

# An Investigation of the Current Situation of Senior High School English Writing Strategies Application from the Perspective of Thinking Capacity

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**Abstract:** At the era of the innovation of general high school English curriculum standards, the writing application has been integrated into core competencies. The form of testing writing ability in the college entrance examination has also transferred. Therefore, the relative research of English writing strategies has become a hot spot, which are lack of researching. This paper aims to use the questionnaire survey and interviewing method to conclude the current situation of senior high school English writing strategies application from the perspective of thinking capacity, so that some suggestions for senior high school English writing strategies can be got. The results are :from the perspective of logicity, senior high school students are lack of writing strategies in creating texts to describe things and characteristics with the use of rhetorical devices as well as using discourse knowledge to organize information structures logically according to the needs of thematic expression. In addition, as far as criticality and innovativeness, senior high school students are lack of positively analyzing the causes of writing problems and trying to solve it, trying to achieve naturalness by using filler words or inserted words and analyzing the causes of anxiety or impatience in the process of writing learning. Therefore, the relative suggestions are: firstly, organizing the accurate plan for English writing strategies, set realistic teaching objectives and design hierarchical English homework; secondly, apply various such as CLT and process-writing method to assist students' learning; thirdly, organize the experience communication discussion and after-class assistance to help students overcome the impatience and anxiety when facing writing difficulties

**Keywords:** investigation; application; senior high school English writing strategies; thinking capacity

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In general, the study of English writing strategies in Chinese senior high schools has experienced the development process from paying attention to writing methods to individual differences and personalized teaching. These studies provide important theoretical support and guidance for improving students' English writing skills and teachers' teaching practice. However, there are still some shortcomings, such as lacking special cases and their analysis, the research is not thorough enough. At the same time, many students said that English writing strategies are varied. During the exam, there is not enough time to think about the details, and plan every step from before to after writing. At the time of the innovation of general high school English curriculum standards , the writing in the college entrance examination has changed from the original single outline writing to outline writing and continuation-task test. Therefore, the score of writing has also changed from the original 25 points to the current 40 points. Due to the wash-back effect of examination on educational research, how to deal with the lack of writing strategies under the background of the new curriculum standard from the view of core competencies such as thinking capacity has become a hot spot, which are lack of researching. This paper aims to conclude the current situation of senior high school English writing strategies application from the perspective of thinking capacity, so that some suggestions for senior high school English writing strategies can be got.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1. Thinking Capacity and its Requirements in Senior High School English Writing Strategies Application**

According to General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards, thinking capacity refers to students’ skills employed in thinking and the quality of their thinking in terms of logicity, criticality, and innovativeness, and it belongs to subject core competencies (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China). Cultivating this core competence helps students enhance their ability to analyze and solve problems, observe and understand the world from a cross-cultural perspective, and make correct value judgments on things.

Based on the concept of thinking capacity, this paper analyzes the relative requirements in senior high school English writing strategies from the perspective of logicity, criticality and innovativeness (Table 1).

**Table1.** *Requirements in Senior High School English Writing Strategies*

<b>Thinking Capacity Category</b>	<b>Content Requirements of Writing Strategies</b>
<b>Logicity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use notes, charts, mind maps, etc. to collect and organize information.</li> <li>2. Understand the main content and the writing purpose of the text according to the text type and characteristics of the text.</li> <li>3. Identify problems in writing in a timely manner, be good at analyzing the causes, and set realistic writing learning objectives.</li> <li>4. List the main information and organize the basic information structure.</li> <li>5. Use textual cohesive means to organize information logically.</li> <li>6. Create texts to describe things and characteristics with the use of rhetorical devices.</li> <li>7. Use discourse knowledge to organize information structures logically according to the needs of thematic expression.</li> </ol>
<b>Criticality and Innovativeness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan, monitor, evaluate and reflect on the learning and application of cognitive, communication, and affective strategies, sum up experiences, and adjust as needed.</li> <li>2. Perceive new language items from different perspectives, focusing on both old and new language knowledge.</li> <li>3. While meeting difficulties in study, positively analyze the causes and try to solve it.</li> <li>4. Conduct phased reflections and summaries, analyze existing problems and learning outcomes, summarize effective methods, and improve learning efficiency.</li> <li>5. In communication, try to achieve naturalness by using filler words or inserted words.</li> <li>6. Analyze the causes of anxiety or impatience in the process of writing learning.</li> </ol>

