

# Exploration of Ways to Cultivate Core Competencies of College Students through Graded Reading in College English

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**Abstract:** *This paper explores the specific methods and effects of graded reading in cultivating core competencies of college students in English. Graded reading not only significantly improves students' English language abilities, but also plays an important role in critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and self-directed learning. Research has shown that graded reading can effectively address the adaptability issues in traditional teaching, enabling students to gradually improve their language comprehension while enhancing their logical thinking and cross-cultural communication abilities. In addition, intelligent graded reading systems and online learning platforms further promote students' self-directed learning and personalized development. Despite facing some challenges, such as the accuracy of evaluation methods and the improvement of teacher professional abilities, graded reading in college English undoubtedly provides a feasible path for cultivating high-level talents with comprehensive qualities and international perspectives.*

**Keywords:** *college English, graded reading, core competencies*

## 1. Introduction

In the context of rapid globalization, the importance of English as an international lingua franca is increasing day by day. College English courses are not only a key link for students to improve their language abilities, but also an important way to cultivate their comprehensive literacy. Among them, graded reading in college English, as an effective teaching method, is increasingly receiving attention from the education community. Graded reading provides suitable reading materials for students of different levels, gradually improving their reading ability, expanding their vocabulary, and deeply understanding the cultural background and diversity of language use during the language learning process [1]. Core competencies refer to the basic abilities and key qualities that students need in lifelong learning and social practice [2]. According to the "2017 Edition of the Curriculum Standards for General High School English" issued by the Ministry of Education, the requirement of "improving students' comprehensive language proficiency" is proposed. College English teaching should not only focus on imparting language knowledge, but also pay attention to the comprehensive improvement of students' thinking quality, cultural awareness, and learning ability. Therefore, how to effectively cultivate students' core competencies in college English teaching has become a topic worthy of in-depth research.

In this context, graded reading in college English, as a teaching method that can balance individual differences among students and promote comprehensive language use, its potential educational value urgently needs to be explored and explored. Graded reading can not only help students master language knowledge gradually, but also stimulate their learning interest, cultivate their critical thinking ability and cross-cultural communication ability through rich reading content. The cultivation of these abilities is of great significance for students' future academic research, career development, and social participation.

This paper aims to explore the impact of graded reading in college English on cultivating core competencies of college students. By analyzing the theoretical basis of graded reading and its application in practical teaching, strategies for optimizing graded reading teaching are proposed. Specifically, this article will use a combination of literature review and empirical research to examine the role of graded reading in cultivating core competencies of college students in terms of language ability, thinking quality, cultural awareness, and self-learning ability. Corresponding teaching

suggestions will be proposed to provide reference and inspiration for the reform of college English teaching.

## **2. Basic principles and methods of graded reading in college English**

### ***2.1 Definition and background of graded reading in college English***

College English graded reading refers to the classification and grading of reading materials based on students' English proficiency and reading ability, in order to provide suitable reading content and challenges for students of different levels [3]. The emergence of this teaching method is due to the recognition and importance of individual differences among students, as well as the urgent need to improve learning effectiveness and cultivate students' comprehensive literacy. With the acceleration of globalization, English has become an important language for international communication, and English learning for college students has become a compulsory course. However, due to the uneven English proficiency of students, the traditional one size fits all teaching model is difficult to meet the needs of different students. Therefore, graded reading, as a targeted and personalized teaching method, is gradually receiving attention and application in college English teaching.

### ***2.2 Basic principles and theoretical foundations of graded reading in college English***

The basic principle of graded reading in college English is based on individual differences and cognitive development patterns of students, combined with the non-linear characteristics of language acquisition, and adopting a hierarchical and progressive teaching strategy [4]. According to Vygotsky's developmental stage theory and the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), graded reading aims to provide students with challenging but not too difficult reading materials, enabling them to gradually improve their reading ability with appropriate help and guidance, and achieve higher-level language use. In addition, graded reading also draws on Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis, emphasizing the improvement of language output and communication ability by providing students with input that meets their language proficiency. At the same time, graded reading also relies on cognitive psychology and constructivist theory, advocating that students actively participate and reflect in the reading process to construct new knowledge structures and language meanings.

### ***2.3 Teaching methods and techniques for graded reading in college English***

In practical teaching, the teaching methods and skills of graded reading in college English mainly include the following aspects: first, teachers should choose appropriate reading materials based on students' English proficiency and reading ability, and scientifically classify them. Secondly, teachers need to guide students to use various reading strategies, such as prediction, speculation, and summarization, to cultivate their comprehensive reading skills. At the same time, teachers should also encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions and interactions, promoting their language use and thinking collision in communication. In addition, teachers can also use multimedia technology and Internet resources to expand students' reading horizons and improve their cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills. Finally, when evaluating students' reading outcomes, teachers should focus on comprehensive evaluation, taking into account their language expression ability, cultural awareness, and critical thinking ability, and providing personalized feedback and guidance.

