

Recommendation: Revise and Resubmit

Dear Authors:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript. We feel the purpose of the research reflects a desire to connect critical thinking dispositions to the ability to write arguments in the English language, with Chinese high school students as participants. The topic is interesting and important and the article is well written. My main concern is with the writing measure you used and would like to know more about its validity and whether it can truly elicit critical thinking. I gather that the prompt, "No smoking in public places?" is a stand-alone prompt with no sources to consult. It seems to me that this assessment will favor students who have background knowledge about this issue. I find it hard to imagine how students could come up with claims and subclaims that would reflect deeper thinking. Perhaps if you included a "best" and "poor" article and showed how they linked to the CTD scale and provided evidence of the use of dispositions that predict writing quality, I would be more convinced.

Introduction:

I thought the introduction was well written and made a case for why this area of inquiry was well grounded. I suggest that you move your Research Questions up to the end of the introduction rather than wait until line 231.

Literature Review:

Your literature review is thorough. I suggest you look at the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing for a look at critical thinking dispositions at the university level. When you talk about Graham and self regulation, I wondered how this related to your writing prompt. I love the idea of ESW being the "passport" to further educational and job opportunities.

You mention that you modified the CTDI-CV for high school. What did you change?

Methods:

I wonder if your sample is large enough to draw the conclusions you come to. I also wonder if recruiting students who majored in English would have made a difference in what you saw in your results? As I said, I have some major concerns about the prompt you are using. Won't students just say...Smoking should not be allowed in public places because it causes cancer and could negatively affect peoples' health?

I am a curriculum specialist, and not a statistician. So, I elicited these comments on your manuscript from Undraa Maamuujav, the Project Scientist on an academic writing grant on which I am Principal Investigator:

1. The author/s did not report of IRR for ECEAW. I'd be interested in knowing more about The IRR for the argument proficiency, if there any big discrepancy between the two raters, and how the discrepancy was resolved, etc.

2. After reading the Methods section, I had a lot of questions about the measures used (e.g., ECEAW and CTDI CV). Some of the methodological procedures were reported in the Results section. To avoid confusion, the author/s might want to consider moving the section on construct validity and reliability (lines 318-339) to the Method's section.

The author/s might also want to provide some clarity and rationale (justify some of the methodological choices they made). For example:

- a. it is not entirely clear why EFA was performed
 - b. the positive and negative traits for CTDI CV items (lines 347 to 349) seem important but need further clarification
 - c. Each subdisposition has several items, so I am wondering if a factor score obtained and used in correlation and regression analysis. This was not clear to me. The author/s might want to make it clear whether they used factor scores or raw scores. In other words, I want to know if the 8 subdispositions are latent constructs or observed variables?
3. Results: I was not sure why the author/s chose to add the nonsignificant CTDI CV variables based on Pearson Correlation in regression analysis. This seems unnecessary.

Looking at the Evaluation Criteria for the ECEAW, the fifth level says, "Completes the test question task; covers all the main content points; the central thesis and subarguments are clear and appropriate," etc. How did students know they were supposed to include this in their papers? Where did they draw their examples from? Again, how does the task elicit critical thinking? How does truth seeking and justice relate to critical thinking?

Conclusion:

You say "The results convey clear messages for how to improve EAW teaching and learning in Chinese High Schools." So, how does a teacher do this? What are your practical suggestions for how to enhance instruction on critical thinking dispositions? What is "suitable CTD training?"

Limitations:

I suggest that you don't end your article with Limitations. You also close with "other critical thinking aspects such as thinking skills have yet to be explored." How are critical thinking skills different from critical thinking dispositions?"

Overall, both Dr. Maamuujav and I feel the paper is missing a So What? What is the clear take away of the article?