



Promoting Parental Involvement in Students' English Writing of Chinese Middle School: Guidelines for Best Practices

Hongqiong Sun, *Professor, Vice Dean of School of Languages and Culture, Chuxiong Normal University (Correspondence)*

Jing Li, *Associate Professor, Chuxiong Normal University*

GuopingKui, *lecturer, Chuxiong Normal University*

Chunyan Zhang, *Associate Professor, Chuxiong Normal University*

Date of Submission: 04-05-2022

Date of Acceptance: 19-05-2022

Abstract: Observational studies suggest that parental involvement has an outstanding effect on children's learning, especially when parents are prepared in the involvement. However, the teachers seldom have the time to explain English writing in class, while the well-educated parents spend most of the time with their child, who are dedicated to their child's English writing. Therefore, parental involvement provides parents with the opportunity to improve parenthood and English writing at their disposal of capitals. 100 students from 2 middle schools and their parents with a half in the experimental class were invited in the study. There are 7 workshops for parents. After each workshop, there are observation, reflection, and students' English writing exercise. A questionnaire would be provided for the 100 parents, together with one final English writing exercise for 100 students. Plan-Do-Check-Act model is used in analyzing the qualitative data, while Hierarchical multiple regression in SPSS would be adopted in analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire. The result shows 87.3% of the variance predicts students' English writing, which proves the validity of the model. Finally, the article provides 8 guidelines based on the results of the model study for parents to be better involved in students' English writing competence.

Keywords: Parental involvement Parental Capitals English writing Guideline

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have confirmed that parental involvement has a unique and essential effect

on children's learning, which is positively relating to students' personal fulfillment. Especially in urban area, parental involvement plays a significant role in students' academic achievement (Jeynes, 2005; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2011). Students show more attention in the classroom, higher attendance, higher test scores, improved behavior, and learning difficulties are easily identified sooner, when parents are involved in school (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Daubert & Epstein, 1993). Furthermore, home-based involvement provides parents with the opportunity to supplement instructing in class; reinforce and expound on classroom learning and reward achievement.

However, English in China remains a highly regarded subject in Chinese school system since it can be important acceptance to university, which in turn is often a significant determinant in a student's future success (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002a; Jiang, 2003). However, students in Middle School find one of the biggest obstacles in their English learning is English writing (Jiang, 2003). Few English teachers at Middle School cultivate students' English writing competence, which may influence students' writing score in TOEFL or IELTS in the future.

In Chinese culture, the role of family in children's development has been overwhelmed in Confucian philosophies. At the center of socio-cultural contexts, students' family-related factors are considered as the most powerful external factors on the development of students' academic achievement (Tavani & Losh, 2003; Vygostky, 1978). What's more, parents are believed in taking the



responsibility for their children's academic achievement and successful future life. However, most Chinese parents who want to help their child develop English writing don't know how and when due to less normative analysis (Yingqi Wang, 2015).

Parents can do something based on their available resources and abundant experiences (parental capitals) in developing students' English writing as much as possible. Furthermore, in most middle schools of Chinese urban areas, 85% parents have bachelor's degrees (Author & Rungrajsuan, 2019), making them more competent to involve in student's English learning at home.

Both the quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis indicate the validity of the model in the study. Hence, guidelines for embedding parental involvement into Chinese students' English writing competence are somewhat vague. Consequently, this

paper provides specific suggestions for infusing parental involvement into students' English writing practice in China to promote students' English writing competence based on the effectiveness analysis of the model. This article discusses parental involvement model in China, the 7 workshops for parents, and presents guidelines to support parental involvement into students' English writing competence.

II. MODEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The core concepts of developing the model of parental involvement lie in Brown's formula in parental involvement (1998), English writing process (Graham et al., 2016), English writing rubric (Wang & Han, 2017), and students' English writing context at Chinese junior middle school.

