

# Theoretical Construction and Practical Path of Critical Reading Teaching in High School English under the Perspective of Core Literacy

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**Abstract:** The core literacy framework promotes the deep shift of English reading teaching from skill training to thinking cultivation. Critical reading should not stop at the extraction of information on the surface of the text, but should become a thinking process of students' questioning, reasoning, judgment and self-calibration. On the basis of explaining the connotation of critical reading, this article determines its inherent coupling relationship with the four-dimensional core literacy, builds a four-order teaching model of "text deconstruction - problem-driven - dialogue generation - reflection and evaluation", and explains the classroom transformation path in combination with textbook examples. The study believes that the fundamental tension of critical reading teaching lies in the continuous tuning between "language support" and "thinking depth". Only by repeatedly grinding in specific discourses can critical thinking sink from teaching slogans to students' inner literacy.

**Keywords:** Core Literacy; High School English; Critical Reading; Teaching Model; Practice Path

## 1. Introduction

The course standard establishes language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability as the core literacy of the subject [1], which means that English teaching must be aimed at shaping "complete people" with independent thinking and cross-cultural understanding. As the main channel of language input, reading teaching should have become a medium for students to examine the relationship between themselves and the world, but at present, the classroom is still indulging in vocabulary syntax practice and test polishing, and lacks a systematic examination of the views, assumptions and value positions carried by the

text. Students are used to looking for "standard answers", but rarely ask "why did the author say this" and "what voice was missed". This gentle reading posture forms an internal rift with the critical thinking promoted by the core literacy [1].

Therefore, critical reading teaching has attracted much attention from the academic community, but there are two weaknesses in the existing discussion: theoretical construction and classroom practice are broken, or staying in grand narrative, or focusing on fragmented skills, lacking a coherent analytical framework; the dilemma between "insufficient language ability" and "high-order thinking requirements" in the foreign language context urgently needs to be in language Find an operable balance between the bracket and the depth of thinking. This article tries to respond to the above questions: take core literacy as a theoretical lens, reinterpret the connotation of critical reading, build a systematic teaching model and provide a classroom practice path.

## 2. Reinterpretation of the Connotation of Critical Reading and Literacy Coupling

The connotation of critical reading has undergone profound changes in the field of foreign language teaching. It was originally rooted in the critical thinking movement of the 20th century, focusing on cognitive skills such as logical reasoning and evidence evaluation [2]; since then, it has been influenced by Frey's critical pedagogy and has been injected into the dimension of social criticism - reading is no longer just decoding text, but also means "reading the world", alerting the power relationship and consciousness behind the text. State preset; In recent years, the rise of pluralistic reading theory has expanded it to multimodal discourse analysis [3]. Based on these veins, the critical reading defined in this article refers to the reader's active questioning and examination of the views, argumentation

structure, cultural assumptions and value orientation of the text on the basis of language understanding, and reflects on their own positions in the process, and finally achieves the meaning reconstruction [4]. This definition includes three progressive levels: analysis and reasoning at the cognitive level, contextual discrimination at the sociocultural level, and self-calibration at the reflective level.

Putting this connotation in the core literacy framework, it can be found that critical reading and four dimensions constitute a deep coupling: language ability is the basic support, but not a precondition - critical reading itself can also reversely stimulate sensitivity to deep semantics and pragmatic functions; thinking quality is closest to critical reading, and quality Suspicious assumptions, examination of evidence, and identification of logical fallacies naturally constitute its practice field [5]; cultural consciousness gives reading depth, so that the implicit presuppositions of the text surface; learning ability can be concentrated in continuous self-monitoring and cognitive adjustment.

An important understanding emerges from this coupling picture: critical reading is not a "high-level achievement" that can only be reached after the core literacy is realized, but the inner path to the core literacy. Teaching critical reading is not to add additional content to the existing teaching, but to change the way of asking questions, promote the depth of dialogue, and reshape the relationship between students and the text.

### **3. The Fourth-Order Model of "Text Deconstruction - Problem-Driven - Dialogue Generation - Reflection Evaluation"**

Based on the above theoretical positioning, this paper proposes a four-stage teaching model to provide an implementation framework for critical reading teaching under the perspective of core literacy. These stages are not linear processes in the real classroom, but dynamic systems that can be flexibly called and cycled according to the characteristics of the text and the learning situation [5].

Stage 1: Text deconstruction - construction logic of the text

The starting point of critical reading is not to extract "what the article is about", but to ask "how the article is constructed". Traditional teaching regards text as a transparent container

of meaning, while critical reading "problems" it - as a series of discourse choices by the author in a specific context. Teachers need to guide students to see through the rhetorical intention of these choices: how are the arguments structured and highlighted? What information is placed in front or marginalized? How do person, tense and modal verbs adjust the distance between readers? What kind of authority does the text invoke to enhance persuasiveness? These micro-language operations are not technical details, but the manifestation of the ideological texture of the text. For example, if an AI discussion paper exaggerates the risk of unemployment with a high mood, but downplays the response plan with a weak attitude, it has completed a rhetorical threat amplification.

