

# Research on the Cultivation of Rhetoric and Critical Thinking in English Writing based on TED Speech

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**Abstract:** For English majors, it is very important to have certain critical thinking ability in English course learning, which has an important impact on their future employment and career development. In traditional English course teaching, the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability is indeed very limited, with the training and teaching to cultivate rhetoric and critical thinking ability being even less. English writing requires a good command of language expression and logical thinking. In this regard, based on the TED speech, this article analyzes the importance of rhetoric and critical thinking in students' English writing, and explores effective countermeasures to improve students' rhetorical and critical skills in English writing.

**Keywords:** TED Speech; English Writing; Rhetoric; Critical Thinking

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## Introduction

In the new era, high-quality talents have become one of the important resources that countries compete for. Such talents generally have a certain sense of innovation and thinking ability. To cultivate more high-quality talents, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of talents' thinking ability and improve the talents' language skills. In this regard, it is required to strengthen the cultivation of students' rhetorical and critical thinking ability in the teaching of English writing courses, promote the continuous improvement of students' English writing level, and lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of high-quality talents. At this stage, the ways of learning English are becoming more and more diverse. TED is famous for its speeches. Its speeches have its own characteristics and contain many creative ideas and topics. Such speeches have important learning value for students' English learning, especially of great significance for cultivating students' English writing and expression ability and promoting students' critical thinking ability.

## 1. The importance of TED talks and their relationship to critical thinking

The role of speech is huge. A good speech can drive the audience, make them their own supporters and helpers, inspire people, and bring about different effects. Many students are not good at speeches and cannot grasp the elements of speeches. The speeches they made are often poor in content, superficial in thought, and empty. Such speeches have no deep thinking and reasonable logical relationship, so it is difficult to drive the audience and resonate. This situation is also related to the speaker's language level and knowledge, indicating that the speaker's thinking ability has limitations. Through research by scholars, Gao Yihong pointed out in his analysis of students who failed in speeches that the students' scores were deducted because of language errors, which to a certain extent reflected the lack of students' thinking ability. Zhao Rui analyzed the speeches of 28 contestants in the 2005 CCTV English Speech Contest, and found common problems, namely, unclear purpose of speech, imprecise structure, irrational logic, etc. The application of rhetorical devices in speech language is far from proficient, and there are certain deficiencies in the choice of connectives and the expression of conclusions. These also highlight that in English teaching, the focus is on students' skills, but it does not pay attention to the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability, which leads to the general lack of students' critical thinking ability. It can be seen that in order to cultivate students' high English language ability, we must grasp the cultivation of critical thinking ability.

As far as English speech is concerned, thinking, writing and expression are the three major elements intertwined together. Speech focuses on the expression of ideas, and the content of the speech exercises students' writing ability. Finally, the speaker presents the content and ideas to the audience through his own expression. To ensure the effect of the speech, it is necessary to ensure that the topic selection is novel and unique, and has a certain attractiveness. At the same time, the content of the speech needs to have a reasonable logic and rigorous relationship, as well as a certain literary talent and ingenious conception. In the speech, facing a large number of audiences, to ensure that they can obtain the information of the speech effectively, they also need to pay attention to the speed of speech, volume, pronunciation, rhythm, and equip corresponding body language and expressions, etc., so as to present a speech. Nice speech. In the process of speech, students' critical thinking ability is continuously strengthened. Before speech, students need to think. What is the purpose of speech? How to choose the topic of the speech? Who is the audience for the speech? Where should speech materials be obtained? And so on, the thinking of these questions is the exercise of the students' thinking ability. When students are writing speeches, they also need to think about how to organize language, whether to put forward an argument first or to trigger thinking first, and how to express it to make the language appear more literary and interesting? In the continuous thinking and creation, the students' critical thinking ability is continuously strengthened.

TED Talk is a non-profit organization for the dissemination of ideas. Its speeches are mainly for the dissemination of creative ideas, with a variety of types and a wide range of topics. In its related speeches, it also contains ideas that change the world, focusing on calling on citizens to love themselves. the homeland, focusing on enhancing citizens' sense of social responsibility and spreading positive energy. This kind of speech will definitely bring a certain positive effect to the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability, and it can greatly help students' English language learning, so that students can feel a better way of thinking, learn language expression skills, and make their Language expression ability has been continuously improved. Judging from the TED speeches, the relevant speeches are rich in words, rhetorical, professional in language, and not difficult to understand. Many of them use simple and easy-to-understand language to interpret profound truths, which can make the audience understand. Accurately grasp the meaning of the language, arouse the enthusiasm of the audience, and pay attention to the combination of long and short sentences in the speech, all of these can be achieved only if the students are very sensitive to English rhetoric and flexible in thinking and writing.

Therefore, introducing TED speech into English writing to cultivate students' rhetorical and critical thinking ability can make students have more inspiring thinking, change the shortcomings of traditional writing teaching mode, allow students to express their opinions and thoughts freely, and improve students' language, rhetorical skills and critical thinking skills.

## **2. Strategies for cultivating rhetorical and critical thinking skills in English writing based on TED speeches**

### **2.1 Adopt the infusion teaching method and use speech as an important learning material**

In the teaching of English writing, teachers can adopt the injection teaching method, take famous TED speeches as important materials for students' writing learning, lead students to watch TED speech video materials, interpret relevant speeches together, and analyze the characteristics and advantages of speeches , to conduct a specific analysis and research on the application of related rhetorical devices in speeches. On the basis of analyzing the corresponding speeches, form a new understanding of English language expression, and then consciously organize students to carry out relevant English writing, let students try to apply relevant rhetorical devices in English language writing, and make the language more refined and literary. At the same time, it is necessary to analyze the thinking mode in the TED speech, so that students know how to think and complete a good speech, so that they can learn the language thinking skills in the speech, grasp the reasonable thinking logic, and help students in thinking and constantly improve the writing ability in the exercise.

## **2.2 Strengthen the organization and development of speech activities, and exercise rhetorical thinking ability in practice**

English writing teaching must turn passive into active, as many students are not completely satisfied with teaching. Students should be encouraged to speak English, not be afraid of making mistakes, find problems in English learning in time, and get rid of fixed mistakes. Organizing students to give English speeches is equivalent to conducting “oral tests” for students, so that students can really get exercise in English language practice, clarify their own shortcomings in speaking and listening, and then carry out targeted training and listening in follow-up learning.

In order to further improve students' English writing level and oral expression ability, and promote the cultivation of students' English rhetoric and thinking ability, the English teaching and research group can insist on holding standardized writing competitions and English speech competitions every year. Students should prepare speeches in advance, practice repeatedly, make unscripted speeches, and ensure that the English expressions in the speeches are fluent and accurate. The school can also send some speech videos of students to the class group to share with parents, setting an example and allowing students to learn, to create a good atmosphere for English language learning. In this process, the students could participate in the speech competition, further exercise their English language rhetorical expression skills and thinking ability, and master the thinking skills in the continuous writing and speaking training, which plays an important role in improving the students' comprehensive English language application ability.

## **3. Conclusion**

In order to cultivate students' rhetorical and critical thinking skills in English writing teaching, it is necessary to reform the traditional course teaching mode. The introduction of TED speech mode in teaching can make up for the shortcomings of traditional English writing teaching, optimize course teaching resources, and allow students to have more. In the process of analyzing TED learning materials, mastering language expression skills, and efficient training of writing and speaking, students' English rhetoric writing and thinking skills will be continuously strengthened.

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