

# *Research on the Cultivation Path of Critical Thinking Ability in College English Writing Teaching*

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**Abstract:** Writing is an important part of college English teaching, is the embodiment of students' critical thinking ability, but also an effective way to reflect the students' overall English level. It is very important to combine English writing teaching with thinking ability practice to cultivate students' thinking ability in the process of writing. This paper analyzes the reasons for the lack of English writing ability, discusses the specific methods to improve students' discourse ability in the writing process, constructs a unified teaching method of discourse ability writing, and provides suggestions for the teaching reform of English writing curriculum.

## **1. Introduction**

Cultivating Chinese students' critical thinking ability is the core of international higher education, and also an important task in cultivating innovative Chinese talents in the 21st century. However, in China, as the core course of ordinary institutions of higher learning, English teaching generally attaches great importance to the training of language ability, but not to the training of thinking ability, especially in English writing. In this way, with the growth of time, the students' critical thinking ability has been weakened. Therefore, how to reasonably integrate the training of critical thinking into the writing courses of ordinary colleges and universities, so that students' critical thinking and writing ability, has become one of the key problems of writing teaching in higher education today.

## **2. Critical thinking ability and its influencing factors**

### **2.1 Connotation of critical thinking ability**

Discrimination ability refers to the ability to determine things in a specific way. Differential thinking ability is the integration of cognitive skills and personality ability, including judgment, discrimination, judgment, openness, confidence, loyalty and tenacity. Critical thinking ability in undergraduate mainly refers to the critical skills trained by learners in the English teaching environment. Language is also a means of speculation, English writing is to express thinking. The content and framework of writing are related to thinking, so writers must form new words and sentences based on critical thinking skills, and shift from existing words to more flexible language expressions. To some extent, the level of English is also related to the critical thinking ability in

English<sup>[1]</sup>.

## 2.2 Influencing factors of critical thinking ability

Critical thinking ability is deeply disturbed by both subjective and objective factors. In the subjective aspect, students have no knowledge and experience, it is easy to have a biased and superficial understanding. Students just enrolled in college are still in the memory and cognitive difficulties period, and their thinking and discrimination ability are still weak. Therefore, the teachers must guide them, so that the students can think independently and judge independently, so as to make a reasonable plan for the students' future study direction and career. An objective factor is that because their independent thinking level of knowledge and skills are not high, and because the students are "taught for the test", it is also difficult to improve. The indoctrination teaching method prevents students from thinking and analyzing independently. In addition, the school does not teach the critical thinking courses, and the teachers do not receive the critical thinking training, so they do not develop the critical thinking ability in the teaching<sup>[2]</sup>.

## 3. The importance of critical thinking writing ability in English

The word about speculation in wang Shouren "biography Lu" " if only the festival of Wen Qing, support the appropriate, but a day two days and do, use very learning speculation?"From the perspective of students, the exam preparation is a firm, self-examination preparation, while the second level is the skill level, such as practice and research to prepare the exam content of the course, and training to master the skills. The inner operation of the soul is even more important. Mindfulness only refers to the ability to think and analyze information. Thinking is the processing of input information from the brain, while mindfulness is the discrimination and analysis of further processed information. The ability to apply dialectical ability to teaching refers to the teachers' ability to investigate problems or events, not to blindly make conclusions, but only to understand the multi-level nature of events, and to classify, infer and evaluate problems and events by analyzing information, and finally to make a correct judgment and draw conclusions, so as to solve the problem. The ability to think clearly means to recognize the complexity of current events, see their direction and understand the overall politics behind the surface. Supporting critical speculation is the ability to make theoretical judgments, which include cognitive skills such as analysis and reasoning, as well as positive emotional components such as honesty, confidence, inquisitiveness, and perseverance, as well as the ability to adjust, supervise, and correct one's own thinking. This ability is the basis of creative thinking, and also an important symbol of a comprehensive, mature and rational person in today's society. With the deepening of China's social change, and the sustainable development of market economy, the demand for talent training is growing, but Chinese universities in many fields or backward and change, in the past mode too heavy diploma, light ability, today is more diversified, extensive, deep basic complex talent training, but China's higher education has been faced with unclear definition, education concept outdated difficulties, unable to meet the needs of the new era. So higher education must pay more attention to the cultivation of speculative ability, and put the training into the disciplinary teaching classroom, and English reading teaching can be the main carrier of interdisciplinary speculative ability, the foreign has many advanced practices, in these fields also do quite well, Oxford, Cambridge schools in the selection of new speculative ability as one of the options, and there is a widespread lack of "speculative" domestic problem<sup>[3]</sup>.

