
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research on the Current Situation and the Construction of a Diversified Assessment System for College English Teaching in Private Universities Based on Positive Psychology

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the existing problems in the college English teaching assessment system in private universities and attempts to construct a diversified assessment system suitable for college English teaching in private universities based on the principles of positive psychology. Through questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, the shortcomings of the existing assessment system were analyzed. It was found that the current assessment methods relied too much on test scores and ignored the learning process and personalized development of students, making it challenging to stimulate students' intrinsic learning motivation. Based on the research findings, this study proposes a diversified assessment system that integrates the principles of positive psychology, which is designed from three dimensions: evaluation subject, evaluation content and evaluation method, aiming to comprehensively assess students' language proficiency, stimulate learning motivation, promote self-directed learning, and cultivate positive psychological traits.

KEYWORDS

Positive Psychology; Private Universities; College English; Teaching Assessment; Diversified Assessment System

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the increasing frequency of international exchanges, college English teaching is shouldering the important mission of cultivating talents with an international perspective and cross-cultural communication skills. As an important part of higher education, the quality of English teaching in private universities is directly related to the implementation of the national talent cultivation strategy. However, at present, English teaching in private universities still faces many challenges, such as students' weak learning motivation, unsatisfactory learning outcomes, and suboptimal teaching results, which make it urgent to find new breakthroughs to improve teaching quality.

In addition, in the current practice of college English teaching, the traditional teaching assessment system has gradually revealed many problems, such as single evaluation criteria, fixed methods, and single evaluation subjects, ignoring students' individual needs and development potential. This phenomenon not only affects the improvement of college English teaching quality but also restricts the overall development of students' language proficiency to a certain extent. At the same time, it also shows that the existing assessment system failed to fully reflect students' English proficiency and learning process, making it difficult to adapt to the teaching demands in the new context. Furthermore, it failed to fully utilize the function of "assessment for learning". Therefore, in this context, how to construct an assessment system that promotes students' all-round development has become an important topic in the current college English teaching reform of private universities.

As an emerging psychological perspective, the core concept of positive psychology is to focus on individuals' positive qualities and potential, emphasizing the promotion of all-round development and well-being by cultivating positive emotions, traits and experiences (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) ^[1]. The rise of positive psychology has brought new perspectives and opportunities to college English teaching assessment. The introduction of the principles of positive psychology into the assessment process of college English teaching is expected to overcome the limitations of traditional assessment and address the existing problems in college English teaching assessment. Additionally, it helps promote the transformation of college English teaching assessment in private universities from "result-oriented" to "process-oriented" and from "negative evaluation" to "positive feedback", to create a more positive and healthy learning environment for students, and stimulate their intrinsic learning motivation.

Based on the above analysis, this study aims to analyze the current situation of college English teaching assessment in private universities, explore the possibility of applying positive psychology concepts in teaching assessment, and try to construct a diversified assessment system that can promote students' all-round development.

2. Literature Review

At present, with the continuous updating of educational assessment concepts, diversified assessment systems have gradually become a hot topic in educational research. Diversified assessment refers to the transformation of practical teaching assessment methods from a single paper test evaluation to an assessment mode with more diverse evaluation subjects, evaluation content and evaluation methods.

In the early 1970s, foreign educational assessors began to elaborate on diversified assessment from many aspects. In terms of evaluation subjects, the American evaluation scholar Patton (1978:15) was the first to put forward the core concept of "Participation of multiple stakeholders" ^[2]. Matsuno (2009) proposed a combination of self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment ^[3]. In terms of evaluation content, foreign scholars pay more attention to the formulation of evaluation criteria, students' academic performance, learning motivation, learning attitude and emotional intelligence. In terms of evaluation methods, Bachman and Palmer (1996) affirmed the promotive role of formative assessment in students, teachers, teaching, and examinations^[4]. It can be seen that foreign scholars are committed to the study of diversified assessment and believe it has become an effective way to promote students' all-round development. At the same time, some foreign scholars of educational psychology and educational assessment have also begun to pay attention to the application of positive psychology in teaching assessment. They advocate incorporating students' positive psychological traits into the assessment system, such as self-efficacy, learning motivation, learning strategies, etc., to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning status and development.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, diversified assessment has gradually gained attention in China and has become a research hotspot in the field of teaching. Although the research on diversified assessment in China started relatively late, some research results have been achieved. The advanced search method with the theme of "Diversified Assessment System + College English Teaching" on CNKI was defined from 2000 to 2024, and only 28 related academic journal papers were retrieved. A large number of studies have explored the significance of the combination of formative assessment and summative assessment in the construction of diversified assessment systems (Yu Guang, 2008) ^[5] and the impact on college English teaching practice (Chen Jun et al., 2014) ^[6], which provides strong theoretical guidance for the construction of diversified assessment systems. A small number of researchers have conducted empirical studies on diversified assessments of English language teaching (Yuan, 2020) ^[7]. Researchers have also extensively focused on and explored the facilitative relationship between diversified assessment and translation teaching (Chen Ying, 2020; He Junmei, 2020) ^{[8][9]}, and the facilitating role of teachers' English teaching proficiency, students' English learning ability, and the effectiveness of English classroom teaching (Tao Sha et al., 2019; Wang Jingsi, 2023) ^{[10][11]}. On the whole, domestic researchers are committed to constructing a diversified assessment system for English teaching, and continuously improving the assessment system through current situation analysis, experimental validation and summarized recommendations. Although there are rich theoretical achievements, there is a lack of specific, practical assessment models or tools for teaching practice.

