

## 10 A REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE UNIVERSITY WRITING (COURSE) BOOKS

In this chapter, we review a number of contemporary Chinese university writing books so that readers may know what input and instructions Chinese university students receive in terms of Chinese writing. In Chapter 8 we argued that Chinese writing has been influenced by its own tradition and by the West. Here we again argue that the writing of Chinese students has certain “blended” features and these are inherited from Chinese writing traditions and Western influence. For example, the modes of argument are diverse, and “deductive reasoning has always existed alongside inductive reasoning” (Kirkpatrick, “Chinese Rhetoric” 246).

There is currently a wide range and variety of Chinese writing books for university students. These books can be briefly classified into: 1) writing course books, e.g., Wang and Li; Qiao; Zhou, Li, and Lin; Ye; Ma Zhengping; and Wu Hanxiang; 2) applied writing guides on different genres, e.g., Huo; Lu, Zhan, and Zhang; Yu, Chen, and Wu; Liu Zhuang; Cheng, Fan, and Ma; Huang and Liu; Gao, Sun, and Zhao; Gao et al.; 3) Chinese rhetorical studies, e.g., Zong (*Chinese Rhetoric, Parts 1 & 2*), and studies of specific genres and topics such as Lu and Pu’s *Thesis Writing in Chinese*; Duan and Li’s *New Edition Schema Writing Coursebook*, Yu and Huang’s *Schema Writing*; and Wang Zelong’s *An Exploration on Chinese Writing Studies*; 4) collections of essays on writing by well-known authors, e.g., Liang’s *Liang Qichao’s Introduction to Composition*; Xia and Ye’s *72 Lectures on Speech and Writing* and Yue, Zhan; and Zhao’s *Writing Masters on How to Write Papers*.

We shall, in the main, review the first category of the above mentioned books, namely, writing course books. These include Wu Hanxiang; Ma Zhengping; Ye; Wang and Li; Qiao; and Zhou, Li, and Lin. These are the commonly selected books for Chinese writing courses.

## UNIVERSITY WRITING COURSE (WU HANXIANG)

Wu's *University Writing Course* comprises three major sections including narrative writing, argumentative writing, and practical writing. What is worthy of special attention in this book are the two chapters (Chapter 9 and Chapter 10) as these discuss ways to present and strengthen an argument. These include two major categories: 1) setting up and defending one's arguments; and 2) describing and attacking others' arguments. Seven specific ways are listed for setting up and defending one's arguments. This can be done with the use of a. facts; b. theories; c. cause-effect relationships; d. analogies; e. contrasts and comparisons; f. metaphors; and g. indirect argumentation. The second category includes ways to attack the others' themes, their supporting details or evidence, and their means of argumentation. There are also direct and indirect ways of attacking others' arguments, e.g., revealing or disclosing the mismatch or gap between the others' viewpoints or arguments and supporting details; the breaching of logic and rules for argumentation; arguing by contradiction; and setting a person's own spear against his own shield (a Chinese expression which means refuting somebody with his own argument).

Kirkpatrick ("Chinese Rhetoric" 248–9) reviewed Wu's *University Writing Course* and a number of other coursebooks published in 1980s and 1990s and concluded that argumentative texts (or *yilunwen* in Chinese) must contain three essential components, namely the thesis, the argument and the proof (*lundian*, *lunju*, and *lunzheng*). In terms of thesis or *lundian*, "in the context of Chinese, Wu advises that the argument must be clear and explicit. In the debate between form and meaning, Wu's position is clear: facts conquer eloquence." In terms of argument or *lunju*, Wu proposes factual material and statistical material, including arguments from classical writers, appeals to authority, and scientific truths and axioms. Wu places scientific truths alongside the classics and authority. Kirkpatrick (248) also quotes Wu by saying that the *lunju* can be placed "either at the beginning or summed up at the end." In terms of the third essential component of argumentative texts, "the *lunzheng* or proof must show that there is a necessarily true link between thesis and argument" (Kirkpatrick 248).

