

Exploration of Graded Group Reading Teaching Mode for Primary School English

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Abstract

In recent years, graded group reading in English has become a new and efficient teaching method and means, which has been increasingly understood and valued by primary school English teachers. However, how to actively and effectively carry out this teaching method in actual teaching is still the most confusing and urgent problem for frontline teachers. Based on the graded group reading teaching materials of FLTRP, this article aims to explore the path of graded group reading teaching mode in primary school English through five aspects: focusing on the theme, activating thinking - obtaining information, clarifying the theme - comparing and refining, exploring the theme - discussing and extending, internalizing the theme - connecting with life, and externalizing the theme.

Keywords

Primary School English; Graded Group Reading; Teaching Mode.

1. Introduction

Teacher Li Xingyong defined "graded group reading" as follows: English graded group reading selects a group of articles for reading teaching based on different language levels of students (reflecting grading), centered around a specific theme or topic (reflecting the core), and based on different language texts (reflecting grouping), carries out English learning activities aimed at core literacy development. The significance of graded group reading in primary school English lies in: it increases the reading volume of primary school students through two or more group articles according to the actual level of students. In the constantly repeated texts of vocabulary, language structure, and expression paradigm, it allows students to quickly understand and grasp the text as a whole; it effectively improves students' reading level, reading skills, and comprehensive language application ability through reading techniques such as browsing, speed reading, careful reading, and extensive reading; through the comparison, analysis, discussion, and summarization of multiple text materials, it guides students to think about the phenomena, viewpoints, connotations, and essence behind the language through the text, changes the teacher-centered reading teaching based on knowledge, and focuses on education reading, maximally develops students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability, and comprehensively enhances students' reading interest and core literacy.

Primary school English teachers generally recognize and affirm the connotation, significance, effectiveness, and advantages of graded group reading. However, in reality, facing heavy educational and teaching tasks, blind and arbitrary text selection, uneven reading volume of students and insufficient input of teaching materials, it is difficult for frontline primary school English teachers to truly and effectively cultivate students' good English reading habits and reading literacy, and it is difficult to achieve a deep and sustained promotion of graded group reading. The "English Graded Group Reading" series of reading materials is a set of original English graded readers that implements the teaching reform of moral education and core

literacy of English subject. It introduces the concept of group reading of Chinese language subject advocated by the Ministry of Education into English subject, and is the first set of original English graded readers in China to practice the group reading concept. It covers three major theme contexts of "people and nature", "people and society", and "people and self", and selects two or more texts around the same theme, with a total of 12 volumes corresponding to grades 1-6, based on the actual level of different students.

In the author's actual teaching practice of English reading, taking "English graded group reading" as the teaching material, the graded group reading teaching is comprehensively and systematically applied to primary school English reading class. Through long-term practice, the author has summarized and refined a teaching mode of graded group reading in primary school English that is suitable for teachers' practical operation and application, and meets the cognitive level and psychological characteristics of primary school students, in order to fully stimulate students' reading interest and expression desire, and let students experience the fun of reading and truly love reading.

2. Focusing on the Theme, Activating Thinking

2.1. Review What is Known and Lead to the Unknown

The title is the concentration and label of the theme. Based on the title, we can find the key to activate the theme accurately. For example, in Lesson 3 of Grade 3, the theme is "The Great People." Through two different articles "Early Birds" and "A Special Class," they respectively tell the stories of ordinary people from various professions who get up early and parents from different industries introducing themselves at a special class meeting. Both articles tell about various professions. Therefore, the teacher starts with professions and lets students quickly say the related words about professions through brainstorming on PPT, and then leads students to think further, "Do you know early birds? Are they early birds? Which people are early birds? Let's read the story and know more." In the process of reviewing what is known and exploring the unknown, students activate the construction of vocabulary reserve and theme meaning.

