

A Study on Extracurricular Literary Classics Reading in High School English Based on Core Literacy

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Abstract: Reading teaching is the core content of high school English teaching, and extracurricular literary classics reading is a supplement to in-class reading, which can deepen students' understanding and memorization of English-related knowledge, and cultivate students' core literacy. This paper outlines the problems in high school English reading teaching, analyzes the significance of extracurricular literary classics reading in high school English, and explores the teaching strategies of extracurricular literary classics reading in high school English based on core literacy, with a view to providing valuable reference information for teachers.

Keywords: Core literacy; High school English; Extracurricular reading; Literary classics

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1. Introduction

At this stage, the National Education Department puts forward the teaching goal of cultivating students' core literacy. The core literacy of high school English reading mainly includes reading skills and reading character, and the goal of cultivating core literacy cannot be achieved by relying solely on in-class reading teaching, so it is necessary to optimize and adjust the teaching method. Extracurricular reading of literary classics is a supplement and extension of in-class reading, which can help students develop good reading habits, enhance their cultural awareness and diversified thinking ability, and improve their ability to acquire information and cross-cultural understanding, so that students can have a good reading experience and thus achieve the goal of cultivating core literacy.

2. Problems in high school English reading teaching

Reading teaching occupies a central position in high school English teaching, and its teaching quality can have a greater impact on students' English learning levels. At the present stage, there are several problems in high school English reading teaching, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects. Firstly, most teachers

use the texts in the textbooks as the teaching material, and the teaching focuses on grammar and vocabulary knowledge, aiming to train students' reading skills ^[1]. Currently, the English reading materials used in the examination are mostly from classic literary masterpieces, with various styles of articles, distinctive writing techniques, rhetorical techniques, and textbooks in the article. There is a big difference between the higher reading ability requirements for students, such as the students who simply accept the classroom reading teaching cannot accurately understand the content of the article, which affects the improvement of the English learning performance. Secondly, extracurricular literary classics are longer, requiring teachers to invest a lot of practical research. However, most teachers have limited energy and do not fully recognize the importance of extracurricular literary classics reading, resulting in the inability to effectively guide students to complete the relevant content of the reading and learning, which is inconducive to the cultivation of students' core literacy and the improvement of their reading skills ^[2].

3. Significance of extracurricular literary classics reading in high school English

3.1. Improving students' reading comprehension skills

In the process of reading extracurricular literary classics, students can learn about authentic grammatical expressions, master more English vocabulary, and accurately grasp the differences between local culture and English culture, so as to correctly understand the connotations of the reading materials in specific contexts and cultural backgrounds, and master the correct use of English grammar and vocabulary ^[3]. At the same time, in the process of English learning, some students tend to figure out the meaning of each long sentence and each word in the article. When they encounter incomprehensible words or long sentences, they will spend time looking up words and analyzing sentence structure, which leads to the reduction of reading efficiency and effect ^[4]. Extracurricular reading of literary classics can improve students' overall reading skills. By guessing the meaning of the sentences, the accurate meaning of the vocabulary can be determined, and students can master the methods of scanning, skimming, and further speculation on the plot of the article, ultimately enhancing their reading comprehension skills.

3.2. Expanding students' horizons

High school English textbooks are short in length, simple in language, and close to students' daily lives, thus enabling students to easily read and understand. Extracurricular literary classics can enrich the reading material through the relatively complex content, storylines with ups and downs, and the customs, history, and culture of various countries, which can expand students' horizons, improve their interest in learning English, and consolidate the reading knowledge learned in the classroom, so that they have a solid grasp of the English reading skills ^[5].

3.3. Cultivating students' core literacy

The high school stage is a key stage in the formation of students' life values. Under the interference of network culture and the external environment, students can easily lose themselves and form wrong ideological concepts, which seriously affects their future development. Extracurricular literary classics have high artistic value, which helps students to produce emotional resonance, feel the inner conflicts and struggles of the characters, and experience the humanistic care and warmth conveyed by the author. Through these, students form the correct values of life, learn to distinguish right from wrong, establish lofty ideals, and form a positive concept of hard work and struggle ^[6].

4. Teaching strategies of extracurricular literary classics reading in high school English based on core literacy

4.1. Selecting appropriate literary works according to students' characteristics

There is no uniform textbook for extracurricular literary classics reading, so teachers can select suitable literature in accordance with the age, character, and ideological characteristic of high school students. When choosing literature, teachers need to ensure that the theme is positive and favorable to the physical and mental development of high school students^[7]. At the same time, extracurricular literary classics should be in line with the psychological characteristics of adolescents, stimulate students' desire for knowledge and curiosity, and cultivate students' imagination and thinking ability. In addition, extracurricular literary classics should be of moderate difficulty and length. Teachers can choose appropriate reading materials from professional English learning websites and prepare school-based extracurricular reading materials to meet the diverse extracurricular reading needs of students. The author believes that classic fairy tales can fully stimulate students' imagination, and the story themes are positive and healthy, thus they can be the first choice for extracurricular literary classics reading. Teachers can also choose relatively simple and interesting literary works for students, such as *The Little Prince*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Jane Eyre*, and so on. Additionally, students can be guided to read English newspapers and magazines to deepen their understanding of English culture^[8].

