

《二语写作》第四辑

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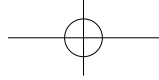
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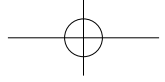
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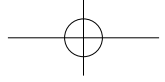
卷首语

近年来，国内二语写作研究方兴未艾，不同领域的理论被陆续引入并用于教学实践，但国际上新兴的超语（translanguaging）理论尚未得到足够重视。此外，过程写作法虽然在大学阶段的外语写作教学中得到广泛应用，但中小学教学语境下对其的关注还远远不够。超语写作理论在中国如何实现本土化？过程写作法如何有效融入中小学英语写作教学？上述问题鲜有研究涉猎，有待进一步探讨。

在此背景下，《二语写作》设立本期专刊，聚焦超语写作理论本土化和过程写作法在中小学英语写作教学中的运用，邀请美国佛罗里达大学Danling FU教授、上海交通大学Nathaniel T. MURRAY教授、美国得克萨斯大学Xiaodi ZHOU教授担任组稿专家，来自中美9所大学或机构的15位学者和一线教师为专刊撰稿。上述人员均参与并共同完成了一项中小学英语写作教学课程设计与实验研究项目，该项目以超语写作和过程写作法为理论基础，内容涉及上述理论在新编英语写作教学手册中的应用和本土化调整，并通过课堂教学实践进行了验证性研究。

本期专刊由10篇文章组成，分别从不同角度汇报了研究项目的重要意义、实施过程与研究成果。在引言部分，组稿专家首先介绍了每篇论文的研究方法和主要发现，阐明了研究成果对于外语写作教学的理论贡献和实践价值。最后的评述文章由世界英语教师协会（TESOL International Association）前任主席Ester DE JONG撰写，肯定了相关研究的多语角度和理论贡献，积极评价了研究成果对国内中小学英语写作教学的启示意义。

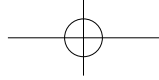
其余8篇文章均为研究论文，系统报告了研究项目的理论基础及其本土化、写作教学设计与课堂实践过程。其中，Nathaniel T. MURRAY等介绍了超语理论和过程写作理论，探讨了这些理论在教学材料编写和课堂实践中的指导作用。Danling FU等基于叙事分析方法考察了研究者与一线教师的深度合作过程，发现有效的课程实施需基于具体的教学条件和教学对象及时调整。Lin DENG等采用自传式民族志方法，讨论了教学材料编写中的挑战及应对策略，发现过程写作教学法在教学实践中具有灵活性，为英语老师和学生提供了有效的教学示范和实际学习经验。Rongrong DONG等从多角度分析了中小学英语教师参加教师培训后在写作教学理念层面的转变以及对超语理论的运用，研究发现教师学习



共同体对于个体教师的专业发展至关重要。Xiaochen DU等探究了一位中国英语教师尝试理解并实施过程写作教学法的过程，展示了过程写作教学法在我国英语写作教学中的潜力。Zexu XI等研究了一位初中英语老师在写作教学中的超语实践，结果表明教师的超语实践有助于英语写作教学的有效开展。Buyi WANG等探讨了多位英语教师对超语实践的态度和看法，发现教师需要摆脱语言分离的思维模式和单语理念，方可取得更好的教学效果。Xiaodi ZHOU等考察了一位小学生的英语写作学习过程，发现过程写作教学法和超语实践有助于提升初级双语使用者的英语写作能力。

本期专刊立足国内中小学英语写作教学，紧跟二语写作研究国际前沿，有关研究聚焦超语理论和过程写作教学法在教学实践中的融合，具有理论价值和实践意义。此外，本期专刊全景式展示了一项研究项目的理论设计、策划实施、研究成果等，在二语写作理论本土化和理论如何指导教学等方面提供了重要借鉴。

作为本刊特色，本辑整理出2021年7至12月国内出版和发表的与二语写作相关的著作与期刊文章，便于读者把握二语写作领域的最新进展和发展动态。



Editorial Introduction: Studies on the Intervention Design and Implementation

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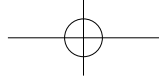
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Abstract: This article is a foreword to this special issue written by three guest editors to this volume. In addition to a presentation of the purpose and significance of the special issue on the teaching of English writing in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this editorial article provides an overview of each study included in this volume — its research approach, general findings and contribution to the field of teaching and researching on English writing in EFL contexts.