**2.2. Previous Studies of Senior High School English Writing Strategies**

*2.2.1. Foreign Research Situation*

Writing strategies run through the whole writing process, affecting the writing process and writing quality. Many foreign scholars have studied learning strategies, whose points mainly involve five aspects: the difference between successful language learners and the unsuccessful strategies; the strategies used by successful language learners; the relationship between the use of strategies and English performance; the factors affecting the choice and use of language strategies; the way of language strategy training and its effectiveness. The research on writing strategies abroad mainly focuses on meta-cognition, bilingual writing level, individual differences and writing strategy training. Foreign scholars on writing strategies include Rubin, O'Malley, Chamot, Bacon, etc.

O'Malley & Chamot studied 70 students and 22 teachers in 1983 and discovered more than 600 different learning strategies after talking with the students. Arndt (1987) studied the English writing and native language writing activities of six Chinese English learners ". The results show that what

they use in the process of writing strategy are: plan (find a point, then decide what to write), global plan (how to organize writing overall), practice (try to express thoughts and ideas), repeat (repeat keywords and phrases to provide a foundation to continue writing), revision (to read what one has written), questioning (classify and evaluate the content in writing), modifying (modify the article to make the article meaning more clear) and editing (correct sentence pattern and spelling errors).

Bacon (1992) found that boys are likely to use the translation strategy, which is one of the mother tongue strategies; while girls would use the monitoring strategy. Victori's (1995) research, which is based on interviews and sound thinking method, summarizes seven writing strategies, including planning, monitoring, evaluation, using resources (refers to the use of external reference resources, such as English articles, excellent composition, etc.), repeat (refers to reviewing written content or writing new content at the same time), reduce (eliminating an unimportant point from the article, ignoring it by restructuring sentences).

Macaro (2001) did his empirical research by randomly dividing six classes of second-grade French students into experimental group and non-experimental group. The research methods mainly include writing test, questionnaire survey and sound thinking report method. After five months, the students in the experimental group received a variety of writing strategies, such as meta-cognitive strategies including preview, monitoring and evaluation. The post-test of the experiment found that the students in the experimental group had made great progress in their writing, especially in the grammatical accuracy. At the same time, students also have changes in their writing methods. They have used dictionaries selectively and became more careful in writing, and reduced their dependence on teachers. It can be seen that writing strategies application has played a positive role in writing activities and writing teaching.

### *2.2.2. Domestic Research Situation*

Before the 21st century, there were few papers specifically researching English writing strategies. In the era when learning strategies became a hot topic in applied linguistics, the research on English writing strategies in China was almost blank. During this period, the paper mainly emphasized the writing structure, the theme and sentences of different paragraphs, the coherence between sentences, and the accuracy of grammar and vocabulary. What they discussed is how to choose the central sentence, the layout, advanced sentence pattern and vocabulary. Qi Huiyun and Hui Lili (1997) analyzed successful writing strategies from four dimensions: considering from macro one to micro one, highlighting the central point of view, writing logic links and using a variety of vocabulary and sentences. In 2001, the focus of literature research is only on the writing structure, paragraph distribution, central sentence, conclusion sentence and so on. Yang Shuxian (2002) quantitatively analyzed the relationship between the application of writing strategies and the writing level of English major students. Through case study, she found the difference between successful and unsuccessful English writers in the use of strategies. The study found significant differences in conception, focus and polish, and it is also the first empirical study on writing strategies in China, whose results confirm some research results of foreign scholars, that is, students often do not plan before writing. Later, domestic universities conducted similar quantitative experimental analysis studies for students at different stages. However, during this period, the research of English writing strategies for high school was in almost the blank.

