

Teaching Model of English Writing Based on Integrative Feedback

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Abstract: The paper presents an important reason why most Chinese college students find it hard to improve their English writing ability—the influence of traditional teaching mode and the restriction of writing feedback. Then it reviews the current research situation of writing feedback and proposes a new teaching model of college English writing, which integrates teacher feedback, peer feedback and online feedback. The paper outlines the three steps of the teaching model and summarizes its advantages after its practical application for two semesters. This model based on the integrative feedback enables learners to participate in real-time essay revising process, greatly reduces learners' writing anxiety, promotes students' writing motivation, and effectively enhances students' English writing proficiency and quality.

Introduction

Writing is one of the main forms of language output, and it is a direct reflection of the comprehensive use of language ability. *College English curriculum requirements* also makes clear requirements for English writing ability. However, English writing has always been a major headache for college students. Some students, even those who perform well in class, find themselves quite at a loss what to say when they write. The problems of many students' compositions mainly lie in the following aspects: inaccurate words, inappropriate collocation, lack of logical connection, incoherent content and even spelling mistakes.

The main reasons for students' poor English writing ability are the influence of traditional teaching mode and the restriction of writing feedback. At present, most college English teachers still employ the traditional teaching and feedback model in writing classes, that is, "teachers assign writing tasks—students write compositions and submit them—teachers grade students' work". This model focuses on the evaluator, pays more attention to learning results, and fails to fully reflect the dominant position of students in learning. As a result, students may lose enthusiasm for writing and have difficulties improving their writing ability.

Therefore, it is very important to explore new ways of feedback and construct a new teaching model for improving writing teaching of college English and enhancing students' writing proficiency and quality.

A Brief Overview of Feedback

According to the Keh (1990), "feedback" is the input of the reader to the writer, with the purpose of providing the writer with the information to revise the composition. In this way, the write can find out the shortcomings in his composition such as lack of logic organization, inadequate content, or grammar and spelling mistakes, so that he can improve the content and language according to the information. In the process of writing, whether composition revising can improve the quality of composition depends not only on the writer's language ability, but also on the quality of feedback he gets from readers. Writing teaching process cannot be separated from the corresponding evaluation and feedback because feedback not only has a positive impact on improving the author's writing process, but also helps readers to reflect on their own shortcomings and draw on the advantages of

others' articles. According to the source of feedback, it can be divided into three forms: teacher feedback, peer feedback and online feedback.

Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback is the most traditional and direct form of feedback. In traditional writing classes, teachers first explain the theory and skills of writing, and then ask students to imitate the sample essays to complete the writing task. After class teachers give written feedback to each student's work. However, the most authoritative way of feedback has shown its disadvantages for a long time because of the limited time of teachers and the large size of classes. Students have lost their enthusiasm and motivation for creation when they receive the untimely feedback of teachers. They only focus on their own scores, not on how to improve their articles, let alone the improvement of their thinking and writing ability. Students cannot really participate in the whole writing process. This kind of teaching evaluation mode, which overemphasizes the results and neglects the learning process, is not conducive to the overall development of students' writing ability.

Peer Feedback

With the continuous improvement of English teaching methodology at home and abroad, peer feedback has attracted more and more attention and research from experts and teachers. Peer feedback is a writing teaching activity in which students exchange their compositions to read and put forward suggestions to each other for revision. Researchers and teachers have found that in the process of peer feedback, through face-to-face communication, negotiation and discussion, students gradually express their intended meaning in a two-way and active way of feedback, which optimizes the writing effect while completing the assessment task. At the same time, students' autonomous learning ability and cooperative spirit have been well developed, and their writing level and thinking ability have also been greatly improved. However, they've also pointed out that although peer feedback can make up for many shortcomings of teacher feedback, it is still difficult to avoid limitations. Among the limitations, the correctness, fairness and effectiveness of peer feedback are questioned most.

Online Feedback

With the rapid development of modern education technology and network information technology, the traditional time-consuming and inefficient college English writing mode is in urgent need of reform. Automated Writing Evaluation System (AWES), which uses computer technology to evaluate and grade compositions, came into being. In the past 40 years, the automatic writing evaluation system has adopted the latest achievements in statistics, natural language processing and artificial intelligence, and entered the practical application stage in 1999. The research and application of Automated Writing Evaluation System has become a hot topic in computer aided writing teaching at home and abroad. Pigaiwang (<http://www.pigai.org>), an online automated essay scoring system developed by Beijing Ciwang Technology Co., Ltd., is widely used in many colleges and universities. This online intelligent scoring system provides teachers and English learners with online automatic correction service in the form of SAAS (software as a service). It aims to provide students with a writing environment, provide real-time scoring and diagnostic feedback, motivate students to actively revise their compositions, and constantly improve their writing ability. At the same time, it can also reduce teachers' workload of composition correction and help teachers to understand students' English writing level more intuitively. However, due to the technical limitations, it gives more feedbacks to students in terms of vocabulary and grammar, but fails to give enough feedbacks to students in terms of writing content, text structure, style rhetoric and logical coherence.

