

Exploring the Teaching of English Reading in Junior High School Based on Core Literacy

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Abstract: With the introduction of core literacy, it has been received great interest that the development and pedagogical exploration of core literacy in reading teaching. In order to improve students' core literacy, the teaching concept of core literacy needs to be continuously implemented throughout English teaching. And how should core literacy be cultivated and concretely implemented in English reading teaching? In this paper, we conduct a research and exploration based on core literacy in junior high school English reading teaching. It is hoped that this will better improve students' core literacy, better promote the development of students' comprehensive quality, and better improve junior high school English reading teaching.

Keywords: Core Literacy, Junior English, Reading Teaching

1. Background

In the latest English Curriculum Standard (2022 Edition) Curriculum Philosophy, it is mentioned that in order to play the leading role of core literacy, curriculum objectives should be determined, curriculum content should be selected and teaching methods should be innovated. At the same time, it is believed that core literacy is the concentrated embodiment of the nurturing value of the curriculum. Core literacy is also the correct values, necessary character and key competencies, which students gradually form through curriculum learning to meet the needs of personal lifelong development and social development. The core literacy to be developed in the English curriculum include language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. Core competence of English discipline includes linguistic ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. ^[1]

The basic skills of junior high school English include listening, speaking, reading and writing. As we are known, reading is an effective way for students to understand and acquire information. However, under the influence of traditional teaching, English reading teaching in junior middle school is mainly based on teachers' "speaking" in class, while students just passively "listening". There is no effective way to cultivate students' core literacy, which makes it difficult for students to enhance their interest in reading. ^[2] Therefore, in the context of curriculum reform education, we should strengthen the cultivation and research on the core literacy of junior English reading teaching.

2. Problems in English Reading Teaching in Junior High School

Firstly, because of the single teaching method of junior high School English reading class, teachers focus on the explanation of vocabulary and grammar in reading class, but ignore the exercise and development of students' oral English and language sense. ^[3] As a result, students may not know how to use words and form conjunctions into sentences in oral output, which may hinder the development of students' comprehensive quality of language ability.

Secondly, teachers pay too much attention to the "admission rate" and "excellent rate", so most of the junior high school English teachers' teaching methods are exam-oriented teaching and infusing teaching. Besides, teachers pay more attention to "teaching" and ignore students' "learning", resulting in students' lack of reading skills and methods. ^[4] Teachers also failed to fully explore students' learning needs and stimulate students' autonomy and initiative in learning. These problems have hindered the development of students' learning ability.

Thirdly, Compared with primary school English reading, junior high school English reading has

undergone qualitative changes. Not only did the vocabulary become larger and longer, but there was also a significant increase in difficulty.^[5] Therefore, it brings difficulties to students' overall reading comprehension, and different students have different difficulties in reading comprehension, which also hinders the development of students' thinking ability.

Finally, students may not easily understand the value of foreign culture and the significance of foreign culture in reading comprehension due to the cultural differences between countries. In addition, teachers do not attach too much importance to students' cultural knowledge input and lack of certain context for reading teaching. Therefore, it is difficult for students to empathize with foreign culture and lack a certain cultural awareness.^[6]

3. Cultivation of Core Literacy in Junior High School English Reading Teaching

3.1 Cultivation of linguistic ability

Language competence refers to the ability to understand and express language by applying linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge to specific situations or language activities of related topics. The cultivation of language competence should also be carried out in the context of language knowledge and non-language knowledge. In junior high school English reading, language ability is mainly reflected in students' mastery of reading comprehension and reading comprehension ability. Whether students can apply the knowledge that they learn from reading comprehension to real life, to understand short English articles and magazines and to communicate. What's more, when students read English articles, their vocabulary has been expanded. Students also have learned some authentic English expressions as well as the understanding and identification of foreign cultural expressions. All these have exercised students' language ability, which is conducive to the cultivation of students' language ability.^[7]

3.2 Cultivation of learning ability

Learning ability is the awareness and ability to actively use and debug English learning strategies, expand English learning channels, and strive to improve the efficiency of English learning. In junior high school English reading teaching, teachers should enable students to master reading skills, teach students to learn skimming and intensive reading and other reading methods in reading comprehension. Teachers also should cultivate students' good English reading habits. In addition to this, teachers should cultivate students' ability of independent reading and active reading in reading teaching.^[8]

3.3 Cultivation of cultural awareness

Cultural awareness refers to students' understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and appreciation of excellent cultures. On this basis, students are allowed to develop cross-cultural cognition, to learn the attitude of excellent culture, to respect excellently cultural behavior. In junior high school English reading teaching, teachers can select some excellent foreign articles on the reading materials to help students to understand foreign culture. Besides, in reading teaching, teachers can restore the situation as much as possible when explaining some topics related to foreign culture, so that students can experience the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures and feel the beauty of foreign excellent culture in the situation, so as to cultivate their cultural awareness.

