



Research on English Reading and Writing Teaching in Senior High School Based on the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” Model: An Empirical Study of a Laibin, Guangxi Case

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Abstract. The new English language examination not only places higher demands on students, but also poses a great challenge to teachers in terms of their professionalism and teaching ability. The objective of the study is to investigate the impact of the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model on the English learning of high school students and at the same time better improve the separation of English reading and writing teaching in high school. The study concentrates on the attitudes and opinions of high school students towards the integrated teaching of reading and writing based on the “Reading- Thinking- Expressing” model, and the impact of this model on English reading and writing ability of high school students. In order to verify the effectiveness of this teaching method, the students of the senior section of X Middle School in Laibin, Guangxi were taken as the experimental subjects. The study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and conducts a six-week experimental study through various research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and so on. The data collected before and after the experiment will be analyzed using SPSS26 for sample comparison. The results revealed that the application of the “Reading-Thinking- Expressing” model in the six-week experiment from 6 February 2023 to 25 March 2023 not only helps students to enhance their attitudes towards writing, but also develops their ability to apply the ideas, content, language, structure and articulation learned from the reading texts to their writing. The high school students have positive attitudes towards the “Reading- Thinking-Expressing” model and express the expectation that teachers could adopt it more often in the future to teach and guide their thinking about reading and writing. In conclusion, the application of the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model for the integration of English reading and writing in the high school English classroom is effective.

Keywords: High School English; PEP; Reading and Writing; Teaching Suggestion

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The inevitable trend of economic globalization not only makes English play an extremely vital role in international communication. However, to learn English well, you must raise your overall English language skills, and two of the most important of these skills are the abilities to read and write English. This is especially true in recent years when the new college entrance examinations have changed, weakening grammatical knowledge and increasing the value of reading and writing in English, which confirms the importance of reading and writing. In addition, *the General High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)* ^[1] (hereinafter referred to as *the Curriculum Standards*) sets out the requirement that “language skills include listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing” (MOE 2020; 4) for English language learning at the high school level in China. The requirements for the comprehension skill “reading” include the ability to extract the main information and ideas from contexts and comprehend the main meaning of discourses, to grasp the key details and main concepts in the discourse and to grasp the development of the main events in the discourse etc. The main requirements for the expressive skills “writing” include the ability to be able to use different ways of expressing meaning and conveying information in writing and expression, to be able to choose appropriate vocabulary and expression structures and to be able to use predetermined linguistic devices in writing and expression, e.g. paragraph articulation, language transfer, etc. However, the authorship has found that the real English reading and writing skills of high school students are far from the requirements of the curriculum due to plenty of factors through reviewing relevant literature, distributing questionnaires in the field and observing real classes; the separation of English reading and writing teaching in high school is prevalent.

1.2 Current Situation

Most teachers teach reading and writing as two separate parts, and the time spent on reading is generally greater than the time spent on writing due to the format and timing of English reading and writing in high school. Teachers tend to focus on the accuracy of vocabulary and grammatical structures in writing classes, while neglecting to stimulate students’ thinking and creative abilities. Although this is the most common model of teaching in high school English classes, and it helps students to improve their English vocabulary and build up their grammatical knowledge, it is not conducive to the development of students’ thinking abilities. Besides, Some teachers even ignore the writing section in some chapters. Interviews with teachers revealed that most teachers are reluctant to spend most of their lesson time on writing because it is a time-consuming and slow process. As a result, most English teachers prefer to spend most of their class time on the language aspects of reading texts and neglect writing during the English class.

For students of Grade Ten, most of them are anxious and uneasy about the changes in the learning environment and the difficulty of the teaching materials, which causes

many of them to be afraid of the difficulties they encounter in learning English; thus they slowly lose their interest in learning English. Besides, the separation of reading and writing, the emphasis on grammatical content rather than chapter structure and other problems in high school English teaching intensify most students' discomfort with English learning and their aversion to reading and writing in high school English.

Due to this background, many experts and scholars in China have begun to investigate how to change the phenomenon of English reading and writing separation. The aim of this paper is to draw on the experience of previous researchers and to apply the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model to help senior students adapt to the high school level of English learning and to work on improving their reading and writing competences so as to lay the foundation for their future English learning.

