

英语论文写作研究

Academic Research & Thesis Writing

● 杨永林 杨 芳 杨 莉 编著



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前言

本书以十章篇幅,研讨了我们在长期的教学科研过程中,通过理论研究与创新探索相结合的方式,逐步形成的一种学术训练模式,并对其实际应用也作了相应的介绍。通过上述研究与探索,我们试图在广义的学习理论基础上,分别从社会认知发展(socio-cognitive development)和研究过程发展(process-controlled development)两个方面入手,构建一种以学生为本的科学训练模式。在具体的应用过程中,我们提出了“问句驱动”(a question-driven model)和“镜像模拟”(a mirror-image model)两种信息处理手段,旨在解决科学研究和学术论文写作过程中一些常见的难点、疑点问题。从这个意义上来说,本书既包含了理论层面上传道立论的功效,又具备了应用层面上释疑解惑的功用,可以作为学术著作研读,也可以作为论文指南检索,还可以作为专门教材使用。除了上述理论创新特点以外,本书还兼备下列编排特色:

1) 采用“说说唱唱”的行文方式,每个章节都由“内容介绍”(Preview Discussion)、“专家讲授”(Professor's Lecture)、“示范讨论”(Discussion)(含“主题讨论”[Theme Discussion]和“细节讨论”[Episode Discussion]两个部分)、“范文示例”(Sample Demonstration)、“自我实践”(Follow-up Practice),以及“发展空间”(Suggested Activities & Readings)六个方面的内容组成,为不同层面的研究者和学生群体,提供了独立进行科学研究的充分条件;

2) 从社会实践理论(community of practice)的角度入手,引入了一种互动性科学研究模式,强调协作学习与自我创新之间的辩证统一;

3) 充分利用清华大学论文写作数据库资源,通过大量“原汁原味”的个案材料的分析展示,充分实现以学生为研究者主体的指导思想(the student-researcher-oriented principle);

4) 充分发挥计算机技术在文本生成中的辅助作用,为读者提供了一套可在七种语言环境中进行学术论文文摘文本生成的软件系统,简称“易觅”(EAME),制成磁盘随本书一起发行,有效地降低了论文写作强度,加强了论文写作规范,提高了论文写作质量;

5) 辅助材料丰富,仅在附录部分就包括了“学术荟萃”(Reading Materials)、“同侪大作”(Student Samples)及“资源导航”(Research Resources)三个方面的内容,供

初入此道者参比观摩,开拓思路;触类旁通,渐达通识,步入自我创新之境界。

本书的读者群体包括各类科研人员、高校教师、中学教师、在校研究生、本科生,以及远程教育学生。

在本书的撰写过程中,我们得到了许多人的支持与帮助。首先,我们要感谢中央电大的刘黛琳教授,没有她的敦促鼓励和协调安排,我们不可能在如此短的时间内完成本书的撰写编审以及出版印刷工作。

其次,我们还要感谢北京电大的俞妮娜教授,以及全国其他省市电视大学里从事“专升本”英语教学与管理的专家学者,他们的积极参与和殷切厚望使得我们的编写工作更加具有针对性和应用性。

再次,我们还要感谢北京外国语大学教授、《外语教学与研究》杂志主编姚小平先生慨然应允我们使用其投稿指南中“稿件格式要求”的内容,使得我们对于学术论文文体格式要求方面的讨论显得更加充分饱满、有的放矢。

