Title: Redesigning pedagogy for Chinese writing: The multi-sensory approach
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**Redesigning Pedagogy for Chinese Writing: The Multi-Sensory Approach**

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**Abstract**

To help students who have difficulty in creative writing, it is important to redesign pedagogy to suit their needs. In redesigning pedagogy for average and lower-ability tertiary students, a multi-sensory approach to instruction on Chinese writing was tested in three associate degree classes (N = 100). The students were taught with the multi-sensory approach in writing Chinese essays in three distinct genres (i.e., descriptive, narrative, and expressive). The essays were assessed by three assessors: (a) the writer (i.e., the student himself or herself), (b) a peer, and (c) the teacher at 2 time points (i.e., before and after the instruction). A 2 (time) x 3 (genre) x 3 (assessor) repeated-measures analysis of variance found statistically significant main effects and also interaction effects. Overall, the approach improved students’ writing over time in all three writing genres. However, the effects were stronger for the expressive and descriptive genres and the students did not feel the improvement in writing in the narrative genre as strongly as they did in the other genres. To improve average and lower-ability students’ writing in Chinese, the multi-sensory approach may be helpful especially in the expressive and descriptive genres.

Researchers and teachers of languages have been in search for effective ways to enhance the quantity and quality of students’ writing output (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Hudson & Bruckman, 2002; Kraetsch, 1981; Mehnert, 1998; Moran, 1988; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wigglesworth, 1997). In teaching Chinese-speaking students to write in Chinese, conventional approaches often include modeling with clear instructions on the genre of the essay (Erbaugh, 1990; Jin, 2001; Zhu, 1997). In the present investigation, we tested a multi-sensory approach to enhancing students’ quality of writing. In assessing the students’ writing output, in addition to traditional teacher ratings, the writers of the passages themselves and their peers in the class also rated their written work. This process not only facilitated a sense of self-regulation (Winne & Perry, 2000) during the learning process but also provided some cross validation of the findings in the experimental study.

**The Multi-sensory Approach**

In the context of English language teaching, various approaches to improving students’ writing output have been tested. Of the many approaches, an interesting one that has been found to be useful is the multi-sensory approach (Hillocks & Kachur, 1979; Jampole, 1990; Nelson, 1976;
Peterson-Stroz, 1997; Pohan & Kelly, 2004; Vaac & Vacc, 1979; Walling, 1978). By attending to their five senses (i.e., visual, touch, small, taste, and sound), students tend to write more and write better.

The idea of using sensory stimuli to enhance output in writing has been tested with various samples. For example, Vaac and Vacc (1979) found that the use of sensory to aid manuscript writing was useful not only for normal ability students but also for learning-disabled and emotionally disturbed children. Hillocks and Kachur (1979) found the approach useful in students’ stimulating interest in writing. In helping students with descriptive writing, Walling (1978) found the approach useful, resulting in improved output. Particularly relevant to language output, Nelson (1976) has highlighted that the five senses can be used to add a creative touch to students’ writing output.

The appeal to students’ imagery and touch can be very powerful and it may facilitate deep learning. Pohan and Kelly (2004) described the success of a student teacher who facilitated students’ learning by using sensory experiences to generate meaningful connections. To consolidate student’s learning about sea creatures, the teacher asked students to have a close look at sea shells and attend to the details such as the patterns, colours, shapes, and textures. To facilitate a more thorough understanding of the descriptions about a scuba diver visit, the teacher allowed the students to actually try on the scuba diving gear including the fins, tank, weights, and regulator. The approach resulted in better understanding of the new knowledge.

In language learning, the sensory experiences of imagery and touch may also be useful in facilitating students’ output. For example, Peterson-Stroz (1997) found that by instructing students to use guided imagery and writing warm-ups in a printmaking and bookmaking course, students were motivated and they showed evidence of improvements in both areas of writing and techniques in printmaking and bookmaking.

Furthermore, positive effects are not limited to imagery and touch. Researchers have studied the effects of involving students in the five senses when engaged in writing tasks (Hillocks & Kachur, 1979; Jampole, 1990; Nelson, 1976; Peterson-Stroz, 1997; Pohan & Kelly, 2004; Vaac & Vacc, 1979; Walling, 1978). Nevertheless, of the various senses, the visual sense seems to be particularly influential. In a study with gifted elementary students, Jampole (1990) examined the effect of guided imagery on students’ writing. Academically gifted 3rd and 4th graders were tested ($N = 126$). Students with high and low creativity scores were randomly assigned to (a) an imagery training group that practiced the formation of mental images based on descriptive passages followed by a creative writing task, (b) a writing practice group that listened to short stories followed by a creative writing task, and (c) a control group in which students participated in individual projects assigned by the class teacher. A comparison of pretest and posttest scores on creative writing found that the high-creativity students in the imagery training group improved in their originality, story length, and use of sensory descriptions over time. There was evidence that the use of the visual sense could enhance the quality of writing.

