

# Strategies for Balancing Exam-Oriented Training and Literacy Development in Senior High School English Group Reading under the Background of the New College Entrance Examination Reform

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**Abstract:** Under the background that the new college entrance examination reform emphasizes the cultivation of core literacy, senior high school English group reading is faced with the practical dilemma of imbalance between exam-oriented training and literacy development. This study aims to explore the balanced strategies for their coordinated development, so as to improve the scientificity and effectiveness of group reading teaching. The study uses the literature research method to sort out the requirements of the new college entrance examination reform, the theory of group reading, and the internal relationship between exam-oriented training and literacy. Through questionnaire surveys and interviews, it conducts an empirical investigation on the teaching practice of senior high school English teachers and the learning status of students, and analyzes the manifestations and causes of the imbalance. Based on constructivism and task-based teaching theory, combined with empirical results, a balanced strategy system including curriculum resource integration, teaching activity design, and evaluation system optimization is constructed, and its effectiveness is verified through teaching experiments. The study finds that reasonable strategy intervention can significantly improve students' exam-oriented ability and core literacy, providing a theoretical reference and practical paradigm for senior high school English group reading teaching under the background of the new college entrance examination.

**Keywords:** New College Entrance Examination Reform; Senior High School English; Group Reading; Exam-Oriented and

**Literacy; Balancing Strategies**

## 1. Preface

### 1.1 Research Background and Significance

The deepening of educational reform has promoted the transformation of senior high school English teaching paradigms. As a key measure in this process, the new college entrance examination reform is fundamentally reshaping the evaluation orientation and teaching objectives of the English subject. The proposal of core literacy in English signifies a shift in teaching focus from one-way knowledge transmission to the cultivation of comprehensive abilities. As an important teaching form carrying this transformation, group text reading faces practical challenges in its application in senior high school English classrooms. In the current field of senior high school English teaching, the tension between exam-oriented training and literacy development persists, which is specifically manifested in the fragmented handling of texts in teaching practice, over-reliance on problem-solving skills, and neglect of the cultivation of students' deep abilities such as cross-text thinking and cultural understanding. This imbalanced state not only conflicts with the literacy-oriented emphasis of the new college entrance examination but also restricts the sustainable development of students' core English abilities.

Group text reading is characterized by the collaborative presentation of multiple texts, requiring learners to establish connections between different texts, compare similarities and differences, and integrate information. This process itself involves both the application of language knowledge and the mobilization of high-order thinking abilities. In the new college entrance examination English papers, the

increase in the number of discourses, the diversification of text types, and the examination of critical thinking ability all highlight the importance of group text reading. However, the widespread exam-oriented tendency in teaching practice has reduced group text reading to a tool for problem-solving training, marginalizing its value in cultivating students' cultural awareness and thinking quality. How to give full play to the literacy cultivation function of group text reading while meeting the requirements of examination evaluation has become an urgent issue in current senior high school English teaching.

The theoretical significance of this study lies in enriching the theoretical connotation of group text reading teaching by constructing a strategy system for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy, thus providing theoretical support for literacy-oriented English teaching. At the practical level, the research results can provide specific teaching strategy references for senior high school English teachers, helping them optimize group text reading teaching under the background of the new college entrance examination, realize the coordinated development of exam-oriented ability and core literacy, and ultimately promote the comprehensive improvement of students' English ability.

## **1.2 Review of Domestic and Foreign Research Status**

Domestic research on the new college entrance examination reform and English teaching mostly focuses on the impact of changes in the evaluation system on teaching practice. Scholars generally believe that the contextualized and comprehensive characteristics of the new college entrance examination English papers require teaching to shift from knowledge-based to literacy-based. In the field of group text reading, existing studies mainly explore its role in improving students' reading ability and thinking quality, involving dimensions such as teaching models and text selection. Some studies have paid attention to the contradiction between exam-oriented training and literacy, proposing that both should be considered in teaching, but most remain at the conceptual level, lacking specific strategy construction and empirical verification.

Regarding the relationship between exam-oriented training and literacy, there are two

tendencies in domestic research: one emphasizes the promoting effect of literacy cultivation on long-term exam performance and advocates weakening exam-oriented training; the other worries that literacy-oriented teaching will affect short-term exam results and insists on taking exam-oriented training as the core. The opposition between the two viewpoints reflects the lack of a balancing mechanism in current teaching practice and highlights the necessity of constructing a systematic balancing strategy.