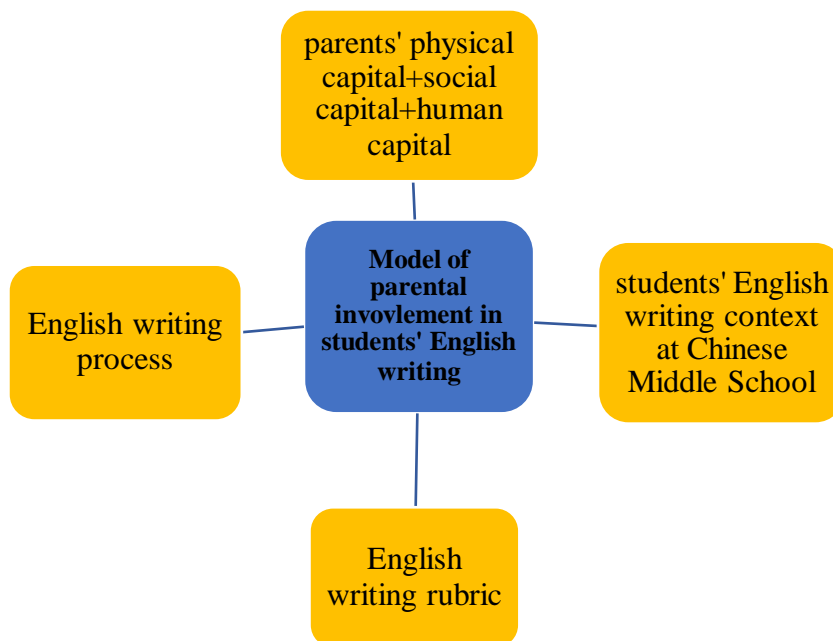


Figure 1 Model of Parental Involvement in Students' English writing Competence

Brown's formula of parental involvement provides the theoretical foundation that parents can help in students' learning. English writing process and writing rubric show the parents how to involve actively and effectively in students' English writing. Students' learning could infer from parent's physical capital, human capital, and social capital (Brown, 1998). Physical capital contains some tangible resources provided by parents. Social capital indicates social support with the parents. To be specific, parents could use their social capital within the physical capital, then provide their own human capital in students' English writing.

Parents and students could be the different role in students' writing process based on Graham and his team (2016). On the whole, parents can help students in planning, goal setting, and evaluating of the writing with their more fruitful experience in terms of physical capital, social capital, and human capital. On the other hand, helping students' in their English writing can encourage students' strategic thinking, ultimately helping them to write more effectively. However, parents could not replace English teacher at school. Therefore, some basic English skills (vocabulary, sentence) are still from teacher's role. Figure 2 provides more detailed



information of parental involvement in students' writing process.

