



Deep Reading in Senior High School English: Differentiated Teaching Strategies for Different Genres

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Abstract

This study aims to address the dilemmas of weak genre awareness and homogeneous teaching strategies in senior high school English reading instruction, which hinder students' in-depth reading competence and the implementation of core competencies. Adopting the methods of experience summarization and case analysis, this research constructs genre-specific, operable deep reading strategies based on deep reading theory and the Activity-based Approach to English Learning. The strategies are tailored to three typical genres: narratives focusing on emotion and narration, expositions concentrating on logic and information, and argumentative texts centering on claims and reasoning. Typical texts from the FLTRP senior high school English textbooks are used for demonstration. The results show that the differentiated strategies can effectively guide students to shift from superficial information extraction to in-depth meaning construction and help teachers carry out targeted teaching. It is concluded that integrating genre features with deep reading is crucial to improving students' discourse interpretation, logical thinking and critical reflection abilities, thus promoting the cultivation of English core competencies.

Keywords

Senior High School English; Deep Reading; Text Types; Reading Instruction; Reading Strategies

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the economy and society, science and technology as well as profound changes in social life, China has set higher standards for talent cultivation quality. In the new era, the national demand for innovative, interdisciplinary and international talents keeps rising. Young people are required not only to possess solid English foundation and basic communicative competence, but also to develop independent text interpretation ability, logical critical thinking, cross-cultural awareness and lifelong learning literacy. This puts forward higher and

multi-dimensional requirements for senior high school English reading teaching. The General High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, Revised 2020) (hereinafter referred to as the Curriculum Standards) proposes to further enhance students' comprehensive quality, prioritize the development of core competencies, and promote the cultivation of students' scientific and cultural literacy and lifelong learning abilities [1]. Accordingly, the educational objectives of English discipline require teaching to embody the integration of humanism and instrumental value. On the one hand, students are expected to master linguistic knowledge and apply language to daily communication. On the other hand, they should improve comprehensive literacy and ability through language learning, especially the advancement of thinking quality. Deep reading teaching serves as a crucial pathway to achieve this goal, enabling students to go beyond superficial textual information, examine viewpoints critically, and substantially upgrade their thinking quality.

Nevertheless, current senior high school English reading teaching is trapped in a prominent dilemma of homogenization. Teachers apply identical teaching procedures to narratives, expositions and argumentative texts, lacking sufficient awareness of generic distinctions and failing to design targeted deep reading activities based on textual features. A large number of daily reading classes still follow the traditional fixed mode: new words explanation, complex sentence analysis, paragraph translation and exercise comments. Such teaching ignores the unique textual logic, writing purposes, communicative functions and intrinsic value connotations of different genres, lacking hierarchical thinking guidance, emotional immersion and thematic meaning exploration. The single and stereotyped teaching mode obscures the distinctive characteristics of various genres and leads to rigid thematic sublimation, which restricts the development of students' deep reading ability to a certain extent. Long-term homogenized teaching easily leads students to develop passive and exam-oriented reading habits. They cannot flexibly switch thinking modes to interpret different genres and fail to develop higher-order abilities such as independent analysis, logical reasoning, critical evaluation and meaning construction, which is inconsistent with the core competency goals proposed in the new curriculum standards.

This study adopts the methods of experience summarization and case analysis. Based on long-term classroom observation and textbook content analysis, it selects typical reading passages from compulsory FLTRP senior high school English textbooks as analytical cases. Combined with deep reading theory and the Activity-based Approach to English Learning, it constructs differentiated teaching strategies adaptable to real classroom practice. The research provides replicable and scalable practical paths for senior high school English teachers to carry out deep reading teaching, helping students realize the leap from shallow fragmented reading to in-depth holistic comprehension.

2. Definition of Core Concepts

Derived from deep learning, deep reading stands in contrast to shallow reading. Essentially, shallow reading belongs to low-level cognitive activity, which aims to memorize scattered information, sort out literal plots and complete exam-oriented tasks, focusing on basic ability training such as vocabulary recognition, sentence comprehension and information location. In contrast, deep reading breaks away from utilitarian and exam-oriented reading limitations. Based on constructivism and cognitive development theories, it focuses on exploring textual connotation, deconstructing discourse logic, judging authorial stance and constructing value judgments.

Scholars hold slightly different views on the connotation of deep reading. Yu Wen believes that deep reading is a constructivism-based reading mode that surpasses superficial information extraction and centers on in-depth meaning construction and core competency cultivation. Its core lies in guiding learners to participate in knowledge construction actively. Learners are expected not only to master linguistic knowledge, but also to analyze textual logic profoundly, explore authorial intentions and cultural connotations. Through in-depth interaction with texts, students can develop critical thinking, innovative thinking and cross-cultural communicative competence, so as to achieve coordinated improvement in language ability, cultural awareness and thinking quality [2].

