

# Constructing High School Chinese Speculative Reading Teaching Based on Dewey's Thinking

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## Abstract

In recent years, "thinking" has always been a hot topic of concern and discussion in the language education circle. "Speculative reading and expression" task group is listed as 7 of the compulsory courses in the "Chinese Curriculum Standards for General Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)". One of the task groups, its importance is obvious. However, due to the influence of exam-oriented education, most of the current high school Chinese reading teaching still adopts the teaching method of knowledge instillation. Teachers are in the position of "authority" and completely lead students' thinking and values. This teaching method is completely unfavorable for cultivating students' independent thinking and logical reasoning skills. And Dewey's thinking based on pragmatic induction, closely combining thinking training with teaching activities, can provide new ideas for the construction of high school Chinese speculative reading teaching, and has reference and practical guiding significance for cultivating students' thinking habits and innovative spirit.

## Keywords

Dewey; Thinking; High school Chinese; Speculative reading.

## 1. Introduction

As one of the greatest philosophers and educators in the 20th century, Dewey left many works on philosophy, pedagogy, and psychology to later generations. Issues such as methods, teacher-student relations, schools and society are all programmatically explained. In Dewey's "The Nature of Thinking", "How We Think: Experience and Education", "Thinking and Teaching" and other works, he explained the connotation and value of thinking, and made a systematic analysis of the order and methods of thinking training and cultivation. in-depth analysis. It can be said that Dewey's view of thinking occupies a very important position in his entire educational thought system. And Dewey's view of thinking based on pragmatic epistemology has strong practical guiding significance for teaching.

The key task of the quality education implemented by the current new curriculum reform in our country is to cultivate students' practical ability and innovative spirit. In the current cultural and social environment, the necessity and social value of advancing critical reading is self-evident. A comprehensive understanding and study of Dewey's view of thinking can provide us with a good inspiration and guiding significance for constructing speculative reading teaching.

## 2. The Basis of Implementing Speculative Reading Teaching in High School Chinese

### 2.1. The Dilemma and Reform Demands of Chinese Reading Teaching in Senior High Schools

"Students' self-exploration" and "cooperative seminars" are all teaching modes advocated by the new curriculum standard. However, due to the orientation of exam-oriented education, the actual high school Chinese reading teaching is still taught by teachers, and students only need to listen. Over time, students' thinking has been in a state of acceptance, and the long-term mechanical reading mode will naturally make it difficult for students to develop their critical thinking ability. This completely goes against the original intention of educating students.

On the other hand, the basic function of reading teaching is to let students master the basic knowledge of Chinese in the process of reading texts, but more importantly, to let students acquire the accumulation, precipitation and growth of aesthetics, language, emotion and other aspects in reading. Text itself contains multi-layered values such as aesthetics, literature, philosophy, etc., but the texts selected into the Chinese classroom firstly become teaching texts. As we all know, Chinese textbooks are not only the core content of Chinese curriculum resources, but also the main support for Chinese teachers to carry out teaching activities, and also an important material for students to acquire knowledge. Therefore, the interpretation of texts in reading teaching should not be a unilateral analysis by teachers of the whole text, word for word, sentence by sentence. Teachers' interpretation cannot replace students' autonomous interpretation. The dialogue between students and texts is the focus of reading teaching.

Changes in the arrangement of Chinese textbooks also prove the rationality of this statement. In 2017, the Ministry of Education's newly compiled Chinese textbooks were implemented nationwide, and reading teaching formed a "trinity" structure. Based on such a new structure of teaching materials, two types of courses must be distinguished in teaching, namely, "teaching and reading courses" are taught into "teaching and reading courses", and "self-reading courses" are taught as "self-reading courses". The deeper reason for this change is that with the in-depth advancement of the new curriculum reform, the concept and method of reading teaching have undergone major changes, and the teaching goal of reading class has also changed from "teaching Chinese" to "learning to read". Improve students' autonomous learning ability and reading ability. In this regard, Yu Dangxu believes that speculative reading "is rational reading, dialogue reading, and critical reading". [1] Through the teaching of speculative reading, students can use a dialectical perspective to examine the text they read, and they will have their own thinking and questioning during the reading process, instead of blindly following the concepts of elders, teachers, and books.

