

Observation and Analysis of High School English Writing Class: from The Perspective of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

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Abstract:

Writing, as a way of language output, can reflect students' comprehensive English ability. The article "How to Observe Classes from Bloom's Classification of Educational Objectives Observation Perspective - Taking Six High School English Classes as an Example" observes six high school English reading classes and to see whether their teaching links coincide with the cognitive process dimension in Bloom's Classification of Educational Objectives theory. As a result, the study found that the most missing link was application, followed by evaluation, and finally analysis and creation. Therefore, this study hopes to analyze whether the most missing links are the same and whether the cognitive process dimension goals in Bloom's taxonomy of educational goals are different for each type of class through the observation of six high school English writing classes in the hope of providing some suggestions for solving the problem of the current state of writing teaching and learning in the light of this theory.

Keywords:

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Writing Instruction, Classroom Analysis, Critical Thinking Skills

1. Introduction

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives low-level objectives include memorization/recall, comprehension, and application; high-level objectives include analysis, evaluation, and creativity. Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Revised) - Learning and Teaching and Their Assessment in Taxonomic Perspective includes four types of knowledge and six levels of cognitive processes, reflecting an examination of the consistency of objectives, instruction and assessment. Meanwhile, the two-dimensional classification framework constructed by Bloom's theory of classification of educational objectives provides us with operational theoretical and practical bases for formulating various types of educational and teaching objectives.

In anticipation of combining the theory, this dissertation conducts classroom observation of a high school writing class to explore whether the teaching sessions coincide with the cognitive process dimension in Bloom's theory of classification of educational objectives, with a view to providing some references to today's writing teaching.[1]

2. Bloom's Theory of Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

In 1956, B. S. Bloom, edited with M. D. Engelhardt, E. J. Furst, W. H Hill, and D. R. Krathwohl and others, wrote and published the book, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*, which proposed a system of classifying educational objectives. Bloom and other educators (1956) categorized educational objectives into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, and in 1964, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia added a system of educational objectives for the affective domain. In 1972, Simpson proposed a system of goals for the motor skills domain, which was revised in 2001 by Lorin Anderson, a student of Bloom's, and others.[2] In Bloom's theory of classification of educational objectives, the classification of educational objectives in the cognitive domain is a quite important part, which is divided into: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. Taking Ms. Wu Tianyan's writing topic Traditional Chinese Festival in Compositions as an example, it is categorized according to Bloom's cognitive process dimensions as follows Table 1:

Table 1. Bloom revised the six categories of cognitive processes and related cognitive processes.

Process Categories	Examples of cognitive process
Memory	Recall the date of the festival;Decide which holiday it is according to custom
Understand	Understand the special meanings implied by festivals such as the Mid-Autumn Festival represents reunion
Apply	Use new phrases and grammar to form sentences
Analysis	Distinguish and compare sentence composition, syntactic Structure; Analyze composition elements
Evaluation	Evaluate the logic of sentences and vocabulary expressions of model essays or companion compositions
Creation	Write about related topics based on the previous content

3. The Current Situation of English Writing Teaching

3.1. Teachers' Inattention to Writing Instruction

In the actual teaching process, some English teachers focus on reading teaching, vocabulary teaching, grammar teaching, and listening teaching, thus neglecting writing teaching. Although students are assigned to write English essays after class, there is no detailed instruction or systematic English writing training. When coping with exams, students are often made to memorize a lot of transitional sentences, English sentence templates, and a lot of advanced vocabulary for the purpose of scoring high marks. There are also some teachers who gradually neglect the teaching of English writing in their teaching, failing to apply the most advanced teaching means and methods, and the traditional teaching methods can no longer satisfy the students' interest in learning. Therefore, in order to fundamentally improve the teaching level of English composition, it is necessary to focus on systematic English composition writing training.[3]

3.2. Low interest in student writing

Under the pressure of teaching schedule, many English teachers will simply explain the basic skills of English writing to students and encourage them to memorize the corresponding model essays, neglecting the development of students' creative and critical thinking and the cultivation of core literacy. Writing tasks are usually after-school assignments given to students by their teachers, and students have an aversion to after-school assignments, coupled with the fact that they are writing in English, they are more tired of it and only want to scribble to finish the task, which is even more detrimental to the improvement of English writing ability. In addition, some rural and remote areas, the professional development of English teachers is not too good, and they may do not update their teaching theories, teaching methods, so that the writing class may arise a phenomenon: given a topic, and the students began to write the whole class. The teacher do not to diversify the thinking of the students, which may results in low motivation for students to write, and aversion to the English writing class.[4]