ADVANCED COMPOSITION STUDIES  
COURSEBOOK SERIES (MA ZHENGPING)

As far as writing course books for Chinese college students are concerned, one series (edited by Ma Zhengping) plays a significant role. This series comprises seven course books on Chinese composition studies, including *Introduction to*

*Advanced Composition Studies (Gaodeng xiezuoxue yinlun)*, *A Training Course for Advanced Composition Thinking (Gaodeng xiezuoxue siwei xunlian jiaocheng)*, *A Training Course for Advanced Stylistics I: Basic Writing (Gaodeng wenti xiezuoxue xunlian jiaocheng I: jiben wenti xiezuoxue)*, *A Training Course for Advanced Stylistics II: Practical Writing (Gaodeng wenti xiezuoxue xunlian jiaocheng II: shiyong wenti xiezuoxue)*, *New Thinking for Teaching Secondary School Writing (Zhongxue xiezuoxue jiaoxue xin siwei)*, *Advanced Composition: Exemplars and Analyses (Gaodeng xiezuoxue: liwen yu fenxi)*, and *References for Teaching Advanced Composition (Gaodeng xiezuoxue jiaoxue cankao ziliao)*. Ma's series on writing has become a "landmark of contemporary Chinese composition studies" (Sun 1). This series serves as a "milestone", indicating that Chinese composition studies is no longer a "marginalised" subject but a "conventional scientific" discipline (Sun 9). Sun (8–9) further argues that composition studies should be given status equal to that given to linguistics and literature, pointing out that, since the 1990s, Chinese composition studies has not been categorised as a distinct degree strand or a discipline in Chinese undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

## A WRITING COURSE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS (YE)

Ye's *A Writing Course for College Students* contains ten chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, and includes definitions of writing and a discussion of the essential skills required of writers. Ye (1) defines "writing" as "creative mental work that a writer engages in to express thoughts with words. The writing process includes collecting material, refining themes, considering structure and discourse, draft writing, revising and editing." The essential skills (12–24) include "the abilities to use language, to observe, to think critically, to imagine, and to express oneself." The remaining chapters of the book deal with the collection of material for writing and conceiving ideas; expressing and refining/revising; writing poetry, prose, novels and drama; *yingyong* writing (practical writing), e.g., writing a proposal/plan, a summary, regulations, reports, briefings, news, and advertisements; business writing; writing administrative documents; writing academic papers; writing speeches. The final chapter on *Shenlun* writing is of particular interest. *Shenlun* refers to argumentative essay writing, and this forms an integral part of the current Chinese examination for selecting State civil servants. The *Shenlun* examination comprises four sections, namely: reading; summarising; writing a proposal; and defending arguments. The Chinese characters of *Shen* and *Lun* respectively refer to explaining, demonstrating, proposing arguments and defending oneself. According to Ye (406), the words *shen lun* are found in the Confucian Analects "*shen er lun zhi*," meaning

“explaining, expounding, arguing, and reasoning.” *Shenlun* essay writing, as an examination format or item, was introduced into the Chinese Examination for State Civil Servants in 2000. The purpose of including *Shenlun* essay writing is to test the participants’ abilities to “analyse, summarise, refine, and process texts”, in addition to their abilities to comprehend reading material, analyse material comprehensively, propose arguments, and use the Chinese language skillfully.

*Shenlun* essay writing has three characteristics. The first characteristic is its flexibility and variety. Since *Shenlun* essay writing contains three sections, i.e., summarising, making a proposal, and argumentative writing, its writing involves a variety of styles and genres, including narrative writing, expository writing, and argumentative writing. The second characteristic is its wide ranging content, which includes politics, economics, culture, education and other social issues, hot topics and current affairs. The third characteristic is its explicit focus on examining the participants’ abilities to summarise and analyse text materials, and to argue sensibly and practically in light of contextual realities. The participants are expected to read and comprehend the given materials, to tease out the logical relationship of the ideas, and to work out the major issues embedded in the materials. At the same time, the participants are also expected to be able to make a proposal, and to support their arguments (Ye 408).

