

Integration of Reading and Writing: Curriculum Logic and Practical Pathways

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Abstract. Integration of reading and writing refers to the organic interaction between reading and writing, wherein both mutually promote and enhance quality and efficiency. Implementing this integration in Chinese language instruction aims to cultivate students' language literacy. From a curriculum development perspective, integrated reading and writing is increasingly favored by curriculum standards, textbooks, and high school entrance exams. In practice, using texts as models can guide students to learn observational techniques, choose appropriate modes of expression centered around a theme, and master basic textual structures. Meanwhile, writing can clarify the purpose of reading, enhance reading interest, and deepen reading comprehension.

Keywords: integration of reading and writing, reading to promote writing, writing to promote reading

1. Introduction

Reading and writing occupy extremely important positions in the Chinese language curriculum. Reading helps students expand their knowledge, enhance comprehension, and improve cognitive abilities while also contributing to the cultivation of cultural literacy and humanistic spirit. Writing, as a crucial output method for students in language studies, allows them to transform their understanding and thoughts into verbal works, thereby honing their expressive abilities, logical thinking, and creativity. From a behaviorist perspective, reading and writing are two distinct modes of behavior; reading instruction focuses solely on decoding, understanding, appreciating, and critiquing texts, while writing emphasizes output. However, from a constructivist viewpoint, reading and writing are unified processes that involve a shared cognitive mechanism, leading to their gradual integration. The integration of reading and writing has a long-standing historical tradition in Chinese language education and is also a key aspect of competency-based language education reforms. Ye Shengtao regarded reading as fundamental, viewing the relationship between reading and writing as one of absorption and expression [1]. Hong Zongli emphasized that reading and writing should complement each other—writing is found within reading, and reading is present within writing [2]. In 2011, Pan Xinhe proposed that reading is the ultimate goal of writing and that writing can enhance reading [3]. Li Jinyun and Li Shengli (2017) combined the theory of deep learning to propose a deep integration of reading and writing, focusing on the connection between external text and internal cultivation and creativity [4]. Additionally, curriculum standards and unified Chinese textbooks actively advocate for the integration of reading and writing to promote mutual enhancement, aiming for the comprehensive development of language literacy.

2. The Logic of Integrated Reading and Writing in the Curriculum

2.1. Integrated Reading and Writing as a Principle of the Chinese Curriculum Standards

The Chinese curriculum standards serve as a foundational document for the language curriculum, outlining its nature, objectives, and content while providing guidance for implementation. The Teaching Outline for Junior High School Chinese (Draft) published in 1956 proposed three educational tasks for middle school Chinese, one of which is to guide students in enriching their language knowledge while learning literary works and to express their thoughts and feelings clearly through both spoken and written language. It also suggested that writing should be viewed as a creative and comprehensive practice that not only develops students' writing abilities but also reinforces the texts they have learned, fully reflecting the concept of integrating reading and writing.

The Full-time Middle School Chinese Teaching Outline (Draft) of 1963 emphasized the need for various practical activities to strengthen students' literacy, sentence construction, and organizational skills. Students are encouraged to read and memorize extensively, ensuring that they can apply the vocabulary learned when writing. The 1978 Full-time Ten-Year System School Middle School Chinese Teaching Outline (Trial Draft) included several points on language knowledge instruction, stating that reading and writing are closely related, with reading serving as the foundation for writing. If teachers do not prioritize the development of students' reading abilities, it is unrealistic to expect improvements in their writing skills. Conversely, writing practice can also enhance reading abilities. When teachers effectively integrate reading and writing training, it can further promote reading proficiency. By appropriately combining reading and writing training, teachers can summarize and distill fundamental principles and methods of writing from the texts studied, which can be highly enlightening for students. The 2011 Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards emphasized the importance of connecting writing instruction with reading and oral communication, advocating for an organic combination of reading, writing, and speaking to mutually promote each other.

