

# English Reading Teaching Strategies in Senior High School from the Perspective of Key Competency

Yang Xiao

School of China West Normal University, Sichuan China

## Abstract

Reading is one of the important links in high school English teaching. It is the fundamental way for students to accept texts, learn knowledge and exchange ideas. The key competency proposed in the revised English Curriculum Standards for Senior High schools is to develop students' core quality of English subject, and advocate teachers practice English learning activity view in order to promote the development students' core quality. Curriculum reform has put forward new requirements for high school English reading teaching, that is, teachers should explore ways to develop students' core qualities in teaching and lay a good foundation for students' future development. This paper systematically elaborates the connotation of core English literacy, analyzes the current situation of senior high school English reading teaching, and focuses on exploring the new English reading teaching strategies based on core literacy from three aspects: what to teach, how to teach, and evaluation.

## Keywords

Core Competency; High School English Reading; Teaching Strategy.

## 1. Introduction

In order to adapt to the changes of talent training requirements in the new era, the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 edition) emphasizes that English has not only an instrumental role, but also a special humanistic role, that is, English contains a unique educational value. Core quality is the excellent character and key ability that students need to possess, adapt to the development needs of the times, and guide life practice (Ministry of Education, 2018). The core quality of English subject mainly includes four aspects, namely language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. Reading teaching is an important part of high school English teaching, which involves the integration of vocabulary, grammar, stylistic features, cultural knowledge and other aspects of the reading text, is a key way to develop students' comprehensive language application ability and cultivate students' core quality of English subject. Therefore, it is the teaching goal of high school English teachers in the new era to design and effectively carry out English reading teaching and organically combine English reading teaching with the cultivation of students' core quality of English subject, so as to maximize the educational value of English subject, promote the development of high school students' core quality, and implement the fundamental task of cultivating morality and cultivating people.

## 2. Connotation Overview of English Core Literacy

The term "core literacy" first appeared in 2003 in "Core Literacy for Successful Lives and Healthy Societies", published by the OECD. The core literacy framework was formally proposed in 2005 and includes three elements: the ability to use tools interactively, to interact in heterogeneous groups, and to act autonomously (OECD, 2005). The European Union has proposed eight core qualities for lifelong learning: mother tongue communication, foreign

language communication, mathematical ability and basic scientific and technological ability, digital ability, learning how to learn, interpersonal, cross-cultural and social ability and civic ability, entrepreneurial spirit and cultural expression (European Commission, 2006). Professor Chu Hongqi (2016) believe that core literacy, as a key literacy, should adapt to individual and social development as well as national conditions and requirements of international competition.

### **2.1. Unique Educational Value of English**

The so-called educational value of a discipline refers to that the curriculum content of discipline not only enables students to learn certain discipline knowledge and develop discipline skills, but also promotes the development of students' mental ability, emotional sensitivity, ideological morality, social responsibility and other aspects. Each subject of basic education has the value of educating people and can promote the all-round development of students from different perspectives, and English is no exception (Cheng Xiaotang, 2016). As a language, English is not only a part of culture but also the carrier of culture. Through English, students can understand the culture of other countries, and form the awareness and ability of cross-cultural understanding, which helps students respect cultural differences, enhance the understanding of their own national culture, and strengthen their cultural confidence (Gong Yafu, 2014). In addition, different languages also contain different ways of thinking. The process of learning English is also a process to promote the development of their own thinking quality. In the future study and life, students can also view a certain phenomenon or problem from a variety of perspectives.

### **2.2. Components of Core Literacy of English**

The core quality of English subject mainly includes language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. These four elements are closely connected and inseparable. Language competence which is the basic element of the core quality of English subjects refers to the ability to understand and express meaning by means of listening, speaking, reading, writing and watching in social situations. Language competence includes language knowledge and language skills. Cultural awareness refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign culture and the identification of excellent culture, which is the cross-cultural cognition, attitude and behavior orientation of students in the global background. Cultural awareness reflects the value orientation of the core quality of English discipline and is the "cornerstone" of the core quality. Quality of thinking refers to the ability and level of thinking in logical, critical, innovative and other aspects. It reflects the mental characteristics of the core quality of English discipline and is the key to the core quality. Learning ability is the development condition of English subject core accomplishment. The cultivation of learning ability is necessary. Students with strong learning ability can adjust themselves in time according to their own learning conditions and give full play to their own advantages, which is conducive to the formation of good habits (Carroll, 2000).

