

# The Application of Integrating Chinese Elements into College English Writing Blended Teaching Based on the Genre-based Approach

Wen Tian

School of Foreign Languages, Guizhou Medical University, Guizhou, Guiyang 550004 China

**Abstract:** Ideological and political education should be carried out with all kinds of courses in colleges and universities under the new circumstances. With the prominent features of instrumentalism and humanism, the implementation of moral education concerning Chinese elements in the course of college English writing teaching should be the responsibility for the teacher, which can combine the Genre-based Approach (GBA) as the teaching theory with the blended teaching that consists of online and offline learning as the teaching model, to thoroughly dig into the Chinese elements from teaching materials provided in the course and then integrate these Chinese elements into accomplishing writing tasks. In this article, the designed teaching cycle is mixed the learning cycle of the GBA with the blended teaching model for students to improve writing ability, enhance confidence in Chinese culture and realize all-round development. As a result, this paper will firstly review the theories of genres and its pedagogy, and introduce the concept and benefits of blended teaching model. Then by following the proposed teaching cycle, the application of integrating Chinese elements into teaching the genre of an argumentation as an example will be discussed in detail.

**Keywords:** Ideological and political education; Chinese elements; The Genre-based Approach; The blended teaching; College English writing

## 1. Introduction

In December, 2016, at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work of Colleges and Universities, General Secretary Xi Jinping indicated that moral education should be placed at the center, emphasizing the importance of education on virtue and morality, as well as ideological and political work in colleges and universities. It is also stressed all types of courses and ideological and political theory courses should be developed in the same direction to achieve the effect of synergy.<sup>[17]</sup> Being one of the public basic courses for general education, college English course can play the function of educating people. Since the aim of college English writing teaching in the course is to enable students to clearly and logically express views in the compositions, thus the teacher can fully dig into the ideological and political elements from the model texts, integrate the elements of ideology and politics, mainly including Chinese elements into writing training, guide students to acting on socialist core values based on Chinese characteristics, inheriting traditional Chinese virtues, strengthening cultural identity, enhancing confidence in Chinese culture, and realizing all-round development. Then, students can learn to tell Chinese stories in English via appropriate language usage and organization and can be fostered to have great patriotic affection.

For the purpose of achieving the objective, this paper will attempt to adopt genre-based approach as the teaching theory, the blended teaching which is combined online learning with offline learning as the teaching model, to deeply evacuate the Chinese elements from the teaching resources related to the unit theme of the textbook and integrate it into writing tasks.

## 2. An introduction to the GBA

### 2.1. The definition of GBA

The concept of genre has been interpreted and studied in a variety of ways. What genre is remains a controversial issue because various experts have different viewpoints.<sup>[8]</sup> This article will mainly center on the genres of the Australian School, which has a huge impact on syllabus and curriculum setting in schools.<sup>[1]</sup> In the Australian School theory, genres are referred to as text types.<sup>[13]</sup> With respect to broad rhetorical and linguistic patterns, the genres are categorized into seven text types including recounts, procedures, narratives, reports, descriptions, explanations and expositions.<sup>[11]</sup> It is further explained that, once language is to produce these types of texts, genres can be considered as getting things done which are embedded in linguistic and cultural activities so as to achieve their particular purpose.<sup>[11]</sup> Similarly, It is indicated that the GBA compensates for the limitations of formal grammar instruction in schools which lacks connections from the real use of the language learning.<sup>[5]</sup> The genre theory attaches great importance to grammar, words, structure and sentence patterns, the writer's purpose, the readership and writing style when writing a text.<sup>[12]</sup> As a result, the Australian GBA can be recognized as an approach whereby the utilization of genre is a central component in deciding on writing instructions to promote second/foreign language teaching.

### 2.2. The Australian instructional framework for GBA

Copyright © 2021 Wen Tian

doi: 10.18282/l-e.v10i7.2944

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

The teaching-learning cycle of this pedagogy is largely influenced by Vygotsky’s scaffolding theory, which put forwards that interacting with a knowledgeable person promotes the learning process.<sup>[6]</sup> The cycle is made up of three stages, including a modelling phase, a joint negotiation phase and an independent construction phase.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the stage of modeling a text, students seem to play the role of apprentices, while the teacher is likely to be the expert on language system and function. The teacher explicitly analyzes structural and linguistic features and the context of a text to students. With the direct instruction rendered by the teacher, students who are trained to understand that different types of texts have different writing purposes, gradually acquire the consciousness of how and why texts are organized in particular ways, with the emphasis on the expectations of the audience and obtaining the relevant linguistic input. Phase two is joint construction that the students work with their teacher to write a target text. In this negotiation process, the teacher’s role gradually diminishes, because the students can help themselves to reinforce their contextual and textual knowledge by discussion. In the last stage, the students are allowed to independently write a particular text type. By confidently gaining relevant genre knowledge that has already been discussed in the previous two stages, students are capable of writing a draft on their own and later revising and editing their work.<sup>[1]</sup>