The 2022 version of the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (referred to as the "New Standards") organizes course content into six learning task groups, two of which—literary reading and creative expression, and critical reading and expression—clearly contain the requirement for integrating reading and writing. Additionally, the interdisciplinary learning task group also requires students to engage in reading-writing integration. For example, the overall goal of literary reading and creative expression requires students to perceive, imagine, and appreciate the unique charm of language, leading to an understanding of the rich connotations of the works, thereby attempting to create literary pieces. In the learning content section, students are expected to read excellent works related to humanity and nature, drawing on the writing techniques utilized to express their thoughts and feelings. The teaching suggestions section emphasizes integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing, guiding students to utilize various reading methods to study literary works, appreciate their unique charm, and encourage students to present their work using both spoken and written language. In the overall goal of critical reading and expression, students are guided to organize their viewpoints and the relationships between materials in various ways, allowing them to express their opinions and views coherently, supported by evidence. The learning content section requires students to read texts related to scientific inquiry and connect them with their existing scientific learning experiences, engaging in thematic presentations, discussions, and writing centered around identifying, exploring, and solving problems. Teaching prompts encourage reasoning and evaluating the texts. Students are guided to conduct various discussions based on their reading experiences and life realities, with expectations for their expressions to be clear, evidence-based, and logical.

2.2. Integrated Reading and Writing as an Innovative Aspect of Chinese Textbooks

Chinese textbooks are essential carriers and means for implementing the language curriculum and important tools for achieving educational objectives, relying on the textbooks to meet teaching goals. In Chinese textbooks, reading and writing are the two aspects most emphasized by the authors, each with its unique teaching value. However, the pursuit of integrating reading and writing is one of the characteristics of the unified junior high school Chinese textbooks. The unified textbook writing system mainly includes two organizational formats: thematic writing and writing integrated within texts, meaning writing content is interwoven with reading, comprehensive learning, and classic literature guidance modules.

The six volumes of junior high school Chinese education cover 36 writing topics, including various types of writing such as narrative, expository, argumentative, and practical writing, clearly reflecting the idea of integrating reading and writing. Thematic writing is generally set at the end of each unit, complementing reading instruction and collectively enhancing students' language proficiency. For instance, in the fourth unit of the seventh-grade textbook, the theme "The Human Body as a Vessel" includes works such as "In Memory of Norman Bethune," "From the Hundred Grass Garden to the Three Flavor Study," "The Shepherd Who Plants Trees," "Take One Step, Then Another," and "Letter to My Son." This unit requires students to learn to read silently, annotate, and clarify the writing ideas of the articles. The writing focus of this unit is to ensure clarity of thought. The unit's writing guidance suggests students approach it from three angles: overall conception, determining the writing sequence, and outlining. During the stage of determining the writing sequence, students can integrate knowledge from the texts studied in this unit. For example, "The Shepherd Who Plants Trees" uses chronological order to narrate the story of how a shepherd transformed a wasteland into fertile land, while "In Memory of Norman Bethune" adopts a logical sequence to praise Bethune's internationalism, communism, and pursuit of excellence in medical skills. It can be said that thematic writing fully embodies the integration of reading and writing.

Writing integrated within texts is often set in the after-class accumulation and extension section, requiring students to imitate, rewrite, expand, critique, or summarize based on the texts studied. Such writing not only deepens students' understanding of the texts but also hones their written expression abilities, effectively realizing the idea of integrating reading and writing. For instance, the ninth-grade textbook's "Hometown" requires students to continue the story of Hong'er and Shuisheng meeting after growing up; the fifth unit of the seventh-grade textbook "The Wolf" asks students to use their imagination to rewrite the text as a colloquial story, paying attention to character actions, psychology, and dialogue; the fourth unit of the eighth-grade textbook "Ode to the Poplar" requires students to use symbolism to describe familiar things.