From the perspective of thinking development, Dai Huimin points out that English deep reading corresponds to the higher-order cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy, namely application, analysis, evaluation and creation. It requires learners to integrate information, make logical inferences, critique opinions and construct new meanings in reading practice [3]. Huang Yuanzhen summarizes the characteristics of deep reading as "lofty, profound and warm" [4]. Being lofty refers to the thematic height and value orientation of texts; being profound embodies logical reasoning and internal textual exploration; being warm reflects emotional resonance, humanistic infiltration and personality cultivation. The three dimensions jointly constitute the core attributes of English deep reading.

In practical teaching, English deep reading emphasizes problem orientation and knowledge transfer. On the one hand, reading activities should be designed around real-life problems to guide learners to extract problem-solving strategies from texts and apply structured knowledge to real situations [5]. On the other hand, it highlights the integration of language, content and thinking. On the basis of understanding linguistic forms, learners are required to grasp the ideological connotation conveyed by texts and develop diversified thinking abilities [6]. Different from general deep reading in liberal arts subjects, English deep reading has the unique feature of second language acquisition. While realizing text interpretation, thinking development and value construction, it consolidates students' discourse sense, sentence application, topic vocabulary accumulation and cross-cultural cognitive competence, achieving the integrated development of

language learning, thinking training and humanistic education.

It is evident that English deep reading teaching should not only deal with basic linguistic knowledge at the surface level and cultivate students' language ability, but also explore the profound implication behind thematic contexts. Through situational experience, task inquiry and cooperative discussion, it promotes the development of students' higher-order thinking and comprehensively fosters their disciplinary core competencies.

3. Deep Reading Teaching Strategies for Different Genres

3.1. Narratives: In-depth Interpretation Focusing on Emotion and Narration

Narratives mainly adopt narrative expression to convey information and emotions through storytelling, consisting of three basic elements: characters, plot, and setting. Most narrative texts selected in senior high school English textbooks focus on youth growth, international public welfare stories, interpersonal perception and moral choices, featuring complete plots, distinctive characters and clear emotional clues. With typical narrative nature, authentic emotional expression and implicit educational value, they serve as important discourse carriers for emotional understanding, personality shaping and value judgment cultivation in senior high school education.

Narratives undertake the task of realizing emotional education goals and deepening students' emotional experience by expressing emotions through character depiction and narration [7]. In narrative texts, authors' emotions and attitudes are usually implied in the description of characters, plots and settings. Therefore, deep reading of narratives should take plot as the clue, emotion as the core and theme as the soul, guiding students to perceive emotions and reflect on values on the basis of understanding stories.

3.1.1. Dual-line Sorting of Plot and Emotion

Plot development and emotional changes usually progress simultaneously. Teachers can adopt a timeline to present plot evolution and emotional fluctuation synchronously, helping students establish internal connections between the two. Taking *My First Day at Senior High* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 1, Unit 1) as an example, the text records Meng Hao's experience on his first day of senior high school from a first-person perspective. The plot follows the logical sequence: getting up early for school, exploring the campus and meeting teachers, self-introduction in English class, and receiving encouragement from teachers. Students' emotions obviously fluctuate along with plot advancement.

In teaching, teachers can guide students to construct a timeline with time as the horizontal axis. At the beginning stage, students mark Meng Hao's initial emotion of excitement and expectation; in the development stage, they extract his curiosity and

unease through dialogue analysis; in the climax stage, they analyze his nervousness and embarrassment by capturing detailed descriptions; in the ending stage, they sort out his emotional transformation from relaxation to firmness according to the teacher's instructions. Through dual-line sorting, students can clearly grasp the main plot of adapting to the new campus life and understand the emotional transition from tension to relief and finally to self-confidence. Meanwhile, emotional resonance with the text effectively helps freshmen relieve anxiety about adapting to new study and life, realizing the organic combination of text interpretation and psychological growth.

3.1.2. Role Immersion and Motivation Analysis

Role playing enables students to perceive characters' behaviors and emotions from the character's perspective, which facilitates behavioral motivation analysis, emotional experience and textual empathy. Taking *The Well That Changed the World* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 3, Unit 2) as an example, the text tells the story of Ryan, a Canadian teenager who raises money to build wells for African children. It involves multiple roles such as Ryan, African students and staff from charitable organizations, whose behaviors contain multiple emotions and motivations including perseverance, gratitude and support.

Teachers can organize students to play different roles in groups and reconstruct core scenes such as Ryan's setbacks in fundraising, African students using newly built wells, and charity workers informing the cost of well construction. Through role immersion, students can directly perceive Ryan's perseverance, the joy of African children and the sense of responsibility of charitable institutions, thus deeply understanding the theme that ordinary people can change the world. Meanwhile, the immersive experience provides implicit education in public welfare dedication, responsibility awareness and perseverance, achieving the implicit humanistic educational goal of English subject.