### 2.2. The Emphasis on Speculative Reading in the Chinese Curriculum Standard of Ordinary Senior High Schools

First, the "Chinese Curriculum Standards for General High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" takes the task group "Speculative Reading and Expression" as one of the seven task groups in the compulsory course, aiming to "guide students to learn critical reading and expression, to develop the ability of evidence, reasoning, criticism and discovery, to enhance the logic and depth of thinking ... to improve the level of rational thinking". [2] Second, "thinking development and improvement" is one of the important elements of the core literacy of Chinese. It is not difficult to find that the importance of "thinking" is highlighted again in the new curriculum standard. In the current Chinese classrooms of primary and secondary schools, there are still many teachers whose reading teaching content and teaching design are still at the level of scripting, which is mainly manifested in that they are completely dependent on

various teaching materials, and have few independent thinking activities; It does not guide students to savor the meaning and beauty of the text; or it is just to deal with the reading questions in the exam, and the students' reading ability is measured by the level of scores. In this social context, the effectiveness of reading teaching has not been outstanding. The fundamental reason is that reading teaching is not lawful. How to read and even grasp the ideological content and cultural connotation of reading texts, so as to improve students' autonomous reading ability, especially their thinking ability? It is advisable to introduce Dewey's thinking based on pragmatism induction into Chinese classrooms in primary and secondary schools, hoping to absorb the essence and provide new ideas for reading teaching for teachers and students.

On the one hand, in the process of Chinese reading and learning, students will read and appreciate texts and connect with life experience and social reality, so that they will form their own unique literary feelings; on the other hand, "language construction and application" In a fundamental position, an individual's thinking is generally presented or expressed by language, which can be said to be the external expression of thinking to some extent. Based on the above analysis, as mentioned in the new curriculum standard, if students want to express their unique reading feelings in a more organized and logical way, they obviously need to carry out a series of thinking activities such as analysis, comparison, reasoning, and summarization. It can be seen that the high school Chinese curriculum standards organize and present curriculum content by learning task groups, and ultimately point to the development of students' core literacy. Advocating and promoting "speculative reading" plays an irreplaceable role in implementing the core literacy of "thinking development and improvement".

### **3. The Basic Content of Dewey's View of Thinking**

#### **3.1. The Connotation of Thinking**

Regarding the explanation of "what thinking is", Dewey summed it up into four definitions, the first is a very loose definition, thinking that everything that comes to mind can be considered as thinking; the second refers to things that are directly felt through various senses; The third meaning is that the specific point of thinking is "belief based on a certain symptom", and it may be "belief based on insufficient basis"; the fourth kind can be called reflective thinking, referring to a certain Continually pondering problems, collecting sufficient evidence by heart, and forming beliefs after conscious and serious thinking. For example, when Columbus "thought" the earth was round, he upheld the spirit of doubt and exploration, and dared to break the traditional theory. Therefore, he and his companions began to make a series of practical actions to prove his hypothesis. Among these kinds of thinking, Dewey clearly stated that the best way of thinking is introspective thinking.

#### **3.2. Five Stages of Reflection**

Dewey mentioned in "How We Think: Experience and Education" that each person's thinking has two limits, that is, the beginning and the end of thinking may face two situations, the first situation can be called the situation before reflection; The second situation in which the problem is solved can be called the post-reflection situation. Reflective thinking occurs in different states in these two situations. From this, Dewey started from the concept of "five steps of thinking" and believed that reflection activities should go through five stages.

