

Effective Strategies for Improving Primary School Students' English Reading Skills from the Perspective of Core Literacy

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Abstract: Primary education, guided by the cultivation of disciplinary core literacy, places a greater emphasis on students' autonomy and is committed to promoting students' all-round development. English reading is one of the main ways for students to acquire English knowledge. Although it is a fundamental learning point in English teaching, it poses challenges to English teaching in primary schools. This paper makes a detailed analysis of the current state of English reading education for primary school students from the perspective of core literacy, and then proposes effective strategies for improving students' English reading skills.

Keywords: Core literacy; Primary school students; Reading skills

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1. Introduction

At present, the society has entered the era of globalization. As one of the most widely used languages, English has become a necessary language for talents in the current society. The task of English education in primary schools is heavy. The "English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education" clearly proposed to strengthen the enthusiasm of students in English learning and cultivate comprehensive skills among students in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This has put forward certain requirements on students' learning tasks. Fourth grade students should achieve certain reading goals, alike sixth grade students. The first-level reading goal is to be able to recognize words by looking at pictures^[1]. On the basis of identifying objects, the student is able to read with the help of pictures. The second-level reading goal is to reach the second-level English level, master 600 to 700 vocabularies, and read a total of 100,000-120,000 words. Reading is the most important teaching content in English education, especially in primary schools. It not only tests students' language decoding skills, but also cultivates their cross-cultural understanding skills, which is of great significance to cultivate primary school students' English core literacy. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen students' reading skills. However, the actual state of English reading education in primary schools in China is not optimistic. Due to the influence of traditional teaching concepts and methods, there are often many disadvantages when carrying out English reading education, which is not conducive to strengthening students' reading skills and raises various obstacles in the cultivation of students' core literacy. This paper makes a detailed analysis of relevant contents to effectively improve and strengthen primary school students' English reading skills from the perspective of core literacy, achieve the goal of core literacy in regard to the English subject, and lay a foundation for

students' sustainable development in the future ^[2].

2. Requirements for English reading education in primary schools from the perspective of core literacy

2.1. Adhering to student-oriented education

Under the educational background of core literacy, teachers should focus on student-centered education and carry out scientific and reasonable English reading education in primary schools. It is imperative to pay close attention to students' learning, in order to ensure that the students understand and master a certain degree of information in addition to ensuring that English reading education and the new curriculum standards satisfy the requirements ^[3]. When setting the teaching contents and methods of English reading education in primary schools, teachers should meet the objective development needs of 7- to 12-year-old children and ensure that the teaching contents and methods are scientific in nature. Furthermore, when implementing English reading education, teachers should come to understand the characteristics and objective intelligence of children at different stages, as well as integrate vivid and interesting contents into English reading education, so as to make good use of the mental characteristics of primary school students and carry out English education scientifically ^[4].

2.2. Paying attention to culture and humanities

For a long time, English reading education in primary schools pays more attention to the teaching of English knowledge, neglecting the mining of humanities and other cultures. On this basis, students may deviate from active learning, which is not conducive to improving their cultural literacy ^[5]. In terms of core literacy, many contents require students to have a good cultural understanding, so that students can enhance their cross-cultural understanding skills in the process of learning English. However, many teachers may overlook the implicit cultural connotation of textbooks and teaching materials. Therefore, under core literacy, teachers will be required to correct cultural connotation, allowing students to establish various national cultures and the idea of equality as well as respect the cultures of other countries, on the basis of learning knowledge, reading various texts, developing feelings of humanity, as well as learning the cultural connotations of different countries. In order to promote the overall development of students, it is important to cultivate good cultural character, capable of understanding knowledge and feeling the shape of culture ^[6].

3. Current state of English reading education in primary schools from the perspective of core literacy

3.1. Neglecting the importance of English reading education

The basic level of systematic learning is at primary schools. The English class setting is relatively less, but there are more teaching contents. Under the pressure of heavy teaching tasks, teachers are more likely to focus on directing students to acquire English vocabulary and conduct English dialogues, but they are unable to implement the reading-in-depth teaching design. In the implementation of English teaching, the dabbling or even overpassing of reading contents is common, thus directly affecting the efficiency of English reading education in primary schools and the cultivation of English reading skills among students ^[7].

3.2. Outdated teaching method

The English reading content in primary schools is a compilation of all kinds of English knowledge. When teaching English reading, teachers should focus on guiding students and stimulating their desire to read. However, given the current state of English reading education, its implementation is incomplete, the teaching methods are single and old, and students are unable to deeply perceive the cultural charm and

humanistic feelings behind the reading content due to the boring explanation of new words, phrase supplement, listing and collocation, paragraph by paragraph analysis, grammar explanation, and so on. The cramming-style teaching method not only leads to the lack of understanding of knowledge among students, but also reduces the enthusiasm of students for learning, resulting in a lifeless classroom atmosphere, in which it is difficult to ignite students' drive ^[8].

3.3. Lack of reading resources

The "Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards" requires sixth grade students to read a total of 100,000-120,000 words. However, considering the current textbooks, students will not be able to complete the required reading. Therefore, teachers must actively introduce extracurricular reading materials, recommend appropriate extracurricular reading content to students, broaden their perspectives, and encourage them to read more. However, in the current English reading education, teachers tend to disregard the use of extracurricular reading resources, the selection of extracurricular reading materials is not scientific enough, the auxiliary teaching effect is poor, and the requirements of the new curriculum standards cannot be met, making it difficult to improve students' reading skills ^[9].