3.4 Cultivation of thinking quality

Thinking quality is the embodiment of the level and the reflection that students' thinking personality characteristics in understanding, analysis, comparison, inference, evaluation, creation and so on when they treat things. In junior high school English reading teaching, teachers need to cultivate students' logical thinking ability and critical thinking ability when discovering, analyzing and solving problems.^[9] Teachers can guide students to think by setting questions and answering questions in reading. Teachers can also use role-play or hold debates on a controversial topic, so that students can think by themselves about how to solve problems. By this way, students can develop their thinking skills and cultivate their thinking quality.

4. Concrete measures to cultivate core literacy in English reading teaching

4.1 Diversified teaching forms to improve students' language ability

The teaching of English reading in junior middle school has a single form. Teachers focus excessively on the explanation of words and grammar knowledge, not rely on reading materials well, dig out the deep meaning to be conveyed to students behind the text, thus neglect the development of students' language ability. For this reason, junior high schools should diversify their teaching formats. For example, Teachers should develop a cooperative group learning model or carefully select reading materials. The cooperative group learning model is a very suitable way to improve students' language skills that based on core literacy training in reading teaching. The teacher creates small groups in the class and assigns each group a task for the lesson, so that students can explore the task together through division of labor, assistance and communication between groups. The learning mode of group cooperation is not only beneficial to students' learning of reading, but also beneficial to teachers' teaching of reading. As for students' learning, this group cooperative learning mode can exercise students' language ability and cultivate students' core literacy ability to a certain extent. For teachers' teaching, it enriches the form of teaching, stimulates students' interest in learning, and thus improves the quality of teaching. For instance, when learning *What's the Best Movie Theater*, teachers can assign each group a reading task that takes into account the content and requirements of the lesson. Teachers can arrange tasks with "My Favorite Movie" as the theme for groups, so that students can fully express and communicate according to their actual situation and preferences. Then, the teacher asks the following questions: "What are your best movie theater?" "What are the reasons why you like this movie theater?" "How should we go to this movie theater?" In this way, students will talk and communicate effectively through the guidance of questions, and other students will give relevant opinions and views. This group cooperation mode can effectively train students' language expression ability, improve their learning effect and emotional experience. This group cooperation mode can also effectively promote the improvement of students' comprehensive literacy level.^[10]

4.2 Foster students' autonomy and initiative to improve their learning ability

Teachers focus too much on "teaching" and neglect students' "learning", thus hindering the development of students' autonomy and initiative. As a result, teachers should give full play to students' ability to learn English independently. English is a language. English should run through our daily life just like our mother tongue. So students should see, listen, learn, read and write more in their daily life. It is more important for students to learn English on their own initiative than to be guided by teachers. In the process of learning English, it is more important for teachers to develop students' ability to learn independently, to provide them with an efficient way of learning the language and to develop the habit of taking the initiative to learn the language. On top of that, language is a fluid discipline, generating a constant stream of new vocabulary and phrases as time goes on. It is a continuous process that English language learning. It requires students to develop the good self-learning habits and to contact the latest English vocabulary in daily life. For English reading, students should not only finish the reading homework assigned by teachers, but also get in touch with more diverse English reading materials according to their own interests in their spare time.^[11] For instance, in the English classroom, teachers can guide students to learn independently by allowing them to carry out personalized reading. In the lesson *Where did you go on vacation?* in Grade 8, teachers can ask students to discuss and share their travel experiences, so that they can read independently with their own travel experiences and then compare their travels with the differences in the article. By this way, Teacher not only can deepen students' understanding of the article, but also cultivate students' ability of independent learning.

