

# The Implementation of the Activity-based Approach to Senior High School English Reading Teaching

Xinyue Zhou

China West Normal University, Nanchong 637000, China

**Abstract:** Reading Teaching is an important part of high school English teaching. The activity-based approach to English learning is realized through a series of learning activities from learning and understanding to applying and practicing to transferring and creating. The activities at these three levels range from text-based, in-depth text to transcendental text, focusing on the learning objectives of culture, language learning, and thinking development, which provide an operational way for the transformation of students' learning methods and the implementation of core competence.

**Keywords:** English reading teaching; senior high school; activity-based approach to English learning.

## 1. Introduction

English reading teaching is an effective way to input language knowledge, develop language ability and cultivate multiple thinking. The reading teaching process means teachers promote the successful dialogue between students and texts. In this process, teachers use a variety of teaching means to guide students to analyze texts, enable learners to obtain corresponding language knowledge and cultural significance from reading texts, training students' reading skills and thinking ability through setting reading tasks for students, and finally cultivating students into independent and efficient readers.

General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards [5] emphasizes the importance of the Activity-based Approach to English learning in English teaching. This requires teachers to change traditional teaching models and integrate teaching contents, optimize teaching methods, and design contextual, hierarchical and effective English learning activities for students, so as to promote the overall development of students' language knowledge and skills [2].

Teachers should guide students to learn new knowledge and solve problems around themes in reading teaching, gradually moving from text-based to in-depth and beyond-text learning, thereby developing language skills, improving thinking quality, and enhancing cultural awareness.

## 2. The Overview of the Activity-based Approach to English Learning

(1) The Connotation of the Activity-based Approach to English Learning

The activity-based approach to English learning advocates that students learn English through a series of integrated, relevant, and practical theme-based activities, where they undergo learning process such as perceiving and understanding, applying and practicing, and transferring and creating. Through independent, cooperative, and exploratory learning modes realize students' deep learning of the discourse and promote their transformation from competence to literacy. Therefore, students can use their language skills comprehensively to solve real-life problems and share their opinions with proper values.

The activity-based approach to English learning has three

basic characteristics: it aims to promote the development of core competencies of the discipline, it emphasizes the integration of the six elements of curriculum content, and it reflects the pragmatic features of English learning [1]. Under the guidance of thematic meaning, relying on the text and connecting with existing background knowledge, one moves from learning about the text to delving deeper into the text and transcending the text in learning.

## 3. The Significance of the Activity-based Approach to English Learning in Reading Teaching

Wang Qiang [6] pointed out that the significance of constructing the English learning activity view: "promoting the transformation from teacher-centered teaching to student-centered learning, from fragmented learning to integrated, situated and structured learning, and from discipline knowledge-oriented to discipline education-oriented." The reading teaching based on the view of English learning activity has effectively changed the current situation of the superficiality in English reading classes. The implementation of the view of English learning activities is conducive to changing the situation of teachers leading the whole process in high school reading classes, giving full play to the main position of students, and forming a classroom atmosphere with active thinking and openness in reading classrooms. Li Hongying has pointed out that the concept of English learning activities not only successfully integrates various aspects of the English curriculum, but also effectively ensures the achievement of the overall curriculum goals. It provides a practical pathway for improving students' learning methods and enhancing the quality of English teaching. When applied to senior high school English teaching, it mainly has the following teaching values: it improves the efficiency of English teaching, optimizes students' learning methods, and promotes the all-round development of students.[3] Mei Deming has pointed out that English teaching driven by learning activities breaks through the traditional language-oriented barriers that focus on language knowledge and skills. It emphasizes the perception and expression of meaning based on language forms, highlights theme-led teaching and exploration of theme-related meanings, and proposes the concept of discourse learning as well as the requirement for

comprehensive learning based on discourse. It also places importance on the learning and application of learning strategies, including metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and communicative strategies.[4]

The English Learning Activity View plays a crucial role in reading instruction by transforming the learning process into a more engaging, interactive, and comprehensive experience. It encourages students to actively participate in reading activities, thereby enhancing their motivation and interest in reading. Through varied activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and project-based learning, students are not only able to improve their language proficiency but also develop critical thinking skills by analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting texts. The ELAV emphasizes the integration of reading with other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing, which helps students to better retain and apply language knowledge. Additionally, it fosters cultural awareness by encouraging students to explore the cultural contexts of reading materials, thus promoting global competence. The ELAV also supports differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to design activities that cater to different learning styles and abilities, ensuring that each student is appropriately challenged and supported. Furthermore, it encourages collaborative learning, where students work in pairs or groups to share ideas and develop important social skills. By promoting autonomous learning, the ELAV helps students take responsibility for their own learning, setting personal goals and choosing reading materials that align with their interests. Overall, the ELAV aligns with core literacy goals, supporting the holistic development of students by enhancing their critical thinking, creativity, cultural awareness, and communication skills, and preparing them for the challenges of the 21st century.

