

Design of Performance Assessment in Senior High School English Writing Classroom Based on Deep Learning

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Abstract: The evaluation system of basic education in China is continuously deepening its reform and presenting a trend of diversification and comprehensiveness. Against this backdrop, this paper explores the implementation path of promoting students' deep learning in senior high school English writing classrooms under the guidance of deep learning theory and combined with the framework of performance assessment. The research points out that traditional evaluation methods have problems such as superficial goals, lack of context, and vague criteria, leading to insufficient writing motivation and rigid thinking among students. In response, this paper proposes the principles and implementation steps of performance assessment design under the guidance of deep learning theory. This study provides theoretical support and practical references for breaking through the bottleneck of senior high school English writing teaching and implementing evaluation reforms oriented by core literacy.

Keywords: Deep Learning, Performance Assessment, English Writing Instruction.

1. Introduction

The "Senior High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" (hereinafter referred to as the "New Curriculum Standard") proposes that "teachers should guide students to deeply study and understand the theme significance of the text on the basis of in-depth reading of the text, construct structured knowledge, internalize the learned language and cultural knowledge, and express their own views independently to achieve deep learning"[1]. This requires senior high school teachers to implement clear teaching goals, cultivate students' higher-order thinking, and reflect learning progress in the teaching process under the guidance of deep learning theory. However, traditional senior high school writing teaching only focuses on results and mechanically applies writing templates to exams, exposing its limitations and failing to meet the needs of cultivating students' deep learning abilities. Therefore, this paper starts from the deep learning theory, combines the current situation of senior high school English writing teaching and the requirements of the curriculum standard for students' writing ability training, and studies the teaching design and case of performance assessment in the classroom to explore the implementation path of promoting students' deep learning in senior high school English writing teaching.

2. Research Background and Significance

2.1. Reform Trends in the Evaluation System of Basic Education in China

In recent years, the evaluation system of basic education in China has been continuously deepening its reform and presenting a trend of diversification and comprehensiveness. The Senior High School English Curriculum Standard proposes in its basic concept to improve the English curriculum evaluation system and promote the effective formation of core literacy. Senior high school English courses

should establish a curriculum evaluation system with students as the main body, promoting the comprehensive, healthy, and individual development of students. Evaluation should focus on and promote the formation and development of students' core literacy in English, adopt a diversified evaluation method combining formative and summative evaluation, pay attention to the role of evaluation in promoting learning, focus on students' emotions, attitudes, and values in the process of English learning, and guide students to monitor and adjust their English learning goals, learning methods, and learning progress. Against this background, various fields in education have begun to explore from the reform of the evaluation system, and many scholars and experts have put forward many solutions and suggestions, beginning to think about how to transform the traditional single evaluation method that only focuses on grades into a diversified evaluation method that focuses on students' performance.

2.2. The Importance of Cultivating Senior High School Students' Deep Learning Abilities in the Information Age

The Senior High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 Edition) provides an action plan and route for schools to promote teaching reform, change the way of training people, and improve the quality of training. The curriculum standard clearly points out that senior high school English courses should further develop students' comprehensive language use ability on the basis of further developing students' comprehensive language use ability, focusing on improving students' ability to obtain information, process information, analyze problems, and solve problems, and paying special attention to improving students' ability to think and express in English. The comprehensive development of students cannot be separated from the cultivation of core literacy in disciplines, and deep learning is an important way for learners to cultivate core literacy in the current educational context. It is also an important measure to change the way of learning and update the current educational concept.

Cultivating students' deep learning abilities from the perspective of the new curriculum standard is an inevitable choice for teachers and students to adapt to the new teaching module and achieve the corresponding teaching goals and academic requirements. Nowadays, the rapid development of educational modernization also puts forward higher requirements for students' learning abilities. Cultivating deep learning abilities is also an effective means to help students adapt to modern teaching and an inevitable preparation for the rapid development of information and the rapid change of knowledge fields in the future educational environment.

2.3. Development Bottlenecks in Senior High School English Writing Teaching Models

English writing ability is an important part of students' comprehensive language use ability, and its cultivation needs to be coordinated with listening, speaking, and reading abilities and should be tailored to students' cognitive laws and developmental stages. In current teaching practice, although most teachers are aware of the importance of writing teaching, the traditional teaching model is still widely used in the specific implementation process, resulting in the failure to effectively implement the emphasis on writing ability training. The teacher-centered one-way input model is difficult to stimulate students' initiative in creation, and the mechanical imitation of model essays neglects the cultivation of personalized expression. Although some teachers have the process of evaluation in writing teaching, the evaluation focus is on grammar and words, and the lagging teaching guiding ideology also makes writing teaching detached from real language use situations. This also affects students' overall understanding and evaluation of writing, which is not conducive to improving students' English writing ability and cultivating students' interest in writing. In the long run, students' creative thinking and practical writing ability development will be inhibited.