4. Effective strategies for improving primary school students' English reading skills from the perspective of core literacy

4.1. Introducing English picture books to stimulate students' interest in learning English

Picture books are rich in content and diversified in form. They are great for younger readers. The reading material of picture books is mostly comprised of pictures, with some words thrown in for good measure. The words are relatively short and simple, making it is easy for students to understand. In English reading education, teachers should actively explore the reading resources of picture books and stimulate the observation skills of students, so that students can express their understanding of the contents through imagination by analyzing and thinking. The contents of picture books are usually vivid and can stimulate students' association and sensory experience, making them more enticing than pure text. Primary school students have a relatively small grasp of English vocabulary. With the help of picture books, even if they do not understand certain words, they can continue reading with the help of pictures, which effectively drives their enthusiasm for reading. For example, when learning "We Love Animals," picture books about zoos can be introduced into the teaching ^[10]. Through vivid pictures, it allows students to learn English words, stimulate their interest in learning, and enrich their vocabulary ^[11].

4.2. Creating problem scenarios and stimulating students' thinking

The goal of problem-driven education is to truly demonstrate the dominance of students and to put forward engaging questions, so that students can learn to solve problems through their own understanding on the basis of reading and learning, as well as to acquire more knowledge about English ^[12]. Questions are raised around the key information of English reading education, and students are inserted into the problem scenario, using question-driven teaching to completely mobilize students' enthusiasm for reading, activate their thought process, and stir their hunger for knowledge ^[13]. Teachers could incorporate a pointing game while teaching "My classroom" to help students grasp essential phrase patterns and English words, as well as comprehend the active learning and usage of sentence patterns and vocabulary. Students are instructed to point out certain things in the classroom when a question is asked. For instance, when the teacher says, "Where is the floor?", "Where is the window?", or "Where is computer?", students will have to respond by pointing to the corresponding items. This activity will stimulate students' thinking and reaction. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of the knowledge in English reading education and understand the use of reading knowledge in reality through these intriguing problem scenarios ^[14].

4.3. Cultivating primary school students' reading skills and reading thinking

Reading skills are the key to help students read well. Only on the basis of mastering reading skills and strengthening reading thinking can students develop good reading habits. From the objective level, primary school students are under the visual mode of thinking, and reading an article is also only a cursory glance. Therefore, in order to foster students' reading thinking, teachers can transfer the writing logic and context of articles to students and integrate it into English reading education, allowing students to learn the writing norms of these articles and better understand the reading content. For example, when introducing the extracurricular book *Secret Garden*, teachers should encourage students to investigate fundamental facts, such as time, location, characters, cause, process, and outcomes, as well as guide students to comprehend the general concept and key idea of the article. Teachers should focus on constructing students' reading thinking, help them to read more efficiently, and strengthen their reading skills ^[15].

4.4. Creating cultural reading situations to enhance students' cross-cultural understanding

Scenario creation is an active and scientific teaching method. It uses the external environment for students to achieve spiritual resonance with the teaching method. From an objective standpoint, the mother tongue of the people in China is not English, so the understanding of foreign culture and experience of foreign language among students are limited to a certain extent. From the perspective of core literacy, it is important to pay attention to nurturing students' cross-cultural understanding skills. Therefore, in the process of teaching primary school English reading, teachers can, with the help of certain means and method, build rich emotional language color as well as foreign language context scenarios. These means may drive students' psychological reaction. The vivid situation not only stimulates students' mood for learning and makes reading more humanistic and definite, but also drives their enthusiasm for learning. For instance, when learning "Dinner is ready," teachers can actively explore the cultural connotation and factors behind the classroom knowledge in the context of English reading education, so that students can learn about the differences in the food culture between China and the West while learning ^[16]. Situations pertaining to "Chinese and western eating habits" can be created to help students gauge the importance of a healthy diet and cultivate good eating habits, exert a subtle influence on the permeability of cross-cultural understanding skills, guide students in learning, analyzing, and expanding knowledge in the process of strengthening their intercultural understanding skills, as well as emphasize practicing the goals and objectives of core literacy ^[17].

4.5. Introducing group cooperation to strengthen students' reading comprehension

As the saying goes, "True knowledge comes from practice." In order to assist students in strengthening their reading skills, it is necessary to encourage students to practice and carry out reading independently, so that students can perceive reading emotion, understand reading knowledge, and improve their reading skills ^[18]. In elementary schools, English reading education includes not only information, but also a significant amount of cultural and emotional knowledge, both of which are important in building accurate language emotion and thinking cognition among students. Therefore, the group cooperative learning mode can be actively introduced, so that students can deeply understand the emotion and humanistic feelings behind the knowledge in the process of practice, interaction, and cooperation. For example, after learning "What would you like?", the teacher can share the differences between the Chinese culture and Western culture with the class, having the students to act out "Chinese restaurant ordering, and Western restaurant ordering" ^[19]. In the process of practice, the performance can be linked to non-dining environment and food culture. For example, given the question "What would you like to order?", the response may be in line with "tea, dumplings, noodles, and eggs" at a Chinese restaurant; however, in a Western restaurant, the response will be more in line with "hamburgers, sandwiches, salad, and beef." In the process of guiding students in

practice, students' cultural cognition should be strengthened so that they can understand the significance of cultural teaching and the soft knowledge of English reading education, thus improving their reading comprehension skills ^[20].

5. Conclusion

In a word, reading education should not only enable students to solve reading problems independently, but also emphasize on knowledge application, thinking expansion, and reading skills improvement. Under the background of core literacy, traditional rote memorization and questions can no longer meet the objective development needs of students. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the actual situation of primary school students and introduce scientific teaching methods to optimize the teaching of reading, effectively cultivate students' reading skills, and stimulate their interest in English reading. Lifelong English reading plays a strong supporting role for lifelong learning.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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