

# A study on the teaching practice of continuation writing pointing to the cultivation of thinking quality

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**Abstract:** As an effective method to improve the efficiency of foreign language teaching, continuation writing combines the imitation of language with the creative use, which has a synergistic effect. It is conducive to dispersing students' thinking and promoting the cultivation and development of students' thinking quality. This study focuses on the cultivation of students' thinking quality. Inspired by the theory of "Questioning the Author", this study attempts to explore the teaching strategies for the cultivation of thinking quality from various elements of narrative. On this basis, the study combines with the design and presentation of specific teaching cases, aiming to provide certain reference and reference for the teaching of English teachers in first-line high schools.

**Keywords:** Thinking quality; Continuation writing; Senior high school English

## 1. Introduction

As a new type of question after the reform of college entrance examination, continuation writing has aroused the attention of many teachers and scholars. Continuation writing is a method that closely combines language input and output and aims to accelerate the improvement of students' language application ability (Wang Chuming, 2012)<sup>[1]</sup>. It can be traced back to the foreign language writing length method proposed by Professor Wang Chuming (2005)<sup>[2]</sup>. Continuation writing is the follow-up writing on the basis of the narrative text. On the basis of reading the given text materials, students will deeply analyze and discuss the main idea and central theme of the article. They could give full play to their imagination and creativity, and continue to write the story of the original text.

With the deepening of curriculum reform, the English core literacy derived from the core literacy requires that the teaching should take the cultivation and development of students' thinking quality as its important goal. At present, the domestic research on the continuance after reading mainly focuses on its promoting effect, synergistic effect and reading materials. The domestic research on the quality of thinking is deeply discussed from the aspects of education system, teacher teaching and individual students. The combination of the two is relatively rare. There are also broad research prospects in related fields. Therefore, from the perspective of cultivating students' thinking quality, combined with the teaching practice of college entrance examination, this study attempts to explore the teaching strategy of English after reading in senior high school.

## 2. The relationship between continuation writing and the quality of thinking

Wang Chuming and Qi Luxia (2013)<sup>[3]</sup> said that continuation writing can not only fully examine students' comprehensive reading and writing ability, but also closely combine understanding with output. It combines content creation with language imitation, so it can effectively improve the efficiency of foreign language teaching. Language is both the core and shell of thinking (Yang Cheng, 2018)<sup>[4]</sup>. Therefore, in a sense, continuation writing, as a new form of language output, can improve students' language ability and learning ability to a certain extent, develop students' thinking quality and cultivate their cultural awareness.

### 2.1. Continuation writing--a form of explicit thinking quality

The efficiency of foreign language learning depends on the synergistic effect produced by the close combination of language understanding and production. The closer the combination of the two, the stronger the synergistic effect, the better the foreign language learning effect (Wang Chuming, 2011)<sup>[5]</sup>.

The two-way interaction between language understanding and language production in the process of second language acquisition contributes to the learning promotion effect. Based on the input hypothesis of Krashen (1985)<sup>[6]</sup> and the language output hypothesis of Swain (1993)<sup>[7]</sup>, combined with the learning promotion effect of continuation writing, the author divides the relationship between foreign language skills (see Figure 1).

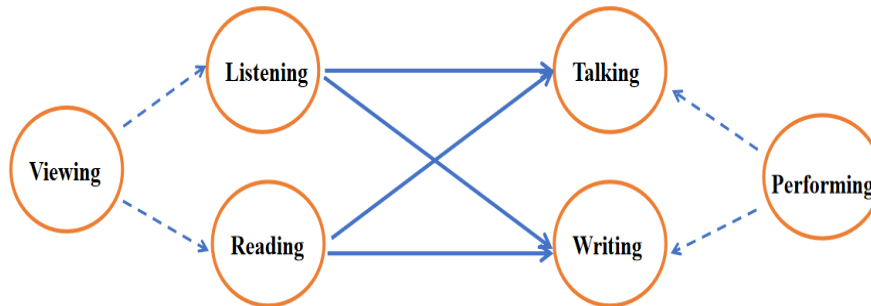


Figure 1: The relationship between English language skills

As a method of combining reading comprehension and writing practice, continuation writing embodies the interaction and cooperation of language input and output. It has obvious effect of promoting learning. In the process of continuous writing, students' imagination can be given full play, which exercises students' language ability, cultural awareness and thinking quality to the greatest extent. This helps to cultivate students' innovative thinking and promote the formation of students' core literacy. Vygotsky's theory of the relationship between language and thinking provides a certain theoretical basis for the development of students' thinking quality. High school students are more active in thinking and can express their ideas in language to a certain extent.