Ye (409) compares *Shenlun* essay writing with the policy essay (*celun*), required in the imperial civil service exam. *Celun* was different from the *bagu* essay in that its candidates were asked to address policy questions relating to social change. The essay required creative thinking on contemporary issues, rather than the simple reproduction of knowledge. Ye concludes that there are similarities between the *Shenlun* essay writing and the policy essay writing and that these include:

1. the policy essay of the ancient Chinese examinations required the candidates to “reflect deeply and thoroughly on the needs of the government and administration, to be far-sighted in their argumentation, to be practical and feasible in their proposals, and to be forceful and convincing in the use of words and rhetorical devices.” The *Shenlun* essay writing also has these requirements;
2. both the policy essay and the *Shenlun* were/are used for selecting state civil servants;
3. they both touch upon contemporary and topical issues, i.e., policy essay writing concerned government and administration, and *Shenlun* writing encompasses politics, economics, law, culture and current affairs. However, one essential difference between the two

types of writing is that the *Shenlun* writing is more closely related to the actual work of contemporary civil servants, where they make and implement policies based on investigating and analysing realistic issues, putting forward their opinions, making proposals to solve current problems.

The *Shenlun* essay examination takes 150 minutes (with 40 minutes for reading, and 110 minutes for writing). The writing part comprises these three sections:

- 1) summarising the major problems or issues covered in the reading section in approximately 150 words;
- 2) making a proposal to solve or deal with the problems or issues in approximately 300 words. The proposal has to be stated clearly, with a focus on the problems or issues, and the solutions proposed have to be feasible;
- 3) writing an argumentative essay in approximately 1,200 words, with a self-defined topic, to address the problems or issues in the reading material and to justify the proposed solutions. The essay should be clear in its theme(s) and in-depth and convincing in its arguments.

Ye (412–413) also summarises three essential components for a well-constructed and well-written argumentative essay. These are:

1. an appropriate structure with logical presentation of content and a good combination of detail and brevity;
2. explicit and focused themes supported by detailed and specific content; and
3. fluent language with appropriate expressions and a coherent and cohesive argument.

Ye (412) proposes that the opening of the essay should be “short, brisk, and impressive”; the middle section should be “structurally sound, logically clear, rhetorically appropriate, and provide relevant supporting evidence”; and the conclusion should be forceful, striking, positive and inspirational. The conclusion should neither be a “snake tail (with a tiger head)”, nor with “feet added to the drawing of a snake.” (Both “*hu tou she wei*”, i.e., “tiger head, snake tail”, and “*hua she tian zu*”, i.e., “adding feet when completing the drawing of a snake” are four-character Chinese proverbs). In the context of writing, “*hu tou she wei*” can be used to refer to an essay with a powerful and convincing opening,

but a weak and incompatible concluding section, while “*hua she tian zu*” means unnecessary additions to an already well-written essay, particularly at the end of it.

## UNIVERSITY WRITING COURSE: NEW EDITION (WANG AND LI)

Wang and Li’s writing course book claims to be original in that it promotes a pattern of discovering—conceiving—expressing. The book has two sections: writing theories; and common types of writing, including writing for the public civil servant selection examinations. In Section One, Wang and Li define writing from a pedagogical point of view, arguing that writing entails creativity (or originality) and productivity. “Writing is transformation or generation of value-added information” (3). The value-added information is the result of discovery in the writing process. Wang and Li (4) also point out that traditional writing is text-based, comprising eight key elements: *zhuti* (theme), *cailiao* (material), *jiegou* (structure), *biaoda* (expression), *yuyan* (language), plus *xulun* (introduction), *xiugai* (revision), and *wenfeng* (style). They (9) further define writing as an activity of expressing and improving the content and form in relation to four key elements including *keti* (object), *zhuti* (subject), *zaiti* (medium), and *shouti* (readership). They summarise the characteristics of writing as possessing “individuality” and “originality” (13).