This special issue presents a series of designed experimental studies or formative experiences. These are flexible qualitative studies grounded in a pragmatist ontology which “aims at discovering workable instruction and relevant theory in the real world” (Reinking & Bradley 2008: 8). They involve intensive testing and modification of the research design itself as well as the implementation of the experiment. This special issue of the *Chinese Journal of Second Language Writing* with eight studies reports the design and implementation of the interventions on English writing instruction at the primary and secondary levels in China. This intervention is entitled the *Handbook of English Writing Instruction*, situated within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts in China. EFL is a universally required subject in the formal education of nearly all non-English speaking countries across the world. Therefore, even though these interventions and studies are situated in the Chinese context, they have potential implications for EFL education globally.

In today’s globalized world, English has become an important subject area. However, the traditional EFL curriculum often fails to meet the global digital literacy demands of the 21st century, in which writing competence is essential for effective communication and collaboration. The lack of training and resources in EFL writing instruction presents a critical issue in K-12 formal education throughout the world, as teachers of English encounter great difficulty in teaching English writing to their students (Ji 2019). Research shows that writing instruction for communicative purposes in EFL contexts at the K-12 level is scant across the world (Leki et al. 2008; Velasco & García 2014).

To address this problem, a team of literacy educators from universities and schools across China and the United States have collaboratively designed the *Handbook of English Writing Instruction* (hereafter *Handbook*) with separate editions for teachers



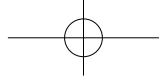
and students. This intervention project, specifically designed for teachers of English and students in grades 3-8 in China, where English writing is a key component of the language curriculum, intends to meet the education demands of the 21st century global literacies. These studies, conducted mostly by the design team members on various topics in EFL writing instruction with diverse research approaches, aim to fill the gap in the research on writing instruction for emergent bilingual students in EFL contexts across the world.

The volume starts with three articles on the theories, adaptation, and contextualization of the intervention design. The first article authored by Murray and his colleagues presents two contemporary literacy theories underpinning the intervention design: translanguaging pedagogy and process writing theories. In this article, the authors illustrate not only the core principles of translanguaging and process writing theories in which the intervention design is grounded, but also how these theories are applied to writing instruction within each unit of the *Handbook*. In addition, the authors also discuss how the theories are contextualized and applied to the teaching and learning situations in China. This study concludes that theories need to be reinterpreted, readjusted, and localized when put into practice. As stated in “Moving the Field Forward: Commentary” by Dr. de Jong in this issue, the past president of TESOL International Association:

The articles in this special issue engage deeply with two significant shifts in the EAL (English as Additional Language) field: (1) notions about English language competence, and (2) its relationship to students' entire linguistic repertoire. With a focus on EAL writing in the context of English language teaching in China, the empirically driven articles address current theory and practice from curriculum development to classroom practice from the perspective of the course/curriculum developers to those of teachers and students.

The second article authored by Fu and her colleagues reports on a study about the collaborative process during the design of the intervention. The detailed examples of collaboration between the design team and the frontline classroom teachers demonstrate the pragmatist ontology. The expertise and efforts from both university scholars and frontline teachers have made this intervention practical and appropriate for the intended audience, namely the students of grades 3-8. This study suggests that any workable classroom intervention needs a partnership between people at different levels in literacy education, and that their collaboration ensures quality work and contextualized and workable products.

The third article authored by Deng and her colleagues presents a study on the adaptation and contextualization process of the writers and language editors when composing the intervention units. The reflections from the writers of the units of the *Handbook* demonstrate their commitment and painstaking efforts to make each writing sample appropriate for students in China, and to closely relate these writing samples to

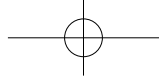


the students' lived experiences, developmental age, cognitive development, and English language proficiency. In addition, this study presents vivid accounts of the unit authors' composing experiences in the writing of their units. It also discusses the *Handbook's* language editors' work in revising the language of the writing samples. The experience of the unit authors and language editors suggests that any good writing involves multiple drafts — thinking, rethinking, searching and researching, to attain the author's intended outcomes. This is the core principle of the process writing theory which underpins the intervention.