## 2.2. The cultivation of thinking quality depends on continuation writing

The quality of thinking refers to the different views or views of others displayed by the brain when people talk about something or carry out a certain action. It is mainly composed of five aspects: depth, flexibility, agility, creativity and criticality. Vygotsky (1986)<sup>[8]</sup> made an in-depth study of the relationship between language and thought in his book *Mind and Language* (see Figure 2). He believes that the relationship between language and thinking is independent and fluid. But on the other hand, it is closely linked, checks and balances each other, and maintains a partial integration state.

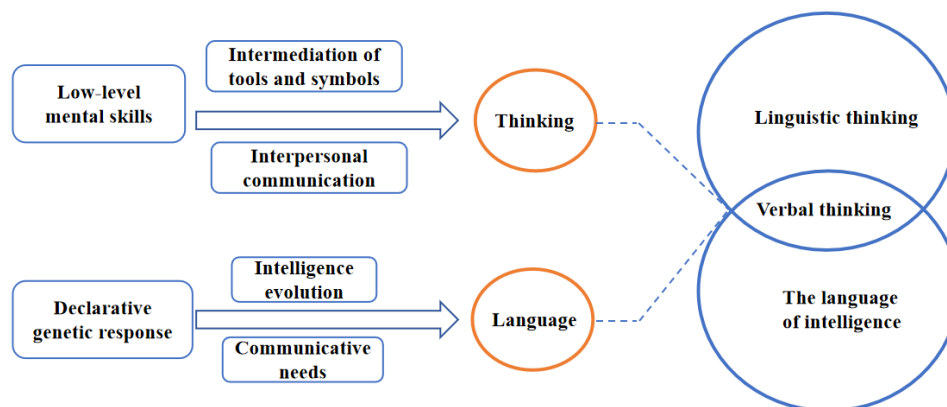


Figure 2: The roots and dynamic relations of language and thinking

Vygotsky's theory of the relationship between language and thinking provides a certain theoretical basis for the development of students' thinking quality. High school students are more active in thinking and can express their ideas in language to a certain extent. Therefore, when teaching, teachers should imparting knowledge is the basis, and should also use language teaching to open students' thinking and build new understanding for students. As a new way of language output, continuation writing provides conditions for the cultivation and development of students' thinking quality.

### **3. The teaching strategy of continuation writing that points to the cultivation of thinking quality**

Beck & McKeown (2006)<sup>[9]</sup> believed that comprehensive consideration of narrative elements such as plot, characters and language is conducive to understanding the author's writing intention. This provides a new way for English teachers to carry out continuation writing teaching in first-line high school. Based on the research results of narrative theory, this study puts forward the following continuation writing teaching strategies from the perspective of thinking quality.

#### ***3.1. Study the text deeply and identify the main ideas***

The central theme of the article, that is, the author's writing intention, is the key for students to continue writing after reading. Each text is centered around a specific theme, and all language learning activities should be based on a certain thematic context, which is no exception. Training students to absorb, integrate, sublimate and innovate themes is an important link in continuation writing teaching (Zhang Huizhen, 2019)<sup>[10]</sup>. Discourse takes language as the carrier to express specific thematic meaning by creating certain situations and contents. Students' exploration of the meaning of the subject directly affects their thinking development level and the quality of writing. Therefore, in the teaching of continuation writing, teachers should guide students to analyze the text layer by layer from characters, plots, language and other elements to explore its thematic significance.

#### ***3.2. Combine the first sentence of the paragraph to predict the development of the plot***

Narrative writing, as a kind of writing style describing the experience of characters and the development and change of things, has strong readability and continuity. It is helpful for students to give full play to their imagination and creativity in the process of writing after reading, and improve their writing ability and level. At present, the discourse that continues after the college entrance examination is mainly narrative. The narrative text has strong logic, the narrative revolves around a main line, and the continuing plot should conform to the writing logic of the original text. The first sentence of the passage given continuation writing indicates the general direction of the plot. Therefore, teachers should guide students to adopt reasonable reading strategies to extract the detailed elements of the text, clarify the logical relationship between the elements and paragraphs, and allow students to discuss with the prompt of the first sentence of the paragraph. On this basis, students give full play to their imagination and infer the development of the plot, which is conducive to promoting the development of students' logical thinking and innovative thinking ability.

