Educational and Humanities
ISSN Print: 3104-4352
ISSN Online: 3104-4360
CD ISSN: 3104-4379
https://doi.org/10.63313/EH.9088

Application Strategies of Multi-modal Teaching Model in Senior High School English Reading Teaching

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How to cite this paper: Yang, Q. (2026). Application strategies of multi-modal teaching model in senior high school English reading teaching. Educational and Humanities, 4(1), 1–7. ISSN Print: 3104-4352, ISSN Online: 3104-4360.
https://doi.org/10.63313/EH.9088
Published: 2026-07-06

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Abstract

This paper addresses the predicaments in senior high school English reading teaching: teachers' excessive focus on vocabulary and grammar knowledge results in fragmented knowledge; reading materials are disconnected from students' daily lives; and students'passive knowledge reception leads to lack of learning motivation. To tackle these problems, based on the "viewing" skill and the English Learning Activity Framework stipulated in the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools this paper proposes classroom optimization through a multi-modal teaching model and thoroughly explores its applicable strategies in senior high school English reading instruction. The author defines the concepts of modality and multi-modal teaching, highlighting that this model activates multiple senses via diversified symbolic carriers such as language, images, sound and body language to achieve collaborative meaning construction. Taking The Monarch' s Journey from Compulsory Book 1 of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press senior high school English textbooks as a case study, specific application strategies are elaborated: first, adopt audio-visual integrated lead-in and activate students' thematic schemata by playing animal migration videos; second, build visual, auditory and tactile situational contexts, and deepen students' text comprehension and emotional experience with pictures, audio materials and VR migration route diagrams; third, carry out full-process diversified evaluation, which monitors and feeds back on reading learning effects through question chains, project presentations and self-assessment forms. The study verifies that multi-modal teaching can remarkably improve students' reading motivation, ability to deploy reading strategies and cultural awareness. It offers a clear pathway for teachers to transform their identity from classroom managers to instructional designers and learning guides, and carries practical value for fulfilling core literacy cultivation goals and elevating teaching quality.

Keywords

Multi-Modal Teaching Model; Senior High School English Reading Teaching; Application Strategies

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Listening, reading, writing, grammar and other modules constitute integral components of senior high school English teaching, among which reading occupies an irreplaceable core position. Under the new college entrance examination system, the total score of English reading has risen from 30 points in the old examination framework to 37.5 points, with the score per single question increased from 2 points to 2.5 points. As a common pedagogical maxim goes, "He who masters reading masters English learning". Competent English reading ability serves as a fundamental prerequisite for knowledge acquisition and language literacy development. Therefore, amid the core literacy-oriented reform of English education, reading teaching acts as the core carrier to foster students' linguistic competence and thinking quality, which calls for innovative breakthroughs in teaching models.

Currently, senior high school English reading classrooms are trapped in widespread predicaments. For one thing, teachers tend to center reading lessons exclusively on textual linguistic information, prioritizing vocabulary and grammar drilling as the core teaching objective. Though such methods may temporarily lift students' test scores, they fail to deliver sufficient thinking training, leaving students with fragmented, disconnected knowledge. For another, reading passages are often compiled merely to consolidate specific linguistic points, lacking connection with students' real-life experience. Last but not least, traditional reading teaching is dominated by teacher lecturing and passive student reception. Consequently, students lack intrinsic enthusiasm, learning motivation and exploratory curiosity toward reading texts, making long-term improvement of reading competence a persistent challenge.

Against this backdrop, the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools puts forward two key requirements: teachers shall design comprehensive, coherent and practical English learning activities; the basic connotation of linguistic competence is clarified, and "viewing" is incorporated into the framework of language skills alongside the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Accordingly, to fully implement the English Learning Activity Framework, teachers should embrace the transformation of teaching and learning modes driven by modern information technology, leverage information technology to construct multi-modal teaching contexts, and provide students with abundant opportunities to access and engage with multi-modal texts. Such practice enhances students' capacity to interpret both continuous and non-continuous texts, boosts their comprehensive language proficiency through holistic development, and strengthens their ability to acquire, process, analyze information and solve problems in English.

As a visual literacy skill, "viewing" offers students an intuitive channel to upgrade reading ability and internalize linguistic knowledge, thereby giving rise to the multi-modal teaching model. This model coordinates multiple senses including sight, hearing and touch, and integrates symbolic resources such as language, images and

audio, emerging as an effective solution to prevailing teaching difficulties. Given the prominent drawbacks of current English reading instruction and the new demands specified in the Curriculum Standards, in-depth research on the application of multi-modal teaching models is imperative. It can cater to students' differentiated learning needs, stimulate classroom participation, and effectively elevate students' English reading literacy through targeted reading strategy instruction.