1.3 Research Purpose and Problems

The purpose of this dissertation is to figure out the variations of students' writing attitudes, writing behaviors, etc. after using the integration of reading and writing in senior secondary English teaching based on "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model, to investigate the attitudes and advice of the students and teachers aimed at this teaching approach as well as to strive to explore the potential of "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model for teaching English as a second language in senior secondary schools to improve students' current reading and writing competence. The following questions will be answered after the action research.

(1) What are the attitudes and opinions of high school students towards the integrated teaching of reading and writing based on the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model?

(2) What is the impact of reading and writing integration based on the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model on the English reading ability of high school students?

(3) What is the impact of reading and writing integration based on the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model on the English writing ability of high school students?

Besides, the author sincerely hopes to be able to alter the current phenomenon of a serious disconnect between reading and writing in high school English and also to make a modest contribution to the development of English education in China.

2 Analysis of "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" Model

2.1 Analysis of concepts

The "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model is a deep reading teaching model for junior high school English constructed by Professor Huang Yuanzhen of Fujian Normal University in 2015 [2]. It comprises three major aspects of reading, thinking and expressing in the teaching of reading and writing. "Reading" refers to the teacher's design of guided reading, silent reading and reading aloud according to the teaching principles of reality, continuity and regularity; "thinking" refers to the teacher's use of cognitive

conflict, question-induced thinking and prototype-inspired teaching strategies to organize thinking, inquiry and communication (Huang Yuanzhen et al., 2019) [3]. This model is in line with the second language acquisition theory that language learning needs to go through three stages of “input → internalization → output”; input is the acquisition of language information through comprehensible input such as visual and auditory means [4]; internalization is the process in which learners process information and transform explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. The process of output is the process of expressing one’s thoughts in verbal form and making the internalized knowledge visible (Ying Ling, 2019) [5].

2.2 Application of “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” Model

Since the model was proposed, many scholars and front-line English teachers in China have tried to use the model as a guide to explore teaching models that can effectively integrate English reading and writing teaching. Based on the concept that the new curriculum points to the development of core elements in the subject, Ying Ling (2019) applies the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model to the practice of reading and writing teaching in high school, and achieves the goal of promoting students’ reading and writing skills by optimizing their reading and writing classroom teaching methods, i.e. allowing students’ reading, thinking and expressing abilities to be interactively coordinated during the class [5]. Tang Jiaoyan (2022) conducts an action research on the teaching design under the guidance of the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, using the test content of reading for writing from New Senior Secondary Examination Paper I June 2022 as an example [6]. Wang Biwen (2020) utilizes the “Reading - Thinking - Expressing” model, taking *A Little Match Girl* literature as an example, to develop students’ comprehension in close reading and text interpretation, understanding the storyline, sentence patterns and rhetorical techniques [7]. In this context, plenty of empirical studies have demonstrated that the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model is also applicable to the integrated teaching of reading and writing in senior secondary English, and even to the type of teaching of reading for writing. This indicates that the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model has crucial implications for improving the separation of reading and writing in English and for developing the thinking and writing skills of high school students.

Although the above studies offer great implications for the integrated teaching of reading and writing in English, there are still some limitations. Firstly, most of these studies follow the teaching and learning process from input to output, placing more emphasis on input at the expense of the significance of output. Finally, most of the former studies guided by the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model have concerned about the junior secondary English teaching, while relatively scarce research has been conducted on senior secondary English teaching.

3 Research Methods and Experimental Conditions Setup

3.1 Research Subjects

The research subjects are 54 senior high school students in experimental class in Grade Ten of Laibin X High School, Guangxi Province (South-central China). This high school, rated as a first-class standard school in Xincheng county, has a relatively solid foundation in English language skill. Those 54 students were assigned to a class based on their high school entrance examination results. The basic information of the students is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Basic Information of Participants (Source: Data Collection and Statistics by Authors)

Class	Gender	Number	Total	Grade	Ages
EC (Class 1)	Male	24	54	Grade Ten	15-17
	Female	30			

3.2 Questionnaires

The pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire for this research are designed according to the questionnaires in the master's theses of Li Xiulan (2022:64)^[8], Zhou Jiaoni (2021:55)^[9], Weng Libin (2021:64-66)^[10] and Xiong Yan (2021:81-85)^[11]. Both the two questionnaires will be distributed and collected separately before and after the experiment in EG (Experimental Group) with 54 students in total involved in.

Apart from that, the scoring in the questionnaires is based on the Five-point Likert scale. To confirm the reliability of the questionnaire, an informal pre-questionnaire has been distributed and returned. According to the data analysis conducted by SPSS26, the reliability coefficient of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires are 0.729 and 0.965 respectively.

