

# Research on the Cultivation Strategies of Critical Thinking Ability in High School English Reading Continuation under the Background of "Three New"

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## Abstract

The "National Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High School English (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" puts forward a series of new requirements for high school English teaching, emphasizing that teachers should cultivate students' core English literacy in the process of English teaching, including students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. The design of writing new question types after reading echoes the concept of the new English curriculum standards and is an effective measure to cultivate students' core literacy in the English subject. Therefore, the combination of continue writing and critical thinking skills has become an important topic in high school English teaching. This article will start from the current situation of high school English reading and writing teaching, and summarize the significance of improving high school students' critical thinking ability based on reading and writing teaching, combined with the requirements of the new curriculum standards. Based on the new curriculum reform, it explores the cultivation strategies of reading and writing critical thinking ability under the background of the three new, aiming to expand students' critical thinking ability and language expression ability through reading and writing teaching strategies, and provide important impetus for promoting the formation of students' English subject literacy.

## Keywords

"Three New" reform; Read and continue writing; Critical thinking ability.

## 1. Introduction

With the promotion of the "new curriculum, new textbooks, and new college entrance examination" (hereinafter referred to as the "three new"), high school English teaching should focus on the core competencies of the subject and highlight the cultivation of students' key abilities. According to the requirements of the new curriculum standard, the core competencies of high school English include language ability, thinking quality, cultural perception, and learning ability, and critical thinking ability is the expansion and extension of English thinking quality. In the context of promoting the deepening development of English curriculum reform, a new teaching method and exam question type, reading and writing, have emerged in the field of high school English teaching. Continuing after reading is an important question type that emerged in the "Three New" reform, which tests students' abilities in information processing and organization, innovative thinking, and language expression. 'Logical and organized complete expression' not only reflects the requirements of the new curriculum standards for high school students' English writing ability, but also reflects the emphasis on cultivating students' critical thinking ability. This process fully mobilizes students' thinking ability, promoting them to exercise and cultivate their thinking quality while training their English language ability (Wang Chuming, 2015). Therefore, high school English teachers should rely on the basic requirements of the "Three New" reform, understand the current teaching

situation, cultivate students' critical thinking ability, lay the foundation for the improvement and sustainable development of high school students' English learning ability, and thus enhance students' comprehensive ability. This article will analyze and explore the current situation and significance of post reading and writing teaching in high school English, as well as the cultivation mode of improving high school students' critical thinking ability based on post reading and writing under the background of the "Three New" reform.

## **2. The Current Situation and Significance of Teaching Post Reading Continuation in High School English**

### **2.1. Current situation of post reading and writing teaching in high school English**

#### **2.1.1. Teachers have not paid sufficient attention to students' use of effective learning strategies in reading and writing**

Wang Chuming once said, "The secret to effectively promoting language learning is that learners can more easily remember and use it during the creative process by imitating and using it once, and connect output and understanding together." Continued, "is the use of this efficient learning process. (Wang Chuming, 2017). Currently, there is a common phenomenon of "confusion between teaching and examination" among middle school English teachers in China. Many teachers believe that by explaining the writing steps, students will understand, which has certain educational misconceptions. In post reading writing activities, teachers often present a large number of example sentences to help students judge the expression of emotions and motivate them to imitate. However, it should be pointed out that continuation writing is different from imitation writing. Continuation writing focuses more on making students' performance "lively" rather than "rigid" imitation. It creatively uses words, rather than copying words or phrases from the original text. Moreover, this rigid writing style causes students to overly focus on the structure of previous sentence structures and language use during the writing process, which may result in a lack of connection between the continuation of the article and the original artistic conception, and may lead to thematic deviations in the subsequent writing process, ultimately failing to highlight the effectiveness and value of the teaching method of reading and continuing.

#### **2.1.2. Read and continue writing with a single content**

Continuation after reading is a new type of question that requires students to grasp the main idea of the article, clarify character relationships, and organize the story and emotional lines of the article while reading. At the same time, students also need to be able to continue writing reasonable storylines, which puts higher demands on the thinking and innovation abilities of high school students in English writing. Moreover, continuation writing should limit the different endings of the story within reasonable limits. If the teacher draws a parabolic plot line for each story, forming a fixed thinking pattern, and follows the pre-set plot, the endings of the continuation stories will be based on the same tone, greatly limiting the students' own thinking, which goes against the learning promoting effect of continuation writing. When students complete the ending continuation of a story, they not only need to have language coordination, but also creative imagination and critical writing. In practice, teachers often focus on how to find information related to continuation from the given preceding text, such as characters, events, developments, etc. This often overlooks students' own thinking and the development and ending of some inspiring storylines, which to some extent stifles students' innovative thinking ability and leads to a monotonous ending in their continuation works. This is not suitable for the development of students' thinking, nor is it suitable for training students' writing ideas through reading and writing. In terms of writing style, it can also be rigid, which

makes it difficult for students to fully unleash their imagination and creativity in writing after reading. Ultimately, this leads to some high school students having weak creativity and limited imagination, resulting in mostly simple vocabulary and sentence structures in their continuation writing, which is straightforward and lacks readability (Shen Rong, 2022).