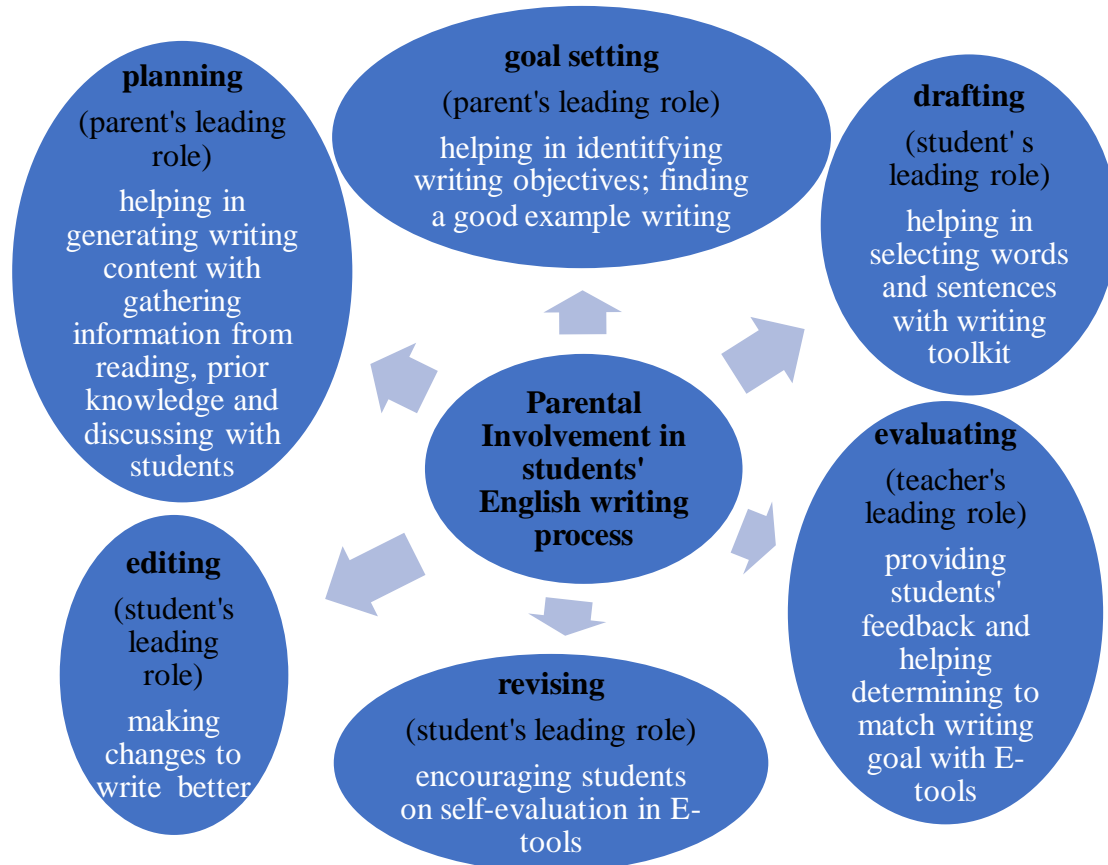


Figure 2 Different role in Students' English Writing Process

However, in some writing phase (such as drafting, evaluating, revising, and editing), parents can help students in the complement role. In summary, parents' role is not only encouraging and expecting students' good writing performance, but also can be truly involved in students' English writing.

There are four parts in marking students' English writing, containing Structure and Organization, Content, Argumentation, Language Use and Mechanics (Wang & Han, 2017). Parents could help students in their writing based on the four parts in writing rubric (Figure 3).

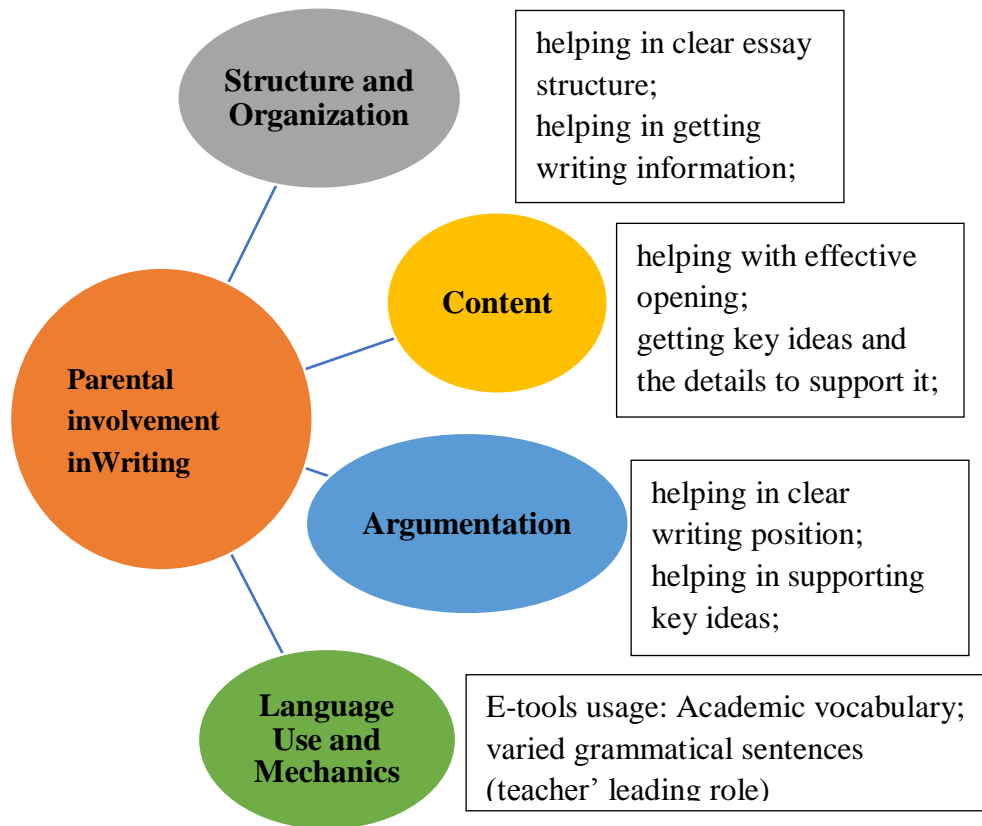


Figure 3 Parental Involvement in Writing Rubric

Finally, students' English writing context includes the curriculum and the syllabus at Middle school, parents' attitudes towards parental involvement, students' English writing situations. Parents cannot truly involved in students' English writing until they know students' English writing context.

