

# An Empirical Research of "Driving License Pattern" Evaluation of English Reading Ability Based on Action-oriented Theory

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**Abstract:** English reading is not only an input of the knowledge but an output with all forms including action. This accords with the action-oriented theory which claims that knowledge takes action as the ultimate goal. This paper attempts to apply action-oriented theory in "Driver's License" evaluation pattern of English reading in order to probe into the evaluation pattern of "theory + skill". Meanwhile, empirical research is carried out to test the feasibility and applicability of this evaluation pattern based on action-oriented theory.

## 1. Introduction

With the reform of vocational education, it is entrusted with the important task of cultivating technical, skilled and application-oriented talents. Great achievements as vocational education has made in many aspects such as the innovation in curriculum system, talent cultivation goal, educational objects, innovation of educational approach, it still has a long way to go to cultivate skilled talents and meet the social needs and requirements. More importantly, there must be a shift of evaluation pattern and mode from traditional knowledge and theory-oriented evaluation to practical and vocational ability.

## 2. Review of Action-oriented Theory

### 2.1. Origin and Development of Action-oriented Theory

Action-oriented can also be interpreted as behavioral orientation. It dates back to the "Project Teaching Method" of the 16th century St. Luca School of Art and Architecture in Rome. The research of action as a formal paradigm of scientific research originates in the 1930s in the United States. The climax of the study is reached in the 1950s. In the 1970s, for German vocational education, it is difficult to cultivate talents to meet the needs of economic development under the teaching paradigm at that time. It arouses a strong appeal for the cultivation and strengthening of students' practical and professional ability. By 1980s, with the help of the German government, action-oriented teaching has gradually spread in vocational education and becomes the dominant paradigm of vocational education with its profound impact on German vocational education.

### 2.2. Theoretical Basis of Action-oriented Theory

Action-oriented theory is oriented by action. It is based on a series of theoretical basis which combine cognitive process with action.

#### 2.2.1. Theory of Action

The basic theoretical basis of action-oriented teaching is the so-called Theory of Action. It is generally accepted that there are three types of theory of action: Motion action theory, language action theory and action regulation theory. The language action theory is the most widely used theory in vocational education and studies. It holds that actions are knowledge-based, and knowledge is action-based. This pattern of "knowledge +action" can be interpreted as theory+skill/ability which is in accordance with the teaching aim and task of vocational education. Language action theory shifts teaching system from knowledge imparting to action-oriented which advocates and requires the curriculum teaching be the process of construction and formation of

students' professional capacity. Action-oriented teaching ultimately evaluates practical operational ability that students should have.

### **2.2.2. The Competency-based Concept**

The core content of action-oriented theory is the formation and development of students' vocational skills and abilities. In teaching design, action-oriented theory requires that the logical foundation of teaching design be based on the "action system" in the course of professional work not the "knowledge system". Then the evaluation pattern of teaching and learning also aims at action and competency rather than knowledge. This basis of action-oriented theory provides another possibility and evidence of "knowledge+ability" evaluation pattern.

In brief, action-oriented theory is one of the important educational methods to adapt vocational education to the educational background and needs of social talents with its emphasis on the mutual influence of operation - understanding - exchange.

## **3. English Reading and "Driving License" Evaluation Pattern**

English reading is not only an input of the knowledge but also an output with all forms including action. "Driving License" evaluation pattern is put forward by Xu Chunhua in 2011. This is a test of theory and practical skills like the driver taking part in a driving test. Vocational education shares something in common with driving test since both merge theory and ability into the whole one. Action-oriented theory is widely used in many dimensions of teaching and learning, but the application in teaching and learning evaluation is little.

In terms of its connotations, the core content of action-oriented theory is the formation and development of students' vocational skills and abilities which is in accordance with the goal of talent training. "Driving License" evaluation and action-oriented theory complement each other through the consensus of "knowledge+action" and ability evaluation. From a theoretical and realistic point of view, action-oriented theory can be the most effective and practical means of English reading evaluation pattern.

## **4. Design and Layout of English Reading "Driving License" Evaluation Pattern Under Action-oriented Theory**

Most colleges and universities have a single form in the evaluation of English courses. The reform of evaluation has been carried out in some curriculum, but for reading course, it is slightly inferior.

### **4.1 Design of "Driving License" Evaluation of English Reading**

In practice, "Driving License" evaluation of English reading can be conducted and achieved from the following four macro-aspects:

#### **4.1.1. Establishment of Evaluation Goal**

Under the target and goal of technical talents cultivation, the establishment and construction of the evaluation system of college English curriculum must adapt to the applied talents training mode. For English reading, the evaluation must focus on students' abilities and competency not only the knowledge and theory system. These abilities include the ability of to use the language knowledge in a comprehensive manner, such as reading ability, comprehension ability, inductive generalization ability, logical reasoning ability and evaluation ability of materials. What's more, the students can improve their communicative competence and develop their future professional and career abilities. The evaluation goal of English reading should be positioned in "knowledge + ability" which manifests the cultivation and improvement of ability and vocational skills.

