Article

A Case Study on the Design Principles and Implementation of the Junior High School English Preview Self-Assessment Form

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Abstract: The Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) underscores that teaching assessment should be employed to fully play the main role of students, with students positioning as designers, participants, and collaborators. Through reflection and self-assessment, students can summarize their learning experience, engage in reciprocal knowledge, and plan their learning. Despite extensive theoretical and empirical work about integrating assessment into pedagogical practices, most research has centered on in-class activities, and studies related to pre-class preview are rare. As a critical yet under-theorized component of formative assessment, pre-class preview currently lacks systematic theoretical guidance, leading to suboptimal implementation outcomes. Thus, aiming to foster learning through assessment and improve the effectiveness of preview, this essay will design a self-assessment form specifically tailored for pre-class preview, to improve the problems like insufficient attention, directional ambiguity, insufficient strategy guidance and insufficient feedback that exist in the implementation of current preview.

Keywords: junior high school English; preview; assessment

1. Introduction

Pre-class preview has demonstrated significant potential to enhance students' learning. Scholars have offered many suggestions to optimize the effectiveness of preview. However, recent research indicates that pre-class preview is still poorly implemented, due to the lack of sufficient attention, clear directions, method guidance, and feedback. Intrinsically, it is the lack of a carrier with which teachers can provide directions, guidance, and feedback that leaves the ineffective implementation of preview unresolved. Thus, the author proposes that clear directions, method strategies, and other required items can be incorporated into a self-assessment table, which will serve as a vehicle for teachers to provide guidance [1].

2. Literature review

Empirical evidence consistently supports the dual pedagogical value of pre-class preview for both learner development and instructional optimization. When students' prior knowledge relevant to the new lesson is activated through preview, students can acquire new knowledge more easily, thereby boosting students' confidence and teachers' teaching efficiency [2,3]. It has been pointed out that preview can cultivate not only students' understanding ability, but also their abilities such as self-regulation, independent thinking, information collection, problem solving, and metacognition [2,4]. Despite these benefits, problems like insufficient attention, directional ambiguity, strategy methodological deficiency, and feedback vacuum still exist. As for the lack of attention, some schools and teachers fail to realize the crucial role of pre-class preparation for enhancing students' abilities of comprehension and cognition and for fostering the teaching of new knowledge. Regarding clear directions, research has found that even though many teachers assigned

preview homework, much of it is vague in its requirements, objectives, and methods. Vague instructions can lead to poor quality of students' preview [5]. With respect to method guidance, it is believed that teachers need to instruct methods and strategies to improve students' self-learning ability and efficiency [6-8]. Nevertheless, sufficient guidance on strategies cannot be guaranteed most of the time. One study showed that only about 30% of teachers assigned written homework, and more than 70% did not provide guidance on how to study [9]. As for feedback, it has been noted that "At present, the assessment system for preview is extremely underdeveloped. Consequently, students' difficulties cannot be identified and remedied in a timely and effective manner."

3. The Significance of Self-Assessment in Educational Contexts

3.1. Enhancement of Learning Motivation

It has been posited that self-assessment can foster deeper cognitive engagement in knowledge construction, strengthen learners' sense of control, and enhance their ownership over the learning process. In this process, students' motivation can be stimulated and their metacognitive abilities further developed [10,11].

3.2. Affective Development

The delegation of assessment authority to learners enhances their sense of academic responsibility. By self-assessing, students can have a clearer command of their strengths and weaknesses, thus their confidence can be boosted. Additionally, the subsequent improvements can further strengthen their sense of achievement.

3.3. Academic Performance Improvement

Andrade reviewed research related to the relationship between self-assessment and achievement and found that among the 25 studies reviewed, 20 explicitly employed formative assessment. All 20 studies, along with two meta-analyses, demonstrated a positive correlation between self-assessment and learning outcomes [12].

Grounded in the premise that both previewing and self-assessment enhance instruction and learning, the author will integrate self-assessment into the preview process, generating a preview self-assessment form to achieve a better effect than the sum of each part. For teachers, a self-assessment form of preview can have a crucial backwash effect on them. Teachers can adjust their teaching according to students' preview results which are visualized through a self-assessment form. For students, the self-assessment form can benefit them before lessons, during lessons and after lessons. Before lessons, students can be equipped with clear preview directions of learning. During the lessons, students can have a clear purpose of learning with the difficulties they found during their preview process and they can understand the content more easily with the activated prior knowledge. After the lessons, students can reflect further on the effectiveness of their preview and self-assessment based on the teachers' feedback and make targeted adjustments.

