Application analysis of Iwrite platform in English writing teaching in higher vocational education

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Abstract. This paper first analyzes the current obstacles of English writing and teaching under the traditional writing teaching model. Then based on constructivism and input-out theory, relying on Iwrite, we conducted a one-year experimental teaching. The experimental class adopts the online and offline hybrid writing teaching based on Iwrite, while only traditional offline teaching is adopted in control class. By comparing the results of pretest and post-test, students’ scores of the experimental class increased from 37.3 to 70.4, which is a big improvement in contrast to the rise from 35.3 to 56.5 in control class. Additionally, on the one hand, Iwrite platform can provide real-time feedback so that students can make modifications in time to practice writing many times. On the other hand, teachers can design targeted teaching based on statistics of mistakes in students’ writing from Iwrite. Therefore, the author proposes that it is essential to establish the mixed model of online and offline English writing teaching.

1. Analysis of the present situation of English writing teaching in higher vocational colleges
Students' English writing ability matters a lot in their English output ability, and its significance can never be overemphasized. Nevertheless, teachers are faced with many difficulties in the process of writing teaching. Just as the so-called saying goes, despite the fact that English writing is difficult, the teaching of English writing is more difficult [1-2]. In the first place, the traditional writing teaching model mainly based on teacher teaching cannot effectively improve students' English writing; in the second place, the current college English curriculum does not have a special writing course, which cannot meet the needs of students' personalized and professional writing teaching; finally, there are not sufficient teaching staff to provide effective teaching to students and it is time-consuming for teachers to correct students’ papers, which leads to a large amount of revision work and slow feedback to the students; what’s more, students often feel it is passive for them to accept the knowledge in writing teaching and training, so they are slow in improving their writing, which is difficult to meet and support the needs of diverse writing courses and prompt composition feedback.

2. The theoretical basis of higher vocational English writing
First of all, foreign scholar Hillocks pointed out through research that environmental mode is the most effective writing learning mode [3]. The characteristic of this model is that it is student-centered, the interaction between students is strong, and the connection is clear. Hillocks said that environmental mode is rather learner-centered in which the instructor plans activities that result in high levels of student interaction concerning specific, structural, problem-solving activities, and tasks with clear objectives;
multiple drafts and peer revision are part of the classroom activity, but explicit criteria for evaluation are considered. (Hillocks, 1986)

Professor Wang Chuming also proposed that to allow students to write freely so that their potential can be fully realized, they must create conditions; in other words, students must practice as much as possible to make their English writing ability better [4-6]. Because only by offering students the opportunity and space for free writing can they focus on the exchange of meaning instead of simply focusing on the grammatical rationality of words and sentences.

Secondly, input-output learning theory also provides a reference for writing teaching.

Linguist Krashen's "language input hypothesis theory" and linguist Swain's "language output hypothesis theory" also laid a theoretical foundation for this research. Language input theory believes that it is important to provide learners with language information that is slightly higher than the learner's current ability, that is, comprehensible language input, which is the only sufficient condition for second language acquisition; Swain defines "output" as "speaking", "writing", "cooperative conversation", "personal soliloquy", etc.. What this research to solve is the ability to "write". Higher requirements for writing are proposed in higher vocational English teaching objectives. The teaching and learning process belongs to the two aspects of language input and output [7]. The two should be closely combined, and both input and output links should be designed for online and offline teaching and training, truly embodying the teaching objective of the English course.

Consequently, the combination of online and offline college English writing teaching is the practice of this theory [8]. Based on the Iwrite environment, the relationship between teaching and learning in the college English writing teaching model should be in the following way. In a real online English learning environment, teachers release learning content and homework requirements through the platform to help students first absorb necessary writing knowledge and then create their own essays; students use online learning platform, with the help of teachers and classmates, input a lot of knowledge required for writing; the content taught by teachers includes not only comes from textbooks, but also from other written materials, audiovisual materials, and information on the Internet.