与此同时,我们要特别感谢清华大学的学生群体,没有他们为学严谨的学术精神,没有他们追求完美的研究风格,没有他们锐意创新的理论观点,没有他们朴实无华的实干作风,我们不可能汇集到如此之多的范文佳例,一来可供读者玩味体会,二来又为本书增色不少。尤其值得称道的是,清华大学外语系外国语言学及应用语言学专业的部分硕士生,以及该专业 2000 级研修班的一些同学,直接参与了本书“示范讨论”、“范文示例”、“自我实践”,以及“发展空间”部分一些内容的撰写工作。具体参加这项工作的有方艳华、孔宪遂、张莱湘、王蓓、曹荣平、庄元丽、肖丹、余莉、尹鸿雁等九位同学。特别值得一提的是,本书成书之时,恰值同学们毕业论文的最后冲刺阶段。在此关键时刻,他们牺牲小我,挤出宝贵的时间,为本书“示范讨论”、“范文示例”、“自我实践”,以及“发展空间”等部分提供了一些内容丰富、各具风采的语篇,令人感动。此外,清华大学外语系英语专业 81 班和 82 班刘维强、王涛、杨飞洋、王雪东,以及于丁等同学,为本书的“同侪大作”部分提供了他们在“英语写作”这门课程中完成的一些 Big Projects。清华大学热能系的邱天、化工系的陈宏,以及环境系的张相锋同学也通过他们为“研究生英语写作”这门课程所提交的学期论文,向我们展示这一群体充沛的科学研究活力和创新精神。我们将这些论文以提纲的形式,一并纳入“同侪大作”之中。此外,考虑到远程教育学生的需要,我们还提供了北京电大平谷区 2001 届英语专业“专升本”部分学生毕业论文的选题一览表。不言而喻,这些学生群体的积极参与,为我们提供了不少如何从不同的专业视角和研究内容进行科学研究的锦章花絮,读来饶有趣味又不乏真知灼见,正所谓“言为心声”、“文为人生”。愿读者与我们共娱同乐于一种清新活泼、崇尚独创、追求真善的学术研究氛围和论文撰写实践之中,仔细体会个中三昧,以求通识。

最后,我们还要感谢清华大学外籍教师 Parish Charles 为我们通读了全书文

稿,并在英语行文上做了一些润色工作;感谢清华大学出版社的宁有权同志、中央广播电视大学的孙建华同志,以及中央广播电视大学出版社的编辑同志为本书做了细致的审校工作。我们深知,学术研究不易,论文写作更难;同时进行这两个方面的研究与训练则更是难上加难。此外,由于教学科研工作繁重,出版时间紧迫,学术水平有限,本书写作过程中舛误之处难免,欢迎指出,以便再版时及时更正。同时,我们也希望有机会聆听到读者的意见与建议,以使本书更加完善。

杨永林负责全书的策划,以及“内容介绍”和“专家讲授”部分的撰写工作;杨芳负责组织协调、对外联系工作,以及整个 Appendix 部分的编排整理工作;杨莉参加了有关章节的撰写工作,并提供了各类期刊的书目。她们两人还通读了各章内容,进行了一些必要的文字加工工作。本书最后由杨永林定稿。

杨永林

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Table of Contents

Chapter One	What is this book all about?	(1)
1.1	Preview Discussion; What is this book all about?	(1)
1.2	Professor's Lecture on "What is this book all about?"	(2)
1.2.1	Why should we write a book like this?	(2)
1.2.2	What theoretical considerations do we have for this book?	(3)
1.2.3	How do we organize this book?	(7)
1.2.4	How can you use this book more efficiently?	(15)
1.3	Discussion	(17)
1.3.1	Theme Discussion	(18)
1.3.2	Episode Discussion	(18)
1.4	Sample Demonstration	(19)
1.5	Follow-up Practice	(21)
1.6	Suggested Activities and Readings	(21)
1.6.1	Suggested Activities	(21)
1.6.2	Suggested Readings	(21)
Chapter Two	Why should we do research?	(22)
2.1	Preview Discussion; Why should we do research?	(22)
2.2	Professor's Lecture on "Why should we do research?"	(23)
2.2.1	What do we mean by research?	(23)
2.2.2	Academic research and practical work, can they meet somewhere?	(23)
2.2.3	How can we relate our research to our work, or vice versa?	(23)
2.2.4	How can we improve our work by research?	(24)
2.3	Discussion	(24)
2.3.1	Theme Discussion	(24)
2.3.2	Episode Discussion	(26)
2.4	Sample Demonstration	(27)
2.5	Follow-up Practice	(29)
2.6	Suggested Activities and Readings	(29)
2.6.1	Suggested Activities	(29)
2.6.2	Suggested Readings	(30)
Chapter Three	What are the fundamental issues in scientific study?	(31)
3.1	Preview Discussion; What are the fundamental issues in scientific study?	(31)
3.2	Professor's Lecture on "What are the fundamental issues in scientific study?"	(31)
3.2.1	What do we mean by "fundamental"?	(31)

