

Strategies for Improving Continuation Writing Teaching in High School English Based on Core Competencies in Jiangxi Province

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Abstract: The characteristics of high school English continuation writing teaching are highly aligned with the cultivation goals of core competencies. Therefore, the improvement strategies for continuation writing teaching based on core competencies in Jiangxi Province require coordinated efforts across four dimensions: material selection, teaching, training, and evaluation. Research indicates that material selection should follow principles such as theme guidance, appropriate difficulty, rich context, comprehensive coverage, and resource integration; teaching can employ models such as the "five-step progressive", "reading-to-write", "interactive alignment", and "theme inquiry"; training can adopt forms such as tiered progression, integration of reading and writing, skill decomposition, and multimodal integration; evaluation should shift toward dynamic assessment, competency orientation, multi-participant involvement, and process assessment. The four dimensions support each other, forming a complete teaching improvement system and practical pathway from "what to select", "how to teach", "how to practice", to "how to evaluate".

Keywords: Core Competencies; High School English Continuation Writing; Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

The "National English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" clearly states that the core competencies of English discipline include four dimensions: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Continuation writing, as a new test type that integrates reading comprehension and writing expression, has been gradually promoted to the

national college entrance examination paper since it was first used in Zhejiang Province in 2016, becoming an important benchmark for measuring students' comprehensive English application ability. This task requires students to use appropriate language to continue the discourse based on understanding the text, making the continuation coherent with the original text in theme, plot, and language. Its assessment points involve "the ability to grasp key information and language characteristics of the short text, the accuracy and richness of language use, the ability to control discourse structure, and creative thinking ability" [1]. This characteristic determines that continuation writing teaching is naturally highly compatible with the goal of core competency cultivation, which is the fundamental starting point of this study. From the perspective of Jiangxi Province, the current teaching of continuation writing in high school English still faces many challenges. Some researchers point out that problems such as insufficient teaching attention, weak student language foundation, and teaching strategies to be optimized are common [2], and the "weak alignment" phenomena such as inconsistent themes, incoherent plots, and mismatched language in students' continuations are also prominent [3]. Based on this, the following sections systematically construct improvement strategies for continuation writing teaching in Jiangxi Province based on core competencies from four dimensions: material selection principles, teaching models, training forms, and evaluation systems.

2. Principles of Material Selection Based on Core Competency Improvement

Material selection is the starting point of continuation writing teaching, and the quality of materials directly determines the teaching effect and the depth of students' core competency

cultivation. In current teaching practice, many teachers are accustomed to directly using college entrance examination real questions or simulation questions as training materials, lacking careful consideration of the accurate alignment between materials and core competency goals. Therefore, material selection based on core competency improvement should follow the following principles.

2.1 Theme Guidance Principle

The new curriculum standards emphasize that teaching should be guided by theme meaning, enabling students to achieve the integrated development of language, culture, and thinking in theme exploration. Some scholars point out that in continuation writing teaching, teachers often focus on plot sorting, character analysis, and language input, but rarely guide students to pay attention to the theme meaning of the text [4]. Therefore, when selecting materials, priority should be given to narrative texts with distinct themes and positive value orientation. For example, narrative materials with themes such as environmental awareness and family affection can be selected to guide students to deeply understand the theme connotation based on understanding the story plot, and then achieve the continuation and sublimation of the theme in their continuation.

2.2 Appropriate Difficulty Principle

According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the difficulty of reading materials should match students' current cognitive level and language ability, following the comprehensible input principle of "i+1" [5]. In other words, language input should be slightly higher than learners' existing language ability. Therefore, when selecting materials, group differences should be especially considered, and measures should be adapted to school and class conditions. For students with weak foundations, short texts with smaller vocabulary, simpler sentence patterns, and clear plot clues can be selected; for students with spare capacity, more literary narrative texts with diverse language styles can be introduced.

2.3 Rich Context Principle

The essence of continuation writing is creative language output in a given context. The contextual tension and narrative openness of the material directly affect the quality of continuation. Therefore, ideal continuation

writing materials usually stop abruptly at the climax or conflict of the story, providing students with sufficient creative space. For example, the material can be truncated at the point where a character faces a moral dilemma, the dilemma is not yet resolved, or the plot suddenly turns, so that students exercise the innovation ability in thinking quality while expressing their personal interpretations.

