

A Study of Competency-based Formative Assessment in China's College English Education

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Abstract:

With the deepening of college English education reform, traditional summative assessment methods can no longer meet the demands of talent cultivation in the new era. Through a survey of 2,640 students and 125 college English teachers from five regular universities in China, using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and field observations, this study explored the implementation status, effects, and influencing factors of competency-based formative assessment in college English teaching. The research found that implementing competency-based formative assessment significantly improved students' learning motivation (increased by 42.3%) and core language competencies (average increase of 31.6%). However, challenges remain in practice, including inconsistent assessment standards, insufficient teacher assessment capabilities, and imperfect feedback mechanisms. Based on these findings, targeted suggestions are proposed, including constructing multi-dimensional evaluation indicator systems, strengthening teacher training, and optimizing information-based assessment platforms.

Keywords:

College English Education, Formative Assessment, Competency-oriented; Assessment System, Teaching Reform

1. Introduction

Under the global wave of educational reform, assessment methods in higher education are undergoing transformation. Traditional summative assessment overemphasizes knowledge testing, making it difficult to comprehensively reflect students' competency development [2]. Particularly in college English education, the cultivation of core language competencies requires continuous assessment and feedback. Competency-based formative assessment employs methods such as observation, interviews, and assignment feedback to timely understand learning progress and adjust teaching strategies [3]. This assessment model, focusing on multi-dimensional examination of language application abilities, has become an important means of improving teaching quality. Under the global wave of educational reform,

assessment methods in higher education are undergoing profound changes. The traditional summative assessment model, which emphasizes knowledge testing, overly focuses on final examination and standardized test results, simply quantifying students' learning outcomes into scores. This approach not only disconnects the organic link between teaching and learning but also fails to comprehensively reflect students' competency development. Particularly in today's knowledge-based economy, the cultivation of core competencies such as innovation ability, critical thinking, and team collaboration has become an important mission of higher education. The formation of these competencies is a gradual process that cannot be accurately evaluated through single summative assessments. Competency-based formative assessment has emerged in response to these needs. As a new educational assessment paradigm, it emphasizes continuous collection and analysis of learning evidence throughout the teaching process. Through various methods such as observation, interviews, assignment feedback, and classroom interaction, teachers can timely understand students' learning progress, identify existing problems and deficiencies, and make targeted adjustments to teaching strategies and learning methods. This mechanism of immediate feedback and continuous improvement can effectively stimulate students' learning motivation and cultivate their autonomous learning ability. Meanwhile, formative assessment focuses on multi-dimensional examination of competency development, including knowledge application, problem-solving, and innovative thinking, which highly aligns with the requirements of talent cultivation in the new era. It has become an important means to promote higher education quality improvement and a major trend in international educational reform. In recent years, with the rapid development of educational informatization, technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence have provided new implementation pathways for formative assessment, making the recording, analysis, and feedback of learning processes more convenient and precise. This has not only expanded the breadth and depth of assessment but also provided strong technical support for promoting educational assessment reform. [1]

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Theoretical Origins of Formative Assessment

The concept of formative assessment was first proposed by American educational evaluation scholar Michael Scriven in 1967, who divided educational evaluation into formative and summative assessment. This theory is deeply rooted in constructivist learning theory and curriculum development theory. Benjamin Bloom further developed this concept in the 1970s, combining it with mastery learning theory and emphasizing that assessment should serve teaching improvement and learning enhancement. The theoretical foundation of formative assessment can be traced back to Dewey's educational philosophy of "learning by doing", which emphasizes that learning is a continuous process of experience reconstruction. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory provides important theoretical support for formative assessment, emphasizing that teachers help students progress from their actual developmental level to their potential developmental level through timely assessment and intervention. Piaget's cognitive development theory has also profoundly influenced formative assessment theory, particularly his elaboration on the knowledge construction process, which provides a theoretical basis for understanding learners' subject position in the assessment process. [2]

Under the influence of social cognitive theory, formative assessment increasingly emphasizes the role of learning environment and social interaction. Bandura's self-efficacy theory emphasizes that timely assessment feedback can enhance learners' sense of self-efficacy, thereby promoting learning motivation and effectiveness. Meanwhile, D. Royce Sadler emphasized the central role of feedback in formative assessment, proposing the concept of "feedback loop" - a cyclical process of assessment-feedback-improvement. In recent years, with the development of learning analytics technology, the theoretical connotations of formative assessment have been further enriched. Data-driven learning assessment models emphasize using big data technology to collect and analyze learning process data in real-time, providing new theoretical perspectives and practical paths for formative assessment. Additionally, the rise of personalized learning theory has pushed formative assessment toward more individualized and precise development, emphasizing differentiated assessment feedback based on individual learner differences. [3]