In summary, scholars at home and abroad have accumulated some research results in the diversified assessment of college English teaching, but their shortcomings cannot be ignored: (1) There is a lack of empirical research. (2) The research subjects rarely integrate with the teaching practice of college English in private universities. (3) The research methods are relatively single-dimensional, lacking the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches. (4) Research on applying positive psychology principles to guide teacher assessment practices is still scarce, with almost no existing studies. In view of this, this study attempts to explore how to construct a diversified assessment system based on the actual practice of college English teaching in private universities from the perspective of positive psychology, so as to promote students' foreign language learning and cultivate positive and optimistic attitudes and spirit of exploration.

3. Research Design

1. This study will conduct a questionnaire survey in selected private universities in Henan Province to collect teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and needs regarding the existing teaching assessment system, including the use of the existing assessment system, the perceptions and attitudes towards diversified assessment, the difficulties in implementation, and the cognition of positive psychology. Specifically, regarding the teacher questionnaire, this study designed 20 questions, which related to the perception of the existing assessment system (Questions 1-4), the perceptions of the diversified evaluation system (Questions 5-8), the difficulty of implementing the diversified assessment system (Questions 9-11), the cognition of positive psychology (Questions 12-15), and the willingness to reform the assessment system (Questions 16-20).

Additionally, in order to further understand the current situation of college English teaching assessment and provide a practical basis for constructing a new diversified assessment system, 10 college English instructors from Zhengzhou University of Economics and Business were selected for in-depth interviews. The questions are as follows: (1) How do you perceive the current college English course assessment system? (2) Do you think the current assessment method accurately reflects the effectiveness of students' English learning? Why? (3) Have you tried a diversified assessment system? What difficulties or challenges have you encountered in conducting assessments? (4) Do you have the opportunity to participate in the design or improvement of the evaluation system? (5) In what aspects do you hope the future assessment system can be improved?

4. Results and Discussions

(1) Questionnaire Survey Results

After eliminating some invalid questionnaires, a total of 300 valid responses were collected. According to the Likert 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1 point), Disagree (2 points), Neutral (3 points), Agree (4 points), Strongly Agree (5 points), SPSS will be used to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each question, with the specific statistical results being presented as follows.

Table 1 Views on Existing Assessment System

Items	M	SD
1. The existing assessment system fully reflects students' abilities.	2.65	1.24
2. The existing assessment system stimulates students' motivation to learn.	2.45	1.24
3. The existing assessment system promotes students' autonomous learning.	2.85	1.20
4. The existing assessment system creates pressure on students.	3.15	1.20

As shown in Table1, it is evident that the teaching community has a low level of recognition of the existing assessment system. It is widely reported that the existing assessment system has significant shortcomings, especially in stimulating students' learning motivation, comprehensively reflecting students' ability and promoting self-directed learning. This combination of a low mean and a high standard deviation indicates that teachers have some differences in opinion on these aspects, but the overall tendency is consistent. It shows that some teachers believe that the existing system is not satisfactory in assessing students' overall ability, improving learning motivation and encouraging students' self-directed learning, making it challenging to motivate students to maximize their potential under the existing assessment system. At the same time, it indicates that the current assessment system has failed to effectively fulfill its function of promoting learning through assessment.

