

A Study on the Factors of Self-efficacy on the Improvement of Junior High School Students' English Writing Ability

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Abstract: In the middle school English curriculum, English writing is a fairly important segment, yet students appear to be in a situation where they are not strong in English writing and are reluctant to write. There are various factors influencing this phenomenon. After investigating the positive effect of Bandura's self-efficacy theory on junior high school students' English writing ability improvement, this theory is applied to the training of students' English writing ability to improve their writing ability. This study applies self-efficacy theory to teaching English writing in junior high school and proposes measures to improve junior high school students' English writing ability.

1. Introduction

Writing is both a cognitive activity and a special kind of emotional activity. Writing ability is not only influenced by students' own English foundation and cognitive level, but also by other factors. First, the general objectives of the Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standard (2011 Edition) point out that language skills are an important part of language use, mainly including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and the integrated use of these skills. Secondly, the "English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2011 Edition)" requires junior high school students to attain five levels of English writing skills. That is, they can collect and prepare materials according to the writing requirements, and can draft short texts, short messages, etc. independently. and revise them under the guidance of teachers, be able to use common conjunctions to indicate sequential and logical relationships, be able to describe people or events simply, be able to write simple paragraphs or operational instructions based on diagrams or tables, etc. Once again, the core literacies of the English subject include: language proficiency, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. Among them, language ability is the basic element and core of core literacy. Language ability mainly includes: perceiving and comprehending, internalizing and integrating, interpreting and appreciating, and communicating and creating. Therefore, language ability is improved while higher requirements are put forward for writing ability. At present, there are many influencing factors in the process of junior high school students' English writing, such as the lack of writing thinking and other phenomena, which affect the improvement of junior high school students' English writing ability (Jiang Guixiang, 2020).

2. The current situation of junior high school students' English writing ability

2.1 The current situation of junior high school students' English writing

2.1.1 Students' ability to collect and prepare writing materials according to the requirements

The preparation of writing materials is a requirement for students before writing activities. It mainly means that students should pay attention to the collection of writing-related materials in the usual learning process, and should always do the accumulation of writing materials so that they can play a key role in English writing and really have something to say in their writing. However, in the actual English writing process, students often ignore the collection and preparation of materials. As a result, students are at a loss as to how to express the key words and sentences in their essays in English when they encounter relevant topics in their exams. Therefore, students' writing skills are at a low level.

2.1.2 Students' ability to use common conjunctions to express sequential and logical relationships

The "English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2011 Edition)" clearly requires students to be able to use common conjunctions that express sequential and logical relationships appropriately in their English writing so that their compositions can be read more fluently. However, in practice, students are not able to use common conjunctions skillfully in their writing, which puts higher demands on teachers. It is crucial for junior high school English teachers to help students master the conjunctions often used in composition and how students will master important vocabulary and sentences in the learning process.

2.1.3 Students' ability to draft short English essays independently

The "English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2011 Edition)" clearly states that students' English writing ability should reach five levels, i.e., they should be able to draft English short essays and text messages independently. However, in the actual writing process, there are two levels of differentiation among students. For students with excellent English grades, drafting a short English text is easy. But for students with poor English scores it is difficult to ask them to write an English composition. Even if students finish writing, there are different degrees of errors, such as whether the words are spelled correctly and whether the grammar is used correctly. Therefore, in teaching English writing in junior high school, it is crucial for junior high school English teachers to narrow the gap between the two levels of writing proficiency.

2.2 Analysis of Causes

In the teaching of English writing, there are many factors that affect students' English writing. The reason why students' English writing ability is not strong is that there are some stable and unstable factors in the process of English writing. In the continuous exploration of English teaching, teachers have applied self-efficacy theory to teaching English writing in junior high school, and students' English writing ability has been positively influenced. This paper focuses on integrating Bandura's self-efficacy theory with junior high school English writing instruction to improve students' English writing skills.

3. Self-efficacy theory

3.1 Overview of self-efficacy theory

Bandura (1986) proposed a sociological theory based on a large number of experimental studies, and also a theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to people's judgments about their personal abilities, or more precisely, their ability to perform an action, and it implies whether a person is confident that he or she can successfully perform an action that will lead to a certain outcome. Self-efficacy in writing refers to one's perception of one's ability to plan and execute the actions necessary to achieve the desired text quality on a specific writing task. When a writer is confident that he or she is capable of writing, he or she develops a high level of "self-efficacy" and is fully committed to completing the writing. Finally, this study focuses on the element of students' "self-efficacy" and proposes corresponding measures to improve middle school students' English writing skills.

