



The Research of Strategies on the Cultivation of Thinking Quality in English Reading Teaching in Junior Middle School

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Abstract— *Language is a part of culture and it is also the carrier of culture. With the development of the globalization of world economy, more and more people are aware of the important role of cultural awareness in language learning. English Curriculum Standards of Ordinary Junior Middle Schools (2017) has stressed the importance of the cultivation of students' cultural awareness, which includes cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication. The cultivation of cultural awareness helps students enhance their national identity, strengthen cultural self-confidence, and become civilized and socially responsible people. English reading plays an important role in English teaching and the cultural instruction should be closely connected with reading teaching, which can help students improve their cultural awareness and communicative competence. This paper firstly makes an introduction of cultural awareness in English reading teaching in senior high school, elaborates some relative concepts and then advocates some strategies on the cultivation of cultural awareness in junior middle school.*

Keywords— *cultural awareness, English reading teaching, strategies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the promulgation and implementation of *Curriculum Standards for Ordinary Junior Middle Schools (2017)*, great changes have been made in English language teaching classroom. What matters a lot is that core competence of English subject has been widely advocated, including language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. As an important part of core competence, thinking quality refers to the ability and level of thinking in terms of logicity, criticism and creativity.

English reading plays an essential role in English teaching and English reading teaching is the main place where students' thinking quality can be appropriately cultivated.

More importantly, the improvement of thinking quality is also very conducive to the cultivation of language ability, cultural awareness and learning ability.

However, in the real English reading teaching classroom, thinking quality has not been widely emphasized. Many junior middle school English teachers just see language contents itself as the main teaching contents, ignoring the essence of language knowledge. In this case, students just extract the information from the original text in a very superficial way. Students read the passages or articles very slowly and they are not good at thinking and imagination, which cannot assist them comprehend the text deeply and form their own cognitive structure of a certain knowledge. Therefore, in English reading teaching, junior middle

school teachers not only need to impart knowledge and extract information in the original text, but also design deep-reading activities and make a combination between thinking quality and reading skills. According to the problems stated above, it is imperative to help students cultivate thinking quality in English reading teaching. And some strategies should be provided for students on the cultivation of thinking quality in junior middle school, which can help students develop reading skills and promote the development of core competence for students.

II. RELATIVE CONCEPTS

1. Thinking quality

The definition of thinking quality has aroused many sparkling views among different scholars.

Lin Chengde (1979) holds that thinking quality is one component of the system of mind and it refers to the individual characters in the mind of human beings. It reflects human beings' different levels in the aspect of intelligence and thinking. What's more, he also defines six characteristics of thinking quality: profundity, flexibility, agility, criticalness, openness and creativity.

In the *Curriculum Standards for Ordinary Junior Middle Schools (2017)*, thinking quality is firstly advocated in a very dominant way, which refers to the ability and level of thinking in terms of logicality, criticism and creativity. That is to say, thinking quality can be divided into three dimensions: logical thinking quality, critical thinking quality and creative thinking quality. Logical thinking quality means that students can analyze and infer logical relations of information. Critical thinking quality refers to the ability to judge and evaluate ideas or opinions correctly. Creative thinking quality is to construct new meanings and express's one views or opinions creatively.

From the above definitions, we can see that thinking quality is a symbol of one's intelligence, including logical thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking and so on. It is necessary for students to cultivate thinking quality so that they can grasp the knowledge better, solve the problems better and develop in an all-round way.

2. Thinking recognition in reading

It is universally acknowledged that reading is a positive process of information processing. But from the aspect of the essence of reading, it is a complex cognitive and thinking process which means readers need to extract, infer and generalize the information in the text and then they need to construct the information based on their own existing knowledge. But in the real English reading teaching classroom, many teachers have some

misunderstandings about what and how to teach reading. In this case, many teachers are prone to teach vocabulary and grammar in isolation, which separate them from the text, thinking and language. It is not helpful for students thinking ability, thus hindering the students' comprehensive ability.