To further examine the effects of imagery, Jampole et al. (1991) examined the effects of mental imagery on 4th and 5th graders’ creative writing. Again, she found that by using imagery, students improved in originality and their use of sensory descriptions although the quantity of output did not
differ from the control group. Similarly, Jampole, Mathews, and Konopak (1994) found positive effects of guided imagery using a sample of 43 academically gifted 3rd and 4th graders. Again, guided imagery was found to generate more original writing, which also contained more sensory descriptions.

Apart from imagery, the other senses may also be useful in facilitating more meaningful output in writing. For example, Sprinkle (1999) used smell as a writing stimulant to encourage writing. Galvin (1997) asked 9th graders to recall a specific sense memory involving food and then write a narrative and create a pictorial representation of it. The task resulted in students’ better output in their writing. According to Orr (2001), authors use words and expressions to convey sensory experiences to the reader such that the reader knows not just what happened, but how it happened as well. Examples of such sensory experiences may include image, taste, sound, smell, and feel. By using expressions about sensory experiences, we can make our writing more vivid and more appealing to the reader.

Thus, the use of a multi-sensory approach may improve students’ writing, especially in certain genres where the senses are likely to appeal to the reader. For example, whereas Rutherford (1991) suggested the use of multi-sensory approaches to writing instruction, she argued that even pieces of candy can provide students with memorable lessons in writing. Whereas the scent and taste of the candy may stimulate the writer to produce a piece of writing in which the candy becomes more vivid, the scent and taste as presented in the words of the authors may in turn trigger the sensory experiences of the reader. Hence, Baart (2002) suggested that the best way to help high school students write poetry is to bring them to memories that would stimulate the expression of things more vividly and more intensely. Nevertheless, as Halpern (2003) has noted, different people may have different sensory modality preferences. When one knows one’s own modality preference, one would be likely to employ this modality in future learning tasks. Therefore, when a writer has learned that the use of imagery is his or her strength, he or she will keep on using the strategy to make the writing interesting.

In sum, the use of sensory experiences has the advantage of making a piece writing meaningful and interesting. However, the technique of using sensory experiences in writing has been mostly tested in western countries. Although Ng and Yeung (2008) have suggested that the approach may work also in Chinese writing, it is unclear whether the positive effects would generalize across different genres of writing. In this study, we hypothesized that by incorporating a multi-sensory approach to teaching writing in Chinese, students would improve in their essay writing scores in three different genres of Chinese essays (i.e., descriptive, narrative, and expressive).

**Method**

*The Participants*

The participants were 100 students who studied in the first year of a two-year associate degree program in Hong Kong. Consent to participate in the study was obtained from the participants before the experiment started. The associate degree was designed for students who have completed a two-year matriculation program but have not obtained advanced level results good enough to be accepted into university. In the past, there was almost no possible path for these students to pursue
tertiary education in a local context. However, in 2001, associate degree (AD) programs started to provide an alternative pathway for these students to pursue higher education. For some of these students, we would expect that there was room for improvement in certain academic areas, including Chinese, which is our focus in the present investigation. Any gain obtained in the experiment would be worthwhile as it may direct us to effective ways to enhance the writing output of comparatively weaker adult learners.

Material and Procedure

In three different classes, the students were taught by the same teacher. There was an ongoing assessment of student learning which spanned across the 45-hour Chinese module, but the marks for the writing tasks in the present experiment were not used for any formal assessment. As such, students would have the flexibility of exercising their creativity and originality.

The Pretest. The total time for each genre—including pretest, instructions, and posttest—was 6 hours (i.e., two lessons of 3 hrs each). For each genre, a pretest was conducted in the first 30 minutes of the first lesson. That is, the teacher gave a topic relevant to that genre and the students completed an essay in their own way within 30 minutes without any instruction. After that, the teacher handed out a list of marking criteria and the student assessed their own work and each individual wrote down a self-assessed score. The marking criteria provided the teacher and students a clear indication of what is required and what is expected as quality output. The piece of writing was then handed to a peer chosen by the author, who also gave the essay a score according to the criteria. This pretest procedure was uniform across the three genres.