#### ***3.3. Draw on vocabulary and syntax and focus on linguistic synergy***

Continuation writing puts forward higher requirements for students' language harmonization. Wang Chuming (2014)<sup>[11]</sup> believed that content should be created after reading, language forms should be imitated, and creation and imitation should be closely combined to promote the appearance of synergistic effects. Therefore, under the guidance of the essay center, teachers should guide students to internalize language knowledge, imitate language style, choose appropriate vocabulary and sentence pattern to complete the continuation of two paragraphs, and maintain the linguistic characteristics of the original text. In addition, teachers should also guide students to pay attention to the wording and narrative style of the text, and keep the tense of the full text consistent.

### **4. The teaching practice of continuation writing that points to the cultivation of thinking quality**

Based on the above teaching strategies, the author takes the text paper of continuation writing of new National College Entrance Examination I in 2022 (see the two-dimensional code at the end of the article) as an example, and presents a specific teaching design for reference.

#### ***4.1. Text analysis***

This is an excerpt from a special education teacher's recollection of one of his students, David, participating in a cross-country race at a local elementary school. The plot is about a story between a teacher and a student. My student David is a teenager with a disability. David's special education teacher, who is also the author of this article, found that David was not in a good state before running, and after careful questioning of his gym teacher, he found that the gym teacher was good enough to do

something bad. The author recalled David's hard training in the past, and was immediately filled with emotion. When the author and David sat together, David did not dare to look at him, and the whole text stopped abruptly here.

The author designed this lesson as continuation writing lesson pointing to the improvement of thinking quality. First of all, the teacher guides the students to summarize the general idea of the passage and perceive the theme of the passage through quick reading. Secondly, based on the knowledge of the topic, the teacher leads the students to brainstorm and set the logical ending of the story. Then, the teacher prompts the students to reverse the plot based on the set ending of the story, and in the process, to describe the thoughts and emotions of the characters in detail. Finally, on the premise of adhering to the style of writing, the article highlights the theme of the original vocabulary and sentence patterns. The series of interrelated language learning activities of perceiving, understanding, integrating and internalizing knowledge can help students improve their linguistic ability and thinking quality.

#### **4.2. Teaching objectives**

After reading this section, students will be able to achieve the following learning objectives.

- 1) Students could quickly and accurately grasp the six elements of narrative essay and identify the expression mode of narrative essay
- 2) Students are able to clarify the author's writing intention, and reverse the plot development according to the theme meaning and the first prompt sentence of the paragraph.
- 3) Students can stick to language coordination and finish the story.

#### **4.3. Teaching process**

There are four steps in continuation writing that point to the development of thinking qualities. Next, the author will explain these three steps in detail with the content of the selected text.

##### **4.3.1. Ask questions and explore the main idea**

Sun Tianshan (2014)<sup>[12]</sup> emphasized that problem teaching can effectively promote the development of higher-order thinking. Therefore, teachers can improve students' thinking quality by asking questions. In order to cultivate students' habit of reading straight to the topic and enhance students' awareness of the topic, teachers can guide students to get to the point quickly by asking questions on the title in class. Then the teacher asks "What does the author want to tell us?" to guide students to explore the central themes of the passage.

After reading the whole text, students will find that there are not many new words and long difficult sentences in the whole text. The article has strong readability and comprehension. The story focuses on a little boy with brain disease who finally overcomes his fear of being laughed at and bravely participates in a cross-country race. According to the plot and characters of the story, it is not difficult to judge that the genre of the discourse is narrative. The theme is the inspirational growth of people and self, which runs through the whole text. Therefore, students should continue to write on the premise of serving the central theme of the article.

##### **4.3.2. Set the ending around the theme**

Combined with the language "He worked so hard for the event.", "participated to his best ability", "had not missed a single practice", "be proud of his strong determination" and "We sat down next to each other, but David wouldn't look at me." and "I watched as David moved up to the starting line with the other runners.", here, David's participation in cross-country running is mainly used to express the self-growth of overcoming fear and breaking through oneself, from being afraid to doing something to successfully doing something, which is also the final sublimation of our article.