This result reflects that the current assessment system may focus too much on the final test score, resulting in neglecting students' progress and growth in the learning process, which make it difficult to stimulate students' intrinsic learning motivation. It is important to highlight that teachers believe that due to the current result-oriented assessment system, the existing assessment methods do bring great pressure to students, which is not only not conducive to stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning, but also inhibits their intrinsic motivation. This further reflects the urgent need for reform of the existing assessment system.

Table 2 Perceptions on Diversified Assessment System

Items	M	SD
5. I have a clear understanding of the concept of diversified assessment.	3.40	1.24
6. I am willing to use diversified assessment methods in daily teaching.	3.15	1.28

7. Diversified assessment can cultivate students' critical thinking.	3.75	1.14
8. Diversified assessment can enhance students' learning motivation.	3.60	1.16

From Table 2, it can be observed that teachers highly recognize and support the diversified assessment system. The standard deviations for Questions 7 and 8 are relatively small, indicating that teachers generally agree on the positive impact of diversified assessment, which provides a good foundation for further promotion of future diversified assessment. However, there is a significant gap between teachers' cognitive understanding of diversified assessment and its practical application in daily teaching. This shows that teachers generally understand its concept and are willing to try new assessment methods, indicating that they maintain a positive and open attitude towards the reform of existing assessment methods, but there are significant differences at the practical level, which indicates that teachers may be limited by objective factors such as personal experience and school support when implementing diversified assessment.

Table 3 Views on Difficulties in Implementing Diversified Assessment

Items	M	SD
9. The main difficulty of diversified assessment is the lack of training and guidance.	3.85	1.15
10. Universities do not place enough emphasis on diversified assessment in terms of resources.	3.45	1.29
11. There is a lack of time to implement diversified assessment in teaching.	3.55	1.25

The data in Table 3 indicate that teachers generally believe that they face many challenges in the implementation of diversified assessment, which is mainly manifested in the fact that most teachers believe that lack of training and guidance is the major difficulty. This reflects that although teachers have a positive attitude towards diversified assessment, they still lack professional knowledge and operational experience at the implementation level, suggesting that universities need to increase investment in teacher training and resource support to promote the implementation of diversified assessment. Additionally, regarding Q10, it shows that teachers generally feel a lack of resources and have diverse opinions, which reflects the lack of institutional guarantee and corresponding resource investment in universities, and also suggests that there may be significant differences in this dilemma among different private universities.

At the same time, some teachers believe that lack of time is one of the main reasons hindering teachers from implementing diversified assessment, indicating that college English teachers in private universities generally face an excessive workload. These phenomena further show that it is precisely due to objective factors such as insufficient support at the institutional level and imperfect training mechanism that directly affect the effect of the implementation of diversified assessment in the daily teaching, and hinder the progress of diversified assessment reform to some extent.

Table 4 Views on Cognition of Positive Psychology

Items	M	SD
12. I have a better understanding the application of positive psychology in education.	3.65	1.11
13. Positive psychology has a positive impact on students' learning motivation.	3.80	1.12
14. I am willing to apply positive psychology in teaching to enhance learning.	3.75	1.14
15. I frequently provide students with positive feedback and encouragement.	3.45	1.29

According to Table 4, it suggests that teachers generally maintain an open and positive attitude towards the application of positive psychology in educational assessment. With regard to Questions 12, 13 and 14, the standard deviations are relatively small, indicating that the teacher community have formed a good consensus on the application of positive psychology. This positive attitude aligns well with the currently emphasized student-centered educational philosophy, which provides a good foundation for further promoting the application of positive psychology in teaching assessment in the future. At the same time, most teachers

also indicate that they often give positive feedback and encouragement to students in teaching, indicating that teachers have a high recognition of positive reinforcement and constructive feedback, and paid attention to students' personal growth.

Table 5 Views on Willingness to Reform the Assessment System

Items	M	SD
16. Student feedback is important for improving assessment.	3.95	1.07
17. Assessment should take students' individual needs into account.	3.85	1.06
18. I value students' self-assessment.	3.70	1.10
19. I value students' effort and personal growth.	3.90	1.18
20. I am willing to participate in the design and implementation of a new assessment system.	3.85	1.25

As shown in Table 5, it is evident that the teacher community demonstrates a positive willingness to reform the assessment system. With regard to Questions 16 and 17, the mean scores for these two questions are relatively high, and their standard deviations are the smallest in the entire questionnaire. This reflects a high level of consensus among teachers on these core concepts, indicating that teachers agree with the assessment concept centers on student development, and hope to pay more attention to students' actual needs and feedback in future assessments. The standard deviations of the last two questions are relatively large, suggesting that teachers' different needs should be taken into account when promoting assessment reform. At the same time, it also shows teachers' proactive willingness for reform, which provides an important intrinsic motivation for the reform of the assessment system in the future.

