

# A Study on Strategies for Cultivating Core Competencies in English Reading Teaching in Senior High School

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**Abstract:** *English core competencies are the centralized embodiment of the value of discipline education, and they are the correct values, necessary character and key abilities that students gradually form through discipline learning. The development of core competencies not only promotes students to become well-rounded people, but also lays the foundation for their lifelong development. As the focus of English teaching, reading is the main channel to develop students' English core competencies. Teachers should explore and use various strategies to put the concept of core competencies of English subject into practice in the process of teaching English. In this thesis, the author will explore how to develop students' core competencies in senior high school English reading teaching by using situational teaching, adopting emotional experience, guiding multi-dimensional interaction, and focusing on strategy guidance in order to improve students' language competence, cultivate their cultural awareness, enhance their thinking quality, and develop their learning ability, so as to improve teachers' teaching efficiency and students' learning effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** *senior high school; English reading teaching; core competencies*

## 1. Introduction

Reading teaching occupies a position in high school English teaching and is a key link in developing students' core competencies. At the same time, it is also an important step for front-line teachers to integrate core competencies into real classroom teaching. The new curriculum standard proposes that the ultimate learning goal of students is to apply the language knowledge acquired in the classroom, such as words and grammar, to real life, and make English a tool for communication and thinking in life. Based on the ultimate learning goals of students, most front-line English teachers bear a more important responsibility. They require English teachers to focus on improving students' language proficiency in real classroom teaching, and the focus of classroom teaching should be shifted to cultivating students' English core competencies. As an important part of English teaching, reading can comprehensively monitor the development of students' comprehensive language quality, and plays a significance role in cultivating students' core competencies.

## 2. The Concept of English Core Competencies

The National English Curriculum Standard for General High School (2017 Edition) condenses the core competencies of the English subject, clarifies the correct values, essential qualities, and key abilities that students should achieve after learning English course, and integrates the three-dimensional goals of knowledge and skills, processes and methods, and emotional attitudes and values. The Curriculum Standard [1] clearly states that the core competencies of the English subject mainly include language competence, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability.

Firstly, language competence. Language competence is the foundation of the core competencies of the English subject, including both language knowledge and language skills in three-dimensional goals. It is the basic guarantee for students to improve their cultural awareness and thinking quality. The positive interaction between language competence and learning ability helps students broaden their horizons and thinking styles, and can help them better carry out cross-cultural communication activities. In turn, cross-cultural communication activities can react to the improvement of students' language competence.

Secondly, cultural awareness. Cultural awareness is the value orientation of students' language

learning, which includes an understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and recognition of excellent cultures. It is the internal expression of core competencies contained in the curriculum. Therefore, the Curriculum Standard emphasizes that the construction of cultural awareness should focus on students' cross-cultural cognition, the formation of cross-cultural attitudes, and the cultivation of cross-cultural behavior. The cultivation of cultural awareness plays an important role and significance in cultivating students to enhance national identity, establish feelings of family and country, strengthen cultural self-confidence, and firmly establish a sense of community with a shared future for mankind.

Thirdly, thinking quality. Thinking quality is a brand new quality element proposed after the revision of curriculum standard. It emphasizes the cultivation of students' logical, critical, and innovative thinking. Cultivating students' thinking quality is conducive to improving their ability to raise, analyze, and solve problems, and can help students collect and process information from a cross-cultural perspective, thereby forming correct value judgments about things.

Fourthly, learning ability. Learning ability is a development condition for cultivating students' English core competencies. The cultivation of students' English language ability can help them form a good sense of self management and develop good learning habits, which can play a role in improving learning efficiency with half the effort. In the course of curriculum implementation, we need to place the cultivation of students' learning ability, that is, the ability to develop independently in the future, in the entire process of curriculum implementation, laying a solid foundation for students' lifelong development.

The emergence of the English core competencies means a shift in English teaching from focusing solely on language to emphasizing cultural guidance and thinking expansion. For students, the process of language learning is also a process of establishing a correct cultural awareness and value orientation, which undoubtedly puts forward higher requirements for the educational and teaching activities of English courses. That is, the high school English classroom should go out of the fragmentation of knowledge teaching, change the current situation of lack of culture and thinking, and build a classroom that integrates language, culture, and thinking organically, thereby promoting the improvement of students' abilities.