Through the above discussion of the basic principles and methods of graded reading in college English, it can be seen that graded reading teaching is a teaching model that deeply integrates cognitive psychology, constructivist theory, and language acquisition laws. In practice, it reflects respect and care for individual differences among students, providing an effective way and guarantee for cultivating core competencies of college students.

## **3. The role of graded college English reading in cultivating core competencies of college students**

College English graded reading, as a personalized and differentiated teaching strategy, not only helps to improve students' English language abilities, but also promotes the development of their core competencies in various aspects. In this process, graded reading helps students make significant progress in language learning, reading comprehension, and cross-cultural communication by providing

reading materials that cater to their different levels.

### ***3.1 The role of graded reading in college English in improving language ability of college students***

Language ability is an important foundation for college students to conduct academic research and career development in the context of globalization. College English graded reading effectively enhances students' language input and overall language proficiency by providing them with reading materials that match their language proficiency. Firstly, graded reading can ensure that students are exposed to vocabulary and syntactic structures that match their language proficiency, avoiding frustration caused by difficult reading materials. By gradually increasing the difficulty of reading materials, students can continuously expand their vocabulary and master complex sentence structures and grammar rules based on their existing knowledge. This gradual learning approach helps to solidify the language foundation and improve the accuracy and fluency of language use. Secondly, graded reading helps improve students' comprehensive abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. During the reading process, students not only need to understand the written content, but also need to think and analyze, which has a positive impact on language output (such as writing and oral expression). For example, summarizing or discussing after reading can effectively consolidate the knowledge learned and promote the improvement of language expression ability. Finally, graded reading provides students with diverse reading materials, enabling them to be exposed to knowledge from different fields and thus expanding their language application scope. Whether it is academic English, business English, or daily communication, graded reading can provide students with corresponding materials and practice opportunities, comprehensively improving their language abilities.

### ***3.2 The role of graded college English reading in cultivating reading comprehension ability of college students***

Reading comprehension ability is an important skill for students to acquire information, analyze problems, and solve problems. College English graded reading helps students gradually master efficient reading strategies and cultivate their reading comprehension abilities through scientifically designed reading materials and tasks. Graded reading stimulates students' interest and initiative in reading through diverse reading materials. The difficulty and content design of reading materials take into account the actual level and needs of students, avoiding boredom and boredom during the reading process, thereby improving their participation and enthusiasm. Graded reading focuses on cultivating students' reading strategies, such as predicting, reasoning, summarizing, and extracting key information. In reading training, teachers will guide students to use these strategies to help them stay focused and quickly grasp the main idea and details of the text during the reading process. These strategies not only improve students' reading efficiency, but also enhance their understanding of complex texts. In addition, graded reading also cultivates students' critical thinking and analytical abilities through various reading tasks and question settings. For example, having students compare the viewpoints of different authors, analyze the structure of the article, evaluate the logical reasoning of the text, and so on. These activities not only improve students' reading comprehension ability, but also promote their habit of independent thinking and critical judgment during the reading process.

### ***3.3 The role of graded college English reading in cultivating college students' cross cultural communication abilities***

In the era of globalization, cross-cultural communication skills have become one of the essential core competencies for college students. College English graded reading uses reading materials from diverse cultural backgrounds to help students understand and respect different cultures, and improve their cross-cultural communication skills. Firstly, the materials selected for graded reading typically cover a wide range of cultural themes, including history, society, economy, art, and other aspects. These materials not only help students enrich their knowledge, but also expose them to different cultural values and social customs during the reading process, enhancing cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness. Secondly, graded reading encourages students to understand cultural differences and commonalities through comparison and reflection. For example, by reading articles about interpersonal relationships, family structures, education systems, and other aspects in different countries, students can recognize the similarities and differences between cultures and reflect on their cultural cognition. This process of comparison and reflection helps students cultivate an open mindset, enhance cross-cultural understanding and adaptability. Finally, graded reading provides a wealth of authentic

language materials to help students master effective communication skills in different cultural contexts. For example, students can learn how to use language in formal and informal settings, how to understand and use cultural specific expressions, and so on through reading. These knowledge and skills have important practical value for students in future cross-cultural communication, especially in international academic cooperation and career development.

#### **4. Application and prospects of graded reading in college English in practice**

College English graded reading, as a personalized and differentiated teaching strategy, has been widely applied both domestically and internationally, and has achieved a series of practical cases and achievements. At the same time, it also faces some challenges, and the future development trend is worth paying attention to.

##### ***4.1 Practical cases and achievements of graded English reading in domestic and foreign universities***

Many domestic and foreign universities and language training institutions have adopted the teaching strategy of graded reading in college English teaching, and have achieved significant results [5]. Abroad, well-known universities such as the University of Michigan in the United States and the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom have offered graded reading courses for students of different levels. These courses help students gradually improve their language and reading comprehension abilities through graded textbooks and task designs. Research has shown that this personalized teaching method can improve student learning outcomes and satisfaction. In China, some universities are also actively exploring the practice of graded reading in college English [6]. For example, well-known universities such as Peking University and Tsinghua University have offered graded reading courses for students of different levels. These courses enhance students' language and reading comprehension abilities by introducing reading materials and tasks that are tailored to their level of proficiency. Meanwhile, some research institutions are also exploring effective implementation methods for graded reading, as well as evaluating its teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. The research results show that graded reading in college English has achieved a series of achievements in practice. The language ability of students has been significantly improved, their reading comprehension ability has been effectively cultivated, and their cross-cultural communication ability has been enhanced. Students' interest and confidence in learning have also been improved. Through the practice of graded reading, students can better adapt to the requirements of university learning and lay a solid foundation for their future academic research and career development.