In the early 21st century, cognitive strategy was still the dominant strategy of writing strategy. However, unlike the initial period, the research focus shifted from language form to language input and native language migration.. Most of the papers in this period explored language input and native language strategies. At the same time, they also noticed the different stages of writing, such as preparation stage, drafting stage, writing process and post-writing modification. Jin Wenli (2002) mentioned that the negative migration of Chinese, two language acquisition theory and Krashen's input hypothesis rose from the structure of writing to other factors that affecting writing. Shao Mingli (2009) concluded that using mutual evaluation could find the mistakes which cannot be found in the compositions of both sides and give suggestions in terms of structure, sentences and vocabulary to improve the writing quality.

Liu Donghong (2002) systematically discussed the influence of mother tongue transferring on English writing in his writing. First, the vocabulary and grammar aspects are affected. There are differences in vocabulary and grammar structure between Chinese and English, and learners may misapply Chinese vocabulary or grammar rules to English writing. Secondly, the expression mode is affected. Different languages have different expression methods, and learners may directly apply Chinese expression methods in English writing, resulting in inaccurate expression or inconsistency with the customary usage of English. In addition, language habits and cultural backgrounds can also have an influence on English writing. Learners may display characteristics of their native language culture, such as ways of thinking, values, and opinions. This may lead to difficulties in learners' English writing in logic, opinion expression and cultural adaptability. According to the relevant research, investigation and analysis, and relevant data collection, the influence of mother tongue on English writing mostly belongs to positive migration. Finally, the researches mentioned that, firstly, the high school students in grade one often used the mother strategy while students in the other grades use higher strategies; secondly, the main influence of the mother strategy on writing is not in the language transferring but in the writing process, such as conception, content generation, article organization, writing style; thirdly, the formation of the high school students in one grade is mainly the result of positive migration; fourthly, the mother strategy determines the transferring in writing. Native language migration may be more closely related to other factors, such as social factors, language distance and psychological type, individual differences, and nature of task; fifth, monitoring strategies can suppress negative migration and promote positive migration.

At present, English writing strategies are developing deeply in China, which is reflected in the extensive use of meta-cognitive strategies. At this stage, domestic researchers have begun to conduct in-depth and detailed exploration of the research of writing strategies, which was not only limited to the macro level, and then raised the importance of writing strategy to a high level. Domestic English education is gradually divided into four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the General High School English Curriculum Standard (2020 revised edition), domestic English education has added viewing into the language skills. After recognizing that students are lack of conception methods and meta-cognitive knowledge in the writing process, researchers have begun to pay more attention to how meta-cognitive strategies can help the writing process.

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This paper mainly researches the current situation of senior high school English writing strategies application from the perspective of thinking capacity, whose objects are 96 senior high school students from different areas and methods are mainly questionnaire method and interviewing method. In addition, the researcher aims to give senior high school English teachers some suggestions about English writing strategies teaching. The following are research questions and research process illustrations.

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

To be specific, this study intends to address the following two questions:

- (1) What is the current situation of English writing strategies application among senior high school students from the perspective of thinking capacity?
- (2) What are the senior high school students' needs in English writing strategies learning?

#### **3.2. Research Process**

For answering the two research questions, the research the following process.

Firstly, the researcher searched for articles related to thinking capacity and English writing strategies through Science Direct, China Knowledge Network, Google Academic and other internet search tools, and carefully studied and summarized them to get the latest cutting-edge information and relevant theoretical basis of the research on senior high school English writing strategies. With a clear research direction, the researcher collected some data about the general situation of English writing strategies application among senior high school students from the perspective of thinking capacity and students' thoughts on it.

Secondly, with the help of some familiar classmates and teachers, the researcher selected 96 senior high school students from different areas to fill in the questionnaire, and set interview questions in this questionnaire so that these joined students can write their needs in English writing strategies that are lack in their current English writing practice..