## **3. Current Problems in Reading Teaching in Senior High Schools**

In China, teenagers' English reading has attracted wide attention. Schools of all levels and types help students to improve and develop their English reading ability through English reading classes. However, there are many problems in the current English reading teaching. Students lack the opportunity to express their personal feelings, attitudes and values. In class, they only focus on the explanation of language knowledge points and the training of basic reading skills such as scanning and skimming.

### 3.1. Single Interpretation of Textbooks

High school English teachers mainly design and carry out teaching activities based on various texts in textbooks. The unit theme is reflected in different discourses, which contain the vocabulary, grammar and cultural content of the unit, which is an important way to cultivate students' English ability and core accomplishment. However, in fact, high school English reading teaching is still dominated by indoctrination teaching, in which teachers translate articles word by word or from Chinese to English to realize the teaching purpose of students understanding the theme of articles and learning key language knowledge (Li Mingyuan, 2016). In reading teaching, teachers often pay attention to students' acquisition of superficial information. For example, students extract information from the text and fill in a form to complete the understanding of the whole article. In addition to the table, teachers often analyze and interpret the content and structure of the text with the clues of exercises after class, but do not pay attention to and dig the deep connotation contained in the text and its unique emotional value, which is not conducive to the development of students' way of thinking and mobilize the enthusiasm of students.

### 3.2. Neglect the Training of Students' Thinking

In reading activities, teachers mainly lead students to read and understand the text content in general, but ignore the in-depth analysis of the details of the text and the deep experience of the emotion behind it. Moreover, they fail to timely explore the creation background of the text and the emotion given by the author. As a result, the whole reading activity stays in the simple level of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This kind of teaching activity neglects the training of students' thinking and hinders the improvement of English reading teaching quality. English is not only a subject, but also a language. The value of Chinese text in reading teaching is not only a tool for students to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing. In-depth analysis of the text content is more in line with the law of students' cognitive development, which is conducive to help students realize the internalization of language ability. Therefore, the importance of thinking exercise in English reading teaching is self-evident.

### 3.3. Don't Pay Attention to Cultural Knowledge

In the study and learning of English, I should form certain emotional attitudes and correct values, learn how to behave, and cultivate people with good self-cultivation, which includes cultural perception, cultural understanding, cultural comparison and cultural identification (Wang Qiang, 2016). Discourse carries linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge. Therefore, when teaching high school English reading, high school English teachers should not only pay attention to whether students have absorbed and understood the language knowledge, but also whether they have mastered the cultural knowledge of British and American countries. Nowadays, in high school English classes, teachers pay too much attention to sentence analysis, ignore the background and context of English reading materials, and rarely mention relevant extracurricular knowledge. Therefore, students will naturally not be interested in it, which has no positive effect on the cultivation of core quality of English subjects and the construction of high school English classes.

### 3.4. The Evaluation Method of Reading Teaching is single

Teaching evaluation is a process of measurement and value judgment of teaching process and teaching result based on teaching objectives, which has a guiding effect on the growth of students and teachers. From the perspective of academic theory, there are three kinds of teaching evaluation of reading, namely formative evaluation, diagnostic evaluation and summative evaluation. However, the current teaching evaluation methods of reading are relatively simple, mainly reflected in the simple and casual classroom teaching evaluation language of teachers, such as "good", "well good" or "well done" filled the classroom. After the

unit study or half study period, closed-book examination is mainly used for detection and evaluation; At the end of the semester, a summative examination will be conducted to directly form the evaluation of students' discourse reading, and the score will be the only basis for the evaluation of students. Therefore, it is found that the teaching evaluation of reading is mainly in the hands of teachers, the examination is the only way of evaluation, the evaluation subject is single, the evaluation method is closed, in fact, such evaluation can not promote the improvement of students' text reading ability, nor can it promote the development of students' reading ability.

