The Probe into the Problems and Solutions in Academic English Writing Class from the Traditional Teaching Perspective

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Abstract. Writing is one of the most important contents in English teaching. Therefore, the paper aims to discuss how to help students manage to achieve two goals in writing: for the sake of grasping language to learn writing and for the sake of writing itself to learn writing in English Academic Writing class compared to in traditional English Writing class from the perspectives of English writing requirements, common problems and teaching design.

Introduction

Writing is one of the most important contents in English teaching. Among all kinds of students’ skills, writing and speaking are both productive skills, while writing is listed as a language outputting skill referring to the perspective of inputting and outputting. In English, the word “writing” not only stands for the writing process, but also indicates the writing outcome. Therefore, a piece of good essay includes both a piece of good writing itself and a satisfactory writing process. Martinez believed that the degree of the good and bad of an essay in its writing process has played a vital role in the production of a good or bad writing piece. Canale and Swain also held that writing should be a process to embody a writer’s social language ability, tactic ability and contextual analyzing ability, from which we can see that they all considered writing both as a process and an outcome. Raimes put forward that writing has two functions: for the sake of grasping language to learn writing and for the sake of writing itself to learn writing. In the following parts, the paper aims at discovering and solving the problems from traditional teaching perspective in academic English writing class.

College English Course Teaching Requirements cover the Following Aspects in English Writing

Basic level:
1. Be able to finish an ordinary piece of writing no less than 120 words within 30 minutes.
2. Be able to narrate, describe and expose a certain topic with appropriate word choices and organize the writing as an organic and complete whole based on a clear theme of the target piece writing.

Intermediate level:
1. Be able to compose a basic argumentative writing to comment on a certain topic, make a summary on students’ own major, write a research paper and describe all types of graphics with no less than 160 words within 30 minutes.
2. Be able to compose a writing clearly, abundantly, organically and logically.

High level:
1. Be able to write a research paper and academic report concerning students’ own major and moreover, express personal viewpoints freely and comfortably.
2. Be able to compose an expository or argumentative writing clearly, abundantly, organically and logically with no less than 200 words within 30 minutes.
In order to instruct students to compose a good writing according to these requirements, all the English writing course teachers contribute themselves in in-class and after-class English writing teaching, however, for most teachers the result and the effect is not obvious. During the teaching and learning process, there occurred some prevailing problems. Then, in the following part, the writer intends to take English Academic Writing Class of Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities (IMUN) as an example to expose the writing problems and illustrate the solutions.

Common Problems in IMUN Academic English Writing Class

The writer is teaching English Academic Writing course for the students of International Studying Exchange Course (ISEC students). ISEC students also learn College English course during the first two years. Therefore, after two years’ College English study, can their performance in learning Academic English Writing course be better?, which is a difficulty to be explored. So at the very beginning, the writer sends ISEC students the survey questionnaire, the result majorly show the following study problems in their English writing.

1. When learning the topic or directions, they do not easily get the writing organization or know how to develop the topic.
2. Their writing seems fragments rather than an organic whole; which is to say that their writing lacks logic coherence both in inter-sentence and inter-paragraph connection.
3. From the perspectives of words and sentences, their writing is in shortage of exactness, vividness, effectiveness and variety.
4. Correctness and completeness are not paid attention enough from the angle of their whole writing.

Next is an example about a short paragraph writing by an ISEC student at the very beginning in Academic English Writing class.

Introducing Myself:
Hello. my name is Liu Yang. I’m from Huhot. I’m ninhteen years old. my family have three people, my father, my father and me. I like reading and singing. I think I’m a outgoinh people, and I like make friend with others.

From this sample writing we can see there exists some common mistakes or improper places which are easy to make among most college students no matter who have already learn College English for 2 years or not. Their writing mistakes frequently appear in the following parts: writing format; word choices; correct and complete sentences; sentence structure; sentence patterns; effective sentences; sentence and paragraph cohesion; organic paragraph and essay genre.

Based on students’ writing reality, aiming to writing a good composition, students are in equal need of basic writing knowledge and qualified writing skills. Therefore, Academic English Writing should include teaching relevant basic writing knowledge as well as training relevant writing skills.

Teaching Design in IMUN Academic English Writing Class

Teaching contents

Based on the reality of IMUN students when they are learning English as a second language, the contents in Academic English Writing class are planned as like this: the arrangements of writing, diction, syntax, paragraph writing, and essay writing.

Developing writing ability

The writing ability for IMUN students is extremely necessary improved by using appropriate vocabularies and various sentences as well as logical coherence to organize their own writing as organic wholes with special effectiveness. Therefore, for the students in Academic English Writing, the following knowledge they are really in need now: word choices and figurative language;
sentence types and effectiveness; writing methods; transitional ways; narrative, argumentative, descriptive and expository writing types; applied writing especially research paper writing.

**Basic writing teaching steps**

Generally, the teaching procedures in writing class are no more than three basic steps which are displayed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Writing Teaching Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-writing (input before writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While-writing (more drafts writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing (feedbacks from student selves, peers and teachers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to organize classroom-teaching in writing**

From the perspective of formative assessment, effective classroom discussion and learning activities are organized during the teaching process in order to verify whether the students understand the target teaching contents as well as providing assistant feedbacks for students, and furthermore, planning further teaching sketches based on students’ current learning effects.

**Classroom-teaching Cycle**

![Classroom-teaching Cycle](image)

**Learning and teaching review and reflection**

Formative assessment strengthens that teachers should know well about students’ learning ability at that moment, clarify learning objectives and criteria, and produce teaching designs in an attempt to accumulate various formative feedbacks and shorten students’ learning gaps. During the whole teaching process, big teaching objectives will be easier to be divided into several small segmentations which can be better realized step by step.

**Conclusion**

The paper aims to discuss how to help students manage to achieve these two goals: for the sake of grasping language to learn writing and for the sake of writing itself to learn writing in English Academic Writing class compared to in traditional English Writing class from the perspectives of English writing purposes, writing contents, writing criteria and writing process. The paper has been explored as College English Course Teaching Requirements in English Writing, common problems in IMUN Academic English Writing Class, teaching design in IMUN Academic English Writing Class which specifies as the following parts: teaching contents, developing writing ability, basic writing teaching steps, how to organize classroom-teaching in writing, and learning and teaching.
review and reflection. The study explored in the paper will surely contribute to effectively
discovering and solving the problems existing in traditional academic English writing class and
improve students' comprehensive academic English writing ability.

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