The instructions. The instruction after the pretest was different for each genre although the total instruction time was equivalent across the three genres. That is, the teacher made use of the rest of the first lesson to provide instructions on (a) meeting the requirements and expectations of the genre, and (b) applying personal senses to enrich the content and presentation of the writing. Students were also given opportunities to practise writing short paragraphs before the first lesson ended. In practising the use of multiple senses in the descriptive genre, the students were each given a candy. They were then required to write down as many words and phrases as they could that they thought were related to the touch, vision, sound, smell, and taste of the candy. Then they made use of these words and phrases to build a paragraph describing the candy. As a result, the paragraph ended in a vivid description of the object in terms of its appearance, colour, size, and texture, and in terms of the smooth touch, the sound generated during the unwrapping of the candy and the movement of it inside the mouth, the inviting scent, and the sweet taste. Making use of the writer’s own experience of the candy through the senses, the piece of writing became much richer in content and presentation. For the narrative genre, students listened to a song in their mother tongue and quickly wrote down words and phrases about the content of the song that tells a story. In particular, they were directed to focus on the “6 Ws” (i.e., what, where, who, when, why, and how), which helped them to make an inventory of interesting details. Then they organized these words and phrases logically to rewrite the story in a logical way that made sense to the reader with rich details in the narrative. For the expressive genre, the teacher turned down the light and played two songs in class so that the students would focus on the audio stimulus. The songs were in Korean such that the
Chinese-speaking students would not know what the lyrics were about. They could only sense from the melody and mood of the music and the voice of the singer whether they would be a happy or sad story. After playing the first song, the lights were on and the students were asked to write down as many words and phrases they could that described the mood of the song and the feelings of the singer. Then they organized these words and phrases into a paragraph to express their feelings. Then the second song was played with a different mood, and the same procedure was repeated, resulting in a paragraph expressing a completely different feeling. The three genres used an equivalent amount of time for instruction and practice.

The practice and posttest. The second lesson started with a review of both the genre characteristics and the application of multiple senses. Then ample opportunities were given to the students to practise and discuss the effects of the approach they had learned in the previous lesson. The last part of the second lesson was for the posttest. The students were given a topic relevant to the respective genre and they wrote an essay for 30 minutes. The teacher then handed out the marking criteria (the same one used in the pretest) and asked the students to give a self-rating. They then asked a peer (the same person as in the pretest) to also give a rating.

Scores by teacher. For the present purpose, a total of three pretest tasks and three posttest tasks were collected (one for each genre: descriptive, narrative, and expressive). The maximum possible score for each piece of writing was 60 marks so that they could be compared directly. For each genre, the essays were randomized in order of marking so as to avoid a biased pattern of marks across the pretest and posttest written works.

Self-rating. Parallel with the teacher ratings, the students were asked to give a rating to their own written work. The list of marking criteria was used to guide the students to rate their own work. Again, the maximum score for each piece of writing was 60 marks.

Peer rating. Parallel with the teacher’s and self-ratings, each student asked a friend in the same class to rate each piece of written work. The list of marking criteria was again used to guide the peers to rate their friends’ work. The maximum score for each piece of work was again 60 marks.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis was conducted with the scores of the 100 students. Because the pattern of results was very similar across the three classes, the result for each class is not presented separately. First, a 2 (time: pretest vs. posttest) x 3 (genre: descriptive, narrative, expressive) x 3 (assessor: self, peer, teacher) repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with time, genre and assessor factors as within-subject factors. All statistical analyses were conducted with the SPSS statistical tool (Foster, 2001).

Results

The mean scores and standard deviations for the writing genres assessed by each of the three assessors in the present study are shown in Table 1. Given the abilities of the students that are known to be comparatively weaker, not surprisingly, the mean scores tended to be low. That is, whereas the teacher’s ratings were clearly below the mid-point of 30, even the students’ self-ratings were less than 40 out of 60 at best. The mean scores showed that in general, self-ratings (e.g.,
posttest $M = 37.03$ for descriptive writing) tended to be higher than peer ratings (e.g., posttest $M = 31.52$ for descriptive writing), which in turn tended to be higher than teacher ratings (e.g., posttest $M = 27.34$ for descriptive writing). There was only one exception, that is, the peers rated their friends’ expressive writing more generously (posttest $M = 32.42$) than the writer (posttest $M = 25.41$) and the teacher (posttest $M = 23.88$) after intervention.

