

Study on the Continuation Writing Teaching in High School English based on the Cultivation of Thinking Capacity

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Abstract

The thinking capacity is an important part of the core competencies of the English subject, and continuation writing is a good example of combining reading and writing under new English question type of college entrance examination. Based on the investigation of the relationship between the cultivation of thinking capacity and the continuation writing teaching, the article discusses the problems in the teaching and learning of reading and writing, analyzes the strategies for cultivating students' thinking capacity in the continuation writing as well as the practice of teaching, i.e., sorting out the elements and cultivating the logic of thinking; setting tasks to develop originality of thought; mutual evaluation and correction to enhance critical thinking.

Keywords

Thinking Capacity; Continuation Writing Teaching; High School English.

1. Introduction

Thinking capacity and continuation writing are two essential topics in high school English teaching, language and thinking are inseparable, thinking regulates language and language develops thinking. According to Wang Qiang, the process of students' extraction, integration, internalization, analysis, comparison, reasoning, criticism, and evaluation of the content of the material are all the process of the formation of thinking capacity (Wang Qiang, 2017). The overall development and improvement of students' cognition is precisely based on their continuous improvement of their ability to learn as well as use the English language.

The thinking capacity is one of the conditions for the completion of high-quality continuation writing, and students need to predict, summarize, analyze and reason about the inner connections of the discourse, make sense of the text as well as create a rational second continuation writing. Continuation writing is also one of the ways to develop the thinking capacity, and teachers use the discourse as a basis to achieve the ultimate goal of educating people in the activity experience.

Therefore, the teaching of continuation writing can develop students' thinking capacity and improve their core competencies. Teachers must carefully design teaching links, adopt teaching strategies for the development of logical thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking, and guide high school students to actively engage in the interpretation of the text, so as to read and write together, and build thinking for learning.

2. Thinking Capacity and Continuation Writing

2.1. Definitions of Thinking Capacity

Thinking capacity is an important part of the core competencies of the English subject, reflecting the variability of students' thoughts in the learning process and the different levels of learning. Thinking is an implicit logical thinking activity, and common thinking qualities include logical thinking, critical thinking, creative thinking and so on. The development of thinking

capacity is conducive to students' cognition of the world from a cross-cultural perspective, improving their ability to analyze and solve problems and better adapting to society.

2.2. Continuation Writing

"Continuation writing" is a new type of question that combines 'comprehension' and 'output', which refers to the enrichment and development of the text that has been read. Students need to organize the whole text according to the information and key clues in the text, grasp the storyline, theme and emotional changes of the characters, and translate the author's intention into their own understanding. When students continue to write, the creative imitation of the language of the previous text can effectively improve their language expression ability (Song Yingchao, 2017). In addition, students also need to write follow-up stories according to the interpretation of the article, and give full play to the main idea of the original text on the basis of not violating the main idea, so as to make the article richer in content, fuller in emotion and deeper in meaning.

2.3. Synergies between Thinking Capacity and Continuation Writing Instruction

On the one hand, the effective memorization of words and grammar needs to rely on the complete discourse, and students' comprehension of the discourse combines thinking skills such as analysis, reasoning and generalization, which provides strong support for vocabulary accumulation, text reading and question answering.

On the other hand, continuation writing are conducive to motivating high school students to improve their logical, creative, and critical thinking. Students understand and reflect on the content of the text, and use their imagination to connect the continuation to the previous text effectively. In this process, students can not only continue to write according to the author's intention, but also surprise and create new conflicts to make the text realize the second twist, increase the interest and level, so as to improve the ability to use the English language and promote the development of thinking capacity.

Thus, the continuation writing teaching and the development of thinking capacity are interrelated and complementary.

