

# Formative Assessment in College English Teaching

**Xuan Zhang**

Tianjin College, University of Science and Technology Beijing, Tianjin 301811

---

**Abstract:** In today's society, with the accelerating process of globalization, the demand for talents is increasingly high. Therefore, all countries attach great importance to education reform and development, especially in the field of higher education. The enrollment scale of Chinese colleges and universities is expanding year by year, and the employment pressure faced by college students after graduation is increasing day by day. In order to improve the comprehensive quality of students and meet the employment requirements of the society, many colleges and universities begin to pay attention to the cultivation of students' independent learning ability and innovative spirit, including formative evaluation. This paper discusses how to carry out formative assessment effectively, and puts forward corresponding suggestions based on the actual situation, hoping to help teachers better understand and apply formative assessment and promote the all-round development of students.

**Keywords:** College English; Teaching; Formative evaluation; Strategy

---

## **Fund Project:**

Complete type of project: National Foreign language teaching and research project of Foreign Teachers Club

A Study on Intercultural Education and Intercultural Competence Cultivation -- Focusing on Multilingual Intercultural Communication Courses, No. : 2022TJ0007

At present, the communication between Chinese economy, culture and other fields and other countries in the world is also becoming more frequent. Therefore, cultivating talents with international vision and intercultural communication ability has become one of the important goals of higher education. As an indispensable part of higher education, college English courses should not only impart language knowledge and skills, but also pay more attention to the improvement of students' comprehensive quality and the cultivation of independent learning ability.

## **1. Analysis of the current situation of Formative assessment in college English teaching**

At present, the implementation of formative assessment in college English teaching has become a trend. Many colleges and universities have incorporated formative evaluation into student grades to motivate teachers to pay more attention to the comprehensive and detailed observation and evaluation of students' learning process. At the same time, it also provides students with more opportunities to participate in classroom activities and self-reflection and regulation. However, we must admit that formative assessment still faces some difficulties and challenges in college English teaching in our country. The concrete performance is as follows: First, some schools have not established a complete formative evaluation system. Although some schools have begun to attach importance to and try to use formative assessment to assess students' language ability, these efforts often have little effect due to the lack of systematic design and standardized operation procedures. In addition, there are also some schools that only stay on the simple level of formulating a simple curriculum test or submitting an essay, and cannot really play their due role. Secondly, many teachers are not clear about how to carry out formative assessment. They generally believe that formative assessment can be completed as long as students are assigned a certain amount of homework or tasks, while ignoring individual differences and actual needs of students. In this way, it is not only difficult to achieve the desired effect, but may frustrate students' enthusiasm and self-confidence. Finally, students' attitudes towards formative assessment also need to be paid attention to. On the one hand, a considerable number of students pay too much attention to the reconstruction evaluation result, even regard it as the only criterion; On the other hand, many students are afraid to participate in extracurricular activities or give speeches because they are afraid of

not doing well enough. All these phenomena indicate that the understanding and understanding of formative evaluation among Chinese college students still need to be further strengthened<sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2. Problems in Formative assessment in college English teaching**

### **2.1 Insufficient understanding of formative evaluation**

Many teachers and students still regard the final assessment as the only way of assessment, ignoring the important role of formative assessment. At the same time, due to the lack of relevant theoretical guidance and improper implementation methods, the formative evaluation effect is not good.

### **2.2 Single and one-sided evaluation content**

At present, the formative evaluation adopted by most colleges and universities mainly includes classroom performance (such as attendance, participation, etc.), homework completion (such as after-class exercises, reading notes, etc.), oral test and other indicators. Although these indicators can reflect the learning state and ability level to a certain extent, but it is difficult to measure the comprehensive language application ability of students.

### **2.3 Single evaluation subject**

In the existing formative evaluation system, there is usually only one evaluation subject, teachers, and other diversified evaluation subjects, such as classmates, parents, peers, etc., are not introduced. This kind of evaluation mode is easy to make students have dependence psychology, which is not conducive to their independent development and self-reflection.

### **2.4 Simple and lagging evaluation methods**

With the continuous progress of information technology, more and more educators begin to pay attention to and try to use new media tools to assist teaching. However, in the current formative evaluation system, few schools will use modern network platforms or mobile APP software for real-time monitoring and feedback, unable to obtain students' learning data in time, and therefore unable to give corresponding incentives or punishments in time. In this way, not only the evaluation efficiency is reduced, but also the accuracy and reliability of evaluation results are affected<sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, the above problems restrict the effective play of formative assessment function in college English teaching, and it is necessary to pay enough attention to and take practical solutions.