Teachers design a series of rich teaching activities to inspire students to think positively, analyze, evaluate, summarize, use texts and have in-depth exchanges with it. These activities promote the in-depth dialogue among teachers, students and the text, improve students' language skills, cultivate their thinking quality, and enhance their ability to interpret texts. Moreover, these activities encourage students to make connections between the texts they read and their own experiences, as well as broader social and cultural contexts. By having in-depth exchanges with the texts, students are able to explore diverse perspectives, challenge their own assumptions, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them. This process of critical inquiry and reflection helps to build their intellectual curiosity and prepares them to be active participants in a global society.

#### **4. Practice of Activity-based Approach in Senior English Reading Teaching**

Based on the understanding of the view of English learning activity and its characteristics and significance, the author takes "Longji Rice Terraces" in Unit 6 of compulsory one of the High School English Textbook (FLTRE) as an example to specifically elaborate on how to implement the view of English learning activity in the process of high school English reading teaching.

##### **(1) Activities of Learning and Understanding**

Learning and understanding activities refer to activities based on discourse that include perception and attention, acquisition and organization, summarization and integration. Teachers create situations based on the discourse, activate

language and cultural background knowledge, and guide students to organize, summarize, and integrate information to form a knowledge structure, understanding the meaning expressed by the language and the cultural value carried by the discourse.

In the reading teaching of "Longji Rice Terraces," teachers activate students' background knowledge by asking "How much do you know of Guangxi?", and then guide students to predict the content of the text with the help of the picture and title of the text, stimulating students' curiosity. After that, students quickly read through the text once and then match the main idea of each paragraph to obtain and sort out the basic information of the whole text. Teachers guide students to summarize the seasonal scenery, history, construction reasons, and principles of Longji Rice Terraces by asking factual questions for each paragraph, such as "What colors are the terraces in different seasons?", "What is the history of Longji Rice Terraces?" and "Why did people get so much trouble to build the terraces?"

Common learning and understanding activities include three aspects. The first is text perception and attention, which can be achieved through reading aloud activities, silent reading activities, or visual perception activities. Visual aids such as pictures and charts can be used to help students understand the content of the text. The second is information acquisition and organization, which includes question-and-answer activities, table-filling activities, and mind-mapping activities to help students sort out and understand the information in the text. The last is concept generalization and integration, which includes activities such as summarizing the main idea, categorizing and inducting, and making connections and extensions.

Through these activities, students sort out and summarize the content of the text in an organized and logical manner, and develop their logical thinking which lay the foundation for subsequent in-depth exploration.

##### **(2) Activities of Applying and Practicing**

Applying and practicing activities mainly include in-depth learning activities within the discourse, such as description and interpretation, analysis and judgment, internalization and application. These activities help students internalize language and cultural knowledge through description, interpretation, analysis, and judgment, consolidate new knowledge structures, and further explore cultural values on this basis.

Teachers guide students to describe the key information about Longji Rice Terraces - the working principle of the terraces - in combination with illustrations. First, students are asked to describe it in pair-work, and then teachers lead them to watch an animation to intuitively feel the working principle of the terraces. The process of describing and explaining is an indispensable step for students to internalize language knowledge. Afterward, teachers ask them to think and analyze the value of Longji Rice Terraces. Students engage in discussions within their groups to analyze and think the role of the terraces in ecological harmony. Based on the illustrations of the working principles of the terraces, students further explore the interactions and positive impacts of the terraces with other elements in the ecosystem, summarizing values such as "Longji Rice Terraces contribute to a harmonious ecosystem where humans cooperate with nature."

The specific design of applying and practicing activities includes three aspects. The first is the description and interpretation of activities, which specifically includes picture

description, story retelling, and cultural display. The second is the analysis and judgment activities, which include analyzing key sentences in the text and analyzing the structure of the article. The last is the internalization and application activities, which include role-playing dialogues and creating English short plays.

Applying and practicing activities can guide students to think deeply and further appreciate the spirit of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature embodied in the construction of the terraces.

### (3) Activities of Transferring and Creating

Transferring and creating activities mainly include reasoning and argumentation, criticism and evaluation, imagination and creation, and other learning activities that go beyond the text. These activities are the process of using language and developing advanced thinking, and they are an indispensable part of students achieving deep learning, which can promote the transformation of students' abilities into literacy.