3. Problems in the "Teaching" and "Learning" of Continuation Writing

Compared with the traditional reading and writing tasks, continuation writing puts higher demands on students' language ability and creativity. However, in actual teaching, it can be found that students often find it difficult to fully grasp the tasks and requirements of continuation writing, and teachers are also prone to deviation in teaching focus, the following are some common problems:

3.1. Student Aspect

3.1.1. Failure to Understand and Capture the Theme of the Story

Accurate reading of the text is the prerequisite and foundation of good writing for students, and the theme of the article sets the emotional tone of the whole text and the idea of continuation. However, many students like to get entangled in some minutiae that have nothing to do with the theme and over-interpret the content of the text, which results in the main line not being prominent, the context is disconnected and lack of coherence. The real reason for these problems is the lack of logical thinking of the students, which prevents them from deeply understanding the core ideas of the text, and the original flavor of the text is lost.

Take the June 2021 Zhejiang paper continuation writing question "My Paycheck" as an example, this continuation writing is a character-driven story about the author who goes to work on his father's land but is reluctant to contribute his hard-earned money to the family after the work.

According to paragraph 1 “The payday arrived at last.” and paragraph 2 “I understood immediately what my parents were worried about.” we know that the story is about to take a turn for the worse. “We know that the story is about to take a turn, and the correct way to think about it is the story of how something changes the writer when payday arrives, and how he proudly gives his father the proceeds of his labor at the end. The unexpected event here is what the student is constructing and envisioning, and we can speculate that it is the author's realization that it is not easy for his father, or that because of the author's love of baseball mentioned earlier, the father wants his child to use the proceeds of his labor to fulfill a hobby. To the extent that it fits the theme, students can be bold in their imaginations.

However, in the exam, many students misunderstand the topic, think that the father is skimming the author's salary, or make up a fanciful reason for parental concern, and the preceding paragraph is out of touch. There are also many students who seize on the details and spend a lot of time explaining why my father would also give his salary to his father when he was young. There are conflicts between logic and improper integration of articles.

3.1.2. Diffuse Excessively and Devise Plots at Will

In the continuation reading, the plot should be highly harmonious with the original text, which is a continuation of the original text. The synergies in the continuation reading task come from the close integration of understanding and output, content creation and language imitation. There is a limit to the number of words in continuation reading, and students need to maximize the richness of the content in the limited space. However, in practice, students tend to over divergence or misjudge the content of the text, resulting in a huge tear in the ideas and content of the subsequent story development and theme text. Some students, due to lack of life experience or imagination, completely ignore the story situation and characters' emotions, and write content that completely deviates from the text.

3.1.3. Capacity Limitations and Frequent Grammatical Errors

An excellent writing must be based on the quantity of correct grammar and the quality of language expression. In the actual continuation writing, students are prone to the following problems due to insufficient vocabulary and grammar reserves. Firstly, spelling mistakes and vocabulary collocation errors, which occur because students are used to memorizing words in isolation or confusing fixed collocation phrases, resulting in writing that does not conform to the content of the original text. For example, in the following sentence: “She sent the boy to hospital and took care for him yesterday.” The words take care of and care for in the sentence are fixed collocations. When choosing phrases that express the meaning of “take care of”, students are prone to misuse them because they can't memorize them. Secondly, the content of the continuation is inconsistent with the original text, directly using the sentences that have been memorized, which is very different from the writing style of the original text, and is commonly used. Third, the strong use of advanced vocabulary and complex sentence patterns, the whole essay is wordy and top-heavy. Fourthly, influenced by the negative transfer of mother tongue and Chinese expression habits, it is easy to appear “Chinese English”, which is not in line with the norms of the English language. For example, the following sentence: “Would you want to take part in this activity with us?” When asking the other party's opinion, you should use the phrase “Would you like to...” is more euphemistic, and ‘Would you want to...’ in the original sentence is obviously a direct translation from the students' Chinese, which seems to be hard and rigid. Although long-term Chinese English is harmless, it is not conducive to the cultivation of students' English language thinking, which leads to unorthodox expression after continuation writing, and makes it difficult to improve the quality of writing.