III. SEVENWORKSHOPS FOR DEVELOPINGPARENTALINVOLVEMENT SKILLS

7 workshops would be devised for parents to effectively involve in students' English writing based on the model of parental involvement(Figure 4).

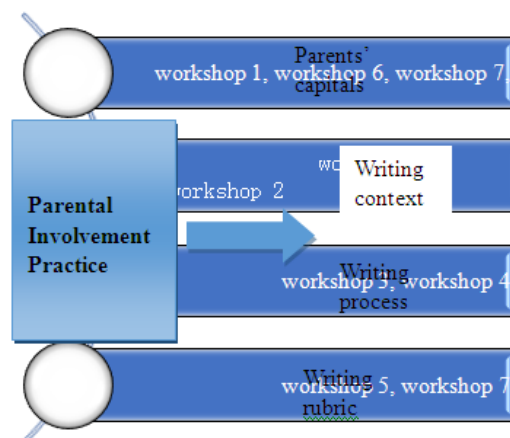


Figure 4 Seven Workshops based on the Model of Parental Involvement



The first workshop is Introductory workshop. It depicts the whole view for parents to comprehend the must if parents want to develop students' English writing competence. The second workshop is workshop of Chinese usage in students' English writing. Parents learn what makes a good English writing essay, and Language 1 to help students' English writing due to parents' qualified Chinese writing constitute. Workshop of English writing strategy could be the third workshop for parents to learn. Parents would know better the good parental writing strategy to fit in the child's English writing. The fourth workshop is workshop of E-tools usage in students' English writing. In the workshop, parents can adopt some E-tools in assisting students' English writing as self-monitoring E-tools.

Workshop of cultivating students' cultural awareness is the fifth workshop for parents to be engaged. Parents would understand cultivating cultural awareness is of great significance in developing students' English learning and writing. The sixth one is workshop of parenting style. Parents can comprehend their proper parenting style while helping child's English writing by learning and communicating with the others in the workshop. Finally, the last workshop is workshop of home-based English writing activities. Parents can devise their own writing activities based on the concepts mentioned in the model. In a word, parents could understand how to involve in students' English writing in details after participating in the seven workshops and share parental practice, thus building community of parental involvement.

50 students with their parents were invited to take part in the study. They were the control class who all came from the 8th grade in different middle school. The sample is non-probability sampling. Another 50 students and their parents together with the experimental class were invited to answer the questionnaire and the final English exercise.

4.1 qualitative analysis

In each workshop, observations, reflection, and students' English writing exercise progress could be evaluated. Plan-Do-Check-Act model (Tague, 2005) is to examine the longitudinal impact of parental involvement practice in each workshop in analyzing each workshop and its effectiveness in parental involvement.

As a result, 50 parents confirm that the 7 workshops are helpful in students' English writing. All the parents ensure that their children have made progress since the beginning of the 7 workshops in regard of writing structure, writing logic, and E-tools usage. All the parents admit that parenthood has been greatly improved by taking part in the workshops and working together with children on each writing activity. The parents all show they would like to contact the other parents to share some parental experience. In conclusion, efficiency of workshops from parental final reflections keeps high in validity of parental involvement. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show that students' English writing score is improved in parental involvement, since their English teachers reported little lecture on English writing rubric due to the time limit in class.

