
THE EFFECT OF PLANNING ON ENGLISH L2 SPEAKERS' INTEGRATED WRITING CAEL TEST PERFORMANCE

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INTEGRATED WRITING TASKS

- Requires use of information from at least one aural or written text
 - Summary of source text
 - Comment on source text
 - Use source text to support own ideas
- Similar to what writers do in academic settings (Cumming, 2013)

Widely used in L2 writing assessments (e.g., TOEFL, CAEL)

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATED WRITING TASKS

Comprehension of source texts

- (Asención Delaney, 2008; Esmaeili, 2002; Plakans, 2009; Sawadki et al., 2013)

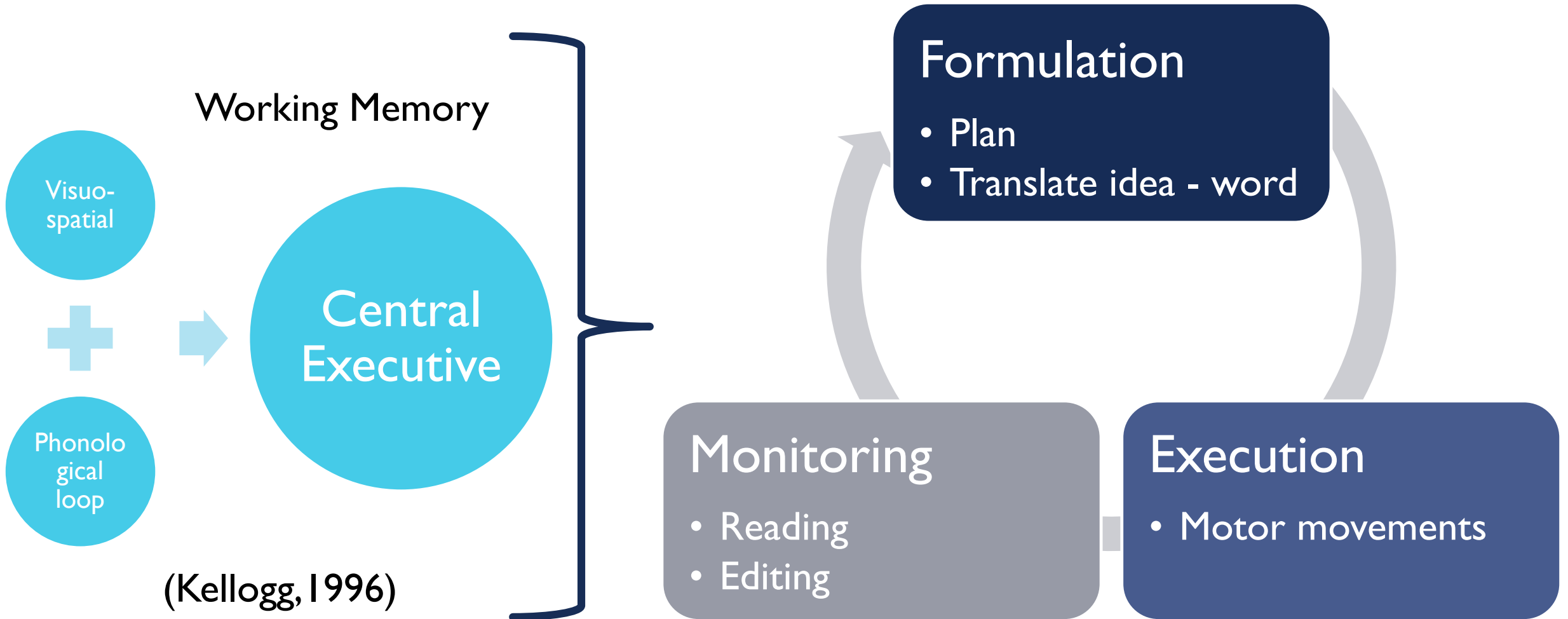
Identification of important ideas in sources

- (Plakans & Gebril, 2013)

