

# The Strategies of the Process Approach to Writing in the Senior High School English Writing Teaching

Shiqin Ren

China West Normal University, China

## Abstract

Writing is the important aspect of language output and is the most difficult language skill for students to learn. However, in traditional writing teaching, teachers often teach students writing with the product writing method featuring in the mode of teacher assigning tasks – students writing individually – teacher correcting products – teacher evaluating products. This mode ignores students' writing experience and feelings in the process of writing. But the Process Approach to Writing proposed by Wallace Douglas emphasizes that teachers pay close attention to students' writing process in writing teaching. And through multiple practical studies, it has been found that the process teaching method has a positive significance in improving students' English writing ability. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the practical writing strategies for the senior high school English writing teaching based on the Process Writing in order to arouse students' writing interests and improve their writing ability.

## Keywords

The process approach to writing; writing experience; English writing teaching.

## 1. Introduction

With the implementation of the new curriculum reform, the process approach to writing has been applied to English writing teaching. The process approach to writing emphasizes the active participation and independent exploration of students in the learning process, emphasizing the learning process and methods, rather than just focusing on the results. And it focuses on cultivating students' critical thinking, problem-solving ability, and self-learning ability to help them establish deep understanding and knowledge application abilities. Compared with traditional direct teaching methods, the process approach to writing places more emphasis on students' initiative and autonomy, encouraging them to improve their abilities through a series of steps and activities (Xue Fenqi, 2023). The application of this method in high school English writing teaching can decompose the writing process into multiple stages, namely pre-writing conception, organization during writing, and post-writing reflection. This paper proposes several strategies for the application of process teaching method in high school English writing teaching based on practical teaching experience, in order to optimize teaching quality and improve students' subject literacy.

## 2. The definition of the Process Approach

The Process Approach was firstly put forward in 1970s by Wallace Douglas. He regarded writing as a process, and teachers should guide the students in every writing step instead of just giving students a writing task and asking students to write independently. Zamel (1983 :165) defines the Process Approach as "it focuses on the writing process, treating writing as a circular psychological cognition, innovative thinking and social interaction. Through a series of cognitive and interactive activities in the process of writing, the author has improved his or her cognitive ability, interactive ability and writing ability". *The Longman Dictionary of*

*Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 460) also defines the Process Approach as “the Process Approach is a process writing. As an English writing teaching method, it emphasizes the writing process, and the author takes part in planning, drafting and revising activities in activities.” Roger (2013: 285) emphasized that the Process Approach should involve different aspects of writing, such as draft, feedback and revision. He stressed that “it was time for students to write their first draft after they had presented their topics and ideas. In the process, students should be reminded that they need to focus on the development and organization of these ideas rather than developing perfect grammar, punctuation or spelling. And after handing in the draft, teachers can make comments”. All the above definitions have one thing in common--they all agree that writing is not a simple liner process; instead, it is an interactive and creative process.

### **3. The significance of the Process Approach**

With the implement of the new curriculum reform, it is essential for teachers to actively apply the process approach to writing. This can provide process guidance to students in writing, timely identify their writing shortcomings, provide targeted teaching and guidance, help students make up for their writing shortcomings, break through writing bottlenecks, continuously improve their writing abilities, and improve teaching efficiency.

#### **3.1. Help to develop good writing habits**

The process approach focuses on the active participation and independent exploration of learners in the learning process. In English writing teaching, the application of process approach can help high school students develop good English writing habits. It emphasizes encouraging students to actively think and independently solve problems. In English writing, teachers help students establish scientific writing thinking by guiding them to analyze problems, sort out ideas, and search for information. And it focuses on cultivating students' ability to learn actively and explore independently. In teaching process, teachers can guide students to independently choose writing topics, conceptualize article structures, and improve vocabulary usage by reading excellent sample texts and referring to writing guidance, thereby cultivating students' awareness of self-directed learning in the writing process. It also emphasizes the timely feedback and correction of students in the writing process. In the teaching process, teachers can provide timely guidance and suggestions to students through regular writing guidance, peer review, group discussions, etc., helping them discover and correct errors, and further improving writing quality.

#### **3.2. Promote students' writing ability**

The process approach stresses that the writing process is more important than the results, and focuses on cultivating students' thinking, organizational, and expression abilities. Firstly, it helps students gradually construct writing strategies. During the writing process, students need to iterate and organize their thinking in the brain to form a complete idea. By repeatedly thinking, adjusting the structure, ideas, etc., and clarifying the writing context, the structure of the article can be clearer and more rigorous, which can also promote the exercise of students' logical thinking and organizational skills. Secondly, it helps students become familiar with various aspects of writing. English writing involves multiple stages such as searching for materials, organizing information, selecting viewpoints, and organizing language. Each stage requires students to practice and master. The process writing approach emphasizes gradually delving into the operations of each stage, and through continuous practice, students can proficiently master the skills and methods of each writing stage. What's more, it helps students discover and correct their writing problems. During the writing process, students may encounter problems such as logical confusion and inaccurate language expression. The process

writing approach requires students to make multiple revisions and reflections, so that they can gradually discover and correct their own problems in writing and improve the quality of writing. Finally, enhance students' confidence in writing. Through multiple writing practices, students can gradually master writing skills and constantly break through themselves in practice. This positive experience feedback will stimulate students' writing confidence, enabling them to express their thoughts and viewpoints more actively and confidently in writing.