Stage 2: Problem-driven - activate thinking with cognitive conflicts

After deconstructing the text, teaching needs to leverage deep thinking with open-ended questions. The power of questions does not lie in pointing to the correct answer, but in creating cognitive conflicts, prolonging students' doubt time, and making them repeatedly weigh and weigh in uncertainty. Problem design can be developed from three dimensions: position follow-up, such as whether the author's core argument can withstand scrutiny and which opposition views are avoided; updating the perspective, such as changing to another cultural background or stakeholder narrative, what different aspects the text will present; logical discrimination, such as whether there is a jump between the conclusion and the evidence, Whether the causal relationship has been oversimplified. The role of the teacher at this time is not to provide the answer, but to be a thinking midwife - by asking "why do you think so", "which sentence in the text supports your judgment" and "is there any other possible explanation", and continue to return the responsibility of thinking to the students [2].

Stage 3: Dialogue generation - weaving pluralistic meanings in the community

Critical reading cannot be downgraded to a lonely game between the individual and the text, and the critical construction of meaning needs to be completed in the tension of dialogue. Students are aware of their own blind spots when listening to the perspective of others, and temper the accuracy of arguments in expression and defense. The teaching organization should

change from one-way teacher-student questions and answers to multi-student dialogues and inter-group dialogues. The specific strategies can be flexibly changed: "Puzzle Discussion" assigns different aspects of the issue to each group for discussion and put together the whole picture. "Court Debate" requires cross-questioning from the defense and the questioning party. "Silent Dialogue" first responds to peer notes with annotations and then Oral communication leaves room for thinking. Regardless of the form, the core principle is that the right to speak must be fully released to students. Teachers need to restrain the impulse to be eager to close the net and collect multiple interpretations into "standard conclusions" - critical reading ultimately cultivates not consensus, but students' ability to continue to think in differences [6].

Stage 4: Reflection and evaluation - looking back at one's own interpretation framework from reading

The most slip-prone link in critical reading is the reflective dimension. If you always look out and never turn around to look at your own cognitive process, criticalness will lack self-reverseness [7]. Real critical reading should promote the reader's self-correction after understanding the text. Structured reflection can be integrated into the teaching operation: students are required to write down "how I view this topic before reading", "what information in the text has changed my cognition", "how my emotional response affects the way of interpretation", so as to objectify the thinking process and make it an object that can be analyzed. Reflection evaluation can also be extended to peer evaluation, allowing students to point out omissions in the argument, unexamined premises or prematurely solidified conclusions. When students are used to monitoring their own thinking while reading, critical reading will be internalized from classroom training to stable thinking temperament [8].

#### **4. Practical Path: Take High School English Textbooks as an Example**

In order to give the model a specific classroom texture, this section takes the reading discourse in Unit 2 "Looking into the Future" of the 2019 version of the People's Education Society's 2019 version of the high school English textbook selective compulsory one as an example to show

the classroom implementation of the fourth-order model. The core text of this unit revolves around the impact of artificial intelligence on future life and employment. It has clear views, rich rhetorical strategies, and naturally contains the excavation space of critical reading.

In the text deconstruction stage, teachers guide students to pay attention to a subtle language phenomenon: when the author describes the benefits of AI, he uses active voice and positive verbs (transform, unlock, empower), and turns to passive voice and noun expression when it comes to threats (concerns have been raised, the displacement of workers is expected). This grammatical choice is not neutral. It weakens the attribution of responsibility at the rhetorical level and dulls the sharpness of negative effects. When students mark these voice transformations with their own hands, they have seen in practice how language silently shapes readers' understanding of reality [9].

Entering the problem-driven link, the teacher raised a set of progressive questions: Why does the author use passive voice to talk about employment risks? If all of them are rewritten into active sentences, how will the persuasiveness change? Are the expert views in the article balanced and representative - which interest groups' voices are missing? These questions are not to seek neat answers, but to loosen students' obedient reading habits of the text.

In the dialogue generation stage, students are grouped on behalf of AI technology developers, traditional industry practitioners and educational policymakers to reread the text from their respective positions and form arguments. In the tripartite confrontation, students personally experience how different social positions activate completely different problem visions and evaluation scales [10]. This experience itself is a physical practice of the spirit of critical reading.

Reflect on the evaluation link, through the writing task - "To what extent does the text change or confirm your existing views on AI? Where does the strongest emotional response appear in reading? Does emotion affect judgment?" - Students turn the focus of examination from the text to themselves, completing the closed loop of critical reading.

In the whole process, teachers need to repeatedly adjust the balance between language

support and thinking depth. When it is difficult for students to express critical views due to language barriers, teachers should not work for them, but can maintain the advancement of thinking through sentence templates, such as "The text assumes that... however..." From the perspective of... the argument could be seen differently". These brackets are the grasp of thinking climbing, reducing the cognitive load of language output, so that students can devote more effort to logical reasoning and perspective switching. With the growth of language ability and critical experience, the bracket can be gradually removed until students can freely carry complex critical thinking in the target language [11].

### 5. Conclusion

Critical reading teaching in high school English under the perspective of core literacy is essentially a migration of "reading ethics" - from consumer reading in harmony with the text to productive reading that continues to work with the text. The fourth-order model constructed in this paper tries to provide a path framework for this migration that combines theoretical interpretation and classroom co-ability. However, any model can only gain real vitality in the repeated practice of specific teaching situations. The deepening of critical reading teaching requires not only the wisdom of design, but also teachers to have a calm and even welcoming attitude towards classroom uncertainty - because real critical thinking is born in questions, unexpected silences and unplanned confrontations outside the preset. Future research can further explore the hierarchical implementation strategy of critical reading teaching under different discourse types and academic variables, and how to seek a more appropriate assessment of critical reading ability in the existing evaluation system.

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