Thirdly, the researcher used SPSS 25.0 to conduct descriptive statistical analysis on the obtained data to acquire the current situation of English writing strategies application among senior high school students from the perspective of thinking capacity.

For the purpose of ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, Reliability Statistics and KMO Test by SPSS25.0 statistical software were used. The results were examined in order to assess if the data can be use in factor analysis, and the result was displayed in Table 2 and Table 3.

As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the English Writing Strategies Application questionnaire is 0.952, which is greater than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

**Table2.** Reliability Analysis of the English Writing Strategies Application Questionnaire

Cronbach 信度分析-简化格式		
项数	样本量	Cronbach α系数
21	96	0.952

**Table3.** Validity Analysis of English Writing Strategies Application Questionnaire

KMO 和 Bartlett 的检验		
KMO 值		0.878
Bartlett 球形度检验	近似卡方	2559.682
	df	210
	p 值	0.000

As the Table 3 shows, the KMO value is 0.878>0.7 and the P-value (sig.) is 0.000, which reaches the significant level and indicates that the validity of the English Writing Strategies Application questionnaire used in this study is suitable. All in all, it can be seen that the reliability and validity of the scale met the standards and can be used for statistical analysis.

At last, after concluding the statistical analysis and students' needs in English writing strategies learning, the paper was written based on the findings obtained from this study.

#### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part shows the results and discussion of this study by the combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. In the questionnaire, the first factor focuses on presenting the students' basic information such as English level; the second factor concentrates on analyzing the current situation of English writing strategies application among senior high school students from the perspective of thinking capacity; the third factor is used to collect students' needs in English writing strategies learning. In the interviews, some interviewees also give the similar thoughts as in the third factor in the questionnaire.

According to Table 4, from the view of logicity, item 6 and item 7 account for the vast majority proportion in their degrees respectively, while the majority degrees of consistency in item 1 to item 5 are all above 3 points; from the perspective of criticality and innovativeness, item 3 and item 5 and item 6 account for the vast majority proportion in their degrees respectively, while the majority degrees of consistency in item 1, item 2 and item 4are all above 3 points.

**Table4.** The Proportion of Degree of consistency

Subject	Degrees of consistency				
	1	2	3	4	5
Item 1	16%	17%	<b>39%</b>	13%	15%
Item 2	13%	14%	18%	<b>39%</b>	16%
Item 3	8%	13%	<b>52%</b>	16%	11%
Item 4	12%	13%	<b>47%</b>	17%	11%



Item 5	15%	15%	<b>38%</b>	22%	10%
Item 6	<b>51%</b>	<b>18%</b>	13%	12%	6%
Item 7	<b>43%</b>	<b>20%</b>	17%	12%	8%
<b>Criticality and Innovativeness</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Item 1	10%	17%	<b>47%</b>	16%	10%
Item 2	19%	21%	<b>32%</b>	16%	12%
Item 3	<b>27%</b>	<b>40%</b>	14%	10%	9%
Item 4	6%	9%	9%	<b>37%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Item 5	7%	<b>49%</b>	<b>27%</b>	12%	5%
Item 6	6%	<b>46%</b>	<b>20%</b>	15%	13%

In the qualitative questions among the third factor in questionnaire and some random interviews, a lot of students also point out some shortcomings in English writing strategies teaching. Firstly, lacking of systematic and personalized training. As students said, most of the writing task is for preparation of middle or final term examination. Neither teachers and students have planned a totally timely-order English writing strategies teaching and writing plan., and the unified task in topics and forms are not suitable for everyone sometimes. Secondly, lacking of original methods to internalize these writing strategies. Some students reflected that their teachers still use expository method to teach them, so that the flexible application of writing strategies are not likely to be achieved totally in examinations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is shown that from the perspective of logicity, senior high school students are lack of writing strategies in creating texts to describe things and characteristics with the use of rhetorical devices as well as using discourse knowledge to organize information structures logically according to the needs of thematic expression. In addition, as far as criticality and innovativeness, senior high school students are lack of positively analyzing the causes of writing problems and trying to solve it, trying to achieve naturalness by using filler words or inserted words and analyzing the causes of anxiety or impatience in the process of writing learning. Therefore, while designing English writing teaching plan, the difficulty points of these lacking strategies need noticing clearly and considering in the teaching procedures.

