

# Deepening the Reform of Chinese Examination in Higher Vocational Colleges

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**Abstract:** The assessment reform of College Chinese is an important content of educational reform. However, due to the fact that the current Chinese assessment in higher vocational colleges does not attract sufficient attention and still needs many improvements, the assessment does not well promote teaching and teaching development or improve teaching efficiency. Therefore, it is of great importance to explore reasonable evaluation methods and to carry out practical assessment methods that give full play to their comprehensive functions.

## 1. Introduction

For the past few years, with the increasing marginalization of college Chinese teaching, the corresponding research on educational reform has gradually attracted more attention and has been deepened. However, from the perspective and content of the research on educational reform, it can be found that researchers mostly focus on discussion of classroom teaching and teaching design, rather than on that of curriculum assessment and student evaluation. One should know that examinations are an important link of sustainable education and are of close concern to teaching contents, methods and effects.

## 2. Defects of existing assessment methods

On the whole, the current Chinese assessment in higher vocational colleges is still limited to the traditional single assessment and evaluation method, which emphasizes the part but the whole, the appraisal and selection but the guidance and encouragement, the final examination but the ordinary examination, the academic theory but the practice, and the in-class study but the out-of-class study, thus bringing about a series of problems embodied in the following aspects:

### 2.1 Randomness of assessment standards

Although it has been basically determined in the current college Chinese examination that the comprehensive score consists of the ordinary score and the final score, but the setting of distribution ratio, specific content and mode of the two are quite different with obvious randomness. For example, the ratio of ordinary score to final score is 3:7, 4:6 or 5:5 in schools, without uniform standards. The content settings are also different, and the final scores are generally obtained through the final examination. However, due to the lack of clear regulations on examination methods (divided into open-book examination, partially open-book examination and closed-book examination), examination types and content emphasis, the examination methods are different, and the proportion of subjective questions and objective questions, of ancient literature and modern and contemporary literature, and of literariness and practicability are greatly different.

Scores are assessed inconsistently, such as only by attendance rate, or attendance rate and small papers, or attendance rate and additional lectures or drama performances in the first five minutes of class by some teachers. The more prominent problem is that different schools, even different teachers in the same school, have obvious differences in scoring methods, resulting in greater

arbitrariness in students' final scores.

## **2.2 Simplification of assessment methods**

Although there is no strict distinction between the learning objectives of students majoring in various disciplines from the perspective of the curriculum orientation of Chinese course in higher vocational college, different disciplines and specialties determine their personnel training objectives to be entirely different. What's more, generally, there are some differences in Chinese proficiency between students of liberal arts and students majored in science in higher vocational colleges. However, same examination contents and methods are mostly adapted for students with large differences in major and Chinese proficiency levels. Especially when the number of students attending classes is large and students from multiple classes attend classes together, many teachers are more likely to regard attendance as the assessment method for ordinary performance. Similar assessment methods focus more on students' attendance than knowledge acquisition. The final grade is mostly decided by only final test paper.

For students who have just completed a large number of exercises training for the college entrance examination, the singleness of the examination method once again makes them face similar examinations. Therefore, they are prone to feelings of fear of difficulties and boredom and perfunctory thoughts, which make it difficult for such method to effectively perform the assessment functions of truly examining the teaching effect, obtaining feedback information, enhancing the learning enthusiasm of students and promoting the development of teaching.

## **2.3 Single assessment function**

It is well known that examination have the most basic functions since primitive society: Pass on experience and evaluating result. To this day, these two basic functions have been detailed and derived into “the function of distinguishing and evaluating human knowledge, skills and abilities, the function of predicting the development tendency of human abilities, and the function of diagnosing, feeding back and stimulating the development process of human knowledge, skills and abilities”<sup>①</sup>. Generally, only when most of the examinations in the education system give play to these functions, can the feedback effect of examinations on teaching be truly realized. However, the current examination of college Chinese is still limited to the function of “distinguishing and evaluating” largely, and the comprehensive function of the examination is difficult to play due to insufficient attention to the functions of “prediction”, “diagnosis”, “feedback” and “encouragement”.