2.4 Comprehensive Coverage Principle

Material selection should take into account the four dimensions of core competencies and adhere to the principle of comprehensive coverage. Specifically: in the dimension of language ability, it should contain rich vocabulary, sentence patterns, and discourse structures to provide students with high-quality language input; in the dimension of cultural awareness, narrative texts involving Chinese and foreign excellent cultures and reflecting cross-cultural understanding and communication can be selected to guide students to tell Chinese stories well in mutual learning between Chinese and foreign cultures; in the dimension of thinking quality, the plot logic and theme profundity of the material should be able to stimulate students' higher-order thinking activities; in the dimension of learning ability, the material should be convenient for students to carry out multiple learning activities such as independent inquiry and group cooperation.

2.5 Resource Integration Principle

Jiangxi Province has rich local cultural resources, such as Jingdezhen ceramic culture and Gannan Hakka culture. Appropriately integrating these local elements into the selection of continuation writing materials can help stimulate students' intimacy and learning motivation, and infiltrate cultural confidence and national feelings in language teaching, truly implementing the fundamental task of "cultivating virtue and nurturing people". For example, the daily life fragments of the people in Gannan can be adapted into continuation writing materials, enabling students to express themselves in English in a familiar context.

3. Teaching Models Based on Core Competency Improvement

The selection and implementation of teaching models are the core links in improving

continuation writing teaching. At present, problems such as “separation of reading and writing” and “imbalance between input and output” still exist in continuation writing teaching in some schools in Jiangxi Province. The following constructs several teaching models suitable for core competency cultivation.

3.1 “Five-Step Progressive” Teaching Model

Based on the process teaching method and the “seven learning” concept, some scholars have proposed a “five-step progressive” teaching model for continuation writing, namely “sorting context for introduction (contextual learning) – cooperative inquiry for internalization (cooperative learning) – integration of reading and writing for practice (practical learning) – evaluation and feedback for skill strengthening (evaluation learning) – expansion and transfer for consolidation (transfer learning)” [6]. This model reflects a complete learning loop from understanding to expression, from input to output, and from practice to transfer. In “contextual learning”, teachers guide students to read through the original text, sort out story elements, and clarify the theme context and value orientation of the text, laying the foundation for the “reading” in language ability and “analysis” in thinking quality; in “cooperative learning”, students work in groups to inspire each other and brainstorm, developing learning ability; in “practical learning”, students independently complete the first draft of the continuation, achieving language output; in “evaluation learning”, through teacher comments and peer evaluation, students identify problems and make improvements; in “transfer learning”, teachers guide students to summarize continuation strategies and methods, achieving knowledge transfer. The practice of this model shows that it can effectively stimulate learning interest, promote the internalization of discourse knowledge, enhance thinking ability, and comprehensively develop English core competencies.

3.2 “Reading-to-Write” Teaching Model

Some scholars have systematically constructed a reading-to-write teaching model, whose core concept is “to provide language input and thinking inspiration for writing through layered reading activities, and realize the effective transformation from understanding to expression” [7]. In this model, teachers divide the teaching

process into four stages: “deep reading – language focus – imitative paragraph writing – creative continuation”. In the “deep reading” stage, teachers guide students to grasp the text structure, theme, and emotional tone as a whole; in the “language focus” stage, guide students to pay attention to the precise expressions, rhetorical devices, and narrative techniques in the original text; in the “imitative paragraph writing” stage, students practice fragment writing imitating the language style of the original text; in the “creative continuation” stage, students complete a full continuation based on a deep understanding of the original text. This model effectively solves the teaching drawbacks of “emphasizing skills over thinking, emphasizing results over process”, and research results show that it has a positive promoting effect on the comprehensive development of English core competencies.