3. Problems in Evaluation Methods in Senior High School English Writing Teaching

The three basic elements of performance assessment are performance goals, performance tasks, and scoring rules. These three elements are interrelated and together constitute the core framework of performance assessment. However, according to the current situation of senior high school English writing teaching, the author finds that there are many problems in the application of these three elements in teaching practice, which affect the improvement of students' writing ability and the realization of deep learning.

3.1. Superficial Goals, Neglecting the Cultivation of Higher-Order Thinking

Due to the complex structure, variable development, need for in-depth subject learning, and diverse forms of expression of higher-order thinking, multiple evaluation elements and methods need to be comprehensively considered in evaluation. Delving into subject classroom teaching and understanding the characteristics, manifestations, and development process of higher-order thinking in learning activities is crucial for a comprehensive evaluation of students' higher-order thinking development. Many teachers confine their evaluation goals merely to whether students can correctly use grammatical rules, spell without errors, and have a basically complete

article structure. Although this superficial evaluation goal helps students master basic language knowledge, it lacks attention to the development of students' critical thinking, creative thinking, and logical reasoning abilities, which are higher-order thinking skills. This superficial goal setting leads to empty writing content from students, lacking depth and breadth. Under the current evaluation system, which is guided by superficial teaching goals, few assessments involve these abilities, resulting in students having few opportunities for deep thinking and innovative expression in the writing process. Students often write just to complete writing tasks rather than to express their views, solve problems, or engage in creative expression. This phenomenon is common in senior high school English writing teaching and seriously affects the improvement of students' writing ability and the cultivation of higher-order thinking.

3.2. Singular Evaluation Methods, Detached from Real-World Contexts

In current senior high school English writing teaching, evaluation methods mainly rely on traditional paper-and-pencil tests and teachers' subjective evaluations, lacking diversity and authenticity. This singular evaluation method fails to comprehensively reflect students' writing abilities and learning processes and does not stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning. For example, most teachers in English teaching adopt the grammar-translation method, translating each sentence from Chinese to English and then having students memorize them by rote. This results in uniform essay content from students. After students complete their essays, teachers conduct a one-time evaluation, ignoring the full tracking and guidance of the writing process. This evaluation method cannot timely identify problems students encounter in the writing process and provide targeted feedback, which is not conducive to the gradual improvement of students' writing abilities. Moreover, traditional evaluation methods often detach from real-world contexts, lacking an assessment of students' ability to use language in real situations. Students often face abstract topics and virtual contexts in the writing process, lacking connections with real life and social practice. This context-detached evaluation method not only fails to cultivate students' ability to solve practical problems but also fails to stimulate students' motivation and interest in learning, leading to empty and superficial writing content.

3.3. Vague Evaluation Criteria, Weakening Student Subjectivity

The vagueness of evaluation criteria is a prominent issue in senior high school English writing teaching. Many teachers mainly rely on personal experience and subjective judgment when evaluating students' writing, lacking unified and clear evaluation criteria and scoring rules. This phenomenon not only increases the arbitrariness of evaluation but also may lead to inconsistent and unstable evaluation results, seriously affecting the fairness and justice of evaluation. When teachers give evaluations based solely on their subjective impressions, students often find it difficult to obtain clear feedback and thus cannot accurately understand their strengths and weaknesses in writing and future directions for improvement. More importantly, vague evaluation criteria also weaken the subjectivity of students. Students usually can only passively receive teachers' evaluation results and lack opportunities to actively participate in the evaluation process. This one-way

evaluation model limits students' in-depth reflection and summary of their writing process, making it difficult to cultivate students' abilities to independently identify problems, self-evaluate, and self-improve. In the long run, students' interest and enthusiasm for writing may be dampened, which is not conducive to their long-term writing development. Therefore, clear, specific, and unified evaluation criteria are of great significance for improving the quality of senior high school English writing teaching and promoting students' subjectivity.