## **4. Effective Strategies for English Reading Teaching in Senior High School**

### **4.1. What does High School Reading Teach**

Based on the actual situation of students and oriented by teaching objectives, teachers need to make choices from the prescribed teaching content at different teaching levels. The answer to this question is that what a teacher ultimately teaches depends on the view of language he holds in his teaching practice. Reading teaching is one of the important ways for students to input language, because discourse carries language knowledge and cultural knowledge, and transmits cultural connotation, value orientation and way of thinking. Discourse in language teaching is usually presented in multimodal forms, including oral and written, audio and video, and in different stylistic forms. Based on the importance of reading and the characteristics of texts, high school teachers should not only lead students to understand and master the language knowledge contained in the texts, but also guide them to contact and grasp the specific structure, stylistic features and expressions of different texts in English reading teaching. This will not only help students to deepen their understanding of the meaning of the texts. It also helps them to use different types of discourse for effective expression and communication. Discourse not only provides language and cultural materials for students to develop language skills and form learning strategies, but also provides a platform for students to form correct values. Teachers should fully explore the cultivation knowledge behind the text and language and implement the goal of cultivating virtues and cultivating people.

### **4.2. Change the Way of Discourse Interpretation**

Discourse study is the key to English reading teaching. Discourse here refers to different types of discourse used in teaching, that is, teaching materials used by teachers in teaching, including oral, written, or multi-modal materials such as graphs and charts, also known as teaching texts or teaching discourse (Wang Qiang,2017). According to the requirements of the Curriculum Standards, teachers can carefully study the text from the three questions of "What How Why" before reading teaching: to clarify the subject matter and theme of the text, to think about the specific content of the text, to analyze the structure of the text, the layout of the text, and how the author organizes and arranges around the main idea. The emotions, attitudes and values that the author wants to convey, the thoughts that he wants to provoke, etc. Secondly, in reading teaching, teachers should carry out discourse teaching centered on students and provide reading guidance according to their learning needs and interests. When choosing a discourse, teachers should pay attention to the moderate length, from easy to difficult, and try to cover all types of discourse in real life, including multimodal discourse.

### **4.3. with the Help of Mind Mapping**

In the process of English learning, students often feel that knowledge is scattered and trivial, and what they learn is fragmented knowledge, which requires teachers to process, transform, transfer and expand knowledge with the help of mind mapping, so as to help students make use of their original experience and knowledge, deepen their correct understanding of discourse, and build a new knowledge system(Sun Jing,2018). Mind maps transform invisible brain

activities into tangible schema tools, concretize and visualize abstract text content, help students intuitively and systematically sort out text structure and content as well as relevant knowledge points, constantly deepen text interpretation and stimulate students' divergent thinking (Chen Jingjing, 2022). Mind mapping can also effectively link old and new knowledge, so that fragmented knowledge can form a complete and comprehensive knowledge framework, and also shape students' divergent thinking in knowledge link and knowledge transfer and divergence. Under the guidance of the mind map, students will have the desire to explore the text and complete various tasks driven by curiosity and thirst for knowledge. In this way, complex and scattered knowledge can be made more organized and logical, so that students can learn easily and their thinking ability can be further developed.