# **3. Reform the evaluation method and implement a reasonable assessment mechanism.**

## **3.1 Scientization of assessment criteria**

Examination is not the ultimate goal of learning, but to promote the improvement of teaching quality and effect. Students should be encouraged to broaden their horizons so as to open their minds, deepen their connotation, improve their cognition and think about problems from multiple angles and channels. However, the complete cancellation of the standards to allow its casual development may lead to the assessment in name only. Therefore, it is essential to establish a set of effective assessment system to standardize the assessment mode without considering the overall situation.

First of all, the assessment criteria should be basically unified. For example, the proportion of ordinary and final scores in the same school should be clearly defined. The specific contents and methods of the two should be basically clear and updated in due course. Secondly, minor adjustments should be made for unforeseen circumstances with due regard given to different factors such as disciplines, majors and Chinese proficiency levels of students. Thirdly, a rich test database to standardize basic information such as question types, contents and examination methods should

be built to extract suitable test questions for different types of students. Finally, in the classroom speech, reading notes and subjective questions in the final exam, the principle that students can be recognized as long as they can justify themselves or speak in a rational and convincing way or that students can get high marks if they have new ideas should be followed.

### **3.2 Diversification of assessment methods**

Because the effect of college Chinese teaching is slow and difficult to quantify, it is necessary to enrich and find various assessment methods. The ordinary score can consist of the score of reading notes, recitation of poems, attendance in class, starting of publication, publication of articles, participation of speeches and essay competitions. Students' ordinary performance and progress should also be carefully recorded and included in the results. There are also corresponding content requirements for students of different majors. The final examination should focus on the final examination paper, and its items should be made uniformly by the teaching and research office. Standardized question database should be established, and different examination papers should be adopted for art and science examinations as far as possible. Meanwhile, the examination papers should be closely related to the pace of the times and the life of students. It is best to set two or three subjective questions so that students can choose the one they are most familiar with and sure of. The ultimate goal is to achieve the evaluation function of assessment, and to encourage students to take daily accumulation and learning seriously, to think positively, to enrich learning experience, to improve learning efficiency and to enhance learning effect.

### **3.3 Diversification of evaluation and assessment functions**

The function of evaluation and examination is never only to obtain evaluation, but also to make feedback, encouragement, adjustment and improvement after evaluation. The same is true for selection examinations, such as entrance examination for senior high school and college, for which evaluation and appraisal results are obtained through several examination papers. This comprehensive function is of great significance to students' learning and teachers' teaching after the examination. Therefore, if Chinese curriculum in higher vocational college aims at cultivating students' humanistic quality and self-study ability, its evaluation function should also include "appraisal-selection function, guidance-motivation function, diagnosis-improvement function, feedback-adjustment function"<sup>②</sup> instead of single evaluation and appraisal function. This requires teachers to put in a lot of effort in the assessment methods and contents, so as to clarify the assessment functions corresponding to the objectives of each assessment and act with a purpose.

In consideration of the historical mission that college Chinese undertakes to pass on language skills, mold humanism, cultivate aesthetic judgment and inherit national culture, the curriculum specifically aims at cultivating and improving students' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, and the examination contents and methods should be closely set up according to these abilities. For example, recitation of poems places emphasis on the accumulation of knowledge and improvement of reading ability, pre-class speech and participation in speech competitions on oral expression, reading notes, publishing articles and participating in essay competition on appreciation of works and writing ability, while the establishment of publications on the combination of various abilities. After all, the comprehensive mission of college Chinese given by the curriculum can be truly completed only through parallel multiple assessment methods or an assessment method that can obtain multiple abilities.

## **4. Conclusion**

However, we must acknowledge that all examinations have certain limitations, especially for a course such as college Chinese, for which teaching results are difficult to quantify through examinations in the short term. In order to avoid the negative impact of unreasonable examination setting and to prevent "determining the teaching direction according to the examination results", the

key lies in clarifying the teaching objectives and taking scientific and diversified examination contents and methods to give full play to the comprehensive functions of the course examination.

Admittedly, examination is not an end in itself, but an important means and link to improve the teaching process and teaching that benefits teachers as well as students. Our ultimate goal is still to cultivate language skills, improve aesthetic standards and humanism, seek learning interests, and enable students to enjoy the pleasure from first language aesthetics, reading and writing. In other words, we should try our best to penetrate the effect of college Chinese teaching into all stages of students' life, so as to lay a good language foundation for the study of other contents and finally form the habit of lifelong learning.

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