The above three articles have presented a foundational overview of the intervention design both theoretically and practically. Grounded in theories that promote writing for thinking and authentic expressions, and maximizing the learning potential for students, the *Handbook* is designed to guide students in China to develop both writing competence and English language proficiency. With insider perspectives, the authors of these studies also help the readers understand the design process of the *Handbook* — a team effort that has produced quality work elucidating not only their knowledge and scholarship, but also their commitment and professionalism as literacy educators, writing instruction specialists, writers, and editors with their special attention to Chinese emergent bilingual writers.

Following these three articles are four articles that report actual experimental implementation and applications of the intervention. This implementation took place in a suburban school district in Shanghai, China. With the case study approach through reviewing classroom teaching videos, interviewing participants, and analyzing the students' writing samples, these studies present findings of how the teacher participants experienced a paradigm shift in their views and practices in the teaching of English writing. Simultaneously, they encountered ambivalence about the teaching innovation due to their current teaching realities, as well as challenges faced in their implementation of the intervention units.

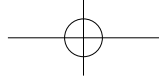
The fourth article authored by Dong and her colleagues reports on a study of three teachers of English in China: how their beliefs about the teaching of writing changed after they attended an onsite professional development workshop on translanguaging and process writing pedagogies provided by the intervention design team. The findings of the study show how a week-long onsite professional development helped the participant teachers make certain shift in their teaching philosophy and practice from a focus on language correctness to a focus on authentic communication and thinking in the teaching of writing. However, despite their positive response to the professional development and appreciation of process writing and translanguaging pedagogies, the participant teachers expressed their anxiety and ambivalence in the implementation of the innovative teaching approach. The implications of the study suggest that in order to help teachers improve their teaching, especially in trying out innovative teaching approaches, they need to have access to on-going and classroom situated professional development. They cannot just listen to “experts”, but should mutually share their ideas, trials and errors, and challenges and successes in their teaching.



The fifth article authored by Du and her colleagues presents a case study of a teacher of English in China. The study focused not only on her shift in perspective, but on her classroom practices in the teaching of writing using the process writing approach. The findings revealed how the teacher changed her perspective in the teaching of writing from solely for test-preparation to helping students develop their ideas and gain communicative competence as both writers and language learners. The data from the study show the depth of how the teacher's newly gained perspective enabled her to adapt a process writing approach to her teaching context, to meet the specific needs of her students. The research highlights the benefits of process writing, its potential to transform EFL writing instruction, and the challenges for implementing the process writing approach within the Chinese EFL context, where time constraints and class size are issues in the teaching of writing for authentic communication and meaningful expressions.

The sixth article authored by Xi and his colleagues reports another case study that explored the translanguaging practices of a teacher of English in a middle school in China. The findings of the study revealed that translanguaging pedagogy could facilitate teachers' writing instruction in EFL contexts: to explain and clarify, to reinforce, and to deepen students' thinking about writing. However, the study indicates that with the dominant monolingual orientation in EFL instruction and the test-driven mentality in education as a whole, translanguaging pedagogy, despite its benefits for emergent bilingual students to meet their learning needs, encounters significant challenges and resistance in its implementation in the teaching of writing, especially in EFL contexts. To implement any innovative teaching approach, teachers need both top-down assistance and grassroots collaboration within the school, as well as support from the community in order to truly enhance children's bilingual and biliteracy development through writing.

The seventh article authored by Wang and her colleagues presents a multiple-case study of three Chinese EFL teachers: their perceptions toward the use of Chinese in English writing instruction guided by translanguaging and process writing theories. In contrast to the article authored by Xi and his colleagues on one teacher's translanguaging practices, this study cross-examined three teachers' beliefs and practices in translanguaging pedagogy in their teaching of writing. Their cross-case study reveals that the three participant teachers had varied and divergent conceptions about adopting a translanguaging pedagogy. These divergences were largely due to their diverse beliefs in monolingualism and language purity in language instruction. The study points out that when adopting a translanguaging pedagogy in writing instruction, teachers need to deviate from the language separation mindset and strict monolingual ideologies which view learners' home language as interference in their additional language learning. In addition, teachers also need to truly believe that the cultivation of students to become real writers requires teachers to make school writing for authentic communication and meaningful expressions, not simply for test preparation or language practice. Translanguaging enables students to learn, think, and express themselves at their full potential as they learn to write in a new language. This study proposes further study of the explicit connections between

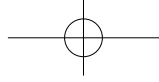


students' first language and their new language writing development.