### **3. The Importance of Cultivating the Core Competencies of English Subject**

#### ***3.1 The Concentrated Embodiment of the Educational Value of the English Subject is the English Core Competencies.***

The proposal of the core competencies of the English subject embodies the overall goal of basic education in the English subject and embodies the educational value of the English subject. Cultivating students' language skills can enable them to acquire language knowledge, master language skills, and form good language awareness and language thinking, meeting the requirements of developing students' English knowledge and skills in the English subject. Cultivating students' cultural character can enable them to have their own correct judgments about Chinese and foreign cultures, and have correct emotions and attitudes towards excellent and scum cultures, meeting the educational value requirements of the English subject. Cultivating students' thinking quality can enhance their spirit of daring to question, being good at putting forward new ideas, and thinking about problems from new methods and perspectives, which is precisely the embodiment of the educational value of the English subject. Learning ability requires students to have a correct understanding of English, have a sense of active use of English, develop individual learning methods and strategies in the process of English learning, and achieve the highest goal of thinking in English. High quality learning ability is a requirement of the educational value of the English subject.

#### ***3.2 The Key Factor to Break the Public's Prejudice against the English Subject is the English Core Competencies.***

The cultivation of English core competencies helps students form good language awareness, thereby enabling them to flexibly apply their knowledge to the real world and overcome public misconceptions about the English subject. The phenomenon of "learning without using" is an important reason why more and more people misunderstand the subject of English. Some people believe that English is not important, learning English is just to cope with the college entrance examination, and even a small number of people believe that English subject should be eliminated in the college entrance examination. The phenomenon of "dumb English" is also one of the main reasons why the public has a

bias against English. The obvious characteristic of "dumb English" is that students have a sufficient vocabulary, memorize grammatical rules, and can understand the articles on the test paper, but are not afraid to open their mouth in practical use. To change the phenomenon of "dumb English", it is necessary to start with changing the English teaching mode in China.

The important task of the English discipline is to develop students' language communication skills and cultivate their core competencies in language practice activities. Based on the requirements for English core competencies and the current situation of English teaching in China, English teaching cannot be limited to teaching basic knowledge of textbooks, but also to paying attention to whether students can master knowledge about emotions, attitudes, skills, and other aspects in the process of English learning. Implementing the method of integrating English core competencies into the classroom can, to a certain extent, avoid the occurrence of "dumb English" phenomenon. When students possess the English core competencies, they can learn and improve themselves during the learning process, truly apply the knowledge they have learned to practical applications, and ultimately achieve the educational value of the English discipline.

Integrating the core competencies of the English subject into classroom teaching is of great significance. It can cultivate students' language thinking and awareness, enable them to use the cognition formed in the process of English learning to think about various issues in their study or life, put forward their own opinions, and express them in their own ways, so as to shake off the misconception that learning English is just for the college entrance examination and make the public aware that learning English can not only learn knowledge about English itself, but also master other skills that can improve one's overall quality. Only by changing the public's inherent understanding of English subject can the public have a correct understanding, a positive learning attitude, and a strong interest in learning English.

#### **4. Strategies for Cultivating Students' Core Competencies in English Reading Teaching in Senior High School**

##### ***4.1 Improving Students' Language Competence through Situational Teaching***

By creating specific scenes or atmospheres that are appropriate to the teaching content, students can be stimulated to have a positive emotional experience, enhance their learning motivation, enhance their interest in learning, and stimulate their learning potential. Let students deepen their understanding, memory, and flexible use of the knowledge they have learned through the created simulation scenarios, thereby achieving mastery of the knowledge. Teachers should change the traditional "duck feeding" knowledge explanation in the classroom teaching process to present students with a vivid and objective world, and stimulate students' learning enthusiasm in vivid scenes, so as to achieve the goal of helping students quickly, accurately, and proactively understand the knowledge learned and improve their comprehensive language ability. In the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to communicative teaching and cooperative learning, and attach importance to activating the classroom with the teaching model of "task+situation+activity". Teachers can design games and activities that students are willing to participate in around the topic and based on their language foundation, allowing them to actively engage in exploratory learning, enabling students to experience, understand, and apply language in relaxed and pleasant activities, comprehensively improving their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, cultivating students' interest and self-confidence, and improving classroom teaching efficiency.

##### ***4.2 Improve Students' Cultural Awareness through Emotional Experience***

The so-called emotional experience is actually in the classroom, where teachers not only focus on teaching basic knowledge, but also need to reasonably permeate emotions to conduct teaching. Therefore, in the teaching of English reading, in order to strengthen students' core competencies, it is necessary to strengthen the teaching of English knowledge while appropriately infiltrating some language emotional and cultural aspects of teaching, so that the knowledge that students master is not just mechanized words, phrases, or grammar, but can extend to the language, culture, and related cultural connotations in English. In this way, not only can students effectively improve their core competencies in the English subject, but also has a very important significance for improving their cultural awareness.

