

A Study on Emotional Education in Advanced College English Writing

Gao Jiong^{1,2} Zhang Chengli³

1.Department of Foreign Languages , Beijing Union University, Beijing, China 100101

2.College of Education, Capital Normal University, Beijing, China 100089

3.Department of foreign languages, Xin Zhou Normal University, Shanxi,China 034000

Gaojiong66@126.com, Zhangcl_2007@163.com

Abstract

Emotional education is gaining ground in the field of language teaching and learning, and the involvement of emotion in writing process has been confirmed, yet there is lack of research examining the emotional education in advanced English writing. Through emotional education, students' writing can be improved, for the richness of their expressions and the diversity of their forms is enhanced. In the teaching process of advanced English writing, teachers need to know the students' writing proficiency and difficulties in advance in order to provide targeted instruction. Various activities with wise strategies can be designed to promote students' emotional education, guiding students to produce English writing works with sincere feelings and rich expression. In a word, emotional education could enable meaningful learning experiences and thus verbalize such learning experiences in writing. The effect of emotional education in advanced college English writing is mainly reflected in the improvement of students' writing skills and competence.

Keywords: Emotional education; Advanced college English writing; College English teaching

1. Introduction

Emotional education plays an increasingly important role in college advanced English writing course. Advanced English writing not only involves the teaching of vocabulary and grammar, but more importantly, it guides students to have a better analyzing ability in writing through emotional education in the teaching process, thus generating language, enriching language forms and rhetoric, and finally completing writing output. It is of great importance to better cultivate students' emotions, guide students to treat the society, the collective, others and themselves correctly, and help students establish a sense of mission and responsibility in the new era. These are all important aspects in emotional education in advanced English writing.

2. Emotional Education in College Advanced English Writing

2.1 College Advanced English Writing

As a key export language skill, English writing skill occupies a core position in the process of teaching and learning, and it is also the focus of English teaching and the difficulty of learning. Therefore, for students who have a pretty high English level and want to improve their writing ability, Advanced English Writing, an elective course for non-English majors, is of great importance. The core objective of this course is to cultivate students' competence to express as well as their comprehensive English skills. At the same time, it aims to

enhance students' understanding of different cultures, deepen their understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and then cultivate cross-cultural communication ability. By studying this course, students will be able to understand the western culture, strengthen their confidence in Chinese culture, learn to tell the story of China in English, and then spread excellent Chinese culture.

2.2 Emotional education

Emotions research may not be new, yet there has been a growing awareness of the role of emotion in language teaching and learning, what has been referred to as “the affective turn” or “the emotional turn.” There are some definitions for emotions. Emotions have often been examined as “an individual phenomenon” by Pavlenko (2006) or “contextual, relational, and the effects of contact among people, ideas, and objects” (Benesch, 2016, p.1). Prior's (2019) argues that emotions are not just intra-psychological or biophysiological phenomena. Dolan (2002) views emotions as a “motivational force for what is best and worse in human behavior” (p. 1191). They are also fundamentally social and contextual. Emotions are shaped by our languages, cultures, world views, personal histories, social relationships, and affiliations” (p,524) Much of the research, however, has been cognitively-oriented and has studied emotions in relation to affective factors such as motivation and anxiety and “the most widely studied emotion in second language acquisition” might be language learner anxiety (Prior, 2019, p.524) Much of the research, however, has been cognitively-oriented and has studied emotions in relation to affective factors such as motivation and anxiety (MacIntyre, 2017, p. 11; Miller, 2023; White, 2018) In this study, the definition of emotions would come from White (2018) that emotions have been often characterized as dichotomic, classified into either positive or negative categories, Often in terms of where they aid or influenced an individual's language learning process. Emotion is a relatively complex concept, and different disciplines and fields have different interpretations of emotion. So far, there is no unified definition of emotion. Marx believes that emotion is a subjective response of human subject to the value relationship of objectively existing things. Emotional education is of great value in caring for people's mental state, reaching the whole life development, constructing human ethics and facing the narrow and closed educational disadvantages. It is the theoretical basis and practical experience for rethinking education and carrying out humanistic education and teaching practice (White, 2018; Zhu & Wang, 2007).