The first stage is suggestion, that is, the idea of how the heart is inclined to solve the problem. Learners will not always be smooth in doing things, and will inevitably encounter difficulties. When the learner finds himself stuck, the idea of what to do takes the place of direct action. This suggestion is actually a presupposition of behavior. If there is only one suggestion, then there is no doubt that the learner will immediately accept the existing concept, but if there are two or

more suggestions, and they are still mutually Conflict-like flare-ups inevitably lead to hesitation and delay. Faced with this situation, teachers should intervene in a timely manner, guide students' thinking to check their own goals, situations, resources, and difficulties, and carefully review and evaluate the preset plans or ideas.

The second stage is intellectualization, that is, turning the emotional factor into a more intellectual one, in order to make the obstacles encountered in the situation more explicit in this way. When a learner encounters a puzzling situation, at first not knowing where the difficulty lies, it seems to spread throughout the situation. According to Dewey, the question is often presented exactly at the same time as the answer. Before the reflective activity, the learner's understanding of the problem may be ambiguous and uncertain, but once the nature of the problem is identified and determined, it is no longer ambiguous. If the learner can know what the difficulty is and where the difficulty is, it will be easy to start work.

The third stage is hypothesis, that is, a possible guess hypothesis is obtained through observation, thinking, and analysis. When the learner puts forward a certain hypothesis, it becomes the dominant idea, and the judgment already made will govern the chosen solution. According to this hint, the question that was hesitant before has been identified, and once the hint has passed a simple test, it will further confirm the concept of the original guess and hypothesis, and naturally it will become a realistic thinking. Here, in order to help readers understand, Dewey briefly discusses the process of a doctor's diagnosis and treatment. For example, when a doctor diagnoses a patient, people who have not been trained in introspective thinking will make random guesses and randomly use drugs on the patient. People with reflective thinking will observe carefully and use the professional knowledge and skills they have learned to find out where the patient's problem is. The fourth stage is reasoning, which is to reason in the mind the hypothesis of validity. The fifth stage is proving, which is the testing of speculative ideas through apparent action.

But Dewey pointed out that there is no fixed order for the five stages. "The five stages of introspective thinking only describe the general outline, and they are all essential elements of thinking, but there are no fixed rules. And each stage can be carried out and how to deal with it depends entirely on personal ingenuity and Sensitivity". [3]

## **4. The Enlightenment of Dewey's View of Thinking on Chinese Speculative Reading Teaching in High Schools**

### **4.1. The Value and Cultivation Path of Good Thinking Quality of High School Students**

In *How We Think*, Dewey devoted himself to the training of thinking as a separate part, divided into five chapters. Discuss how to carry out reflective thinking training in teaching activities from the aspects of activities, language, observation, and lectures. The close combination of thinking training and teaching activities can provide new ideas for the construction of high school Chinese critical reading teaching.

The abstract logical thinking ability of junior high school students has been initially developed, and it has shown a trend of gradually taking the lead, but it is mainly supported by perceptual experience. Until entering high school, students' thinking develops in a more general, logical and abstract direction, and begins to form dialectical thinking. So that the thinking structure of high school students is more mature and the thinking function is more perfect. The "Chinese Curriculum Standards for General High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" requires that students' thinking quality should be improved in Chinese teaching. According to the thinking characteristics of high school students, it is obviously the best choice to carry out critical reading teaching. First of all, Dewey's introspective thinking emphasizes following the concept of "two masters" in teaching, always keeping in mind that teachers' dominance and students'

subjectivity are unified, and promoting students' independent thinking and exploration; and teachers should seize the opportunity to pay attention to students learning feedback to inspire students in a timely manner. In this way, students can consciously cultivate rigorous, flexible, profound, critical and original thinking qualities.