3.1.3. Thematic Extension and Realistic Reflection

After mastering basic plots, emotions and character motivations, teachers should further guide students to explore thematic significance to form a closed-loop understanding of the text. It is essential to build a connection between textual themes and real-life values, enabling students to deepen thematic comprehension combined with personal experience.

Taking *After Twenty Years* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 1, Unit 4) as an example, the text takes the twenty-year appointment between Bob and Jimmy as the main clue, with the core theme focusing on the conflict between friendship and responsibility. Teachers can design hierarchical discussion tasks around the theme. At the individual level, students are encouraged to share personal experience: Have you ever faced a choice between friendship and personal principles? How did you decide?

Combined with real-life situations such as refusing unreasonable requests from friends, students can concretize the connotation of responsibility boundaries. At the social level, teachers organize discussions on What qualities should true friends have?, extending individual perception to universal values of friendship. At the cultural level, students are guided to compare Chinese and Western perceptions of loyalty and principles, such as the Chinese philosophical idea that a gentleman's friendship is pure and plain and the priority of responsibility in Western culture, so as to deepen the cross-cultural connotation of the theme. Such discussions enable students to transform textual themes into personal value judgment and realize the value-shaping function of deep reading.

3.2. Expositions: In-depth Interpretation Focusing on Logic and Information

Expositions aim to explain and introduce specific things, phenomena and principles to readers. Selected senior high school English expositions cover a wide range of themes including art and culture, physical geography, climate change, popular science and social phenomena. They are characterized by high information density, rigorous logic, objective language and abundant data and examples, which are crucial for cultivating students' information screening ability, logical analysis, scientific inquiry awareness and rational critical thinking.

Expositions are usually supported by specific data, cases and charts to enhance accuracy and persuasiveness. Accordingly, deep reading teaching of expositions should focus on structural sorting, information screening, logical comprehension and knowledge transfer.

3.2.1. Structural Visualization and Logical Deconstruction

Mind maps can be adopted to analyze textual structure, clarify logical relationships between different modules and help students establish systematic cognitive frameworks. Taking Live from the Louvre (FLTRP Compulsory Book 3, Unit 4) as an example, the text introduces three masterpieces in the Louvre from Zack's live-streaming perspective, adopting a general-specific-general structure. It begins with an overall introduction to the Louvre's status as one of the world's largest museums, elaborates on the features and value of three artworks in the middle part, and concludes with the timeless appeal of artistic heritage across time and space.

Teachers can guide students to draw a radial mind map with Louvre's Amazing Treasures as the central theme. The first-level branches are divided into three artworks in parallel relationships, and each branch is further subdivided into secondary branches covering specific features and artistic value to reflect progressive logic. Visual presentation enables students to grasp textual logic intuitively, understand the uniqueness and commonality of each artwork and avoid fragmented information reception. Meanwhile, students can master common

expository structures such as general-specific, parallel and progressive layout, forming transferable interpretive strategies for similar discourses.

3.2.2. Information Verification and Critical Scrutiny

Data and charts in expositions serve as vital non-verbal information sources. Guiding students to examine textual data and cases critically helps develop their information literacy and critical questioning awareness. Taking *Hot! Hot! Hot!* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 3, Unit 6) as an example, the text takes the extreme high temperature in London as the entry point and quotes various statistical data.

After basic comprehension of relevant data, teachers can design hierarchical verification tasks: asking Which institution is likely to provide authoritative temperature data for London? to guide students to judge the credibility of information sources; raising the question Why is the Central Line regarded as the hottest route in the London Underground system? to verify the rationality of textual statements; further exploring Besides climate change, what other factors lead to extreme heat in London? to break textual limitations and expand thinking depth through interdisciplinary discussions. Such tasks cultivate students' habit of critical reading instead of accepting textual information blindly, conforming to the new curriculum standards' requirements for fostering senior high school students' information literacy, rational questioning awareness and interdisciplinary thinking.

3.2.3. Knowledge Transfer and Practical Application

Apart from popular science value, expositions have great potential to transform textual knowledge into problem-solving ability. Exploring the practical value of expository texts is an important approach to deep reading teaching. Taking *Live from the Louvre* as an example, the text not only introduces artwork features, but also implies interdisciplinary knowledge such as artwork interpretation logic and museum visiting etiquette.

Teachers can design the project task of Campus Art Corner Tour Guide Plan, requiring students to design visiting routes, etiquette guidelines and detailed implementation schemes based on textual knowledge. Through project-based group learning, students can deeply explore interdisciplinary connotations of the text, analyze language details, and improve comprehensive quality via group cooperation and extracurricular knowledge expansion. It realizes the thinking advancement from textual comprehension to practical innovation, and fully fulfills the three-level teaching objectives of the Activity-based Approach to English Learning: learning and understanding, application and practice, transfer and innovation.