4. Conceptual Definitions

4.1. Deep Learning

The concept of deep learning was first proposed by Ference Marion and Roger Saljo in 1976. They described deep learning in their work "On Qualitative Differences in Learning: I - Outcome and Process" as a process where learners extract knowledge through reading and effectively integrate it with existing knowledge in the brain while engaging in critical recognition. [2] Under the impetus of China's educational reform and core literacy research projects, the deep integration of deep learning and core literacy has become a focal point in educational research. He Ling and Li Jiahou[3] provided an in-depth analysis and clear definition of deep learning, stating that it is a process where learners critically think about new knowledge and ideas based on understanding, integrate them into their existing cognitive structures, connect various ideas, and transfer acquired knowledge to new situations to make effective decisions and solve problems. Deep learning not only demands that students master subject knowledge but also emphasizes the cultivation of higher-order thinking abilities and comprehensive literacy, such as critical thinking, innovative thinking, and problem-solving skills.

4.2. Performance Assessment

Under the guidance of deep learning theory and in response to the new curriculum standards' call for constructing efficient and clear evaluation methods, how to achieve teaching goals through specific and explicit teaching strategies and evaluation methods has become a major challenge in the field of education. Performance assessment offers an effective solution to this challenge. The precursor of performance assessment, known as performance testing, first emerged in the field of educational psychology around the 1950s. Subsequently, educational scholars began to focus on performance assessment and provided a definition in the context of education: in a school setting, performance assessment refers to evaluating students' developmental achievements by observing their performance in completing real tasks. It is built upon a critique of traditional academic achievement tests. Performance assessment originated in the United States, and its implementation creates a real context for educators to teach theoretical knowledge and provide necessary experience to learners. Learners then apply the acquired knowledge to solve real problems and complete tasks.[4]

Definition of Performance Assessment: Performance assessment focuses on analyzing and providing feedback on students' academic performance. It helps students clarify directions for improvement based on an analysis of their learning issues and utilizes the results of performance assessment to adjust teaching practices, thereby promoting

students' comprehensive development. [5] Existing performance assessment tools include classroom learning observation forms, record sheets, portfolio assessments, evaluation scales, work scales, and PTA scales.

5. Design Principles of Performance Assessment in Senior High School English Writing Classes Based on Deep Learning Theory

5.1. Clarity

In performance assessment activities, a clear understanding of learning goals and evaluation criteria by both teachers and students is key to the effectiveness of performance assessment. Therefore, performance assessment goals should be formulated based on curriculum standards to ensure their standardization, objectivity, and consistency. Curriculum standards provide clear overall goals for teaching evaluation, guiding teachers' teaching content and avoiding randomness and one-sidedness in teaching content. At the same time, clear performance assessment goals enable teachers to transform teaching goals into learning goals that students can understand and master, helping students accurately grasp course knowledge and clearly understand how they should learn. Performance assessment should set clear and progressively increasing evaluation goals to guide students in gradually enhancing their abilities from basic to advanced levels. Each stage's goal should be specific and clear, in line with students' cognitive laws, and capable of stimulating their learning motivation. Moreover, learning goals should incorporate elements of deep thinking, encouraging students to not only acquire knowledge and skills but also to develop critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving abilities during the task completion process.

5.2. Contextuality

The most important factor in performance assessment is placing the evaluation within real or simulated real language use contexts. Teachers should create real and life-related contexts based on teaching content, allowing students to engage in authentic performance within these contexts. The design of performance tasks and problems must accurately replicate the conditions and processes students encounter when solving real-world problems. By observing students' behaviors and final outcomes in these contexts, teachers can effectively assess students' ability to transfer knowledge and solve problems. This context-based evaluation method not only stimulates students' interest in learning but also better reflects their ability to apply learned knowledge in real-life situations, thereby providing teachers with more accurate feedback to guide subsequent teaching activities.

5.3. Operability

This principle is mainly reflected in the scoring rules. Scoring rules are tools used to evaluate students' performance, providing specific descriptions of the expected performance levels related to learning elements. As an evaluation tool, a scoring rule comprises elements such as goals, knowledge, levels, and exemplars. In writing teaching practice, there are two common forms of scoring rules: checklists and evaluation scales. The key to writing performance assessment is to develop scoring rules tailored to different writing activities and to use these targeted and operable rules for timely

evaluation and feedback. Operability is manifested in two aspects: first, it is targeted, meaning that a specific scoring rule cannot be used to evaluate all types of writing; the use of scoring rules must be adapted to different writing genres, tasks, and student conditions. Second, it is process-oriented, as the application of scoring rules runs throughout the entire writing teaching process, providing clear evaluation criteria for students' planning, drafting, and revising stages.