These four articles focus on EFL teachers in China: their beliefs and practices with translanguaging or process writing pedagogies in their teaching of writing. The common thread in these studies is that all the teachers saw the merits of translanguaging and process writing approaches in the teaching of writing to emergent bilingual students, but they were all constrained to some extent by monolingual ideologies and challenges within their own teaching contexts, which are dominated by high test demands, both from within the school and from the society as a whole.

The last article authored by Zhou and his colleagues shifts our attention to young emergent bilingual children — how they learned to write in English in a three-month weekend tutoring program. Though the report focuses primarily on one child's growth in English writing and language development, the study also involves multiple young emergent bilingual writers. The research adopted a mixed research method with an experimental and comparative approach to the study of writing instruction with a translanguaging and process writing approach, which contrasts with that of a more traditional approach. This comparative study uses detailed evidence to argue that through the translanguaging and process writing approach, the young emergent bilingual writer was able to produce richer and more personally meaningful work than those children who learned from a traditional approach in their writing, producing bland, impersonal, and formulaic compositions. The study highlights the value in encouraging EFL writers to follow the writing process with peer support and assistance and addresses the importance of viewing all of students' languages as resources in EFL writing instruction.

These eight studies were conducted on the design and experiment implementation of the intervention — the *Handbook of English Writing Instruction* before its publication in late 2021. Most of the data, except the one on young children's writing development, were collected through online interviews, as well as through the analysis of teaching videos and students' writing samples. In addition to the significant findings presented from these studies on the implementation of an innovative intervention in the teaching of English writing in EFL contexts, two important additional discoveries manifested themselves through these studies. The first is the significant roles that the teacher participants played, in both the design and the implementation of the intervention. Despite the time limitations and high stress from teaching, they took risks to try a new teaching approach for the benefit of their students. Their voices and actions contributed to the intervention's design and implementation. The second is how to conduct classroom situated research through technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives and work tremendously over the past two years and has forced us to think innovatively as researchers and collaborators. Communication through technology has closed the vast distances between people and nations and has enabled people to traverse physical borders to connect and collaborate efficiently and effectively. Throughout the course of the intervention design and experimental implementation, most of the collaborations and data collection activities were conducted through Zoom meetings, as well as WeChat or e-mail exchanges. Through



communication technology, the authors/researchers of this special issue have managed to cross time, languages, cultures and geographies to collaborate with local teachers to create a workable intervention to improve English writing instruction and educate children with the competence, knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the twenty-first century digital global literacies.

In addition, the variety of research methodologies within this collection of studies employed by the researchers featured in this volume, which include conceptualization, content analysis, single- or multi-case studies, autoethnography and mixed methods with experiment and comparative study, renders this issue especially insightful and interesting. We are excited to invite our audience to engage in further discussion on the implications of this intervention in EFL writing instruction with innovative approaches that aim at preparing and empowering all children as competent bilingual and biliterate individuals cross the world to meet the demands of today's digital global literacies.

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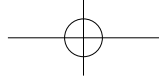
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Translanguaging and Process Writing Theories of the Intervention

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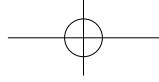
Abstract: Translanguaging and process writing theories have long been recognized within the language and literacy community as effective pedagogical approaches for developing communicative writing competences. Despite this, in China they have seldom been used as the pedagogical basis of textbooks and other instructional materials for academic writing instruction, even as the country places high importance on the study of communicative English writing in K-12 education. The present article reports on an innovative intervention project — the *Handbook of English Writing Instruction* that is being designed to address this need within the Chinese grades 3-8 context. Grounded in translanguaging and process writing theory, each of the *Handbook's* units is structured so as to take students through multiple drafts of the same essay, each time focusing on a different aspect of language or content, requiring students to write active reflections of the changes they made to each draft. This article examines the ways in which the theories of translanguaging and process writing shape the design of the *Handbook*. It then describes the process of drafting and editing the language and content of the *Handbook's* unit. The *Handbook* has completed its design phase, with the expectation that this intervention be undergoing constant revisions based on the piloting of individual grade units by teachers or students in China. The uniqueness of this project has opportunities but also challenges. On the one hand, it uses two literacy theories which had previously seldom been used as the basis for academic writing instructional materials in China. On the other hand, it faces the challenge of having little precedent on which to build.