3.2.2	How can we identify major problems?	(32)
3.2.3	How can we avoid the dilemma of a necessary job but an impossible mission?	(32)
3.2.4	What is our focus, micro or macro?	(32)
3.3	Discussion	(33)
3.3.1	Theme Discussion	(33)
3.3.2	Episode Discussion	(34)
3.4	Sample Demonstration	(35)
3.5	Follow-up Practice	(37)
3.6	Suggested Activities and Readings	(37)
3.6.1	Suggested Activities	(37)
3.6.2	Suggested Readings	(37)

Chapter Four How can we develop our research potential? (39)

4.1	Preview Discussion: How can we develop our research potential?	(39)
4.2	Professor's Lecture on "How can we develop our research potential?"	(39)
4.2.1	What are the crucial factors in the development of our research potential?	(39)
4.2.2	To what degree should we rely on our "old" knowledge?	(40)
4.2.3	What is the importance of our personality or working style in research?	(40)
4.2.4	Star student or good researcher, does it make a difference?	(41)
4.3	Discussion	(41)
4.3.1	Theme Discussion	(41)
4.3.2	Episode Discussion	(43)
4.4	Sample Demonstration	(44)
4.5	Follow-up Practice	(45)
4.6	Suggested Activities and Readings	(45)
4.6.1	Suggested Activities	(45)
4.6.2	Suggested Readings	(45)

Chapter Five How can we choose a meaningful topic? (47)

5.1	Preview Discussion: How can we choose a meaningful topic?	(47)
5.2	Professor's Lecture on "How can we choose a meaningful topic?"	(47)
5.2.1	What do we mean by "meaningful"?	(47)
5.2.2	How can we develop our sensitivity in setting up some good research relationships?	(48)
5.3	Discussion	(49)
5.3.1	Theme Discussion	(49)
5.3.2	Episode Discussion	(51)
5.4	Sample Demonstration	(52)
5.5	Follow-up Practice	(55)
5.6	Suggested Activities and Readings	(55)
5.6.1	Suggested Activities	(55)
5.6.2	Suggested Readings	(56)
5.6.3	Websites Available	(56)

Chapter Six What should we know about the chosen theme?	(57)
6.1 Preview Discussion; What should we know about the chosen theme?	(57)
6.2 Professor's Lecture on "What should we know about the chosen theme?"	(57)
6.2.1 Why do we emphasize the importance of "knowing something" in your research preparation?	(57)
6.2.2 In what way can we show our familiarity with the current state of our research focus?	(58)
6.2.3 How can we improve our performance in information collection?	(58)
6.2.4 How can we solve some practical problems?	(59)
6.3 Discussion	(60)
6.3.1 Theme Discussion	(60)
6.3.2 Episode Discussion	(63)
6.4 Sample Demonstration	(64)
6.5 Follow-up Practice	(65)
6.6 Suggested Activities and Readings	(66)
6.6.1 Suggested Activities	(66)
6.6.2 Suggested Readings	(66)
Chapter Seven How do we conduct research planning?	(68)
7.1 Preview Discussion; How do we conduct research planning?	(68)
7.2 Professor's Lecture on "How do we conduct research planning?"	(68)
7.2.1 What is the nature of our study?	(68)
7.2.2 What research types are available?	(69)
7.2.3 What are your methodology considerations?	(70)
7.2.4 What are our research hypotheses?	(71)
7.2.5 How can we make a flexible and reliable procedure for our research?	(72)
7.3 Discussion	(72)
7.3.1 Theme Discussion	(72)
7.3.2 Episode Discussion	(75)
7.4 Sample Demonstration	(77)
7.5 Follow-up Practice	(78)
7.6 Suggested Activities and Readings	(79)
7.6.1 Suggested Activities	(79)
7.6.2 Suggested Readings	(79)
7.6.3 Websites	(79)
Chapter Eight How can we adopt a pattern of discourse?	(80)
8.1 Preview Discussion; How can we adopt a pattern of discourse?	(80)
8.2 Professor's Lecture on "How can we adopt a pattern of discourse?"	(81)
8.2.1 How many sections do we want to have for our thesis?	(81)
8.2.2 What do we need to say in these parts?	(81)
8.2.3 How are we going to present our findings and conclusions?	(82)
8.2.4 How about our implications, limitations, and further research?	(82)
8.2.5 What would a complete version of a sample thesis look like?	(82)
8.3 Discussion	(83)
8.3.1 Theme Discussion	(83)