## 4. Problems in Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in College English Writing Teaching

In the course of English writing of students, from their English writing, we can see that the article

form is very simple, the vocabulary is very small, there are still some grammatical errors, incorrect grammar structure, poor consistency between the article and the paragraphs, and the overall structure of the chapter is not coherent. It is also understood that now many graduates are in accordance with the online writing methods and templates to write, which also shows that the framework and conception of writing is lack of consideration, and the form of the article is single, no creativity. This phenomenon shows that they lack critical thinking in their English writing. In today's era of information surplus, students often blindly absorb information without screening and reflection, which makes it difficult for them to analyze and think dialectically. Over time, students are unable to form their own views of problems and phenomena, and lack innovation, let alone meet the needs of development and work. At present, there are several problems in promoting critical thinking ability in English classes<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### **4.1 The tradition should be seriously influenced by education**

From primary school to high school, college students are taught to prepare for postgraduate exams, and the attention paid to the exams enables them to judge their own situation and progress according to their grades. The traditional examination-oriented education seriously restricts students' thinking and destroys the development of critical thinking ability.

#### **4.2 Teaching ideas are too outdated**

Teaching methods are outdated, curriculum and content design is too traditional, and students' ability to interact and communicate with others has not improved. There is a mismatch between the starting point and the center of the teaching. In class, only let students listen and write, rarely ask questions to let them think, these situations will lead to students' rigid thinking rigidity, is not conducive to the cultivation of students' dialectical thinking ability.

#### **4.3 Writing topic selection is not combined with the training of critical thinking ability**

##### **4.3.1 Lack of thinking training in selecting topics**

Despite the changing college English textbooks, many topics related to dialectical thinking training are still lacking. They may ask students to think independently and form their own opinions under the guidance of teachers.

##### **4.3.2 Neglect the accumulation of materials for students' writing and thinking expansion**

If students do not pay attention to building and expanding their knowledge, they will be unable to analyze the problem in depth and lack material for written work.

#### **4.4 Teaching management mode is too rigid**

English writing courses put more emphasis on the use of words, grammar and the correct use of grammar and sentences, but ignore the overall structure of the article. Even in some universities, teachers also use the previous writing outline and writing ideas to strengthen the degree and recite to students. Without the appropriate practice and training layout ability test, this way is too rigid. This opportunistic way can only make students cope with the exam, but the students can not improve their thinking ability, which limits the development of students.

#### **4.5 Lack of innovation in teaching management**

The curriculum is not related to social development, and many cases in the curriculum are still reuse cases, with nothing to do with recent social problems. At the same time, the content of the curriculum management is outdated and one-sided, with too much emphasis on centralization and unity, ignoring the development of students' personality, and not promoting students' awareness and ability of bold innovation.

### **5. Reasons for the absence of critical thinking ability in English writing**

#### **5.1 Students' improper learning strategies**

In the process of writing, because students like to recite the traditional "general sentence pattern" or "writing scheme", students tend to only pay attention to the form of writing and ignore the connotation of the article, so it is difficult to break through their own writing routines, and rarely really use their brains to write. These learning behaviors all seriously affect the normal play of students' creativity and critical thinking ability.

#### **5.2 The curriculum is not scientific enough**

Writing teaching is an important part of English teaching, which can concentrate on reflecting students' overall ability to use English. However, the author has observed in the practice of English teaching that many colleges and universities do not pay enough attention to the writing teaching, and the writing teaching is not mentioned as an independent subject in the curriculum. Compared with the class hours of college English reading and listening comprehension strengthening teaching, writing teaching class hours are relatively few, and students have very limited opportunities to practice writing, leading to a lack of overall understanding of the whole writing process.

#### **5.3 The restriction of the traditional teaching mode**

The traditional conclusion-based method is the writing teaching method usually adopted by most English teachers in most universities. According to the western scholar Richards, the conclusion teaching method emphasizes the final conclusion of writing. In this way, the teacher first explains the theoretical knowledge of writing, then guides the students to analyze the paper, then lets the students imitate the paper to write, and finally the teacher judges the students' paper. In the whole classroom teaching process, because the teachers master the initiative in the classroom, but the students feel that the writing class is very dull, making them all become negative users. And such students' writing class is not conducive to improving their interest and innovation ability, so that their thinking consciousness cannot be trained. Secondly, in the writing class, the teacher often heavy structure light connotation, heavy expression of less thought, speak mechanical text practice, always pay attention to recite vocabulary, sentences, mode and model essay, but the problem about enlightening students thinking is less. This approach limits the development of student creativity and critical thinking, preventing students to learn more. Written articles are too modular and lack of speculation and logic<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### **5.4 The evaluation method is not reasonable**

Usually, the exam determines the teachers' teaching and the students' learning pace, but the way of setting the English test will inevitably affect the content of the writing. Students usually recite some models in the test, and then apply them directly in the test, which makes it difficult for students

to establish their own ideas. In Chinese English classes, teachers tend to use the final judgment method. When evaluating students' writing, they often emphasize the authenticity of the language expression, without taking into account the logic and depth of the article. This form of evaluation makes them often only pay attention to the authenticity and appropriateness of the discourse used by students when writing writing, while ignoring the deep performance of students' thinking. Therefore, to some extent, the traditional evaluation method prevents the students from improving their creative thinking skills.

