

A Study of Teachers' Perceptions of Cultivating Students' Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Teaching

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Abstract: At present, higher education in China is paying increasing attention to the cultivation of creative talents. Creative talents must first and foremost possess strong critical thinking abilities. However, based on the current teaching situation of various subjects in senior high school, teachers pay more attention to students' academic achievements but neglect the cultivation of their critical thinking abilities. Under such circumstances, the development of students' thinking and the cultivation of creativity are greatly restricted, making it difficult to cultivate creative talents that meet the needs of the times. Therefore, since English is listed as a compulsory course in senior high school, it should take on the responsibility of providing students with critical thinking training, change the outdated teaching methods, and create a favorable learning atmosphere for students, thereby improving their creative thinking, critical thinking ability and level.

Keywords: Senior High School English; English Teaching; Critical Thinking Ability

Introduction

In the context of talent competition, the cultivation of critical thinking ability is the key to improving students' English knowledge and enhancing their learning efficiency. However, critical thinking ability is not something that can be cultivated overnight, but requires a gradual learning progress. For this reason, teachers should adjust their teaching methods for different students, create a good learning atmosphere for students, guide students to the maximum extent to cultivate creative talents^[1].

1. The Value and Connotation of Critical Thinking Ability

Critical thinking ability refers to the ability to think and analyze, emphasizing a person's ability to conduct in-depth analysis of objective things, form their own unique viewpoints, engage in intense discussions with others, and persuade others with rich arguments. This process fully expresses the individual's ideological activities. Continuous learning of thinking skills allows students to develop cognitive abilities to understand and express emotions, so that they can view things with an objective and comprehensive attitude, thus breaking through the shackles of conventional thinking, using multiple methods to solve problems, and spontaneously generating innovative awareness. In the process of English teaching and learning, by analyzing the problems encountered during the teaching process, students can better express their ideas and achieve the goal of improving the quality of English teaching. With the continuous deepening of senior high school teaching reform, it is increasingly important to cultivate students' critical thinking ability. Senior high school English teachers should recognize that composition writing is a comprehensive application of various ways of thinking. In writing teaching, it is necessary to fully tap into students' subjective initiative and provide professional personalized guidance, so that they can proficiently master English writing skills and apply them flexibly, thereby expanding their writing horizons and improving their critical thinking abilities^[2].

2. The Current Situation and Importance of Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Teaching

The purpose of English language programme in senior high school is to select the best students for higher education and cultivate a group of high-quality talents who are capable of going abroad to study advanced culture, science, and international communication. However, due to the influence of exam-oriented education, front-line teachers blindly pursue college entrance examination scores and form a "single-minded" ideology of "promotion and salary increase", which is a kind of neglect of the current situation of cultivating students' critical thinking ability.

In senior high school English classrooms, there are still "cramming" teaching model of teachers speaking and students listening; teachers only emphasize the important content of the exam according to the standards of the college entrance examination, emphasizing the importance of the exam, without paying attention to the students' personal thinking and understanding of English. And students only

mechanically repeat the vocabulary, phrases, and sentences from English textbooks, Therefore, in such a frequent and monotonous learning process, it is impossible for students to view the knowledge and culture of high school English with their own thinking, and students' critical thinking ability cannot be developed and improved.

3. The Advantages of Effectively Implementing the Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Teaching

When conducting critical thinking teaching, the cultivation of speculative ability should not be seen only as a theoretical framework, but should be applied to the specific classroom teaching of teachers in order to make it truly effective.

3.1 Enhancing National Sentiment Through Comparison Between Cultures of Different Countries

The English programme in senior high school is an important course that not only cultivates students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also selects typical texts and materials to enhance students' humanistic qualities. In the process of senior high school English teaching, teachers should attach importance to the training of students' critical thinking, timely and effectively guide the text in textbooks, so that students can find their differences in the comparison of Chinese and Western cultures, thereby improving their national self-esteem and enhancing their national consciousness. At the same time, teachers should actively encourage students to look for gaps in comparison, to take the best and discard the dregs, and reflect on their own actions, so as to make up their minds to devote themselves to the construction and prosperity of the motherland, and to achieve the purpose of improving national sentiment.

3.2 Promoting Students to Know How to Learn through Diverse Activity Designs

In English learning, senior high school students have been in an environment of exam-oriented education for a long time, relying too much on teachers' teaching, which deprives them of good opportunity to cultivate and develop their own critical thinking ability. In the process of designing various activities, teachers are able to think and make judgments independently, critically analyze emerging problems from multiple perspectives, boldly try and guide students' behavior, and finally find out effective solutions to solve problems. In this way, students will naturally learn to take the initiative to learn, which can improve their learning efficiency.

4. Problems in Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Teaching

To cultivate students' critical thinking ability, it is not only important to attach importance to their questions and answers, but also to their independent thinking and analysis of the text. However, in the teaching of English courses, there is only a single teaching mode and method, making it difficult for students to effectively grasp the knowledge they have learned.