### **3.3. Promote the cultivation of students' thinking ability**

The process approach divides the writing process into several steps, including outlining, drafting, revising, editing and so on, and each step involves different cognitive activities and thinking process. In the stage of outline, students need to accumulate relevant materials, stimulate inspiration, apply divergent thinking, and accumulate rich ideas. In the drafting stage, students need to organize and organize these ideas, apply logical thinking, and determine the writing framework. In the revision process, students need to examine the content and structure of the article, apply analytical and critical thinking, identify problems, and improve them. In the editing process, students need to carefully polish the text, use meticulous observation skills and language control abilities. This cyclical process runs through different levels of thinking activities, which is beneficial for cultivating students' thinking ability and improving their cognitive level.

### **3.4. Encourage students to reflect on themselves**

The appliance of the process approach can help students receive feedback and evaluation during the English writing process, realize their learning strengths and weaknesses, and think about how to improve and enhance them in a targeted manner. The process approach can present learning objectives to students and encourage them to learn purposefully. It emphasizes the feedback mechanism in the learning process. Teachers can provide timely feedback to students through grading assignments, discussions, evaluations, and other forms, which can help students recognize their shortcomings. It can encourage students to flexibly apply various learning strategies during the learning process. By trying different learning methods, students can gradually develop their own learning style. Meanwhile, students reflect and think about which learning strategies are more effective for themselves, thereby improving their learning outcomes.

## **4. The application strategies of the Process Approach**

Teachers are supposed to apply the process approach to the high school English writing teaching so that students' writing ability can be strengthened and language literacy can be promoted. Therefore, this part will introduce some teaching strategies about it.

### **4.1. Provide writing material before writing**

Before students' writing, teachers should guide them to analyze the composition materials according to the teaching purpose, so as to lay a good foundation for formal writing. For example, teachers can guide students to communicate, brainstorm, and broaden their writing horizons by providing text and chart materials related to the writing topic and encourage students to draw up a composition outline, so that students have a general understanding of the structure of the composition, so as to avoid the pause of thinking when writing. Firstly, providing materials can be presented in the form of reading materials. Teachers can choose articles, stories, news reports, etc. related to the writing topic for students to read and understand. By reading materials, students can gain more information and perspectives on the topic and draw inspiration and materials from it to support their writing ideas. Secondly, providing materials can be carried out through activities such as classroom discussions and

mind maps. Teachers can organize students to have group or whole class discussions, allowing them to share and exchange viewpoints and ideas related to the topic, learn from each other's ideas, and clarify the writing context. At the same time, students can also be guided to use tools such as mind maps to help them organize their thinking, integrate various viewpoints and materials, and form their own writing framework and logical structure. Finally, teachers can also encourage students to conduct personal research and surveys. Students can find materials and information related to writing topics through the Internet, libraries and other channels. They can read relevant research reports, academic articles, interview experts, conduct field investigations, etc. to broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of the topic. This research process will help students form independent viewpoints and insights, and provide rich materials and evidence support for writing.

For example, in Unit 1 "A new start" lesson of the Foreign Language Research Press, after teaching the article "My First Day at Senior High", teachers can organize students to engage in relevant writing. Before writing, teachers can prepare some short articles, video clips, etc. about high school life for students to read and understand. These materials can contain information about the new school environment, peer relationships, curriculum challenges, and other aspects, echoing the theme of My First Day at Senior High. By reading these materials, students can gain more background knowledge and experience about high school life, thus better understanding the description of high school life in the article. Furthermore, they can compare and connect with their high school life, reflecting on the confusion, expectations, and challenges they face. This kind of thinking process will provide them with more writing materials and inspiration, which will help to construct their personal writing perspectives and expressions. Afterwards, teachers can organize students to have group or whole class discussions, allowing them to share their expectations and thoughts about high school life. Through discussion, students can gain new inspiration and materials from each other's perspectives and experiences, enriching their writing content. During this process, teachers can guide students to use tools such as mind maps to integrate various viewpoints and materials obtained from discussions with classmates, forming their own writing framework and logical structure.