3.3. Less daily practice

With the implementation of the new curriculum reform policy, the improvement of English writing ability has gradually become the focus of English education in high school, but through the observation of teaching materials, it is found that the teaching content of English compositions is arranged in the last part of each unit, and there is a big difference between the theme of compositions and the content of the unit, and the difficulty is far beyond the actual level of the students in high school, which leads to the negative learning mood of the students. With the limited time of the English course, many teachers cancel the design of the writing course in order to complete the teaching task as soon as possible, resulting in students not having many opportunities for writing practice, which is not conducive to the improvement of high school students' English writing ability.[5]

3.4. A single approach to evaluation

Although high school English teachers will review students' English compositions in a timely manner, the focus of teachers in the review process is often on grammar and vocabulary use, and not enough attention is paid to the logic and structure of the essay. In the form of evaluation, only a corresponding score is given, without relevant comments and explanations. This leads students to believe that their essays have no problems other than grammar and vocabulary, and that the same logical and structural problems will reoccur during the examination, which affects the overall performance.

To address these problems, this study observes six high school English writing classroom videos provided online after the new curriculum reform, and observes the high school English writing classroom with Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Theory as a guide, with a view to discovering the problems and analyzing the causes of such phenomena. If the problem is not solved, the problem will be there eventually, so in the latter part of the article, suggestions will be given on this issue.[6]

4. Classroom Subject Analysis and Observation

4.1. Observation subjects

This time, we mainly observed the English writing videos of six high school online available after the new curriculum reform in 2017. The observer mainly include Hui Hongdan of Tiren Middle School in Daqing City, Heilongjiang Province, Wu Tianyan of Wanning Affiliated High School of Beijing Normal University, and Li Xue of Nanjing University Affiliated High School. Teacher Xu Jie and Teacher Zhao Zhimin of the 15th National High School English Teachers' Teaching Competition come from Jiangsu and Heilongjiang, respectively. The Table 2 below shows the teacher and writing topics observed in class

Table 2. *Teachers and Topics.*

Teachers	Topics
Hui Hongdan	Traditional Chinese Festival in Compositions
Wu Tianyan	How to Report an Activity
Li Xue	Story Continuation Writing
Li Xue	How to Write an Application Letter
Xu Jie	Write a Letter of Advice
Zhao Zhimin	Writing about a Family Memory

4.2. Classroom Analysis

Teaching process analysis

Ms. Hui Hongdan has a smile on her face, a strong affinity, and create a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom. Ms. Hui first introduced the class with three festivals, allowing students to learn about the dates, origins, meanings, and customs of the festivals by filling in the vacant words of the text through listening, and finally assign writing task. In the process, she kept inputting some new phrases and sentence structures, and let students make sentences and try to expand their vocabulary. When students are writing, Ms. Hui reminded them to pay attention to the transitions between sentences, logic and so on, by dialoguing with a "virtual student".[7]

Ms. Wu Tianyan introduced the class by analyzing the essay of the college entrance examination, after which she presented a model essay for students to discover the structure and features contained in a report. After that, she presented a second article for students to compare and contrast, analyze the sentences and summarize its structure. The teaching of writing becomes more concrete in the comparison of the articles, which is conducive to students understanding and learning. On this basis, students act positively, which is beneficial to classroom performance. When the teacher projects students' compositions on the podium, she divides the sentences with a red pen, which is easy to view and modify their mistakes in a clear and concise way.