In addition to writing integrated within the reading text accumulation and extension sections, classic literature guidance also covers this integration. The unified junior high school Chinese textbooks arrange for two classic works each time, with corresponding writing exercises set for each classic. The types of training vary, including diaries, character biographies, letters,

reading notes, reflections, and experimental plans. The integration of reading and writing in classic literature can be reflected in two aspects: first, accumulating writing material through classic literature reading. There are mainly two ways for middle school students to accumulate writing material: one is reading, and the other is observing life. Given the relatively limited life experience of middle school students, reading becomes the most important means for them to gather writing material. The carefully selected readings in Chinese textbooks facilitate this process; for instance, reading "Red Star Over China" can provide material related to the Long March and its spirit. Secondly, students can learn writing techniques through reading classic literature. For example, "Water Margin" and "How the Steel Was Tempered" require students to learn to write character biographies. As representatives of excellent novels, these two classics have unique aspects in character development, allowing students to transfer the character portrayal techniques learned from these classics into their writing practice, leading to a deeper understanding of the characters within the novels and achieving the integration of reading and writing.

2.3. Integrated Reading and Writing as a Pursuit in Chinese High School Entrance Exams

Modern curriculum theorist Ralph Tyler proposed a classic curriculum system that includes curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation. Evaluation is an important component of the curriculum system that plays a crucial role in achieving curriculum objectives. Evaluation is not only for selection but also aims for better development, and promoting teaching through evaluation has become a consensus in the education community. The integration of reading and writing is not only reflected in the Chinese curriculum standards and textbooks but is also fully embodied in the pen-and-paper high school entrance exams. Observing current exam questions, there is an increasing number of questions pursuing the integration of reading and writing. For instance, the high school entrance exam papers in Zhejiang Province illustrate this characteristic well, and the methods and positions of reading-writing integration are quite flexible. In the 2023 Taizhou City high school entrance exam for Chinese, the test designers combined non-continuous texts with short commentary writing, first providing three materials related to "Special Forces-style Tourism," and then asking students to express their agreement or disagreement with "Special Forces-style Tourism" and write a short commentary of 100 words, requiring clear opinions and sufficient reasoning.

In contrast, the 2023 Ningbo high school entrance exam for Chinese presents an even tighter integration of reading and writing. Firstly, the non-continuous text reading section embodies the concept of reading-writing integration, where students are required to write a paragraph of no less than 200 words introducing the Tianyi Pavilion library. Secondly, the writing section also fully reflects this integration, requiring students to read a passage about oil spills, where different people have different ideas and actions, and write an essay on the topic "Deciding the Beautiful Future of Nature." Furthermore, in the 2023 Wenzhou Chinese exam, the test combined activities from the traditional opera promoter with exercises on memorizing classical poetry, reading famous works, and classical Chinese reading, requiring students to present a micro-lecture in class on the topic "Traditional Opera and Chinese Language," incorporating their experiences from the activity and writing a speech of about 150 words, with clear viewpoints and logical structure. The aforementioned examples from the high school entrance exam papers genuinely reflect the pursuit of integrating reading and writing.

3. Reading Nourishes Writing and Paves the Way for Writing

The writing requirements in the fourth stage of the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as the "New Standards") can be summarized in several aspects: observing life from multiple perspectives, choosing appropriate modes of expression around a central theme, writing narrative essays with clear intentions and substantial content, ensuring clarity in expository writing, articulating clear and well-supported arguments in argumentative essays, and being able to condense, expand, and rewrite the content of articles. Additionally, the fourth stage emphasizes that students should be able to express themselves orally and in writing through sorting and reflecting on their reading experiences and methods across different types of works.

3.1. Learning to Observe from Texts to Lay the Foundation for Writing Practice

As the saying goes, "Where does the clear water come from? It flows from the source." In the writing process, students often struggle with content, which is not only due to a lack of life experiences but more importantly, a lack of observational skills that prevent them from capturing meaningful moments in ordinary life, thus failing to inspire their writing. The ability to observe life can be cultivated through teaching texts such as Jinan's Winter and The Four Seasons of Rain. For instance, Jinan's Winter vividly describes the winter scenery of Jinan, painting a beautiful picture for readers and expressing the author's love and admiration for Jinan's winter. During the lesson, teachers can guide students to consider which elements the author used to present the characteristics of winter in Jinan and what features these elements have. This approach can help students discover the author's depiction of Jinan's mountains and waters, utilizing various rhetorical devices to showcase the warmth of Jinan's winter. Similarly, another self-study text, The Four Seasons of Rain, can prompt students to think about how the author describes the distinct personalities of rain in different seasons, encouraging them to engage their visual, auditory, and olfactory senses to grasp writing techniques. Guiding students to observe life from different angles is the first step in writing; helping students learn observational