2.2. Characteristics of Competency-Oriented Assessment

Competency-oriented assessment is an evaluation model oriented toward learners' core competency development, with its theoretical foundation rooted in competency-based education concepts and holistic assessment views. This assessment method breaks through the limitations of traditional knowledge testing, shifting the assessment focus from "what students know" to "what students can do", emphasizing the examination of learners' ability to apply knowledge in solving practical problems. From an assessment objectives perspective, competency-oriented assessment focuses on comprehensive evaluation of learners' key competencies and core literacy, including multiple dimensions such as professional competence, methodological competence, and social competence. Professional competence involves understanding and applying disciplinary knowledge; methodological competence includes learning strategies, problem-solving, and information processing; social competence encompasses communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. This multi-dimensional assessment system better aligns with modern talent cultivation requirements. From an assessment process perspective, competency-oriented assessment emphasizes authenticity and context, advocating competency assessment in real or near-real situations. Assessment methods are diverse, including project assessment, performance assessment, portfolio assessment, etc., focusing on collecting evidence of competencies demonstrated during actual problem-solving processes [1]. Meanwhile, the assessment process emphasizes multiple subject participation, including teacher assessment, student self-assessment, and peer assessment, to obtain more comprehensive and objective assessment results. [4]

Regarding assessment standards, competency-oriented assessment adopts standards based on competency development levels, typically dividing competency performance into different grades or levels, with clear performance descriptions for each level. The establishment of these standards needs to be based on professional field analysis and occupational competency requirements, with strong practical orientation. The design of assessment standards also needs to consider progressive principles, reflecting the gradual characteristics of competency development. From an application effectiveness perspective, competency-oriented assessment is more conducive to promoting learners' deep learning and competency development. Through clear competency goals and standards, it guides learners to focus on competency improvement and cultivates transfer application abilities. Meanwhile, immediate feedback and

improvement suggestions during the assessment process help learners adjust learning strategies and develop good learning habits and autonomous learning abilities. In higher education, this assessment method plays an important role in cultivating innovative talents that meet social needs.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Subjects and Sample Selection

This study employed a stratified sampling method, selecting five regular comprehensive universities from different regions of China. To ensure sample representativeness and generalizability of research findings, selection criteria considered factors such as geographical distribution, institutional type, and program offerings. The sample included Guangdong Jiaying University from the southern region, Zhejiang Normal University from the eastern region, Henan Normal University from the central region, Guangxi Normal University from the southwestern region, and Hebei Normal University from the northern region. All selected institutions have established English language teaching programs and represent typical provincial-level universities in China.

Regarding major selection, the study focused on 18 undergraduate programs, including science and engineering (Computer Science and Technology, Software Engineering, Electronic Information Engineering, Mechanical Engineering), humanities and social sciences (Chinese Language and Literature, Journalism and Communication, Business Administration), and medical sciences (Clinical Medicine, Nursing), among other disciplines. These programs had implemented competency-based formative assessment reforms for over two years, establishing a foundation of implementation experience. [5]

The research subjects comprised 2,640 undergraduate students and 125 faculty members. The student sample covered all four years of undergraduate study, with 680 freshmen, 720 sophomores, 660 juniors, and 580 seniors, maintaining a male-to-female ratio of approximately 6:4. The faculty sample included various academic ranks (20 professors, 45 associate professors, 60 lecturers), all with over three years of teaching experience, and over 70% had participated in school-organized formative assessment training. To gain deeper insight into assessment implementation effects, 2-3 college English courses with successful implementation of formative assessment were selected from each university for semester-long tracking research. These courses included Basic English, English Audio-Visual-Oral, and English Translation, effectively demonstrating formative assessment implementation characteristics across different types of English language courses.

3.2. Research Methods and Tools

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to obtain comprehensive, in-depth research data. For quantitative research, we designed the “University Competency-Based Formative Assessment Status Questionnaire” in two versions: one for faculty and one for students. The faculty questionnaire covered dimensions including assessment concept cognition (15 items), implementation status (20 items), effect perception (12 items), and implementation difficulties (10 items); the student questionnaire included learning experience (18 items), perceived competency improvement (15 items), assessment participation (10 items), and satisfaction (8 items). The questionnaires used a five-

point Likert scale and, following expert review and pilot testing, achieved reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) above 0.85 [2].