8.3.2 Episode Discussion	(86)
8.4 Sample Demonstration	(88)
8.5 Follow-up Practice	(90)
8.6 Suggested Activities and Readings	(91)
8.6.1 Suggested Activities	(91)
8.6.2 Suggested Readings	(91)
Chapter Nine How do we produce an abstract?	(92)
9.1 Preview Discussion: How do we produce an abstract?	(92)
9.2 Professor's Lecture on "How do we produce an abstract?"	(93)
9.2.1 Why do we need an abstract for a thesis?	(93)
9.2.2 What is the relationship between the thesis text and the abstract?	(93)
9.2.3 What are some important things we want to put into the abstract?	(94)
9.2.4 How can we complete an electronic abstract with the help of EAME?	(94)
9.3 Discussion	(95)
9.3.1 Theme Discussion	(95)
9.3.2 Episode Discussion	(96)
9.4 Sample Demonstration	(99)
9.5 Follow-up Practice	(99)
9.6 Suggested Activities and Readings	(99)
9.6.1 Suggested Activities	(99)
9.6.2 Suggested Readings	(100)
Chapter Ten How do we choose a format?	(101)
10.1 Preview Discussion: How do we choose a format?	(101)
10.2 Professor's Lecture on "How do we choose a format?"	(101)
10.2.1 Why do we need to adopt a given format for our thesis?	(101)
10.2.2 What types of style sheets are available?	(102)
10.2.3 How can we choose one?	(102)
10.2.4 How should we deal with practical problems concerning style?	(103)
10.3 Discussion	(105)
10.3.1 Theme Discussion	(105)
10.3.2 Episode Discussion	(106)
10.4 Sample Demonstration	(107)
10.5 Follow-up Practice	(107)
10.6 Suggested Activities and Readings	(107)
10.6.1 Suggested Activities	(107)
10.6.2 Suggested Readings	(108)
References	(109)
Appendices	(111)
Appendix 1 Reading Materials	(111)
Appendix 1.1 Trends in the teaching of writing	(111)
Appendix 1.2 是范式的交替, 还是方法的变换? ——外语学科中范式理论应该缓行	(119)

Appendix 1.3 “易觅”:一种基于问句驱动、镜像模拟基础之上的文本生成系统	(127)
Appendix 1.4 A Suggested Style Sheet	(145)
Appendix 2 Student Samples	(147)
Appendix 2.1 Sample Research Project by Student Researchers at Tsinghua University	(147)
Appendix 2.2 Sources and Citations for the Study of e-writing	(156)
Appendix 2.3 北京电大平谷区 2001 届英语专业“专升本”部分毕业论文 选题一览表	(159)
Appendix 2.4 A literature Review Sample	(160)
Appendix 3 Research Resources	(163)

Chapter One

What is this book all about?

1.1 Preview Discussion: What is this book all about?

As you will fully understand, the first chapter of a book usually tends to be the most difficult part of the whole book. Our book is no exception. This is because there are so many new things crammed in this part: innovative concepts you have not met before, big terms you are not familiar with, special styles you need to adjust yourself to, and unique content arrangements necessary for the subject matter clearly understood, to name but a few. Being well aware of some difficulties our student researchers may have in a scientific study, we try to adopt a balanced approach in this introductory chapter with theory and practice being equally emphasized. What we present in this book is a systematic and informative system concerning how to do research independently. Following this brief Discussion Preview, we are going to introduce a kernel part called Professor's Lecture where all important issues listed below will be explained and discussed to some extent. Since this is the introductory part to the book, more discussion concerning the issues such as writing purposes, theoretical frameworks, potential readers, content arrangements, and reading instructions will also be presented. Afterwards, we will have interesting group discussions, sample demonstrations, and follow-up practice. For this reason, in the Preview Discussion section of this chapter, we hope you will notice the following simple facts: 1) there are six sections in Chapter One, 2) the focus of this chapter is the authors' introduction to the whole book, both theoretical and pragmatic issues being discussed, and 3) the titles for the sections and sub-sections of this chapter are:

- 1.1 Preview Discussion
- 1.2 Professor's Lecture on "What is this book all about?"
 - 1.2.1 Why should we write a book like this?
 - 1.2.2 What theoretical considerations do we have for this book?
 - 1.2.3 How do we organize this book?
 - 1.2.3.1 Some basic things you should know about how to do your own research
 - 1.2.3.2 An updated and detailed organization framework for this book
 - 1.2.4 How can you use this book more efficiently?
- 1.3 Discussion
 - 1.3.1 Theme Discussion
 - 1.3.2 Episode Discussion
- 1.4 Sample Demonstration
- 1.5 Follow-up Practice
- 1.6 Suggested Activities and Readings

1.2 Professor's Lecture on "What is this book all about?"

1.2.1 Why should we write a book like this?

This book aims to introduce an innovative model in thesis writing and project designing. This new model reflects our emphasis and concern for a socio-cognitive way of learning in general and a deconstructive way of doing research in particular (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991). To meet this end, we introduce a tripartite model in this book, which possesses the following features, while a more detailed explanation of these components will be given in Section 1.2.2 below.

- 1) A "Professor's Lecture" section is introduced immediately after the "Preview Discussion" of each chapter as to highlight the major issues that will be thoroughly discussed, illustrated, and analyzed in the remaining sections of each chapter;
- 2) A question-driven discourse pattern will be employed in this book so that a more economic, direct, and efficient type of communication will be maintained between the supervisor and the student researcher. In addition to the general arrangement of the whole book, a good illustration of this pattern can be found in "Theme Discussion" and "Episode Discussion" sessions;
- 3) A "Sample Demonstration" section will be introduced, along with other equally useful tools such as "Follow-up Practice" and "Suggested Activities & Readings" in each of the chapters in the book so as to get more creative, diverse and individualized input concerning the issue of how to do research.

As you can see from this rather brief introduction to the framework of the book, we are striving at something innovative and original in our training practice. We have used this model of training in our linguistics program at Tsinghua University for some time. But the attempt to write a book like this has been encouraged by many external factors. Our long involvement in the teaching of the self-taught B.A. program at Beijing Radio & TV University is one, our experimental participation in the research training of this program is another, our colleagues' push is a third one, and our desire to enhance the quality of higher education in China is a fourth one. This list of writing motivation could go on to some extent. But the most important factor we have for completing a book like this is, however, related to our understanding of the student researchers' needs and our concern for a more healthy and communicative pattern of discourse in doing research (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Over the past decades, we have repeatedly witnessed the tension and agony the student researchers experienced when engaged in writing a term paper, a B. A. or M. A. thesis, or even a Ph.D. dissertation. Doing research is not an easy job. We all know that. Doing research differs from studying in classroom. You may say so. "Doing research is some big guys' business but not my cup of tea." We disagree. The fundamental reason for us to reject the last assumption is that any scientific research seems at a rather abstract level to reflect an understanding of the relationship between the human being and the world. As rational adults, we have developed our unique ways of conceptualizing this relationship. As in-service students, we are thoroughly familiar with our own work. As university students, we have gathered enough knowledge in a given field. Therefore, when it comes to the final stage of our university training, we are supposed to be mature in representing our understanding of the relationship between what we have got in work and what we have learned in class. Logically speaking, doing research is a natural expression of oneself. Administratively speaking, doing research is an important and indispensable process in our higher education system. Academically speaking, doing research is a practice that has to do with different traditions and special

requirements in theory development and methodology selection. Having said so much about some basic features in doing research, let us now turn to a more relevant issue we want to explore in this book. This focal issue tries to answer the question of how to become a successful student researcher. And some big problems that are related to this fundamental issue become our direct and major concerns of this book, which could be further summarized as follows:

- 1) What are some basic things a student researcher should know all about at a meta-cognitive level of reasoning when engaged in research?
- 2) How can a student researcher complete a big project by following a step-by-step procedure in his/her research training or thesis writing?
- 3) What devices are available to help a student researcher fight back, or rather demythify, some false assumptions concerning research so that a healthier heuristic pattern could be set up between the student researcher and the subject matter examined?