3.3 “Interactive Alignment” Teaching Model

Some scholars point out that the common problems in students’ continuation writing exercises are mainly “inconsistent theme between continuation and original text, incoherent plot, and mismatched language”, which are essentially manifestations of “weak alignment” [8]. Professor Wang Chuming’s continuation writing theory takes interactive alignment as the core mechanism, emphasizing that learners achieve a “leveling effect” between language output and input through interaction with the original text. Therefore, teachers should carry out continuation writing teaching with the “interactive alignment” model to help students achieve a high degree of alignment with the original text at three levels: emotional theme, plot content, and situational language.

3.4 “Theme Inquiry” Teaching Model

The “theme inquiry” teaching model means that continuation writing teaching takes “theme meaning as the guide”, guiding students to “explore theme meaning through in-depth study of discourse” in the reading stage, “sublimate theme meaning through effective interactive alignment” in the writing stage, and “express theme meaning by connecting with self, connecting with text, and connecting with the world” in the thinking stage [4]. This model elevates continuation writing teaching from simple language skill training to the height of value guidance and competency cultivation.

Teachers can guide students to go deeper step by step through a chain of questions, moving from surface narration to deep meaning construction, simultaneously developing cultural awareness and thinking quality in the process.

4. Training Forms Based on Core Competency Improvement

Training forms are the bridge connecting teaching models and students' ability improvement. A single training form cannot meet the development needs of students at different levels, nor is it conducive to the comprehensive cultivation of core competencies. The following proposes several training forms suitable for the requirements of core competency cultivation.

4.1 Tiered Progressive Training

From the examination requirements, continuation writing mainly includes three abilities: reading comprehension, creative thinking, and language expression. Training should adhere to a tiered progressive form. Therefore, in view of the current uneven English proficiency of high school students in Jiangxi Province, a three-level training system of "basic level – improvement level – expansion level" can be constructed. Basic level training focuses on cultivating reading comprehension ability and basic continuation ability, with training tasks including extracting and sorting original text information, predicting plots based on given paragraph opening sentences, and simple continuation fragment exercises based on keywords; improvement level training focuses on the logic of plot design and accuracy of language expression, with training tasks including sorting and completing plot chains, comparing and judging multiple plot versions, and peer evaluation and revision of the first draft; expansion level training focuses on the diversity of language style and the breakthrough of creative thinking, with training tasks including different style continuations of the same material, long-length continuation challenges, and cross-genre continuation experiments.

4.2 Reading-Writing Integrated Training

Research shows that continuation training should not only be integrated but also run through the three-year teaching cycle of high school. Specifically, in the first year of high school, basic continuation writing training can be carried

out in combination with unit themes, "focusing on language material accumulation"; in the second year, the difficulty and length of continuation can be gradually increased, systematically cultivating plot conception and language application ability; in the third year, test preparation strategies can be focused on vocabulary replacement, sentence pattern upgrading, and timed training. Moreover, in daily teaching, continuation writing training can be integrated into each teaching unit. After explaining the text, teachers guide students to conduct short continuation exercises based on the text plot. This micro-continuation training takes a short time and has a high frequency, which can effectively maintain students' awareness of continuation and the inertia of ability development.

4.3 Skill Decomposition Training

Generally speaking, the micro-skills involved in continuation writing include: plot prediction, character analysis, environmental description, psychological description, dialogue design, transition, ending sublimation, etc. Decomposing these micro-skills one by one and conducting special training helps students systematically master various technical means of continuation. For example, in plot prediction training, teachers can present the structural framework of the first half of the story, allowing students to draw a plot development mind map through group discussion, cultivating students' ability to make reasonable predictions based on the logic of the original text; in psychological description training, guide students to pay attention to the emotional tone of the original text and the trajectory of characters' psychological changes, learn to use multiple expressions to portray characters' emotions, making the continuation echo the original text at the emotional level.

4.4 Multimodal Integrated Training

The development of information technology provides rich possibilities for innovation in continuation writing training forms. Teachers can use multimodal resources such as videos, audios, and pictures to construct story contexts, enhancing students' sense of immersion and substitution. In addition, online collaborative continuation based on information technology also provides a new path for the cultivation of learning ability. Using online collaborative document tools, students can conduct group

collaborative continuation, share ideas in real time, and annotate and revise each other, thereby developing cooperative learning ability and information literacy.