#### **4.2. Carefully design writing tasks and activities**

Teachers should carefully design writing tasks and activities. On the one hand, the theme and content of the task should be close to students' life, relevant to their experience and interests, in order to stimulate their writing motivation. On the other hand, the difficulty level of the task should be moderate, allowing students to face certain challenges in a bid to unleash their potential. For example, in the process of "writing about a family memory", during the thinking stage, teachers can organize activities such as brainstorming and group discussions to guide students to review their family life, activate beautiful memories of spending time with their families, and lay an emotional foundation for writing. Teachers can also provide excellent sample analysis to help students understand the techniques and methods of describing family memories. In the drafting process, teachers need to guide students to use logical thinking, organize and structure accumulated ideas, and establish writing ideas. At the same time, teachers should attach importance to process feedback and continuous support, encourage students to make early efforts such as writing plans and knowledge reserves, and help students complete the initial draft. The modification process is a key focus for teachers. Teachers should guide students to conduct peer reviews with each other, identify shortcomings in each other's works, and provide fair feedback. On this basis, students are encouraged to use critical and creative thinking to self-adjust and partially modify their works, continuously improving their content and language expression. In the editing process, teachers need to cultivate students' meticulous observation and language control abilities, refine the text to achieve higher quality standards. Throughout the process, teachers should maintain close interaction with students,

fully leverage the positive role of classroom democracy and teacher-student equality, promote student participation and role transformation, and achieve effective guidance in the writing process.

### **4.3. Guide students to write independently**

Guiding students to write independently and strengthening their writing skills aims to cultivate their autonomy and independent thinking ability, while helping them apply the writing skills and strategies they have learned to improve the quality and expression ability of their writing. Firstly, teachers should encourage students to develop their own style and voice, rather than excessively intervening in their writing. Teachers should respect students' creative rights, give them sufficient freedom, and encourage them to express their opinions and emotions in writing. Secondly, teachers should provide students with specific guidance and advice, rather than simply telling them what to write. Teachers can provide specific suggestions and improvement suggestions for students' writing works through group discussions, individual tutoring, and other forms, guiding students to think about how to better organize the structure of the article, enrich content expression, and increase the strength of argumentation. Finally, teachers should give students sufficient time and opportunities to repeatedly revise and improve their writing works, enhancing the quality and depth of their writing. Writing is a continuous process of development and improvement. Students need to repeatedly think, revise, and polish their own works in order to achieve a higher level of writing proficiency. Teachers should establish reasonable writing time and schedule and encourage students to revise and reflect multiple times during the writing process.

For example, after teaching the article "A Child of Two Cuisines" in Unit 1 Food for thought of the Foreign Language Research Press, teachers can encourage students to choose a specific experience or story related to food as the theme for writing. It can be a special culinary experience, a memory of a family gathering, or a cultural tradition related to food. Teachers can inspire students to think and recall their emotions and experiences related to food, and help them clarify themes and positioning, emphasize that students should provide sufficient descriptions and details, so that readers can feel the authenticity and emotional resonance of their experiences related to food and encourage students to use visual language to describe the appearance, taste, aroma, and texture of food, as well as the associated emotions, memories, or cultural meanings. Afterwards, teachers should guide students to apply the methods they have learned, such as reasonable layout of discourse structure and skillful use of linking words, to specific writing, and use real-life examples to enhance the strength of argumentation. At the same time, teachers can provide examples of descriptive vocabulary and sentence structures to help students enrich their expression methods.

### **4.4. Summarize the writing process and re-edit**

Effective English writing teaching requires a process of evaluation and feedback, so that students can have a correct understanding of their actual situation in English writing, identify their writing shortcomings, and gradually correct them in the future. Therefore, after students complete their English writing, they should be organized to summarize and reflect on the writing process, considering whether there are any off-topic phenomena, inaccurate word choices, or inconsistencies between the introduction and the conclusion. Timely discover one's own writing shortcomings, then engage in secondary creation, and continuously improve writing skills. During this process, teachers pay attention to observing and understanding the actual situation of students' summary and reflection, helping them identify shortcomings or solve confusion, so that they can better complete English writing (Chen Wenmei, 2019).



## 5. Conclusion

The application of process approach in high school English writing teaching can effectively promote the improvement of students' writing ability and thinking ability, in line with the requirements of the new curriculum reform. This teaching method encourages students to continuously explore and develop in writing through their full process participation and interaction, thereby achieving better writing results. In future English writing teaching, teachers should continue to explore the process approach to better cultivate students' writing ability and comprehensive language application ability.

## References

- [1] Chen Wenmei. (2019). Read to write: A new approach to junior high school English writing teaching. Examination Weekly, (86): 104-106.
- [2] Richards & Schmdit. (2010). Longman Dictory of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (4th edition). London: Longman , 460.
- [3] Roger Byard. (2003). Scientific Writing: the process and the pitfalls. Forensic Science, Medicine, and Pathology, (3): 285.
- [4] Wallace.(1992). <https://www.chop.edu/doctors/wallace-douglas-c>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Xue Fenqi. (2023). An analysis of the application of the Process Approach in high school English writing teaching. Theory and Practice of Education.
- [6] Zamel. (1983). The composing Process of Advanced ESL Students: Six Case Studies. TESOL Quarterly , 165-187.