## **6. Strategies of of Thinking Ability in College English Writing Teaching**

### **6.1 Clear teaching objectives**

English writing is a process that combines speculation, evidence, evaluation, and logic, requires planning and layout. Before you can pick up your writing, you will need to read, understand, extract, and organize large amounts of information, and develop your writing ideas by asking questions to make your writing clearer and more organized. The most important thing is to set goals in writing teaching. The goal is the soul of the syllabus, and the cultivation of critical thinking ability should be included in the goal of writing teaching, so as to bring the cultivation of students' writing and critical thinking ability into the corpus. The criteria for writing are the clarity, relevance, logic, and language correctness of arguments: critical thinking requires the clarity, relevance, and accuracy of students' views. There is a substantial overlap between the two. English writing is a process of thinking, if the sense of thinking is not strong, the writing arguments will not be clear. Writing goals should include the clarity, relevance, and accuracy of thinking ability, so that students can refer to the standards of thinking ability in writing practice, expand thinking, modify writing, and develop thinking ability.

### **6.2 Develop good study habits**

Cultivating writing is related to critical thinking ability and extensive reading of books. If you want to write well, you have to read a lot. If you have nothing to say in the text, it shows that you can't make a comprehensive analysis, thinking and exploration of the topic of your article, which makes the content unclear. Teachers should guide students to develop good reading habits, and broaden their horizons through a wide range of reading activities, so that students can better explore and analyze things and problems from various perspectives. At the same time, the students have also accumulated a large number of written materials, and the students can write according to the requirements of the topic. At the same time, teachers should also guide students to integrate cultural knowledge into the memory of words and grammar, so as to understand English, and improve their critical thinking ability through the trinity of language, culture and thinking. Furthermore, when preparing written assignments, teachers can use mind mapping to help students analyze a topic from different perspectives. When discussing mind mapping, students are encouraged to open their minds, collect different views and summarize them in their own articles, change the traditional thinking patterns, and conduct written research from different perspectives.

### **6.3 Expand the teaching content**

In order to achieve this goal, the exercise of critical thinking ability should be regarded as the teaching content of the writing class.(2) Broaden the content of writing teaching. Strengthening students' discourse ability helps to improve their language thinking ability. The practice of dialectical thinking can be based on the cultivation of syndrome differentiation ability, and take the cultivation of syndrome differentiation ability as an important teaching goal. Many college students lack the

ability to describe the details of events in the texts, and their texts are abstract and didactic. Teachers can guide students to improve their writing, so that they can recognize the particularity and novelty of their own writing. Teachers can ask students to distinguish between the meaning to help them extract the main content of their articles. For students' oral expression in writing, teachers provide logical guidance, help students to organize the relationship between the writing content, and write key and structured articles.

#### **6.4 Improve teaching methods**

Teaching methods also reflect the teacher's teaching philosophy. In the past English teaching, teachers often emphasize the correctness of students' thoughts, but ignore the child's thinking and logic in the composition, which is not conducive to the children's speculative growth. Therefore, teachers should use the problem teaching method, pay more attention to the core role of children, so that students can think more active under the guidance of teachers, and write ideological works. Using the step teaching method to train the creative ideas, teachers should guide the students to play a role in all the writing steps. The step-by-step approach is taken. Before the composition, the teacher arranges the topic for the students, they use their spare time to collect, sort out and summarize the relevant information, to form their own views. In class, teachers plan to carry out activities to stimulate students' thinking, such as mind mapping, brainstorming and group discussion, so that students can open their minds, express their own opinions, and learn to explore problems. When students have completed the paper, they were evaluated in groups according to the criteria, and students modified their paper based on the results of the group evaluation. During group evaluation and review, students can improve their critical thinking through interaction with classmates. After the reading, the teacher will conduct a comprehensive evaluation. Teachers should give feedback on students' written homework after the evaluation, emphasizing language quality, logical thinking and key opinions to improve their critical thinking ability<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### **6.5 Improve the evaluation system**

Students can improve their understanding of their own writing level by using the evaluation system. Teachers use the curriculum evaluation and reform to optimize the composition evaluation system and mobilize students' enthusiasm for composition. In order to improve the level of critical thinking, students will give feedback through self-evaluation, network sharing and teacher evaluation, which will help students to find ways to solve their problems through reflection. Process evaluation can also be an effective means to motivate students to write. Process evaluation can include teacher evaluation and peer evaluation. Teacher evaluation can train students' language analysis skills, and teacher evaluation can also help students to lay a solid foundation in using grammar, language expression and logical organization. Teachers can also correctly evaluate students' written work through the paper checklist, which provides a basis for cultivating students' critical thinking ability. In addition, teachers can also guide students to reflect on themselves through critical evaluation. Students can reflect on their written work in a more meaningful way by writing articles, editing, self-evaluation, peer comparison and teacher evaluation. Students can also improve their thinking ability by sublimate the thinking, architecture and language structure of the article.

### **7. Conclusions**

When teaching college English writing, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' critical thinking consciousness, take the cultivation of their critical thinking consciousness as the purpose and focus of writing education, improve the teaching mode, improve the education

assessment system, let them cultivate good writing habits and cultivate their critical thinking consciousness. As their critical thinking level improves, they will in turn develop their students' writing ability, and thus ultimately improve their English expression skills.

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