4.3 Carry out targeted stratified teaching, improve students' thinking ability

For English reading comprehension, different students have different ways of understanding. Consequently, teachers should carry out targeted stratified teaching, so as to improve students' thinking ability. Educational psychology suggests that targeted multi-level teaching can fully consider the individual characteristics of different students and effectively improve the overall teaching effect. For this reason, in the practice of junior middle school English reading teaching, teachers should have a good understanding of each student's learning ability level in advance, fully understand the contents of classroom teaching, and carry out targeted hierarchical teaching on this basis. To be specific, the stratified teaching in junior Middle school English reading teaching requires teachers to do the

following aspects:

Firstly, stratified students in the class, that is, according to the level of students' academic performance and the strength of reading ability. It is divided into three levels, as an important basis for the subsequent stratified teaching.

Secondly, the classroom teaching practice is stratified. In the first stage, the teacher helps the students to read through the English reading topic and master the general idea of the article. In the second stage, teachers lead students to read English reading topics. Teachers guide students to master the meanings of words, grammar, long sentences and difficult sentences involved in the article. Teachers help students to understand the context of the article and the content they want to express. In the third stage, the teacher analyzes the cultural factors and emotional factors behind the English reading topics for students, and guides students to improve their cultural literacy in the process of reading articles.

Thirdly, after the completion of the above stages, teachers need to carry out teaching for students at different levels. Such as for students with strong English reading ability, teachers should focus on guiding them to train their language use and expression ability on the basis of mastering the meaning of the article. For students with average English reading ability, teachers should focus on guiding them to review the basic knowledge of words, grammar and so on to improve their English reading level. For the students with poor English reading ability, teachers should guide them to make up the shortcomings of basic knowledge and lay a solid foundation of English reading.^[12]

For example, when teaching the reading part of *Wild Animals in the first volume* of the eighth grade, teachers need to analyze the content of the textbook in advance, to formulate different questions according to the content, and to guide students to read with the questions. The questions are: "What is the panda's name?" "When did the panda go outside first time? According to?" "What do you learn in this report?". Question one is relatively simple, students can directly find the answer in the textbook, suitable for students with low English reading ability to answer; Question two can find the details of the answer from the textbook, but students need to make corresponding supplements, test students' language expression ability and way of thinking. It is suitable for students with moderate English reading ability to remember the answer; Question 3 is highly comprehensive, requiring students to have a deep understanding of the content of the material and use appropriate vocabulary to correctly express their reading feelings. It is suitable for students with strong English reading ability to answer.^[13] Teachers ask questions in different ways for students of different thinking levels, which can improve their thinking ability and foster their thinking quality.

4.4 Create a positive English reading teaching contexts to cultivate students' cultural awareness

Students cultural awareness is weak due to the differences in foreign cultures and lack of teacher' attentions to develop students' cultural awareness. As a result, teachers need to actively create an environment that is conducive to teaching English reading for their students . Most students who have studied abroad have a high level of English proficiency, which shows that creating an English-speaking environment plays an important role in English learning. In China, students communicate with each other in their mother tongue, which affects their English learning progress in a certain extent. Therefore, teachers need to constantly explore and innovate, and actively create an English environment for students. For example, the class can set up an English corner and configure English reading materials to offer the students to read. In addition, teachers can communicate with students in class by spoken English so as to create the atmosphere. In extracurricular time, students can also exchange what they have read recently English reading materials. As long as teachers create an English reading learning environment, it can enhance students' confidence in learning English reading. It not only can put what students learned into practice, but also let students learn English reading and love English reading. Teachers should together with students to promote the development and progress of English reading teaching.^[14]

5. Conclusion

The cultivation of core literacy is not something that can be accomplished overnight. Teachers need to persevere, make efforts and adopt appropriate teaching strategies based on the actual teaching situation, so that students can effectively form core literacy in line with the concept of quality-oriented education.^[15] Reading teaching is based on the core literacy context, which not only develops students'

language skills and improves their learning ability, but also enhances their quality of thinking and cultural awareness. This is also the education policy proposed by the Ministry of Education for our national context as well as our learning situation. However, in this paper, it is only superficial study that junior high school English reading teaching based on core literacy in terms of the cultivation of linguistic ability, learning ability, thinking quality, cultural awareness and specific teaching measures. There are only some aspects of the research have been studied. The research in this paper is junior high school English reading teaching based on core literacy. The research hopes to pave the way for the subsequent junior high school English teaching based on core literacy. The research also hopes to provide reference for teachers in reading teaching thus to promote the development of English reading teaching.

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