

Exploration on Accompanying Assessment of College English Teaching under the Background of Digital Empowerment

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Abstract: *In the era of the wide application of digital information technology in the field of education, the assessment model of English teaching is undergoing changes from Assessment of Learning to Assessment for Learning accordingly. The new form of assessment called accompanying assessment is put forward by some scholars recently. This paper analyzes the current situation of accompanying assessment, then attempts to design an accompanying assessment framework for college English teaching under the background of digital empowerment, and plans to apply it in future college English teaching.*

Keywords: *accompanying assessment, college English teaching and learning, digital empowerment*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of information technology has had a profound impact on education and teaching. With information technology, people gain new abilities and ways to participate and express themselves in a networked society. This can be called digital empowerment, which is not a direct consequence of having and using technical facilities, but a multi-phased process to gain better networking, communication and cooperation opportunities, and to increase competence of individuals and communities to act as influential participants in the information society. Digital empowerment refers to empowering specific people with digital tools such as big data, mobile internet and artificial intelligence, so that they can acquire corresponding life skills and survival capability.

Digital technology is not only greatly changing almost all aspects of people's lives, but also altering work content and working methods of higher education. As far as college English teaching is concerned, modern information technology promotes changes in teaching evaluation as well as modernizes and facilitates teaching methods. According to the research results of evaluation conducted by the expert Stiggins, the time teachers spent on evaluation and related activities is about one-third or even half of their daily teaching. It can be seen that evaluation is a very important part of teaching ^[1]. Therefore, in this context, researchers have begun to attempt to apply accompanying assessment to the reform of education and teaching with the help of digital empowerment.

2. Changes in teaching evaluation

American curriculum theory expert Ralph Tyler pointed out in curriculum research that evaluation, as a process of judging degree of achievement of educational goals, requires evaluators to determine behavioral evidence that is consistent with educational goals, and to use corresponding procedures to achieve specific processes ^[2]. Through evaluation, educators can collect and analyze learners' learning information, judge their learning status, and make educational decisions in a targeted manner. Currently, the field of educational evaluation is undergoing a paradigm shift, with evaluation as an important link in curriculum teaching and learning, the role of evaluation is no longer limited to making judgments on students' learning results, but more importantly, it is to help students achieve learning goals and promote self-development through evaluation. In this context, many aspects of teaching evaluation are also undergoing changes, such as forms of assessment, concept of assessment, assessment methods, and assessment contents.

2.1 The form of assessment

As one form of assessment, accompanying assessment has been applied in teaching recently. Initially, accompanying assessment originated from Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in bioengineering and other fields. It is an evaluation tool for testing the greenness of products, with the core of tracking and evaluating the entire process of materials, production, and disposal of a certain product. In this process, Life Cycle Assessment usually appears in the form of “accompanying” or “accompanying by”, which derives the concept of “accompanying evaluation”. With the quick development of digital technology and big data, digital technology has been deeply integrated with humanities and education, and provides advanced methods and tools for the innovative development of humanities, including foreign language discipline [3]. The application of the accompanying evaluation concept in teaching evaluation can not only effectively track and obtain learning data such as students’ behavioral performance, but also provide targeted, clear, and personalized guidance for students’ current and next stage of learning. Students can adjust their learning status, attitude, strategies, methods, etc. in a timely manner based on these guidance suggestions, and teachers can also make real-time adjustments to teaching accordingly. In the context of digital technology empowering foreign language discipline, the concept of Life Cycle Assessment has been applied to the classroom assessment of English teaching to promote students’ learning. Such assessment is called accompanying assessment. Accompanying assessment is an evaluation method aimed at promoting students’ learning and personal development. In the process of using modern digital technology to assess and evaluate students, teachers should summarize and study the collected student data, determine where to start getting involved in students’ learning activities, and provide a foundation for developmental evaluation. Accompanying assessment pays attention to guidance and feedback effect of data on the teaching process, promoting transformation of evaluation from stage-based static evaluation to dynamic overall process evaluation.

2.2 The concept of accompanying assessment

The concept of evaluation is now shifting from emphasizing students’ learning results to attaching great importance to learning process and promoting learning, which can be called Assessment for Learning [4]. According to Hargreaves’ [4], assessment for learning can be described under six summary definitions. The first group of definitions of Assessment for learning means monitoring pupils’ performance against targets or objectives. The second one means using assessment to inform next steps in teaching and learning. The third one means teachers give feedback for improvement. The fourth definition of assessment for learning is that teachers learn about students’ learning. The fifth one means children take some control of their own learning and assessment. The final definition of assessment for learning is defined as turning assessment into a learning event. With the continuous integration of digital technology and teaching, the evaluation of college English teaching is more and more emphasizing the subjectivity of students in teaching, and the goal is also increasingly to promote students’ improvement and development. In order to promote learners’ self-development, learner’s role in evaluation is emphasized in the process of Assessment for Learning. The key to using evaluation to guide learning is for learners to become evaluators of self-learning. By utilizing evaluation feedback information, learners can make self-adjustment, self-adaptation, and make changes to their learning plans, integrate evaluation into their learning process. It is transformation of evaluation concept from Of Learning to For Learning.