Secondly, teachers should be good at creating a situation for students to guide the development of thinking in reading teaching. The so-called "education is life, education is growth, education is experience" and "learning by doing" fully embodies the connotation of Dewey's reflective thinking. The traditional reading teaching is often separated from the students' life experience, so that the students' thinking does not play its due role. Constructivist theory also emphasizes that teachers should help students to actively construct knowledge. For the input of external information, students need to screen, process and organize in their brains. Only in this way is knowledge construction in the true sense. Influenced by the traditional teaching mode of "teacher teaches, students listen", most high school Chinese teaching students are in a completely passive state at present, and the teaching method of rote memorization is completely unfavorable for students to internalize the knowledge they have learned. Some abstract concepts and theories can only be transformed into their own inner knowledge through their own understanding. To this end, teachers should create a situation with reference to students' existing knowledge or contact with students' life experience, so that students can have their own thinking and learning gains in reading.

#### **4.2. Curiosity and the Speculative Inspiration of Reading Texts**

Reading and learning must be conscious of problems, and thinking also stems from doubts and curiosity. Dewey called curiosity "the basic element of expanding experience". Curiosity is inherent in everyone, but it should be noted that if there is no intentional guidance from others, this irrational quality will deteriorate or even dissipate over time. Based on the above considerations, Dewey believes that once students lose curiosity, the flame of thinking will be extinguished, and it is difficult to be rekindled. So teachers can only do what they can to prevent students' curiosity from dissipating. To put it into practice in reading teaching, first of all, teachers need to be based on reading texts, master the skills of asking questions, and guide students to learn thinking under the desire to explore. Taking the "Six Kingdoms" taught by teacher Huang Shujing as an example, she simply analyzes the task of Reading teaching is carried out in a group way, leading students to sort out the logic of the text. "Through in-depth questions in six class hours, students are taught how to think, so that students can learn to question texts and dare to point out the 'omissions' of famous articles." [4] At the same time, teachers should completely avoid dogmatism or indoctrination. Because this tendency will make students rely too much on teachers, resulting in the disadvantages of single thinking.

#### **4.3. The Significance of Training Students' Thinking Diversity**

Dewey believes that the task of education is ultimately directed to impart as much information and knowledge as possible, but this does not mean to provide proofs for every theory or insight, "the responsibility of education is to help educators develop strong and effective The habit of thinking allows individuals to distinguish, through hands-on practice, which beliefs are tested and which are mere conjectures and conjectures." [5] Dewey believed that this is the most basic thinking quality that everyone should have, and this kind of thinking habit is not innate and needs to be gradually nurtured and cultivated in daily life. Therefore, educators should deeply understand the law of students' thinking development, and should learn and master the methods and methods of thinking training, and on this basis, create conditions to guide students to carry out thinking training. Secondly, Dewey mentioned that the primary requirement for developing good thinking habits is that students must have a good thinking attitude, that is, concentration, responsibility, modesty, and the most important thing is to develop a scientific spirit of questioning. In this regard, in the process of speculative reading teaching, high school

Chinese teachers should not only encourage students to question boldly, but also inspire students to obtain evidence from texts through various methods. In speculative reading teaching, teachers should find effective methods and core elements for thinking training, and at the same time implement the concept of "five steps of thinking" in the whole reading teaching process, so as to avoid blindly following authority or ideological occlusion.

## 5. Conclusion

At present, critical reading has attracted extensive attention and attention in the academic circle of Chinese education. Traditional reading teaching places too much emphasis on the teaching of problem-solving routines and single appreciation methods, which is also the fundamental reason for students' lack of reading interest and reading ability. Yu Dangxu, a famous scholar, talked about the problem of reading transformation, and proposed to shift from confirmatory reading to speculative reading. "As for the difference between the two, on the surface, the latter only has one more link of questioning and reflection. But in fact, there are essential differences in the value setting and way of thinking of the two." [6] Introducing Dewey's view of thinking into Chinese reading teaching in high school, there are still many areas worthy of in-depth thinking and excavation. How to cultivate students' thinking habits and innovative practice ability in reading teaching, and how to play the biggest role in speculative reading teaching, these problems require practical research by all Chinese educators.

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