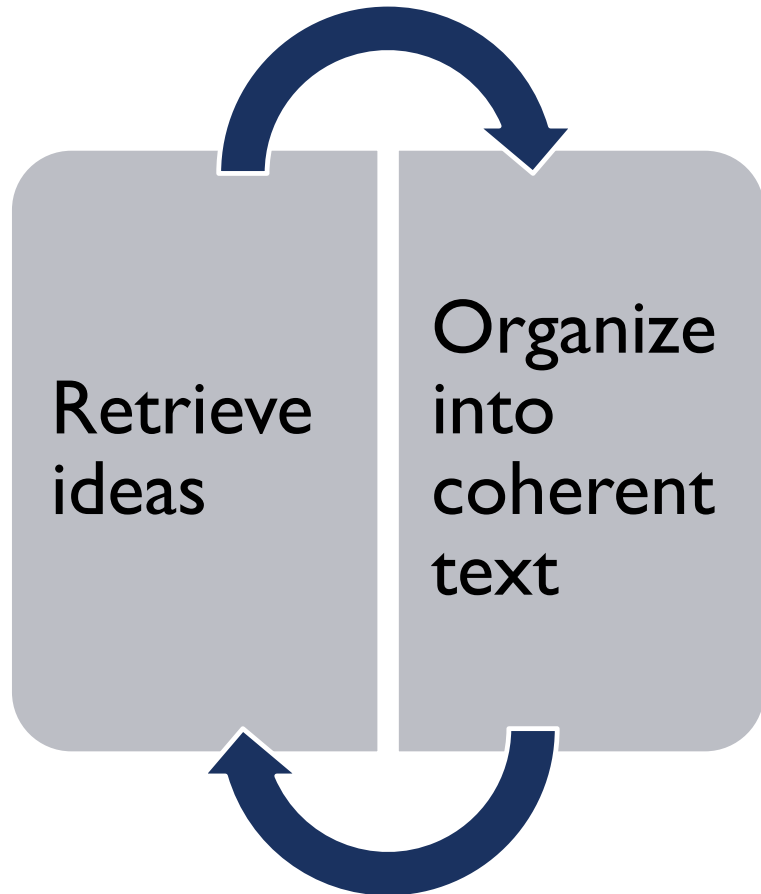
Difficulty integrating source text information

- (Cammish, 1997; Cumming et al., 2005; Currie, 1998; Gebril & Plakans, 2014)

WRITING MODELS



FORMULATION (PLANNING AND TRANSLATING)



- Significant demands on working memory
- **Predictions:** Strategies that funnel central capacity will lead to increases in
 - Fluency
 - Overall quality
- No clear predictions on complexity

DOES PLANNING HELP?

Study	Subjects	Planning Conditions	Findings of pre-task planning
Ellis & Yuan, 2004	42 Chinese EFL learners	(1) No planning; (2) Pre-task planning; (3) On-line planning	Increased fluency and syntactic complexity & variety Limited impact on accuracy
Ong & Zhang, 2010; 2013	107 Chinese EFL learners	(1) Extended (plan: 20m. + write: 10m); (2) Pre-task (plan: 10m + write: 20 m)	Negative impact on fluency and complexity
Johnson, et al, 2012	968 Spanish EFL learners	(1) Idea generation; (2) Organization group; (3) Goal setting; (4) Goal setting + organization	No benefits on lexical & grammatical complexity; Limited impact on fluency
Johnson & Nicodemus, 2016	Replication 90 LI English Lang Arts	(1) Idea generation; (2) Organization group; (3) Goal setting;	No impact on any measures

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

- L2 writing research primarily focuses on **independent writing tasks**
 - Is there evidence that planning may be a useful strategy for cognitively more challenging tasks?
- Instructions on the Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) encourages test takers to plan their written responses
 - Is there in fact empirical evidence that supports planning time in the context of assessment tasks?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- RQ1: When given different planning instructions, how much time do English L2 university students take to plan and write CAEL integrated writing tasks?
- RQ2: Are there any differences in the texts written by students across the planning conditions?
 - Accuracy
 - Lexical diversity
 - Phrasal complexity
 - Syntactic complexity
- RQ3: Is there a relationship between planning time and text features?

METHOD: PARTICIPANTS

- **Writers:** 111 English L2 writers in EAP courses
- **Gender:** 68 women, 43 men
- **Mean age** = 22.5 (SD = 5.6)
- Varied LI backgrounds:
 - Mandarin (41)
 - Arabic (20)
 - French (16)
 - Spanish (12)
 - Other (22)
- **Undergraduate degree programs:**
 - Business (50), Arts & Science (37), Engineering & computer science (20), Fine Arts (4)
- Mean years of **previous English study:** 8.9 (SD = 5.1)
- Mean length of **residence in Canada:** 17.5 months (SD = 20.2)

MATERIALS: CAEL SAMPLE TEST

Reading 1: 25 minutes

Consequences of Long-Range Forecasting: Preparation or Panic

11 questions: multiple-choice; open-ended; cloze



Listening 1: 20 minutes

Lecture format

Listening for details; Listening for main ideas



Reading 2: 30 minutes

Assessing the Economic Benefits of Improved Long-Range Weather

12 questions: multiple-choice; open-ended; cloze



Writing task: ~45 minutes

Should governments invest money in and report long-range forecasts for weather and other geophysical events?