Table 1. *Means and (Standard Deviations) of Variables by Time, Genre, and Assessor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Assessor</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>$M = 36.92$</td>
<td>34.80</td>
<td>21.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (8.13)$</td>
<td>(7.65)</td>
<td>(5.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>$M = 28.32$</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td>21.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (6.56)$</td>
<td>(7.41)</td>
<td>(5.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>$M = 24.82$</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>20.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (6.46)$</td>
<td>(6.37)</td>
<td>(2.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>$M = 37.03$</td>
<td>34.16</td>
<td>25.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (5.97)$</td>
<td>(6.21)</td>
<td>(6.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>$M = 31.52$</td>
<td>27.41</td>
<td>32.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (6.53)$</td>
<td>(6.22)</td>
<td>(4.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>$M = 27.34$</td>
<td>22.98</td>
<td>23.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = (4.11)$</td>
<td>(5.35)</td>
<td>(3.50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $N = 100$. Maximum possible score for each writing task was 60 marks. In the repeated-measures ANOVA, Time 1 = pretest, Time 2 = posttest. The three genres of writing were Descriptive, Narrative, and Expressive. The three assessors were self (the writer), peer (another student in the same class), and teacher (the same teacher in all three classes).*

A comparison of the pretest scores and posttest scores found a general pattern of higher posttest (e.g., posttest teacher rating $M = 27.34$ for descriptive writing) than pretest scores in the respective genre and assessor (e.g., pretest teacher rating $M = 24.82$ for descriptive writing). In other words, there seemed to be improvement in scores over time. The only exception was found in the self-ratings for narrative writing where the posttest score ($M = 34.16$) was lower than the pretest score ($M = 34.80$).

A 2 (time: pretest vs. posttest) x 3 (genre: descriptive, narrative, expressive) x 3 (assessor: self, peer, teacher) repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted. The $F$-statistics are presented in Table 2. The ANOVA found statistically significant effects of time, $F(1,99) = 112.99$, $MSE = 38.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .53$; genre, $F(2,198) = 214.34$, $MSE = 47.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .68$; and assessor, $F(2,198) = 186.65$, $MSE = 37.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .65$. These results indicated that (a) there was a general gain in scores over time, (b) the students scored differently in the three writing genres, and (c) the different assessors differed somewhat in their ratings.
The interaction effects were also statistically significant. The time x genre interaction was significant, $F(2,198) = 21.49$, $MSE = 38.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$, indicating that the gain in scores due to intervention was not equivalent among different writing genres. The time x assessor interaction was significant, $F(2,198) = 54.19$, $MSE = 20.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .35$, indicating that the gain in scores due to intervention was not equivalent among the different assessors of written work. The genre x assessor interaction was significant, $F(4,396) = 107.15$, $MSE = 23.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .52$, indicating that whereas some assessors tended to rate works in a certain genre higher than the other genres, some other assessors did otherwise. Finally, the three-way time x style x assessor interaction effect was also significant, $F(4,396) = 10.69$, $MSE = 19.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, indicating that the gain in scores due to intervention was neither equivalent across genres nor equivalent across assessors.

Table 2. Summary of F-Statistics for ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Effect</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$MSE$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>112.99**</td>
<td>1,99</td>
<td>38.27</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>214.34**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>47.21</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>186.65**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>37.88</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x genre</td>
<td>21.49**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>38.72</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x assessor</td>
<td>54.19**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre x assessor</td>
<td>107.15**</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>23.22</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x genre x assessor</td>
<td>10.69**</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>19.83</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Effect</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$MSE$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>16.50**</td>
<td>1,99</td>
<td>34.27</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>157.45**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>38.80</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x assessor</td>
<td>4.13*</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>31.95</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Effect</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$MSE$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>7.65*</td>
<td>1,99</td>
<td>25.20</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>226.33**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>34.72</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x assessor</td>
<td>5.25*</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>24.36</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expressive Effect</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$MSE$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>287.22**</td>
<td>1,99</td>
<td>20.23</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>56.02**</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x assessor</td>
<td>45.15*</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $N = 100$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

To examine the potential gains due to intervention more closely, a 2 (time: pretest vs. posttest) x 3 (assessor: self, peer, teacher) repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted...
separately for each genre. The results are presented in Table 2. For the descriptive genre, the ANOVA found statistically significant main effects of time, $F(1,99) = 16.50, MSE = 34.27, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, and assessor, $F(2,198) = 157.45, MSE = 38.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .61$, indicating an increase in scores over time and that the teacher tended to rate the written works lower than the students. The time x assessor interaction effect was also significant, $F(2,198) = 4.13, MSE = 31.95, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$, indicating that the different assessors did not perceive the magnitude of improvement the same way. For example, whereas the teacher’s ratings showed a 10% increase in scores (pretest $M = 24.82$ vs. posttest $M = 27.34$), the self-ratings did not show any improvement over time (pretest $M = 36.92$ vs. posttest $M = 37.03$).