IV. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MODEL

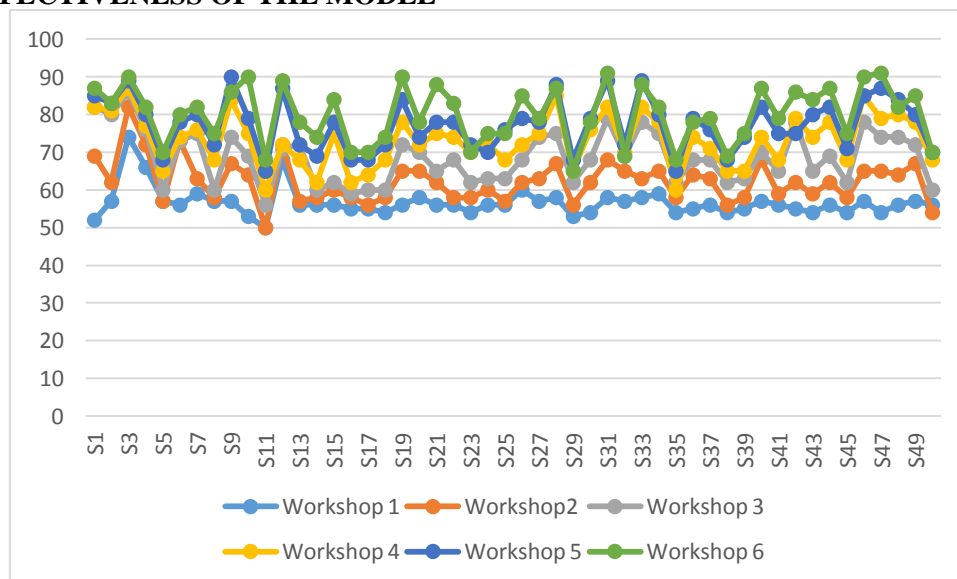


Figure 5 Scores of Each workshop in Students' English Writing Exercises

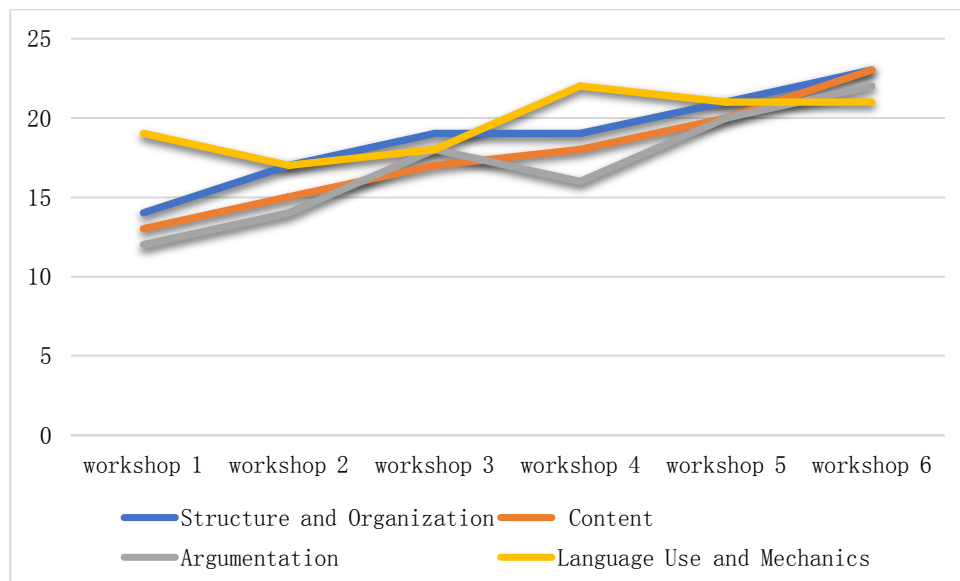


Figure 6 Mean Scores of Each Part in Students' English Writing Exercise

4.2 quantitative analysis

The questionnaire was conducted on 16 January 2021 on www.wjx.cn. Another 50 students and their parents (experimental group) were invited in the last writing exercise and the questionnaire. There are six independent variables of the questionnaire to investigate the contribution of parental involvement skills gained from the workshops based on the model to assess making the large contributions in students' final English writing scores. However, the variables are to support in the interpretation of contributions among the variables with students' final score. The research results

indicate that a positive association existed in parents' education status has relationship with students' English writing score (EWS) from the aspects of parental involvement. And it confirms to the study of Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) and Kashahu et al. (2014).

Hierarchical multiple regression in SPSS would be adopted to analyze the data from the 100 parents. Since parents' gender has less contribution with students' writing score (Author, 2019), parents' age and parents' education status could be contained in the model as the predictors in the analysis.

