

# Exploring Reading-to-Write Strategies in Senior High School English Teaching

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## Abstract

This passage mainly discusses the importance and effectiveness of Reading-to-Write in high school English teaching. Firstly, it emphasizes the significance of the comprehensive cultivation of language skills as proposed in the National English Curriculum Standard for Senior High School, highlighting the mutual enhancement between comprehension skills and expressive skills. The passage then analyzes the issue of the separation between reading and writing in high school English instruction and presents the theoretical basis of Reading-to-Write, including Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis. It further explores the role of Reading-to-Write in developing students' comprehensive language proficiency, shifting their attitudes toward writing, and fostering their autonomous learning abilities. Finally, the passage proposes specific teaching strategies for Reading-to-Write, such as selecting inspiring reading materials, designing engaging writing tasks, and analyzing reading texts for writing ideas, alongside concrete teaching examples. These strategies aim to help teachers integrate reading and writing teaching more effectively and improve students' overall language proficiency. Looking ahead, Reading-to-Write will continue to play a crucial role in high school English teaching, promoting steady progress in students' English learning and laying a solid foundation for their lifelong development.

## Keywords

Reading-to-Write, Writing Teaching, Senior High School English.

## 1. Introduction

The National English Curriculum Standard for Senior High School (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) (hereinafter referred to as the Standard) states that language skills are an important part of the ability to use language, in which listening, reading and viewing belong to comprehension skills, while speaking and writing are considered expressive skills. These two sets of skills complement and promote each other throughout the language learning process. Therefore, the Standard advocates the combination of single training and comprehensive training in teaching, avoiding isolated single skill training, in order to cultivate students' authentic language communication skills.

Guided by this philosophy, the continuation writing has been added in the English test paper of the college entrance examination, which fully reflects the importance attached by the Standard to students' comprehensive language skills. Additionally, the score allocated to the English writing portion of the college entrance examination has been increased from 25 to 40 points. This change further highlights the significance of reading and writing skills in English teaching, indicating a need for teachers to place greater emphasis on these skills. As Webb (1987) noted, "Reading is, in a sense, a 'dress rehearsal' for writing, with the reading materials providing the props for it." This view emphasizes the close relationship between reading and writing, showing the necessity to integrate these two skills in English teaching.

However, in the current high school English teaching context, teachers face several challenges. To begin with, there is a noticeable disconnect between students' reading and writing learning, and they often struggle to effectively transform what they have read into writing tasks; next, the integration of reading and writing is often inadequately addressed in the teaching process, thereby limiting students' ability to enhance their overall language proficiency; in addition, the reading materials are often poorly chosen, and the texts students read do not offer sufficient support their writing, resulting in their inability to apply what they have learned in writing tasks. In view of these problems, it is especially crucial to explore the teaching strategy of Reading-to-Write. Effective reading instruction can enhance students' writing ability, and the concept of Reading-to-Write has been a consensus in the academic field (Yao Junwei 2013). Since reading and writing share significant commonalities in language use and discourse features, the appropriate use of this strategy can assist in promoting students' thinking and writing skills (Luo Zhihui & Chen Dan 2017).

## **2. Understanding Reading-to-Write**

### **2.1. Definition and Connotation**

Reading-to-Write is a teaching strategy that emphasizes developing writing skills through reading activities, based on the premise that reading serves as the primary means of language input, while writing acts as a crucial form of language output. In this approach, students first absorb and comprehend language materials through reading. With teacher guidance, they utilize key vocabulary, sentence structures, and elements of expression from the texts to construct and articulate their own ideas, ultimately completing their writing tasks. This process creates a complementary relationship between reading and writing, where each reinforces and enhances the other.

Against the backdrop of the new Curriculum Standard, the new college entrance examination, and the implementation of new teaching materials, Reading-to-Write assumes an indispensable role in English writing teaching. Teachers should attach great importance to the integration of reading and writing in the teaching process, and build an interactive classroom model to promote the overall development of students' language ability. Consequently, Reading-to-Write represents not merely an efficacious avenue for augmenting students' English writing competencies but also a significant instrument for improving their all-round language capabilities, equipping them with the skills necessary to thrive in a multilingual and globalized context.

