

The Application of Formative Assessment in College English Writing Teaching

——Taking Nanchang Institute of Science & Technology As An Example

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Abstract: Formative assessment is to evaluate a student's learning process, aiming to improve and develop their learning. Formative assessment focuses on the process of student writing, and promotes the teamwork ability and self-reflection ability. As a new type of assessment method, formative assessment is established based on humanism and constructivism, which fully embodies the new concept of student-oriented teaching, which plays a major role in promoting students' independent learning. Through the implementation of formative assessment in English writing teaching, this paper finds that it helps to improve students' learning motivation and writing interest, and is conducive to improving students' English writing ability. At the same time, the following specific operation methods are proposed: establish student writing files; classroom teaching observation; extracurricular writing guidance; learning effects assessment.

1. Introduction

College English Curriculum Requirements released by the Ministry of Education in 2007 clearly stated; "Teaching assessment is an important part of College English teaching. A comprehensive, objective, scientific and accurate assessment system is essential for achieving the objectives of the curriculum. College English Curriculum teaching assessment consists of two parts: formative assessment and summative assessment. What's more, it also clearly pointed out the role and significance of formative assessment to improve the quality and validity of College English Curriculum. In recent decades, many scholars have carried out both theoretical and empirical researches on the impact of formative assessment on College English Writing. They concluded that the application of formative assessment in College English Writing class will help to improve students' writing ability. At the same time, many college teachers have incorporated formative assessment into their daily teaching, but there are still cases that formative assessment has not been brought into its fullest play. It is in this context that this paper reflects on how to better use formative assessment to promote College English Writing teaching .

2. The Concept of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment was first proposed by M. Scriven in Chicago, USA, and then applied to educational practice by B. S. Bloom in United States. Concerning the concept of formative assessment, there are many similar expressions in the field of foreign language teaching, such as classroom assessment, school assessment, and assessment of performance files while formative assessment is the most widely used statement. Formative assessment is an assessment method that provides feedback on current educational activities by diagnosing the problems of education programs, plans and activities, which can improve the education quality. In short, teachers monitor the progress of students in learning activities, and adjust the teaching methods, teaching content and teaching progress by collecting feedback information from students, so as to improve the quality of teaching.

3. The Necessity of Applying Formative Assessment to College English Writing Teaching

The basic contents of college English teaching include listening, speaking, reading, writing and

translating. Writing ability is the embodiment of learners' comprehensive English application ability, and it is also a major difficulty in English teaching. Teachers pay more and gain less. Especially in college English, it is difficult to improve both listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in a limited class time.

In traditional writing classroom, teachers presuppose questions and writing requirements, and ask students to complete and submit essays within a limited time. Teachers then modify the essay, comment, give scores, and send them back to students, and finally explain FAQs. This process makes the writing class seem boring. Therefore, there will be many problems. Teachers can't point out all the mistakes in the process of composition modification; some students only pay attention to the scores and pay less attention to the mistakes they made in the composition after receiving the feedback, which makes it impossible to prevent the same mistakes from continuing, so the goal of English writing is not achieved; some students are not serious about writing, and they just want to finish the assignment sometimes with plagiarism; the society attaches great importance to the scores of CET4 and CET6, resulting in exam-orientation situation; in addition, students depend too much on teachers to correct errors and they lack the ability to discover and modify the problems independently; furthermore, students do not have a good understanding of teachers' comment, and they can not modify the composition accordingly. Combining formative assessment with College English Writing can effectively solve the above problems.

4. Application of Formative Assessment in College English Writing Teaching

Taking the college English writing curriculum of Nanchang Institute of Science & Technology as an example, the author will study on the construction and practice of the formative assessment system of its writing curriculum. This study will demonstrate the teaching effect by formulating a formative assessment system for college English writing curriculum. The college English curriculum of Nanchang Institute of Science & Technology adopts A and B layered teaching. Experimental groups and non-experimental groups are selected from all layers to carry out research and the effect of the formative assessment system on college English writing will be observed. A final plan will be formulated and applied to practical teaching based on requirement proposed in *College English Curriculum Requirement* promulgated by the Ministry of Education, combined with the language output theory's enlightenment and advice of teachers. In addition, in the process of implementation, the teaching plan can be modified based on the result to finally construct an effective formative assessment system, shown in Figure 1.