4.2. Determining appropriate reading forms

In order to ensure that high school English extracurricular literary classic reading can achieve the expected results, teachers need to consider the English level of students, the difficulty of reading materials, etc. The students will be divided into a number of extracurricular reading groups, with the responsibilities clearly divided among the group members, and jointly carry out extracurricular literary classics reading^[9]. At the initial stage of extracurricular reading of literary classics, teachers arrange one class time per week for teachers and students to read together, then instruct each group to complete extracurricular reading independently. Students are required to record the beautiful words and phrases in the literary classics during the reading process and share their reading experiences, while teachers provide guidance and interact and communicate with students, so as to achieve the best reading effect^[10].

4.3. Formulating guided reading strategies

In the process of carrying out extracurricular literary classics reading, teachers need to integrate the reading content and students' actual characteristics to develop an appropriate and ideal guided reading strategy, and guide the students to read the articles through different perspectives in order to achieve the best reading effect. The first strategy is skimming the literary classics. The narrative content of extracurricular literary classics can be skimmed to understand the overall situation, sort out the content of the article, and outline the development of the storyline. Extracurricular literary classics contain many vocabulary and the length is relatively long. Teachers can guide students to read one to two pages each time, with the aim to understand the general idea of the article instead of focusing on the vocabulary. For example, when reading the content of *The Little Mermaid*, there are one to two pages describing the characters' stories and scenes. During the guided reading process, questions can be put forward, such as "What are the first two pages about? What happened in the story?" and "What do you think of the sea?" These questions can stimulate students to think when reading and understand the outline of the story and the meaning of vocabulary based on the context^[11]. The second strategy is detailed reading. Using extracurricular literary classics with beautiful language and profound connotations, teachers can guide students to deeply grasp the connotation of the article in the process of reading. In-depth and

detailed reading of the article can stimulate the imagination and thinking ability of the students, so that they can experience the beauty of the language of the article and have an in-depth understanding of the ideological connotation of the article. For example, when reading the sixth paragraph of *The Little Mermaid*, teachers can guide students to read the sentence “it seemed as if the ends of the branches and the roots were playing together and wished to kiss each other,” conduct an in-depth discussion and analysis of the ending of the story, and explain the rhetorical devices used in the sentence, so that students understand the beauty of the language^[12]. The third strategy is repeated reading. Extracurricular literary classics are relatively long and rarely read by students, so it is necessary to guide students to integrate the information they have read through repeated reading and help students master the storyline and the relationship between the characters, so that students can appreciate the beauty of the article. For instance, when reading page four of *The Little Mermaid*, the teacher can ask the questions “Did all the sisters come up to the surface of the water?” and “Did they want to stay there?” Students can read the article again according to the questions posed by the teacher in order to understand the structure of the article more clearly.

4.4. Teaching extracurricular reading skills

Extracurricular literary classics cover a variety of subjects, writing techniques, and rhetorical methods, which are difficult for students to read, so teachers need to strengthen the teaching of extracurricular reading skills to improve students’ reading experience^[13]. For example, when explaining the content of *Jane Eyre*, teachers can guide students to comprehensively use a variety of reading skills. In the initial reading, students are instructed to determine the relationship between the characters in the story and accurately grasp the tone of the pursuit of freedom and dignity. In the later reading process, teachers need to guide students to study the main storylines in depth and analyze the psychological changes of the characters in the development of the storyline. For instance, on the wedding day of Jane Eyre and Rochester, Jane Eyre chose to leave after knowing the secret, her psychological state at this time was to adhere to her principles and not allow deception to occur; after learning about Rochester’s subsequent encounters, Jane Eyre chose to reunite with him, her psychological state at this time was to pursue true love and happiness. At the same time, teachers can guide students to compare and analyze the differences between extracurricular literary classics and textbook articles in terms of rhetoric, sentence pattern, and other aspects, in order to improve students’ reading comprehension skills^[14].

4.5. Developing a suitable teaching evaluation program

In the process of teaching extracurricular literary classics, teachers need to develop a suitable teaching evaluation program for students to discover their own strengths and weaknesses and improve their reading skills. In the teaching evaluation process, with the aim of cultivating students’ comprehensive literacy, teachers need to focus on assessing students’ comprehensive ability to use language through methods such as sharing the best sentences from the article, making reading cards, drawing illustrations, role-playing, sharing reading experiences, etc. By examining students’ reading situation, objective evaluation of their reading performance can be given, guiding the students to improve their reading behaviors and attitudes, so that they can form good reading literacy^[15].

5. Conclusion

The reading of extracurricular literary classics in high school English can make up for the shortcomings of in-class reading and promote the cultivation of students’ core literacy, for which teachers need to recommend suitable reading materials for students, formulate ideal teaching strategies, and scientifically carry out teaching

evaluation to ensure that the expected results in extracurricular reading of literary classics can be achieved.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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