

Application of Reading Materials in High School English Teaching

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Abstract: English reading ability is a very important skill for high school students, whether it is required for test-taking or learning the language itself. This study aims to analyze how teachers can better select reading materials for English learners at the high school level from two perspectives: the importance of reading in English learning and the current situation of English reading materials for high school students. Through the method of literature review, eleven authoritative texts were referenced, which included two experimental studies on the topic of the impact of reading materials on student learning outcomes. It was found that there are some problems with the current English reading materials in high schools, such as the limited number of reading materials in textbooks, the lack of interesting reading materials in the market, the lack of cultural information in the reading materials, and the topics that are not close enough to the students' real life and interests. In order to solve these problems, teachers should choose reading materials that are suitable for students' cognitive level and interests, reduce the reading difficulty, enrich cultural information, reflect the contemporary nature, and be close to students' daily life and topics of interest, and ultimately promote the solution of the problems.

Keywords: high school English, reading text, English teaching, English learning

1. Introduction

Reading is the main way to learn a non-native language, and it is especially important for English learning. Most English learners at the high school level adopt the "excessive assignments tactic, i.e., Connect with a large number of reading test questions and thus improve your English skills. The English Curriculum Standard for General High Schools (Revised 2017 Edition 2020) has clear requirements for students' extracurricular reading in English. Reading is the main means to help English learners at the high school level to broaden their cultural knowledge and improve their language use ability.

In order to develop students' reading skills, it is crucial to choose good reading materials that can help teachers achieve their teaching goals and at the same time keep students from finding it boring [1]. The choice of reading materials determines the field of knowledge students are exposed to and the difficulty of developing reading habits. However, due to the intense studies and numerous tasks, high school students rarely have time to read outside of English class. To solve this drawback, teachers can select suitable extracurricular reading materials and texts from teacher-recommended

reading lists, give reasonable and effective guidance, and at the same time optimize the reading methods in order to help students successfully engage in independent reading. For English as a second language (ESL) beginners who lack sufficient language knowledge and reading skills, are unable to read independently or consistently [2]. Therefore, it is important to select texts that are appealing to them and linguistically appropriate to create a favorable learning experience for students.

Existing studies showed that the percentage of unsuitable and boring reading materials among the problems faced by students in reading amounted to about 45.2%. In addition, students exposed to interesting English books performed significantly better in almost all language proficiency tests than those who focused only on reading, vocabulary and grammar training [2]. Therefore, the choice of reading materials also plays a key role in developing students' reading habits and in the process of teaching English. This study explores the significance of reading materials in the learning process, addresses current issues in English material selection, and provides targeted solutions to enhance high school English teaching programs.

2. Importance of Reading Learning Method

2.1. Learning Process

Reading comprehension question types are the focus of academic level tests and learning tasks in high school. As far as English learning is concerned, reading aloud is the most important way to acquire English knowledge, and intensive reading is an important means to understand English texts [3]. Through reading aloud, students can focus their attention, exclude other distractions, read the text information better, and turn the content and language in reading into their understanding and feelings. Intensive reading is more conducive to the extraction of detailed information in the text, reading the text word by word and sentence by sentence, repeatedly speculating on the use of sentence patterns and advanced vocabulary in the text, which not only broadens students' vocabulary, but also enables students to achieve a thorough understanding, and then a deeper appreciation of the meaning of the text. Compared with other methods of language learning, such as repeated memorization and other rigid and boring methods, reading and learning methods can not only improve students' language skills, strengthen their language knowledge, and improve their language expression ability, but also broaden their knowledge and accumulate cross-cultural knowledge.

2.2. Teaching Process

Reading is a process of extracting information from visual material, a method of transforming visual material into sound to achieve comprehension. The process of reading is the process of decoding. Reading class is a "self-creation" teaching method that focuses on cultivating students' English core qualities. It cultivates students' interest in learning English and exploring its language expression and culture. Moreover, it aims to increase students' participation and engagement in English reading [4]. Exposure to different texts and gaining knowledge in the process of reading are very effective teaching methods. The use of the reading teaching method can enhance students' reading and comprehension skills. By training the reading method with tasks and objectives, students can enhance their problem-solving speed, gain a deeper understanding of the creative intentions, and explore the cultural context of the text more comprehensively.

At the same time, students can also refer to the text's sentence structure, rhetoric, and the author's word choice; learn the basic skills of English, such as vocabulary, and improve their level of learning English.

3. Problems in the Selection of Reading Materials for High School Students

3.1. Single Reading Material

Due to the advancement of teaching tasks, most of the teaching materials selected for reading classes come from the texts in the textbooks. The number of complete texts in the textbooks is limited, although it can satisfy part of the teaching task of explaining new vocabulary, but if you want to broaden the English vocabulary and improve the English reading ability, and at the same time perfect the students' ability to analyze the structure of the article and the ability to apply the sentences in writing, you need to supplement it with repeated practice and a lot of reading. However, most of the English reading materials available to students are aimed at the college entrance examination, with a wide range of topics, and the interestingness of English reading is seriously insufficient, which also fails to meet the requirements of English reading for high school students [5]. In the process of classroom teaching, most of the reading classroom is still a very traditional form of classroom education, students are very passive, mostly listening to the teacher's explanations and summarizing the answers unilaterally. Moreover, a traditional English classroom is centered on the teacher and the textbook. Rather than students' independent learning, which is likely to cause students to be weak in reasoning and have no logic in writing.