Table 1 Model Summary
Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.174 ^a	.030	.010	12.589	.030	1.511	2	97	.226
2	.934 ^b	.873	.757	6.234	.842	7.634	45	52	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), education status, gender

b. Predictors: (Constant), education status, gender,

total EWS (English writing strategies), total PS (parenting style), total ETU (e-tools usage), total CCA (cultivation of cultural awareness), total HEWA (home-based English writing activities), total CAL (cultivation of cultural awareness)

c. Dependent Variable: FWS (Final writing scores of students)

In Block 1, after the parents' age and education status have been entered, the overall model explains 30.0 percent of the variance (.30×100). All the variables have contained in Block 2, the model as a whole explains 87.3 percent

(.873×100) of the variance. On the line labelled Model 2, the R square change value is .842. The results show that the six variables explain an additional 84.2 percent (.842×100) of the variance in students' writing score, even if the effects of parents'



age and education status responding are statistically controlled for.

The finding suggests that these parental involvement skills can help their children's English writing competence, thus assisting their children higher score in writing. The workshops did help in students' writing competence in terms of parental involvement. Therefore, parents could adopt parental skills learned in the workshops in helping students' writing. The more parents devoted themselves in parental involvement in students' English writing, the better students would achieve in their English writing competence.

V. GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS TO INVOLVE IN STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING

With the modifications of the model, parents may support children's English writing development, provide writing methods with parents' capitals and gained writing knowledge from the workshops, stimulate children in a number of writing activities to build their own writing strategy, and learn to write in English together with children.

Guideline 1: Guide Parents with Students' English Writing Context

Parental involvement serves as the supplement role in helping students' English writing instead of teacher's role at school. Parents are expected to understand English curriculum and English syllabus for Middle School students, essential English writing process, criteria for a well-structured English writing, and English writing expectations for students.

Furthermore, English basic structure could be illustrated with title, organization, content, argumentation, and language use. In such case, parents would understand the whole English writing facets they would help students with. Above all, content and argumentation are the focus for parents to be involved.

Guideline 2: Chinese Usage in Students' English Writing

Many studies have found that the first language can be beneficial as a cognitive tool that may be helpful in second-language learning (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Watanabe, 2008). It's of great significance to use L1 in constructing writing structure (Graham et al., 2005). Parents can help and guide students in writing structure and constructing the main argumentation of English writing in Chinese first with their social

capital and physical capital. Well-structured in content could be edited and arranged in Chinese concerning thinking style before writing (Gao, 2006). However, parents could help students' English writing by working the toolkits together, sentences writing monitoring by understanding Contrastive analysis.

To be more specific, parents could help students in content structure of English writing in Chinese, such as in refining the main writing idea. As for the structure in writing, parents could use Chinese to help and guide students construct the writing. Meanwhile, parents could adopt the toolkits to help and work with them. For the sake of understanding and efficiency of writing toolkits, parents can use code switching during the co-working time with students.

Guideline 3: Constructing Writing Toolkits with Students

Parents can use Chinese to help students construct toolkits in English words (word bank), grammar usage, and conjunction usage. In constructing toolkits, parents require students in Chinese first, then students build grammar toolkit and conjunction toolkit in written English. All the toolkits would be constructed based on the textbook that students have learned at school. Teachers would help parents categorize every word into the categories in building word bank. For the toolkit of grammar, parents may assist students to list every item of grammar rule, including Chinese name for it, Chinese implication, and making a sentence in English using the tense. Finally, the toolkit for conjunctions, parents would help students list all the conjunctions they have been learned so far at school, demonstrate Chinese meaning, and then make sentence with it in English. By doing so, parents can be more efficiently involved in students' English writing to improve the parenthood, but also helping students in reviewing and preparing their English examination.

Guideline 4: Students' English Writing Strategy on Parental Involvement

Parents must understand some writing strategy which fits in parental involvement to help students in selecting writing strategy, carrying out each step of the strategy, and adapting the strategy in writing. Parents could combine previous strategies with their physical capital and social capital, such as students mind-mapping, using mother tongue to construct writing structure, co-editing, and revising. However, more detailed strategies of parental involvement would be introduced before



writing, when writing, and after writing.