3. Methodology
This study mainly uses contrasting and experimental methods to divide students into control class and experimental class. A one-year college English writing teaching research is conducted, and the data obtained is analyzed, hoping to explore a mixture of online and offline English writing teaching mode.

3.1. Research object
There are a total of 180 students from 6 classes of grade 2017 in Shandong institute of commerce and technology. Before the study, a pretest of the writing level of the students was conducted, and the average score of each class was compared and analyzed by means of SPSS software. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the average score of each class. On this basis, two classes are randomly selected for the experiment. One class is the experimental class, and the second class is the control class.

3.2. Research tools
Iwrite online writing platform in this study is a writing teaching and correcting platform from foreign language teaching and research press [9]. IWrite is a professional online writing engine, which provides real-time intelligent review of the composition submitted by students from four dimensions: language, content, chapter structure and technical specifications. Students can complete the preliminary draft of the composition first, while making modifications according to Iwrite's instant feedback. It is recommended to correct the simple grammar and vocabulary errors in the composition.

SPSS software is used to analyze the data. The data comes from the pretest and post-test for the experimental class and the control class. Through the pretest, the students are divided into the experimental class and the control class randomly; after the post-test, we compared the performance of students in the traditional writing teaching model with the online and offline mixed writing teaching
model. In order to ensure the validity of the test, both tests use the topic from CET-4. Students are required to write a short essay of not less than 120 words within 30 minutes. The reliability of the test is also a key fact in the study. For the composition of the pretest and post-test, three teachers who have participated in the scoring of CET-4 writing anonymously in accordance with the scoring standards of CET-4 test. The composition score is 100 points, and the average score of 3 teachers is the final score.

3.3. Research process
At the beginning of the term, we ran a writing English pretest in all the six classes so as to get the students’ original scores; then at the end of the second term, we held a post-test in the classes and got their final scores. CET writing tests were adopted in pretest and post-test respectively.

Online and offline mixed teaching relying on the Iwrite platform is adopted in the experimental class. Teachers register the class on the Iwrite platform and send the class code to the students. The students register with their real names and join the online class. Students can log in freely from WeChat and the computer to take advantage of the massive resources on the platform. On the other hand, students in control only accept traditional offline teaching. In the offline class, the materials and contents for the experimental class and the control class are the same, but the online tasks and autonomous exercises are only for the experimental class. The students have broken the time and space restrictions, and can train writing anytime, anywhere. With the real-time online feedback, they can amend their writings many times to deepen the vocabulary and grammar commonly used.

Based on the analysis of the testees’ English writing, we would like to put forward some suggestions in order to improve the students’ English in our experiment teaching.

3.4. Research results

3.4.1. Comparison of students’ scores in pretest and post-test between experimental class and control class

Table 1. Comparison of students’ scores in pretest and post-test between experimental class and control class.

|                  | Control class | Experimental class | Distinctiveness |
|------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                  | Average score | Standard deviation | Average score   | Standard deviation |         |
| Pre-test         | 35.3          | 2.4                | 37.3            | 2.5                | .411    |
| Post-test        | 56.5          | 2.2                | 70.4            | 2.70               | .000    |

It can be seen from Table 1 that the significant difference between the experimental class and the control class in the pretest (sig.>0.05) shows that before using the Iwrite platform, there is no big difference in the English writing between the experimental class and the control class students. The writing level is basically the same. In the post-test, the writing performance of the students from the two classes showed a clear difference (sig.<0.05), which means that the writing level of the students in the experimental class has improved significantly. The average score of the pre-test is 37.3, while the average score of the experimental class in the post-test is as high as 70.4. Therefore, we can come to a conclusion that the online-offline mixed English writing teaching mode is more effective than the traditional writing teaching mode.

3.4.2. Statistics on the revision of students' online writing from Iwrite. In the study, all students submitted the composition assigned by the teacher, and on the average, they have modified their composition for 6.5 times, with one of them has corrected composition online for 195 times. In this way, they can better improve their writing ability through practice.
3.4.3. Statistics of mistakes in students’ English writing based on Iwrite platform. There is another superiority of online teaching. Common mistakes in student composition can be easily and quickly counted through Iwrite, which allows teachers to conduct offline teaching more accurately based on online data, greatly improving the teaching effect.