The theoretical sections, Chapters 2, 3, and 4, are about “writing discovery”, “conceiving / mind-mapping”, and “expression”. They argue that “writing is to express what has been discovered, therefore, discovery is one of the essential steps in writing” (49). In terms of approaches to discovery, they propose *fasan* (divergent) approaches, *jube* (convergent) approaches, *huanyuan* (substitution) approaches, *nifan* (opposite, or counter-factual) approaches, *xiangbei* (conflict) approaches, and *qianyi* (transfer) approaches. In terms of “conceiving / mind-mapping”, they propose outlining, conceptual mapping, accumulative thinking, and conceiving ideas. They categorise means of expression into the following genres: “narration”, “description”, “prose writing”, “argumentation” and “expository writing”. Section two of the book is about writing a range of genres. These include news writing (news, correspondence, reports), practical and documentary writing (official documents, summary writing, applications), literary writing (prose, novels, poetry, drama and plays), and theoretical writing (critiques, essays and papers).

This comprehensive writing course book combines writing theories with practice, and makes students aware of the need for appropriate form and

content. For example, of the eight key elements of writing introduced in the book, theme, introduction, and material are about content, while structure, expression, language, and style are primarily about form. Revision is related to both form and content. As we have illustrated earlier, the debates between form and content have continued for hundreds, if not thousands, of years in China.

## UNIVERSITY COMPOSITION: NEW EDITION (QIAO)

Qiao's book on university writing has eight chapters: the introduction; summative writing; deductive writing; petition writing; evaluative writing; research writing; entertainment writing; and story writing. Qiao emphasises the importance of “establishing a thesis statement”, “material selection and arrangement”, and “process writing, including drafting and revising”. The thesis statement should be positive, in-depth, and appropriate. In terms of the selection and arrangement of material, it is important to select useful and relevant materials, and arrange them so that the structure is complete (and the structure can be the *qi cheng zhuan he* structure we discussed and exemplified in Chapter 2). Qiao cites a metaphor from classical Chinese to describe an appropriate rhetorical structure: “the opening should be as attractive as the head of a phoenix; the body should be as rich as the body of a pig, and the closing should be as forceful and strong as the tail of a leopard (凤头, 猪肚, 豹尾).” In the remaining chapters, Qiao defines the different types of writing, and gives specific samples to illustrate a number of key points in writing. For example, “theme is the soul of writing” (52) and it is determined by means of “writing purpose”, “writing style”, and the “careful selection of material and genre” (53–8). In terms of the relationship between “theme” and “material” (63–4), Qiao argues that “material forms the basis for theme development”, “material is the content, while the theme is the core”, “material centers around the theme, serving to verify the theme”, “material is a collection of objective facts and other's viewpoints, while theme is the result of the writer's independent thinking”, and “material is the means for deepening the theme, while theme serves as the end for material selection and use”. In terms of language use, Qiao places much attention on “conciseness” and “expressiveness”.

In deductive writing, Qiao (85) points out that the central themes should be clearly thought out in the pre-writing stage. The establishment of a gist, a theme or a thesis, and choice of an appropriate form (including the discourse structure, and outline of the writing) are of primary importance. The central themes should then be sensibly explored or developed in a clear, concise, linear and logical manner (101–2). Rhetorical devices can be adopted in the deductive

writing process, for example, the use of metaphors. What is also important for deductive writing is that the beginning (the central themes) and the ending (the conclusions) should cohere.