Using the information in the readings and the lecture

3 Planning Conditions

Suggested planning

- Current CAEL instructions
- Planning :
 - Suggested 15 min
- Writing:
 - Suggested 30 min

Fixed-time required planning

- Planning:
 - Mandatory 15 min
- Writing:
 - Maximum of 30 min

Self-timed required planning

- Planning:
 - Suggested 15 min
- Writing:
 - Maximum of 30 min

PROCEDURE

Reading + listening (75 minutes)

Planning + Writing (~45 minutes)

Background questionnaire (~10 minutes)

Writing anxiety & self-efficacy questionnaire (~20 minutes)

Post-writing interview (10 minutes)

ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN TEXTS

Length

- Total words

Accuracy

- Number of spelling errors
- Number of errors
 - Hand coded following Polio & Shea, 2014

Lexical diversity

- VocD
 - Coh-metrix

Syntactic & Phrasal Complexity measures

- Mean length sentence
- Coordinated phrases/clauses
- Dependent clauses/clauses
- Complex nominals per clause
 - Lu's Syntactic Complexity Analyzer

RESULTS

- RQ1: How much time do English L2 university students take to plan and write their texts?

Condition	Plan		Write	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Suggested planning (n = 37)	*9.5	4.7	25.8	5.1
Required, Fixed time (n = 38)	11.9	3.6	24.6	5.5
Required, Self-timed (n = 36)	12.1	2.9	27.1	3.7

- RQ2: Differences in the texts written by students across the planning conditions?
 - Text length & accuracy

Condition	Words		Spelling errors/words		Other errors/words	
	Mean	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Suggested planning	232.5	45.1	.01	.01	.06	.02
Required, Fixed time	247.8	62.5	.02	.01	.05	.02
Required, Self-timed	243.6	47.8	.02	.02	.05	.01

- RQ2: Differences in the texts written by students across the planning conditions?
 - Lexical diversity

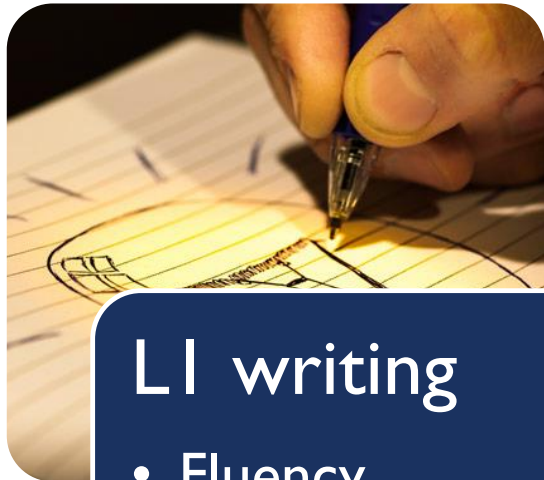
	VocD
Condition	M (SD)
Suggested planning	91.8 (24.3)
Required, Fixed time	83.5 (27.1)
Required, Self-timed	87.9 (22.4)

- RQ2: Differences in the texts written by students across the planning conditions?
 - Syntactic & phrasal complexity

	Mean length sentence	Coordinate phrases / clause	Dependent clauses / clause	Complex nominals / clause
Condition	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Suggested planning	19.8 (5.2)	.4 (.3)	.4 (.1)	1.3 (.4)
Required, Fixed time	19.2 (4.2)	.4 (.2)	1.3 (4.5)	1.3 (.4)
Required, Self-timed	18.9 (3.3)	.4 (.2)	.3 (.1)	1.3 (.3)

