# Cultivation of Middle School Students' Overall Reading Critical Thinking Ability from the Perspective of Chinese Teaching

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### Abstract

This paper analyzes the outstanding problems in Chinese class, advocates improving the critical thinking ability of middle school students in the whole reading, and puts forward the common methods of cultivating the critical thinking of middle school students in the whole reading practice: paying attention to the design of main problems in single reading, and clarifying the internal logic between each part of the text. In reading group essays, the discrimination of group essays is the key point, so you should be familiar with the text comparison method. Classification in reading the whole book and writing rules of literary criticism are beneficial to the improvement of thinking.

### **Keywords**

Whole Reading; Critical Thinking; Single Reading; Group Writing; Whole Book.

# 1. Introduction

When talking about the disadvantages of Chinese teaching in middle schools, Professor Wang Furen pointed out with deep sorrow: "Chinese is the most interesting textbook in all subjects, but Chinese classroom is the most boring one in all subjects." From the point of view of teaching practice, the main reason for this phenomenon is that the Chinese text is fragmented and the Chinese interpretation is fragmented. As Mr. Yu Yi warned us: with the stale method of feeding chewed knowledge to students, students often only spend their energy on memory, which is not conducive to the exercise of thinking ability and does not meet the requirements of the times and talent training [1]. Chinese teachers' literary theory knowledge is old and weak. Many Chinese teachers are "old pedants", but they only emphasize the word "old", and knowledge learning is more important than ability training. This concept is far from meeting the needs of modern students.

Based on the thinking of the above Chinese learning problems, the author thinks that in the process of Chinese learning, we should first take care of the text as a whole, and conduct overall perception and exploration from a macro perspective. In the whole reading, critical thinking is used to examine the text rationally. Understand the text through inferential, evaluative and appreciative speech forms on the surface of the text. Think carefully about the relationship between judgment and logical reasoning in the text with the consciousness of questioning and demonstration, and construct and reshape one's Chinese rational thinking.

This paper will summarize and refine the typical methods, skills and matters needing attention of cultivating middle school students' critical thinking from the overall reading level of single text, group text and whole book.

# 2. Critical Thinking Training in Single Reading

# 2.1. Critical Thinking Training is Contained in the Thinking and Reasoning of the Main Problem or Chain Problem of the Text

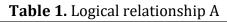
Designing questions, using questions to promote students' participation in class and promoting students' deep thinking are undoubtedly the magic weapon to promote students' deep reading. However, the depth of thinking and the breadth of the questions directly affect the overall reading quality. The piecemeal teaching method and over-analysis word by word are not the overall reading teaching, which is not conducive to the development and promotion of students' thinking. Only by designing the main problem that affects the whole body or the chain problem with systematic and careful thinking can it conform to the overall reading thought, and students can imperceptibly improve their critical thinking ability in continuous evidence-based, reasoning and judgment.

For example, during the intensive reading of "Invitation to Wine", a teacher designed the question of "what kind of Li Bai do you read". Students need to think advanced based on overall perception of the text, capture information between the lines for inference, and gradually form their own judgment. Some say they read about a wild Li Bai, some say they read about a painful and anxious Li Bai, and some say they read about a lonely Li Bai ... When students answer questions, they first give their own opinions and conclusions, and then organize language to form arguments to prove their opinions. A demonstration of thinking about the main problem of the whole article, and at the same time, it trains students' reasoning and argumentation thinking.

# 2.2. Critical Thinking Training Should Focus on the Logical Relationship between Different Parts of the Text

A classic text is an organic whole in which various elements of the text coordinate and cooperate with each other. When we pay attention to the interaction and harmonious development of various elements in the whole, we will grasp the essence of overall reading, and Chinese reading will also receive the overall effect. However, the logical relationship between various parts of the text is easy to be obscured and ignored in the interpretation of the text. Questioning and questioning are necessary links in order to penetrate the fog and clarify the logical relations among the internal parts of the text. Only when you ask questions can you reason and form an opinion. As the core link of cultivating critical thinking, questioning plays an important role. The following is a case study of "Spring river flower moon night" to explain the overall reading effect changes brought about by the questioning method.