### 3. The introduction to the blended teaching

#### 3.1. The concepts and benefits of the blended teaching

The blended teaching is a teaching mode which formed after the advent of blended learning theory. In the domain of educational technology studies, the concepts of blended teaching and blended learning are extraordinarily similar but different as blended teaching centres on the teacher while blended learning focuses on the learners. The definition of blended teaching has various interpretations at home and abroad<sup>[15]</sup> It is offered a description to blended learning, which was defined as “blended learning is to combine traditional learning pattern with web-based learning, which not only allows teachers to play the leading role of inspiration, guidance and monitoring in the teaching process, but also allows students to play the subjective role of initiative, enthusiasm and creativity”.<sup>[4]</sup> It is also elaborated that blended learning is to utilize many online tools and resources to extend daily classroom instruction. The advantages of blended teaching model include providing various ways for students to communicate and collaborate with the teacher and peers, cultivating students ‘independent learning ability, stimulating the students’ enthusiasm towards learning.’<sup>[14]</sup>

#### 3.2 “U Campus” and “Pigai Network” used to the blended teaching

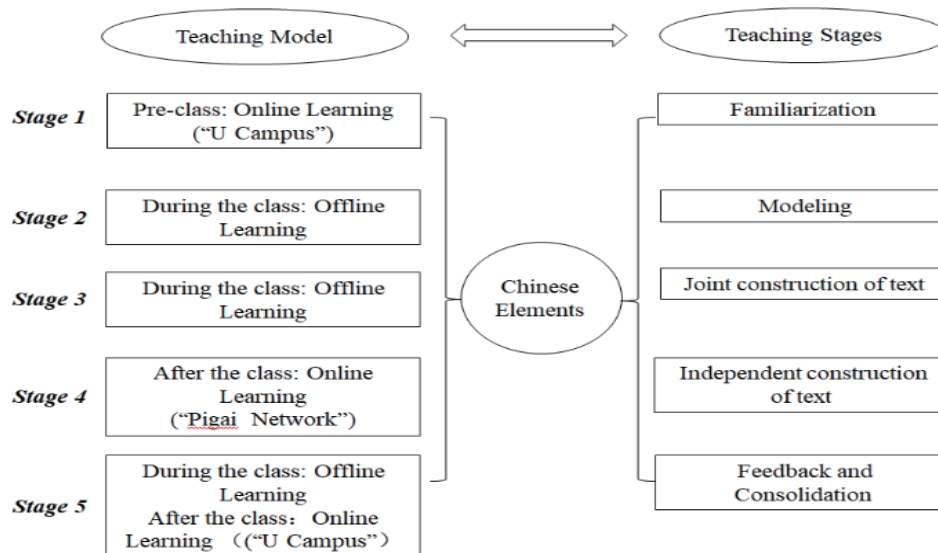
In this paper, two online learning platforms will be introduced which are used for students’ online learning. To begin with, the online learning platform “U Campus” is designed by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, which offers the magnitude of resources to students for continuing learning after class. The materials relating to the unit themes and moral educational resources can be provided on the platform, which is useful for the teacher to assign the tasks so that students can preview the text before class and consolidate their knowledge after class. The other one is Pigai Network, which is applied for revising students’ compositions. The benefits of this learning platform lie in its timely revisions to students’ essays and largely reducing the heavy burdens of the teacher. By contrast, the platform mainly aims at revising linguistic errors, which can hardly evaluate the content and organization of a text.<sup>[7]</sup> Thus, the teacher also needs to check students’ compositions and then gives relevant feedback.

### 4. The application of integrating Chinese elements based on the GBA and the blended teaching into college English writing classes

#### 4.1. The construction of the teaching cycle to college English writing

In order to guide students to grasping and manipulating the genre, but also excavating Chinese elements from the given type of text to form a correct outlook on world, life and values, this article incorporates the merits of the GBA and blended teaching, and then attempts to put forward the teaching cycle to live up to teaching objectives. (See Figure 1)

Figure1 The teaching cycle of integrating Chinese elements into college English writing



## 4.2 The application of the proposed teaching cycle to teaching the argumentation

Since the genres including exposition and argumentation are most taught for non-English majors at college in China<sup>[10]</sup>, the application of teaching the genre of argumentation will be presented. Thus, this article will focus on an argumentative essay *Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West* selected from Unit 8 of *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing 3*.