##### **4.3.3. Extract details and rewind the plot**

After defining the end of the story, students need to clarify the development of the story and the relationship between characters, and combine the clues and hints in the text to reverse the plot. The six elements of a narrative cover time, place, people, as well as the cause, process and result of events. Under the guidance of the teacher, students quickly extracted the six elements of the article by filling in the form (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Six elements of narrative essay*

When	The day of the big cross-country run
Where	Thick evergreen forest
Who	Main characters:I, David Secondary characters:the coach, other children
What	David initially chose not to participate in the race, but later returned to the starting line.
Why	David has a brain disease.
How	David overcame his fear and made his breakthrough.

After completing the form, the story becomes clear and definite. Around the main idea of the article, according to the existing clues, how can the story develop next to point to the final ending? Teachers can design question chains, guide students to read the discourse closely, reverse plot development with empathy, and cultivate logical and innovative thinking. There is a certain logical relationship between paragraphs in the article. For example, the reason for David's unhappiness in the second paragraph of the article is mentioned in the fifth paragraph. David's brain disease is also the reason why he has to train harder than myself. According to the information in the article, it can be inferred that David is still hesitant to participate in the competition. He is afraid of being laughed at by other children. Then why did he decide to participate in the competition at last?

It also describes the emotional state of the characters, such as sad, depressed, surprised and so on. This provides new clues for students to continue writing. Students can use the emotional changes of the characters as the dark line of the article. They can not only directly express David's emotions through the description of actions and expressions, but also highlight David's image through the description of other people's emotional changes and predict emotional changes (see Figure 3). Therefore, under the guidance of the theme, according to the set ending, combined with the first prompt sentence, the reasonable plot development of the first paragraph should be that David finally decided to participate in the trail running with "my" encouragement, and then began to walk towards the starting point. The second paragraph should focus on the process of David completing the trail run.

Characters	Emotions	
	Before the run	After the run
David	Sad/depressed/worried...	Happy/confident/grateful...
I	Surprised/frustrated...	Happy/satisfied/moved...
Others		respectful/admiring...

*Figure 3: Echo for emotion*

Teachers can inspire students to think through the following questions.

Q1: Did they laugh at him?

A1: No.

Q2: What difficulties did David meet with in the race?

A2: He stumbled and sweated, but he kept running.

Q3: Did he finish running?

A3: Yes, he did.

Q4: What was the coach and other kids' reaction to his performance?

A4: The children applauded and cheered him, and the teachers gave him admiring glances.

The form of the question chain sorts out the plot development, which helps to further sublimate the meaning of the theme and help students improve their logical analysis and judgment ability.

#### **4.3.4. Accumulate language and express collaboratively**

It is not necessary to copy all keywords or deliberately imitate the language form of the original text,

but it must be consistent in form and features (Yuan Hongyang, 2018)<sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, teachers should guide students to pay attention to the language structure characteristics of the text, analyze the sentence structure characteristics, learn to properly intersperse long and short sentences, and inherit the language expression style of the original text. The original text is mainly in the simple past tense, with rich sentence patterns, including declarative sentences, interrogative sentences and exclamatory sentences. The language is simple but easy to understand.

At the same time, teachers should guide students to base on the text, summarize and summarize the imitable language expression and description techniques in the original text, and then conduct divergent thinking, accumulate appropriate materials to express emotions and apply them to the writing, build adequate language scaffolding for the writing, enhance language collaboration, and realize the transfer and application of language knowledge.

## 5. Conclusion

Continuation writing is a process of continuous collision, development and innovation of language and thinking, which requires long-term accumulation. Inspired by the theory of “Questioning the Author”, this study focuses on the cultivation of students' thinking quality, starting from the three aspects of plot, characters and language, and finds that there are three teaching strategies for the cultivation of thinking quality after reading. First, students can study the text deeply and clarify the main idea. Second, students are supposed to combine the first prompt sentence of the paragraph to predict the development of the plot. Third, they should learn from vocabulary sentence patterns and pay attention to language coordination. In the teaching practice of continuation writing, how to promote the improvement of students' thinking quality through effective guidance needs more practical exploration.

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