Keywords: translanguaging; process writing; K-12; EFL; China

1. Introduction

In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, English has emerged as a lingua franca, with writing as the primary mode of communication (Phan 2020). However, the teaching of English writing for communicative purposes in countries where English is not the dominant language has been considerably lacking (Gil 2016). Teachers of English in mainstream K-12 settings often lack the professional development and resources as well as the institutional flexibility to implement communicative English writing pedagogies (Ruan et al. 2020).

To meet the demands of communicative English writing instruction in EFL contexts, a team of university researchers and educators in China and the US worked together to design a special intervention project, the *Handbook of English Writing Instruction* (the *Handbook*) whose pedagogy is based on contemporary theories of translanguaging and



process writing. This intervention specifically targets grades 3-8 in China, though its applicability could be explored in other contexts as well.

This article traces the initial design and conceptualization of this intervention, laying out the theoretical foundations of its structure and pedagogy. We explore the adaptation of the intervention to the Chinese context, and discuss its initial process of development and refinement, which was done using a formative experiment method. This discussion will pave the way for subsequent articles in this special issue, which will discuss the results of the pilot studies on the implementation of the intervention in EFL classrooms in China.

2. Theoretical Foundations

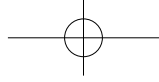
This intervention is grounded in translanguaging and process writing theories. These two contemporary theories have been gaining prominence in the field of literacy education since the 1980s.

2.1 Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a theory in bilingualism which states that languages are connected in the brain, such that using two languages simultaneously actually improves a person's fluency in both (García & Otheguy 2021). Based on that premise, bilingual students should be allowed to use whichever language they wish to communicate in a given situation (Vallejo & Dooly 2020). Doing so will actually stimulate the students' cognitive abilities, which in turn will lead to improved new language acquisition (Ticheloven et al. 2019). It will also lead to greater lexical retrieval and vocabulary acquisition (Grewal & Williams 2018). This view contrasts with more traditional beliefs about bilingual education, which maintain that a person should eliminate the use of one language when attempting to learn another. Such a traditional view continues to be deeply entrenched in common bilingual education practice (Prinsloo & Krause 2019).

The contemporary concept of translanguaging has been traced back to Welsh educator Cen Williams (1994) who, in the early 1980s, attempted to revive the Welsh language as a complement instead of as a competitor to the dominant English language (Lewis et al. 2012). Williams's intent was to put decisions about language learning in the hands of the local community instead of the national government (García & Otheguy 2020). During that time, the psycholinguist François Grosjean (1989) also famously argued that using multiple languages simultaneously was not like switching between separate language systems, but was instead a unified language "system" in itself, one which activated neural capacities not available to monolingual speakers.

Although translanguaging theory initially evolved out of research into first language acquisition (e.g., Welsh and English were both treated by Williams as first languages), it quickly found its way into second language acquisition research. Early studies by Raimes (1979, 1985) and Zamel (1976, 1982) found that bilingual students drew on their first language when composing essays in their second language. The literature's general consensus during this time was that bilingual students could actually write higher quality essays in their second language when they had the opportunity to draw on their



first (Krapels 1990). For instance, they might write the initial draft or outline in their first language. Or in early drafts, they might use their first language to write out words and phrases that they did not yet know in their second.

Subsequently, translanguaging has come to be defined as a set of social practices. García and Wei (2014: 22) argued that translanguaging referred “not simply to a shift or a shuttle between two languages, but to the speakers’ construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the speakers’ complete language repertoire”. In other words, the whole concept of “language” is reinvented from a defined set of discrete rules and conventions (such as “Spanish” or “Chinese”) to anything a person says or utters in order to convey their point. This definition allows students to engage more in active and creative forms of communication instead of trying to fit one’s ideas into prefabricated grammar structures. Ironically, engaging in such active communication can eventually lead to better acquisition of those grammar structures and higher-order communication skills in multiple languages than if the students are trying to study those structures directly (Duarte 2019).