#### **4.1.2. Diversification of Evaluation Forms**

For English reading, the conventional written examination and test scores are used to evaluate

students' learning and teaching of the teacher. Some class performance is considered in the evaluation but only accounting for a very small proportion of 30% or 40%. Different forms of evaluation can be taken in different teaching and learning stages. Open examination can be adopted in the aspect of knowledge memorization with a small percentage in the evaluation. In a practical skills-based section, more forms can be taken like term paper, online test, oral test, and practical operation exam and so on. In addition, the subject of evaluation can be teacher or peer-assessment.

#### 4.1.3. Reasonable Evaluation Content

The evaluation content of English reading should be multidimensional. Take formative evaluation as horizontal and competency as longitudinal evaluation. The evaluation of ability includes comprehensive analytical capabilities, logical reasoning ability, reverse thinking, spatial imagination capability, and practical operational abilities and so on. The content of examination should not be limited to the text understanding. It can be interspersed with speaking and writing in it. The form can be a picture, a chart and so on. Combined with English language proficiency level examination, "Driving License" evaluation of English reading should be designed overall and implemented.

#### 4.1.4. Attention to the Feedback of Evaluation Results

Evaluation is not an end but a beginning. Feedback is the central function of formative assessment. Feedback information enables teachers to modify subsequent learning activities and experiences, which will help to change the old teaching evaluation fundamentally. It also allows students to have a clear sense of their English proficiency, to identify group or individual deficiencies including language knowledge and practical application skills.

All in all, "Driving License" evaluation moves focus of evaluation from knowledge-target to knowledge and ability. This also means turning achieving grades onto learning processes.

### 5. Teaching Experiment and Implementation of "Driving License" Evaluation

This teaching experiment can be taken as the practical and micro-aspects of evaluation based on "Driving License" evaluation of English reading.

#### 5.1. Teaching Experiment

Class 1 and Class 2 are selected as experimental groups and reference groups. Knowledge-targeted evaluation and "Driving License" evaluation pattern of "knowledge+ability" are carried out respectively in two classes from September to December. The following is a detailed evaluation schedule and results.

Table 1 knowledge-targeted reading evaluation in Class 1

Type	Exam Goals				
	memorization	comprehension	application	creation	Total
Word Formation	20%	5%	5%		30%
Gap Filling	5%	3%	1%	1%	10%
Reading Comprehension	5%	25%	10%	10%	50%
Summary	2%	3%	2%	3%	10%

Table 2 "knowledge+ability" reading evaluation in Class 2

Type	Exam Goals				
	memorization	comprehension	application	creation	Total
Vocabulary	5%	5%	5%		15%
Matching	3%	5%	5%	2%	15%
Reading Comprehension	5%	20%	10%	5%	40%
Mind Map	2%	10%	3%		15%
Topic Summary	2%	8%	3%	2%	15%

The above two tables show different evaluation with different types. Following the "knowledge+ability" evaluation, the practical ability of students differs from each other. Learning motivation and interest are also different.



Fig.1 Evaluation results

From the chart, it can be seen that the students in Class One are good at knowledge memorization but their application ability is not in parallel with it. The basis of the students' knowledge is solid but not dynamic. Students tend to be "high scores and low abilities". Students in Class Two show higher ability each compared with Class One and it is in constant growth and improvement. Students in "Driving License" evaluation pay more attention to their ability and their learning process is greatly motivated in constant improvement and progress.

## 5.2. Enterprise-based Evaluation System

The above evaluation is just teacher-based and it is a question whether they meet the needs and requirements of the market of the enterprise. So an enterprise-based evaluation system must be established to collect and analyze the feedback information. Students can be exposed to all kinds of enterprises in some interview simulation contests. Their basic competency is measured by the basic demands of enterprise with emphasis on practical and vocational abilities. Feedback from enterprise is a good guide to teaching and learning especially.

## 6. Conclusion

Vocational education features its importance in cultivating students' independent learning ability and action-oriented theory has been playing an important guiding significance in the present practice of higher vocational education. Many studies of action orientation regard it as the main principle of curriculum development, teaching design and implementation. In teaching evaluation, action-oriented theory breaks the unilateral evaluation pattern and content based on knowledge. "Driving License" evaluation adheres to the combination of knowledge and ability or competency, the so-called applied social talents cultivation and evaluation. Action-oriented evaluation is a shift from the traditional reading evaluation with the expectation of evaluating the knowledge and ability of students to enhance the comprehensive quality.

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