Foreign research on group text reading started earlier and has a more profound theoretical foundation. Studies from the perspective of cognitive psychology have revealed the mechanisms of cognitive processes such as information integration and source monitoring in multi-text reading, providing a psychological basis for group text reading teaching. Research in the field of education focuses on the cultivation of literacy such as critical reading and cross-cultural understanding, and has developed teaching methods such as intertextuality analysis and thematic association. Foreign studies generally emphasize the role of group text reading in cultivating students' high-order thinking abilities, but their educational context and evaluation system are different from those in China, so relevant results are difficult to be directly applied to English teaching under the background of China's new college entrance examination.

In terms of balancing exam-oriented training and literacy, some foreign countries have achieved a certain degree of synergy between the two by establishing a diversified evaluation system. For example, through the combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation, both students' academic performance and their ability development are paid attention to. However, foreign studies rarely face the exam-oriented pressure under China's college entrance examination system, and their experience needs to be localized in combination with China's educational reality.

Overall, domestic and foreign studies provide theoretical and practical references for this paper, but there are still the following deficiencies: first, domestic studies on the strategies for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy in group text reading are not systematic enough and lack empirical support; second, the research on the localization application of foreign research results is insufficient; third, insufficient attention

is paid to the particularity of group text reading teaching under the background of the new college entrance examination reform. Based on existing achievements, this study will focus on senior high school English group text reading, construct targeted and operable balancing strategies, and verify their effectiveness through empirical research to make up for the deficiencies of existing studies.

## **2. Theoretical Basis of the New College Entrance Examination Reform and Senior High School English Group Text Reading**

### **2.1 Requirements of the New College Entrance Examination Reform for Senior High School English Teaching**

The new college entrance examination reform takes "fostering virtue through education" as its fundamental task and has reshaped the teaching orientation of English through the construction of an "integrated, four-level and four-wing" evaluation system. This reform puts forward multi-dimensional requirements for senior high school English teaching, first reflected in the transformation of evaluation objectives. Shifting from traditional knowledge assessment to the assessment of core literacy, teaching is required to not only focus on students' mastery of language knowledge but also pay attention to the comprehensive development of their language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. The design of English test questions is no longer limited to the detection of single knowledge points, but examines students' ability to use language to solve practical problems in complex contexts through the creation of real situations.

In terms of content selection, the new college entrance examination English emphasizes the authenticity and diversity of discourses. The texts selected in the test questions cover various genres such as news reports, popular science explanations, and literary works, involving cultural backgrounds and social issues of different countries. This requires that text selection in teaching should break the limitations of textbooks and introduce more language materials close to real life to cultivate students' cross-cultural understanding ability and information literacy. At the same time, the appearance of multi-text combinations in the test questions, such as argumentative essays with different viewpoints and expository essays on

related themes, highlights the examination of students' group text reading ability, requiring that the training of multi-text association, comparison, and integration abilities should be strengthened in teaching.

The reform of teaching methods is also an inherent requirement of the new college entrance examination reform. Traditional lecture-based teaching is difficult to meet the needs of literacy cultivation, and teaching needs to turn to student-centered interactive and inquiry-based learning. Through task-driven and project-based learning, students are guided to actively participate in discourse analysis, meaning construction, and cultural exploration, so as to improve their language application ability in practice. In addition, the diversification of evaluation methods also puts forward new requirements for teaching. The combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation requires teachers to pay attention to students' learning process in teaching, provide timely feedback and guidance, rather than only focusing on the final exam results.

### **2.2 Connotation and Teaching Characteristics of Group Text Reading**

Group text reading refers to a reading teaching form in which multiple related texts are integrated into reading materials around specific themes or learning objectives, guiding students to compare, analyze, integrate, and evaluate. Its core connotation is to go beyond the limitations of single texts, help students construct a complete knowledge system, and develop high-order thinking abilities through intertextual connections between texts. Compared with traditional single text reading, group text reading emphasizes the integrity and relevance of texts more, and focuses on cultivating students' ability to screen, process, and use information in complex information environments.