Teachers ask students to choose the purpose of the author in writing this passage to understand the author's writing intent and the ideological value conveyed by the text.

Then teachers ask students if they know of any other examples of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature to promote innovative development of their thinking and guide them to consider more ways of living in harmony with nature. At this point, teachers can provide students with some specific examples, such as wind power generation and the Dujiangyan irrigation system. Under the guidance of questions, students go through the process of "independent thinking—inquiry—presentation," understanding the text from multiple perspectives, and developing diverse and critical thinking.

Reasoning and Argumentation activities involve making inferences and hypotheses about the value orientations behind the text and the author's attitude. Students are encouraged to use clues, logical connections, and other information within the text to support their arguments and deduce the deeper meanings behind the text, thereby enhancing their understanding of the discourse. Criticism and Evaluation activities require students to reflect on and assess what they have learned. They need to grasp the essence of things or viewpoints, deepen their understanding of the thematic significance, and based on their newly constructed knowledge frameworks, evaluate others' ideas and express their own opinions. Imagination and Creation activities refer to teachers guiding students to apply what they have learned. Through autonomous, cooperative, and inquiry-based learning methods, students transfer their acquired language knowledge and skills to real-life situations. They connect with practical issues, solve problems, and demonstrate their personal values.

This stage of the activity requires students to transcend the text and engage in a dialogue with the author, utilizing the knowledge and skills developed from the previous three stages. Through reasoning and argumentation, they delve into the cultural connotations and underlying meanings of the text, thereby enhancing their own cognitive abilities [7].

## 5. Conclusion

The Activity-based Approach to English learning is an important measure to cultivate students' core competence and realize discipline-oriented education. Guided by the view of English learning activity, teachers create situations, guide students to sort out structures, obtain factual information,

interpret texts in multiple dimensions, and develop critical thinking. It emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning. Students are encouraged to engage in autonomous learning, where they take responsibility for their own progress and set personal learning goals. Cooperative learning is another essential aspect, as students work in groups to share ideas, solve problems, and learn from each other. Inquiry-based learning fosters curiosity and encourages them to explore the thematic meanings. In the process, students develop language skills, improve thinking quality, establish cultural awareness, and cultivate their subject core competence.

Moreover, many activity-based tasks encourage students to develop teamwork and leadership skills. As they work together to complete tasks, they learn to listen to others, respect diverse viewpoints, and contribute their own ideas to achieve common goals. This collaborative learning environment also helps to build a sense of community and mutual support among students, making the learning process more enjoyable and motivating. And another aspect of the Activity-based Approach is its emphasis on creativity and innovation. By encouraging students to think outside the box and come up with their own solutions to problems or interpretations of texts, teachers help to cultivate students' creative thinking abilities. This is particularly important in today's rapidly changing world, where the ability to adapt and innovate is highly valued in personal settings.

For educational institutions and policymakers, the success of the Activity-based Approach highlights the importance of providing teachers with the necessary resources and professional development opportunities to effectively apply such student-centered strategies.

Ultimately, the Activity-based Approach to English learning offers a powerful model for how education can be transformed to better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. By focusing on the development of core competencies through active and meaningful learning experiences, we can inspire a new generation of learners who are not only proficient in language but also equipped with the critical thinking, cultural awareness, and collaborative spirit needed to contribute positively to a global society.

## References

- [1] Han Yuanyuan. An exploration of senior high school English reading teaching practice based on the English learning activity view [J]. *Campus English*, 2022, (10): 85-87.
- [2] Jiang Pan. Senior high school reading teaching design based on the English learning activity view [J]. *Overseas English*, 2023, (22): 175-177.
- [3] Li Hongying. An exploration of the implementation pathways of the English learning activity view in senior high school English reading classrooms [J]. *Overseas English*, 2025, (04): 1671-69.
- [4] Mei Deming. (2024). English Learning and the English Learning Activity View Oriented towards Core Literacy Development [J]. *Curriculum. Teaching Materials and Methods*, 44 (08): 86-90+98.
- [5] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Senior high school English curriculum standard (2017 edition, 2020 revision) [M]. Beijing: People's Education Press, 2020.
- [6] Wang Qiang. From comprehensive language use ability to English subject core literacy: New challenges of senior high

school English curriculum reform [J]. English Teacher, 2015, (16): 6-7.

[7] You Hongnan, Li Mei'ao. An exploration of senior high school English reading teaching design from the perspective of the English learning activity view [J]. Gansu Education Research, 2022, (10): 45-48.