2.3 Framework of accompanying assessment

Accompanying assessment is a new form of assessment for learning. Guided by relevant theoretical knowledge and combined with teaching evaluation practices, researchers have proposed rules and strategies for conducting accompanying assessment. This article summarizes and organizes them which help guide design of an accompanying assessment framework. In 2002, scholars Black and Wiliam, along with their leading Assessment Reform Group, defined “Assessment for Learning” as the process of providing evidence and interpretation for students and teachers to understand their current learning status, learning goals, and how to achieve these goals through assessment. This concept is gradually being widely used, and the form of evaluation is gradually shifting from summative evaluation to formative evaluation. Based on constructivist theory, Black et al. [5] and Black & Wiliam [6] explored the theory and practice of formative assessment, published research results on assessment for learning in the classroom, distinguished between Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning, emphasized the importance on evaluation in the learning process, and emphasized the role of feedback in promoting learning. Broadfoot et al. [7] proposed 10 principles for Assessment for Learning to guide classroom practice. Due to the different evaluation elements proposed by researchers in different disciplinary fields for different

evaluation methods and based on the above theories and research practices related to the accompanying assessment of promoting learning, this article combines existing research results on accompanying assessment and the impact of digital technology on teaching evaluation forms and intends to design an accompanying assessment framework for college English teaching, as shown in Figure 1 which references Pan Xue's [8].

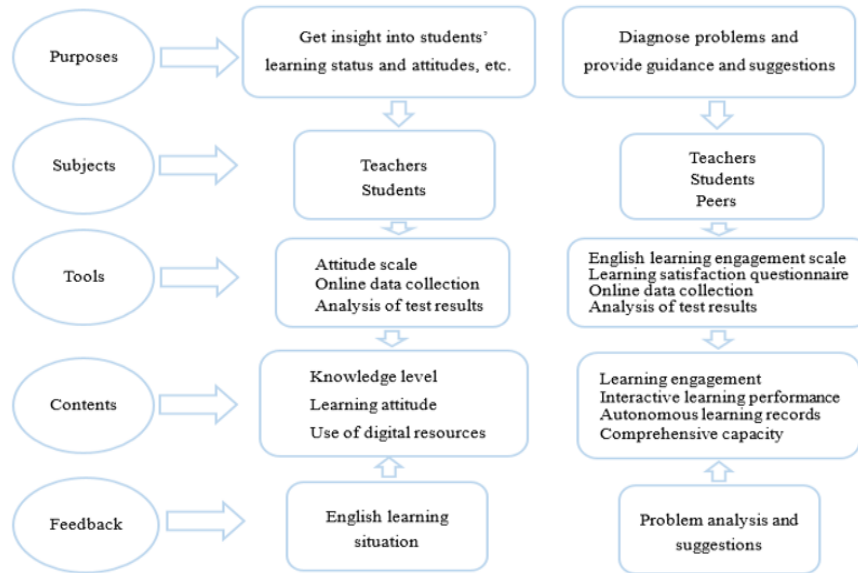


Figure 1: Accompanying assessment framework for college English teaching and learning in the context of digital empowerment

It can be clearly seen from the Figure 1 that accompanying assessment framework for college English teaching and learning in the context of digital empowerment consists of five components:

The first one is purpose of assessment which means getting to know students' college English learning status and attitudes, etc.

Second, subjects include teachers, students and peers who participate in the assessment.

Third, tools mean what kind of methods the subjects will use in accompanying assessment. Conducting a systematic evaluation of effectiveness of information-based foreign language teaching includes determining the evaluation content and standards, selecting appropriate evaluation methods, and making teaching adjustments based on the evaluation. For example, for online learning, on the one hand, technology can be used to obtain learning data for analysis of learners. On the other hand, learning effectiveness can be evaluated through learning journals and learners' profiles [9]. Minaei-Bidgol & Kortemeyer [10] conducted an in-depth analysis of the data generated in online learning systems to diagnose students' mastery of professional knowledge and establish connections with problem-solving methods, guiding teacher intervention, problem-solving counseling, etc. Pedro et al. [11], with the goal of improving students' learning achievement, tracked their online learning interaction behavior, analyzed their learning interests and activity participation, and intervened accordingly in their learning. In this accompanying assessment framework, some specific tools or methods like attitude scale, online data collection, English learning engagement scale, learning satisfaction questionnaire will be used to collect and analyze students' test results, learning attitudes, learning participation, learning satisfaction, interactive learning performance, autonomous learning records, all-round abilities and so on.

Fourth, contents of accompanying assessment are of great importance. Assessment for learning emphasizes checking learners' comprehensive qualities. It is an activity in which teachers continuously diagnose students' needs, adjust teaching plans, and provide feedback to students throughout the entire teaching process, in order to promote the improvement of teaching quality [12]. The contents of accompanying assessment are closely related to the learning objectives, which can promote students towards their expected goals, and provide motivation for moving forward and striving in a targeted direction. Based on Stiggins' [12], some scholars provided a detailed explanation of the contents which pay more attention to tracking the progress and learning needs of each student in addition to evaluating their application abilities and levels in key concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Accompanying assessment provides students with feedback for further learning, teachers can obtain necessary

information about teaching from results of the assessment, then adjust and improve their teaching plan in order to implement differentiated teaching that is in line with individual development of the students. Minaei-Bidgol & Kortemeyer^[10], Pedro et al.^[11], Li Feng & Wang Jiqing^[13] and Shang Chaowang et al.^[14] advocate the use of digital technology to track and collect data from students during their learning process, and then analyze and provide feedback on them.

Finally, feedback is an indispensable and important part, which needs to be provided throughout the whole accompanying assessment. Cowan^[15] claims that feedback must enable the student to make evaluation and improvement in the learning and help students to develop the skill in meeting the learning outputs. The teacher will analyze the problems presented by students in the online learning process, provide targeted, comprehensive and timely feedback on the results, and then provide guidance and suggestions for them.

3. Conclusion

This paper firstly explores the form of assessment and the concept of accompanying assessment. Then, based on constructivist theory, evaluation theory, and drawing on achievements of the other researchers, the paper designs the framework of accompanying assessment which is made up of five components. Afterwards, each of the components is explained. In the future, this accompanying assessment framework will be applied in the evaluation practice of college English teaching to verify its feasibility and correct its potential shortcomings.

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