To sum up, the results of the questionnaire survey clearly reveal urgent need for reform in the teaching assessment system in private universities, and also point out the direction for the reform. The construction of a diversified assessment system should be based on the concept of positive psychology, and emphasize the motivational function of assessment, thereby achieving a shift in assessment concepts from a single exam-oriented approach to a comprehensive development-oriented approach and attaching importance to process evaluation and personalized development. However, its effective implementation requires institutional support in policy-making, resource allocation and teacher training. In terms of time arrangement, institutions should help teachers optimize teaching time arrangements and create the necessary time conditions for the implementation of diversified assessment.

(2) Interview Results

In response to Question 1, 60% of teachers believe that although the current assessment system is more systematic and standardized in some aspects, there are still shortcomings. They generally believe that the current assessment method relies too much on final exams and standardized tests. Although this method ensures the objectivity of the assessment to a certain extent, it is difficult to fully reflect students' language learning process and practical application ability. In response to Question 2, 70% of teachers believe that the current assessment system often focuses too much on test scores, and ignores students' progress and efforts in the learning process, making it difficult to comprehensively assess students' actual language skills.

In response to Question 3, 50% of teachers argue that they have tried to introduce a diversified assessment system with minimal final effect, due to the challenges they face in implementing the assessment. First of all, there is the limitation of time and resources. In the case of large classes, it is often not enough to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth assessment of each student, so large class sizes make individualized assessment difficult. Secondly, due to the heavy course load, it is difficult for teachers to give students constructive feedback and guidance after class.

In response to Question 4, 90% of the teachers report that the assessment criteria and methods are usually formulated uniformly at the institution or department level, and teachers can only make limited adjustments in the implementation process. They hope to have more opportunities to participate in the design and improvement of the assessment system, to contribute their teaching experience and insights, which make the assessment system more aligned with teaching practices and student needs, and improve the effectiveness of assessment.

In response to Question 5, 80% of teachers would like to see more diverse assessment methods to assess students' language proficiency holistically. They also suggest increasing the proportion of formative assessment and paying more attention to students' learning process and progress. At the same time, they also emphasize the introduction of modern technical means

such as artificial intelligence-assisted scoring and the establishment of electronic learning portfolios to improve the efficiency and accuracy of assessment.

In general, college English teachers are looking forward to building a diverse, flexible and effective assessment system that not only accurately reflects students' language proficiency, but also truly promotes students' all-round development and lifelong learning ability, laying a solid foundation for their future studies and careers. To achieve this goal, it is not only for administrators to make the right decisions, but also for teachers to create a fairer, more effective and more enlightening evaluation environment for college English education by continuously updating their educational concepts and innovating teaching practices.

5. Construction of Diversified Assessment System Based on Positive Psychology

Based on the above findings, this study intends to combine the core content of positive psychology and try to design a diversified assessment system suitable for college English teaching in private universities. The system will cover multiple levels, including evaluation subjects, evaluation contents, evaluation methods and other dimensions, aiming to comprehensively and objectively evaluate students' English learning, stimulate their learning motivation, cultivate their independent learning ability, and ultimately improve learning effectiveness and cultivate positive psychological characteristics.

First of all, in terms of evaluation subjects, the system adopts the multi-subject participation model of "student self-assessment + peer assessment + teacher assessment". (1) Student self-assessment aims to guide students to regularly reflect on their own learning process and achievements through learning logs, reflection reports or self-assessment scales provided by the researcher, and record their emotional changes and learning motivation, so as to cultivate students' self-directed learning ability and meta-cognitive skills. (2) Peer assessment is to guide students to assess each other through group projects, oral presentations or peer review in writing, and provide constructive feedback based on the assessment criteria of the peer assessment form provided by the researcher, so as to promote collaborative learning among students and cultivate critical thinking skills. (3) Teacher assessment is based on the assessment scale provided by the researcher, which includes indicators such as students' academic performance, learning process, learning attitude, classroom participation and personal growth, to provide constructive feedback and personalized guidance to students, so as to help students recognize their own strengths and explore their own potential.