3.2. Teacher Aspect

3.2.1. Emphasis on “Writing” Over “Reading” Weakens the Synergy between Reading and Writing

In continuation writing, reading comprehension is a prerequisite for good writing. However, in actual teaching, many teachers design a large number of writing tasks in order to improve students' application ability and shorten the time of interpreting the text. Without sufficient reading, students are unable to grasp the logic and emotional changes of the text, analyze the subtleties of expression, and experience the pleasure of reading, resulting in insufficient material for writing, writing content detached from the theme, and low quality of writing. In the long run, students' reading ability and oral expression cannot be improved, and teachers can hardly carry out the teaching of reading and writing, and the teaching process is single.

3.2.2. Emphasis on “Knowledge” Rather than “Ability”, Weakening the Cultivation of Students' Thinking

Although high school students have a certain learning ability, their cognitive level and thinking level are still limited. In high school English reading teaching, many teachers “emphasize knowledge but not ability” and neglect the development of thinking capacity. Mechanical reading and writing training instead of shallow to deep, progressive meaning practice, without considering the age characteristics of students and the law of physical and mental development. Teaching and learning in a hurry, continuation write can be put together, not put together to make up, with a template to apply the theme, do not take into account the logic and innovation of students' thinking. Once a new change in the topic type occurs, students will be at a loss. Teachers should create as many opportunities as possible in teaching, so that students can discuss, share and innovate more to develop their language skills.

4. Strategies for Developing the students' Thinking Capacity in Continuation Writing Instruction

The continuation writing are not arbitrary, there are content limits and word count requirements. It is a comprehensive language test that tests students' language skills such as reading and writing, as well as their imaginative and creative thinking. In continuation writing, teachers need to use the following strategies to ensure that teaching and learning activities are carried out efficiently and that students' thinking capacities are developed.

4.1. Scientific Selection of Reading Texts

Continuation writing is an activity based on reading, and the content of the reading text is the basis for students' continuation writing. Teachers in the actual teaching should be scientific selection of reading text, to the students as the main body, in line with the law of students' physical and mental development, to stimulate students' interest in reading. For example, teachers can choose interesting stories related to the teaching content, or import from students' real life or social hotspots, so that students are willing to actively explore the development and ending of the story.

4.2. Careful Design of Teaching Sessions

Activity is an important form of classroom teaching, conducive to active thinking as well as active practice, teachers should be teaching activities for scientific and rational design.

For example, when teaching Travelling Around, teachers can utilize group cooperative learning to guide students to explore. Specifically, after introducing the places of interest and the writing format, the teacher asks the question: “When we share our travel plans with our friends, what do we usually talk about?” After the classroom atmosphere has been enlivened, students will put forward travel plans such as “destination, transportation, accommodation, activity”

according to their existing material accumulation. The group discussion helps students to consolidate what they have learned and to think out of the box, so that their language ability can be improved.

4.3. Read through the Text to Clarify the Context

Continuation writing examines students' ability to control the structure of the discourse. Students need to grasp the main content of the story and sort out the key information of the text through the logical relationship of the context. Students not only need to read the literal meaning, but also understand the development of the story, the causes and consequences, the development of conflicts, the emotional changes of the characters and other key elements. On this basis, they can make reasonable predictions about the subsequent plot in order not to depart from the original text.

Each essay has its own unique writing ideas, but the six elements of a narrative essay, i.e. character, time, place, cause, passage and result, remain the same. The main purpose of continuation writing is to let students create the result, so in the creative process, students should firmly focus on the first five elements, seize the story development of the time line, plot line and emotional line, accurately find out the story of the ambush and according to the ambush bold imagination, reasonable creation of the continuation content, increase the plot twists and turns and richness.

4.4. Construct the Logical Maps of Thinking

In the process of high school English reading teaching, sorting out the whole text is the key to efficient reading, and constructing thinking logic maps can help students achieve the purpose of writing and improve the quality of thinking. Tree diagrams help students sort out the storyline, bubble diagrams summarize the characters' character, and flow charts present the characters' emotional changes. In the unit of Travelling Around, teachers can guide students to draw the following bubble map: the root node is the theme Travelling Around, the first level branches are "preparation, transportation, tour, tourist attraction, hotel", and the second level branches are 'transport', such as 'hike, plane, highway, cable car' and so on. The bubble charts help students to create their own story structure, ensure logic and coherence, and thus better accomplish reading and writing. At the same time, it develops the students' thinking capacity and creativity.