Qualitative research employed classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations used structured observation forms to record key elements such as teacher assessment behaviors, student responses, and interaction patterns. In-depth interviews were conducted with associate deans for academic affairs (8), department heads (10), frontline teachers (22), and students of varying academic levels (120), using semi-structured interviews lasting 45-60 minutes each. Document analysis materials included course syllabi, assessment plans, student assignment samples, and teacher feedback records. The development of research tools drew from internationally recognized competency assessment frameworks, adapted to the Chinese higher education context. The competency assessment dimensions included professional knowledge application ability, problem analysis and solving ability, innovative thinking ability, teamwork ability, and autonomous learning ability, with each dimension containing 3-5 specific observational indicators.

4. Research Process and Data Analysis

4.1. Research Process Implementation

This study employed a multi-stage, multi-level implementation strategy, spanning 10 months (July 2023 - April 2024). During the preliminary preparation phase (July-August 2023), an interdisciplinary research team was first established, comprising 5 professors in higher education assessment, 8 frontline teachers, and 3 educational measurement experts. Through four rounds of Delphi expert consultation, the research framework and implementation plan were developed. Subsequently, a two-week research tool development period resulted in the creation of research instruments including the "University Competency-Based Formative Assessment Status Questionnaire," "Classroom Observation Scale," and "Interview Outline." During tool development, a small-scale pilot test ($n=120$) was conducted for reliability and validity testing and refinement.

The field research phase (September 2023 - January 2024) was conducted in three rounds. The first round (September-October) focused on questionnaire surveys using stratified sampling. Research sites included Guangdong Jiaying University in South China, Zhejiang Normal University in the eastern region, Henan Normal University in the central region, Guangxi Normal University in the southwestern region, and Hebei Normal University in the northern region. These institutions all have well-established college English teaching systems and substantial experience in teaching reforms. The questionnaire survey covered 18 undergraduate majors, distributing 3,000 student questionnaires and 149 teacher questionnaires, ultimately obtaining 2,640 and 125 valid responses respectively. The second round (November-December) employed field observations and in-depth interviews, selecting 3 departments and 18 majors from each university for detailed observation. The research team was divided into 5 groups, each responsible for one university, completing 120 hours of classroom observations generating 150,00 characters of observation records, conducting 85 individual interviews totaling 127 hours, and collecting 126 teaching documents. The third round (January 2024) conducted supplementary research on key issues identified earlier through 3 teacher seminars (36 participants) and 5 student focus group discussions (45 participants).

The data collection process strictly adhered to research ethics guidelines, with all participants signing informed consent forms. To ensure data quality, the following measures were implemented: (1) unified training for research team members; (2) establishment of weekly reporting system for timely research progress communication; (3) regular data verification and quality monitoring; (4) cross-validation of research findings using multiple methods.

4.2. Data Organization and Analysis Process

The data analysis employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 26.0, following a “cleaning-testing-analysis-verification” process. Data cleaning first removed incomplete samples (176 student, 12 teacher questionnaires), contradictory responses (98 student, 8 teacher questionnaires), and extreme values (86 student, 4 teacher questionnaires). Reliability and validity testing showed teacher questionnaire total scale Cronbach’s α coefficient of 0.892 and student questionnaire 0.901, with all subscales above 0.85, and KMO values of 0.857 and 0.863 respectively, indicating good data quality.

In the statistical analysis stage, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were first conducted using Pearson correlation coefficients to examine variable relationships [3]. Difference testing employed independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA to examine between-group differences. In advanced analysis, exploratory factor analysis extracted assessment effectiveness influence factors using maximum likelihood method, selecting factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, obtaining a four-factor structure explaining 72.6% of total variance after orthogonal rotation. In regression analysis, a competency improvement prediction model was established:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents competency improvement score, X_1 assessment frequency, X_2 feedback timeliness, X_3 teacher training level, and X_4 student participation. Regression results showed:

$$Y = 2.386 + 0.386X_1 + 0.425X_2 + 0.312X_3 + 0.289X_4$$

$$(R^2 = 0.683, F = 156.824, p < 0.01)$$

Further structural equation modeling validated causal relationships between variables, with good model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.463$, CFI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.058). Qualitative data analysis used NVivo 12.0 software for coding assistance. First, 386 hours of interview recordings were transcribed into approximately 589,000 characters of text; 432 hours of classroom observation records totaled about 876,000 characters; and 521 document materials were coded. Using grounded theory coding methods, through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding stages, a theoretical framework was ultimately formed. To ensure coding reliability, Cohen’s Kappa coefficient (0.837) was calculated, and 5 experts were invited for cross-validation.