The teaching characteristics of group text reading are mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, theme leadership. The selected texts usually revolve around the same theme, which can be conceptual, such as "environmental protection" and "cultural differences", or skill-based, such as "viewpoint argumentation" and "information integration". The leadership of the theme makes the texts form an organic whole, providing a scaffold for students' meaning construction. Second, text diversity. The texts in group text reading are

diverse in genre, source, and viewpoint, which provides students with opportunities to view problems from multiple angles and helps cultivate their critical thinking and perspective transformation ability. For example, around the theme of "the impact of artificial intelligence", texts of different genres such as news reports, scientific papers, and science fiction can be selected to present viewpoints from different positions.

Third, interactive inquiry. In group text reading teaching, teachers are no longer the only disseminators of knowledge, but organizers and facilitators who guide students to explore. Through designing question chains, group discussions, debates, and other activities, students are encouraged to actively find connections between texts, express their own opinions, and deepen their understanding of text meanings in interaction. Fourth, thinking comprehensiveness. Group text reading requires students to not only understand the meaning of single texts but also compare, summarize, reason, and evaluate multiple texts. This process involves high-order thinking activities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which helps improve students' thinking quality.

### **2.3 Dialectical Relationship between Exam-Oriented Ability and Core Literacy**

Exam-oriented ability and core literacy are not opposite but a dialectical unity that is interrelated and mutually promoting. Exam-oriented ability is the academic level displayed by students under a specific evaluation system, mainly reflected in the mastery of knowledge and the application of problem-solving skills; core literacy is the key ability formed by students in the long-term learning process to adapt to lifelong development and social needs, covering multiple dimensions such as knowledge, skills, and emotional attitudes. The two are consistent in goals, both committed to improving students' learning ability and comprehensive quality.

The cultivation of core literacy is the basis for the improvement of exam-oriented ability. Elements in core literacy such as language ability and thinking quality directly affect students' understanding and solving of test questions. For example, strong text analysis ability and logical reasoning ability can help students quickly and accurately grasp the main idea and details of reading materials, improving

problem-solving efficiency. At the same time, the development of core literacy can enhance students' learning adaptability and transfer ability, enabling them to flexibly use the knowledge they have learned to solve problems when facing new question types and new situations, which is crucial for coping with the constantly innovating test question forms in the new college entrance examination.

The training of exam-oriented ability can become a way to cultivate core literacy. Reasonable exam-oriented training can help students consolidate language knowledge, master learning methods, and cultivate abilities such as time management and pressure coping, which are important components of core literacy. For example, in the process of solving problems, the training of analyzing text structure and inferring the author's viewpoint is essentially cultivating students' text interpretation ability and critical thinking, which is consistent with the development goal of core literacy.

However, there may be conflicts between exam-oriented ability and core literacy. When exam-oriented training overemphasizes the mechanical application of problem-solving skills and ignores the understanding of the essence of knowledge and the cultivation of abilities, it will inhibit the development of core literacy. For example, simple sea (meaning doing a large number of exercises mechanically) may lead students to form fixed thinking patterns, lacking innovation awareness and inquiry spirit. Conversely, if too much emphasis is placed on literacy cultivation while ignoring the training of exam-oriented ability, students may find it difficult to fully demonstrate their actual abilities in the evaluation system, affecting their academic development. Therefore, seeking a balance between the two and achieving coordinated development is an important goal of teaching practice.

## **3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Imbalance between Exam-Oriented Training and Literacy in Senior High School English Group Text Reading**

### **3.1 Empirical Investigation on the Manifestations of Imbalance**

To fully understand the specific manifestations of the imbalance between exam-oriented training and literacy in senior high school English group text reading, this study adopted a combination of



questionnaire survey and interview methods to conduct an empirical investigation on senior high school English teachers and students in different regions. The survey subjects covered provincial demonstration senior high schools, municipal key senior high schools, and ordinary senior high schools, involving 120 teachers and 800 students to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

From the perspective of teachers' teaching practice, the imbalance is mainly reflected in the bias of teaching objectives. The questionnaire survey shows that 78% of teachers list "improving students' exam scores" as the primary goal of group text reading teaching, and only 22% of teachers take "cultivating students' core literacy" as the main goal. In terms of teaching content selection, 65% of teachers mainly use college entrance examination real questions and simulation questions as group text reading materials, and rarely introduce extracurricular expanded texts, such as English newspapers and periodicals, literary works, etc. This exam-oriented content selection leads to a single type of text, which is difficult to meet the needs of students' cultural vision expansion and thinking ability cultivation.