3.3 Interviews

After the action research, in order to understand students' and teachers' attitudes and comments towards integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model and collect more about the practical difficulties as well as acquire the profound perceptions on the application of integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model in senior high school, the interviews conducted after the experiment on 25 March 2023. There are nine front-line English teachers and ten students selected randomly from EG are interviewed. Moreover, the interviews will be held in a comfortable and stress-free environment and the tool for recording the content is a mobile phone. After the interview, the conversation will be transcribed into text form and analyzed.

3.4 Research Procedure

The specific teaching arrangements for the research steps are presented in the Figure 1 below.

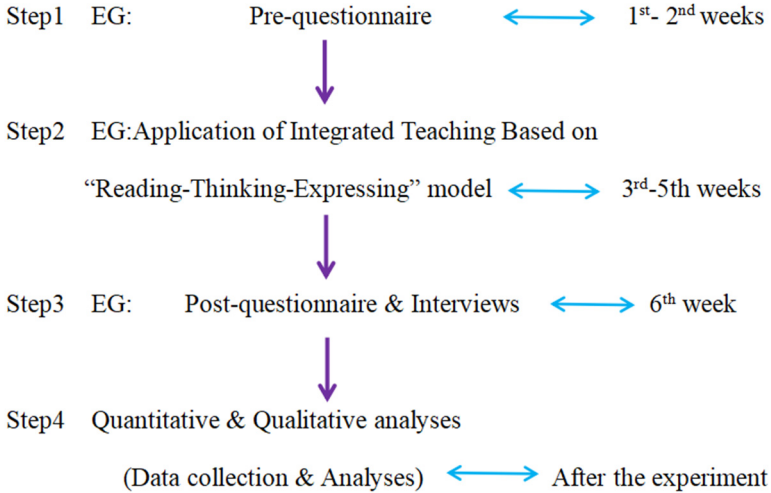


Fig. 1. Four Steps of the Research (Source: Research Plan by Authors)

During the period of the teaching experiment, students in EG will be taught by the writer, and the integrated of English reading and writing teaching based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model is applied.

3.5 A Sample Lesson of EG

In order to better demonstrate the teaching procedures of the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model carried out in senior high school English classes, a sample lesson of EG is simply presented in this part. The teaching content of the sample class mainly consists of an article titled *The Chinese Writing System: Connecting the Past and the Present* selected from the compulsory Textbook I by People’s Education Press, 2019^[12]. The teaching process is divided into three parts - let’s read, let’s think, and let’s express, leading students to be familiar with the content of the text, and then guiding them to think and answer the questions after the text, and finally asking them to express their respective opinions about “What can we students do to contribute to the Chinese language and culture?” in English.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Students' Attitudes and Suggestions

After a six-week experiment, the students in the experimental class achieved a significant improvement in their writing performance. To find out the students' emotional viewpoints about this teaching model, the author not only asked all the participants to finish the post-questionnaire, but also randomly selected ten students in the experimental class for interviews by casting lots.

4.1.1 Questionnaires Aimed at Students.

Twenty items of both pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire in this research are divided into five categories. More specifically, they involve writing attitudes, writing behavior, writing habits, enabling and overviews successively. In terms of the statistic collected, the proportion of the five categories are demonstrated and compared subsequently.

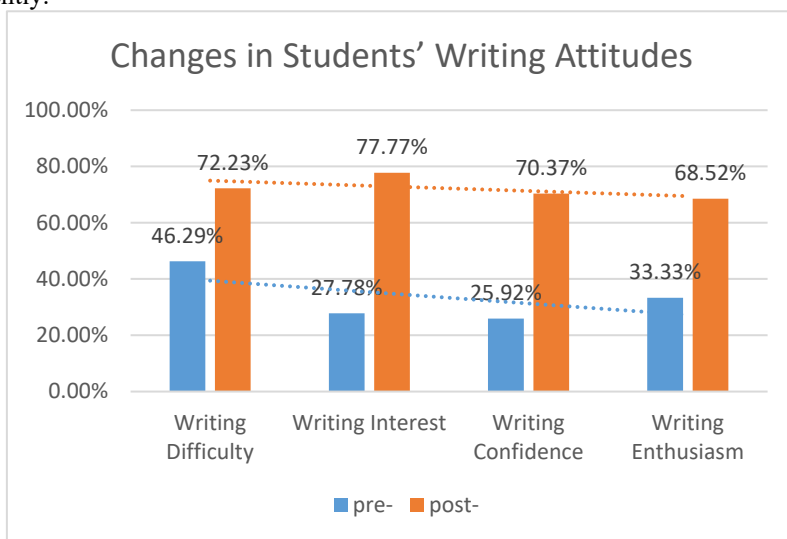


Fig. 2. Changes in Students' Writing Attitudes

Note: The rate is equal to the sum of the rate of score 4 and the rate of score 5.