6. Implementation of Performance Assessment in Senior High School English Writing Classes Based on Deep Learning Theory

6.1. Determine Performance Goals Based on Writing Task Contexts and Student Conditions

The first step in designing and using writing performance assessment tools is to establish focused performance goals. Goals convey expectations, informing students at the outset what they "should be able to do" after completing the writing learning experience, that is, to determine the expected outcomes. Expected outcomes are primarily based on the requirements of the curriculum standards, the writing unit tasks in the textbooks, and then combined with specific writing task contexts, genre types, and student conditions. The creation of writing task contexts is crucial, as it encompasses the basic elements of writing teaching, such as the purpose of writing, genre requirements, and reader awareness, which directly clarify the tasks that need to be accomplished in this writing learning session. Moreover, the writing task context implicitly contains the requirements of the curriculum standards and the textbook writing units, and also hints at the difficulties students may encounter in completing this writing task. The focused performance goals aim to address these difficulties, enabling students to develop core writing abilities and meet the requirements of the textbooks and curriculum standards. Teachers, taking into account the curriculum standards, textbook unit requirements, writing task contexts, and student conditions, determine two focused performance goals: first, to accurately express the purpose and content of writing based on the characteristics of the writing audience; and second, to use appropriate and polite language.

6.2. Design Contextualized Performance Tasks Around Writing Learning Elements

The second step in designing and using writing performance assessment tools is to design contextualized performance tasks around writing learning elements. Performance tasks require students to apply their learned content to solve challenges that are close to real-world situations, demonstrating their understanding and transfer of writing learning elements and content. Contextualized performance tasks aim to solve problems and complete challenging tasks to achieve performance goals, thus focusing on the entire problem-solving process of students. In the context of writing teaching, this means paying attention to how students "solve problems" at each stage of the writing process and "how well the problems are solved." Performance assessment tasks must be embedded in writing teaching activities, making them part of the teaching activities, with the use of evaluation tools also serving as a performance task.

6.3. Decompose Writing Learning Elements to Develop Scoring Rules

The third key step in designing and using writing performance assessment tools is to develop and apply operable scoring rules. The process of developing scoring rules involves the continuous decomposition of writing learning elements. Through scoring rules, students can further clarify "what it means to achieve the goal" and "how far they are from achieving the goal." Therefore, scoring rules should decompose writing learning elements and describe different levels of student performance, specifying what the performance at each level looks like. Developing operable scoring rules around learning elements should consider students' existing writing experience and level while decomposing the elements.

6.4. Monitor and Remedy Student Performance Using Scoring Rules

The fourth key step in designing and using writing performance assessment tools is to monitor student performance using scoring rules, allowing students to adjust their writing learning in a timely manner, improve the quality of their task performance, and narrow the gap to achieve the goal. Moreover, the process of using scoring rules is also a process for students to internalize the rules, further understand the performance goals, and gain a deeper understanding of the core knowledge and concepts they need to learn. This process guides students in reflecting on their performance and transferring these skills to future writing learning, thereby developing writing abilities. Using scoring rules to monitor and remedy performance should involve multiple evaluation subjects. Evaluation subjects can include students themselves, peers, teachers, parents, and specialized personnel from society, and can also utilize the internet to involve more people in monitoring and evaluation. Students can use scoring rules for peer evaluation, exchange evaluation results, and modify areas where they fall short. Teachers can combine the specific content of the scoring rules to provide students with descriptive feedback and interpretive evaluative comments, clearly pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of students' writing performance. This allows students to compare their current performance with the desired outcome, promoting writing learning. After receiving feedback from multiple sources, students can further understand what knowledge is needed to complete the performance task and reflect on their own performance, remediating their deficiencies.

7. Summary

In senior high school English writing instruction, performance assessment provides an effective pathway for promoting students' deep learning capabilities by constructing a learning ecology that is authentic, interactive, and reflective. Unlike traditional error-focused teaching that offers superficial feedback, performance assessment designs writing tasks within real-world contexts, guiding students to transform language knowledge into the ability to solve practical problems. During the task implementation process, students engage in multi-dimensional evaluation mechanisms - including self-diagnosis based on rubrics and peer evaluation, as well as formative feedback provided by teachers - gradually developing the ability to critically analyze writing quality. This dynamic evaluation system not

only makes evaluation criteria visible but also promotes a "writing - evaluation - reflection - reconstruction" cycle, encouraging students to deeply examine core writing elements such as language logic, genre characteristics, and reader awareness. As learners actively apply evaluation criteria to reflect on their own work, their cognitive activities shift from passive reception to active construction. While enhancing language accuracy, students also cultivate metacognitive strategies and creative expression abilities. This evaluation-driven teaching paradigm ultimately transforms writing classrooms into deep learning spaces that foster higher-order thinking and knowledge transfer, promoting students' deep learning capabilities.

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