2.3 The lack of emotional education in advanced English writing

In the teaching process of Advanced English Writing as well as CET-4 (College English Test: a nationwide English test for non-English Majors. For some college and universities, CET-4 is the basic prerequisite for obtaining a bachelor's degree) and CET-6 writing, based on the analysis of students' writing texts, there are not only thinking problems, but also the bigger problem that students' emotional positions are chaotic, especially in the argumentation structure. The common problems in argumentative writing are as follows. First, they only list their views from their own positions without considering the opposing views. Second, students' dialectical thinking is weak, and they could not tell opinions from facts. More importantly, students' work shows that they are quite narrow-minded and lack of coherence. As their life experience is limited due to the fact that all their life has been based on textbooks and classrooms so far. Since they are isolated from society and reality in a way, they even mistake factual statements as personal opinions and prejudices, let alone view things from an overall perspective. All the shortcomings are reflecting the fact that students need training in emotional education to better their writing level. The emotional education in writing is gaining ground in language teaching and learning (Garner, 2010), yet there is a lack of research examining in emotional education in advanced English writing.

2.4 The importance of emotional education in advanced English writing

English writing should be a way for students to express their thoughts and feelings and a process for students to reconstruct their experiences. Moral sensitivity, sensitivity to oneself and others, richness, profundity and stability of emotional world, which are restricted by people's emotional quality, are the constant psychological background in the process of people's moral behavior (Zhu, 1994). These elements constitute the key basis for writing articles with far-reaching ideas and correct ideas. Emotion, as the source of inspiration for individual creation, can stimulate the vitality of thinking and the emergence of inspiration, just like a switch, the most authentic emotions would gush out and pour out in writing. Therefore, the most basic function of this "writing emotion" is to show the characteristics of "dynamic" as an "internal driving force".(Gannon, 1985,p34) It holds high possibilities to connect emotional competence with subject-specific content as well as self-reflection to create meaningful Bildungs-experiences (Grund &Holst, 2023). Within the history of education, the significance of emotions in learning processes and emotional traits as learning outcomes has been well understood since student engagement also includes emotional dimension (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Ghanbari & Abdolrezapour (2021) also maintain that emotionalized integrated tasks improved the integrated writing achievement of the students. Therefore, emotional takes part in learning and it will boast writing as well.

3. Practical Strategies of Emotional Education in English Writing Teaching

3.1 Establishment of emotional goals

In order to better understand the current situation and needs of students in emotional education, first-hand information about their difficulties in English writing can be collected by interviews or questionnaires. According to the results, the teaching objectives of emotional education in writing could be designed and the teaching content will be categorized to meet the actual needs of students. In the teaching process, students should be guided to think profoundly about the theme of writing and integrate correct values and moral concepts, so as to enhance their writing conception and expression realm. This concept should be integrated with the goal and content of advanced English writing in order to realize all-round education. Emotional education can help students overcome their writing difficulties and improve their writing ability.

3.2 Categorization of the writing content

The essay topics are basically classified and summarized. Find the link between knowledge and writing skills, bridging the gap between the real-world problems with the course syllabus. As various problems in real life are closely related to the topics of writing, which have social, economic, cultural and psychological significance, involving the relationship between people, their judgment, and the responsibility of individuals, their families, the collective and the whole society. Therefore, through rational consideration, the significance and value behind each topic should be closely evaluated. At the same time, emotional connotations contained in the topic could be explored in depth. This will help to improve our writing level and comprehensive quality and better meet the needs of social development.

3.3 Reconstruction of thinking patterns

Writing is a creative output activity and the ultimate end of input. Language is the carrier of thinking, and rationality and emotion together constitute human character or even the soul itself. It still remains unsolved as how to enrich the expression ways of language through emotional education and enhance the conception and pattern of the article or how to jump out of the limited scope of mindset. In the dynamic process of obtaining materials, refining materials and arranging structures, students' love for society and the collective is to be

cultivated so that they would respect the relationship between others and themselves, and further develop international vision and humanistic feelings so the quality of language will be better improved and the breadth and depth of thinking could be perfected as well.

A variety of activities could be designed to activate students' emotions both in and out of class. Mind maps are to clarify ideas in class; classroom debates to identify the pros and cons; use story sharing activities to think over the plot; play sitcoms to simulate different roles to better know how to handle different relationships, such as doctor-patient relationship or parent-child relationship; use motto sharing and summary to start a provoking piece of writing; and organize students to watch relevant video clips (including public service advertisements of good values) can also be inspirational. After class, students write a journal to reflect their learning experience while teachers write teaching reflection logs. WeChat group could be another bulletin board to answer questions and students' learning status would thus be tracked in time. Students are encouraged to use online themes to accumulate writing materials and share with them in class regularly and positively.