### **2.2. Theoretical Basis**

#### **2.2.1. Input Hypothesis**

Krashen's input hypothesis (1985) provides a solid theoretical foundation for Reading-to-Write. According to this theory, there are several key conditions that need to be met for effective language input to facilitate second language acquisition.

Firstly, the material must be comprehensible and slightly above the students' current level of proficiency in order to facilitate the learning of new language structures and vocabulary. Secondly, the material needs to be relevant to the students' experiences in order to stimulate students' interest and facilitate the internalization of their knowledge. Thirdly, the input materials should follow the "i+1" principle to ensure that the materials are within students' comprehension, but provide moderate challenges to promote the development of language proficiency. And finally, a large amount of language input is provided to achieve quantitative to qualitative change and help students make substantial progress in language acquisition.

Therefore, in Reading-to-Write teaching, teachers need to provide a wide range of reading materials to ensure that students have sufficient input to support the development of their writing skills.

### **2.2.2. Output Hypothesis**

In English teaching, the significance of reading as a source of input and writing as an output activity is clear; together, they form two essential components in the process of second language acquisition (Gu Qiyi 2006). Swain put forward the output hypothesis in 1985, highlighting the significance of output in second language learning. This theory posits that output is more than just a phase of language learning; it also serves to solidify knowledge and stimulate thought. Furthermore, the output hypothesis also provides a theoretical basis for Reading-to-Write.

Following substantial reading input, students need to consolidate what they have learnt through output activities such as writing. Writing not only enables students to apply vocabulary and grammar but also improves their overall language proficiency. By writing, students can reinforce what they have learnt from reading, build text structures and create new content, thus refining their writing abilities. Consequently, in Reading-to-Write, teachers should offer a variety of reading materials and motivate students to write after reading. This approach fosters a connection between reading and writing, deepening students' comprehension and command of the language.

## **2.3. Significance in English Teaching**

### **2.3.1. Enhancing Students' Comprehensive Language Proficiency**

The enhancement of comprehensive language proficiency is closely linked to the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and rhetoric, and Reading-to-Write plays a vital role in this process. Reading offers students essential writing materials, language knowledge, and emotional insights, making the integration of reading and writing an effective approach to improving their writing ability (Zhu Yongju 2021).

On one hand, engaging with texts allows students to deepen their understanding of English grammatical structures and encounter a variety of sentence patterns and grammatical rules. Learning through practical application, as opposed to traditional grammar explanations, enables students to grasp the practical use of grammar in writing, thereby improving the precision and richness of their language expressions.

On the other hand, Reading-to-Write aids students in accumulating vocabulary and improving their skills in vocabulary usage. Through reading, students are exposed to a diverse range of thematic and stylistic vocabulary, which not only broadens their lexicon but also strengthens their ability to use vocabulary flexibly and accurately in writing. By constantly emulating vocabulary usage found in model texts, students gradually build their own vocabulary base, making their writing more vivid and concrete while demonstrating a higher level of comprehensive language proficiency. In this way, students can not only improve their language skills, but also apply what they have learned more effectively in real-world communication.

### **2.3.2. Shifting Students' Attitudes Toward Writing**

While enhancing students' reading and writing skills, Reading-to-Write also effectively shifts their attitudes towards writing. Engaging with a broad range of texts not only sparks students' interest and creativity but also helps them realise that writing is a way of expressing oneself rather than a mere mechanical exercise.

Reading offers students models to imitate and learn from, allowing them to grasp different writing styles, structures and tones. As they experiment with different modes of expression, students gain confidence and cultivate a positive perception of their writing abilities. Moreover, they come to understand that writing is not merely the application of language but also a

medium for conveying thoughts and emotions, serving as a bridge to connect with readers. This realization encourages them to increasingly appreciate the value of writing.

