Research on Teaching Strategies for English Reading Based on Deep Learning

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Abstract— Deep learning, as a pedagogical concept and approach, is aligned with educational reform trends. It has gained increasing prominence and offered new perspectives for designing junior high school English reading instruction. Classroom teaching of English reading based on deep learning emphasizes deep knowledge processing and advocates for learning that is socially interactive and inclusive. It draws theoretical foundations from Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, constructivism, and metacognitive theory. In English reading classrooms, teachers can promote deep learning through strategies such as setting concrete, tiered, and achievable learning objectives; creating authentic contexts; and employing positive, guiding assessment approaches.

Keywords— deep learning, English reading, teaching strategies

I.   INTRODUCTION

Higher-order competencies such as critical thinking, reflection, and innovation have gained equal emphasis alongside knowledge acquisition and core competency development advocated by the new curriculum reform, becoming pivotal objectives for student growth (He, 2018). The *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2022 Edition) stipulate that English courses should cultivate students' core competencies, including linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, thinking skills, and learning abilities. Developing students' thinking skills requires teachers to emphasize the internalization, transfer, generation, or creation of knowledge, which is also the cultivation of students' deep learning abilities (Bao, 2020). Deep learning aims to cultivate students' ability to solve real-world social problems. Achieving this goal relies on establishing students as the primary agents in their learning and guiding them to deeply integrate textbook content with their personal experiences, thereby fostering new meaning construction and higher-order thinking (Wang et al., 2021). As the new curriculum reform continues to advance, junior high school English reading instruction has been profoundly influenced in both philosophy and methodology. Nevertheless, certain issues persist in teaching practice. Fragmented, superficial, and label-oriented approaches to English instruction represent particularly prominent issues (Wang, 2018). Integrating deep learning with English reading instruction not only responds to contemporary educational reform demands but also revitalizes teaching practices. Cultivating students' deep learning abilities fosters the development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, ultimately guiding them toward forming rational and objective value positions.

II.   THE CONNOTATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DEEP LEARNING

The concept of deep learning was first proposed by foreign researchers, with its origins traceable to renowned psychologists such as Bloom and Gagné. In his book，A *Taxonom*y for Learning, *Teaching, and Assessing*, Bloom identified six levels of cognitive objectives: remembering, understanding, analyzing, applying, evaluating, and creating. This framework implicitly contained the academic concept of "deep learning" (An, 2014). In educational psychology, deep learning is often discussed in contrast to surface learning as a pair of relative concepts. These are not mutually exclusive but rather jointly reflect the depth to which learners process information during the learning process. Ference Marton and Roger Saljo (1976), among others, proposed that deep learning emphasizes connecting new and old knowledge and facilitates smooth knowledge transfer, whereas surface learning lacks such connections and focuses on rote memorization. This distinction emerged based on differences in how students process given materials or the cognitive level at which they acquire information.

He and Li (2005) were among the earliest scholars in China to define the concept of deep learning. They emphasized that its core lies in learners critically examining new knowledge and reconstructing their cognitive structures based on thorough comprehension, ultimately achieving effective knowledge transfer and problem-solving in complex real-world contexts. Building upon existing research, Duan (2012) developed an interactive hierarchical model integrating deep learning. He urged educators to focus on students' learning processes, fostering meaningful learning that builds upon their existing knowledge and abilities. Guo (2016) further deepened the connotation of deep learning, defining it as a learning process where students, guided by teachers, actively engage with challenging themes, construct meaningfully, and achieve significant development. This definition has gained widespread recognition in the field of curriculum and teaching reform in primary and secondary schools (Wang et al., 2021).

The connotation of deep learning reveals it as a profound learning experience built upon surface learning. This endows deep learning with richer characteristics.

Deep learning emphasizes deep processing of knowledge, which is its key feature. It is a form of critical learning, requiring learners to critically understand the content they study. This critical engagement constitutes another form of knowledge construction, enabling continuous enhancement of the learner's comprehension level. Self-reflection and evaluation are also indispensable in deep learning. Evaluation and reflection enhance cognitive outcomes during the learning process, enabling timely adjustments to learning strategies. Critique and reflection further facilitate knowledge transfer and application, empowering learners to solve problems in real-world contexts. The ability to effectively apply knowledge and skills in authentic settings serves as the definitive criterion for assessing whether deep learning has occurred. Instructional design must strive to create conditions conducive to deep learning, establishing this as the ultimate goal of classroom teaching.

The transferability of deep learning facilitates both knowledge transfer and cognitive transfer, enabling learners to apply acquired knowledge to real-world contexts and thereby enhancing problem-solving abilities.

Extensive scholarly research exists on the characteristics of deep learning. Through systematic comparisons between deep and surface learning, He and Li (2005) identified three core features: comprehension and critique, connection and construction, and transfer and application. Wang and Cheng (2025) examined deep learning from a social context perspective, highlighting its contextuality, higher-order nature, and reflective qualities. Furthermore, Guo (2016) proposed a set of key criteria for determining whether deep learning genuinely occurs, primarily observed through the following dimensions: association and structure, activity and experience, essence and variation, transfer and creation. Wang et al. (2021) argue that the concept of deep learning emphasizes the necessity for students to engage in practice-oriented activities centered around themes and new knowledge structures, thereby facilitating the transformation of knowledge into competence.