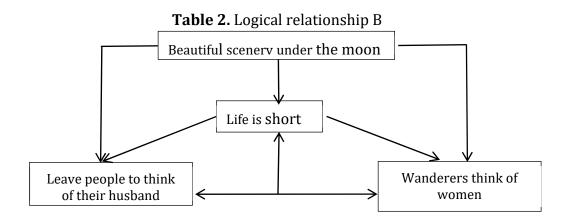
Normally, we divide "Spring river flower moon night" into four parts. Beautiful scenery under the moon, philosophical thinking about life, longing for husband and wandering for women. From the courseware searched on the Internet, it is believed that there is a one-way linear logical relationship between these four, namely:



Beautiful scenery under the moon  $\rightarrow$ Philosophy of life  $\rightarrow$ Leave people to think of their husband Wanderers think of women

"Spring river flower moon night" is the "masterpiece" of the whole Tang poetry. Is its idea really that simple? This is such a simple and messy relationship between the four parts? The role of a

bright moon is only to set off the shortness of life? Is there a relationship between philosophy of life and separation of husband and wife? After a series of questioning, we realized that the four parts should be a two-way network-like logical relationship.



Zhang Ruoxu tried his best to create a beautiful scene under the moon, not only to elicit the feeling of life, but also to set off and contrast the latter three parts. Life is short, and the relationship between leaving people and thinking of their husband and wandering children and thinking of their wives is also a mutual contrast: the more romantic the wandering children and thinking of their wives are, the more bitter the parting is. Life is short. In this short life, the bitterness of lovesickness is added. The bitterness of life and the bitterness of lovesickness interact with each other, brewing and fermenting together. How can the sorrow be turned? It's just a thrill ride!

In the single reading, the logical relationship between each part is clarified and the text is thoroughly read. In this process, readers need questioning, questioning and rigorous reasoning, and the training of middle school students' critical thinking ability is hidden in this process.

Of course, the discourse texts like "Brings the Principle" and "Six States Theory" are the easiest to cultivate students' critical thinking in the whole reading of a single text. The critical thinking skills such as elaboration, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and demonstration of this kind of text are explicit. Students have text as an example, which is easy to learn and understand. On the other hand, we should guide students to accept the views of argumentative texts carefully, and insist that no view can obtain the immunity of rational trial, otherwise students' learning will fall into the trap of receptive learning and cannot cultivate critical thinking ability. In addition, the analysis, questioning and reconstruction of famous scholars' interpretation views, and the multiple interpretation of text themes can cultivate students' critical spirit and critical skills.

## 3. Critical Thinking Training in Group Reading

Group reading, also known as multi-text reading, is usually a combination of several articles (paragraphs) under the same theme for students to read. This kind of reading form is by no means a simple addition of single text reading, but a new reading form like puzzles or even building blocks. It came into being in the development of the times. The new curriculum standard, new teaching materials and new college entrance examination also focus on this reading form. For this kind of text, we should not only pay attention to the details, but also grasp the text as a whole, think about the relationship between multiple texts, find both connections and differences, and be able to dialectically think, re integrate and critically absorb the multi text information.

# 3.1. Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in the Discrimination of Group Relations

In multi text reading materials, the subject selection, style determination and combination of texts are very changeable, and there is no unified mold. When reading this kind of text, we should first take care of the whole text and find out the relationship between the texts: are they complementary and perfect or contradictory? Is it causal explanation type or progressive relationship type? Is it argument type or theoretical explanation type? In the analysis of the relationship between groups and texts, the thinking of combing and extracting, generalizing and simple reasoning will be effectively trained.

When the relationship is clear, reading can be further deepened. When faced with complementary and perfect multi-texts, it is necessary to "mix all kinds and synthesize one", that is, to form a comprehensive judgment after a single analysis and to construct a more comprehensive and systematic logical system of viewpoints and arguments. In the face of conflict-of-opposites multi-texts, we should carefully consider whether the two viewpoints are in direct contradiction or unity of opposites, and then confirm the rationality of one of them after comprehensive evaluation, or improve and reconstruct the conclusion. When facing causal interpretation multi text, we should understand that multi text means that there is a phenomenon of multiple causes and one result or one cause and many results. We should distinguish between cause and effect, pay attention to the comprehensiveness and rationality of causality, avoid single cause fallacy, and avoid the two wrong causal logic of "common change is cause and effect" and "after that, cause and effect". Progressive relational multi text should consider the progressive truth and falsehood. Opinion argumentation multi text focuses on judging the credibility of the argument and its support for the viewpoint. The multi text of theoretical interpretation should judge the scientificity and rationality of the theory, and can also put forward the competitive point of view and weigh the two points of view. Secondly, we should examine the conceptual unity and logical extension of the theoretical part and the specific interpretation part.

Using holistic care and comprehensive thinking in the analysis of group relations can basically achieve the goal of "being able to judge the authenticity and reliability of text information and opinions based on multiple information sources, and logically and clearly clarify your own basis" [3]. However, in order to complete the requirements of the new curriculum standard academic quality level 5-2, it is necessary to make a more in-depth comparative analysis of the text.