4. Alleviating Preview Burden through Structured Self-Assessment Design

Through systematic literature review and classroom observation analysis, the author finds that the implementation of preview in junior high school English teaching has been largely ineffective. Although scholars have proposed various solutions, they have not provided frontline teachers with an effective tool to implement preview tasks, resulting in no significant improvement in preview effectiveness. Thus, this essay will take the self-assessment form as a carrier, with clear directions, monitoring of learning awareness, correct learning strategies, and monitoring of the learning process integrated into it, forming a comprehensive and informative self-assessment form of preview. By addressing the persistent shortcomings of preview—namely, insufficient attention, unclear directions, and inadequate strategic guidance—the proposed self-assessment form is expected to enhance both students' learning capacity and efficiency. Taking the "Reading for Writing" section

from Unit 6 of the FLTRP Grade 7 textbook (second semester) as an example, the paper demonstrates form design that meets both curriculum requirements and practical teaching needs. In addition, this essay will articulate and summarize the design principles that underlie the form.

5. The Connotation of the Self-Assessment Form of Preview

The self-assessment form of preview is a combination of preview task lists and self-evaluation. After finishing the personalized, progressive, guided and problem-based preview tasks and self-assessment designed by teachers, students can have clear directions, be motivated, and have a basic understanding of the new knowledge, their learning status, learning outcomes and areas for improvement, thus preparing more effectively for new lessons, addressing difficult points, and adjusting their self-learning processes.

6. The Design Principles of the Self-Assessment Form of Preview

The Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards notes that teaching evaluation should give full play to the leading role of students. Therefore, the self-assessment form of preview should also stick to the student-centered principle. And based on it, we need to follow the following principles.

6.1. The Differences in Student Learning

The content of the self-assessment form needs to be tiered and categorized. Due to differences in learning environments, learning resources and personal interests, students may exhibit different learning abilities and interests to preview assignments. Therefore, the design of the form needs to take learners' different needs into consideration to make the content tiered and categorized. The layered approach can be reflected in the graduated sequence of questions to cater to students' needs, allowing students to achieve optimal development within their "zone of proximal development." The categorized approach can be reflected in classified assignments like listening activities, speaking activities and researching activities to appeal to varied preferences and strengths. Teachers may adopt whichever classification scheme best suits their context. For example, based on people's perceptual modes, learning styles can be divided into visual learning, auditory learning, experiential learning, and tactile learning. Preview forms have been classified into descriptive preview, hands-on preview, investigative preview, and experiential preview [13].

6.2. The Multi-Dimensionality of Students' Assessment

Generally speaking, assessment entails process-oriented assessment and product-oriented assessment. In a broad sense, the learning process includes the level of engagement, learning methods, learning procedures, and the quality of learning and living, etc [14]. However, most current assessments are product-oriented, overlooking students' monitoring and adjustment of learning strategies, learning states, and learning engagement during the learning process. The evaluation of the process has also been incorporated into the evaluation form. Therefore, when designing the forms, teachers should adopt various evaluation methods such as formative evaluation and summative evaluation [12,15].

6.3. The Lifelong Nature of Students' Learning

Preview strategies should be incorporated into the form. Firstly, it can decrease the waste of time caused by ineffective strategies and alleviate negative emotions caused by difficulties. Secondly, the guidance of preview strategies can develop students' abilities of preview and self-learning, which can benefit them for a long time. As for the category of learning strategy, Researcher proposed a classification system of learning strategies, which includes cognitive strategies, regulatory strategies, communicative strategies and resource strategies [16]. The learning strategies that affect the effectiveness of English

learning include cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and communicative strategies [6].

6.4. Emotional Stimulation of Students' Learning

6.4.1. Assignments in the Form of Questions

Problemizing the tasks is beneficial to stimulating the desire for exploration and fully leveraging students' existing knowledge and abilities [17]. Therefore, when setting the task forms, teachers should phrase tasks inquisitively rather than imperatively, such as: "Can you find several words about laughter in the text? Can you mark them in the text?" rather than "Find the words about laughter in the text."

6.4.2. Mastery Goals

Mastery goals emphasize knowledge acquisition and competence development. It emphasizes the enhancement of abilities during the learning process and the in-depth understanding of knowledge and it usually adopts self-reference standards, namely, progress is evaluated by comparing one's current levels with previous levels. Expressive goals refer to the goals that individuals set in order to demonstrate their abilities or outperform others. These goals usually adopt standards set by others, and success is judged relative to others' performance. Some researchers found that learning and mastery-oriented goals can direct students' attention toward the task itself and foster willingness to engage with challenging material [11]. Performance goals, on the other hand, may lead students to avoid challenging tasks. Therefore, the goals set by teachers should be mastery-oriented, with the aim of enabling students to understand their own learning progress, rather than for students to compare with each other.

6.5. Teachers' Guidance and Assistance

6.5.1. Teacher's Feedback

It has been shown that students' learning initiative may decrease when they cannot get teachers' feedback. Therefore, on the forms, a section for teachers' feedback and evaluation should be left for teachers to give feedback on students' preview and self-assessment. Additionally, teachers can check students' preview outcomes by raising questions and giving feedback during class [8].