##### ***4.2 Application methods and effects of graded reading in specific teaching of college English***

There are various application methods for graded reading in college English teaching, each of which has its unique effect. Graded reading can be carried out by selecting textbooks that are suitable for the student's level. Teachers can choose reading materials with corresponding difficulty levels based on students' English proficiency, ensuring that students are both challenging and able to understand during the reading process. This can help students gradually improve their reading ability and enhance their confidence in English. Graded reading can promote student participation and thinking by setting different types of reading tasks. For example, teachers can design questions and discussions, guide students to analyze texts, extract key information, and summarize themes. This task design helps to cultivate students' critical thinking and reading strategies, and improve their reading comprehension abilities. In addition, graded reading can also be combined with other teaching methods, such as listening training, oral expression, etc. By comprehensively utilizing various teaching methods, students can comprehensively enhance their language and cross-cultural communication abilities. Research has shown that the application of graded reading in college English has a significant impact on students' learning outcomes. Personalized teaching design enables students to better understand and master knowledge, improve learning motivation and enthusiasm. By combining with other teaching methods, students can better apply the knowledge they have learned to practical communication, improving the accuracy and fluency of language use.

##### ***4.3 Development trends and challenges of future college English graded reading***

The future of graded English reading in universities is facing some development trends and challenges. With the development of artificial intelligence technology, we can expect the emergence of

more intelligent graded reading systems. These systems can automatically recommend suitable reading materials based on students' language proficiency and learning needs, and provide personalized guidance and feedback. This will further enhance the learning effectiveness and motivation of students. Graded reading can be combined with online learning platforms to achieve remote teaching and sharing of learning resources. Students can access reading materials and teaching resources of different levels through online learning platforms, and learn and practice anytime, anywhere. This flexibility and convenience will provide students with more learning opportunities. However, graded reading also faces some challenges. Firstly, accurately assessing students' language proficiency and reading ability remains a challenge. The current evaluation methods mainly rely on standardized testing, but this method cannot fully reflect the actual abilities and needs of students. Therefore, it is necessary to research and develop more comprehensive and accurate evaluation tools. Graded reading requires teachers to have relevant teaching abilities and material resources. Teachers need to understand the learning needs of students, choose appropriate textbooks and tasks, and provide timely guidance and feedback. Therefore, cultivating teachers with graded reading teaching abilities will be an important task.

## 5. Conclusion

College English graded reading, as an innovative teaching strategy, has shown significant results in improving the core literacy of college students. By tailoring reading materials and task designs for students with different language proficiency levels, this approach not only promotes the development of English language abilities, but also plays an important role in core competencies such as critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and self-directed learning.

Graded reading helps students gradually improve their reading comprehension level while adapting to their own language abilities, and cultivates their language application abilities. This personalized teaching method effectively solves the adaptability problem in the traditional "one size fits all" teaching model, allowing every student to accept challenges and gradually progress within their comfort zone. Through diverse reading tasks and discussion activities, students have significantly improved their critical thinking abilities. They learned how to analyze text, extract key information, evaluate author viewpoints, and developed logical thinking and problem-solving skills in the process. These skills are crucial for their future academic research and career development. In addition, graded reading in college English also enhances students' cross-cultural understanding abilities. By reading texts from different cultural backgrounds, students not only improve their language skills but also broaden their international perspectives, increasing their understanding and respect for global diversity and cultural differences. This cross-cultural literacy is of great significance for cultivating high-quality talents with international competitiveness and a global perspective. Graded reading also cultivates students' self-learning ability. With the help of intelligent graded reading systems and online learning platforms, students can be more proactive in learning, plan their own learning process, and continuously improve from personalized feedback. This not only improves learning effectiveness, but also stimulates students' interest and intrinsic motivation in learning. Although graded reading in college English has achieved significant results in practice, it still faces some challenges, such as the accuracy of evaluation methods and the cultivation of teacher professional abilities. However, with the development of artificial intelligence technology and the continuous enrichment of educational resources, we have reason to believe that graded reading will continue to play an important role in improving the core literacy of college students and bring more innovation and breakthroughs to college English teaching.

In short, graded reading in college English is an effective teaching strategy, which comprehensively enhances students' language ability and core literacy through personalized and differentiated teaching design. Future research and practice should further improve this method, overcome existing challenges, promote its wider application and development, and make greater contributions to cultivating high-level talents with comprehensive qualities and international perspectives.

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