5. Evaluation System Based on Core Competency Improvement

At present, the evaluation of continuation writing in many schools in Jiangxi Province is still based on a single score, focusing on results and neglecting processes, which is not conducive to the cultivation of core competencies. To build an evaluation system for continuation writing teaching based on core competency improvement, systematic improvements in four dimensions are required: concept innovation, standard refinement, subject diversification, and method optimization.

5.1 Evaluation Concept: Shift to Dynamic Assessment

For a long time, continuation writing teaching “generally adopts a static evaluation model” [9]. The core of dynamic assessment is to embed evaluation into the teaching process. In specific operation, teachers can use a cyclic model of “diagnostic pre-test – process teaching intervention – reflective post-test” to continuously observe, provide feedback, and guide students’ performance during continuation training, helping students gradually cross the “zone of proximal development” and achieve substantive improvement in ability.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria: Oriented to Core Competencies

The establishment of evaluation criteria should take the college entrance examination scoring criteria as the basic reference, while refining and integrating the four dimensions of core competencies. Some scholars have deeply analyzed the college entrance examination scoring criteria from three dimensions of content, language, and discourse structure, and proposed corresponding strategies for continuation writing teaching [3]. Among them, the content dimension mainly examines the logic and criticality in thinking quality, and also involves value judgment in the dimension of cultural awareness; the language dimension mainly corresponds to the evaluation of language ability; the discourse dimension comprehensively reflects language ability and thinking quality; the creativity dimension mainly examines

innovation in thinking quality. The evaluation weights of the above four dimensions can be flexibly adjusted according to teaching objectives and training stages, but the balanced assessment of each dimension of core competencies must always be ensured.

5.3 Evaluation Subjects: Emphasis on Multiple Participation

The single teacher evaluation model can no longer meet the needs of core competency cultivation. A multi-evaluation system of “teacher evaluation – peer evaluation – student self-evaluation” should be constructed so that the perspectives and standards of different evaluation subjects complement each other [10]. Teacher evaluation mainly makes comprehensive judgments from dimensions such as language, content, structure, and creativity, and provides personalized improvement suggestions for each student; peer evaluation can cultivate students’ critical thinking and learning ability, and help them learn to empathize, discover patterns, and learn from experience; student self-evaluation helps to cultivate students’ metacognitive awareness and autonomous learning ability.

5.4 Evaluation Methods: Emphasis on Process Evaluation

In terms of evaluation methods, it is necessary to break through the limitation of “one exam determines the result” and organically integrate process evaluation with summative evaluation. Process evaluation runs through the entire teaching process. Teachers can establish a “continuation writing growth portfolio” for students, recording students’ original text understanding analysis, first draft, revised draft, peer evaluation forms, and self-reflection logs for each continuation, tracking students’ longitudinal development trajectory in language accuracy, plot conception, theme grasp, etc., to achieve a comprehensive and dynamic evaluation of students’ core competency development.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the improvement strategies for continuation writing teaching in high school English based on core competencies in Jiangxi Province require coordinated efforts in the four dimensions of material selection, teaching, training, and evaluation. In material selection,

adhere to principles such as theme meaning guidance, appropriate difficulty, rich context, core competency coverage, and local resource integration; in teaching models, flexibly apply multiple models such as “five-step progressive”, “reading-to-write”, alignment-driven, and theme inquiry; in training forms, promote tiered progression, reading-writing integration, micro-skill decomposition, and multimodal integration training; in the evaluation system, realize the transformation from static evaluation to dynamic evaluation, from a single subject to multiple subjects, and from summative evaluation to the combination of process and summative evaluation. This strategy system is oriented by core competencies, based on the local reality of Jiangxi Province, and tested by teaching practice, with strong pertinence and operability. The four strategic dimensions support each other and are interlocked, forming a complete teaching improvement system from “what to select” to “how to teach”, and from “how to practice” to “how to evaluate”. Future research can further verify the actual effects of various strategies through teaching experiments, and make localized adjustments and optimizations based on the actual conditions of different regions and different levels of schools in Jiangxi Province.

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