### **2.1.3. The implementation of evaluation activities is relatively lacking**

In the evaluation activity of reading and writing, from the perspective of the evaluation subject, teachers are the evaluation subject, and most classrooms lack self-evaluation and peer evaluation among students. In terms of evaluation methods, considering the consistency of the ending of the continuation story, teachers focus on the grammar errors in students' continuation works when evaluating their compositions. Students' continuation works only received grammar and vocabulary errors marked by teachers, and few teachers evaluated the innovation and thinking of students' ending continuation. This will make students lack recognition of their own composition in terms of conception, which is not conducive to students' systematic analysis of their continuation works. Therefore, high school English teachers need to follow the principles of "student-centered" and "student-centered" in developing students' critical thinking skills through reading and writing. At the same time, they need to regularly communicate and exchange ideas with students during the teaching process, and scientifically and reasonably carry out comprehensive teaching evaluation methods such as student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher feedback. When designing post writing activities, teachers should not only design learning activities that exercise students' independent thinking and analysis, but also design activities such as group discussions and peer evaluations to promote the effective improvement of students' critical thinking abilities.

## **2.2. The Teaching Significance of Continuing Writing after Reading High School English**

Firstly, as an innovative teaching model, it is a breakthrough and innovation in the traditional English teaching mode. Introducing it into high school English teaching can help promote the innovative development of English teaching and expand the depth and breadth of English teaching. Under the background of the new curriculum reform, based on the teaching of reading and writing, students' critical thinking ability can be improved. On the one hand, it can expand the depth of reading teaching, because students in English reading classes not only need to learn new thematic vocabulary and grammar knowledge, appreciate the beauty of English language, imitate the use of language, but also exercise their ability to apply reading skills and learn to process various reading text information in a critical manner; On the other hand, it can expand the breadth of high school English writing teaching, as the improvement of students' critical thinking ability requires teachers to expand the teaching content from textbooks to specialized exercises on different topics, thereby enhancing students' ability to identify textual information and extract themes.

Secondly, the teaching of reading and writing after reading promotes the development of students' language application abilities. The language ability in core literacy mainly refers to students' language application ability. The 2017 edition of the General High School English Curriculum Standards states that language use involves both structural and practical knowledge of language (Mei Deming, Wang Qiang, 2018). Through reading, students can come into contact with various articles and literary works, accumulate vocabulary and expression methods. And reading and writing afterwards requires students to apply the knowledge they have learned, as well as their understanding and analysis of the original text, to create. In this way, students' language proficiency will be better exercised and their vocabulary will be further expanded. Therefore, continuing to write after reading can provide students with the opportunity to practice the writing skills they have learned. Through the process of continuation writing, students' literary talent and expression ability can be exercised, and their

writing level can be improved. At the same time, reading and continuing writing can also expose students to different types of articles, thereby expanding their writing breadth and depth. In this teaching mode, students can have opportunities for comprehensive training, thereby improving their language proficiency.

Finally, the teaching activity of reading and writing can highlight the students' subjectivity. For the English subject in high school, the knowledge it covers is tedious, complex, and has a certain level of learning difficulty, which leads to the majority of high school English classrooms being dominated by "teacher lectures and student listening". The teaching methods adopted by teachers throughout the entire teaching activity are too singular, thereby weakening the students' dominant position in the English classroom. With the continuous advancement of teaching reform, building an efficient English classroom based on the teaching model of reading and writing after reading can bring more fresh elements to the entire teaching activity, lead students' interest in English learning, mobilize students' English learning motivation, and make students the main body of the English classroom. In this activity, students accumulate rich language knowledge and vocabulary, effectively master writing skills and methods, and the writing process becomes easier, easier, and smoother, giving students more confidence and motivation. This enables students to independently and consciously invest more time and energy in the teaching activity of reading and writing, becoming the main body of the reading and writing classroom.

### **3. Exploration of Teaching Strategies for Continuing Writing and Critical Thinking Skills in High School English Reading**

#### **3.1. Pre writing stage: Deeply interpret the preceding text after reading, stimulate students' critical thinking ability**

In the post reading continuation task, reading the given text is a form of language comprehension, and students need to continuously internalize the corresponding language materials under the premise of input in order to complete the entire language learning process. Continuation text, on the other hand, is a form of language production in which "continuation" connects the two parts of understanding and production and influences each other. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that post reading continuation involves both input theory and output theory. American linguist Krashen proposed the "Output Hypothesis" in the 1980s. This hypothesis suggests that 'output is only one possibility for learners to acquire knowledge, and it has little impact on acquisition, while' comprehensible input 'is the only way to acquire knowledge' (Lu Renshun, 2002). And Krashen (1982) pointed out that the input must be understandable language (Krashen, 1982).