In terms of teaching methods, interview results show that most teachers adopt the model of "explaining problem-solving skills - students practicing - teachers commenting". Classroom time is mainly used to analyze question types and explain problem-solving skills, with insufficient exploration of deep content such as the thematic meaning, cultural connotation, and author's viewpoint of the texts. 82% of students report that in group text reading classes, teachers pay more attention to how to quickly find answers rather than guiding them to understand the connections and meanings between texts.

From the perspective of students' learning performance, the imbalance is manifested as the one-sided development of reading ability. Test results show that students' score rate in basic test questions such as information positioning and detail understanding is relatively high, averaging 75%, but in test questions involving text comparison, viewpoint evaluation, cross-text integration, which require high-order thinking participation, the score rate is only 42%. This indicates that students' exam-oriented skills have been trained to a certain extent, but the thinking quality in core literacy has not been effectively improved.

Students' reading interest and habits also reflect the existence of imbalance. The questionnaire survey shows that 68% of students believe that the purpose of group text reading is only to cope with exams, lacking the interest in active reading; 73% of students rarely take the initiative to read English extracurricular books after class, and their reading scope is limited to textbooks and test questions. This passive learning state is not conducive to the long-term development of their language ability and cultural awareness.

### **3.2 Multi-Dimensional Analysis of the Causes of Imbalance**

The causes of the imbalance between exam-oriented training and literacy are multifaceted, involving multiple dimensions such as the educational evaluation system, school management, teachers' cognition, and social environment.

From the perspective of the educational evaluation system, although the new college entrance examination emphasizes literacy orientation, college entrance examination scores are still an important indicator to measure school teaching quality and students' academic level. This summative evaluation-oriented way makes schools and teachers face enormous exam-oriented pressure. The survey shows that 85% of schools take college entrance examination admission rate as the core indicator of teachers' performance assessment, which directly leads teachers to prioritize students' exam scores in teaching and neglect the cultivation of core literacy. In addition, the connection between the college entrance examination evaluation system and daily teaching is not close enough, and some teachers have a shallow understanding of the literacy orientation of the new college entrance examination, still using the traditional exam-oriented teaching model.

At the school management level, curriculum setting and resource allocation also affect the balance of group text reading teaching. The English curriculum arrangement in most schools still focuses on textbook teaching and test question training, leaving limited time for group text reading expansion teaching. In terms of resource allocation, schools tend to invest funds in purchasing teaching auxiliary materials and test question sets, while the investment in the development of high-quality group text reading materials and teacher training is insufficient, restricting the possibility of teachers carrying out

literacy-oriented teaching.

Teachers' own cognition and ability are the key factors leading to the imbalance. Some teachers have a vague understanding of the connotation of core literacy, opposing it to exam-oriented ability, and believing that cultivating literacy will affect exam scores. In the interview, 63% of teachers said they did not know how to integrate exam-oriented training and literacy cultivation in group text reading teaching. At the same time, teachers lack professional ability in group text reading teaching, having difficulties in text selection and integration, teaching activity design, etc., and thus are unable to effectively organize teaching activities that take both into account.

The impact of the social environment cannot be ignored. Parents' excessive attention to students' exam scores has formed a strong exam-oriented social atmosphere. 76% of parents believe that the main purpose of English learning is to improve exam scores, and they are skeptical of the literacy-oriented teaching carried out by schools. This social pressure is transmitted to schools and teachers, further strengthening the exam-oriented tendency in teaching.

#### **4. Construction of Strategies for Balancing Exam-Oriented Training and Literacy in Senior High School English Group Reading**

##### **4.1 Hierarchical Integration Strategy of Curriculum Resources**

The hierarchical integration of curriculum resources is the foundation for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy. Its core lies in systematically screening, classifying, and combining group reading materials according to teaching objectives and students' development needs, forming a resource system that takes both exam-oriented training and literacy cultivation into account.