4.5. Rationalization of the Scoring Mechanism

A detailed and accurate division of the scoring mechanism for continuation writing is conducive to improving the effectiveness and relevance of high school English reading teaching. When scoring, teachers should first determine the grade according to the overall situation of the answer, and then consider the quality of the content, the accuracy of the grammar and vocabulary used, as well as the coherence of the whole text, etc., with the help of standardized scoring criteria to set teaching objectives, so that teaching can be based on the law. At the same time, it is conducive to teachers to clarify the direction of the students to practice and improve the continuation writing, guide students to carry out targeted training, and then develop students' logical thinking, comprehensively improve students' language skills.

5. The Teaching Practice of Cultivating Students' Thinking Capacity in Continuation Writing

Continuation writing has the advantage of surpassing many other foreign language learning tasks and is the best teaching method to promote learning efficacy (Wang, Chuming, 2013). Reading is the input, the source and foundation of writing. Teachers need to combine the existing teaching experience and innovate teaching activities to ensure that students are

coordinated in content and coherent in the process of writing, and to give full play to the role of reading followed by writing in promoting the development of thinking capacity. The following is an exploration based on how to cultivate students' thinking capacity in continuation writing.

5.1. Sorting out the Elements and Cultivating the Logic of Thinking

5.1.1. Analyzing Discourse from Multiple Perspectives to Enhance Students' Literacy Thinking Skills

In continuation writing, students not only need to be content and grammatically correct and rich, but also need to connect effectively with the content of the previous text. Discourse is the basic unit of language learning and the foundation of English language teaching (Dai Hongyan; Wang Yanpeng, 2023). Students need to constantly push and polish the content of the original text, interpret the background information, appreciate the good sentences, understand the conflict, grasp the emotional changes, and create a continuation of the content with the author's intention to write.

The following takes the continuation writing "A Mother's Day Surprise" in the second volume of the new National College Entrance Examination in 2021 as an example to explore the story content and background information in the discourse strategy.

Reading material fragment 1 (inferring the content of the story): "The twins were filled with excitement as they thought of the surprise they were planning for Mother's day. "Interpretation: From Material 1, it is clear that the main part of the story is about the surprise on Mother's Day and centers around the twins' actions. Nudging the content of the story will ensure that the continuation is coherent with the reading material.

Reading material fragment 2 (interpreting of background information): "How pleased and proud Mother would be when they brought her breakfast in bed. They planned to make French toast and chicken porridge. The big day came at last. The alarm rang at 6 a.m. "Interpretation: The basic information about the time, place, main characters and events of the story can be found in Material 2, which sets the stage for accepting the new plot.

5.1.2. Conceptualize Storyline Development in a Problem-Oriented Way

Question and answer between teachers and students is an essential part of classroom interaction. An excellent question can improve the depth and breadth of students' thinking. In the continuation writing, teachers should change from simple to complex, raise questions step by step according to the content of the text, and help students sort out the materials and make judgments about the subsequent plot. At the same time, they can also compare, question and evaluate the outcome of the story in a variety of possibilities, so that students can form their own personalized thinking in the thinking and discussion.

5.2. Setting Tasks to Develop Originality of Thought

5.2.1. Use Brainstorming to Stimulate Thinking

The use of brainstorming in continuation writing is beneficial in stimulating students' creative thinking. The teacher first clarifies a thesis, and students work together to solve the problem through group discussion. In this process, the teacher strictly forbids criticism, and students freely imagine and explore the answer through the resonance of thinking, which cultivates the spirit of group cooperation. Writing as a language output activity, the pre-writing process in the first stage is essential, and brainstorming precisely provides students with writing materials as well as ideas, simplifying the process of product output. Students can push forward in the process of collision of ideas, making the renewed plot fuller, the characters more three-dimensional, and the psychological changes of the characters richer.