2.2. Cover Analysis and Prediction

Each lesson in the "English Graded Group Reading" textbook has a cover with a panda as the prototype. The cover contains rich information, including the title, picture, and question. It can effectively predict the theme context, story type, development and result, and language and thinking preparation for the theme meaning. For example, in Lesson 1 of Grade 4, the theme is "Think Carefully," and below the theme word is a panda holding a feather fan, standing at the bow of a boat, and borrowing arrows with straw boats. Through cover analysis, the teacher helps students speculate and predict: "Who is he? What do you think of Zhuge Liang? Are you good at thinking carefully? Can you guess what story we will read today?" Thus, the theme is activated and the text is introduced.

3. Obtaining Information, Clarifying the Theme

3.1. Picture and Text Decoding

The "Primary School English Curriculum Standards" emphasizes in the second-level objectives that students should be able to understand, read, and tell simple stories with the help of pictures. As an important carrier of graded group reading teaching materials for primary school English, pictures not only explain each other, but also serve each other with text. Teachers guide students to learn to read books and pictures, decode the information and connection between picture and text, further enrich the language connotation, help students establish schemas in their minds, effectively understand the group reading text and theme meaning, and stimulate students' desire to read in English. For example, in Lesson 5 of Grade 4, "Be Brave," the

encouraging eyes and expressions of parents, friends, and people in the picture, along with the encouraging words in the text, make students and the little protagonist constantly empathize: "Come on, be brave, you can do it!" The combination of picture and text truly achieves the purpose of touching the soul and nurturing the heart.

3.2. Picture Tour

Picture tour is essentially a shared reading process, which is a process of teachers and students reading stories together and constructing meaning collaboratively. In this process, the teacher guides students with questions, inspires them to observe, predict, think, and list in a specific order through characters, event pictures, etc., helps students grasp the story plot, understand the characters' psychology, and explore the story's meaning through teacher-student cooperation, and effectively improves students' English thinking quality. For example, in Lesson 4 of Grade 4, "Be Grateful," the teacher helps students sort out the development of the two stories through the picture tour, and further clarifies the theme of gratitude.

3.3. Mind Map

Using mind maps in graded group reading teaching in primary school English can help students grasp the main line of the text, sort out the summary of the group reading, compare and summarize the theme meaning, and achieve higher-level teaching goals, promoting the improvement of students' comprehensive language application ability. For example, in Lesson 5 of Grade 4, "Be Brave," the teacher uses a ladder-shaped mind map to sort out the story of the little turtle going through hardships and throwing itself into the embrace of the sea and little boy Tommy overcoming fear and bravely giving a speech. Through the development of the plot, the two texts coincidentally lead to the group reading theme "Be Brave," making the theme meaning both obvious and logical, and achieving the educational goal of encouraging students to face difficulties and overcome them.

4. Comparing and Refining, Exploring the Theme

4.1. Multi-perspective Exploration of Theme Significance

In Lesson 2 of Level 4 of English Graded Reading, "No pain, no gain," there are two stories. The first story, "Jay and Ray," is about two mice named Jay and Ray. From autumn to winter, Jay has been busy while Ray does nothing. Jay shares his food with Ray, who then expresses her desire to work with Jay next year. The second story is the well-known Chinese traditional story, "Waiting for the Hare."

After analyzing and extracting the theme of "No pain, no gain," the teacher uses the following question chain to guide students' thinking: "How do you understand the proverb 'No pain, no gain'? Can you give some examples of 'No pain, no gain'? Do you think you can get something easily without hard work? Using '____ hard, ____ can ____,' the teacher can gradually guide students to reach the conclusion that 'The more you plow, the more you gain' and 'Every effort put in translates into gains.' The teacher can also further guide students to ask, "Do you have to give something in return? What would you most like to contribute?" This can help students not only understand the significance of hard work but also use their personal and social experiences to understand the principle that there may not always be a reward for effort, but without effort, there will be no reward. By facing various results, only focusing on giving and not on receiving can help us face life calmly.

4.2. Hypothetical Extension of Theme Significance

In Lesson 4 of Level 4 of English Graded Reading, "Be grateful," there are two stories. The first story is the Chinese traditional story, "The Farmer and the Snake." The second story is "The

Lion and the Mouse," where the lion releases the mouse at its request. The third story is "The Ant and the Grasshopper," where the ant helps the grasshopper in its time of need.