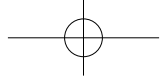
Translanguaging has also been approached from a critical social justice standpoint. Yilmaz (2019) summarized the benefits of translanguaging as providing students with the means to think more creatively, affirm their identities as multilinguals, and uproot structural inequalities that might result from the imposition of an outside language as the “gold standard” for academic achievement.

2.2 Process writing

Process writing is a theory of literacy education which states that students should be actively guided throughout their writing process: from pre-writing to drafting, and working multiple drafts before it reaches satisfactory stage (Graham & Sandmel 2011). Students should be given feedback from both the teacher and peers throughout the composing process and provided with minilessons on how to improve their work at different writing stages. A writing process is not linear from one step to another, but recursive, and can be different from one student to another and the writing teacher needs to differentiate his/her instruction based on individual students’ needs.

This approach to writing instruction differs from the traditional “product-oriented” approach, where students are provided with a general set of writing tips and several finished products as models, but are otherwise given no feedback until they receive their final grade for that assignment. With such an approach, even if detailed feedback is provided at the end, that feedback usually does not sink in with the students, because they do not have the opportunity to implement that feedback on the same assignment. Students learn best when they have the opportunity to improve their work on which they had received feedback. A process-oriented approach has been shown to improve both the mechanics and the contents of students’ essays by making the conscious reflection on a student’s own piece of writing a major step in the assignment requirements (Huang & Zhang 2020).

While the debate on the process-based approach in writing instruction has existed



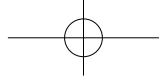
since the early twentieth century (Matsuda 2003), it began receiving mainstream attention in the field of literacy education with the 1963 publication of a monograph titled *Research in Written Composition* (Braddock et al. 1963), commissioned by the National Council of Teachers of English (US). This monograph proposed a comprehensive research agenda for English composition studies. Part of the agenda included questioning the effectiveness of simply providing students with finished written products as models to imitate, as well as identifying the types of questions that students should ask themselves before they begin writing a paper.

Subsequently, Murray (1972) argued that the typical approach to writing instruction — namely that of analyzing a finished piece of writing as a model and simply asking students to emulate — was ineffective because it overlooked a series of more elemental actions necessary to attain that final product in the first place. These actions included pre-writing, writing, and rewriting. Without more time devoted to conception and pre-writing, holding up certain finished products as models did not guarantee that students could actually emulate that model or its writing style. It did not guarantee that students would actually develop a conscious awareness of the features of effective writing. Nor did it guarantee that students would develop a self-awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their own writing. Instead, students needed to be provided with models of a first draft, a second draft with the revisions highlighted, and a chance to write several sentences of self-reflection in which the students directly reflected on the changes they made to their own second drafts.

In practice, of course, a “draft” is not a finished product, as the writing process is constantly recursive. However, a side-by-side comparison of an early and a later version of a text can provide a kind of scaffold or model for students during this recursive revision process. Murray (1972) further suggested that teaching students to more consciously reflect on the ways in which they took a piece of writing from the first draft to the final draft would more effectively cultivate this self-awareness. Boscolo (2008: 368) argued that stronger writers are those who have a “repertoire of strategies ... when planning, composing, and revising their texts”.

Process writing has been explored from different aspects, including the use of culturally-relevant writing models (McComiskey 2000), vocabulary development (Muncie 2002), and assisting struggling writers (Fields 2020). The process-oriented approach views the very act of writing as a way to discover or generate ideas and develop students’ complex thinking skills (Keen 2017).

While the writing process in many second-language contexts (such as the US) has been treated as recursive and almost entirely student-centered, the authors of the *Handbook* made the determination that the process approach could most feasibly be implemented within the Chinese educational context if it integrated elements of the teacher-centered instruction which tends to characterize this context. This would better enable the teachers on the ground to accept and integrate the process approach into their mainstream curricula, which tend to be teacher-centered.



