

# The Construction of Formative Assessment Model for College English

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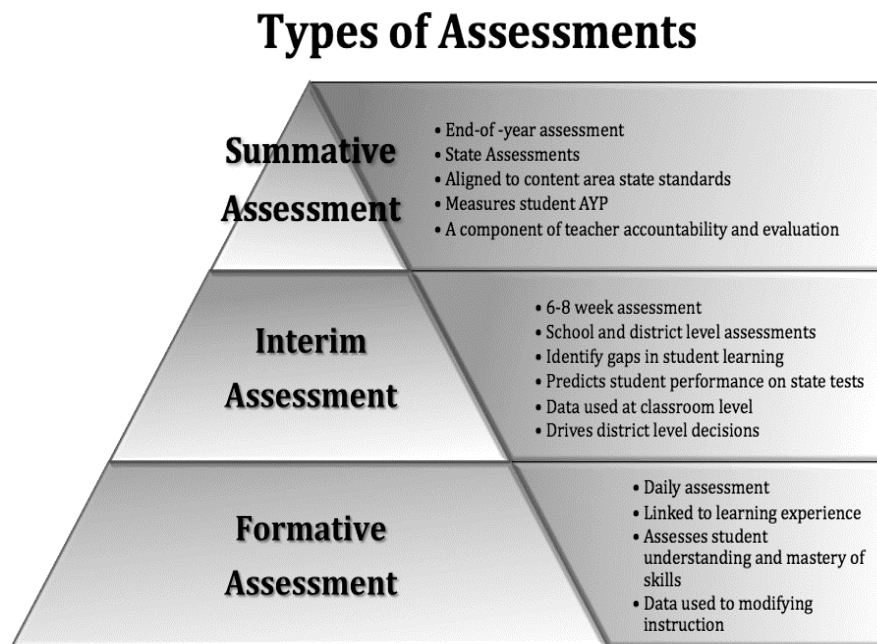
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**Abstract:** This thesis proposes a formative assessment model for College English learning. Based on the theory of the constructivism and the theory of multiple intelligences, the assessment model in this paper is a formative one focused on the performance, achievement, study strategy and attitude of the students in their daily learning process. Aiming on promoting the teaching ability of the teacher and the academic achievement of the students, this formative assessment model puts forward detailed methods on assessing the performance of students from four aspects: self-evaluation, peer evaluation; teacher evaluation and portfolio assessment.

## 1. Introduction

As is shown in Figure1, there are all together three types of assessment: summative assessment, interim assessment and formative assessment. The formative assessment is a way of assessment as oppose to summative assessment. Instead of judging students on the result of a single test, formative assessment is a daily assessment linked to the learning experience of students. It can make instructional adjustments to both teaching and learning, involving specific students' feedback that is turned into student action. Its purpose is not only for assessment, but more importantly for improving teaching method and students' performance.



**Figure 1.** Three types of Assessments

## 2. Theoretical Bases

**Constructivism.** The educational theory of Constructivism derives from the Piaget's early

theory on children's cognitive development theory, which argues that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences [1]. It holds that knowledge is not something fixed and stable, but rather it is constructed step by step, and it is frequently changed, as individuals and groups continually try to make sense of the complex world around them. In Piaget's opinion, learning is a process of acquiring knowledge based their experience and this process is usually done under the mutual influence between people and the environment [2]. It emphasizes that students should be the centre of this process, and students should not accept knowledge negatively, but construct knowledge more actively, so our assessment model should also put more emphasis on students' initiative in learning [3].

**The theory of multiple intelligences.** First introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983, the theory of multiple intelligences proposes that people are not born with all of the intelligence they will ever have. This theory challenged the traditional notion that there is one single type of intelligence, sometimes known as "g" for general intelligence, that only focuses on cognitive abilities [4]. The theory outlines eight types of "intelligence": Linguistic intelligence; Logical-mathematical intelligence; Spatial intelligence; Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence; Musical intelligence; Interpersonal intelligence; Intrapersonal intelligence; Naturalist intelligence [5]. That is to say, when we evaluate our students, we should not only focus on the traditional single type of intelligence, but also give equal importance to other intelligence to make sure every student make achievement in an all-rounded way.

### 3. Formative Assessment Model for College English Learning

**Self-evaluation.** For this part, students are asked to evaluate their performance of previewing or pre-class activities through some on-line platforms. Teachers upload preview tasks closely related to the teaching objectives and some corresponding tests on certain platforms before class to evaluate the students' performance. This part of assessment takes up 10% of the whole formative assessment grade, and is aims to make students take preview more serious and check how well students prepared for this class.

**Peer evaluation.** Peer evaluation is an effective collaborative learning strategy that asks students to reflect on contributions made by classmates in group work. Students are encouraged to examine the work and assign grades to their peers based on assessment criteria. There are two parts in peer evaluation in this model, peer evaluation of in-class activities and peer evaluation of assignments, and each account for 10% of the whole formative assessment. For the in-class activity, each student in a group gets the same grade since it is for group work and their grades are assigned by other groups. For assignments, however, each students get different grades based on their own performance and the grade is given by students in other groups.

**Teacher evaluation.** As the most traditional way of assessment, teacher evaluation comprises three parts: first, student's performance such as attendance, participation in class, etc. Grades on this part mainly rely on the data from the on-line platforms, taking up 10% of the whole. The second part is the evaluation of students' group work performance in class and takes up 20%. The third part is for assignment which accounts for 30%.

**Portfolio assessment.** A portfolio is a collection of students' works over a period of time. <sup>[6]</sup> A portfolio assessment emphasises learning over the course of time and provides opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, to evaluate themselves, and to formulate a deeper understanding of the knowledge. <sup>[7]</sup> One of the most common difficulties in implementing portfolio assessment in college English is that it is very time consuming for both students and teachers alike and thus saddles great pressure for them to carry it on. To solve this problem, the portfolio assessment in this formative assessment model is simplified to only meet the most important purposes. <sup>[8]</sup> In this portfolio, the requirements are for each unit but not each class, making it much simpler and easier for students to finish and teacher to grade. Students should write down the teaching objectives, problems or questions they encounter and how they solve these problems, key words and phrases, a mind map for the text, a homework correction and a reflection for this unit. Teachers would give a grade based on students' performance and this part accounts for 10% of the whole formative

assessment.

**Table 1.** Contents for a student's portfolio

<b>Basic contents for a student's portfolio:</b>
1.Teaching objectives for this unit;
2.Questions and answers in this unit;
3.Key words and phrases in this unit;
4.Mind map of the structure of the text;
5.Homework correction;
6.Reflection\self-evaluation.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper constructs a formative assessment model based on constructivism and the theory of multiple intelligences, and the assessment model consists four parts: self-evaluation, peer evaluation; teacher evaluation and portfolio assessment. This thesis proposes detailed assessing methods for each part and as oppose to the traditional assessment methods, this kind of formative assessment will not only assess students' language ability, more importantly, it can improve students' learning potential and inspire their own type of intelligence, making students the core and centre for the whole teaching process.

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