Table 2 Students' English Writing Strategies based on Parental Involvement

Before writing	In writing	After writing	Other strategies
help students make clear of the requirements in English writing, writing propose;	parents are expected to help students finding some ideas, facts, research results in preparing argumentation in writing;	parents have to urge students to check writing spelling again;	write after the model, reading model English writing;
help students write down the related information on the topic in Chinese;	guide students using dictionary to ascertain words spelling;	ensure organization and proper conjunctions usage and grammar usage in the writing;	use the newly learned words in the textbook;
help students write writing outline in Chinese first then in English, read and sort out writing materials.	check the logic flow in the writing;		sign the writing class online;
	confirm writing ideas in the writing;		adopt some apps to assist students' English writing;
	utilize available resources from reading in argumentation of the writing;		writing different genre in English;
	Help students write the conclusion part.		summarize students' English writing progress;
			building toolkits for students' English writing;
			effective ways of finding resources that "feed" into a particular writing;
			produce a writing plan with research notes in and setting achievable goals to students' writing competence.

Furthermore, parents are bound to offer helps in students' English handwriting, including capitalized the first word of sentences and proper names, the tidiness of the overall appearance in handwriting, punctuation usage, and correct spelling based on the dictionary. All in all, many creative strategies in parental involvement are provided based on

discussion and sharing between parents and students.

Guideline 5:E-tools Usage in Students' English Writing

The incorporation of electronic and web-based tools for students' writing has been studied by MacArthur (2009), who confirms the use of word



processing, outlining, and concept mapping tools for struggling young writers. According to Eastwood and his colleagues (2012), the available tools might be helpful for students to achieve language writing goals and to become informed, critical technology consumers. E-tools could be adopted to check students' English writing while they are at home with parents. However, parents cannot replace English teacher's proficiency to check students' writing in terms of content, structure and organization, argumentation, and language use. Therefore, they might need help from E-tools usage.

Furthermore, when selecting E-tools for this parental involvement, it is crucial that E-tools should be easy to use and access for both students and parents. The selected E-tools have been manifested they are mainly adopted during the pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing stages of the writing process. The E-tools can be utilized in outlining, brainstorming, and organization during the pre-writing stage, paraphrasing, summarizing, and organization during the writing stages. What's more, they can be used in feedback and peer review during the post-writing stages (Table 2).

Table 3 E-tools Usage in Students' English Writing

Pre-writing	When writing	After writing
<i>Eyeploer.com</i>	<i>Edublogs</i>	<i>Word Processors</i>
<i>Wall wisher, Tricider</i>	<i>readwritethink</i>	<i>Grammarly</i>
<i>NoteEverything</i>	<i>ia.net/writer</i>	<i>Hemingway Editor</i>
<i>Spiderscribe</i>	<i>EssayAiBot</i>	<i>WritingAssistant</i>
<i>Stixy</i>	<i>www.bigan.net</i>	<i>PaperRater</i>
<i>Wridea</i>	<i>www.Ichecker.com</i>	<i>The "Paraphrase Self-test"</i>
<i>Mind42</i>	<i>Rhyme Zone</i>	
<i>99 words</i>		
<i>Wordnik</i>		

In wording process, students and parents could use the following:

OxfordLearner's Dictionaries (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>); Lexico (<https://www.lexico.com/>); Collins Dictionary (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>); Merriam-webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>); Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online (<https://www.ldoceonline.com/>); Online Collocation Dictionary (<https://www.freecollocation.com/>); The Free Dictionary (<https://www.freethesaurus.com/>); Online Etymology Dictionary (<https://www.etymonline.com/>).

Students are expected to enlarge their reading in writing, they could use the corpora in English writing (<https://www.english-corpora.org/>). Meanwhile, Loyal Books (<http://www.loyalbooks.com/>), AudioBook Treasury (<http://www.audiobooktreasury.com/>), and Free Classic Audio Books (<https://www.freeclassicaudiobooks.com/>) also available in students' reading.

Guideline 6: Cultivating Students' Cultural Awareness in English Writing

Culture is the way people learn to look at the world and how people function in it. According to Bennett (1993), learning a language without knowing

its culture makes a "stupid" learner, since the learner understands less social or philosophical content of that language. The full proficiency in the target language does not only include only the language skills, patterns, and grammar rules but also the target culture (Hesar et al., 2012).