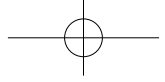
2.3 Formative experiment

The education intervention is considered a formative experiment. This methodology, also called design research or design experiment, is a method of developing new pedagogical approaches by iteratively testing them in real-world settings and making modifications based on researcher and participant feedback (Plomp 2013). While many other kinds of research designs are similarly developed through piloting and modification, formative experiment differs in that the results of the study include not only data that was collected using that study, but also data about the research design of the study itself, such as its strengths, weaknesses, and future modifications (Stahl et al. 2019). For instance, in a quasi-experimental study that tested the impact of several vocabulary teaching methods on the ways in which low-income preschoolers learn new vocabulary and organize their writing, Neuman and Dwyer (2011) divided their intervention into two phases, using feedback from the first phase to make modifications in the second phase, such as different exercises or more difficult vocabulary. Similarly, Cunningham et al. (2015) conducted a three-year intervention study to examine the impact that teacher study group method of teacher professional development on the development of students' phonological awareness. The intervention was slightly modified each year, unlike traditional experiments in which the research design itself remains largely unchanged.

In this sense, formative experiment is iterative, meaning that the research design is being adjusted as the research goes along (Collins 2010). It is a kind of meta-research, much like what process writing is to writing instruction. The focus is as much on the process of developing the research design, as it is on the data that is actually collected using that design.

3. Design of the Intervention: Applications from Theory

Guided by a formative experiment approach, the team designed the intervention on English writing instruction for grades 3-8 in China grounded with translanguaging and process writing theories. To ensure that the intervention could be better integrated into the students' mainstream curriculum, several factors were taken into account. First, the topics for each unit of the intervention were similar to the types of topics that normally appear in the students' standard English textbooks, such as school or family. Second, the writing samples' word lengths matched the mainstream curriculum's required English essay word lengths at each grade level, such as 160-180 for the sixth grade and 180-200 for the eighth grade. In an American K-12 setting, it is not preferable to specify a target word length for the essay. However, the Chinese K-12 curriculum sets word length requirements for essays according to grade level. Thus, in order to facilitate the integration of the *Handbook* into the mainstream Chinese curriculum, the authors made the decision to conform to the curriculum's word length requirements for each grade. Third, because Chinese class sizes average 40-60 students and leave little time for individualized feedback, the intervention does not include individual student-teacher conferences — although these are of course highly recommended where time permits.



Each of the intervention's six grade levels includes 10 units, with each unit having its own topic, such as family or favorite movie. Units follow the same four-part structure: (a) brainstorming and first draft, (b) first revision with a focus on content issues, (c) second revision with a focus on language issues, and (d) integration of all language modes with presentation and discussion. This four-part approach is more structured than process writing theory would normally call for, but it is designed that way in order to fit into the teaching and learning contexts in China. This modified process approach takes students at the same pace through multiple drafts from conception through multiple revisions to final draft of an essay. While the writing process is highly individual to each person, the modified process writing approach makes it more workable for students and teachers in China, where unified standards and learning pace is highly emphasized.

Student-teacher conferring is recognized by many scholars as one of the key components in the teaching of writing with a process-oriented approach (Palmer et al. 1994). However, the *Handbook* authors determined that it would be difficult to attempt to fit this step into the Chinese K-12 context, given the time constraints, the unified curriculum requirements, and the large class size with which local school teachers are required to work.

3.1 Brainstorming and first draft

In the early stage of the *Handbook's* writing process, brainstorming focuses on the generation of ideas. In the *Handbook's* design, a mind map is used to have students put down as many thoughts related to the writing topic as they can think of. In this stage, students can freely use the home language for expression, which can help to drive their second language writing. For instance, one unit's topic is "Classmates", and the pre-writing activity is a mind map where the students describe different classmates' personalities in one word (e.g., funny, friendly). Another unit's topic is "My Home", and the mind map asks for details such as location, number of rooms, and the family members who reside there.

After completing this mind map, students write the first draft of their essay on that topic. They are instructed to focus only on developing content without worrying about grammatical correctness. At this stage of the writing process, teachers keep their language feedback to a minimum, allowing students the freedom to express and develop their original thinking without setting too many restraints early on. Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) pointed out that teachers should first teach composition skills such as sequencing or developing the main idea, and only subsequently, embed the conventions of language or mechanic of language, such as spelling, punctuation and grammar in students' daily writing practices. Working on content development as the first step in writing is highly emphasized in the process writing approach.

Therefore, in order to develop ideas first in writing, students are instructed to write the first draft in their choice of languages: English, Chinese, or some combination of both. This is in accordance with the translanguaging approach. Translanguaging provides students with the freedom to select the language they wish to use, as a way to enable students to generate their thoughts, get deeper into a writing topic, and turn abstract ideas