I found it difficult to work as a team because many of the university assignments are individual...even if I was able to follow the plan, it was no good if my teammates were not able to complete their tasks.” (OA)

6.1.2 AI Tools

There were many comments about the use of AI for writing in English. One student from a group that had openly and proudly announced their reliance on AI commented:

“I saw English in the project, but I don’t think much of it. Because I rely on translation tools.” (SA)

Some students admitted using AI to translate their story content from Japanese to English, but also explained that it

was because of their low English proficiency. As mentioned earlier, the biggest challenge for many students was creating the story—especially one with a branching structure and multiple endings. For these students, developing the story in Japanese already required significant effort. Once that hurdle was overcome, they relied on AI tools to help them with their English. In this sense, AI was not used to replace the creative process, but to support their ability to communicate their ideas in a second language.

“Tools such as AI were used to correct writing. However, due to my poor English ability, [almost everything was] corrected. However, compared to the usual situation of doing nothing, I can say that it was effective.” (HA)

One student from the group that submitted their gamebook, including AI-generated illustrations, reconsidered their usage of AI:

“We used AI to translate into English. However, as our teacher pointed out, the AI translation lacked liveliness and disrupted the flow of the story... AI included difficult words that even we didn’t know... after receiving feedback, we changed our approach. Instead of relying entirely on AI for translation, we first translated the text ourselves and then used AI to check for mistakes.” (KA)

Although I had initially felt disappointment and frustration about the overuse of AI, reading these reflections helped me see that many students felt overwhelmed and unsure of how else to manage the language demands of the project.

6.1.3 Reflections on Final Book

The students were just as frustrated and uncertain as I was during the course of creating the books. Some expressed regret over their heavy use of AI or lack of teamwork. However, the overwhelming consensus was one of pride and satisfaction in the final product. Many felt they had created something meaningful for the children in Cambodia.

One group in particular stood out. It was the group I had been most worried about. They had been disruptive throughout the course— frequently late or absent, and often loud during class— but they submitted a charming, original gamebook. It had not been written using AI and had colorful, hand-drawn illustrations. The story was easy to follow, imaginative, and engaging.

One of the students from this group—the same student who had once declared that everyone should receive a passing

grade— wrote:

“I think the book we made in our group today turned out very good...We took our time to think about it from the beginning and I'm really looking forward to seeing how the text we created will be conveyed to Cambodian children and how they will enjoy it. I want to see Cambodian children reading our picture book.” (SD)

7. Reflections and Teacher Learning

I felt frustration with the students' attitude throughout the course. The obvious and excessive use of AI in the writing course was especially concerning. One comment that stayed with me came from the student who wrote, “I saw English in the project, but I don't think much of it. Because I rely on translation tools.” Though initially disappointing to read, this comment revealed just how normalized AI translation tools have become—not only in students' daily lives, but also in their education. It reminded me of another comment from a different class, where a student said it was their first time not using AI for an assignment. These moments revealed a shift in student habits and expectations that I had underestimated.

Throughout the semester, I also worried about the quality of the books the students were making. I had originally planned to have them bind their finished stories using a home binding kit, but by the end of the course, the stories still needed significant editing to be useful as materials for the children in Cambodia.

However, reading the students' final reflections gave me a different perspective. Despite their outward behavior, many students expressed a genuine desire to connect with their readers. They were eager to share aspects of Japanese culture, teach basic moral lessons, introduce interesting facts, and take the children on fun, imaginative adventures around the world. This deeper engagement with the purpose of the project helped me see their work in a new light.

I also came to realize that the anxiety and embarrassment students felt due to their low proficiency needed to be met with less pressure and more compassion. Linking their classroom behavior to anxiety about low performance gave me insight into how I might approach future cycles of reflective teaching. I now understand that the students were as frustrated as I was, and with good reason. They were being asked to perform at a level far beyond what they were used to: writing a complex story, designing a branching narrative, considering the needs of young readers in a foreign country, working on a group project, and being instructed entirely in English—many for the first time.

It would be easy to give up on such an ambitious project. It was stressful, time consuming, and at the time, not very rewarding. But after reading about the students' sense of accomplishment and seeing their final products, I believe this kind of work is worth pursuing. The vast majority of students expressed genuine pride in what they created, despite the difficulties they faced. That alone made the project meaningful to me as their instructor.

8. Plans for the Next Cycle

8.1 Storylines and Groupwork

My intention in assigning a branching storyline was to challenge students and to encourage collaboration by having them work in groups. However, I now recognize two main issues with this approach:

1. Creating multiple storylines was too complicated— even in their first language.
2. Groups of three often led to uneven collaboration.

To address these issues, I plan to reduce the number of story branches and shift to pair work instead of groups of three. Working in pairs will still allow for collaboration, language support, and peer brainstorming, while making project management more balanced and less overwhelming.

8.2 Language of Instruction

I was aware that some students were concerned about being taught by a native English speaker. In a previous class, students wrote about this issue, and, while many expressed enthusiasm, some questioned the effectiveness of native speakers teaching EFL. Their concerns included difficulty understanding instructions in English, struggling with the teacher's Japanese, and a lack of opportunity to ask questions in Japanese. Additionally, some students felt that teachers may not fully recognize the challenges Japanese learners face when studying English.

To address these concerns, I had already incorporated groupwork and regular peer/instructor feedback into the syllabus. However, after reading student reflections, I now see that I underestimated the challenge of being taught entirely in English. Moving forward, I will continue to teach and offer support in English, but I plan to revise all materials into clear, level-appropriate instructions in English with Japanese translations. This includes project instructions, assignment rubrics, and handouts. My goal is not to reduce input, but to reduce anxiety and build confidence through scaffolded bilingual support.

8.3 Use of AI Tools

The use of AI tools emerged as one of the most complex challenges of the course. Many students reported using AI due to their low confidence and limited proficiency, especially when translating their stories from Japanese to English. While I understand this impulse, it often led to a lack of authenticity, emotional connection and level appropriateness for the target audience.

To address this, I plan to create a sample gamebook with the students during class before they begin their own projects. This will model the process, build shared understanding, and give them more confidence to write in their own words. I also plan to provide examples of past student gamebooks and, if possible, videos of Cambodian children interacting with those books. These materials can help future students see the real purpose of their writing and feel more ownership over their work.

9. Conclusion

This study explored how a project-based, and a service-learning approach might shift the engagement and attitudes of reluctant EFL learners in a compulsory university writing course. While the process was fraught with challenges—uneven group dynamics, overreliance on AI, and visible student resistance—what emerged through student reflections was a deeper sense of care, creativity, and pride than I had initially perceived. Many students expressed a genuine desire to connect with their readers and take ownership of their work, even if their skills were limited. Through this project, I was reminded that student disengagement often masks anxiety and uncertainty, rather than only apathy. Reflective practice and action research helped me better understand both my students' struggles and my own teaching assumptions. Although the project was demanding, I believe it holds real potential for reimagining EFL writing instruction as a more meaningful, collaborative, and human process. I plan to continue this work with a renewed sense of purpose and greater awareness of how to support my learners— and myself— in the classroom.

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Acknowledgment

The author consulted OpenAI's ChatGPT during the writing process to clarify ideas, brainstorm content organization, and receive feedback on phrasing and structure. All final decisions about content, interpretation, and analysis were made by the author.

- 1 The phrase "choose your own adventure" is used here to refer to interactive, branching-path stories that allow readers

to make decisions which affect the narrative outcome. It is not affiliated with the *Choose Your Own Adventure*[™] book series originally published by Bantam Books.