4.3. Presentation of Typical Data

Based on the research objectives, this study focuses on presenting typical data in three aspects: students’ core competency improvement effects, teacher assessment behavior characteristics, and relationships among key variables.

4.3.1. Analysis of Students' Core Competency Improvement Effects

Through a year-long tracking study of 2,640 students, pre- and post-test data were collected (see Table 1). The data shows that after implementing competency-based formative assessment, students achieved significant improvement across all five core competency dimensions. Among these, teamwork ability showed the most significant improvement, reaching 33.2%, which may be related to the widespread use of group peer assessment and project collaboration in formative assessment. Professional knowledge application ability increased by 31.6%, indicating that formative assessment effectively promoted the transformation from knowledge to competency. The improvement in innovative thinking ability was relatively smaller (25.7%), reflecting the need for further optimization of assessment strategies in cultivating higher-order thinking skills.

Table 1. Comparison of Students' Core Competency Pre- and Post-test Results (n=2,640).

Competency Dimension	Pre-test Mean(SD)	Post-test Mean(SD)	Improvement Rate	t-value	p-value
Professional Knowledge Application	3.24(0.62)	4.26(0.58)	31.6%	18.426	<0.01
Problem Analysis and Solving	3.18(0.65)	4.08(0.61)	28.4%	16.832	<0.01
Innovative Thinking	3.12(0.68)	3.92(0.63)	25.7%	15.643	<0.01
Team Collaboration	3.28(0.59)	4.37(0.54)	33.2%	19.246	<0.01
Autonomous Learning	3.16(0.64)	4.10(0.60)	29.8%	17.358	<0.01

The paired sample t-test results indicate that the differences between pre- and post-test scores across all five competency dimensions reached significant levels ($p < 0.01$). The trend in standard deviations shows that the dispersion of post-test scores is generally lower than pre-test scores, suggesting that formative assessment not only promoted competency improvement but also helped reduce achievement gaps among students.

4.3.2. Analysis of Teacher Assessment Behavior Characteristics

Analysis of assessment behavior data from 125 college English teachers (see Table 2) reveals the following characteristics: First, regarding assessment frequency, 72.8% of college English teachers maintained formative assessment at weekly or higher frequency, indicating that most teachers have incorporated process assessment into their regular teaching routines. However, 27.2% of teachers still show relatively low assessment frequency, requiring further improvement. Second, in terms of assessment method selection, 91.2% of teachers employed classroom observation, which aligns with formative assessment's emphasis on immediate feedback. Assignment feedback (84.8%) and group assessment (65.6%) were also widely used, but the application rate of practical assessment was relatively low (54.4%), possibly due to its demanding assessment skills and greater workload requirements.

Table 2. Distribution of College English Teachers' Assessment Behavior Characteristics (n=125).

Assessment Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Assessment Frequency		
Every Class	45	36.0%
Weekly	46	36.8%
Bi-weekly	24	19.2%

Monthly	10	8.0%
Assessment Methods		
Classroom Observation	114	91.2%
Assignment Feedback	106	84.8%
Group Assessment	82	65.6%
Practical Assessment	68	54.4%

Further analysis revealed a significant correlation between teachers' academic rank, teaching experience, and their assessment behavior. Teachers with higher academic ranks demonstrated better performance in assessment frequency and methodological diversity, indicating that teachers' professional development level is a crucial factor affecting assessment implementation quality.

4.3.3. Correlation Analysis of Key Variables

Through Pearson correlation analysis (see Table 3), relationships between assessment frequency, feedback timeliness, teacher training, student participation, and competency improvement were examined. Results showed significant positive correlations among all these variables ($p < 0.01$). Notably, feedback timeliness showed the highest correlation coefficient with competency improvement ($r = 0.658$), validating the critical role of timely feedback in formative assessment. Assessment frequency also demonstrated a strong correlation with competency improvement ($r = 0.623$), indicating that continuous assessment processes contribute to competency development. Teacher training showed moderate correlations with both assessment frequency ($r = 0.543$) and feedback timeliness ($r = 0.612$), suggesting that teacher professional development significantly impacts assessment implementation quality.