skills through exemplary texts is undoubtedly crucial in writing instruction. When students apply the observational skills learned in reading instruction to their own writing, they can produce unique essays infused with genuine emotions.

3.2. Learning to Choose Appropriate Modes of Expression Centered Around a Theme

Professor Rong Weidong proposed a functional writing pedagogy, suggesting that writing is based on specific situational tasks aimed at particular readers, with defined purposes and centered around specific topics, employing appropriate styles and language to construct discourse and exchange meaning [5]. This aligns with the requirements of the New Standards, both emphasizing the need to choose appropriate modes of expression based on the needs of the message. For example, when studying *In Memory of Norman Bethune*, students should consider why the author employs a blend of narrative and commentary. This helps students appreciate how the author first recounts Bethune's contributions to China's war effort and then discusses his selflessness and dedication to others, making the writing clearer and more logically compelling.

3.3. Constructing Textual Schemas Through Reading

Scholars studying the integration of reading and writing have noted, based on the theory of learning transfer, that "the potential for integrating reading and writing lies in the shared structural characteristics of written texts and compositions. 'Reading' can yield cognitive structures for a type of text, forming a set of text structures in students' minds; this structural schema can map onto their writing, serving as a 'prior organizer' during the writing process." [6] In the eighth and ninth grades, the focus is primarily on genre writing and composition techniques, making it crucial to help students master the textual structures of important genres through reading. Only by constructing these structures during reading can students effectively transfer them into their writing.

The New Standards require students to master various writing genres, including narratives, expository texts, argumentative essays, practical writing, poetry, and short stories. The ability to write these genres can be cultivated through reading instruction. For narrative writing, it is an essential component of junior high school writing instruction. The New Standards emphasize that narrative writing must have clear intentions and substantial content, with detailed descriptions being indispensable. For example, by studying "From the Hundred Grass Garden to the Three Flavor Study", students can be guided to focus on how the author uses descriptive techniques to showcase character traits. By studying "A Chang and *the Classic of Mountains and Seas*", students are taught that details in writing should serve the central expression, avoiding unnecessary detail for its own sake. Through works like "Take One Step, Then Another" and "Rebuilding Life", students learn to use multiple senses to portray their environments richly.

The New Standards also require that expository writing be clear and precise; thus, students must master the sequence of explanation and capture the characteristics of the subject matter. The eighth-grade textbook contains units primarily focused on expository writing, presenting both factual and conceptual expository texts. By studying "Suzhou Gardens" and "The Footprints of Time", students can learn to move from generalization to specifics in their explanations; through "The Cicada", they grasp the use of chronological order; and in "Dreaming Back to Prosperity", they understand spatial organization in their explanations. Under the guidance of teachers, students can establish a basic understanding of different explanatory sequences, such as:

Spatial Order: Commonly used to describe the external form of a subject.

Chronological Order: Often used to explain the development of an event or the process of creating a work.

Logical Order: Frequently used to elucidate scientific principles and the internal connections of phenomena.

Expository writing instruction not only requires students to grasp the sequence of explanations but also to focus on the characteristics of the subjects. Understanding these characteristics in expository writing can also be achieved through reading instruction. For example, studying "Suzhou Gardens" can teach students that capturing the characteristics of subjects requires keen observation and comparison, highlighting the unique features of the subject while also noting the common traits shared by similar subjects. Additionally, studying "Chinese Stone Arch Bridges" helps students recognize that explaining characteristics relies on the rational and effective use of explanatory methods. This text adeptly uses examples and numerical data to present the characteristics of Chinese stone arch bridges clearly.