In the actual teaching process, if the language material only contains the knowledge that the learner already has, or if the language material is too difficult, it cannot effectively improve students' learning ability. Assuming  $i$  represents the current state of language knowledge and  $i+1$  represents the next stage of language development,  $i$  is the gap between the current language knowledge and the next language knowledge. Only after students are exposed to comprehensible materials at level  $i+1$ , will their language abilities be affected.

Therefore, teachers need to deeply interpret the discourse and use the preceding text as a "comprehensible input" to guide students to gradually develop their text interpretation and logical thinking abilities. Before the reading and writing class, teachers should carefully study the text and achieve a "close reading and deep reflection" on the discourse. They should first read the text thoroughly, grasp the core words, accurately distinguish the connection between sentences and paragraphs, and guide students to fully internalize the read article from the discourse level, understand the author's intention, emotional attitude, or value orientation, thereby improving their ability and level of continuation writing.

From the perspective of student input information, interesting reading analysis significantly increases the amount of comprehensible knowledge input. Teachers can design guidance plans based on students' actual situations, allowing students to use them for in-depth reading, gain a more comprehensive understanding of the content of the article, grasp the main idea of the article, and lay a theoretical foundation for writing after reading. Teachers can also guide students to use mind maps to organize the plot and context of an article, allowing them to see the writing concept and emotional development path of the article in a more intuitive way. Teachers can also have students stand on the opposite side of the author to express their views after teaching the entire text. This can not only help students learn and study the writing ideas of writers who read texts, but also stimulate them to engage in reverse thinking and cultivate their critical thinking abilities. In the subsequent writing process, students can extract the knowledge stored in their brains in a timely manner and apply it in writing, thereby improving their creative English writing skills.

### **3.2. Writing stage: Using a critical framework to enhance writing and critical thinking skills**

Inspired by Mu Congjun's (2023) model for cultivating post reading creative writing critical thinking abilities, the author believes that through the guidance of a critical thinking framework, students can effectively and thoughtfully complete continuation writing based on a deep understanding of the content of the preceding article. The use of speculative frameworks in post reading continuation teaching can enable students to think about problems from multiple perspectives and positions, search for positive and negative arguments, and greatly enrich the content of writing; At the same time, various excellent reading materials provide students with demonstrations for identifying and using language, helping them overcome common difficulties in English writing such as language vocabulary poverty and lack of expressiveness (Mu Congjun, 2023).

#### **3.2.1. What is a speculative framework**

The speculative framework is a guide for organizing and supporting speculative activities (Perkins 1987:47), including five language steps of introduction, target, refutation, response, and conclusion, as well as eight explicit speculative indicators of background, controversy, core argument, evidence, target, refutation, response, and conclusion (Toulmin 2003; Han Baocheng, Wei Xing 2021). When conducting continuation writing activities, teachers should guide students to write through five language steps, and then evaluate based on eight explicit reasoning indicators. The introduction steps include cultural situational factors related to the topic, the background and position of the audience, and the presentation of arguments; The target slogan step refers to the author mentioning different positions or viewpoints to indicate the viewpoints involved in the subsequent discussion, and analyzing the evidence of the other party's claims; The refutation step refers to a series of reverse arguments based on the opponent's viewpoint, in which the target argument is gradually dismantled to refute the argument and express the speaker's own position or proposition; Response language step refers to responding to the viewpoints and evidence of the other party, reflecting a speculative discussion of viewpoints; Conclusion language step refers to the further revision of one's viewpoint by the speaker under the collision of thinking, and the subsequent conclusion, proposing answers or solutions to address the issue (Mu Congjun, 2023).

How to use speculative frameworks in continuation activities

Many teachers feel confused when facing the teaching of reading and writing, and do not know where to start? The speculative framework provides students with a good writing approach and logic, making their thinking clearer and helping them express accurate viewpoints. This framework can enable students to consciously think critically about topics, allowing them to

think from multiple perspectives and perspectives, and to search for positive and negative arguments. Meanwhile, the content of students' writing is substantial and well founded.