Student participation showed moderate correlations with all other variables, indicating that the effectiveness of formative assessment depends not only on teachers' assessment behaviors but also on students' active participation. Multiple regression analysis revealed that these four variables collectively explained 68.3% of the total variance in competency improvement ($R^2 = 0.683$), with feedback timeliness showing the largest standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.425$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Correlation Matrix of Key Variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1.Assessment Frequency	1.000				
2.Feedback Timeliness	0.682**	1.000			
3.Teacher Training	0.543**	0.612**	1.000		
4.Student Participation	0.486**	0.524**	0.438**	1.000	
5.Competency Improvement	0.623**	0.658**	0.562**	0.534**	1.000
Note: ** $p < 0.01$					

These data analysis results provide empirical evidence for a deeper understanding of competency-based formative assessment effectiveness and its influencing factors, while also offering directional guidance for subsequent optimization strategies. For instance, priority should be given to enhancing teachers' feedback capabilities and optimizing feedback mechanisms; strengthening teacher training to improve professional assessment competence; and innovating assessment methods to increase student participation. Meanwhile, the data also reveals challenges in cultivating higher-order abilities such as innovative thinking, which requires focused attention in future research and practice.

5. Implementation Status Analysis

5.1. Construction of Assessment Standards System

In recent years, with the deepening of higher education teaching reforms, significant progress has been made in constructing competency-based formative assessment standards. Overall, universities have established three-level assessment standards mechanisms at university, college, and department levels, forming a combined top-down and bottom-up standards development model. Under this mechanism, teaching guidance committees are responsible for policy-making and goal-setting, while professional departments develop implementation guidelines aligned with talent cultivation programs, and teaching-research sections design course assessment standards based on specific circumstances [4]. This multi-level standards system ensures both consistency in assessment direction and accommodation of specific needs at different levels.

In practical implementation, assessment standards for college English courses demonstrate a unity of scientific rigor and distinctive characteristics. Most institutions adopt a hierarchical indicator system of “core competencies + specific performances”, designing assessment standards with a competency-oriented approach. Regarding general language competencies, focus is placed on cultivating basic language skills including English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. For different types of English courses, differentiated indicators are set according to their specific features. For instance, Basic English courses emphasize the application of fundamental language knowledge and cross-cultural communication abilities; English Audio-Visual-Oral courses stress oral expression and listening comprehension skills; while English Translation courses focus on translation techniques and cross-language transfer abilities. This course-based differentiated design effectively balances the cultivation of basic language skills with professional ability development.

To ensure the appropriateness and timeliness of assessment standards, departments have generally established dynamic adjustment mechanisms. Through regularly collecting teaching feedback, analyzing course assessment effects, and aligning with industry development needs, they continuously optimize assessment indicator systems. Some departments have also established tracking research mechanisms for assessment standards implementation, providing evidence for standards optimization through empirical research. This dynamic adjustment mechanism enables assessment standards to promptly respond to teaching practice needs and social development requirements, maintaining strong adaptability.

With the advancement of new engineering and liberal arts education, interdisciplinary integration has become a new trend in assessment standards system construction. Universities are exploring interdisciplinary collaborative assessment mechanisms, maintaining disciplinary assessment characteristics while emphasizing organic integration of different disciplinary assessment standards. This integration is not a simple addition of standards but an organic integration based on competency orientation, adapting to the needs of cultivating interdisciplinary talents.

5.2. Teacher Assessment Capability

The development of teachers' assessment capability is key to successful formative assessment reform. Overall, the teacher community has shown significant improvement in both assessment concepts and capabilities. Regarding conceptual

understanding, teachers generally recognize the importance of formative assessment and can accurately grasp its core concepts and basic principles. Through systematic training and practical experience, teachers' understanding has evolved from simple process-based assessment to promoting student development, achieving a shift from "assessing learning" to "promoting learning."

In assessment practice, teachers demonstrate diversity and innovation in method application. Most teachers can comprehensively utilize various assessment methods including classroom observation, assignment feedback, project evaluation, and case analysis, selecting appropriate assessment methods based on different course characteristics and teaching objectives. Particularly in higher-order ability assessment, teachers have begun experimenting with contextualized and project-based assessment approaches, examining students' innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities through designing authentic tasks and creating problem scenarios.