1.2. Research Purposes

Based on the analysis of research background and ample theoretical foundations of multi-modal teaching, this paper sets forth the following research purposes. First, to address existing problems in senior high school English reading teaching and optimize classroom reading instruction models. Second, to keep pace with advances in information technology applied to English education, integrate conventional teaching tools and resources with modern educational technology to support teaching and learning, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of students' English learning. Third, to explore the applicable strategies of multi-modal teaching models in senior high school English reading classes and their impacts on students' reading competence, particularly whether this theoretical framework can generate innovative instructional paradigms and more effective pedagogical approaches for reading teaching.

1.3. Research Significance

The application of multi-modal teaching models in senior high school English reading enriches teachers' instructional repertoires by drawing on multi-modal pedagogical practices. For instance, animated visuals deployed in reading lessons can capture students' attention, raise classroom engagement and break the rigid mold of conventional reading classes. Furthermore, teachers' work in developing and integrating multi-modal teaching resources facilitates educator communication and resource sharing, fostering a positive research-oriented teaching ecosystem where students can collaboratively explore new approaches to English reading learning. Most importantly, teaching guided by English subject core literacy enables teachers to organize text learning around thematic contexts, shifting instructional focus toward cultivating reading strategies and reading competence rather than isolated linguistic knowledge. This positively lifts overall teaching quality and enhances students' comprehensive English literacy.

2. Definition of Core Concepts

2.1. Modality

Scholars have proposed diverse definitions of modality from distinct academic perspectives. From a neuroscientific standpoint, Kolb & Whishaw (2005) define modality as perceptual systems and their corresponding neural mechanisms.

Semiotic scholar Kress (2010) conceptualizes modality as channels for meaning transmission, highlighting that combinations of different modalities produce unique semantic effects. Halliday (1985), the founder of Systemic Functional Linguistics, regards modality as diverse symbolic resources for meaning expression, encompassing language, sound, images and other forms. From a human-computer interaction perspective, Bernsen (2008) frames modality as pathways for information presentation. Collectively, these definitions reveal the core essence of modality: it underpins the social interaction process through which humans construct, transmit and comprehend meaning via coordinated brain mechanisms. In essence, modality refers to the interactive interface between human sensory organs (sight, hearing, etc.) and external environments (human beings, digital devices, etc.). Human communication fundamentally relies on multi-modal symbolic carriers including bodily gestures, speech, imagery and written text.

2.2. Multi-modal Teaching

The concept of multi-modal teaching originated in Western academia, breaking the confines of traditional pedagogy. It translates conventional instructional content into images, color, audio and video to stimulate students' sensory perception and deepen learning engagement. multi-modal pedagogy advocates mobilizing students' auditory and visual senses through music, pictures, videos and educational games to facilitate interactive teaching. With the advancement of information technology and educational reforms, numerous educators have introduced multi-modal theories into English classrooms, utilizing PPT slides with images and video clips to capture students' attention and activate multiple senses. Relevant practice has verified that multi-modal teaching delivers remarkable improvements in instructional outcomes.

Therefore, multi-modal teaching model refers to a pedagogical method that employs diverse channels and instructional tools to engage learners' multiple senses in coordinated operation, strengthening knowledge retention and deepening memory.

3. Application Strategies of Multi-modal Teaching Model in Senior High School English Reading Teaching

To analyze the practical deployment of multi-modal teaching in senior high school English reading lessons, this paper takes The Monarch' s Journey: the Understanding Ideas section of Unit 5 Into the Wild from Compulsory Book 1 of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press senior high school English textbook as a typical case. It designs multi-modal reading activities and elaborates on actionable multi-modal teaching strategies.

3.1. Audio-Visual Integrated Lead-in to Stimulate Students' Learning Interest

A compelling lead-in is pivotal for a reading lesson: effective opening segments draw

students' attention, spark curiosity and lay a positive emotional foundation for subsequent instruction. Renowned Soviet educator Sukhomlinsky once argued that if teachers rush to deliver knowledge without first cultivating students' positive mood, agile thinking and active mental state, students will develop apathy and passivity, severely hindering subsequent intellectual work.

Hence, teachers ought to abandon single-modality lead-in approaches such as oral questioning that rely solely on auditory or visual input. Instead, they should adopt audio-visual integrated multi-modal lead-ins to enliven classroom atmosphere and capture student focus.