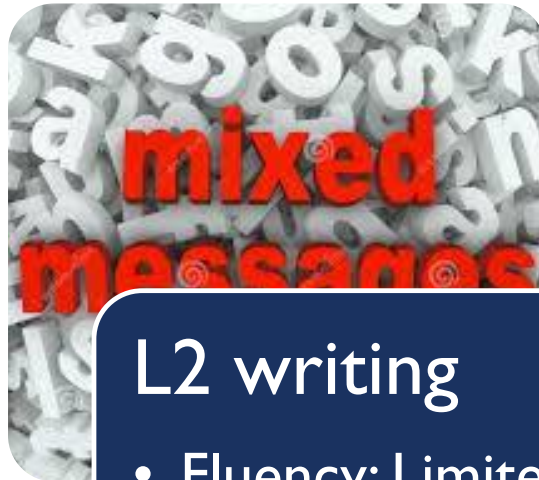
- RQ3: Is there a relationship between planning time and text features?
 - Accuracy
 - Spelling errors/words: $r = -.25$
 - Syntactic complexity
 - Coordinated phrases per clauses: $r = -.35$
 - Phrasal complexity
 - Complex nominals per clause: $r = -.22$

DISCUSSION: SUMMARY



L1 writing

- Fluency
- Complexity



L2 writing

- Fluency: Limited
- Complexity: No



Current study

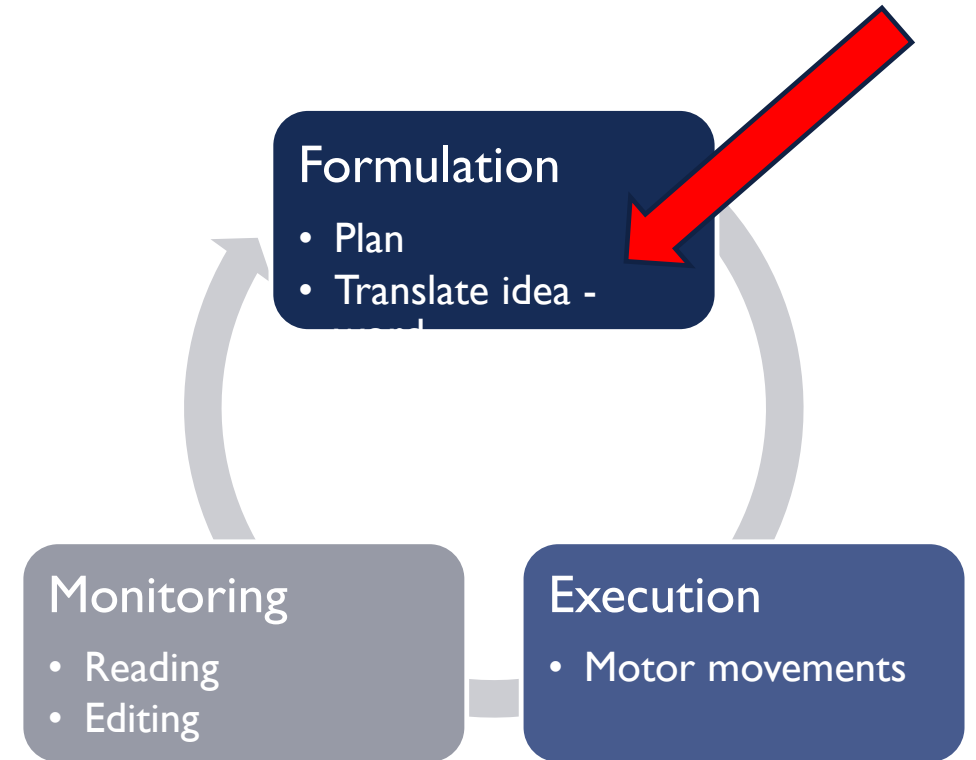
- Accuracy
- Positive
- Complexity: No

DISCUSSION

- CAEL instructions - suggest 15 minutes to plan
- **Present study:** Requiring or suggesting 15 minutes to plan does not seem to impact writer's practices
 - Required, fixed time: 21/38 spent at least 13 minutes (55%)
 - Required, self timed: 19/36 (53%)
 - Suggested time: 10/37 (27%)
- Previous research - 10 min provides ample pre-task planning (Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Johnson, et al., 2012)
- What motivates learners to promptly begin the writing process?
 - Desire to start writing or concern about running out of time?

DISCUSSION

- Current results – positive relationship between accuracy and planning time
- Next step is to examine band scores across three groups
 - If planning benefits accuracy AND is associated with higher band scores = **Consider implementing stricter rules for planning**



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Not quantity of time, but quality of planning?
 - Future analysis of their notes and the interview data
 - Qualitative study of planning notes (Ojima, 2006)
- No impact on text features, but ability to use source text more judiciously
 - RQ to explore further: Does planning time impact quantity and quality of source text?
 - Future analysis using source text use rubrics in development (Neumann, Leu, & McDonough)

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