3.2. Lack of Cultural Information

Among the educational objectives of disciplinary core literacy, one aspect is to cultivate students' cultural awareness, that is, students' understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and identification with outstanding cultures, especially cross-cultural cognition, which embodies the value orientation of disciplinary core literacy, formed in English learning [6]. Reading teaching is not only to improve students' English reading ability, but also to improve students' comprehensive English ability, and the understanding of English-speaking countries' culture is also very important. However, reading materials cannot keep up with the changes of the times. Emerging topics, hot words, and current news are changing and progressing every year, and at the same time, the revision of textbooks takes a lot of time and cost. As a result, the cultural information in many textbooks is no longer current and up-to-date, and cannot keep up with the development of students' cultural literacy.

3.3. Topic Divorced from Reality

Textbooks and exam reading materials have a very serious language style, and the topic is very rigorous, the current survey of the high school level shows that, under the premise of the freedom of choice of reading materials, students will be more inclined to choose entertainment, sports, events reading materials, these materials are more interesting, the language style is relatively easy, and the students' interests are adapted. Besides, "literary" reading materials are also popular among students [7]. Although the high school reading teaching materials and test materials cover a wide range of fields, the theme is also very clear, history, politics, biographies and novel excerpts are included. However, the process and topics introduced are not close enough to students' daily learning life, and most of the advanced vocabulary contained therein are proper nouns, which increases the students' reading difficulty and the frequency of errors and does not leave a deep enough impression on the students, greatly weakening the teaching efficiency of the reading class, and the materials used for extracurricular reading are also mainly aiming at the college entrance examination objectives, which do not stimulate the students' interest in reading.

4. Selection of English Reading Materials in High School

4.1. Selecting Texts of Moderate Difficulty

The level of difficulty of the reading texts should be in line with the cognitive level of the students, and the texts should allow students to successfully draw some conclusions in the course of group discussions during the actual learning process or stimulate the development of their critical thinking. That is, reading materials should be appropriate for students' current level of psychological and academic development. Teachers should choose reading materials that are adapted to students' cognitive level, devote themselves to improving students' vocabulary and expressive ability, and guide students to think critically, so as to improve the effect of English reading [7]. In the process of teaching, more attention should be paid to adhering to the six student-centered teaching principles, choosing reading texts with moderate reading difficulty from the practicality of students. The accessibility of the content of the reading text and the accessibility of the language should also be noted. Content accessibility means that students understand the themes and concepts contained in the target text. When students already know a concept, the transition to an English book about the same concept is less overwhelming. Because they already have a foundation of knowledge. The accessibility of the language lies in whether the reading material is simple and direct enough in terms of sentence formation [8]. Simple phrases or sentence patterns, a limited amount of text per page, and predictable repetitive text can reduce the difficulty of reading text for high school level students, thus stimulating their comprehension of the text and better speculation of writing skills and advanced vocabulary building.

4.2. Selecting Culturally Rich Reading Texts

When selecting reading texts for students, it is important to focus on the cultural accessibility of the content of the text. For example, some puns, parodies, ironies and slangs have different expressions in different contexts. These are difficult for high school students, so teachers should choose texts that contain not only foreign culture but also Chinese culture, concepts that are close to students' mother tongue and easy to understand. The main goal of learning English is to use it in real-life situations. Therefore, the scope of the material should be centered on students' daily life, close to their own local culture, in the process of reading the text of their familiar themes, students can combine their own existing life experiences or perceptions of life to read and understand, so as to effectively strengthen the students' understanding of the main meaning of the text and the details of the information in-depth [9]. At the same time, teachers in the process of organizing students to read and integrate curriculum resources should prefer to choose reading materials that reflect the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and promote the deeds of outstanding people. Both the excellent Chinese culture and English learning should be combined, in English reading to understand the positive, open and confident, full of local customs of China, but also to highlight the introduction of English culture, understanding and respect for the English culture, absorbing the excellent cultural content in the cultural comparison, and learning to respect in the cultural borrowing.

4.3. Choosing Topics of Interest

Teachers should provide students with English reading materials that are centered on topics and text types that are of interest to students, so that students can be more active in their understanding of the textual story, and it can broaden students' reading and improve their logical reasoning skills. Difficult or completely unfamiliar areas are unlikely to inspire high school students' interest in reading and learning English. It is important to focus on moderately difficult reading materials,

students mastery and proficiency of sentences and words can be improved by increasing the rate of word surfacing and sentence repetition. The stimulation of reading interest can better help students develop learning strategies of independent exploration, group discussion, and research-based learning as well as develop good reading habits.

5. Conclusion

This paper focuses on the selection and application of English reading materials in high school. It is found that students face many difficulties in the process of reading, such as the mismatch between reading materials and students' cognitive level and the lack of sufficient cultural information in reading materials. In order to solve these problems, teachers should select suitable reading materials according to students' interests and needs, and focus on the accessibility of the materials and the accessibility of the language. In addition, teachers should adopt reading pedagogy to develop students' reading interests and reading ability. However, there are some shortcomings in this paper. This paper does not mention specific research methods and data analysis, which lacks empirical support. In future research, quantitative research methods can be used to collect and analyze relevant data in order to verify the influence of reading material selection on students' learning effectiveness and interest. It can also further explore how to improve students' reading ability and reading interest. Different teaching strategies and such as teaching reading skills, group discussion and cooperative learning.

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