A more direct reason for us to write a book like this comes from the encouragement, motivation and success our supervising team obtained in the year of 2001 when we were engaged in the training program of thesis writing at Beijing Radio and TV University. The experience we got when working with the student researchers in Beijing area and the extensive support we received from the staff members of this program have greatly paved the way for us to deal with the three problems identified above. The great enthusiasm, active participation and high involvement we observed in the work of these student researchers gave us a deep impression. More importantly, our efforts in this program received a very positive response at the exchange conference held at the City of Shenzhen in November, 2001, which was organized by China Central Radio & TV University and sponsored by the Shenzhen Radio & TV University. The participants of the conference were directors or chief tutors of the English program provided in television universities in different parts of China. We presented our research program at the conference and the participants showed a great interest in seeking the possibility of using this training model for thesis writing on a large scale all over the country. A mutual agreement was finally made at the conference: We were asked to expand and develop the training model we used in our original thesis writing program so that it would become more flexible and practical for distance student researchers in other areas. Based on a full understanding of the problems and the importance of the work, we set out to write a book like this. A last but not least reason for adding one more book to the already existing collection of works on how to do research is ignited by the great enthusiasm we felt when we were working with our students in some interesting research projects, the Student Research Training at Tsinghua University being included.

1.2.2 What theoretical considerations do we have for this book?

Clearly enough, the three tasks we have mentioned above are not easy ones. In fact, they are tough and demanding. Given the difficulty and complexity of doing high qualities research, we designed a tripartite model training framework so that the student researchers could conduct their own scientific study independently, in most cases just by following the procedures we will prescribe. Put another way, we want to deal with the three major problems identified in 1.2.1 above by introducing a nested pattern of discourse. To match our discussion with these three major concerns in research, we have developed a concurrent organizational pattern for all the chapters of this book. You may occasionally notice some minor changes here and there in our discussion, but the tripartite model of structural organization we propose at the outset of this chapter will form the backbone of our

presentation, other materials will be arranged around these main themes. For your benefit, let us try to resume to the original tripartite model of discourse and say more about each of the three component elements.

We will first have an important section called "Professor's Lecture" at the beginning of each chapter and just after the Preview Discussion. This part is designed to provide you with some theoretical discussion at a meta-cognitive level so that you could look at a given issue in your research by adopting a top-down perspective, namely, from something more theoretical to something more concrete. A thorough understanding of this part is encouraged. However, if you have a poor interpretation of some concepts or ideas discussed in this part, don't feel bad. Keep on your reading and you will get more supportive feedback messages from other parts of the same chapter.

We will then introduce a question-driven model to expose you directly to those big issues you will immediately encounter in your research practice. As we will illustrate soon, we are going to deconstruct the whole chunk of academic research or thesis writing into several stages, rather, processes, each of which will become the focus of a certain chapter in this book. More importantly, the focuses of these research issues will be represented in a question form and your job is to learn how to address these questions in a more scientific, practical, and meaningful way. To further facilitate the mechanisms the student researcher may encounter in dealing with some demanding tasks in their research, we will provide some step-by-step instructions for them to follow when they move on and try to settle each of their research questions.

We will further introduce a special section called "Sample Demonstration". By including a section like this, we emphasize a data-driven model of research. Having an arrangement like this, you will have an opportunity to read some real or "authentic" ("原汁原味") pieces completed by our student researchers at Tsinghua University either in their degree pursuit or in other research engagement. More specifically, some of them are undergraduates' pieces completed for some big projects, while others are graduates' theses designed for more complex subject matters.

