

Practical Exploration of Senior High School English Newspaper Reading Teaching from the Perspective of the New Curriculum Standards: A Case Study of *21st Century*

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Abstract:

With the implementation of the General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), senior high school English reading teaching has entered a new stage of reform oriented towards the cultivation of core literacy. English newspapers and periodicals, with their unique advantages of timeliness, authenticity and diversity, have become high-quality supplementary teaching resources that align with the concepts of the New Curriculum Standards. This essay takes the mainstream English newspaper for middle school students, *21st Century*, as the research carrier, and combines the practical scenarios of senior high school English reading teaching to systematically explore the application value, practical paths and optimization strategies of English newspapers and periodicals under the background of the New Curriculum Standards. The research aims to solve the problems of outdated teaching content and single context in traditional reading teaching through the teaching integration model of textbook, newspaper and periodical, and provide operational practical references for improving the quality of senior high school English reading teaching and implementing the goal of cultivating core literacy.

Keywords:

New Curriculum Standards, Reading Teaching, *21st Century*, Core Literacy, Teaching Practice

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The New Curriculum Standards clearly state that high school English teaching should guide students to learn and apply language in real language contexts, and regards language competence, thinking quality, cultural awareness and learning ability as the core goals of teaching [1]. This requirement has driven the transformation of senior high school English reading teaching from knowledge transmission type to socio-cultural development type. However, traditional senior high school English

reading teaching has long relied on textbooks, which has brought about problems such as lagging content updates, detachment from real-life language situations, and a single cultural perspective, making it difficult to meet the needs of core literacy cultivation for real language input, diverse cultural experiences and the cultivation of autonomous learning abilities.

English newspapers, as the important carriers of authentic language and diverse cultures, have a wide range of topics, vivid language, and content that closely keeps up with the times. These characteristics are highly consistent with the concepts of realistic situational teaching and cultivation of cross-cultural communication skills advocated by the New Curriculum Standards. *21st Century* is an English newspaper specifically designed for Chinese senior high school students, which has significant advantages such as a reasonable language difficulty level, topics closely related to the lives of teenagers, and a combination of knowledge and entertainment. It has been applied in the English teaching of many senior high schools in China. Based on this, this article takes *21st Century* as the research case, deeply analyzes the application value of English newspapers in senior high school English reading teaching, constructs feasible teaching practice strategies, and conducts reflection and optimization based on teaching practice, providing theoretical and practical support for the reform of senior high school English reading teaching under the New Curriculum Standards.

1.2. Research Significance

1.2.1. Theoretical Significance

This research is based on the core literacy concepts of the New Curriculum Standards, systematically exploring the convergence points between English newspapers and senior high school English reading teaching. It enriches the theoretical system of the application of real language materials in second language teaching, providing theoretical references for the subsequent development of related teaching resources and innovation of teaching models. At the same time, through the empirical analysis of the teaching practice of *21st Century*, it verifies the applicability of theories such as differentiated teaching and situational teaching in newspaper reading teaching, expanding the application scenarios of related teaching theories.

1.2.2. Practical Significance

The teaching strategy for newspaper reading, which was constructed in this study and consists of textbook integration, hierarchical tasks, diverse activities and technology empowerment, is highly operational and can provide specific teaching guidance for English teachers in the frontline. Through practical application, it can effectively handle the pain points of traditional reading teaching, enhance students' language application ability, cross-cultural communication awareness and autonomous learning ability, and contribute to the implementation of the core literacy development goals.

1.3. Current Research Status at Home and Abroad

1.3.1. Current research status abroad

Research on the application of English newspapers in reading teaching has started earlier abroad. Krashen (1985) proposed in the Input Hypothesis that second language

learning requires a large amount of comprehensible real language input, and newspapers, as an important source of real language materials, can provide learners with abundant language input [2]. Harmer (2000) emphasized in *How To Teach English* that language learning in real contexts can enhance learners' motivation for learning, and newspaper reading can effectively connect classroom learning with real life [3]. Bndaka E. (2007) confirmed through empirical research that the reasonable use of newspaper articles can significantly improve high school students' reading skills and critical thinking abilities [4]. Overall, the foreign research mostly focuses on the empirical verification of the improvement of language competence through newspaper reading, laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent research.

1.3.2. Current Research Situation in China

Domestic related research has gradually increased with the proposal of the core literacy concept. Wang Qiang (2015) pointed out that English reading teaching under the background of core literacy needs to restructure the teaching content and mode, and authentic and diverse teaching resources are crucial [5]. Hu Zhuanglin (2018) from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis, proposed that multimodal resources such as text, pictures, and audio in newspapers can enrich the teaching scenarios and improve teaching effectiveness [6]. Existing research has largely affirmed the value of English newspapers in reading teaching, but the systematic construction of teaching strategies and practical reflection for specific newspapers still need to be deepened, especially in aspects like in-depth integration of textbooks and newspaper resources and specific operation of hierarchical task design, where there is a lack of detailed research. This also provides an entry point for this study.