6.5.2. Clear Expression of Purposes

The criteria for self-evaluation should be specific and based on specific tasks [18]. Through previous investigations, it has been found that many preview tasks still suffer from vague wording. Teachers need to ensure that the instructions are clear. For example, teachers need to clarify the expected methods to be used, the outcomes and degree to certain questions. For example: Can I, through researching and recalling, summarize some words that have similar meanings to "giggle" in the text, as well as words with opposite meanings, such as "laugh", "cry", etc., and be able to easily recall and correctly spell other synonyms or antonyms of one of these words when mentioned?

7. Conclusion

Through literature analysis, the author finds that the importance of preview in students' learning is widely recognized. Despite abundant solutions proposed by scholars, the implementation of preview has not been improved significantly. Problems such as insufficient emphasis on previewing, vague directions, inadequate methodological guidance, and scarce feedback still exist. The author believes that these shortcomings intrinsically stem from the lack of practical tools for teachers to carry preview requirements, as most previous scholars just called on teachers to attach importance to preview and provide guidance on it, leading to teachers' confusion in how to provide preview directions,

strategy guidance and feedback. To bridge this gap, the present study proposes integrating the preview task list with self-assessment, visualizing preview objectives, tasks, methods, processes, results and evaluations, so that students can have a clear direction for preview, strategies for improvement and a tool for evaluation. Theoretically, it is the first organic combination of self-assessment and preview session of junior high school, which can provide new insights for other scholars to improve preview, explain the design principles of self-assessment forms of preview and promote the effective integration of self-assessment with English language teaching research. Practically, the form equips students with directions and strategies, thereby enhancing the students' effectiveness of preview, students' learning abilities, students' self-assessment abilities and the efficiency of both preview and subsequent classroom learning. Regretfully, this paper focuses primarily on the junior high school stage and the preview phase. In addition to further data collection and in-depth research on this topic, scholars can choose to conduct in-depth studies on other stages and phases, expanding the scope of implementation for the integration of teaching, learning and assessment.

Appendix A: Sample Preview Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form is designed for the "Reading for Writing: Exploring the Unexplored" section of Unit 6, Grade 7, Book 2 (FLTRP English Series). The theme of it belongs to people and self. The article mainly tells the story of Xu Xiake, a great traveler in Chinese history, who dreamed of traveling through China's mountains and seas from a young age. At 22, he embarked on his life's journey, which lasted about 30 years. During his travels, he made many geographical discoveries, such as climbing Tian Du Peak and Lianhua Peak on Mount Huang, where he found that Lianhua Peak was even higher. He also recorded his travel experiences in diaries, which later became "The Travel Notes of Xu Xiake," allowing people to understand China nearly 400 years ago (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample Preview Self-Assessment Form.

Self-Assessment Form of Preview—Module 6 Reading for Writing, Grade 7(Second Semester) Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press					
Knowledge Section					
Stages	Learning Objectives	Learning Status				
Basic Stage	1. Can you try to collect information about Xu Xiake's experiences?	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well	E. Not at all
	2. Can you read the text aloud twice with the video and mark the unfamiliar words?	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well	E. Not at all
	3. Can you infer the meaning of unknown words and then check them in a dictionary?	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well	E. Not at all
	4. Can you divide the passage into sections and use the hints in Exercise 3 to get the right answers?	A. Zero or one correct answer	B. Two correct answers	C. Three correct answers	D. Four correct answers	E. Five correct answers
	5. Can you finish Exercise 3 after reading?	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well	E. Not at all

Advanced Stage	1. Can you try to answer Exercise 4? (Tip: locating the part in the text first and then rephrasing it in your own words.)	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well E. Not at all
Challenging Stage	1. Can you search for another great figure in Chinese history and introduce him/her using the same structure as this passage? (Tip: Exercise 3 has already outlined the structure.)	A. Very well	B. Fairly well	C. Average	D. Not very well E. Not at all

Reflection Section					
1. How focused were you during this pre-class preview?	A. Very focused	B. Fairly focused	C. Average	D. Not very focused	E. Not focused at all
2. What were your sources of motivation during this pre-class preview?	A. Interest in the topic	B. To gain knowledge	C. To make class easier	D. To satisfy the teacher's requirement	E. Lack of motivation
	F. Other (add here):				
3. How did you feel emotionally during this pre-class preview?	A. Curious and expectant	B. Calm	C. Felt pressure	D. Bored and irritable	E. Sad
	F. Other (add here):				
4. Which part did you find most difficult during this pre-class preview?	A. Content too hard to understand	B. No enough time	C. Lack of methods	D. Lack of reference materials	E. Lack of motivation
	F. Other (add here):				
5. What was the greatest gain for you during this pre-class preview?					

Teacher Feedback Section

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