

An Exploration of the Ability of AI to Assist College English Writing Teaching

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Abstract: *The paper is an exploratory paper on AI-assisted college English writing teaching, which mainly discusses the problems of traditional college English writing teaching as well as the potential and practical strategies of AI technology in teaching.*

Keywords: AI, College English, Writing, Teaching.

College English writing instruction has long been recognized as an area with shortcomings, as its traditional teaching mode is relatively monotonous. The disadvantages of this mode are particularly evident in the context of English as a general course. Critiquing and correcting essays is labor-intensive, often leaving teachers overwhelmed in the latter stages of writing instruction. Consequently, the writing teaching process becomes top-heavy, with writing assessment classes frequently turning into generalized model text appreciation sessions. Students exhibit a low sense of self-efficacy in English writing learning, and some even suffer from fear and anxiety, resulting in stagnant writing abilities. These issues are especially prominent among non-English majors at independent colleges and universities, where the author works. Students possess a weak English foundation and struggle with writing, yet many do not know how to improve. This pressing issue in college English writing urgently requires resolution through innovative approaches.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) technology has advanced rapidly and has been promoted and applied in numerous fields, with the education industry being no exception. The State Council clearly stated in the New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan issued in 2017 that intelligent technology should be utilized to accelerate the promotion of talent training models, teaching method reforms, and the construction of a new type of education system that encompasses intelligent and interactive learning. This policy indicates that the next wave of educational transformations will be intricately linked to AI technology. In this context, college English education should follow the development trajectory of AI, integrate with the discipline's characteristics, and incorporate AI technology into English teaching to facilitate a new round of classroom reforms.

At the current stage, English education has access to more popular and mature hardware and software devices, leading to the emergence of human-computer interactive learning modes. Among these, AI-assisted writing systems have garnered attention. Online searches for platforms like "pigai.com" and "credibility" yield several related literatures. Many scholars have analyzed the reliability of these systems by sampling student compositions and utilizing statistical software such as SPSS. All of these studies have affirmed the high reliability of online correction systems in assessments. For instance, Song Hao (2016) compared the reliability and average scores between AI-based scoring on pigai.com and teacher scoring,

concluding that both have Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.5, indicating reliable scoring. This provides the potential for integrating pigai.com into the evaluation system for college English writing instruction.

Yan Yijing (2023) conducted a questionnaire survey among 54 English teachers from various higher vocational colleges and universities across different regions, and statistically analyzed the results. The study revealed that, although most English teachers currently lack sufficient knowledge about AI-assisted teaching tools, they all hold a positive attitude towards them. The data also indicated that as the frequency of using AI-assisted teaching tools increases in instruction, the teaching effectiveness continues to improve.

Lin Ting (2020) conducted a multi-dimensional comparison between traditionally teacher-corrected compositions and AI-corrected compositions on Critique.com, exploring the auxiliary effects of AI on college students' English writing instruction and their independent learning. The study proposed that the utilization of AI technology can more effectively assist teachers in completing composition corrections and data analysis efficiently. It is anticipated that this can address the issue of inadequate teacher correction and assessment in the latter stages of college English writing instruction, as well as students' low self-efficacy in writing learning. Simultaneously, it is hoped that this will cultivate students' awareness of independent English writing and lifelong learning.

Currently, despite the growing momentum in the development and utilization of AI-assisted English writing, challenges remain in integrating it with college English writing courses and enhancing teachers' adaptability to using AI-assisted teaching tools in their courses. To address these challenges, the following suggestions are proposed:

Firstly, consider the characteristics and needs of college English writing classes as the starting point and explore their integration with AI. College English writing classes have their unique characteristics, emphasizing students' practical language application abilities. AI-assisted teaching tools can search for corresponding resources from vast internet databases, providing as rich as possible real-world scenarios and simulation resources for college English writing instruction.

Secondly, leverage the advantages of AI to realize a

transformation in teaching modes. Professor Merrill, an American educational psychologist, divides the teaching mode into four stages: activation, demonstration, utilization, and integration. With the aid of AI-assisted teaching tools, teachers can adopt different tools at various stages, flexibly adjust the teaching mode, fully utilize online and offline resources, provide students with multimodal and interactive classroom experiences, and realize a transformation in the teaching mode of English writing classes under the backdrop of AI.

Third, improve the assessment and evaluation methods to promote the teaching reform under the background of artificial intelligence. Teachers have adopted new teaching tools and new teaching modes, so the assessment and evaluation methods of teachers should also be reformed. For online teaching or teaching based on artificial intelligence technology, more weight should be given to the evaluation, and trial and error should be allowed and encouraged, online and offline combined, and formative and summative evaluation combined, so as to guide teachers to actively explore new multiple classroom models.

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