

A Multi-Modal Teaching Approach in High School English Reading: A Case Study of Unit 4 from YLP English Textbook 1

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Abstract: *As technological advancements continue to reshape educational methodologies, the concept of multi-modal teaching has garnered significant interest. This approach, characterized by the integration of various sensory modes and media formats, offers students a comprehensive and varied learning experience, enhancing the richness and diversity of information acquisition. In the realm of English language education, multi-modal teaching has not only gained momentum but also received endorsement and encouragement from the Ministry of Education. Despite this, there remains a notable gap in research specifically focusing on the application of multi-modal teaching strategies in senior high school English reading classes. This study aims to underscore the importance of adopting a multi-modal teaching framework in these settings. It presents a detailed teaching design tailored for multi-modal instruction and employs a specific case study in reading to evaluate the impact of this approach on enhancing students' engagement, linguistic insights, and communicative skills.*

Keywords: *Multi-model teaching; High School English; Reading class*

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of modern technology has profoundly influenced educational methodologies, prompting a search for innovative teaching strategies. Multi-modal teaching, a novel pedagogical approach, stands out in this context, gaining considerable attention and application in the educational field. This approach integrates various sensory modes—such as visual, auditory, and tactile—and diverse media forms, including images, audio-visual materials, and videos. As a result, it offers students an enriched learning experience with a diverse range of informational inputs. Particularly in the field of English education, multi-modal teaching aligns with the evolving trends and is endorsed by the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2022 edition) and the *English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High Schools* (2017 edition, 2020 revision), reflecting its growing importance.

In the context of senior high school education, the English curriculum is crucial for fostering students' core literacy, particularly in enhancing their listening and speaking competencies. Despite its significance, there is a noticeable scarcity of research on the application of multi-modal teaching strategies in English reading classes at the senior high school level. Moreover, in the previous semantic analysis, researchers only paid attention to the language system and semantic structure itself and the relationship between social culture and psychological cognition, ignoring other forms of meaning expression such as images, sounds, colors, animation and so on. ^[5]This makes discourse analysis with greater limitations. This gap highlights the need for further exploration into the effective use of multi-modal teaching strategies to foster the development of students' listening and speaking abilities. This paper endeavors to articulate the necessity of multi-modal teaching in this context. It examines the strategies employed in multi-modal teaching for junior high school English listening and speaking classes. Through a detailed case study in reading, the paper evaluates the feasibility and effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing student engagement, stimulating learning motivation, and bolstering language perception and communicative skills. Ultimately, this research aims to provide robust support for language development and the enhancement of students' comprehensive literacy.

2. Multi-modal Teaching

Multi-modal teaching involves the construction and transmission of meaning through the integration

of various symbolic systems in the process of expressing meaning.^[2] Beyond the primary symbolic system of language, this approach incorporates other systems like imagery, attire, music, movement, dance, and color, all of which contribute to meaning-making. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, proposed in the 1970s, highlights language as a comprehensive social symbol system.^[1] The multimodality concept suggests that in specific interpersonal communications, people utilize a range of symbols and resources. These diverse modal symbols work collaboratively to facilitate meaning expression. Modern educational materials, extending beyond textual content, incorporate various modes such as imagery and auditory exercises, qualifying them as multi-modal teaching resources. In classroom settings, the interaction between teachers and students encompasses auditory, kinesthetic, and visual elements, creating a multi-modal teaching environment.

Multi-modal teaching advocates for the strategic employment of various symbolic resources, including language, gestures, and media tools, to foster student engagement and initiative, thereby positively influencing the classroom learning experience.^[3] This approach cultivates a relaxed, democratic, and open learning atmosphere, aiding students in comprehensively understanding and retaining the educational content, thereby optimizing teaching outcomes. Multi-modal teaching not only enhances skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and observing but also supports the holistic acquisition and application of language skills. This pedagogical method emphasizes active student participation and interaction, encouraging exploration, practice, and collaboration. Such an approach is instrumental in promoting cognitive, emotional, and linguistic development among learners.

3. Necessity

The Curriculum Standard (2017 edition, 2020 Revision) explicitly delineates the core literacy levels in English education, outlining a progressive framework from level 1 to level 3. At each level, the proficiency required in multi-modal discourse comprehension escalates. Level 1 focuses on students' ability to grasp the main message, information, and intent of multi-modal discourse, as well as recognizing its overall structure and style. Level 2 elevates these requirements, expecting students to understand both the gist and specific information of multi-modal discourse, and to infer the author's intentions, emotional attitude, and value orientation. By Level 3, students are expected to accurately comprehend and infer detailed aspects of multi-modal discourse, including the author's intentions, emotions, attitudes, and values. This progression underscores the escalating demands for multi-modal discourse comprehension across different levels.