#### 3.2. Training Critical Thinking Skills in Group Comparative Analysis

When analyzing the relationship between groups and texts, we pay more attention to the internal unity of multiple texts, and pay less attention to the differences and inter-texts of multiple texts. In the comparative analysis of group texts, although we also pay attention to the consistency of texts, we pay more attention to differences. In the comparative analysis of differences, students can experience the usage and effect of various reasoning skills. When comparing the differences, we can focus on the demonstration position, demonstration mode, demonstration method, demonstration idea, demonstration language, reasoning form and so on.

It should be emphasized that an important feature of the new textbook compiled by the Ministry is the group text composition, which provides a good carrier for training students' critical thinking in group text reading. Teachers and students should work together to explore the value of the new textbook in this regard, as evidenced by the comparative reading of "a Fang Gong Fu" and "Six states theory" above. However, from the perspective of cultivating middle school students' critical thinking ability, there are disadvantages in the text selection structure of the new textbooks compiled by the Ministry: the new textbooks adopt a "two-line organizational unit structure", which generally organizes units according to the theme of humanistic units and organizes text groups according to the training of Chinese literacy ability points, which leads to more complementary and perfect text groups and few other group text types. This requires us to break the existing structural order while making good use of the teaching materials, redevelop the teaching materials, or supplement related texts so that the teaching materials and extracurricular texts can be grouped together to achieve the goal of cultivating students' critical thinking ability.

## 4. Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability in Reading the Whole Book

In the whole book reading, there are many strategies to cultivate critical thinking ability from the perspective of whole reading, such as annotation method, summary content method, title method, questioning predecessors' comments and so on. But the following two methods are effective and easy to operate.

First, classification. A collection of works can't all be one kind of works, and the authors generally can't classify them, which gives students room for thinking training. The specific steps are as follows: (1) Ask students to read the whole book quickly with the task of classifying the portfolio works. (2) Analyze the text content, determine the classification standard, and classify the works. (3) Write the classification criteria and reasons, and write the recommendation. When the author guides students to read "earthbound China", students follow this process. One of the students divided the three articles "inaction politics", "elder rule", "separation of name and reality" into a group, defined the classification standard as "four forms of rights in rural society", and determined a secondary standard: to explain the right structure in the comparison between China and the West. (Reasons for classification and recommendation are omitted here). Teacher Cao Yongjun used the classification method more skillfully in his class at a national conference. He asked the students to compile a selected collection and write a preface on the basis of reading through "Ai Qing's Poems". When students present in class, each study group has a set of standards and each study group has a "Selected Poems of Ai Qing". Students' thinking and presentation are colorful. So how does classification train critical thinking ability? In fact, students train students' comparative thinking when classifying works, their inductive argumentation ability when refining classification standards, and their causal explanation and causal argumentation ability when writing classification reasons and recommendation speeches. Students' critical thinking ability is invisible in the process of students' task completion.

Second, the writing method of literary short comment. When reading a literary work, writing out your understanding, analysis and evaluation of the work in brief words from your own feelings is a short literary review [4]. In short, literary essays are concise and lively literary comments. It is quite different from the feeling after reading. The feeling after reading generally stays at the level of starting from sensibility and ending at sensibility. It is only the feeling and understanding after reading literary works. It is an intuitive and perceptual knowledge and the primary stage of knowledge. The literary essay should start from sensibility and finally rise to the rational level. Literary essays are of great benefit to students in forming clear concepts, making accurate judgments and reasoning correctly.

Whether it is the classification or the writing method of literary essays, the display of exploration results is an essential link. In the process of students' presentation, teachers should guide students not to participate in the presentation with an attitude of self-admiration, but to maintain a curiosity, maintain an open thinking space, seriously consider the views of others and demonstrate the reasoning process. After the exchange, students should have a comprehensive reflection. They should examine their short literary essays with a neutral and tolerant attitude without personal emotional preference, re-evaluate their opinions, evaluate

whether the reasons given in the argumentation are sufficient, and evaluate the degree of support for the opinions. Finally, improve your reasoning and judgment through absorption and reflection.

#### 5. Conclusion

Middle school is an important period for students' thinking development level to transition from image thinking to abstract thinking, especially the golden period for developing higherorder thinking ability represented by critical thinking. Middle school teachers pay attention to the strict training of basic skills of critical thinking in overall reading, which can be said to grasp the bull nose of cultivating middle school students' critical thinking ability.

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