It is also observed that our discussion of relevant issues in research takes on a strong linguistic orientation, though one may expect to gain a general understanding of scientific research by reading the book. Consequently, our adoption of a tripartite model like this not only reflects an awareness of the current development in applied linguistics, but also indicates a serious concern about the application of learning theories of various kinds to our classroom practice. Over past decades, many important changes have taken place both in the field of linguistic research and in the domain of language teaching and these shifts should not go unnoticed.

Ever since the 1980s, an appeal has been made for a combination of collective work between psychologists, linguists, and cognitive scientists (Miller, 1990). As time passed by, more and more researchers, educators included, realized the importance of the correlation between cognition enhancement and performance development (杨永林, 2002). Following this argument, we may resume one of crucial points in research, that is, we should treat this practice as a process of illustrating the relationship between the researcher and the world. If you accept this presupposition, then we will proceed to introduce another expression to characterize the nature of thesis writing by regarding doing research as a good opportunity to illustrate how we combine the process of sharpening our mind with the process of maneuvering our hands. Therefore, cognitive training of research skills will become necessary in this case. This cognitive approach, which aims at bridging the gap between knowing how to write and learning to how to think, will inevitably involve more factors at different levels than the traditional research paradigm does. Needless to say, this combination is the very essential

requirement to develop our performance in creativity and innovation. The Professor's Lecture in this book is designed to deal with research issues at the level of meta-cognition and theoretical exploration. We hope our discussion in this section will provide a starting point to help you take off and soar up in your sky of the interested field, rather than bore you to death by having too many fancy terms.

During the past decades, the process-oriented method has successfully been introduced in the writing classroom all over the world (Yang, 1995). This shift in paradigm implies a huge change in our understanding of writing activities. Researchers observe that our writing behavior can be regarded as a series of successive activities such as brainstorming, prewriting, writing, rewriting and editing rather than a practice completed once for all. What is more, there has also been a tendency to regard reading as a process-oriented activity as well. If we believe that people read and write in that way, we may take one more step and assume that a successful researcher should also tend to organize his/her research work in a well-controlled process pattern, rather than a once for all practice (一蹴而就的行为). The reasoning behind this assumption is that writing provides a universal structure for any type of research and all of our projects must be presented in a written form.

A second consideration for cutting the whole research chunk into a series of intrinsic processes comes from the belief that some resource scarcity in time, energy and mentality forces us to use minimal efforts for maximal effects. A process-controlled model is highly likely to make this "barter trade" possible and beneficial. Guided by a principle like this, we emphasize in this book the importance of deconstructing a research project into a series of meaningfully related processes. This understanding of the nature of research is also pragmatically oriented. Doing research, quite like completing a good piece of writing, is a rather demanding task even for an experienced practitioner. Facing this challenge, we have to search for some strategic solutions. Our research experience has shown that a step-by-step controlled model in thesis writing could be one of some potential strategies we may rely on.

This conceptualization of thesis writing also has to do with our own experiment and practice in developing a computer-assistant-device for promoting research over the last two years (杨永林, 2000; Yang, et al, 2000). The basic mechanism underlying this attempt is to set up a model that could be run on a computer to help a less experienced researcher produce an acceptable abstract text in different language situations. The framework we developed for this software is called a question-driven and mirror-simulating model. We are going to introduce the software in Chapter Nine "How to produce a good abstract for your thesis" and show you how to make an abstract text for your thesis with the help of our software named EAME, or simply dubbed "易觅" in Chinese. Over the past years, we have encouraged our student researchers at different levels to adopt this abstract generating model and write abstracts for their own theses. It turned out that this software has been particularly successful. Based on the positive input we have gained so far, what we want to do now is to show you how the framework we used for this software is related to our tripartite model proposed for research training and thesis writing. Encouraged by our initial success in the use of EAME, we also want to take this opportunity to show you how the two functions we have in this software, namely, the question-driven function and the mirror-simulating function, could be further elaborated and conveniently employed as two major tools for our thesis writing. A few more words will be needed to show the relationship between the first function and an innovative understanding of thesis writing, which regards thesis writing as a series of well-controlled and prefabricated processes which are designed to answer a set of intrinsically related questions. And the second function is introduced for showing our concern for another component in the tripartite model and this function will substantially be realized by the diverse sample-based demonstration throughout the book. Below are some further elaborations