### Stage 1 Familiarization

In the first stage, students will be required to complete the pre-class tasks on the online learning platform “U Campus” in order to be familiar with the unit theme and preview the genre knowledge of the argumentation. Thus, students complete some activities to aourse their schema and understand the background information. In addition, students also are asked to read five argumentative articles including the essay *Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West* before the class to find out the writing purpose, the potential readers and identify the structure.

### Stage 2 Modeling a text

This stage is to explicitly expound and analyze the given argumentative texts. This article is to mainly introduce the entire process of analyzing the text *Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West* since the steps of learning other four texts are similar. The modeling stage is central to the writing lessons. To be more specific, in this stage, students will build the genre knowledge of the argumentative texts. This stage consists of the following five steps:

Step 1: Understanding the writing purpose and the reader-writer relationship of the argumentative text *Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West*

Since students have already read the given text, the teacher offers a series of issues concerning the genre knowledge of the text: (1) What is the genre of the text? (2) What are the main ideas of the text? (3) What’s the writing purpose of the text? (4) What are the potential readers of the text? The answers to these questions might be reported in two or three groups. The passage is an argumentative essay about three ideological differences between Chinese and Western parents. Furthermore, the writing purpose of this genre is to strengthen or change an attitude of the readers, or to persuade the readers to accept the view that to some extent, Chinese parents are more effective in teaching children than Western parents. The writer probably writes this passage for offering parents and educators a new perspective on looking at the different parenting models between the Chinese and Western parents.<sup>[19]</sup>

Step 2: Identifying the structure of the argumentative text *Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West*

The second step of this stage is to identify the structure of the argumentative essay. The students read the article again and the teacher analyzes the features of the structure. The given argumentative essay comprises the introduction, the body and the conclusion (See Table 1).

Table 1

Unit 8 Text A <i>Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West</i>		
Paragraphs	Structure of the Text	
Para.1	Introduction	Hook
Para.2		Thesis statement
Paras.3-6	Body	Argument 1+Differing point 1+Refutation 1
Paras.7-8		Argument 2+Differing point 2+Refutation 2
Paras.9-10		Argument 3+Differing point 3+Refutation 3
Para.11	Conclusion	Response to the thesis statement

The introductory part generally consists of a hook and thesis statement. The function of a hook in the argumentation is to draw the readers’ attention to continue reading the essay. Thus the teacher firstly explains five types of common hooks including anecdotes, questions, quotations, statistics, and setting a scene and then asks students to identify the hook of this argumentation. Secondly, the teacher illustrates that the thesis statement of an argumentation is the position that the author attempts to take on the controversial issue, which shows the topic of the essay, the author’s position and the main idea supporting the position.

In the body part, the teacher analyzes how the author argues his/her position. By introducing the simple picture of the viewpoint as the topic sentence, utilizing facts, examples, anecdotes, quotes, statistics, and experts’ testimony as the supporting evidence, and getting the summary as the conclusion sentence, each argument can be illustrated. Equally important, the teacher should explain the opposing views and rebuttals of the augmentation. To strengthen the author’s position, the counter-arguments should be acknowledged and granted the merits to show that the author looks at the arguments on all sides. Then the author is very likely to refute the differing viewpoints by pointing out its flaws.

In the conclusion part, it is often indicated that three ways can be used to end an argumentative essay. The first way is to restate the thesis statement in the opening paragraphs. Next comes the way that the writer explains why the issue discussed is of great significance. The last one is to call for future actions. Among the ways of ending an argumentative essay, this article presents the thesis statement again by using different words.<sup>[3]</sup>

Besides the above outline of the argumentation, the teacher should highlight the other structural pattern of the argumentation so

that students can understand two common patterns of the argumentation (See Table 2).