As shown in Figure 2, the rate of writing difficulty varies from 46.29% who find it difficult to 72.23% who find it less difficult. It is evident that the integrated teaching approach of English reading and writing based on "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model has a significant positive impact on students' attitudes towards English writing.

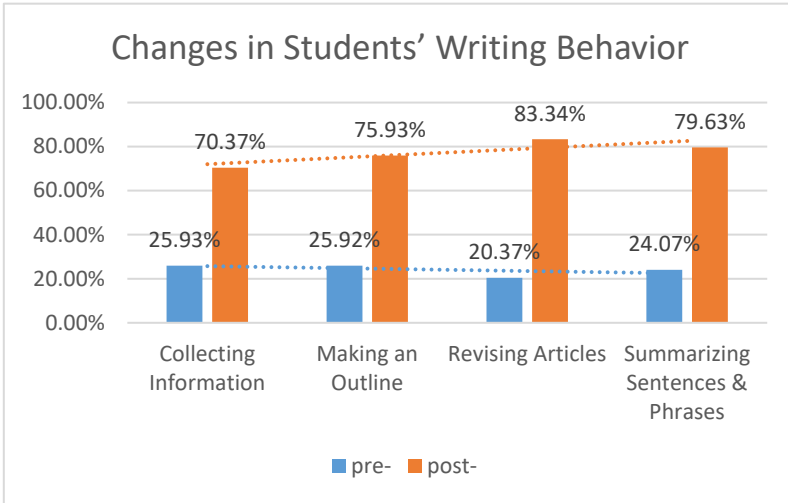


Fig. 3. Changes in Students' Writing Behavior

Note: The rate is equal to the sum of the rate of score 4 and the rate of score 5.

As shown in Figure 3, it is obvious that the integrated teaching approach of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model has a vital beneficial effect on students’ behavior towards English writing.

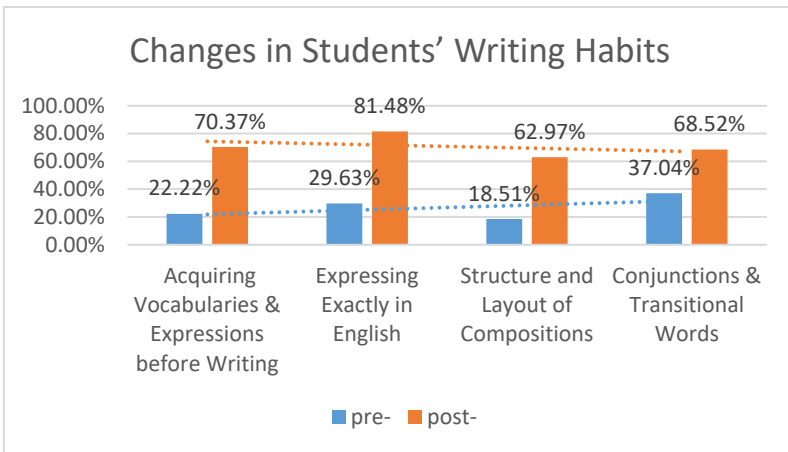


Fig. 4. Changes in Students' Writing Habits

Note: The rate is equal to the sum of the rate of score 4 and the rate of score 5.

As shown in Figure 4, it is apparent that the integrated teaching approach of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model plays an important role in students’ habits towards English writing.