2. The Application Value of English Newspapers in High School English Reading Teaching under the New Curriculum Standards

2.1. In line with the core literacy development goals, enhance students' comprehensive language skills

The New Curriculum Standard regards core literacy as the core objective of English teaching. Among them, language competence is the foundation, and it requires students to accurately understand and apply the English language in various situations. *21st Century* covers various themes such as current political news, technological inventions, cultural exchanges, and campus life. The language style is a combination of formal and colloquial, and it contains a large number of vivid words, phrases, and sentence patterns, which can provide students with abundant language input. Through reading newspapers and periodicals, students can come into contact with advanced vocabulary and practical expressions that are not covered in the textbooks, thereby expanding their vocabulary and sentence pattern reserves. At the same time, reading newspapers and periodicals requires students to quickly grasp key information and organize the logical structure of the article, which can effectively enhance students' skimming, scanning, reasoning, and judgment reading skills, and thereby strengthen their language comprehension and application abilities.

2.2. Enrich the teaching content and scenarios, and enhance cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is an important component of core literacy. The New Curriculum Standards require students to understand the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures and enhance their awareness of cross-cultural communication.

English newspapers are important carriers of cross-cultural communication. In *21st Century*, there are numerous articles covering cultural customs and values of different countries, such as Comparison of Chinese and Western Festival Cultures and Global Teenagers' Environmental Protection Actions, which enable students to intuitively experience the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures through reading. In addition, articles with a Chinese theme in the newspapers, such as Overseas Spread of Chinese Traditional Culture and Reports on Chinese Scientific and Technological Achievements, help students tell Chinese stories in English and enhance cultural confidence. Through newspaper reading, students can break the limitations of the single cultural context in the textbooks and form a multicultural perspective, thereby improving their cross-cultural communication skills.

2.3. Stimulate reading interest and cultivate autonomous learning ability

Traditional senior high school English reading textbooks have relatively fixed and dull content, which can easily cause students to experience reading fatigue and reduce their learning enthusiasm. *21st Century* has novel themes and content closely related to students' lives, such as campus hotspots, celebrity interviews, sports events, and science and technology trivia, which can greatly stimulate students' reading interest. At the same time, newspaper reading can break through the limitations of class time and space. Students can choose reading content according to their own interests and read independently during their spare time, gradually forming good reading habits. During the process of independent reading, students need to actively look up new words, organize the article's structure, and solve reading questions, which can effectively enhance their autonomous learning ability and meet the requirements of the New Curriculum Standard to cultivate students' lifelong learning ability.

3. Practical Strategies of *21st Century* in High School English Reading Teaching under the New Curriculum Standards

3.1. Integrate newspaper resources based on the themes of the textbooks to achieve precise teaching

To prevent the separation of newspaper reading and textbook teaching, teachers should base their work on the themes of the textbooks and select and integrate the resources of *21st Century* to achieve complementary teaching of textbooks and newspapers. For example, when teaching the theme Teenage Life in the first unit of the Chinese High School English textbook, teachers can choose relevant articles such as Teenagers' Online Learning Habits and Youth Volunteer Activities from *21st Century* as supplementary reading materials. During the teaching process, teachers can first guide students to learn the content of the textbooks, master relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns, and then introduce the newspaper articles, allowing students to compare and analyze the different expressions about teenage life in the textbooks and the newspapers, further deepening their understanding of the theme. At the same time, teachers can design targeted reading tasks, such as asking students to find the core vocabulary related to the textbook theme in the newspaper articles and summarize the writing ideas of the articles, to consolidate language knowledge and improve reading skills.

3.2. Design layered reading tasks to meet the needs of students at different levels.

The New Curriculum Standards emphasize paying attention to students' individual differences and implementing differentiated teaching. There are significant differences in English foundation and reading ability among high school students. Therefore, in the teaching of newspaper reading, teachers should design differentiated reading tasks to meet the learning needs of students at different levels. Taking an article on technology from *21st Century*, titled New AI Technology Helps Students Learn, as an example, for students with weak foundations, basic tasks can be designed, such as identifying the key vocabulary in the article, translating key sentences, and summarizing the main idea of the article; for students with average foundations, improvement tasks can be designed, such as analyzing the paragraph structure of the article, sorting out the specific ways in which AI technology helps students learn, and judging the author's attitude; for students with strong foundations, expansion tasks can be designed, such as discussing the pros and cons of AI technology in the field of education based on the content of the article, and writing a short essay on Technology and Learning. Through the design of differentiated tasks, each student can gain a sense of achievement in newspaper reading and gradually improve their reading ability.