3.4 The inspiration of emotions in writing

As one dimension of emotions, empathy is often mentioned in some literature (Akamatsu & Gherghel, 2021). Empathy explicitly comprises a moral dimension through feeling responsibility, compassion and "a sense of obligation to promote others' well-being" (Saarni, 1999, p. 186). For example, students should not only think in cognitive way to switch their perspectives including empathizing with the role of another person. That is to say, they should develop an understanding for the fact that not everyone would think the same as they do. They could also think in an emotional way to imagine some potential emotional consequences by role-playing famous figures in history. They could also learn how to empathize with animals if they are required to finish a writing task concerning biodiversity or climate change. For example, students are given a scenario that a man found an odd thing in his studio. A tree frog liked to stay on top of his computer and returned even after it was put into a greenhouse. It turned out that the tone the computer produced is so very much like that of his own species. The frog would stay in a studio only because it heard the tone and it wanted to find a companion there. It waited and hoped but its effort went in vain. There is no other frog just a computer. Students should know that frogs are considered "species indicators" and frogs could forewarn bad situation in climate and humans and animals are closely related. Students' writing task is to imagine what message this little tree frog wants to send to human beings. Only when students are thinking in the perspective of a tree frog can they fully understand the hopelessness a lonely frog is experiencing and only when they get through such emotions by themselves can they fully understand how this little creature is hoping for and only when they have profound sympathy towards frogs can their emotions be integrated in their writing and readers' heart could be touched indeed.

4. Effect of Emotional Education in College Advanced English Writing

4.1 Language skills improved

Students are to have accurate and appropriate English writing skills, and can reflect correct values and outlook on life in their works. Writing content should have a pattern, show the vision and mind that contemporary college students should have, and combine personal cognition with social culture construction. Students should be able to identify and correct common grammatical mistakes, and complete a short essay of 150-200 words within 30 minutes according to the composition topic, outline or chart, data, etc with relevant content, rigorous structure, clear organization, correct grammar, fluent language, and appropriate expression.

4.2 Student satisfaction improved

After receiving emotional education, students' mental outlook has changed significantly. This helps students solve specific difficulties in English writing. Some students can also realize that their previous cognition is narrow and not comprehensive enough. In short, students' satisfaction with the writing course has been improved. Students get excited when the teaching methods are more conducted to inspire their emotions, especially when they are asked to write on emotionally arousing topics. The course was more conducted in cognitive way yet when emotions are introduced as the thinking ground and thinking perspectives, their motivation and interest are to be greatly enhanced, which are shown in their reflection logs.

4.3 The quality of writing bettered

In the teaching process of college advanced English writing, the richness and diversity of students' expressions is shown by the breadth and breadth of students' thinking. Their social knowledge has become extensive, which is also reflected in their writing. Enhanced empathy enables students to better understand opinions and things from the perspective of others, and their self-centeredness and conformity are reduced. Students' analysis has been updated to some extent. Especially in the debate structure in argumentative writing, students are no longer just listing opinions from their own standpoint, but also learning to integrate opposing viewpoints, changing the weak dialectical thinking and distinguish opinions from facts with a broader and more objective view, which reflects their sense of responsibility as contemporary college students.

5. Conclusion

The teaching of college advanced English writing is not only about words and expressions. The realization of the emotional goal of this course “ultimately points to the sound development of the whole personality including individual emotions”. Emotional education is based on the law of individual lives and their emotions and emotional states, leading emotions to be closely related to human development and have an important impact on human development in a positive way, and makes them grow into new emotional qualities, and practice is a more effective way to cultivate emotional qualities (Saarni, 1999).

In the process of teaching advanced English writing, the purpose and value of the course is to actively explore different teaching methods, explain knowledge from multiple perspectives and dimensions, guide students to learn to distinguish and think in a critical way, and then establish a correct outlook on life, values and world outlook.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Project Fund of the Teaching Reform of Beijing Union University “Research on College Students’ Learning Engagement under the Blended Teaching Mode” (JK202219); the Researching Reform of Beijing Union University “ The Study of Integrating Ideological and Political Elements into College English Courses” (SK110202003); the Teaching Reform of the Educational Science Project of Beijing Association of Higher Education “Emotional Practice of Ideological and Political Elements into College English Teaching in in the age of artificial intelligence.” (MS2022099); Education Reform Project of Shanxi Provincial Education Department “Exploration of ideological and political chain construction of English major curriculum in Xinzhou Normal University” (J2021590) .

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Biography

Gao Jiong, Ph.D student in College of Education in Capital Normal University, lecturer of Beijing Union University, Research interests: Applied linguistics and language education.

Zhang Chengli, Associate professor of XinZhou Normal University. Research interests: Applied linguistics and language education.