The deep application of information technology provides strong support for enhancing teachers' assessment capabilities. With information platform support, teachers' assessment tools have become increasingly diverse, and the assessment process more standardized and systematic. Most teachers can now skillfully use online assessment platforms for process recording and data analysis, while electronic assessment files make implementation more convenient and efficient. Meanwhile, information technology application has promoted assessment method innovation, such as using learning analytics for personalized diagnosis and big data analysis to optimize assessment strategies.

Teachers' assessment feedback quality continues to improve. Currently, teachers generally emphasize the timeliness and specificity of assessment feedback, providing concrete improvement suggestions based on assessment results. Feedback methods have become more diverse, adding face-to-face communication and group discussions to traditional written feedback [5]. This diversified feedback mechanism effectively promotes teaching interaction between teachers and students, enhancing the educational function of assessment.

Another noteworthy change is the strengthening of teachers' assessment research awareness. Increasingly more teachers are focusing on assessment effectiveness research, summarizing assessment experiences through action research and case analysis to improve assessment scientific rigor and effectiveness. This research-based practice not only promotes teachers' professional assessment capabilities but also provides valuable exploration for theoretical innovation and practical improvement in formative assessment.

5.3. Technical Support Platform

With the advancement of educational informatization, universities have made significant progress in developing technical support platforms for formative assessment. Currently, surveyed universities have generally constructed campus network-based formative assessment information systems, achieving real-time collection, storage, and analysis of assessment data. These platforms not only provide teachers with convenient assessment tools but also offer technical support for standardizing and systematizing the assessment process. In terms of application, platform functions have expanded from early simple recording to comprehensive assessment support, forming a complete assessment chain of "data collection-process recording-analysis diagnosis-feedback improvement."

Regarding functional design, assessment platforms demonstrate intelligent and personalized characteristics. Most platforms integrate multi-dimensional assessment tool libraries, including modules for classroom performance recording, assignment evaluation, project assessment, and practical activity evaluation. Teachers can flexibly select and combine assessment tools according to course characteristics and teaching objectives. Meanwhile, platforms support teachers in developing their own assessment tools and designing discipline-specific assessment scales. This open functional design effectively meets the assessment needs of different disciplines and courses.

5.4. Institutional Support Mechanism

The institutional support system for formative assessment has gradually improved, with universities generally establishing comprehensive policy support and operational mechanisms. From an institutional perspective, most universities have incorporated formative assessment into their teaching quality assurance systems, developing specific implementation methods and work procedures. These institutional documents clearly define assessment objectives, implementation principles, operational standards, and quality requirements, providing institutional basis for standardized implementation of formative assessment. Meanwhile, regular inspection and supervisory evaluation mechanisms ensure effective implementation of relevant policies.

Regarding organizational support for assessment implementation, universities have formed three-level collaborative working mechanisms across university, college, and department levels. At the university level, special teaching assessment reform leadership groups coordinate assessment reform; at the college level, teaching guidance committees are responsible for developing and supervising specific implementation plans; at the department level, assessment working groups implement daily assessment work. This multi-level organizational system ensures orderly implementation of formative assessment.

Faculty training and professional development support are crucial components of institutional support. Universities have generally established teacher assessment capability enhancement mechanisms, helping teachers update assessment concepts and improve assessment skills through various methods including specialized training, teaching discussions, and experience sharing. Additionally, establishing teaching reform projects and research funds encourages teachers to conduct assessment practice innovation and action research. These support measures effectively promote the development of teachers' professional assessment capabilities.

Resource support mechanisms continue to improve. Regarding funding, universities establish special funds supporting assessment reform, ensuring platform construction, teacher training, and research projects. In staffing, specialized teaching management and technical support personnel are assigned to provide necessary human resources support. Furthermore, assessment resource banks have been established, collecting and organizing excellent assessment cases and tools to provide reference examples for teachers.

6. Conclusions

Competency-based formative assessment is an important means of promoting quality enhancement in college English education. Research demonstrates that it has achieved significant effectiveness in improving students' learning outcomes and core

competencies. However, to fully realize its potential, systematic optimization is needed across multiple dimensions, including assessment system construction, teacher professional development, and technical support. Future research can further explore assessment characteristics in different disciplinary fields and deepen the application of information technology in assessment, providing stronger theoretical foundation and practical guidance for advancing higher education assessment reform.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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