Reading-to-Write is a text-reading-based writing approach that fosters positive emotional, cognitive and behavioral changes in students, helping them to alleviate their fear and anxiety surrounding English writing. Thus, Reading-to-Write serves not only as a strategy to enhance students' writing skills, but also as an effective means to change students' attitudes towards writing.

### **2.3.3. Developing Students' Autonomous Learning Abilities**

Traditional English writing teaching was predominantly teacher-centred, offering students few opportunities for independent thought and writing. Reading-to-Write introduces an alternative approach that can stimulate students' self-directed learning and develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. During the reading process, students take the initiative to accumulate vocabulary, sentence patterns, and diverse expressions, thereby gradually constructing their own linguistic repertoire. In addition, analyzing the structure, main ideas, and language features of texts while reading not only enhances their independent reading skills but also equips them with a wealth of language resources for their writing. Through the reading-based writing process, students expand their ideas and pathways of English learning. They actively employ various learning strategies and engage in reflective practice, striving to enhance their problem awareness and learning efficiency, so as to lay a solid foundation for lifelong language learning (Guoqiang & Li Lizhu 2021). In this manner, students not only develop their ability to learn independently but also improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This empowerment enables them to express themselves more effectively and engage in creative writing in English.

Furthermore, in the implementation of Reading-to-Write teaching, students' writing is no longer restricted by the traditional framework, but transformed into a platform for self-expression and creativity. The increased freedom in writing not only ignites students' enthusiasm for writing, but also fosters their independence in problem-solving and opinion-expression. As a result, this approach provides effective support for enhancing students' overall English proficiency.

## **3. Problems in High School English Writing Teaching**

### **3.1. Lack of Awareness of the Reading-Writing Connection**

The high school stage is crucial for students as they undergo rapid physiological and psychological growth. During this period, their interest in English reading and writing is essential for their overall development. Yet, many teachers overlook the close relationship between reading and writing, leading to a phenomenon of "separation of reading and writing." This failure to effectively integrate the two leaves students in a state of isolation in these areas (Zhang Xianchen 2021). Consequently, this situation not only weakens students' interest in English reading and writing but also directly impacts the quality of their writing.

Influenced by the traditional exam-oriented education system, teachers often prioritize enhancing students' exam techniques, with the main goal of improving test scores. As a result, insufficient attention is given to teaching English writing, and teachers tend to rely on conventional, rigid methods and strategies, lacking a systematic and comprehensive approach to writing instruction (Wang Li 2014). This teaching model, which undervalues writing in favor of reading, fails to allocate adequate attention and resources to writing instruction. Afterwards, both teachers and students develop a weak understanding of the integration between reading and writing, making it challenging to effectively promote the organic combination of the two.

In order to change this situation, teachers need to review and adjust their teaching methods and balance the teaching of reading and writing. By adopting Reading-to-Write, teachers can effectively guide students in accumulating writing materials and enhancing their writing skills through reading. This approach promotes the overall integration of reading and writing in students' learning experiences.

### **3.2. Imbalance in Teaching Practices: Reading vs. Writing**

In high school English teaching, an imbalance often exists in the approach to teaching reading and writing. This discrepancy results in students' language learning frequently stagnating at the level of memorizing words and grammar rules, without a deeper exploration of the themes and structures of texts. Teachers tend to overlook the cultivation of students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, and writing tasks are frequently assigned as homework with little guidance or feedback during the process (Qian Xiaofang & Wang Qiang 2020).

When reading is overemphasized while writing is neglected, students often struggle to consciously extract language materials from their reading. This leads to a disconnect between reading and writing, which limits their ability to benefit from reading and hinders their writing skill development. Treating reading and writing instruction as two separate entities impedes students from applying the discourse knowledge acquired through reading to their writing. This not only renders writing an impenetrable challenge for both teachers and students but also contradicts the goal of developing core competences within the English curriculum (Li Yao 2024).

To address these issues, teachers need to re-examine and rebalance reading and writing instruction, viewing them as an integrated whole rather than as separate components. Additionally, by designing cohesive learning activities within the Reading-to-Write framework, teachers can enable students to acquire language knowledge through reading and apply it to their writing, fostering greater creativity and self-confidence.