Firstly, teachers should introduce the concept of speculative framework before students start writing, helping them understand what speculative framework is and the connotations and meanings of the five language steps and eight indicators. Through this method, students can better understand the layout of argumentative essays. Secondly, in the selection of reading materials in the previous section, on the one hand, the latest hot and controversial events at home and abroad can be chosen as topics, allowing students to analyze and reason about the topic during the discussion, thereby promoting their deeper thinking on the topic; On the other hand, it is possible to expand and extend the content of textbooks, integrate relevant and interesting resources into actual teaching, and use interesting teaching carriers to meet students' interest needs, thereby improving students' classroom participation. After completing the above steps, students should organize their language for writing according to the five steps of the speculative framework. Finally, after the completion of the student continuation activity, teachers should guide students to evaluate their continuation works based on the eight indicators and innovate teaching evaluation methods through "peer evaluation". During this process, teachers should provide students with timely feedback and guidance, help them discover and correct mistakes, and further improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities.

### **3.2.2. Post writing stage: Conduct diversified evaluation and optimize the cultivation of critical thinking ability**

The multiple evaluation method, as a new trend that has emerged in recent years, is gradually being valued and applied in English writing teaching. The new curriculum standards clearly state that students should be the center, highlighting the individual differences of learners, the learning process, and the practicality and applicability. Under the background of the "three new", English teaching evaluation should pay more attention to students' comprehensive development and reflection of their critical thinking ability. Diversification refers to the comprehensive evaluation of students' learning in middle school English composition teaching, involving students, classmates, and teachers in composition evaluation. It is necessary to achieve diversity in subjects, content, and methods, so as to better integrate evaluation with middle school English composition teaching and achieve diversity in evaluation. The teaching evaluation of reading and writing should adopt the following principles:

Principle of diversification of evaluation subjects. In English teaching, multiple evaluation methods are used, including teacher evaluation, student self-evaluation, and peer evaluation, to promote full interaction and communication between students, classmates, and teachers. We should fully tap into students' subjectivity, transform their negative attitudes into positive ones, and enable them to better integrate into the evaluation process. Teachers should transform from leaders to guides and collaborators, encourage students to actively participate and freely evaluate, and strive to create a democratic and equal evaluation atmosphere, thereby further stimulating students' thinking activity.

Principle of Multidimensional Evaluation Content. In English writing teaching, teachers often only emphasize the imparting of language, while neglecting the overall quality of students' language. If teachers only judge based on grammar and other language aspects, it will lead to students placing too much emphasis on language knowledge while neglecting the content of continued writing. At the same time, teachers should also set appropriate criteria for the conceptualization and grading of students' continuation works in their daily grading, so that students can not only focus on the use of language, but also on the rational expression of creative thinking and imagination. When evaluating students' continuation works, it is important to maintain an open attitude towards their story ideas and discover the strengths of

their writing from different perspectives. Wang Chuming once proposed that the first favorable condition for promoting learning through "reading and writing" is to open up imagination and develop thinking. The same story will have different personalities for different readers, and the same story will have different endings in the hands of different writers. Human intelligence is multidimensional, with each individual having their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in addition to evaluating students' writing achievements, teachers should also evaluate students' various intelligences, pay attention to their overall writing process, and comprehensively evaluate students' learning writing attitudes, writing interests, writing strategies, and other aspects.

The principle of diversified evaluation forms. In English writing teaching, evaluation should adopt a combination of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. On this basis, through discussions and revisions among students, they can achieve better results in composition teaching. Let students find out if there is anything else they can improve on in their homework, so that they can use a critical and sharper perspective to identify problems in their writing. In the process of mutual evaluation and improvement among students, each student is both an author and a reader, giving writing communicative significance. And in the peer evaluation among students, there is a collision of different thinking styles, collecting viewpoints from different positions, which is more conducive to improving students' critical thinking ability. In terms of evaluation tools, Cunningham and White (2021) proposed that evaluation measurement forms and group collaboration forms can be used for teaching evaluation. After class, methods such as student portfolios, questionnaires, teacher-student discussions, interviews, teaching records, and teaching feedback forms can be used for evaluation.

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, in high school English reading and writing teaching, in response to the call for the "Three New" reform to enhance high school students' critical thinking ability, achieve optimization and innovation of high school English teaching mode, and lay the foundation for cultivating comprehensive and versatile talents, it is necessary to strengthen the effective application of the reading and writing mode. Teachers should consciously use the teaching mode of cultivating critical thinking ability to help students better diverge their thinking and form good writing skills on this basis. When conducting post reading and writing training activities, English teachers should start from enriching students' effective input information, constructing writing thinking frameworks, and optimizing their thinking abilities through multiple evaluation methods. At the same time, they should stimulate students' writing innovation to achieve the goal of comprehensively improving students' English comprehensive literacy. This teaching mode can not only achieve integrated reading and writing teaching, but also promote the development of students' core literacy, help improve their critical thinking ability, and thus maximize the educational value of high school English teaching. Therefore, high school English teachers should clarify the current situation and significance of improving high school students' critical thinking ability based on post reading continuation teaching, and integrate the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability into high school English post reading continuation teaching in a targeted manner to promote the improvement of high school students' critical thinking ability.

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