In petition writing, Qiao suggests that the writers set a clear target, use appropriate approaches (linguistically accurate, concise, and unambiguous, and culturally appropriate), and adopt an appropriate mindset, which refers to sensible and realistic expectations in relation to petition writing. In passing, we would stress that “sensible and realistic” aims are highly subjective terms in this context, as can be seen from the two petitions we analysed in the previous chapter, Charter 08 and the Open Letter.

In terms of evaluative writing, Qiao emphasises the importance of avoiding empty and worthless comments. With regards research writing, Qiao argues that it should focus on the significance of the research, the source and authenticity of the data, the values of the viewpoints, and the need to document the sources clearly. It is worth stressing here the importance he attaches to citation. The language used in research writing should be clear and unambiguous. Puns and inaccurate expressions should be avoided. Qiao also stresses the importance of developing outlines, saying that it helps with structural coherence, overall progression, time management, and appropriate material selection.

Qiao’s university writing coursebook focuses on both form and content, and while embracing Western ideas, also honours the Chinese rhetorical tradition. For example, there is mention of the traditional *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* pattern. Linguistic clarity, succinctness, and cultural appropriateness are also stressed. “Empty words” should be avoided.

## ADVANCED COURSEBOOK ON COMPOSITION STUDIES (ZHOU, LI, AND LIN)

Zhou, Li and Lin summarise three stages of contemporary writing pedagogy that have been in use since the Revolution of 1911, which saw the end of the imperial system and the birth of the Chinese Republic. These stages comprise:

1. the 1920s-1940s: with the focus on the teaching of writing at Beijing University, particularly on the promotion of writing in *baihua* (the vernacular style);
2. the 1950s-1970s: based on the writing courses in a number of higher institutions, and the introduction of former Soviet literary theories, and the studies in linguistics, rhetoric, and logic. In this period, the most widely adopted theoretical framework was that of the eight key elements, mentioned earlier by Wang and Li, namely: *zhuti*

- (theme); *cailiao* (material); *jiegou* (structure); *biaoda* (expression); *yuyan* (language); *xulun* (introduction); *xiugai* (revision); and *wenfeng* (style);
3. the 1970s—present: the milestones of this stage include the College Entrance Examination system, the establishment of the first national writing society (1980), and the first issue of the national journal *Writing (Xie Zuo)*. Changes during this stage include the shifts from static to dynamic writing, from micro- to macro-level writing, and from text based to human oriented writing.

Other representative works on writing include: He Jiakui's *Talks on Basic Writing Knowledge*; the two key writing course books written by academic staff in the Chinese Departments at Beijing and Fudan Universities respectively in the 1960s; and Zhu Boshi's 1983 *Introduction to Writing*.

Importantly, Zhou, Li, and Lin also point out that modern Chinese writing, in addition to adapting ideas from the West, should be based on theories inherited from classical Chinese rhetorical tradition. Of the classical texts they cite, they include Liu Xie's *Wenxin Diaolong* and Chen Kui's *Wen Ze* (Kirkpatrick) discussed earlier in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

It is worth mentioning here a brief note about the infamous Chinese university exam, the *gao kao* (literally meaning “high examination”). The *gao kao* has far-reaching influence on the students' career path and personal and professional development. The *gao kao* was established in 1955, although it ceased to function during the ten years of Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), re-emerging in 1977. Over the years, the *gao kao* has been changed and modified. It is still called the nationwide standard examination, but the test papers are administered regionally at the provincial level. Three subjects are compulsory: Chinese (*Yuwen*), Mathematics (*Shuxue*), and Foreign Language(s) (*Waiyu*). In addition, Arts students are examined on politics, history and geography, while Science students are examined in biology, chemistry and physics. As far as the Chinese subject is concerned, the test item on writing has a particular washback effect on the students' writing and literacy development. In the Chinese subject examination, students are required to do a series of exercises on Chinese vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and their general knowledge of Chinese. They must also write an essay. The essay topics vary from year to year and here we give some sample topics and tasks which have been set since 1980. The topic for 1980 was a *du hou gan* (reaction to a reading) about a story describing Leonardo Da Vinci's attempts to draw a perfect egg. The topic and task for 1990 was to write a *yilun* (argumentative) essay on given reading material entitled “Beneath Every Flower There Is a Thorn”. The topic