However, in New English Curriculum for Chinese Primary Schools and Junior/Senior Middle Schools (2017 Version) by the Education Ministry of the PRC, cultural awareness is one of the learning objectives for the students. Cultivating awareness may directly affect students' English writing one way or the other. Chinese writing is typically circular, reflecting a culture that honors being polite and indirect to avoid offending anyone (Samantha, 2011). Asian writing is vertical instead of horizontal, sentence fragments and choppy statements are common. While in English writing, participial phrases, adverb clauses and prepositional phrases can help reduce wordiness, cut out all unnecessary words in writing, and make the writing as simple as possible.

Therefore, parents need to be cautious on some writing habits derived from cultural differences to guide students in positive English writing transfer. Moreover, travelling abroad and some cultural experience activities would be the most effective way to cultivate students' culture awareness in their English writing (Author, 2019). On the other



hand, Parents can also lead students to get simple and easy writing information from Wikipedia and other resources, so as students can cultivate cultural awareness by reading more in English. After all, parents possess more capitals compared to students in learning.

Guideline 7: Parenting Style

Culture plays a role in parenting style of the Asian family, and it must be understood to contextualize the family practices of parental involvement within Chinese culture (Samantha, 2011). According to Baumrind (1991), there are four types of parenting style. However, two more parenting styles would be added based on Chinese culture. Over-caring parenting style refers to parents are too protective for their children, while another one is Ignorant parenting style. Ignorant parenting style incorporates those parents who consider them as ill-literacy in English writing and weekend parents who do not take the responsibility for their child's English learning. They only meet their child on weekends.

Parents have the opportunity checking on their own parenting styles to adapt in parental involvement of students' English writing competence. The practice of parental involvement would be more effective if parents adopt parenting style of authoritarian based on the model of parental involvement. Hence, parents could make the list of items which they have to transform their parenting style compared to authoritarian. Parents may reconsider parenting style in the family, gaining more thoughts on it to promote parenting style in parental involvement of student's English writing competence.

Guideline 8: Constructing Home-based English Writing Activities

Rearing environment predicts children's academic performance and learning outcomes (Kiuru et al., 2012). In addition, parental behaviors especially maternal involvement practice (responsibility, warmth, engagement) would be stable in affecting children's learning performance (Else-Quest et al., 2011). However, good parent-child interaction at home promotes home-based learning activity to increase children's learning performance (Rawashdeh et al., 2017). Home-based English Writing Activities is to encourage parents and students to design home-based English writing activities in parental involvement to help students' English writing.

According to Eklund & Brunt (2017), meaningful home-based activities are supposed to contain the proper activity opportunity, good family

interaction, better organization, and reasonable planning. When designed home-based learning activity, validity and utility must be considered in processing the activity. However, Chinese family activity is restrained somehow due to traditional monarch-subject relationship (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Subsequently, parents are required to extend their own family activities to fit in the involvement.

It is intended to remind parents that they have to combine English writing structure with home-based English writing activity, together with the main criteria to assess English essay (Robinson, 2000). Parents may be led and guided how to construct home-based writing activities on their own family culture. Then, the child can be encouraged to design and conduct the whole activity to practice better effects on their English writing.

VI. Conclusion

Students spend the majority of their time with parents, and families have unique effect on students out of school time. Especially during the outbreak time of COVID-19. Furthermore, families are among the most important determinants of students' learning attitudes, behavior, and overall well-being (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeroen, 2007). The degree of parental involvement is definitely influenced by many factors, such as family educational background, parental residence and parenting style which parents are adhered to one's cultural context (Bempechat, 1992; Dandapani, 2001; Sheila, 2005).

There's much more parents could actually do in developing students' English writing competence in terms of parental involvement. Parents need to transform traditional perspectives of parental involvement into a more challenging and dynamic ones to be better parents for children and family. After all, it's time to learn and grow in learning with children together.

Acknowledgement:

Support from numerous colleagues, friends and experts from Chuxiong Normal University and No. 1 Middle School of Lufeng and Nanhua is gratefully acknowledged. Funding was received from the generous grants from Office Education in Yunnan Province, China, and support from the staff in other middle schools in Chuxiong City is gratefully acknowledged. The article is dedicated to my colleagues of the research team in their achievements and resilience.



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