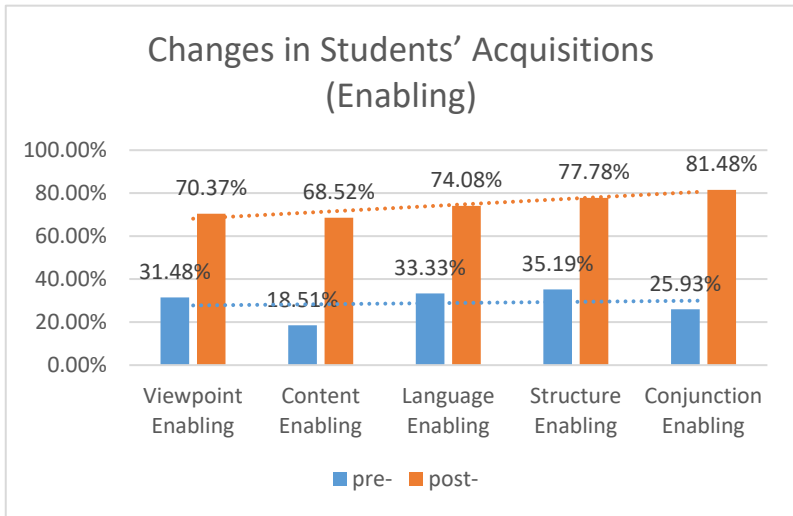


Fig. 5. Changes in Students' Acquisitions (Enabling)

Note: The rate is equal to the sum of the rate of score 4 and the rate of score 5.

As shown in Figure 5, by comparing and analyzing the figures accessed from the questionnaires, it is clear that the integrated teaching approach of English reading and writing based on “Reading- Thinking-Expressing” model is effective and appropriate in promoting students’ English writing.

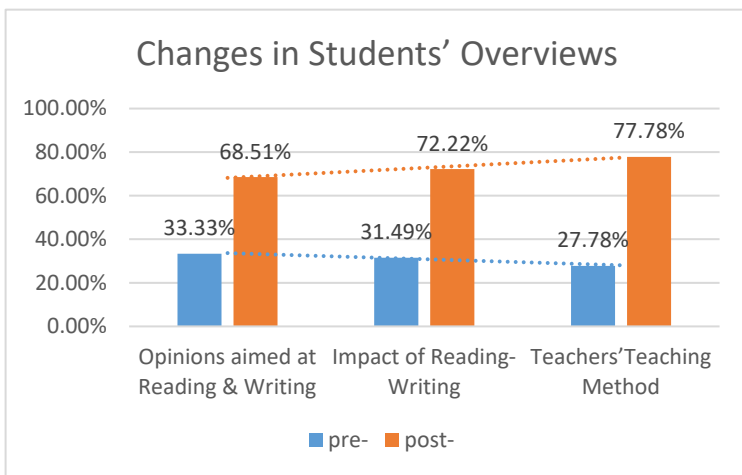


Fig. 6. Changes in Students' Overviews

Note: The rate is equal to the sum of the rate of score 4 and the rate of score 5.

As shown in Figure 6, by comparing and analyzing the figures accessed from the questionnaires, it is clear that the integrated teaching approach of English reading and

writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model is not only accepted by students to a large extent, but also enables them to better perceive that the relationship of reading and writing in English is inextricably linked.

In addition to the questionnaire data, interviews aimed at students can also be used to support the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the questionnaire data.

4.1.2 Interviews Aimed at Students.

The interview aimed at students after the experiment were recorded and transcribed by the author. Here are the main ideas and suggestions from the ten students who were randomly selected.

In response to the question “Do you like the way teachers implement the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model for teaching English reading and writing in the class? Why?”, all ten students were largely positive, as they felt that this mode of teaching was different from that used by their English teacher in the past. Most of them had found reading and writing in English extremely boring and tedious, but their attitude towards reading and writing in English had changed through this model. They concur that this model gives them more opportunities and time to explore knowledge and express themselves on their own, while the teacher’s appropriate guidance gives students more chances to communicate with the teacher. In addition, the design of questions and activities at different levels of difficulty allows students of all levels to participate in the classroom activities. However, it took some time to adapt to this mode of teaching from the initial unfamiliarity.

In response to the question “Do you feel it difficult to write continuation writing task?”, almost all of the students interviewed shared the common sense that it was difficult to read and then write essays because they did not know how to follow the two opening sentences of the paragraphs given in the question to sort out a logical essay that fits the topic, and even the higher achievers in English had this problem.

In response to the question “What problems are you facing currently?”, four of the ten students interviewed said that the largest problem at the moment is that it is difficult to balance all the subjects, as there are ten subjects in total in Grade 10 and most of the students’ self-study time outside of class is spent on subjects such as Maths and Science. The rest of the students stated that they still found it difficult to express their thoughts directly in English because they rarely had the opportunity to do so and they were worried that their spoken English was so poor that they would be ridiculed by their classmates for speaking English. Even though they had mastered a lot of English vocabulary, they often forgot some English words when they were about to express themselves.