and task for 2000 was a written response to four graphs given as visual stimuli, whereby students were required to express their own perspectives, their different understandings, approaches and solutions to real life issues. The essay topics also vary from region to region. The various essay topics on the one hand show that Chinese students, despite the mention of the *qi-cheng-zhuan-be* structure in some textbooks do not have to learn traditional Chinese text styles, in the same manner as the Chinese ancient *Shuyuan* students did, in order to enter universities. Contemporary Chinese students “are encouraged to be inventive and original in their writing” (Kirkpatrick “Are They Really so Different?” 50–1).

## BOOKS ON CHINESE COMPOSITION PRIOR TO THE 1990s

Prior to the 1990s, Chinese composition courses and course book writing at the tertiary level were given more emphasis than they are today. For example, in the late 1970s, the Ministry of Education organised a number of meetings to discuss composition teaching and course book writing. One resultant course book was *Fundamentals for Writing (Xiezuojichuzhishi)* (Liu X. et al.). This book was reviewed by prominent Chinese linguists including Lü Shuxiang, Zhu Dexi and Zhang Zhigong. It comprises chapters about definitions and the social functions of writing and attitudes towards writing; the collection of writing material; theme development; composition structure; language; narration; description and dialogue; argumentation and exposition; revising and editing; and writing styles. As far as language is concerned, this book advises that “language should be used to communicate and exchange ideas”, and that the use of language should be “precise, concise, vivid, and simple” (Liu X. et al. 147–54). The book also pointed out eight common “sins” in contemporary writing, namely “fake writing”, “empty writing”, “irrational or unreasonable writing”, “rigid writing”, “insinuation writing”, “invariable writing”, “brainwashing writing”, and “writing for fame and benefits” (Liu X. 298–9).

Other course books on writing published in the 1980s focused on fundamental writing skills training, and the relationship between writing and reading. Lu, Shi, and Fan’s *A Writing Course Book* contains chapters on developing the basic skills needed for writing (e.g., observing, investigating, developing topic and theme, selecting material, developing structure, using language and appropriate writing styles, distinguishing speech and writing, imitating and being creative, and drafting and revising), and the training of writing in different genres, e.g., narration, argumentation, exposition, and practical writing. The book advocates the collection of empirical data for writing. For example, the authors (7–8) list six ways of collecting data: focus group interviews; individual interviews; field

work; the writer's first-hand experience; observations; and literature, reference and archive searches.

Hu's *University Writing* contains not only a variety of topics on writing *per se*, but also a chapter which provides twenty sample readings, including a selection from the Chinese classics. One such piece is the *Memorial Expressing My Feelings* by Limi (224–87 CE) (translated and discussed in Chapter 2). The readings also contain contemporary masterpieces from both home and abroad. “Medicine” by Lu Xun (1881–1936), “Friendship or invasion? Invasions?” by Mao Zedong (1893–1976), “The Cop and the Anthem” by O’Henry (1862–1910), and “On Authority” by Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) are examples. According to Hu (382), reading just twenty sample articles is far from sufficient and students need to consult other classical and modern collections in order to improve their writing skills.