3.3. Argumentative Texts: In-depth Interpretation Focusing on Arguments and Reasoning

Argumentative texts take viewpoint expression as the core and persuade readers to

accept opinions by stating facts and reasoning. Most senior high school English argumentative texts focus on dialectical themes such as life value choices, the significance of adventure, social hot issues and the collision between tradition and modernity. They feature clear structure, distinct stance, sufficient evidence and rigorous reasoning logic, serving as critical carriers to train students' logical reasoning, dialectical thinking, standpoint expression and rational evaluation ability. Argumentative texts usually have clear structure and diverse reasoning methods. Deep reading teaching of argumentations should highlight thesis extraction, evidence analysis, reasoning evaluation and dialectical thinking.

3.3.1. Thesis Positioning and Rationality Evaluation

The thesis is the core of argumentative texts. Accurate positioning of the central thesis is the primary task of deep reading. After distinguishing the logical relationship between thesis and evidence, students can evaluate textual viewpoints from the dimensions of clarity, pertinence and persuasiveness to deepen comprehension.

Taking *Like Father, Like Son* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 1, Unit 3) as an example, the text adopts a script form to present the conflict between father and son over career choice. Essentially, it is a speculative discussion on balancing personal interest and family expectation. The central thesis is implied in the grandfather's mediation: career choice should balance personal interest and practical life security. After understanding the textual thesis, teachers can connect the theme with students' real life such as subject selection and career planning, making textual value serve students' practical growth needs and realizing the integration of textual interpretation and senior high school students' career development.

3.3.2. Effectiveness Analysis of Evidence

After distinguishing facts from evidence, teachers can guide students to evaluate the correlation, representativeness and completeness between evidence and thesis, so as to cultivate critical thinking. Taking *Climbing Qomolangma: Worth the Risks?* (FLTRP Compulsory Book 3, Unit 5) as an example, the text quotes two core pieces of evidence to support the thesis that adventure possesses spiritual value: George Mallory's famous remark *What we get from this adventure is just sheer joy* and Alan Arnette's perception *It brings into focus what's important to you*.

Teachers can design analytical tasks: judging relevance by discussing *Do Mallory's words directly support the spiritual value of adventure? Why?*; evaluating representativeness via *Is Arnette's personal experience representative of all mountaineers?*; supplementing reasoning completeness with *What other examples can support the potential risks of climbing Qomolangma?*. Through multi-dimensional analysis, students learn to examine evidence objectively, improve reasoning systems and understand the rigor of logical argumentation, gradually forming a rational thinking habit of reasoning based on facts without prejudice and

extremism.

3.3.3. Dialectical Thinking and Multi-dimensional Expression

After in-depth analysis of thesis and evidence, teachers can organize practical activities such as debates to expand students' thinking boundaries. Based on the core contradiction in *Like Father, Like Son*, teachers can hold a mini-debate: the affirmative side advocates giving priority to personal interest, while the negative side insists on valuing family suggestions. During the debate, teachers guide students to return to the balanced textual proposition: the affirmative should recognize the reference value of family advice, and the negative should acknowledge the driving force of personal interest. After the debate, teachers summarize the dialectical viewpoint of taking personal interest as the core and family advice as a valuable reference. Debates break the limitation of one-sided thinking, deepen students' understanding of themes such as career choice from multiple perspectives, and simultaneously enhance their speculative ability and language expression competence, realizing the coordinated improvement of thinking quality and oral English application ability.

4. Conclusion

Under the orientation of core competency education, senior high school English reading teaching must break away from the predicament of homogenization and superficiality and move towards structuralization, differentiation and depth. It is imperative to abandon the traditional stereotyped reading teaching mode and establish distinct genre-based teaching awareness. Designing hierarchical, classified and staged deep reading activities according to the intrinsic features of different discourse genres has become an inevitable trend for teaching reform and quality improvement of senior high school English reading courses. Different genres possess unique logical characteristics and thinking value. Only by implementing targeted deep reading strategies based on generic features can teachers effectively enhance students' discourse interpretation ability, logical thinking competence and critical reflection capacity.

The three types of differentiated deep reading strategies for narratives, expositions and argumentative texts constructed in this study are based on real textbook cases with strong operability and scalability, providing clear teaching paths for frontline teachers. Closely adapted to conventional senior high school classroom teaching, the strategies take into account language knowledge acquisition, higher-order thinking training, emotional value infiltration and cross-cultural awareness cultivation, fully conforming to the overall core competency goals of the new curriculum standards and possessing practical classroom value and teaching research reference significance.

In future teaching practice, teachers should further strengthen genre awareness, integrate deep reading with generic features in depth, ensure the genuine

implementation of deep reading classes, and make the development of students' thinking quality visible and tangible.

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