Argumentative writing is a primary genre that ninth-grade students need to master. The New Standards require that argumentative essays present clear viewpoints backed by evidence. A clear viewpoint means that the argumentative essay must clearly state the central argument and then elaborate on it. We can utilize language texts to help students formulate central arguments. For instance, in the second unit of the ninth-grade curriculum, students can extract the structural diagram typical of argumentative essays, which follows the pattern: What it is - Why it is - What to do. For specific argumentative essays, students can be guided in structuring their arguments. For example, "Dedication and Enjoyment in Work" helps students summarize the structural diagram as: Identify the problem - Analyze the problem - Solve the problem. Through the fifth unit of the ninth-grade textbook, students can develop a fundamental structure for their argumentative essays: Point (state the central argument) - Affirm (present supporting arguments) - Refute (address counterarguments) - Deepen (delve deeper into the discussion or reveal the essence of the matter) - Connect (expand on the argument in practical contexts) - Conclude (summarize the essay and draw conclusions). This structural diagram provides effective methodological guidance for students writing argumentative essays.

4. Writing Promotes Reading, Making Writing the Engine of Reading

Using reading to promote writing has become a consensus in language education. In fact, writing training can also enhance reading and optimize the reading experience. Through the bridge of texts, reading and writing mutually promote and accomplish each other. Writing training can deepen students' understanding of texts, improve their reading efficiency, and stimulate their interest in reading.

4.1. Writing Deepens Students' Understanding of Texts

Reading based on writing encourages students to pay more attention to the structure of the text, the choice of words, sentence construction, and rhetorical techniques. To write well, students carefully analyze the strengths and weaknesses of others' works, thereby deepening their understanding of the text. For example, in the first unit of the seventh-grade textbook, the activity following "Jinan's Winter" requires students to draw on the writing techniques used in this lesson to describe the winter in their hometown. To complete this task, students must first thoroughly understand and master the writing techniques of "Jinan's Winter", enabling them to apply these methods in their short writing assignments, which undoubtedly enhances their understanding of the text. Similarly, the extension activity in the eighth-grade textbook, "Two Short Essays", requires students to choose one piece and rewrite it in vernacular prose. Successfully rewriting this piece necessitates a deep understanding of the original text, which further enriches their comprehension during the rewriting process.

4.2. Writing Helps Improve Reading Efficiency

Reading with a focus on writing often allows for a clearer focus. The demands of writing encourage students to quickly select relevant content and grasp key points, thus enhancing reading efficiency. During the process of writing narratives, students learn how to choose materials, organize them effectively, and achieve an appropriate balance of detail, which assists them in studying narrative techniques, enabling them to focus on the characteristics of narratives when reading. For instance, during the process of writing argumentative essays, students internalize knowledge about the genre, including how to evaluate the relationship between viewpoints and evidence, how to formulate a central argument, and how to elaborate on this argument. With this foundational knowledge of argumentative writing, students' reading of such texts becomes more focused, naturally drawing their attention to the central argument, the reasoning process, and the argumentative techniques. As students write expository texts, they construct a knowledge map related to this genre; thus, when reading expository texts, they can utilize this internal knowledge to enhance their reading efficiency.

4.3. Writing Stimulates Students' Interest in Reading

Stimulating students' intrinsic motivation is key to successful teaching; when students are interested in learning, everything becomes smoother. When students need material for writing, they actively seek suitable content through reading, leading them to engage with outstanding works and classic literature. Writing can ignite students' demand for knowledge, transforming reading into an intrinsic necessity and motivating students to invest more time and effort into reading.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the integration of reading and writing is an effective teaching method. Through reading, students can build knowledge about writing and transfer that knowledge into their writing, making the process of "decoding" easier. Simultaneously, using writing to promote reading can enhance students' reading efficiency, deepen their comprehension of texts, and stimulate their interest in reading. The pursuit of reading and writing is mutually beneficial and interdependent. Only through this approach can we effectively enhance both reading instruction and writing instruction.

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