In Chapter 8, we reviewed two important studies on paragraph development and arrangement. Hao identified eleven different ways in which paragraphs can be organised (Kirkpatrick, “Chinese Rhetoric” 251–5). The first of these is the juxtaposition of coordinates, *binglie guanxi*. The second way of organising a paragraph is through sequencing, *chengjie guanxi*. Paragraphs that follow this pattern are chronologically sequenced and are straightforward. The third method is *dijin guanxi*, and this is defined as a linguistic style that follows sequential ordering based on size, height, number, depth or weight. The fourth organisational method is the *xuanze guanxi*, literally “choosing relation”. The fifth method is the *jieshuo guanxi* where the function of the latter part of the paragraph is to provide an explanation or example of what has been expressed earlier. The sixth organisational principle is the *zhuanzhe guanxi*, the transitional or contrastive relation. The seventh is the *yinguo guanxi*, or the cause and effect relation, which, in our view, is of greatest significance for the organisation of text in Chinese. The eighth and ninth organising principles or logical relations are *jiashe* or hypothetical, and *tiaojian* or conditional, respectively. The tenth method of paragraph organisation is the *mudi guanxi*, or purpose, or “in order to” type connection. The eleventh is the *zongfen* or whole-part organisational principle. “This eleventh principle is closely linked to inductive and deductive methods of argument, with whole-part linked to deductive argument and part-whole to inductive” (Kirkpatrick 2002: 254).

In his review of a sample of Chinese composition books written in the 1980s and 1990s, Kirkpatrick (246) points out that “the influence of European and English rhetoric should not be overlooked. The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919 saw a flood of translations of European and English texts of a variety of different types and these translations had a stylistic influence on contemporary Chinese writing”. He also points out that “by the 1980s a wider range of examples [for

writing compositions] is evident. This more liberal trend is discernible into the textbooks of the 1990s.”

In addition to academic writing as such, the majority of Chinese university writing books focus on practical writing (*yingyong* writing), i.e., business and official document writing, and various other practical genres. “*Yingyong* writing” is very common (Liu Yancheng 1). Although the nearest English equivalent of “*yingyong* writing” is practical writing, the term refers to a range of official documents, notices, receipts and so forth. Some of the modern genres of practical writing correspond to the classifications found in earlier classification. For example, Yao Nai (1731-1815), whom we discussed in Chapter 8 as a leading supporter of the Tong Cheng school of writing, listed thirteen genres.<sup>22</sup>

Huo classifies the different genres of contemporary practical writing into office documents, advertisements, public relations documents, business writing, law and court related writing, news writing, foreign affairs related writing, and academic writing. Thus academic writing is just one genre of the many listed under practical writing.

A more comprehensive classification of practical writing is provided by Lu, Zhan, and Zhang (*A Course on Practical Writing*). He lists the different genres, sub-dividing each. We provide his full list here to give readers an idea of how sophisticated and complex this list of genres is. The sub-genres, many of which are themselves sub-divided, are listed after the main genre.

1. *xingzheng gongwen* (administrative documents): a. *mingling* (administrative order, order), *jueding* (decision); b. *gonggao* (pronouncement), *tonggao* (announcement), *tongzhi* (notification), *tongbao* (circular, notice); c. *yan* (bill, proposal), *qingshi* (referendum, instructions), *pifu* (response to requests/memorials), *baogao* (report); d. *yijian* (suggestion), *han* (letter);
2. *gongguan wenshu* (public relations (PR) documents): a. *yaoqing xin* (letter of invitation), *ganxie xin* (letter of thanks, letter of gratitude), *weiwen xin* (letter of support), *qingjian* (invitation card); b. *daoci* (eulogy, memorial speech), *fugao* (obituary), *yanhan* (letter or message of condolence), *beiwen* (epitaph); c. *zhengming xin* (a letter prepared by an organisation to prove the identity of someone or for the convenience of contact), *jieshao xin* (letter of introduction, letter of reference); d. *qingjia tiao* (written request for leave), *liuyan tiao* (written) message; e. *tuijian xin* (letter of recommendation), *qiuzhi xin* (letter of application), *geren jianli* (resume, curriculum vitae);
3. *shiwu wenshu* (routine matters, affairs, work documents): a. *jihua* (plan, scheme, programme); b. *zongjie* (summing-up report,