In response to the question “Do you have any suggestions for the teaching approach?”, Students’ suggestions were that teachers could set up more interactive and enjoyable classroom activities, rather than just doing exercises to consolidate knowledge; teachers could share more extra-curricular knowledge and recommend extra-curricular English reading books; group competitions could be held to better motivate students; a mix of good and bad students could be arranged in groups, so that the best could lead the worst and learn from each other.

4.2 Teachers' Attitudes and Suggestions

In the interviews aimed at the interviewed English teachers after the experiment were finally recorded and transcribed by the authorship. Here are the main ideas and suggestions from the nine teachers who have listened to the experimental class.

In response to the question "Do you think it is necessary to implement 'Reading-Thinking-Expressing' model of reading and writing in the senior secondary English classroom? If so, what are the specific aspects?", two-thirds of the teachers interviewed thought that the teaching model had a strong positive effect on students' reading and writing development, while the remaining part of the teachers said that it would be extremely problematic to implement the model in classes where the students' English proficiency was in the middle and lower levels.

In response to the question "What do you think of this teaching approach for continuation writing task?", most teachers report that this teaching model helps students develop the expressive thinking in English needed in continuation writing task, and promotes the development of students' imagination and thinking abilities. In addition, the model can help students accumulate appropriate English knowledge and logical expressions in English to some extent. Thus, they all agree that this model has an important role in improving students' review and expressive output ability in continuation writing task.

In response to the question "What do you think is the biggest problem in implementing 'Reading-Thinking-Expressing' model of reading and writing in the senior secondary English class?", the biggest problem is that both students and teachers need a relatively long time to adapt to this new teaching model. For teachers, it consumes more time and effort for them to rework lesson plans and complete the preparation tasks. Besides, it is tough for students with low level of English to adapt to the full English teaching style and these students will lose confidence and interest in English. Hence, to promote and implement this teaching mode in high school English teaching will still be limited by some factors, such as students' English level, teachers' teaching habits, and class time arrangement.

In response to the question "Do you have any suggestions for this teaching approach?", the implementation of this teaching mode should preferably start in the first semester of Grade Ten, otherwise it will take quite a long time for students to adapt to the "Reading-Thinking-Expressing" model when they have already adapted to their English teachers' traditional teaching mode. In addition, it is really important to encourage students to express their ideas bravely at the beginning of the implementation, and to take care of students of different English levels in the class so that all students can participate in the classroom activities. Teachers should also give students timely feedback and encouragement during the classroom activities to help students with weak English foundation to build up their confidence in learning English and stimulate their interest and motivation in learning. Last but not least, teachers must provide timely critical feedback on students' essays.

4.3 Discussion Aimed at Collection

4.3.1 Effects on English Literacy Skills.

After the six-week English reading and writing teaching experiment, the percentage of students with positive attitudes toward English writing and the relationship between reading and writing has increased significantly; most of the students interviewed expressed the expectation that teachers could adopt it more often in the future to teach and guide their thinking about reading and writing. The results indicate that the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading -Thinking-Expressing” model has a certain guiding effect on the improvement of the English reading and writing ability of the first-year students of senior high school, which also reveals that this model is to a certain extent more excellent than the traditional English reading and writing teaching method in the following two aspects. On the one hand, students have more opportunities to express their own ideas or interact with their classmates or their English teacher directly during the class when applying “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model. On the other hand, the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on the “Reading - Thinking - Expressing” model emphasizes students’ subjectivity, fully considering students’ individual differences caused by various reasons, and pays close attention to the evaluation of each teaching link in the whole teaching process. It is to make students gain a sense of achievement in learning, so as to promote students’ reading and writing performance in this way.