3.3. Carry out diversified reading activities to enhance teaching effectiveness

To enhance the interest and effectiveness of newspaper reading teaching, teachers can carry out diversified reading activities based on the content of *21st Century*. They should integrate reading with skills such as listening, speaking and writing. First, they can hold reading sharing sessions, where students select articles they like from the newspapers and share their reading experiences and explain difficult knowledge in the articles to improve their oral language. Second, they can organize topic debate sessions, focusing on hot topics in the newspapers, such as “Should Teenagers Use Social Media?” “Is Online Learning Better Than Offline Learning?” Wait a moment. Let students debate in groups to cultivate their logical thinking and critical thinking abilities. Third, carry out writing imitation activities, allowing students to imitate the writing style and structure of newspaper articles and conduct short essay imitation, such as writing school news in the format of a news report, to enhance their writing skills. Fourth, utilize the audio resources in newspapers, and carry out listening and reading combined activities, where students listen to the audio first and then read the article, to improve their listening comprehension and rapid reading skills.

3.4. Optimize teaching methods through information technology and expand the learning space

The New Curriculum Standards advocate utilizing information technology to optimize the teaching process. In the teaching of newspaper reading, teachers can utilize information technology to expand the teaching space and enhance teaching efficiency. On the one hand, they can use online teaching platforms to release reading materials, tiered tasks and supplementary resources from *The 21st Century*, making it convenient for students to study anytime and anywhere. On the other hand, they can guide students to use the official APPs or WeChat official accounts of newspapers to independently obtain the latest newspaper content, pay attention to hot topics, and achieve real-time updates of reading resources. Moreover, teachers can utilize big data to analyze students' reading data, understand their reading progress, task completion situations and weak points, and then carry out targeted guidance to improve the accuracy of teaching. At the same time, they can organize students to use information

technology for cooperative learning, such as forming online reading groups, completing reading tasks together, sharing reading resources, and cultivating cooperative learning abilities.

4. Reflections on the Implementation of English Newspaper Reading Teaching under the New Curriculum Standards

4.1. Rationally select and filter the resources of newspapers and periodicals, and control the difficulty and quality of the content.

The content of English newspapers is diverse. Some articles may have a language difficulty level that is not suitable for high school students. Therefore, when selecting newspaper resources, teachers should strictly control the difficulty and quality of the content. Taking *21st Century* as an example, articles that are closely related to students' lives, have an appropriate language difficulty level, and are positive should be prioritized. Avoid selecting articles that involve sensitive topics or have overly complex language. At the same time, in combination with teaching objectives and the actual situation of students, appropriate deletions and adaptations should be made to the newspaper articles to highlight the teaching focus and reduce the reading difficulty for students.

4.2. Balancing the relationship between newspaper reading and textbook teaching

English newspapers are supplementary resources for textbooks rather than replacement resources. Therefore, in teaching, the relationship between newspaper reading and textbook teaching should be balanced. Avoiding the situation where newspaper reading is emphasized over textbooks. Teachers should base their teaching on the goals of textbook learning, integrating newspaper reading into the teaching process of the textbooks. Through newspaper reading, the understanding and application of textbook knowledge can be deepened. At the same time, textbook knowledge can be used to lay the foundation for newspaper reading, achieving the coordinated development of the two.

4.3. Pay attention to students' reading process and strengthen personalized guidance

In the teaching of newspaper reading, teachers should not only pay attention to the completion of students' tasks, but also focus on their reading process. They need to understand the difficulties and problems students encounter during reading, and provide personalized guidance. For students with slow reading speed and insufficient vocabulary, they can be instructed to master effective reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, and guessing the meanings of new words; for students lacking reading interest, appropriate newspaper topics can be recommended based on their interests, such as recommending sports-related articles for students who like sports, and entertainment-related articles for those who enjoy entertainment, gradually stimulating their reading interest.

5. Conclusions

Under the New Curriculum Standards, the cultivation of core literacy has become the core goal of senior high school English reading teaching. English newspapers, as high-quality teaching resources, have significant value in enhancing students'

language competence, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning abilities. *21st Century* offers rich materials and feasible practical paths for senior high school English reading teaching with its unique advantages. Through strategies such as integrating newspaper resources based on textbook themes, designing tiered reading tasks, conducting diversified reading activities, and optimizing teaching models with information technology, the effectiveness of newspaper reading teaching can be effectively improved, and the implementation of the core competency cultivation goal can be facilitated. During the practice process, teachers should reasonably select resources, balance the relationship between textbooks and newspapers, strengthen personalized guidance, continuously optimize teaching strategies, and promote the high-quality development of high school English reading teaching.

Conflicts of Interest

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