Table 2. Types of mistakes in students' English writing.

| Type of mistakes | Sub-type of mistakes                     | Percentage | Total percentage |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| vocabulary       | Mistakes in punctuation                  | 38.5%      | 69.8%            |
|                  | Mistakes in Lexical distortion           | 11.5%      |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in glossary                     | 9.7%       |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in Capitalized words            | 9.7%       |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in Part of speech               | 10.1%      |                  |
| collocation      | Mistakes in Verb and Object Collocation  | 0.35%      |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in Fixed collocation            | 0.07%      |                  |
|                  | Chinglish                                 | 2.8%       |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in link Verb and predicative Collocation | 0.2% |                  |
|                  | Mistakes in adjectives and nouns         | 0.4%       |                  |
| sentences        | Missing ingredients                      | Missing subjects | 5.3% | 22.2% |
|                  |                                          | Missing predicate |      |
|                  |                                          | Missing objects |      |
|                  | Redund                                    | Extra subject | 3.4% |      |
4. Suggestions

4.1. Transform the traditional single writing class, focusing on building mixed online and offline writing teaching model
The popularization and application of big data and automatic scoring system has caused a complete change in teaching, and flipping the classroom has become an essential means of teaching English writing. Offline teaching by teachers is not the only way for students to acquire knowledge, and teachers are not just lecturers of knowledge, but also become lecturers and mentors. Teachers spend a lot of time on inefficient writing and evaluation in traditional single writing teaching, which results in less time for explanation and guidance. In the Internet era, students in mixed teaching of online and offline can fully practice writing without taking up class time, and get real-time feedback to make timely changes. At the same time, big data statistics can enable teachers to accurately and quickly determine the difficulty of teaching so as to achieve an effective connection between teaching and student needs.

4.2. Changing the composition evaluation system
In the traditional English writing model, evaluation system includes teacher review and classroom comment. In contrast, the English writing model in the era of big data can be converted to the combination of machine scoring, manual review by teachers and mutual assessment by students as well as demonstration of essays. It can be seen that the composition evaluation system in the mixed teaching mode of online and offline has changed from a teacher-based evaluation method to a three-dimensional evaluation method, which realizes the three-dimensional method of machine, teacher and student. Fewer English teaching hours and more content are required in higher vocational college, so teachers often do not have the energy to polish the writing teaching process. Mixed teaching of online and offline combined with these methods of evaluation have basically solved this problem, and also solved the problem that students can not get timely feedback in writing, which improves the efficiency and effectiveness of writing teaching.

4.3. The use of Iwrite is conducive to improving students' English writing
Iwrite is a professional engine that provides instant intelligent review of the composition submitted by students. Therefore, students can complete the preliminary draft of the composition with the help of immediate suggestions on Iwrite. In addition, Students are encouraged to think creatively and fill in the problems they encounter, and send an appointment to teachers through Iwrite. Teachers can view and
download the modification and confusions encountered through IWrite, which is helpful for teachers to prepare lessons in a more targeted manner and further effectively improve the efficiency of offline tutoring. After the teachers and students complete the initial online composition modification and feedback, they can conduct offline counseling in line with the appointed time and place. Based on the data obtained from IWrite, teachers provide targeted personalized guidance to students in advance. Through the combination of online and offline teaching, students can maximize the effect of absorbing counseling; at the same time, teachers can also reflect on what they can optimize and improve in the teaching process through the collected information, and reverse the teaching to better help students to improve their English writing skills.

5. Conclusions
In the Internet age, only through the mixed teaching of online and offline method can students have as many practices as possible. It explores a mode for higher vocational colleges to deal with the lack of immediate feedback in writing. IWrite offers a sea of sample writings and resources for the students' personalized learning, which can guarantee students' independent learning. It can be believed that IWrite is a good instance for the online and offline mixed English writing teaching.

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