Ms. Li Xue introduced the topic with a picture of a post-it note to attract students' interest in reading the text and to sort out the content to pave the way for the writing. Ms. Li's teaching features logical, especially when teaching a passage. Firstly she explain the main plot of the whole passage, and then gradually summarize one by one to draw out the Tips for writing, instead of presenting the all TIPS to the students directly, which is somewhat similar to deduction in this process. Finally, writing will be easier after students have mastered the Tips. In such circumstance, students have a deeper understanding of the content and techniques of writing, which helps to improve their writing skills. According to my apprenticeship in secondary schools, I learned that writing after reading a short passage is a new type of questions in the college entrance examination, which has been a knotty problem for students. It tests students' comprehensive ability, both reading-input ability and writing-output ability,

and promotes the development of students' core literacy in English. Regarding the question of “how to teach reading and writing”, a large number of teachers get used to carried out a lot of teaching and research activities on this topic in order to improve students' comprehensive ability. As a young teacher, Ms. Li Xue used many new teaching theories and methods throughout the lesson, such as the task-based teaching method, Bloom's theory of educational objectives, and the constructivism learning theory, and so on.[8]

Ms. Li Xue's pronunciation is fluent and accurate, which is conducive to students' phonological learning. Ms. Li's teaching features logical, especially in the explanation of the passage. Firstly explain the main plot of the whole passage, and then gradually summarize one by one to lead to the writing Tips. Ms. Li allows students to compare and contrast the synonymous sentences, emphasizing the formal characteristics of the application letter.

Ms. Xu Jie used the picture of “The Miracles of the Namiya General Store” to introduce the writing topic “How to ease the relationship between parents and children”. Students need to fill in the text of how to ease the relationship between children and parents by listening, discuss “How to ease the relationship between parents and children” in small groups, and draw a conclusion. After that, teachers will analyze the model text, summarize the sentence expressions and explain the structure of the essay.

Ms. Zhao Zhimin firstly introduces the class with pictures to attract students' interest and make them recall their own memories about their family members. The novelty of Ms. Zhao's class is that she will present an outline for students to analyze the five elements of an essay (who, when, where, what, why). Students sort through what they are about to write and fill out an outline of their essay with clear writing ideas.[9]

Comparison of the Cognitive Dimensional Processes of Bloom's Theory of Educational Objectives for Six Video Lessons

The author believes that Bloom's classification system of educational objectives has covered the basic skills needed for writing, which include recognizing and memorizing vocabulary and content elements; understanding the topic of writing; applying vocabulary and grammar to form words and sentences; analyzing the five elements of compositions and their structure; students' self-assessment and mutual assessment; and finally, teachers' feedback and correction. The following is the compliance of each teacher's teaching sessions with the cognitive process dimension of Bloom's theory of educational objectives. The results shows in Table 3:

Table 3. Correspondence between the teaching process of each teacher and the cognitive process dimension in Bloom's educational goal classification theory.

Bloom's Goal Categorization Cognitive Process Dimensions	Huihongdan	Wu Tianyan	Li Xue	Li Xue	Xu Jie	Zhao Zhimin
Memories/recollections	√		√	√		√
Understandings	√	√	√	√	√	√
Appliance	√	√				
Analyze	√	√	√	√	√	√
Estimation	√	√	√	√	√	√
Creation	√		√	√	√	√

The General High School-English Curriculum Standard (2017 Edition Revised in 2020) states that the core literacy of the English subject includes language proficiency, cultural awareness, quality of thinking, and learning ability. Thinking quality refers to the ability and level of thinking expressed in terms of logic, criticality and creativity. With the in-depth development of education reform, the cultivation of critical thinking and creative thinking is getting more and more attention. Teachers pay more attention to cultivating students' critical thinking ability via designing teaching activities to help train students' critical thinking, so that they can look at things critically, think independently, and have their own thoughts and opinions.

In most of the writing classes, usually the teacher first introduces the class with topics and pictures related to the writing task, presents the model text in the form of listening to fill in the blanks, after that analyzes the syntactic structure, thinking logic, and writing points of the model text, and finally guide students writing. As can be seen from the figure, each teacher's teaching process vary in terms of their conformity with the cognitive process dimension of Bloom's classification theory of educational objectives. Most of them lack of application, followed by comprehension and finally creation. Writing, as a output language, is an examination of comprehensive ability. Lack of application is because in daily teaching, students have already accumulated material and apply less of the words and grammar taught by the teacher in this class. And most of the vocabulary and syntax used is original to the learner.