In the context of these educational standards, multi-modal teaching emerges as a pivotal strategy to enhance students' comprehension abilities in multi-modal discourse. This approach empowers students to derive meaning from non-textual elements like images, sounds, and colors, thereby deepening their understanding.^[4] The integration of audio-visual materials or multimedia technology enables students to perceive and analyze various elements, facilitating the inference of crucial information and intentions. Such a holistic approach to perception and analysis is instrumental in elevating students' understanding of multi-modal discourse and enhancing their reading comprehension skills.

Furthermore, multi-modal teaching plays a vital role in fostering students' cultural awareness and diversified thinking. By incorporating resources from various cultural contexts, it expands students' perspectives and enriches their understanding of diverse cultures. This methodology not only promotes multidimensional thinking but also enhances students' overall abilities in language, thought, and cultural comprehension. It encourages students to assimilate information from different modalities, fostering critical and creative thinking skills.

Additionally, multi-modal teaching is effective in stimulating students' interest and engagement in learning. Traditional single-modal approaches often focus excessively on language symbols, lacking the dynamic audio-visual stimulation and interaction necessary to maintain student engagement. In contrast, multi-modal teaching leverages a variety of sensory stimuli and interactive activities, such as video watching, audio listening, and role-playing, to invigorate students' learning experience.

Given the curriculum standards and the pedagogical benefits, the adoption of multi-modal teaching in reading instruction is not only necessary but also advantageous. It enhances students' multi-modal discourse comprehension, cultivates cultural awareness and diverse thinking, and stimulates interest and initiative in learning. Therefore, educators should optimally utilize multi-modal resources and strategies to create an enriching teaching environment, thereby fostering holistic student development and improving the efficacy of reading instruction.

4. Teaching Design

Multi-modal English reading teaching advocates that students should voluntarily participate in the learning process on the basis of understanding communication rules, getting familiar with communication methods and mastering corresponding knowledge. In the concrete teaching, the teaching strategies such as reality practice, clear guidance, critical framing and transforming practice can be used.

4.1. Teaching Content

The reading part of the unit 4 *Looking Good, Feeling Good* in this lesson is based on a real case. Through the reading of multi-modal discourse, students can understand and analyze the harm of teenagers' eating problems and the solutions. Inline with the requirements of "Man and self" and "man and society" in the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2022 edition). Through this lesson, students will be able to use relevant vocabulary and expressions, describe problems, and analyze impacts and feelings.

4.2. Teaching Objectives

1) Students can use strategies to grasp the genre characteristics and the theme context of the text, obtain the basic information of Jennifer Jones fainting, and complete the information structure diagram.

2) Students are able to make preliminary use of the main language knowledge learned in this course, and the expression is basically accurate and fluent.

3) Students can conduct in-depth discourse analysis and explanation of the reasons for Jennifer Jones' discomfort and fainting, and present them in groups.

4) Students learn to analyze problems in combination with reality and self/group discussion and individual thinking, provide scientific and reasonable suggestions to Jennifer Jones, share the learning harvest orally.

Through the multi-modal teaching method, the cases in the text are presented to students, so that they can perceive and understand through various ways such as words, pictures and sounds. Such teaching methods can enhance students' attention, memory and comprehension ability, improve their overall grasp of the text and their understanding of the details in the text. At the same time, multi-modal teaching can also meet the learning styles and needs of different students, promote their active participation and in-depth thinking in reading teaching, and further improve their reading ability and comprehensive literacy. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt multi-modal teaching in reading teaching, which can effectively promote students' learning effect and teaching quality.

4.3. Teaching Procedures

[Teaching Segment 1]

Step 1: Warming up

The teacher will show a documentary video clip related to diet health to the students to watch, and start to introduce the link to arouse the students' interest and attention. After watching the video, the students answered the following questions:

1) What important information about healthy eating is mentioned in the video.

2) Do you think maintaining healthy eating habits is important for our physical and mental health and why?

Through the discussion of these questions, students can be guided to think about the importance of diet to physical health, and prepare for the following reading part.

Step 2: Presentation

Teachers show pictures related to diet, health, and youth issues, and ask students to discuss the situations and problems presented by the pictures in small groups.

1) What problems do you see in these pictures?

2) What are the possible physical and psychological effects of these problems on adolescents?

3) How do you think these problems can be solved?

Through the display of pictures and the guidance of questions, students can have a preliminary knowledge and understanding of the theme of the text, and at the same time cultivate their ability to observe, analyze and solve problems.

Justification: Through the teaching strategy of reality practice, multi-modal resources (such as videos and pictures) are used to present situations and problems related to the theme of the text, so as to arouse students' interest and thinking, so that they can better understand and invest in the text. This way of introduction can stimulate students' interest in learning, understand the content of the text in advance, and lay a foundation for subsequent reading activities. At the same time, through the form of group discussion, the cooperation and communication between students are promoted, and teamwork ability and critical thinking ability are cultivated.