#### **4.4. Pay Attention to the Relevant Cultural Background Knowledge**

Reading requires a basic level of language, but it is not completely related to the language level. Cultural background knowledge is also important. In the process of reading, the improvement of background knowledge on specific topics helps to improve the efficiency of reading and enable richer text analysis (Liu Linfeng, 2016). When students are familiar with the specific cultural background knowledge of an event or scene, it will be easier for them to understand the text. In the teaching of reading, teachers should pay attention to supplementing students with relevant background knowledge and social and cultural knowledge to broaden students' scope of knowledge (Zhang Enhuai, 2018). And pay attention to guide the students to learn to use the main clues of context to reconstruct the meaning of the article, so as to better train the students' ability to accurately understand the connotation of the text. First of all, teachers should guide students to understand English culture by reading chapters, including politics, economy, history, religion, local customs, value orientation and other aspects, so that students can accumulate cultural knowledge points and understand the origin of culture in the edification of English language, and gradually eliminate their prejudice against culture. Secondly, show the differences between Chinese and English cultures. For example, teachers can take traditional festivals as the starting point to guide students to explain the differences between Chinese and Western social customs and the culture behind the differences, respect the differences, and respect the significance of different customs and habits. Thirdly, students should be guided to think deeply, learn the essence of culture, dare to face the shortcomings of their own culture, and improve the cultural quality in the open cultural exchange. Finally, construct the cross-cultural communication environment, strengthen the use of language, guide cultural communication, and improve the ability of students to adapt to the cross-cultural communication environment. Teachers can also select the most prominent features of Western culture according to the actual situation of students and make systematic thematic introduction, so that students can have a deeper understanding of foreign culture.

### **5. Evaluation**

English teaching evaluation is an important means to strengthen the routine management of English teaching. It has the functions of diagnosis, feedback, guidance and motivation. The previous English teaching evaluation methods only pay attention to the screening and selection functions of evaluation, but ignore the guiding, motivating and diagnostic development functions of evaluation (Wang Yingjie, 2019).

#### **5.1. Enrich the Classroom Evaluation Form**

For reading teaching, appropriate evaluation methods will promote the improvement of teaching efficiency and provide dynamic support for the development of students' continuous learning ability. In the content of teaching evaluation, based on the teaching of one class, students can carry out formative evaluation, diagnostic evaluation and summative evaluation.

These three kinds of evaluation can evaluate students' good performance in the process of text reading, and also give feedback to students' bad reading, so as to guide students to improve their reading process. In addition to the common teacher evaluation, students can also conduct mutual evaluation to guide students to give play to their own initiative and evaluate each other. Through this evaluation method, students can have a more comprehensive understanding of their own situation. High school teachers should also guide students to learn to think about themselves, that is, to conduct self-evaluation. In this way, students need to conduct a systematic analysis of their own learning situation.

## 5.2. Promote Teaching by Evaluation

The role of classroom teaching evaluation is not only to judge the teaching level of teachers, to assess the effectiveness and quality of classroom teaching, but more importantly to find the advantages of teaching through evaluation and encourage teachers to further tap their teaching potential and creativity. Secondly, teachers are supposed to learn from each other and improve together. For reading teaching, the quality of a reading class can be evaluated from teaching objectives, teaching process and teaching results. It is necessary to record the teacher's teaching process and students' activities by means of using video with the purpose of evaluation and analysis after class. Teachers who are observed and evaluated can also participate in the discussion, so as to make the whole evaluation process more comprehensive, objective and accurate. Moreover, the teaching videos from different teachers can be compared, or the same teacher's teaching videos can be compared to analyze the progress of their teaching. Both teachers and students are indispensable participants in education and teaching activities. Without either party, teaching work cannot be carried out. Therefore, in the process of carrying out evaluation, teachers should not only evaluate students, but also guide students to evaluate their teaching situation. Teachers should objectively analyze and carefully study the evaluation results, find out the existing problems in teaching and the causes of the problems, and timely adjust the teaching plan and teaching method.

## 6. Conclusion

High school teachers should actively adapt to the requirements of the new curriculum reform, innovate reading teaching strategies based on the core literacy aimed at promoting the improvement of teaching quality and efficiency. According to the requirements of core literacy, teachers should deeply interpret the text and dig the text knowledge and connotation, use the mind map to help students construct the knowledge structure, optimize the reading teaching evaluation method, so as to gradually cultivate the comprehensive literacy of students.

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