There is a lack of creativity in Ms. Wu's class. From what we've seen, eighty percent of the example sentences presented by the students, were made initially by the teacher during the class. And the students did not think deeply about the writing task, they were not generating their own ideas, not reorganizing their own language and create something new. To a certain extent, the cultivation of students' creative thinking, critical thinking is neglected, which is not conducive to independent thinking and the development of students' divergent thinking.[10]

On Ms. Li Xue's class, we have seen that there are insufficient application sessions. Throughout the lesson, Ms. Li is very logical and focuses on developing students' critical thinking skills, and her teaching focuses on teaching students how to think about an essay topic. Story writing, based on a given topic or scene, is a frequently tested essay type in the college entrance examination. However, it is not an easy job. By leading students to analyze the previous text and summarize its framework, Mr. Li allows students to think about this type of essay writing topic, brainstorm about what might happen afterwards, and generate some writing ideas, which reduces the difficulty of reading and writing, thus raising students' interest on writing. Afterward, when students encounter that type of essay, they will not be at a loss, but will be able to sort out the plot of the essay, develop the logic of the story, and construct new ideas.

5. Suggestions

5.1. Focusing on the development of students' critical thinking skills under the guide of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives

Combined with Bloom's theory of categorizing educational goals, it can be divided into lower-order thinking and higher-order thinking. For teachers who want to cultivate students' thinking quality in writing but lack the corresponding theoretical framework and theoretical knowledge, they should learn to study and excavate the thinking components embedded in writing pedagogies and teaching modes, and

combine them with their own classroom situation and classroom teaching to build a localized writing teaching framework guided by the quality of thinking, and to stimulate students' different thinking activities, such as understanding, analyzing, comparing, evaluating, selecting, reasoning, synthesizing, creating, etc., in a gradual manner in the teaching framework, Evaluating, choosing, reasoning, synthesizing, creating and other different thinking activities in the teaching framework to train students' thinking ability.

5.2. Enriching teaching forms and cultivating students' interest in writing

The tedious style of English composition teaching makes students feel bored coupled with the relatively boring teaching content of English writing, the students themselves are not interested in learning, and in the long run the students' enthusiasm for learning will gradually fade away. As a high school English teaching teacher, in order to enhance students' motivation to learn English writing, we need to improve and innovate the teaching methods so that students can have a better learning experience. For example, in the teaching of English composition, you can use group cooperation, respectively, to give each group a theme, let them discuss to determine their own ideas and directions, and then each person to write a theme-related articles, in the whole process of composition writing, group members can communicate with each other, good English composition students can also be taught their own experience and methods to other students, guiding students to achieve common growth in the process of independent learning. In the process of teaching English composition in small groups, students can communicate with each other. In the process of teaching English composition in small groups, the students' experience of participating in the course will be improved, the overall logic and thinking of English writing will be improved in the process of group communication, and the students' oral communication skills will be cultivated at the same time.

5.3. Strengthening Daily Practice and Accumulating Writing Materials

It takes a long time to improve English writing ability, so in the high school English writing classroom, the teacher should offer more time for writing practice and explanation, which will help students improve their English writing ability faster and better. To improve English writing, we can start practicing from the translation of a single sentence, and figure out the grammatical composition of a single sentence to help students better master the English composition skills. For example, in the classroom, teachers can arrange an appropriate amount of writing exercises according to the content of each lesson, or even the translation of the content of the text, through this series of exercises to help students find the English sense of language and the logic of sentence composition. Thus it can strengthen the knowledge of grammar, and accumulate sentence patterns and vocabulary at the same time have a deeper understanding of the content of the course and experience.

6. Conclusions

Writing, as an important part of the English curriculum in high school, is a comprehensive and strong training task, which is closely related to the language ability, learning ability, thinking quality and cultural awareness in the core qualities of the discipline. Teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' discursive ability, critical thinking and other high-level thinking in daily writing teaching, explore the deeper connotations of the writing task, lead students to think and discern,

and cultivate students' writing ability with logic. The article studies six high school English writing classrooms provided online after the new curriculum reform, observes the high school English writing classrooms with Bloom's taxonomy theory of educational objectives as a guide, in order to find out the problems and analyze the reasons for this phenomenon. If the problems are not solved, they will be there eventually, so in the latter part of the article, suggestions will be made on this issue.

There are still some problems with this study in one way or another, such as in the number of writing lessons observed in the classroom. In addition, there was no long-term observation of the students in these six classes to explore whether they had made substantial progress in their writing skills or not.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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