[Teaching Segment 2]

Step 1: Skimming and answer the questions

The teacher presents pictures of Millie and Simon via PowerPoint and asks the students to quickly look through two letters and answer the following questions:

- 1) Who do Millie and Simon ask for advice?
- 2) Who's Sigmund Friend? What problems can he handle and what valuable advice can he give?

By answering these questions, students can deepen their overall understanding of both letters while helping them find key information.

Step 2: Scanning and complete the information frame diagram

The teacher asks students to peruse the letter and look for relevant information to complete the infoframe. Students can look for relevant details and keywords in the reading process and fill out the information frame diagram to help them better understand the article and organize the information.

Step 3: Watch videos and group discussions

The teacher prepares two video clips about Millie and Simon and asks the students to watch the videos and have a group discussion. Students can answer questions based on the video content to further refine their understanding and information frame. After helping students understand the content of the text, the teacher guides the students to think deeply and answer the questions.

- 1) What logical order do these two letters follow?
- 2) Why do Millie and Simon write in this order?
- 3) Do you like the topic "What should I do?" at the top of the page? Can we change the theme to "I want some help." or "I am looking forward to some suggestions."?

Through the discussion of these questions, students can further think about the organization of the essay and the choice of topic, deepen their understanding of the text, and launch more in-depth discussion and analysis.

Justification: Through multi-modal teaching activities such as PPT, audio and video, and teacher-student interaction, students are guided to in-depth reading comprehension and thinking. By quickly browsing and answering questions, carefully reading and completing information frame diagrams, watching videos and group discussions, students can feel the pleasure of reading in a variety of modes, enhance the understanding and memory of texts, and use the language and knowledge learned to communicate and express. At the same time, by thinking deeply and answering questions, students are able to further explore the logical sequence and topic selection in the text, and develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

[Teaching Segment 3]

Step 1: Role play

By showing relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns in PPT, the teacher leads the students to have a dialogue or a performance, discussing the problems they have met and possible solutions. The teacher provides some examples of dialogue patterns,

Such as:

A: My problem is...../I'm worried about...../ Could you help me with.....?

B: I'm sorry to hear that./What do you think of.....?/ You'd better.....

A:

B:

Through such dialogue exercises, students can express their problems and seek solutions by using the language and sentence patterns they have learned, and develop their critical thinking and analytical skills at the same time.

Step 2: Class discussions and summary

Teachers show relevant case videos by PPT to guide students to carry out class discussion and improve the topic of the article. Teachers ask questions and guide students to discuss how to deal with problems correctly.

A: When we meet, what should we do?

B: We should learn to form a correct and optimistic outlook on life.

C: We should learn to understand each other.

D: We should communicate with our families, teachers and friends.

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Through class discussions, students can share their own opinions and emotional expressions, while helping them form a correct outlook on life and values through the sublimation of the topics.

Justification: Through multi-mode teaching activities such as role play, group discussion and image display, students can stimulate their innovative ability and thinking quality. Through performing dialogues and participating in class discussions, students are able to use language to communicate and think, while deepening their understanding and internalization of essay topics through emotional expression and thematic sublimation. By creating context and cultural information related to the theme, teachers help students establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values, and cultivate their comprehensive literacy and interpersonal skills.

5. Conclusions

This course is meticulously structured to include pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading phases, utilizing a multi-modal teaching approach. This approach incorporates diverse forms of language and emotional expression, aiding students in deepening their comprehension of the article's topic and fostering their innovative thinking and analytical skills. Throughout the instructional process, multi-modal elements such as audio, text, graphs, images, physical actions, and linguistic components are thoroughly employed. This ensures that students can fully engage with and understand the article's content, gaining insights into the underlying cultural context, emotional nuances, and value systems.

However, it is important to recognize that multi-modal teaching is not universally superior but requires thoughtful adaptation to the subject matter and context. In designing this course, we emphasize the significance of quiet reading and material familiarity. We strategically deploy various modal elements in different phases of the course to achieve an effective and streamlined teaching outcome.

With the swift progression of multimedia and internet technologies, multi-modal teaching has emerged as a predominant trend in contemporary English education. In the domain of English reading instruction, educators should focus on developing students' linguistic competencies, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and learning skills. This involves planning and implementing multi-modal teaching strategies effectively to invigorate students' interest in reading and enhance overall teaching quality.

Although scholarly research on multi-modal teaching has grown, there remains a paucity of studies exploring its integration with the development of core English language competencies in students. It is hoped that future research will expand in this area, contributing to the ongoing refinement and enhancement of multi-modal teaching methodologies. Such advancements are crucial for improving teaching outcomes and fostering the comprehensive literacy development of students.

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