Table 2

Structure of an Argumentative Text	
Introduction	Hook
	Thesis statement
Body	Counter-argument 1 and rebuttal 1
	Counter-argument 2 and rebuttal 2
	Arguments
Conclusion	Response to the thesis statement

Step 3: Finding out the linguistic features of the argumentative text Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West

The next step of this stage is to discover the linguistic features of the argumentative essay. It is stated that genre is the particular usage of the language in a certain social context.<sup>[11]</sup> Thus the genre of the argumentation also has its distinctive features as shown in the grammatical patterns and vocabulary usages.<sup>[6]</sup> The teacher should illustrate the language features of an argumentation. For example, when making an arguable claim, in most cases, it is important for the writer to use hedges. A claim can be true in certain circumstances, and with certain conditions and limitations. As a result, when writing a claim, words and phrases such as may, might, maybe, seem to, appear to, probably, possibly, be likely to, to some degree, to some extent can be added to qualify it in order to make it more convincing. In addition, useful patterns can be used to introducing opposing views. Taking the following patterns as examples: Some people say/think/believe/argue that...; It is commonly/generally/believed/thought/held that....By contrast, several useful patterns for rebutting the counter-arguments can be presented: It is true that..., yet...; To be sure/True,...,but this is not to say/it doesn't mean that... What is more, the teacher should offer explicit information on variety, complexity and accuracy of the vocabulary usage and grammatical patterns by summarizing the giving text. In this respect, students gradually become aware of how the use of language and structure serve the writing purpose and satisfy the needs of the audience.

Step 4: Integrating Chinese elements into decoding the argumentative text Reflections of a Chinese mother in the West

In this stage, the teacher leads students to exploring Chinese elements from the given argumentative essay. The educational theme of this unit is to the importance of filial piety. The values expressed from the given text can be discovered, such as “the Confucian doctrine of loyalty (儒家忠的信条)”.<sup>[18]</sup> During the class, the teacher can extend the activities to students for stimulating their interest on the thoughts of Confucius. By helping students to become aware of the affection between the parents and children, the teacher needs to explain the thought of Confucius, and assign various tasks to students. Taking the following translation tasks as examples: “百善孝为首 (Filial piety is the first of all virtues.)”; “孝是中华文化的核心。孝道起源于儒家思想,旨在敬爱尊重长辈,听从长辈的话。但孝道的意义不止于此。儿孙要尽孝,须得切切实实地陪伴、照料年迈的长辈 (Filial piety, otherwise known as xiao, is at the core of Chinese culture. Originating from Confucian philosophy, filial piety means love and respect for one's elders and obeying their wishes. But there is something else too. To fulfill filial piety, you have to be there for them physically, and look after them in their old age.)”.<sup>[9]</sup> “仁者,人也,亲亲为大(The greatest love for people is the love for one's parents)”; “孝悌也者,其为仁之本与(To have love for parents and respect to elder brothers is the essence of filial piety).<sup>[16]</sup> By the knowledge imparted by the teacher and the discussion with peers in groups, students may understand the wisdom of traditional Chinese family.

In the article, the author points out that “all decent parents want to do what's best for their children (普天下称职的父母都想为孩子做最好的安排)”.<sup>[18]</sup> Via decoding the connotation of the sentence, the teacher can lead students to realizing “poor parents all over the world (可怜天下父母心)”. Furthermore, a piece of news can be shared, reporting that a Chinese mother aged 90 had taken care of her son at the age of 64 who diagnosed with COVID-19 for 4 days and 4 nights. With the discussion, students may be aware of the great love shown by the mother, who probably learn to show politeness, respect and kindness towards their parents. Moreover, it can be connected with the fact that medical workers in China spare no efforts to treat any patient infected with COVID-19, never giving up a single life. By concerning with the hot issue in the society, students may enhance the confidence in Chinese culture and also have a sense of happiness for being Chinese people.

By evacuating Chinese elements from the given text, students can explore the significance of filial piety in Chinese family education and can understand and apply certain the language points about family education to their writing if necessary.

Stage 4 Joint construction of text

In joint construction stage, the teacher and students cooperatively produce an argumentative essay. Since the work of an argumentative essay is firstly tried out by students, the students are still guided by the teacher. The teacher may help students develop an outline if they have any difficulties in generating ideas, correctly using the language and etc. In order to strengthen the students' understanding of the unit them, the topic of the writing assignment will be related to the unit theme: “Should children always obey the Confucian doctrine of loyalty and submit themselves to their parents' wishes?” By discussing with the teacher and peers, students are capable of identifying the writing purpose and the target audience, brainstorming the ideas, organizing the structure and choosing the appropriate the vocabulary and grammatical patterns. At this stage, the collaborative writing can play a vital role in leading students toward becoming an independent writer.

Stage 5 Independent construction of text

This stage requires students to write it independently. By acquiring the genre knowledge of the argumentation and understanding the usage of certain language points about the traditional Chinese family education in the previous stages, the students are ordered to

write an argumentative text concerning Chinese elements. The direction of the writing is shown: “Should the children take responsibility for taking care of the elderly people in China?” Students construct the essay on the learning platform “Pigai Network” on the grounds that the online platform can automatically assess students’ compositions. Since the platform mainly revises the linguistic errors, the teacher needs to evaluate students’ compositions from the aspects of the content and the structure.