3.2 The function of self-efficacy

The function of self-efficacy is mainly to regulate and control behavior and to influence behavioral outcomes through behavioral regulation. The functions of self-efficacy include: influencing people's choice of behavior and behavioral persistence, influencing people's level of effort and attitude toward difficulties, influencing people's way of thinking and behavioral efficiency and influencing people's attribution style. According to self-efficacy theory, there are four main sources of information for constructing self-efficacy: one's own successful experiences, alternative experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional states. The following methods can be used to develop a sense of efficacy in junior high school English writing.

4. The application of self-efficacy in the improvement of English writing skills in junior high school

4.1 Using alternative role models to improve students' ability to prepare material before English writing classes

Substitute role models are those who become confident themselves when they see others accomplish a task. This means that the success of others brings a stimulus to learners and causes reactions and reflections. First, teachers assign the task of collecting writing materials to students in English writing instruction. After a period of collecting and organizing, students who actively completed the task showed a significant improvement in their English writing performance. Next, the teacher praised and encouraged the students who actively collected materials in the class. When the students who completed the teacher's task were praised, it created a psychological reaction to other students who did not complete the teacher's task-is it possible that their writing scores would also improve after completing the task assigned by the teacher and would also be praised by the teacher. Then, after being psychologically stimulated, students will collect on writing materials to improve their English writing performance.

4.2 The ability to use positive verbal persuasion students focus on the use of conjunctions in writing

Verbal persuasion is used as a source of self-efficacy and its power is influenced by a number of factors, such as the skill of the persuader, the attractiveness of the feasibility. Experimental studies have proved that verbal persuasion is a moderately effective way to change self-efficacy. That is why

teachers teach English writing with different levels of encouragement and ask students how they should make a composition read logically. To achieve this goal teachers need to teach different forms of conjunctions that indicate logic and sequence in each writing lesson to make the composition read more smoothly. With this, students need to be familiar with conjunctions and be taught how to use them appropriately in their writing. The teacher should actively guide the students during the writing process, motivate them to write, and stimulate their intrinsic motivation to write. The ultimate goal is to improve writing performance and ability.

4.3 Guiding Students to Proper Attribution Motivates Students to Draft English Short Essays Independently

Students with a strong sense of self-efficacy attribute success to internal, stable factors of the student's own (e.g., ability) and do not have doubts about their own abilities. They seek help from others when they encounter difficult problems in their learning and strive to succeed, and they attribute failure to internal self-controllable factors (e.g., lack of effort). Conversely, if failure is attributed to an internal, stable, uncontrollable factor such as lack of ability, students will doubt their own ability, believe that their own ability is the cause of their failure, lose self-confidence, and be reluctant to make further efforts. Thus, positive and correct attributions can increase students' self-efficacy, while negative attributions can reduce students' self-efficacy. In the teaching of English writing, for students who have strong writing ability and write independently, teachers affirm students' ability while appropriately pointing out students' shortcomings and guiding them so that they can continuously improve their writing ability in writing. For students whose writing ability needs to be improved, teachers should actively guide students to write and encourage them that it is not the problem of their ability that causes the difference in writing ability, but the difference in the level of effort that makes it necessary to work hard in order to improve their writing ability, and that only by writing independently on their own can they discover the problems that exist in their writing and keep improving it so that their writing ability can be gradually improved.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the current situation of English writing in junior high school, the factors influencing writing, and applies self-efficacy theory to teaching English writing in junior high school to improve students' writing efficacy. In the teaching of English writing, teachers combine self-efficacy with writing instruction according to the requirements of the Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards (2011 edition), and use alternative role models, verbal persuasion, and correct attribution to improve students' English writing ability. At the same time, teachers cultivate students' interest and confidence in writing and promote a strong sense of self-efficacy. Once the efficacy is formed, students will act through the selection process of behavior, thinking process, motivation process and physical and mental reflection, so that students will gradually transition from the initial inability and reluctance to write to complete each composition with confidence, and eventually students' writing ability will be improved.

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