For the narrative genre, the ANOVA found statistically significant main effects of time, $F(1,99) = 7.65, MSE = 25.20, p < .05, \eta^2 = .07$, and assessor, $F(2,198) = 226.33, MSE = 34.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .70$, indicating an increase in scores over time and that again the teacher tended to rate the written works lower than the students. The time x assessor interaction effect was also significant, $F(2,198) = 5.25, MSE = 24.36, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$, indicating that the different assessors perceived the change differently. For example, whereas the teacher’s ratings showed a 7% increase in scores (pretest $M = 21.40$ vs. posttest $M = 22.98$), the self-ratings showed even a slight drop over time (pretest $M = 34.80$ vs. posttest $M = 34.16$).

For the expressive genre, the ANOVA found statistically significant main effects of time, $F(1,99) = 287.22, MSE = 20.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .74$, and assessor, $F(2,198) = 56.02, MSE = 20.13, p < .001, \eta^2 = .36$, indicating an increase in scores over time and that the teacher tended to rate the written works lower than the students. The time x assessor interaction effect was also significant, $F(2,198) = 45.15, MSE = 22.06, p < .05, \eta^2 = .31$, indicating that the different assessors did not perceive the magnitude of improvement differently. For example, whereas the teacher’s ratings showed an 18% increase in scores (pretest $M = 20.31$ vs. posttest $M = 23.88$) which was very close to the 17% increase in the self-ratings (pretest $M = 21.69$ vs. posttest $M = 25.41$), the peer ratings increased by 54% (pretest $M = 21.05$ vs. posttest $M = 32.42$).

**Discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to test the generalizability of positive effects of applying the multi-sensory approach for enhancing writing output across different genres of Chinese essay writing. Numerous researchers have demonstrated that the approach can improve writing output (e.g., Hillocks & Kachur, 1979; Jampole, 1990; Nelson, 1976; Ng & Yeung, 2008; Peterson-Stroz, 1997; Pohan & Kelly, 2004; Vaac & Vacc, 1979; Walling, 1978). Research findings have shown that the approach works with different learner characteristics (e.g., Hillocks & Kachur, 1979; Ng & Yeung, 2008; Pohan & Kelly, 2004; Vaac & Vacc, 1979). Ng and Yeung (2008) have also demonstrated that the multi-sensory approach may help Chinese learners. The present study has extended these findings to Chinese essay writing by less competent tertiary students in three different genres that are often used and assessed in educational settings.

Taking the teacher ratings as a more accurate indication of the effects of the multi-sensory approach, the results imply that the approach is more effective in enhancing students’ Chinese writing in the expressive and descriptive genres. Although positive gains were also detected for the
narrative genre (7%), the gain was comparatively smaller than for descriptive (10%) and expressive (18%) writings. The students’ self-ratings and peer ratings also seemed to support this implication. Although the change in peer ratings over time for the expressive genre was overwhelmingly high (54%), this increase may also suggest how impressed the peers were by their friends improvement in that genre. For the narrative genre, even though both the teacher and the peers perceived some improvement in the writing, the writers themselves did not seem to perceive any improvement. This result has provided further support that although the multi-sensory approach may be useful in enhancing students’ writing in Chinese, there may be more positive gains in the expressive and descriptive genres than in the narrative genre.

Hence overall, the results of the present study have provided evidence in support of the facilitative effects of the multi-sensory approach in improving students’ writing over time. More importantly, the positive effects of intervention were found in all three writing genres investigated in the experiment. Why the effects appeared to be stronger for the expressive and descriptive genres than for the narrative genre requires further investigation, and why the students did not feel their improvement in the narrative genre is also unclear. Hence further work is needed to elucidate the differential effects, perhaps with a range of different samples in order to provide more information as to which students would benefit from what kind of multi-sensory instruction in which genre. In essence, further experimentation is required to provide us with more accurate directions for maximizing the effects of this redesigned pedagogy.

References