#### Stage 6 Feedback and consolidation

In this stage, the teacher gives the writing feedback to students, mainly focusing on the writing errors related to ideas and organization. Apart from these mistakes, the teacher also presents students’ frequently common errors in the class and correspondently offers the suggested versions. By doing so, students can be better equipped with the genre knowledge of the argumentation. In addition to this, students are ordered to complete tasks connected with the block of moral education on the platform “U Campus” after the class. The materials for moral education provided on the platform “U Campus” include videos, the usage of vocabulary, translation tasks and so forth which can be purposefully selected by the teacher to consolidate students’ understanding of unit theme. Through learning the materials, the traditional Chinese virtue of filial piety is again stressed so that students can inherit the basic virtue in Chinese culture and accumulate the relevant vocabulary and grammatical patterns to express filial piety.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, in the traditional English writing classes, the lessons maybe mainly focus on the language input. However, through the newly English writing teaching cycle, the teacher is required to not only help students identify and understand various types of genres, but also deeply evacuate the Chinese elements from these genres to shape a correct outlook on world, life and values, promote their great patriotism and inherit Chinese culture. More importantly, students can have the ability to produce the required genres by covering the Chinese elements so that they can realize the overall development through college English writing instruction.

## References :

---

- [1] Ahn H. Teaching writing skills based on a genre approach to l2 primary school students: an action research[J]. *English Language Teaching*, 2012, 5(2): 2-16.
- [2] Cope B., & Kalantzis M. *The power of literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing*[M]. London: The Flamer Press, 1993.
- [3] Ding W D., Wu B., Zhong M S. & Guo Q Q. *A handbook of writing*[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2009.
- [4] He K K. New Development of Educational Technology Theory from Blended Learning [J]. *E-Education Research*, 2004, (1)3:1-6.
- [5] Halliday M A K. *An introduction to functional grammar* (2d ed.)[M]. London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1994.
- [6] Hyland K. *Genre and second language writing*[M]. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- [7] Jiang, Y., Ma, W L., *Achievements and Challenges of Chinese English Writing Intelligent Tutorial System: Taking Pigai Network as an Example* [J]. *Electronic Educational Research* , 2013, (7), 76-81.
- [8] Johns, A M., Bawarshi, A., Coe, R M., Hyland, K., Paltridge, B., Reiff, M. J., & Tardy, C. *Crossing the boundaries of genre studies: Commentaries by experts*[J]. *Journal of Second Language Teaching*, 2006, 15, 234-249.
- [9] Li X P. *Discussions on 150 examples of Chinese-English Translation*[M]. Tianjing: Nankai University Press, 2006.
- [10] Kong J J. *Application of a Genre-based Approach in a College English Writing Class* [J]. *Testing and Evaluation*, 2016, (4): 65-70.
- [11] Martin J R. *Language, register, and genre*[A]. In: F. Christie, ed. *Language Studies: Children’s Writing Reader*[C]. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984.
- [12] Nunan D. *Language teaching methodology*[M]. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000.
- [13] Paltridge B. *Genre and the language learning classroom*[M]. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- [14] Pape L. *Blended Teaching and Learning*[J]. *The American Association of School Administrators*, 2010, 67:16-21.
- [15] Sun N. & Li F. *Practical and exploration of blended teaching in private colleges-A case study of integrated business English course*[J]. *International Journal of New Developments in Education*, 2022, 4(1):1-9.
- [16] Wang Z R. & Lu X L. *Introducing Chinese culture in English*[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2017.
- [17] Xi J P. *Speech at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work of Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved December 8, 2016, from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-12/08/c\\_1120082577.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-12/08/c_1120082577.htm)
- [18] Zheng S T. *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing 3(Third Edition)*[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2017.
- [19] Zheng S T. *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing Teacher’s Book 3(Third Edition)*[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2015.

## Profile:

Wen Tian (1988- ) is a lecturer in the School of Foreign Languages of Guizhou Medical School. She received her MA degree in the University of York, whose research direction is English language teaching and learning.

## Funding:

The thesis is the research result of Humanistic and Social Science Research Project of Guizhou Colleges and Universities: The Application of Integrating Chinese Elements into College English Writing Blended Teaching Based on the Genre-based Approach. Project number: 2021ZC155.