4.1 Obsolete Teaching Concepts and Lack of Awareness to Cultivate Critical Thinking Ability

Under the influence of exam-oriented education, many English teachers only focus on the mastery of basic knowledge in teaching, and fail to integrate the knowledge involved in teaching materials. Due to the outdated educational concepts of teachers, students are always placed in a state of mechanically accepting knowledge without understanding the critical thinking ability development from the students themselves perspectives. Which hinders students from forming their own learning methods and leads to the fact that students can gradually consolidate their thoughts only under the guidance of teachers^[3].

4.2 Limited Teaching Management Hinders the Development of Students' Critical Thinking Abilities

Students' critical thinking ability is closely related to the cultivation of teachers' awareness, so the professional qualities of teachers greatly affect students' critical thinking ability. Research has shown that many senior high schools currently have low levels of educational management, limited teaching staff qualification, and mediocre teaching methods, thus affecting students' critical thinking abilities.

5. Ways of Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Classroom

Critical thinking ability is a philosophical category that is frequently mentioned in political science. In the reform of the education system in recent years, critical thinking ability has been used as a kind of important index to evaluate the educational standard of teachers

and students.

5.1 Creating a Relaxed Classroom Atmosphere to Stimulate Students' Questioning Thinking

The traditional high school English classroom atmosphere is very solemn and oppressive. In this kind of boring classroom, students can hardly breathe and can't wait to get out of the classroom quickly. Students cannot truly experience the joy of learning and cannot fully express their thoughts. For this reason, teachers should provide students with sufficient space for free thinking, and create a relaxed and democratic classroom environment in order to encourage students' thinking, thus laying a solid foundation for the development of students' critical thinking ability. For example, in the classroom, teachers can choose cooperative learning methods based on the content of the textbook, giving students sufficient time for independent thinking and discussion. During discussions, teachers communicate with classmates in an approachable manner, which not only creates a relaxed and harmonious English teaching atmosphere, but also enhances students' questioning and problem-solving abilities.

5.2 Respecting Students' Subjectivity to Cultivate Their Critical Thinking Abilities

In high school English teaching, teachers should always play their role and use their authority to ensure the smooth transformation of knowledge, so that students can transform from the original "master" to a "stagnant" "learning machine". Although some teachers have adopted the combination of "questioning" and "interactive" teaching methods, they cannot be completely free from the teachers' control^[4]. Under such a teaching method, students' self-confidence and critical thinking ability are greatly affected. Therefore, teachers should respect students' subjectivity, innovate teaching methods, increase students' freshness, stimulate their individual thinking and cultivate their critical thinking ability. For example, senior high school students in the new era often develop a strong interest in excellent foreign movies and TV dramas. During the teaching process, teachers can choose appropriate classic films according to different teaching content to enhance students' interest in learning. In addition, in the teaching process, teachers stimulate students' critical thinking ability by asking questions. This is not only related to students' listening attitude, but also to their development of critical thinking and comprehensive language skills.

5.3 Transforming the Original Thinking to Change the Old Evaluation Model

The ultimate goal of language teaching is to learn to use the language learned and achieve the purpose of communication, and the purpose of senior high school English teaching is to enable students to learn to use the language they have learned and apply it to practical life. In the process of English teaching, how to detect students' linguistic reasoning ability relies heavily on an effective and flexible examination and evaluation mode. Under the guidance of the college entrance examination, the former high school English teacher used a large number of question-and-answer tactics, which led to the exhaustion of the candidates for this kind of uniform and capricious mechanical examination. How to cultivate students' critical thinking ability? This requires senior high school English teachers to change their teaching concepts and methods. In terms of English writing, there are differences in students' critical thinking abilities, which is particularly evident at senior high school level.

5.4 Developing a Comprehensive Learning Plan to Exercise Students' Critical Thinking Abilities

Essentially, the ability to think critically is to think about the same thing from different perspectives. To equip students with the desired abilities, they need to be taught strictly. More than just studying textbooks, English is about much more than rote memorisation of words. It is impossible to achieve the desired effect by simply training students' critical thinking skills based on textbook knowledge. Therefore, both teachers and students should make full use of their spare time^[5]. Developing a detailed and thorough learning plan for their English and critical thinking abilities. For example, teachers can assign homework in English logbook or on Sundays, and students can supervise each other and check each others' grammar errors in logbook. This has long been a student-dominated teaching method, making it difficult to ensure the smooth progress of teaching. However, with peer supervision, not only can it enhance the friendship between classmates, but it can also effectively improve teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion

To sum up, in the teaching process, it is of great significance to make full use of the text content in senior high school English textbooks to stimulate students' thinking through multiple channels and angles, and gradually cultivate their good critical thinking consciousness, thereby effectively developing and enhancing students' critical thinking ability. In order to cultivate and improve students'

critical thinking ability, senior high school English teaching should undergo bold reforms in the presentation of textbooks, classroom questioning, evaluation, and other aspects, so that students can gradually improve their critical thinking ability and cultivate thinking habits in senior high school English teaching.

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Project Name: Jilin Provincial Education Association's "14th Five Year Plan" Scientific Research Norms Project: A Study of Teachers' Perceptions of Cultivating Students' Critical Thinking Ability in Senior High School English Teaching. Project Number: G217509.