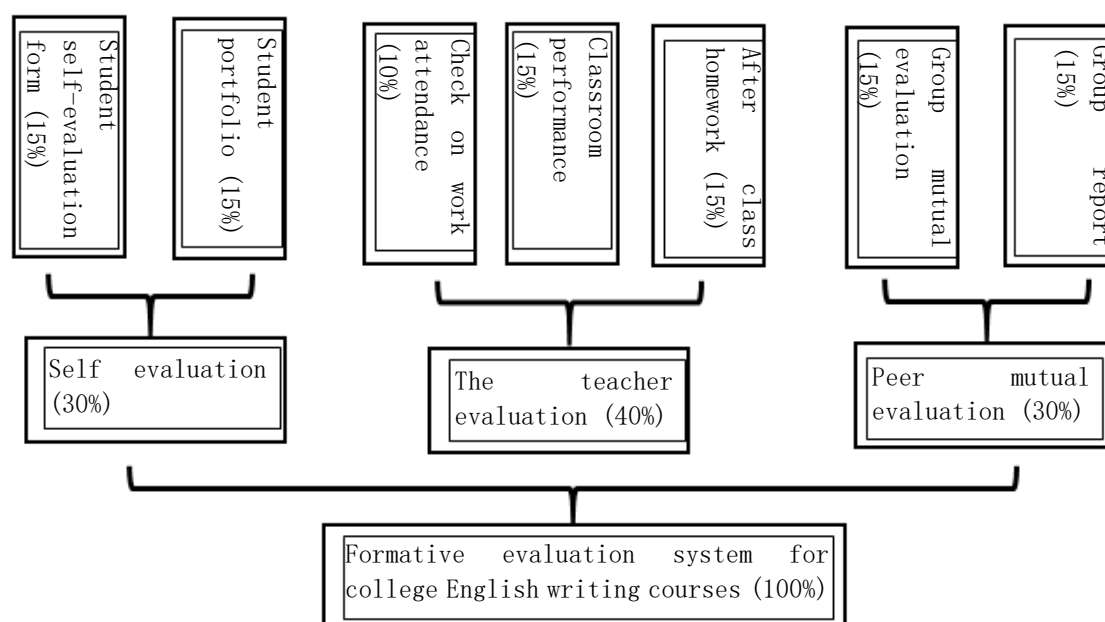


Figure 1. Formative Assessment System of College English Writing Curriculum

In this study, students' classroom performances, student portfolios and final writing scores are compared between the A and B layer experimental and non-experimental groups. The experimental group students are more active in the classroom performance than the non-experimental students. In addition, the student portfolios and final writing in experimental groups show better results and they get higher scores in self-assessment, mutual assessment and teacher assessment. However, there is difference in different experimental group layers. In this study, the pacific operation methods are shown as follows:

4.1 Establish a Student Writing Portfolio

Teachers can create a writing portfolio for each student in this class. The essays, student self-assessment forms, student mutual assessment forms, teacher assessment forms and other materials written by the students in this semester are included in the portfolio.

4.2 Classroom Observation

Classroom is not only the main place for students to learn, but also the main place for teachers to teach. Therefore, the participation of students in classroom teaching activities greatly affects the implementation of students' learning and formative assessment.

Through the classroom performance of the students, teachers can understand the learning situation and learning effect of them. According to the problems encountered by students in the writing process, teachers can give corresponding writing instructions and evaluate their writing process. In the writing class, teachers can improve students' basic writing skills through writing in English words and sentences, which also lays a solid foundation for their English expression skills.

4.3 Extracurricular Writing Instruction

After class, teachers can also interact with students through convenient online tools such as email, QQ, WeChat, etc., to better grasp the learning process of students at any time and anywhere, and help students to set goals at different stages. For examples, teachers can guide students to keep the paper clean, practice long sentence writing, reduce grammar errors and exchange opinions with others. After a semester extracurricular writing process, students can gradually see their own strengths and weaknesses, set their own writing goals for the next semester, and gradually improve their writing skills.

4.4 Learning Effect Assessment

Formative assessment is a diversified assessment method including teacher assessment, student self-assessment and mutual assessment among students. Teacher assessment should adhere to the principle of giving priority to encouragement with light criticism. Teachers must first affirm the students' achievements and progress. At the same time, they should also point out the problems that students have in the process of writing, and make suggestions to improve students' interest in learning and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning. The teacher's assessment can start from the following aspects: whether the students can prepare for the class; whether they listen carefully in the class, and consolidate in time after class; whether correctly grasp the classroom teaching content; whether actively participate in various classroom activities, such as asking questions, answer, discuss, etc.; whether actively participate in classroom activities and so on. In this regard, teachers can use a combination of descriptive assessment, ABCD rating or scoring, in order to truly record the students' mastery of the content.

Students' self-assessment breaks the traditional teacher assessment method, which allows each student to participate in the writing assessment. It can let each student fully understand and correctly evaluate their writing ability, so that each student can fully play their role to form a serious and responsible learning attitude, thus improving students' writing and self-learning ability.

The student's mutual assessment is considered as an internal assessment among students. Students can modify the composition according to the teacher's feedback and then evaluate each other. In the process of college English writing teaching, teachers should divide students into several groups according to the principle of voluntariness. The members of each group include

people to evaluate and being evaluated. In group activities, members evaluate each other.

5. Conclusion

Formative assessment in college English writing teaching is of pivotal importance for the implementation of college English curriculum reform. It is conducive to the formation of a student-centered, teacher-dominant teaching mode, and is beneficial to improve college students' independent learning ability and also for teachers to reflect on their teaching experience and at the same time improve their teaching ability. Formative assessment plays an important role in promoting college English teaching, but its implementation will be a complicated and arduous. Therefore, teachers should continuously explore and summarize experiences to improve the plan for formative assessment in order to establish a scientific and rational formative assessment mode.

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