### **3.3. Disconnect Between Reading Preparation and Writing Tasks**

The consistency of reading and writing content is essential for the success of Reading-to-Write teaching activities. This consistency implies that students should apply the skills and strategies learned from reading—such as subject matter, text structure, and language style—in their writing exercises to develop a deeper understanding of language and enhance their expressive abilities (Dong Zhujun 2018). When designing teaching activities, teachers should closely align with the topic of the discourse and construct scaffolds that match the teaching objectives, ensuring a strong connection between language input and output. However, many teachers fall short in this regard, resulting in a disconnect between reading and writing. As a consequence, students struggle to effectively incorporate the information they have read into their writing, further hindering their progress in writing activities.

Reading-to-Write plays a crucial role in guiding students' literacy skills by emphasizing the interaction between reading and writing. This model encourages students to draw inspiration and material from their reading and incorporate these elements into their own writing, thereby enhancing the overall quality of their work. To achieve this, teachers need to avoid the disconnect between reading preparation and writing tasks, helping students better integrate the content from reading into their writing, which ultimately improves their language ability and writing quality. At the same time, the challenges and demands of the writing process motivate students to engage with and analyze reading materials more deeply, thereby improving their reading skills. Through Reading-to-Write teaching activities, teachers can effectively guide students to recognize the intrinsic connection between reading and writing, ultimately developing their ability to use language comprehensively.

## 4. Effective Teaching Strategies for Reading-to-Write

### 4.1. Selecting Inspiring Reading Materials

For many high school students, English writing poses a great challenge. However, the Reading-to-Write teaching method, which tightly integrates reading and writing, can effectively enhance students' writing abilities. Within this model, teachers should carefully select appropriate reading materials, using the textbook as a foundation and supplementing with extracurricular materials when suitable, to create a bridge to writing. In this way, students can express their own ideas after reading, realise the close integration of reading and writing, and stimulate their writing inspiration.

For instance, in "FLTRP Book 2 Unit 6 Earth first," the teacher can center the teaching activities on the theme of "environmental protection." In class, the teacher could pose the question to the students, "Class, what strategies do you think can help protect our environment?" Students then suggest answers such as "Recycling," "Using less plastic," "Planting trees," and the like. After introducing the unit's topic, the teacher can guide students to read relevant articles regarding environmental protection, like "What's really green?" This passage discusses the common misunderstandings about environmental conservation in daily life and puts forward efficacious measures for safeguarding the environment.

As the content of the passage is closely related to students' lives, many students are likely to find it engaging. Given that students are generally familiar with concepts related to environmental protection, the reading difficulty remains moderate, allowing them to comprehend the text quickly. While students are reading, the teacher can introduce open-ended discussion topics that are relevant to the content of the passage. This encourages students to express their views and enables them to utilize these discussions and the reading material as sources for their writing.

Teachers can pose a topic such as: "What actions can you take to protect the environment? Why are they important?" Under this question, students can express themselves in relation to their own lives, for example: "I always try to recycle plastic bottles and paper. It helps reduce waste and saves resources. I believe if everyone does their part, we can make a big difference." Teachers can then guide students to incorporate what they express in class into the writing on related topics, assisting them in understanding the structure of the passage and thereby enhancing their writing skills.

### 4.2. Designing Engaging Writing Tasks

In Reading-to-Write teaching, after students have completed their reading, teachers should establish writing topics that are closely related to the theme or content of the reading text and guide them into writing practice. When selecting these writing themes, it is essential for teachers to consider their relevance to the reading text, as this connection helps to stimulate students' interest and engagement. By aligning the writing tasks with the readings, the teacher can effectively highlight the advantages of Reading-to-Write, fostering a deeper understanding and enhancing students' writing skills.

Taking "PEP Book 2 Unit 1 Cultural Heritage" as an example, this unit is centred on the theme of cultural heritage. At this stage, high school students' knowledge of culture is expanding, and they often find that information about cultural heritage, such as ancient buildings and traditional handicrafts, arouses their curiosity and thinking. After guiding students to read a text on cultural heritage protection, the teacher can set "Protecting the Intangible Cultural Heritage Around Us" as the theme for writing.