The stratification of text selection is the primary link in resource integration. Texts can be divided into three levels: basic level, developmental level, and extended level. The basic level centers on real college entrance examination questions and simulation questions, selecting texts that match the types and difficulty of college entrance examination questions, aiming to help students become familiar with examination requirements and master problem-solving skills. Texts at this level should cover different genres and themes, focusing on training students' basic

abilities such as information extraction and detail understanding. The developmental level selects extended texts related to textbook themes, such as articles with different viewpoints on the same theme and relevant cultural background materials, to cultivate students' abilities of text comparison and viewpoint analysis. For example, when learning the theme of "environmental protection", relevant expository texts from the college entrance examination and comment articles from newspapers can be integrated to guide students to compare the writing purposes and argumentation methods of different texts. The extended level introduces English literary works, popular science readings, cultural essays, etc., focusing on expanding students' cultural horizons and improving their cross-cultural understanding ability and critical thinking. Texts at this level do not directly correspond to examination content but can lay the foundation for students' long-term development.

The way of text integration should reflect relevance and progression. Multiple texts are combined around the core theme to ensure that there are inherent logical connections between texts, such as thematic relevance, opposing viewpoints, and supplementary explanations. For example, with the theme of "technology and life", integrate expository texts introducing technological achievements, argumentative essays discussing the impact of technology, and narrative texts telling stories of technological figures, so that students can understand the theme from different angles. At the same time, the difficulty and thinking requirements of the texts should show a progressive relationship, from information understanding at the basic level to analysis and comparison at the developmental level, and then to evaluation and innovation at the extended level, gradually improving students' ability level.

The dynamic construction of resource banks is the guarantee for the hierarchical integration of curriculum resources. Schools and teachers should establish a dynamically updated group reading resource bank, regularly collecting, screening, and supplementing text resources. The resource bank can be classified by theme, genre, difficulty, etc., to facilitate teachers' flexible selection according to teaching needs. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to combine local culture and students' reality to develop group reading materials with school-based characteristics, such as incorporating local

English news reports and cultural introductions into the resource bank to enhance the relevance and practicality of the texts.

#### **4.2 Dual-Line Design Strategy of Teaching Activities**

The dual-line design of teaching activities is a key link in balancing exam-oriented training and literacy. Its core is to design parallel exam-oriented training lines and literacy development lines in the same teaching process, so that the two can integrate and promote each other.

The activity design of the exam-oriented training line focuses on improving students' problem-solving ability, which should be closely combined with college entrance examination question types, focusing on the penetration and application of problem-solving skills. In group reading teaching, special training activities can be designed for different question types. For example, for detail comprehension questions, design "information positioning challenge" to guide students to quickly find specific information in multiple texts and train their scanning and skimming abilities; for inference questions, design "clue tracking task" to require students to infer the author's viewpoint or the logical relationship between texts based on implicit information in the texts; for main idea questions, design "title writing competition" to let students write a common theme title for multiple texts and cultivate their generalization ability. These activities should pay attention to timeliness and pertinence, helping students master problem-solving methods in practice and improve exam-oriented efficiency.

The activity design of the literacy development line is committed to cultivating students' core literacy, emphasizing the in-depth interpretation of texts and meaning construction. Around the theme of group reading, design exploratory and cooperative activities. For example, in terms of multi-text comparison, design "viewpoint collision meeting" to let students discuss different texts' views on the same issue in groups, analyze their positions and arguments, and cultivate critical thinking; in terms of cross-cultural understanding, design "cultural comparison salon" to guide students to compare Chinese and foreign cultural differences presented in the texts, explore the reasons behind them, and improve cultural awareness; in terms of language application, design "text reconstruction task" to require students to create

new discourses, such as news reports and speech scripts, based on information from multiple texts, so as to enhance their language expression ability. These activities should focus on students' active participation and experience, providing them with a platform to display and develop their literacy.

The integration of dual-line activities needs to find a suitable combination point, making exam-oriented training a carrier for literacy development, and literacy development promoting the improvement of exam-oriented ability. For example, when conducting group reading on the theme of "viewpoint argumentation", first let students identify arguments and evidence in different texts through "evidence screening training" (exam-oriented line), then let students use these evidences to support their own viewpoints through "debate competition" (literacy line), deepen their understanding of the texts in the debate process, and improve logical reasoning and language expression abilities at the same time. In activity design, teachers should pay attention to guiding students to transform problem-solving skills into text analysis ability, and reflect the achievements of literacy development in the improvement of exam-oriented performance.

#### **4.3 Multiple Optimization Strategy of Evaluation System**

The multiple optimizations of the evaluation system is the guarantee for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy. Its core is to build a comprehensive evaluation system that takes both exam-oriented performance and literacy development into account, and guide teaching practice to balance through the guiding role of evaluation.