4.3.2 Impacts on English Reading.

By means of interviews as well as questionnaire data analysis, the author found that senior students have a very positive attitude toward the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model in teaching English reading and writing. They believe that the learning atmosphere is highly crucial in English learning, and this is where the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model differs from the traditional English teaching mode. Traditional English teaching teachers take an indoctrination approach to make students receive knowledge that is larger than their proximal developmental zone, which will make many students afraid of English, English class, and even English teachers. Under such a teaching style, the atmosphere of the English class becomes dead and lifeless. At the same time, students in the first year of high school have a strong sense of choosing what they are passionate about and discarding what they don’t like, so the long term oppressive learning causes students to gradually lose interest in English and give up English. The “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model enables the teacher and students to establish a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. It is mainly through the teacher’s guidance that students are able to participate in class activities and tasks in a relaxing and enjoyable way, while helping them to solve difficulties that are greater than their current developmental level. In addition, the teacher sets different kinds of activities in the class so that each student has the opportunity to participate in the activities and communicate with others in a cooperative manner. It is in the process of participation that many students reorient their perceptions of English, thus changing their attitudes toward learning English. During the

application of integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, the teacher always pays attention to the change of students’ emotional attitude and strictly controls the students’ frustration level via the setting of different difficulty level tasks. The “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model is the way to improve student’ interests and self-confidence in learning English.

4.3.3 Requirements of Scaffolding and Input.

In the application of the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, the construction of learning scaffolds and the input of English knowledge are extremely vital. Before inputting knowledge to students, the teacher’s first task is to analyze students’ current level, that is, to determine their proximal developmental zone, with the aim of determining their current level and predicting the level they can reach with the help of learning scaffolds. Throughout the process, the teacher is required to analyze the students’ knowledge, to seriously consider the specific content of the instruction and to grasp the teaching process based on the students’ knowledge. In order to achieve that goal, teachers need to anticipate and measure the occurrence of problems in the teaching and learning process, as well as the steps and details of the teaching and learning process. After accurately analyzing students’ proximal developmental levels, appropriate scaffolding can be employed to assist students in improving their proximal developmental areas, which can motivate students and increase their enthusiasm for learning. Scaffolding can also help students activate their background knowledge and help them gain a sense of accomplishment in learning by connecting old and new knowledge, thus increasing their interest in learning English and encouraging them to develop good habits of independent learning. However, in the process of applying the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, if the scaffolding does not match the students’ actual developmental level, it may to some extent hinder the further advancement of students’ comprehensive English language skills. Therefore, in the application of the “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, the scaffolding and the selection of input materials must fully take into account the students’ proximal developmental zone level.

4.3.4 Adapting to Role Changes.

According to the reform of the new curriculum standards (2017 edition) and the principles of the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, we can notice that the details from both the guidance highlight that the teacher is no longer the authority of knowledge and truth and the center of the classroom, and the teachers have been given a new role. The “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” teaching model promotes students’ independent learning and emphasizes the primary role of students, who are the main subjects of learning, and the teacher’s mission is to guide them in their own exploration and independent learning. Although the integrated teaching of English reading and writing based on “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model emphasizes the main role of students in classroom teaching, it cannot overshadow the role of teachers in the process. In the

process of teaching with “Reading-Thinking-Expressing” model, the teacher is the guide of students’ direction, the problem solver, the information provider, and the classroom organizer. At the same time, teachers are expected to adapt to this change in role and return the classroom to the students.

5 Conclusion

Via the analysis of the experimental databases, the author realize that due to the lack of sufficient time and the limitations of the author’s academic proficiency, this research article has the following deficiencies: Firstly, this study was conducted within a single class of a senior class in a single high school, and only fifty-four students participated in this study; hence, the sample size was relatively small and the subjects of the study were single and monolithic. Secondly, the level of research is limited. As the first step in using the “Reading-Thinking- Expressing” model is to find students’ proximal developmental areas and build scaffolds, and these scaffolds should be refined according to the continuous changes of students’ abilities, it is extremely important to know when to build or remove scaffolds. However, due to the restrictions of personal knowledge and experience, it is quite challenging for the author to make a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the students’ potential developmental level. Finally, the study requires a considerable amount of time to validate but the study lasts only six weeks; the author can only monitor the students’ performance and learning behavior during this period.

Therefore, the depth and breadth of this study need to be further strengthened; English teachers should fully understand the curriculum requirements of the new standards, and pay more attention to their own teaching reflection and continuous learning ability of advanced teaching theories; English teachers need to combine the teaching theories, the requirements of the new standards, the content of the new textbooks, with the real context and students’ English reading and writing abilities, and design output tasks that match students’ abilities. Besides, English teachers should give timely and targeted feedback to students’ output texts and make adjustments according to the actual situation. More importantly, teachers and parents should help students establish a correct view of English learning, change their attitude of “learning English for tests”, stimulate students interest in learning English, and make them really want to learn and master English as a language skill from their hearts and internet users in society should also reduce the spread of the “English Uselessness Theory”.

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