The process of reading, in essence, is a process of text interpretation. That is to say, readers need to reconstruct the text based on his/her own previous experience so that they can explore the deep meaning behind the text, which can make the realization of the efficient interpretation the text. In this sense, there is an interactive relationship between the reader and the text in the process of reading.

Thinking recognition in reading is in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy. Therefore, the process of positive thinking can be regarded as an efficient reading.

3. Thinking quality and English reading teaching

Reading teaching is an important part of English teaching in junior middle school, but also an essential way to promote students thinking quality. On one hand, in English reading teaching, students can observe the phenomena between language and culture, analyze and compare similarities and differences, summarize language points and discourse features, identify discourse structures, evaluate the views, attitudes, emotions and intentions of discourse so that it can enhance students' logical, critical and creative thinking. On the other hand, the improvement of thinking quality will benefit students in the aspects of language ability, autonomic learning and cross-cultural awareness.

As an English teacher, we can easily find that reading teaching classroom is a suitable place for students to cultivate students' thinking quality and thinking quality is a good platform to employ an efficient reading. From the investigation, we also can find that students' reading ability often reveals their language competence and thinking ability. Therefore, in the real English reading teaching, we need to give equal emphasis on students' thinking ability while developing students' language ability.

III. STRATGY FOR CULTIVATING STUDENTS' THINKING QUALITY IN ENGLISH READING TEACHING IN JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

According to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, educational objectives can be divided into three parts: cognitive objective, affective objective and motoring objective. Cognitive objective is categorized into six components: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. And thinking quality is

discussed from four aspects: observation and comparison, analysis and inference, induction and construction, and criticism and innovation. To some extents, Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is in accordance with thinking quality which is strongly highlighted in the *Curriculum Standards for Ordinary Junior Middle Schools (2017)*. Therefore, the paper analyzes the strategies for cultivating students thinking quality in junior middle school from the aspect of memory, comprehension, application, analysis, assessment and creative thinking.

1. Strategies for memory

Memory means that students can memorize the knowledge and also can identify the newly-learned knowledge. In English reading teaching, refined memory activities should be advocated. That is to say, students need to memorize something related to the topic/theme, including the background information, relevant details and the transferring knowledge in order to get a better understanding of the discourse features and the structure of the passages.

In junior middle school English reading teaching, it is important to guide students to understand relevant cultural background knowledge, which can help students have a better understanding of the passage. Furthermore, it can raise student's cross-cultural awareness. To some extents, the enhancement of cross-cultural awareness can promote students' thinking quality.

What's more, students need to locate the passage to find out and identify more details of the passage and answer some questions, which can help students explore the questions in a deeper way. In other words, it can promote students' logical development.

Questioning, in fact, plays a vital role in cultivating students' thinking quality. Teachers should design questions carefully and push their questioning in an appropriate way in the reading teaching so as to inspire students think and express actively. In terms of cultivating thinking quality, different kinds of questions should be involved in reading teaching, such as display questions, referential questions and evaluative questions. Display questions lay a foundation for students to study the texts further by finding out meanings of new language knowledge, structure of the texts, detailed information and so on. They are used to make students remember and understand some basic information of the texts, and the answers of certain referential questions contribute to promoting students' ability of applying acquired knowledge to express their own feelings and solving problems to work out the answers. Referential questions are the analytical and comprehensive questions. It aims to form "question chains" to guide students to elaborate the discourse deeply, realize the development of the passage,

conceptualize and reorganize the discourse, and then build the related connections between prior knowledge and the new knowledge. Evaluative questions can facilitate students make correct judgements of things and form their own attitudes in order to promote the development of students' critical thinking. All these questions should be involved in reading teaching, teachers should take full advantage of questioning skills to promote students' thinking quality.

In addition, teachers can make full use of visualized tools, such as pictures, tools, mind maps, conceptualized graphs and so on to aid students to retain the knowledge in their memory. According to the investigation, visualized tools can help students retain information in their mind for a longer time. Therefore, teachers need to refrain memory activities and make full use of visualized tools to lay a foundation for the development of students' thinking quality.