Writing Teaching Model Based on Integrative Feedback

In view of the limitations of the single way of feedback, some scholars have proposed a comprehensive model that involves two ways of feedback in English writing class. But so far there are few relevant researches on the organic combination of the teacher feedback, peer feedback and

online feedback. The research is trying to propose a new writing teaching model and introduce the multi-feedback mechanism into the practice of writing teaching. The new model, based on the online scoring system of Pigaiwang, combines teacher feedback and peer feedback. The integrative feedback is incorporated into different stages of the teaching process, making it dynamically adapt to the writing teaching process and meet the different requirements of each stage of the students' writing process. The general idea is as follows:

Pre-writing Stage. Teachers provide students with writing topics and materials in class and explain the basic knowledge of writing skills, rhetorical devices, grammar and words. Afterwards they organize the pre-writing activities:

- Dividing students into small discussion groups consisting of 4 to 6 students;

- Asking students to fully discuss writing topics and brainstorm;

- Asking each group to sort out their ideas and list the writing outline.

In the process of discussion, teachers can give students individual guidance and feedback when necessary.

Writing and Revising Stage. After class, students log in the online intelligent scoring system of Pigaiwang, finish the first draft according to the written outline, and submit their compositions. The online scoring system can not only give the overall evaluation and scores in real time, but also make detailed comment on the problems in the first draft of students' composition in terms of spelling, collocation, grammar and other aspects, and put forward corresponding revising suggestions. Following the suggestions given by the system, students can revise their compositions more than once and get the real-time feedback until they get their own satisfactory results or scores set by teachers (in order to encourage and supervise students to revise drafts, teachers can set a minimum score for students). Teachers use the peer comment function of the system to assign or randomly assign the completed articles to each student. Students can give comments and revising suggestions on the details of language or the ideas and structure of the article after they get the articles from their peers. As an important measure for students to learn from each other, peer feedback helps the peer readers to reflect on their own shortcomings and draw on the advantages of others' articles in a subtle way, so as to enhance their strengths and avoid weaknesses in practice (before peer feedback, teachers should have the training and classroom practice of peer evaluation for students, because the writing mutual evaluation itself is a comprehensive and complex process. If participants don't understand its objectives and standards very well, they cannot exchange opinions with each other). In the whole process, Students can seek help and guidance from their peers or teachers to make up for the shortcomings of machine evaluation.

Teacher Feedback Stage.

Teachers analyze and summarize the problems listed in the online scoring system to give collective feedback and explanation, especially on whether the content is relevant to the topic, whether the article structure is logical and whether the argument is rational. Receiving the teacher's feedback, the students revise their compositions again and get the final draft.

Advantages of Writing Teaching Model Based on Integrative Feedback

As a college English teacher, I've employed the new writing teaching model in three classes for two semesters. Through teaching practice it is proved the proposed teaching model has the following advantages:

Due to the introduction of the online scoring system, the data of students' writing can be accumulated infinitely and stored in the network permanently and the writing corpus of students in universities can be constructed in the long run, so that teachers can read and analyze the data anytime and anywhere. The data-based information of students' writing can help teachers to understand the overall level and common problems of students' writing in a more macro and quantitative way. According to the results of data analysis, teachers can study students' learning behavior, formulate teaching plans in time, and adjust the teaching materials.

The introduction of integrative feedback mode makes up for the deficiency of single feedback form, greatly increases the amount of feedback, and makes the feedback more objective and reliable. The timely and comprehensive feedback from three channels covers most of the problems at the language and discourse level and helps students realize their shortcomings in writing. In the process of continuous search, selection and self-revision of errors such as words, sentence structure and text structure in their compositions, students can untap their potential in English writing and improve their writing proficiency and quality more effectively.

The theory of self-efficacy tells us that only by improving students' self-efficacy on their own writing ability and making them believe that they can successfully engage in writing, can students' anxiety on writing be greatly reduced. There is a general fear and resistance to English writing among college students in China, which is due to their previous experience of failure. In the face of writing tasks, students with low writing self-efficacy are afraid of making mistakes and show a shrinking attitude toward writing. They don't have the habit of revising their compositions. Some even don't pay attention to the comments written by teachers. With the help of integrative feedback, students can take the initiative to correct their own mistakes and polish their compositions. They find it's not so hard to correct the mistakes in their compositions, such as the spelling of words, the collocation of phrases, the misuse of grammar and Chinglish, etc.. After the revision, the continuously improved scores will serve as a motivation to encourage students to participate in writing. Students gradually reduce their anxiety about writing and feel an unprecedented sense of achievement and satisfaction, and their attitude towards writing will change from helplessly coping with writing tasks to actively and optimistically participating in writing and revising.

Conclusion

The improvement of writing ability cannot be separated from effective feedback, because feedback is an indispensable part of writing teaching process of college English. The integrative feedback is easy to carry out and has its unique characteristics in terms of organization and management of teaching. It plays an active role in bringing into play the students' learning initiatives and in improving the teaching efficiency of writing and is of practical significance in solving problems caused by traditional writing teaching model.

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