Secondly, in terms of evaluation content, this system mainly covers academic performance, learning motivation, learning strategies, learning process, learning attitudes and emotional experience. (1) The assessment of academic performance mainly includes the mastery of language knowledge and language skills. (2) The assessment of learning motivation will use a motivation scale to regularly measure changes in students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, aiming to understand their interest in learning English, goal setting, and self-efficacy. (3) The assessment of learning strategies will be conducted through observing students' strategy use logs and interviews to understand their use of various learning strategies and their effectiveness. (4) The assessment of learning process will record the students' learning trajectory and progress through the electronic learning portfolio, and pay attention to the students' learning engagement, time management, and problem-solving ability. (5) The assessment of learning attitude will focus on students' positive psychological traits such as attitudes towards English learning, their sense of participation in classroom activities, and their trust in teachers and peers. (6) The assessment of emotional experience focuses on the emotional changes and psychological state of students in the process of English learning through emotional diaries and classroom observations, aiming to create a positive learning atmosphere for students and reduce language learning anxiety.

In terms of evaluation methods, the system integrates multiple methods of formative assessment, diagnostic assessment and summative assessment. (1) Formative assessment runs through the whole learning process, records students' learning process and outcomes through homework feedback, online assessment, group discussion, electronic learning portfolio, etc., and uses the online learning platform to track students' learning behavior data, in order to fully and timely understand students' learning situation, and provide a basis for teaching adjustment and personalized guidance. (2) Diagnostic assessment can be conducted at the beginning of the semester through a comprehensive proficiency test and a learning style survey. According to the diagnostic results, the instructor can identify students' learning strengths and weaknesses, and provide support for developing targeted learning plans. (3) The summative assessment is conducted at the end of the semester to comprehensively assess students' overall learning outcomes. The use of a variety of assessment tools are encouraged, such as e-learning portfolios, reflection logs, classroom presentations, project reports, etc., to comprehensively capture students' learning performance and progress. This diversified assessment not only comprehensively reflect students' learning progress, but also stimulates students' creativity and critical thinking.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the assessment system, it is recommended that students should be encouraged to participate in the formulation of assessment criteria as much as possible before the implementation of the new assessment approach, so as to enhance their sense of ownership. Meanwhile, teachers should clearly communicate the criteria and weighting of each assessment to students in a timely manner. In the implementation process, teachers need to flexibly use various evaluation methods to assess students' learning performance according to different learning content and objectives. At the same time, teachers need to constantly reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and develop personalized incentives based on students' individual differences. In addition, teachers need to provide students with detailed feedback on evaluations in a timely manner to guide them for improvement. Teachers and students work together to facilitate the smooth implementation of the new assessment system and achieve the desired results.

6. Conclusion

The main conclusions of this study include the following points: First, the current assessment system of college English teaching in private universities has obvious shortcomings in stimulating students' learning motivation and promoting all-round development, indicating the urgent needs to be reformed urgently. Secondly, the diversified assessment system based on positive psychology can effectively make up for the limitations of traditional assessment, promote the transformation of assessment from "result-oriented" to "process-oriented" through multi-subject participation, multi-dimensional evaluation content and diversified evaluation methods, and create a more positive learning environment for students to stimulate their learning potential and intrinsic motivation. In addition, teachers generally have a positive attitude towards diversified assessment, but face multiple constraints in practice, such as resources, time and training. Therefore, this study suggests that institutions should provide support in terms of policy, resource allocation, and teacher training to ensure the effective implementation of a diversified assessment system. Overall, this study not only provides a practical path for improving the assessment system of college English teaching, but also lays a foundation for further promotion and optimization of the assessment system in the future, which is ultimately conducive to the comprehensive development of students' language proficiency and comprehensive quality.

While this study provides valuable insights into the current situation and reform of EFL assessment in private universities from a positive psychology perspective, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research is limited to a specific geographical context, especially private universities in Henan Province, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of institutions, such as public universities or vocational colleges. Furthermore, the data collection methods used in the study, such as questionnaires, may have certain limitations. For example, when the respondents filled out questionnaires about their perceptions on the existing teaching assessment system, they might be influenced by social expectation effects or subjective biases, leading to biased data. Additionally, this study has not examined how to adapt and optimize the assessment system across different teaching contexts. Therefore, future research can further expand the research scope, adopt longitudinal research methods, explore teacher support mechanisms, and optimize the assessment system by combining technical means to ensure the sustainable implementation and promotion of diversified assessment.

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