For the lead-in session of The Monarch's Journey, teachers can screen a documentary video about animal migration. Aligned with students' cognitive characteristics and interests, this audio-visual multi-modal introduction delivers the core concept of "migration", equipping students with basic background knowledge to pave the way for subsequent reading. During the video playback, teachers can combine verbal questioning, hand gestures and eye contact to activate students' prior knowledge, familiarize them with thematic cultural context, reduce learning barriers, boost learning confidence, cultivate a positive classroom atmosphere and improve overall reading teaching efficiency.

3.2. Construct Teaching Scenarios to Enrich Multi-modal Learning Experience

Multi-modal teaching prioritizes multi-sensory input through vision, hearing and touch to enrich students' learning experience, facilitate knowledge perception and internalization, and lay a solid foundation for students' cognitive development. In English instruction, teachers can design targeted teaching scenarios embedded with guiding questions to drive students' critical thinking.

Three tiers of multi-modal scenarios can be constructed for the teaching of The Monarch's Journey :

First, visual scenarios. During the prediction stage, teachers display photographs of monarch butterflies and their migration routes to engage students, prompting them to anticipate the text theme and interpret the connotation of "journey" in the title.

Second, auditory scenarios. In the post-reading segment, teachers play an English speech audio on environmental protection and harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, requiring students to share their reflections afterward. This practice simultaneously trains listening competence, oral fluency and students' self-confidence in speaking English.

Third, tactile scenarios. Teachers fully implement multi-modal teaching philosophy by adopting VR technology to reconstruct monarch butterflies' migration routes and footage illustrating their sharp population decline. This immersive experience enables students to perceive the existential crisis faced by monarch butterflies firsthand, fostering awareness of wildlife conservation, cultivating cross-cultural

awareness and realizing thematic educational guidance.

3.3. Implement Full-Process Assessment to Measure Multi-modal Learning Outcomes

Full-process assessment enables teachers to comprehensively evaluate students' learning performance under multi-modal instruction, identify deficiencies in multi-modal lesson design, optimize instructional delivery and better achieve teaching objectives. In practice, teachers should adopt diversified assessment methods including written tests, oral presentations and project demonstrations to holistically evaluate students' multi-modal learning performance. In addition, personalized assessment tasks should be designed to accommodate varied learning styles, paired with systematic evaluation frameworks to measure students' comprehensive abilities and track their classroom engagement, creative thinking and learning initiative throughout the lesson.

In the teaching of The Monarch's Journey, multi-stage assessment is embedded across the entire lesson flow. During the lead-in, after presenting visual materials via video, teachers pose the question "What is migration?" to assess students' accurate comprehension of the term and deliver timely feedback. In intensive reading, a question chain is designed to guide in-depth textual analysis: (1) When do monarch butterflies migrate? (2) Where do monarch butterflies migrate? (3) How long is the monarch butterflies' migration route? (4) Why has the monarch butterfly population declined? Teachers evaluate students' responses to gauge their text comprehension.

In the post-reading phase, teachers present images of endangered animals via PPT and construct an immersive audio-visual scenario simulating a phone call from endangered species, then raise the guiding question "How can we protect endangered animals?" to stimulate critical thinking and environmental awareness. Sequential questioning verifies whether teaching objectives are fulfilled, tests students' knowledge mastery, and develops oral expression and self-confidence. Meanwhile, teachers deliver targeted, real-time feedback on students' responses and classroom performance. As professional English educators, teachers must conduct full-process assessment under standardized evaluation criteria, assessing students from multiple dimensions including comprehensiveness of answers, oral fluency, expressive richness and logical rigor.

In the lesson summary stage, student-centered pedagogy is upheld through a dynamic self-evaluation worksheet, which prompts students to reflect on their learning, identify personal deficiencies, optimize learning strategies and internalize knowledge, ultimately advancing the cultivation of English core literacy.

In summary, full-process assessment helps teachers clarify students' knowledge mastery levels, identify strengths and weaknesses of multi-modal teaching models, and conduct timely adjustments and optimizations to boost students' reading proficiency.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the integration of multi-modal approaches into senior high school English teaching, especially reading instruction, represents an inevitable trend driven by social development. Although multi-modal teaching remains in its initial exploratory stage, advances in information technology — particularly the rise of artificial intelligence — will deepen the development and application of multi-modal pedagogy in the future. Furthermore, multi-modal teaching theories impose new requirements on teachers' role transformation: educators must shift from classroom administrators to curriculum designers and learning facilitators, placing students at the center of classroom activities. Ultimately, deploying multi-modal teaching models in senior high school English reading instruction facilitates research into applicable multi-modal strategies, cultivates students' reading strategies, cross-cultural awareness and critical thinking capabilities.

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