Besides, there exist the relative suggestions for senior high school English writing strategies teaching. Firstly, organizing the accurate plan for English writing strategies, set realistic teaching objectives and design hierarchical English homework. Secondly, apply various such as CLT and process-writing method to assist students' learning. Thirdly, organize the experience communication discussion and after-class assistance to help students overcome the impatience and anxiety when facing writing difficulties

What is worth noting is that there are still some research limitations. Firstly, this paper didn't classify the English writing strategies from different views such as cognition and meta-cognition. Secondly, the research methods can be more various to get some empirical data. Thirdly, the research objects are mostly senior high school students in grade two, which leads to the limitation of research objects' diversity. The researcher also looks forward to the deeper study in the future.

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## **APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Questionnaire on the Application of High School English Writing Strategies from the Perspective of Thinking Quality**

Dear students:

Hello! I am a graduate student from SUSE. Currently we have investigated a survey about the application of high school English writing strategies from the perspective of thinking capacity. In order to get the data for giving high school English teachers advice in writing strategy teaching, we would like to invite you to spend a few minutes filling in the questionnaire. I hope you can offer your suggestions for the teachers' English writing teaching.

Wish you have a pleasant life! Have a successful academic!

#### **1. Basic personal information**

##### **(1) What is your grade?**

A senior one

B senior two

C senior

D other

##### **(2) What is your English score in the exam?**

A of 0-60 points

B 61-80 points

C 81-100 points

D 100 points or above

**(3)What is your recent average score in English?**

A of 0-90 points

B 91-110 points

C 111-130 points

D 130 points or above

**(4)What is your recent average score in English writing?**

A0-15 points

B 16-20 points

C 21-30 points

D 30 points or above

**(5)Have you ever known thinking capacity among core competencies in the General High School English Curriculum Standards?**

A yes

B no

**(6)Do you think the thinking capacity affects the quality of your English writing?**

A. Nothing is at all affected

B has a certain effect

C has a relatively large influence

D is very influential

**(7)What is the college entrance examination writing question in your area?**

A summary writing

B Read later and write later

C Outline to write and read for subsequent writing

D other

**(8)Is your high school located in?**

Province  City  District



**2. The conformity degree of each description (please score according to your true feelings)**

Project	Degrees of Consistency				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>logicality</b>					
1. I can use notes, charts, mind maps and so on.					
2. Before writing, I can understand the main content of the chapter according to the title and key words.					
3. I can understand the main content and intention of writing according to the types and characteristics of stories.					
4. I can find out the problems in writing in time, be good at analyzing the causes and setting practical goals.					
5. I can logically organize the information by means of discourse cohesion.					
6. I can create text through description, characterization, and necessary rhetorical means.					
7. I can logically organize the information structure according to the rational use of discourse knowledge according to the needs of the theme.					
<b>Critical and innovative</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1. When encountering difficulties in writing and learning, I can take the initiative to analyze the reasons and try to solve the difficulties.					
2. I can reflect on and realize the strategies I use in my writing and adjust them as needed.					
3. I can understand new language programs from different angles and use them in English writing.					
4. I can summarize and reflect on the previous stage of writing learning, and analyze the results and problems.					
5. In writing, I can properly use Chinese and linking-words to achieve natural expression.					
6. I can analyze the reasons and take methods to adjust myself to the anxiety or impatience in writing learning.					

**3. What aspects do you think needs to be improved in your English writing strategy learning? What suggestions do you have for your English teacher in teaching English writing strategies?**

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