After guiding students to understand the theme of "Be grateful," the teacher can further extend the discussion by asking questions such as "Why should we be grateful? What happens if the farmer doesn't save the snake and the lion eats the mouse? Facing the dead farmer and the living lion, what are you trying to say? Why did the farmer save the snake even though he knew it would bite? If you were a farmer, would you save the snake?" This can help students understand that helping others is a virtue, and gratitude is a virtue. By cultivating a sense of gratitude from a young age, we can live in a world of gratitude and make our lives better.

4.3. Empirical Analysis of Theme Significance

In Lesson 3 of Level 5 of English Graded Reading, "Is that true?" there are three stories. The first story, "A little bird told me," is about a man named Ai Zi who scolds his neighbor for spreading rumors. The second story, "A monster in the wheat field," is about a boy named Tony who mistakes a scarecrow for a monster. The third story is "The sky is falling," about animals spreading rumors after a hazelnut falls on a rabbit's head.

After comparing these three stories, the teacher can guide students to discuss questions such as "Do you think what you hear is always true? Do you think before you believe? What should we do about hearsay?" Then, through the game of Chinese whispers, the teacher can further analyze questions such as "Why are messaging games often distorted? What else can we do in life? How should we avoid it? How can we know the truth?" This can help students understand the reasons and processes of misunderstandings and cultivate a scientific spirit of questioning and seeking truth.

4.4. Highly Sublimated Theme Significance

In Lesson 1 of Level 6 of English Graded Reading, "The Silk Road," there are three stories. The first story, "Carrots and Zhang Qian," is about a boy who does not like carrots but is convinced to eat them after hearing the story of Zhang Qian's journey to the Western Regions. The second story, "Magic Worms," is about a Chinese girl who introduces a British boy to silk and the Silk Road. The third story is "A talk with Marco Polo."

After extracting the theme of these three stories, which is that these people never forgot their mission, persevered, and created the great Silk Road between East and West, the teacher can further encourage students to ask questions and imagine. This can help students understand the role of communication and exchange between countries and races in the world from a cultural perspective and establish lofty ideals. By learning about the world's outstanding civilizations on the basis of learning one's own culture, students can become messengers of Chinese culture, promoting its development and prosperity.

5. Discussion Extension and Internalization of Theme

The act of expressing a specific theme meaning in one's own language is the internalization of theme meaning (Zhang Taigang, 2020). The process of internalizing theme significance not only involves connecting theme significance with personal experiences but also involves enhancing students' core English literacy. For example, in Lesson 2 of Level 4 of English Graded Reading, after guiding students to understand the theme of "No pain, no gain," the teacher can ask students to complete "Jay, Ray, and the farmer - which one do you like best and why? What do you want to say to them?" and use the language framework to help students internalize the theme, such as "I like _____ because _____. You should _____ because no, *." Similarly, after guiding students to understand the theme of "Be grateful," the teacher can ask students to complete "When someone helps/care about/ you, what do you say to them?" and use the sentence structure "Thank you for *. You are*** ." to express gratitude.

6. Contacting Life and Externalizing Themes

Externalizing theme significance is the ultimate goal of theme exploration. It mainly refers to the expression of meaning related to the discourse theme in a new context (Zhang Taigang, 2020). During the reading process, the teacher can create real situations related to students' actual lives based on the results of theme exploration, design language output activities (Li Kai, 2020), and help students effectively express themselves through language in a context that is close to their lives and matches their level and abilities. For example, in Lesson 4 of Level 4 of English Graded Reading, based on the theme of gratitude, the teacher can ask students to make love cards, allowing students to express love and gratitude in a real situation, both externalizing the theme significance and activating language use and nurturing the mind. Similarly, in Lesson 3 of Level 6 of English Graded Reading, based on the theme of work, the teacher can ask students to make posters about work, linking learning with life, integrating themes with practice, extending the classroom to outside of class, and allowing students to experience the beauty of labor and create happiness.

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