#### ***4.3 Cultivate Students' Thinking Quality by Guiding Students to Interact with the Text from Multiple Perspectives***

To cultivate students' thinking quality is to develop their thinking both horizontally and vertically. In the teaching of English reading, teachers should take questions as the guide, stimulate students' curiosity and thirst for knowledge, and thus stimulate students' deep thinking. In cultivating students' thinking quality, teachers should attach importance to cultivating students' thinking predictability. The cultivation of thinking predictability has played a positive role in improving students' cognitive efficiency, helping to accelerate their cognitive process, and the systematic nature of thinking makes students' thinking more organized. In practical English reading teaching, teachers can guide students to first carefully ponder the title of an article, carefully observe the illustrations, and then understand the structure and theme of the article. Instruct students to use thinking activities such as analysis, collation, comparison, and summary to infer the content of an article before reading, so that students can more thoroughly understand the main idea of the article and the author's writing ideas, thereby making students' thinking systematic. This process can train students' thinking and cultivate their meta-cognitive learning strategies.

In senior high school English reading teaching, making full use of mind mapping is also an effective way to improve students' thinking quality. Teachers can guide students to refine the basic, detailed, and main information of an article, clarify the surface and deep information of the article, summarize the author's views, and summarize the author's value orientation, thereby streamlining the development of the article and constructing a thought map. The construction of a mind map is one of the activities that students interact with the text, which is beneficial for students to transfer the language they have learned and use it for richer and self-topic presentations.

When solving reading tasks, encourage students to cooperate and explore, and cultivate students' critical thinking. Teachers should avoid presenting personal presentations in the classroom, interact with students more, and respond positively to student feedback. Encourage students to cooperate and explore independently, and provide as many opportunities as possible for students to express their personal views and ideas. Teachers should try to set open questions to stimulate students' desire to think and cultivate their critical spirit.

#### ***4.4 Develop Students' Learning Abilities by Guiding them to Master Strategies***

Firstly, attach importance to the cultivation of students' learning strategies. The active and correct use of learning strategies is conducive to the improvement of reading ability. The main goal of learning strategy guidance is to change students' learning attitudes. Teachers should fully understand students, take various measures to enhance students' strategic awareness, and expand the range of strategic choices. For example, students often encounter multiple complex sentences with complex grammatical structures and long sentences in the process of reading. Teachers can guide students to divide long sentences into several short sentences, extract the main sentence from them, and temporarily remove the auxiliary explanatory parts such as clauses and parentheses. Teachers should actively teach appropriate reading strategies in daily reading classes, enhance students' awareness of using reading strategies, and improve their ability to use reading strategies.

Secondly, focus on the use of multiple evaluation methods. In the teaching process, there are many ways to evaluate the learning effectiveness of students. In the teaching of English reading in senior high school, on the one hand, teachers should actively use a combination of formative, summative, and task-based evaluation methods to evaluate students' academic performance; On the other hand, teachers should actively guide students to conduct effective self-evaluation and cultivate students' abilities of self-monitoring and self-regulation during the reading process. Teachers should improve students' learning abilities in multiple ways through effective evaluation systems.

### **5. Conclusion**

The teaching of English reading is the main position and approach to cultivate students' English core competencies. The cultivation of English core competencies is a subtle process that requires teachers to pay attention to the culture and thinking behind the language and integrate language, culture, and thinking into an integral part of English learning activities on the basis of continuing to attach importance to the "dual foundation" of English in daily classroom teaching [2]. English reading teaching is not only a means of learning English language knowledge, but also a bridge to understand

British and American culture, master reading methods, form reading skills, and cultivate cross-cultural communication skills.

Therefore, in the process of cultivating students' English core competencies, teachers should not only pay attention to the instrumental nature of English reading teaching, but also pay attention to the humanistic nature of English reading teaching. Instrumentalities include tools for communication, tools for thinking and tools for learning other subjects, while humanities include culture and history, emotional attitudes, value orientations, national sentiments, international perspectives, social responsibilities, thinking patterns and aesthetic interests [3], so that English reading teaching can improve students' language ability and cross-cultural understanding, tell Chinese stories in English and spread Chinese voices to the world, as well as promote students' personal development and become "well-rounded people" with national sentiments, international perspectives and social responsibilities.

## References

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