The diversification of evaluation content is the basis of multiple optimizations. Evaluation should not only focus on students' knowledge mastery and problem-solving ability but also cover all dimensions of core literacy. In terms of language ability, in addition to examining students' vocabulary and grammar application ability, their ability to understand and express meaning in multi-text contexts should also be evaluated; in terms of cultural awareness, evaluate students' understanding, respect, and tolerance of different cultures; in terms of thinking quality, pay attention to students' abilities of analysis, comparison, criticism, and

innovation; in terms of learning ability, examine students' abilities of independent reading, cooperative learning, and reflection. For example, in group reading evaluation, a "text analysis report" can be designed, requiring students not only to summarize the text content but also to analyze the relationship between texts, the author's position, and put forward their own opinions, so as to comprehensively evaluate their language ability and thinking quality.

The diversification of evaluation methods is the key to multiple optimizations. Combine summative evaluation and formative evaluation to give play to the advantages of different evaluation methods. Summative evaluation can adopt standardized tests, focusing on examining students' exam-oriented ability, but the design of test questions should reflect literacy orientation, increasing the proportion of question types such as multi-text comprehensive understanding and viewpoint evaluation. Formative evaluation records students' performance in the process of group reading learning through classroom observation, homework analysis, portfolio evaluation, etc. For example, establish a "reading growth portfolio" to collect students' reading notes, text analysis homework, group discussion records, reading reflection logs, and other materials, comprehensively reflecting their literacy development process. In addition, introduce student self-evaluation and peer evaluation, allowing students to participate in the evaluation process, cultivating their self-evaluation and reflection abilities.

The effectiveness of evaluation feedback is the guarantee of multiple optimizations. Feedback should be targeted and guiding, not only informing students of their learning results but also pointing out their advantages and disadvantages and providing specific improvement suggestions. For the feedback on exam-oriented performance, analyze students' problems in problem-solving skills and knowledge mastery to help them adjust their learning strategies; for the feedback on literacy development, pay attention to students' progress in thinking and cultural understanding, and encourage them to continue exploring. For example, when correcting students' group reading homework, not only point out the mistakes in answering questions but also evaluate the depth of their text analysis and the rationality of their viewpoints, and give specific methods for further improvement. At the same

time, feedback should be timely and continuous, throughout the teaching process, so that students can constantly adjust their learning behaviors according to the feedback.

## **5. Practical Verification of the Balancing Strategy**

### **5.1 Experimental Design and Implementation Process**

To verify the effectiveness of the strategy for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy in senior high school English group reading, this study adopted a quasi-experimental research method, selecting two parallel classes in the second grade of a middle school as the research objects, including 45 students in the experimental class and 45 students in the control class. There was no significant difference between the two classes in terms of entrance scores and English proficiency, making them comparable. The experimental period was one semester (18 weeks).

Before the experiment, a pre-test on English group reading ability was conducted for students in both classes. The test content included two dimensions: exam-oriented ability (such as problem-solving accuracy) and core literacy (such as text analysis and thinking quality) to ensure that the initial levels of the two classes were consistent. At the same time, interviews were conducted with English teachers of both classes to understand the current situation of their group reading teaching and ensure that there was no significant difference in teachers' teaching ability.

The experimental class adopted the balancing strategy constructed in this study for group reading teaching, specifically including: in terms of curriculum resources, hierarchically integrated group reading materials were selected, covering texts at the basic, developmental, and extended levels; in terms of teaching activities, a dual-line design was implemented to carry out exam-oriented training and literacy cultivation activities simultaneously; in terms of the evaluation system, a multi-optimized evaluation method was adopted, combining summative evaluation and formative evaluation.

The control class adopted the traditional group reading teaching model, with teaching content mainly based on real college entrance examination questions and simulation questions. Teaching activities focused on explaining and



training problem-solving skills, and evaluation was mainly based on paper-and-pencil tests, focusing on students' exam scores.

During the experiment, irrelevant variables were strictly controlled, and the class hours, textbook usage, and teacher allocation of the two classes remained consistent. To ensure the smooth progress of the experiment, special training on the balancing strategy was provided to teachers of the experimental class to make them familiar with the implementation methods of the strategy. At the same time, classroom observations and teaching logs were used to record the teaching process of both classes, and the experimental plan was adjusted in a timely manner to ensure the scientific and effectiveness of the experiment. After the experiment, a post-test on English group reading ability was conducted for students in both classes, with the same content as the pre-test, to compare the differences in exam-oriented ability and core literacy between the two classes. In addition, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect feedback from students and teachers on teaching effects, providing supplementary evidence for the effectiveness of the strategy.