- summary); c. *diaocha baogao* (report of findings, investigation report); d. *guizhang zhidu* (rules and regulations);
4. *falü wenshu* (legal documents): a. *qisu zhuang* (pleading, administrative statement of claim); b. *shangsu zhuang* (petition for appeal); c. *shengsu zhuang* (appeal for revision); d. *dabian zhuang* (replication);
  5. *caijing wenshu* (finance and economics documents): a. *chanpin shuoming shu* (product specifications), *guanggao wenan* (advertisement); b. *zhaobiao shu yu toubiao shu* (request for proposal, and tender/bidding document), *hetong* (contract); c. *shichang diaocha yu yuce baogao* (market investigation report, and market prediction report), *kexingxing yanjiu baogao* (feasibility study report); d. *jingji juece fangan* (economic decision/plan), *shenji baogao* (audit report);
  6. *huiyi wenshu* (meeting/conference documents): a. *kaimu ci* (opening speech/address), *bimu ci* (closing speech/address); b. *jianghua gao* (text of a talk), *yanjiang gao* (text of a speech); c. *huiyi jilu* (minutes of a meeting), *huiyi jiyao* (summary of a meeting), *jianbao* (briefing, bulletin);
  7. *keyan wenshu* (science and research documents): a. *xueshu lunwen* (academic paper); b. *biyelunwen* (thesis, dissertation); c. *shiyan baogao* (test/experiment report);
  8. *shenlun* (the *Shenlun* exam): a. *yilun wen* (argumentative writing/paper); b. *shuoming wen* (expository writing, exposition).

The explicit focus on *yingyong* writing or practical writing among contemporary university composition books and academic writing's place as just one of many genres to be learned implies that Chinese composition instruction is currently more concerned with the needs of the bureaucracy than the university.

In addition to reviewing a number of contemporary Chinese texts on composition, we also conducted a focus group survey among university graduates, who majored in Chinese and Chinese-related degree strands, for example, Chinese Studies and Chinese Journalism. The survey shows that the majority of the Chinese Departments in Chinese universities use books on both writing theory and practical writing. The students are generally required to write short pieces between 100 and 500 words for the purpose of practicing writing a particular genre, e.g., argumentation, narration, and to practice using a particular rhetorical device. Such teaching approaches may also indirectly influence how composition textbooks for university students are designed and compiled. It is worth reiterating, however, that in the current tertiary curriculum, it is not

common for non-Chinese majors to receive explicit instruction on Chinese writing. They usually get more instruction in English writing (and in other foreign languages, e.g., Japanese, Russian, German or French) than in Chinese. Chinese writing instruction and practice form only a part of the curriculum for Chinese and linguistics majors.

In this chapter, we have reviewed a selection of contemporary writing course books for Chinese university students. These books include writing course books which cover theoretical aspects of writing, and applied writing guides which instruct students on how to write a range of different “bureaucratic” genres. These writing books bear the influence, both of the Chinese tradition and Western theory and practice.

Writing at the tertiary level experienced a revival period immediately after the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s, and 1980s. However, since the 1990s, the development of writing as an academic discipline has not been given sufficient emphasis especially among non-Chinese majors. In attempt to redress this, writing specialists and educators have recently compiled many course books in composition and rhetoric which aim to integrate Chinese writing traditions with the theories on writing introduced to China from the West. In this, however, they are revisiting an established practice. The review of the major currently adopted university composition books in China enables us to draw the following conclusions or observations: the focus of Chinese university composition books appears to be more on practical writing rather than on training students to develop skills in argumentative essay writing for the academy. A typical Chinese undergraduate (via the *gao kao*) may be well-equipped with writing short articles with memory-based historical facts or evidence, but not research-based academic essays; and a typical Chinese university major will be trained to write a wide variety of practical “bureaucratic” genres. Non-Chinese majors, however, who comprise the great majority of Chinese university students, will receive little instruction in Chinese writing and composition once they have entered the university. Many will receive more instruction in writing in a foreign language, particularly in English. We consider the implications of this in the concluding chapter, where we also summarise the main points we have made throughout the book.