The Use of Scaffolding Theory in the Teaching of Writing

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Abstract: "English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School (2017)" puts forward higher requirements for the writing ability of students: students can use the language knowledge and cultural knowledge they have learned to create new texts according to different purposes and audiences. Writing is a difficult point. However, the current domestic English writing teaching effect is not satisfactory. English writing teaching has not been paid enough attention, and students lack the initiative to learn English writing. Scaffolding theory encourages teachers to follow the "student-centered" classroom teaching model and build scaffolds based on the students' recent development areas, so as to promote students' knowledge construction and meaningful learning, stimulate students' interest in English learning, and improve their English writing level. This article analyzes the teaching of English writing from the perspective of scaffolding theory. First, it introduces the research background, expounds "Zone of Proximal Development" and scaffolding theory, and discusses in detail the five steps of scaffolding theory applied in high school English writing classrooms. Finally, three teaching inspirations and suggestions are provided in order to improve the teaching effect of high school English writing.
Keywords: scaffolding theory, writing teaching, zone of proximal development

1. Introduction

Writing is a process of knowledge accumulation, integration and output. English writing, as an important output technique, expressing personal opinions and personal emotions, is one of the important indicators for evaluating students' English ability. Writing ability is also a manifestation of students' language application ability, communication ability and expression ability. In addition, writing promotes the teaching of other language skills in language learning and helps students complete various communication tasks in the real world. However, writing is more time-consuming, slower to correct, and slower to receive than other skills. So there is relatively little training and insufficient attention in daily teaching. For both students' learning and teachers' teaching, writing is a challenge.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Studies on the application of scaffolding instruction in English writing teaching

Cazden (1979) thought that people could use scaffolding instruction in all disciplines, and it was very helpful for the learners' zone of proximal development. It can effectively stimulate and promote students' interest in learning, promote students' enthusiasm for learning, and foster students' cooperative spirit. With the help of scaffolding, students can learn and absorb new knowledge independently, thus they can cross zone of proximal development and promote their own development. In the process of exploring students' learning, Fisher (1994) found that teachers should pay more attention to the details when giving tips to students, and the tasks given by teachers should have a relatively high correlation. Besides, students should be encouraged to complete the construction of knowledge through independent thinking and full use of scaffolding.Nancy Balaban (1995) believed that "scaffolding instruction" was a benign interaction between teachers and students in the teaching process, in which students could happily acquire knowledge and skills.

2.2 Theoretical bases of scaffolding instruction model

2.2.1 Zone of proximal development

Zone of proximal development (ZPD) is put forward by Vygotsky. Vygotsky defines the "nearest development zone" as the distance between the actual development level and the potential development level of children when they solve problems independently. Among them, the support teaching area where teachers can guide and play a role is the ZPD. The key task of teacher teaching is not to conform to the development level of students, but to be in the front of student development, accurately grasp the characteristics of student development, and guide students to a higher level on the basis of mastering students' intelligence and knowledge. In the teaching process, teachers need to help students in time, and narrow the gap between the two by cultivating students' learning abilities, so that they can continue to create new ZPD.

2.2.2 Scaffolding instruction model

Scaffolding is an assisted learning process that supports the ZPD, or getting to the next level of understanding. This pedagogy advocates learners as the center under the guidance of teachers, and let students continuously climb by providing appropriate scaffolding. Gradually, they will find and solve problems in the process of learning and cultivating their autonomous learning ability. Finally, the teacher removes the scaffolding, which makes learners become the real master of learning. R.E.Maye (1995) thought that children are a building and the learning is the process they construct themselves continuously. Besides, Slavin (2003) points out that this model leads children to construct and internalize knowledge and skills, so as to promote them to acquire a higher level of cognition.

3. The use of scaffolding theory in the teaching of writing

3.1 Measures taken to help students with their writing

There are five steps of scaffolding teaching in writing class.

First, based on students' current academic conditions, that is, the existing cognitive level, combined with the teaching goals in the textbooks to build a learning scaffold for students. It is mainly divided into two types: interactive scaffolding and writing skill scaffolding. The interactive scaffolding mainly refers to the teacher's explanation and demonstration, such as asking questions, suggesting, brainstorming and group discussions. Writing skill scaffolding are often expressed as word-making and sentence-making scaffolding and text layout scaffolding. When constructing writing skills scaffolding, it is necessary to consider students' existing knowledge of language knowledge, structure and thinking ability in writing, combine with students' current development level and teaching goals as much as possible, and establish the connection between the new and the old knowledge. The teaching support is built in the students' "recent development zone" to maximize the enthusiasm of students while improving their learning ability.

Second, teachers should create language teaching situations, which can combine audio-visual with thinking ability. Teachers can choose audio-visual materials related to teaching, use multimedia technology to enhance the interest of teaching, and cultivate students' interest in learning.

Third, teachers should allow students to think and explore independently. Teachers can ask students to choose different angles, choose vocabulary, phrases and sentences according to the theme and try to create the first draft by themselves. Students may have some shortcomings and teachers should pay attention to students' performance in the stage of exploration. Teachers can give students help. As students' independent exploration ability improves, teachers can gradually reduce their support and help to students.

Fourth, teachers should adopt cooperative learning methods. After students have completed independent exploration and can basically complete the creation of the first draft, teachers can guide students to discuss, communicate and cooperate, learn from each other's strengths, improve themselves, and jointly complete writing tasks. Liu Daoyi (2000) command: "Writing can't just be a personal behavior, so in teaching process students should not always be asked to write compositions individually and then corrected by teachers.

Fifth, do effect evaluation. In the scaffolding writing teaching model, teachers guide students to evaluate between each other, so that students can learn from each other, get writing inspiration from communication with other students, learn writing skills, and improve their own writing ability and writing level. In the re-evaluation process, teachers can also make more accurate evaluations of students' compositions based on the formative evaluation to improve the teaching effect.

3.2 Teaching inspiration

3.2.1 Grasp students' "Zone of Proximal Development" comprehensively and dynamically

Scaffolding instruction comes from students' current ability. ZPD is a dynamic concept that changes with the development of students' learning and the changes in learning abilities. Therefore, in teaching practice, teachers should pay attention to all aspects of students' learning abilities and levels. According to the development and changes of students' learning, they should comprehensively and dynamically determine students' ZPD, and carry out timely actions according to the teaching situation. Adjusting and updating teaching timely.

3.2.2 Build various supports timely and moderately, withdraw the supports gradually

In the high school English writing teaching process under the guidance of scaffolding theory, teachers should build diversified learning scaffolds for students in a timely and appropriate manner according to the different needs of students at different learning stages. When students' writing level has improved to a certain level, they can gradually and dynamically withdraw the scaffolding, and give full affirmation to the students' progress and achievements.

3.2.3 Take students as the main body and give full play to the guiding role of teachers

The teacher builds a learning scaffold for students, and the students climb up along the scaffold. When encountering difficulties, the teacher only guides and assists. The scaffolding English writing teaching class requires teachers to have strong classroom observation ability and classroom control ability, create and provide rich communication opportunities for students as much as possible, take students as the main body of the classroom, and maximize the role of learning scaffolding.

4. Conclusion

The high school English writing teaching model based on scaffolding theory takes into account the central position of students and the leading role of teachers in the process of building and removing scaffolds. This method makes full use of the students' recent development area, which is conducive to the improvement of students' English proficiency.

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