5.2.2. Reverse Plot Development to Develop Logical Thinking

The discourse of continuation writing is usually a narrative, with a strong contextual logic and a main line running through the whole text, which requires the plot of the continuation to be logically unified with the original text (Zhang Huizhen, 2022). In material reading, students need to infer unknown information based on known information, so that the continuation passage has overall consistency as well as logical coherence with the original text. However, from the actual situation, students often either run out of plot or the text is not correct. In view of the above phenomenon, the inverse deduction method is conducive to students' reasonable speculation about the development of the subsequent plot. There are two common methods of backward deduction, one is to utilize the storyline to backward deduction, and the other is to utilize key information to backward deduction. The inverse deduction method is conducive to students' further clarification of the logical relationship between the elements and paragraphs and enrichment of the storyline, thus developing logical thinking and improving creativity.

5.2.3. Organize Secondary Continuation Writing to Enrich the Details of the Story

On the basis of the students' completion of the continuation writing, the teacher can also modify the opening sentences of the two endings given in the original reading text, so that the students can complete the secondary continuation of the writing and stimulate the students' imaginative potential and creative thinking.

In the case of the continuation writing topic A Mother's Day Surprise, the original continuation topic was the twins failing to make breakfast and their father showing up just in time. Teachers can change it to the mother shows up, adding twists and turns and interest to the story by the mother's psychological changes, so that students can think out of the box and create more plausible storylines.

For example, we could set up the ending of the story like this: While they were anxious, their mother suddenly appeared. Looking at the mess and dirty kitchen, the mother asked angrily, "What are you doing?" The kitchen is no place for you to play!" Jenna and Jeff quickly explained why. "Mom, it's Mother's Day, and we wanted to make you a surprise breakfast, but we failed." Shocked and ashamed, the mother apologized to the children and joined them in cleaning the kitchen and finishing the breakfast. In this process, everyone feels happy and satisfied, which is the biggest surprise of Mother's Day.

In the students' second continuation writing, through the mother's emotional changes, from anger to guilt to moving, making the story more dramatic, no matter what type of continuation writing, and finally reached the "Mother's Day surprise" writing requirements, sublimation of the theme, and the exercise of the students' writing skills.

5.3. Mutual Evaluation and Correction to Enhance Critical Thinking

The Curriculum Standard points out that the senior high school English program should establish a multi-dimensional evaluation system so as to promote students' all-round development. In continuation writing, teachers should set up corresponding evaluation scales according to the theme and content of the article to evaluate students' continued writing from multiple dimensions. If only a single correction of grammatical errors and scoring, students will not be able to clearly recognize their own continuation of the content, and it will be difficult to provide timely feedback and improve the teaching effect.

For teachers, they can set up a continuation evaluation bank from various aspects such as theme, logic, content, language, emotion, etc., and guide students to check the coherence and harmony between the continuation content and the original text according to the evaluation bank, and make timely modifications to the grammar and content of the continuation content, and embellish the language. At the same time, students can carry out student-student mutual evaluation, so as to enhance the students' enjoyment of participating in the review, consolidate

the text content in the process, get more writing ideas, and modify their own works in time to add the logic and innovation of language and plot.

6. Conclusion

To summarize, continuation writing is an innovation and transcendence of the traditional reading and writing teaching mode, and teachers should pay attention to integrating the cultivation of students' thinking capacity in all aspects of reading and writing to help students' overall development. Teachers need to carefully prepare reading materials, design activities combining knowledge and meaning, draw mind maps, help students analyze the theme, language, emotional attitude and other basic clues of the original text, and at the same time make students complete the synergy of reading comprehension and writing through the evaluation system, so as to guarantee the development of students' language ability, improve their thinking capacity, and mobilize the enthusiasm and interest of students' participation in English learning.

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