Since each student has a unique understanding of the intangible cultural heritage and the writing task is closely linked with the reading text, it can effectively stimulate their enthusiasm for writing. Before writing, the teacher can organize a classroom discussion. Following the

discussion, some students may suggest dividing the passage into three parts: first, introducing the basic information of an intangible cultural heritage; second, describing the challenges faced in preserving this heritage; and third, putting forward suggestions and measures for its protection. Then the teacher should encourage students to express their views on "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage." Some students may say, "The intangible cultural heritage around us, like the North-Sichuan Life-Sized Puppet, is a precious treasure of our culture. It represents the unique spirit and wisdom of our ancestors, and we should take steps to ensure its continuation." Others may point out that "Protecting our intangible cultural heritage is not only our duty but also a way to enrich our cultural life. We can start by promoting it in schools and communities to raise public awareness."

After classroom discussion, students can clarify their writing ideas, formulate novel perspectives, and produce high-quality writings centered around the theme by integrating everyone's ideas. Through Reading-to-Write, teachers can not only help students improve their writing skills, but also raise their awareness of cultural heritage and its conservation. This process fosters greater self-confidence and provides students with more opportunities for expression in their learning. The implementation of this teaching strategy not only improves students' English writing ability, but also lays a solid foundation for their overall development.

### **4.3. Analyzing Reading Texts for Writing Ideas**

The reading texts in senior secondary school English textbooks are highly readable, aiding students in learning not just vocabulary, sentence structures, and grammar but also in gaining life experiences and forming a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. In the teaching process of Reading-to-Write, teachers' guidance is vital. They should guide students to analyse the reading text comprehensively, so that they can draw on their understanding of the content to generate writing materials and participate in a variety of writing exercises

Similarly, taking "FLTRP Book 1 Unit 4 Friends Forever" as an instance, this unit is centered on friendship and interpersonal relationships, probing into the value and deep meaning of friendship while helping students understand the principles that underpin these connections. During the teaching process, teachers can pose a series of inspiring questions, such as: "What qualities do you cherish in a friend?" and "How do you resolve conflicts with friends?" These questions can encourage students to think more deeply and engage with the core theme of the text, augmenting their comprehension and fostering meaningful discussions about friendship.

After completing the teaching tasks in this unit, teachers can assign writing tasks on the theme of "My Best Friend." In their writing, students will be encouraged to integrate their real-life friendship experiences with the sentence patterns and grammar learned in this unit. Students can effectively apply their language knowledge from reading by crafting high-quality pieces. This approach not only enhances their writing skills but also deepens their understanding of friendship and interpersonal relationships, allowing them to express their thoughts and experiences more flexibly and thoughtfully.

By means of Reading-to-Write, students can experience the strong connection between reading and writing. This encourages them to express their personal ideas boldly while flexibly applying what they have learned in English to their writing. Through in-depth reflection and analysis, students enhance their overall literacy and improve their writing abilities. Generally, Reading-to-Write plays a significant role in students' language learning. Meanwhile, it also contributes to the improvement of their critical thinking skills and the elevation of their emotional awareness.

## 5. Conclusion

In high school English teaching, Reading-to-Write is becoming a key pathway for enhancing students' language abilities. This approach effectively makes up for the shortcomings of traditional teaching methods and fosters a complementary relationship between reading and writing. By implementing Reading-to-Write, we can not only improve students' reading skills but also deepen their understanding and application of language in writing, so as to improve their comprehensive language ability.

However, to ensure the effective implementation of Reading-to-Write, teachers need to make continuous efforts and explorations, actively innovate teaching methods, optimise the teaching process and stimulate students' potential. It is believed that Reading-to-Write will continue to play an important role in high school English teaching in the future, helping students to move forward steadily along their journey of English learning, effectively improving their comprehensive language skills and laying a solid foundation for their long-term development.

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