III.   THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives comprises six cognitive skill levels, ascending from lower

to higher order: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. "Remembering" involves memorizing specific, fragmented information such as facts and definitions. "Understanding" requires learners to demonstrate comprehension by restating information in their own words. "Applying" signifies learners' ability to utilize knowledge or skills in new contexts. "Analysis" requires distinguishing between facts and opinions. The "synthesis" level demands learners create new outcomes within specific contexts. Regarding "evaluation", teachers assessing instructional design based on learner feedback aligns with this level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Both "synthesis" and "evaluation" involve critical thinking, which is also linked to deep learning (Adams, 2015).

Constructivism also provides a theoretical foundation for deep learning. Constructivism emphasizes that knowledge acquisition relies not only on teacher instruction but also on students' autonomous construction of knowledge systems and the appropriate application of methods, thereby achieving effective mastery and efficient learning (Li, 2023). Deep learning similarly advocates for learners to actively construct knowledge and promotes critical thinking.

During English reading, students can utilize metacognitive theory to monitor and evaluate their comprehension processes, consciously selecting appropriate strategies to regulate their learning progress.

Flavell (1979) first introduced the concept of metacognition, positing that metacognitive abilities directly influence learning efficiency and problem-solving capacity. He divided metacognition into two major components, metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive control. Metacognitive knowledge encompasses an individual's awareness of their own cognitive characteristics, judgment of task difficulty levels, and understanding of various learning strategies. Metacognitive control involves the dynamic planning, monitoring, and adjustment during the learning process. This framework has driven transformations in educational practice, with subsequent scholars further expanding the scope of metacognition.

IV. DEEP LEARNING-BASED STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION

English classrooms grounded in deep learning should first establish concrete, tiered, and achievable instructional objectives. These objectives define the core subject competencies students should attain upon completing a learning phase, primarily encompassing the ability to flexibly apply specialized knowledge, techniques, and strategies; accurately grasp methods reflecting the essence and principles of the discipline; and demonstrate comprehensive problem-solving abilities (Liu & Guo, 2018). The instructional objectives for reading passages should be formulated based on the specific level objectives outlined in the English curriculum standards. Teachers should also demonstrate differentiation and gradation in their approach to curriculum instruction, unit teaching, and lesson planning. Achievable and observable instructional objectives better guide students by articulating what learners can accomplish after completing the learning process. Lesson objectives constitute unit teaching objectives, and their formulation should balance specificity and relevance. When setting instructional objectives, teachers should also focus on cultivating students' critical thinking skills, guiding them to actively question, analyze, and evaluate during reading, thereby enhancing their metacognitive monitoring and evaluation abilities.

Teachers should create an atmosphere and context in junior high English reading instruction. Establishing an immersive atmosphere and contextual setting in junior high English reading instruction is a key strategy for sparking students' interest and building bridges for language comprehension. Teachers can immerse students rapidly into the textual context by creating an atmosphere. For instance, playing theme-related music, displaying images or short videos aligned with the text, or setting up simple props can stimulate multiple senses, reducing students' sense of alienation from unfamiliar texts. Simultaneously, creating scenarios rooted in students' lives based on the text's content can make abstract words more concrete. Teachers can also design role-playing tasks where students embody characters from the text to engage in dialogue. They may pose real-life questions related to the text's theme to spark discussion or organize collaborative group investigations where students deepen

their textual understanding through problem-solving. This approach alleviates students' apprehension toward English reading while encouraging them to actively draw upon existing knowledge reserves. Through experiential and interactive learning, it enhances both reading proficiency and language application skills.

In reading instruction, teachers should adopt positive, guiding evaluation methods to foster deep learning. Positive guidance evaluation goes beyond simple right-or-wrong judgments. Instead, it focuses on students' reading performance, capturing the bright spots in their thought processes. When faced with incomplete text interpretations, teachers can first acknowledge the validity of the student's starting point, then use probing questions to guide them toward uncovering deeper meanings. For creative viewpoints, provide timely, targeted praise to reinforce their motivation for active inquiry. This approach fosters a safe, relaxed atmosphere for expression, encouraging students to share their reading dilemmas and unique insights rather than passively awaiting standard answers. Simultaneously, positive guidance can be integrated with reading tasks. By highlighting areas for improvement in textual analysis, logical structuring, and linguistic refinement, teachers can steer students from superficial information gathering toward deep meaning construction. This facilitates a genuine progression from text comprehension to transcending discourse—achieving advanced learning.

V. CONCLUSION

With the advancement of information technology, transformations in learning approaches are increasingly drawing societal attention. Addressing issues prevalent in current basic education classrooms, such as formalism, superficiality, fragmentation, and rote training. Deep learning represents an inevitable choice and imperative for pedagogical reform in the information age (Zheng & Liu, 2018). English reading instruction grounded in deep learning, guided by the cultivation of core competencies, breaks free from the limitations of traditional reading pedagogy that prioritizes knowledge memorization over cognitive development. It guides students beyond isolated vocabulary and sentence pattern learning. Through deep discourse interpretation, connecting to life experiences,

and engaging in critical thinking, students' progress from comprehending texts to understanding connotations and ultimately to flexible application. This pedagogical approach not only enhances students' linguistic precision in reading but also hones their logical reasoning, innovative thinking, and cross-cultural communication skills, laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning and holistic development. Moving forward, as teaching practices continue to evolve, the principles of deep learning will integrate more profoundly with junior high English reading instruction. This integration will offer more actionable pathways to address teaching challenges and elevate instructional quality, transforming English reading into a vital vehicle for students to explore the world and develop their potential.

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