2. Strategies for comprehension

The objectives of comprehension in English reading teaching are to construct the intended meaning that the author wants to convey based on his/her previous real-life experience, build a connection between the previous knowledge and the new knowledge and then enrich the schema and knowledge.

In English reading teaching, students should be trained to interpret the text deeply instead of just understanding the basic structure and literal information of the texts. At the beginning of the reading, teachers can direct students to make predictions based on the topic, title and pictures of the article. Prediction is a very important reading technique, which helps students develop logical thinking ability. In other words, under the information provided by teachers, students can make an appropriate prediction of the reading texts. Therefore, teachers can design some activities of prediction to develop students thinking ability.

What's more, teachers need to take the responsibility to guide students to categorize the text into different genres. *Curriculum Standards for Ordinary Junior Middle Schools (2017)* promotes that junior middle school students can understand different genres of the texts. In this case, teachers need to help students identify and recognize some characteristics of a certain genre.

Furthermore, the meaning of key words or sentences should be understood. Teachers need to guide students to comprehend the meaning of key words or sentences and change them into a different format or medium in order to check students' understanding of a certain text.

Therefore, teachers can do a lot to help students have a better understanding, which brings about great benefits to promoting students' logical thinking.

3. Strategies for application

Application means that students can use the newly-learnt knowledge to solve the problems on their own in a certain situation. Situation often involves familiarized and unfamiliarized situation. In other words students can use the newly-learnt knowledge to solve different kinds of problems which they are familiarized or unfamiliarized. It is very important and significant for students to apply the knowledge into the actual use. It can be regarded as an efficient English teaching classroom when students are engaged to solve the actual problems based on what they have already learnt.

Therefore, teachers need to create the similar situations of the discourse contents and guide students to use the reading strategies appropriately. In English reading teaching, students should be allowed to participate in the role-play, interviewing and rewriting, which serves as an assistance to promote students' divergent thinking and creative thinking.

4. Strategies for analysis

In English reading teaching, students need to interpret and analyze the text and identify the intrinsic relationship among different parts, which includes comparison, organization and attribution. Students should be allowed to sort out the information from the text, get the main idea of each paragraph and then construct the intended and implied opinion of the author.

Teachers need to make full use of the plot analysis diagram to make students have a deeper understanding of the text. A complete plot analysis diagram may include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. The plot analysis diagram can clearly clarify the process of plots and the casual relationships, which can help students have a clear idea and structure of the text, which also can promote students' thinking ability.

5. Strategies for assessment

In terms of assessment, it means students can make some judgements about the given topic and express their own ideas, such as the appreciation of the sentences or the assessment of a certain opinion. The assessment competence requires students to have some accumulated existing knowledge and grasp some methods of assessment.

In English reading teaching, teachers can guide students to make judgments to the author's viewpoint, emotional attitude and writing intentions to better grasp the structure of the article and promote the development of critical thinking. What's more, evaluative questions should be utilized, which can enhance students to make correct judgements of things and form their own opinions to promote students' critical thinking.

6. Strategies for creative thinking

Generally speaking, creative thinking is the highest level of thinking. Students are the active participants of meaning-construction. Teachers can create different situations, design the creative activities to help students think and improvise freely.

Teacher can set up some situations and design some open activities to activate and stimulate students' creation. Setting up different kinds of the situations related to the theme of the text is conducive for students to build the connection between the previous knowledge and new knowledge. The situational teaching activities can help students establish an effective connection between the reading tasks and their actual life, so that they can internalize the reading content, integrate the information into a specific situation and improve their thinking quality.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thinking quality is of great significance in English Reading Teaching and it is very conducive for students to cultivate their language ability, cultural awareness and learning ability in order to meet the requirements of core competence. Therefore, in the real English reading teaching classroom, teachers need to cultivate students' thinking quality from the aspect of observation and comparison, analysis and inference, induction and construction, and criticism and innovation in a more conscious and responsible way in order to promote the improvement for students' logicity, criticism and creativity. Of course, this paper also has some limitations. In the future, more and more researches of thinking quality should be explored and a more comprehensive understanding of thinking quality and the application of other English teaching classes should also be needed.

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