## **3. Improvement strategies of Formative assessment in College English teaching**

### **3.1 Improve the evaluation system**

In the course of college English teaching, it is necessary to establish a complete and scientific evaluation system in order to realize the formative evaluation. First of all, in order to improve the quality of college English teaching, we must attach importance to and actively explore diversified formative evaluation models, and constantly improve the evaluation system and related mechanisms, so as to promote the comprehensive improvement of students' language ability. Therefore, the school should set up a special evaluation agency or department to take charge of this work, to ensure that the evaluation work can be carried out orderly; Secondly, both teachers and students should have a clear understanding of their own learning in school, and they should take corresponding measures to solve their own problems. Finally, schools can encourage students to actively participate in formative evaluation activities by developing some reward and punishment mechanisms. In addition, in order to better play the role of formative assessment, we need to pay attention to the following points: First, the content of assessment should be diversified, not limited to language knowledge, but should be more long-term, focusing on the cultivation of students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as intercultural communication awareness and ability; Second, the evaluation forms should be diversified. In addition to the traditional written test, oral test, group discussion, role playing and other forms can be adopted to enable students to experience various types of tasks as much as possible, so as to comprehensively improve their comprehensive quality. Third, the evaluation subject should be diversified, not only by the teacher alone to complete, mutual evaluation among students, self-evaluation is also a very important link, which can not only reduce the burden of teachers, but also let students learn to objectively view the advantages and disadvantages of others, learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses, common progress.

### **3.2 Optimize the evaluation environment**

In the traditional final assessment model, both students and teachers put a lot of time and energy into the preparation for the final exam. On the other hand, in the formative assessment model, the proportion of ordinary grades in addition to the final exams gradually increases, which means that students need to spend more time and energy to complete various tasks. Therefore, in order to better promote the implementation of formative assessment, we suggest that schools should strengthen the construction and management of learning places such as classrooms and libraries, and provide corresponding facilities and equipment support. At the same time,

schools can also carry out various forms of cultural activities or associations to enrich students' campus life, so as to reduce their pressure to participate in the evaluation. In addition, as an important part of the evaluation process, the improvement of teachers' own quality and ability is also crucial. On the one hand, teachers should constantly improve their professional quality, master a more comprehensive and systematic knowledge of educational theories; On the other hand, teachers should also actively participate in various training and seminars and learn from advanced experience and practices of other universities, so as to guide students to self-reflection and correction more effectively [3].

### **3.3 Innovative evaluation methods**

On the basis of traditional terminal evaluation, formative evaluation should be carried out in various forms. In order to promote the all-round development of students, we should actively explore and establish a diversified evaluation system which takes formative evaluation as the leading and combines various evaluation methods. For example, students' self-evaluation, peer evaluation and teachers' comments can be used to get a comprehensive understanding of students' learning. At the same time, modern information technology means, such as network autonomous learning platform or mobile phone APP software, can be used to provide students with more diversified learning resources and ways, stimulate their interest in learning and improve their practical application ability. In addition, quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment can also be combined in order to more objectively reflect the actual level and development potential of students. In short, in order to make formative evaluation really play a role, it is necessary to constantly explore new evaluation models and methods, so as to realize the separation of teaching and testing, promote students' active participation in the learning process, enhance their self-reflection awareness and teamwork spirit, and finally achieve the goal of cultivating high-quality talents with international vision and cross-cultural communication ability.

## **4. Conclusion**

To sum up, formative evaluation can help teachers better grasp students' learning status and progress, timely adjust their teaching content and methods, so that every student has the opportunity to participate in classroom activities and improve their comprehensive quality level such as language application ability, independent learning ability, cooperation and communication ability. At the same time, it can also promote students' self-reflection, cultivate their good learning attitude and habits, so as to achieve better results. Therefore, we believe that formative assessment should be widely promoted and applied in college English teaching practice in the future, so as to achieve the best teaching results.

## **References:**

- [1] Jin Song. Exploration and Practice of Formative Evaluation of College English Curriculum in Applied Universities [J]. English Abroad, 2022(12):172-173.
- [2] Li Fangfang. Application Strategies of Formative Assessment in College English Teaching in the context of Information Technology [J]. University, 2022(11):26-29.
- [3] Li Siyan. The Application of Formative Evaluation Model for College English Writing [J]. English Abroad, 2022(11):87-88.