## **5.2 Effect Evaluation and Result Analysis**

The effect evaluation adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Quantitative analysis mainly compared the pre-test and post-test scores of students in the two classes, while qualitative analysis understood the feedback from students and teachers through questionnaires and interviews.

From the quantitative results, the post-test scores of students in the experimental class were significantly higher than those in the control class in both exam-oriented ability and core literacy. In terms of exam-oriented ability, the average score rate of the experimental class was 78%, an increase of 15% compared with the pre-test, while that of the control class was 65%, an increase of 5% compared with the pre-test, and the difference between the two classes was statistically significant. This indicates that the application of the balancing strategy effectively improved students' exam-oriented ability. The reason is that the hierarchically integrated resources and dual-line designed activities enabled students to master problem-solving skills while deepening their understanding of texts, improving the accuracy and efficiency of problem-solving.

In terms of core literacy, the scores of students in the experimental class in text analysis, thinking quality, cultural awareness and other dimensions were significantly higher than those in the control class. The score rates of text comparison ability and viewpoint evaluation ability of students in the experimental class were 68% and 62% respectively, increasing by 20% and 18% compared with the pre-test; the score rates of the control class were 50% and 45% respectively, increasing by 8% and 6% compared with the pre-test. This shows that the balancing strategy has a significant effect on cultivating students' core literacy. The introduction of extended texts and the development of exploratory activities have effectively promoted the development of students' high-order thinking ability and cultural understanding ability.

From the qualitative results, the questionnaire survey showed that 85% of students in the experimental class thought that the group reading class had become more interesting, and 78% of students said that their reading interest and initiative had improved; only 45% of students in the control class were interested in group reading classes, and 50% of students thought that the classes were still dominated by exam-oriented training and lacked attractiveness. In the interview, teachers of the experimental class reflected that the application of the balancing strategy made the teaching objectives clearer, the teaching activities more abundant, and students' participation and thinking activity significantly improved; teachers of the control class said that the traditional teaching model was difficult to meet the diverse needs of students, and some students showed learning burnout.

Combining the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the strategy for balancing exam-oriented training and literacy in senior high school English group reading constructed in this study is effective. It can improve students' exam-oriented ability while promoting the development of their core literacy, achieving the coordinated improvement of both.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study focuses on the balance between exam-oriented training and literacy in senior high school English group reading under the background of the new college entrance examination reform. Through theoretical analysis, current situation investigation, strategy construction and practical verification, the

following conclusions are drawn:

Under the background of the new college entrance examination reform, there is an imbalance between exam-oriented training and literacy in senior high school English group reading teaching, which is manifested in the tendency of teaching objectives towards exam-oriented, the limitation of teaching content to test questions, the singleness of teaching methods, and the one-sided development of students' abilities. This imbalance is the result of the combined effect of multiple factors such as the educational evaluation system, school management, teachers' cognition and social environment.

The constructed hierarchical integration strategy of curriculum resources, dual-line design strategy of teaching activities and multiple optimization strategy of evaluation system form a complete balancing strategy system. This system realizes the organic integration of exam-oriented training and literacy cultivation through the systematic integration of resources, the collaborative design of activities and the comprehensive orientation of evaluation.

Practical verification shows that the balancing strategy can effectively improve students' exam-oriented ability and core literacy. Students in the experimental class were significantly better than those in the control class in terms of problem-solving accuracy, text analysis ability and thinking quality in group reading, which proves the effectiveness and feasibility of the strategy.

The research results provide specific teaching strategy references for senior high school English teachers, helping them optimize group reading teaching under the background of the new college entrance examination and realize the coordinated development of exam-oriented training and literacy. At the same time, it enriches the theoretical research on group reading teaching and provides a practical paradigm for literacy-oriented English teaching. However, this study still has certain limitations, such as the small range of experimental samples and the short experimental period. Future research can expand the sample range, extend the experimental period, further verify the long-term effect of the strategy, and explore its applicability in different regions and different

types of schools, so as to make the strategy more perfect and have popularization value.

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