

English Reading Teaching in Junior Middle Schools under the Guidance of the Jigsaw

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Abstract: Reading competence occupies an outstanding position in junior high school English learning, and most teachers understand the significance of developing students' independent English reading skills; the current teaching methods do not do an excellent job of stimulating students' reading initiative. *New English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School* (2017) requires cooperative learning ability as a critical indicator to evaluate students' learning ability. In this educational policy context, as teaching in cooperative learning, Jigsaw provides an excellent problem-solving idea in that it divides the students into groups and makes a clear assignment of the reading tasks, enabling students to discuss and learn the problems through multiple methods such as role-playing and Jigsaw helps students build knowledge into a clear framework in their minds, which prepares contexts for students to understand. In this way, students can not only have a clear understanding of the context of the article but also obtain a general idea of solving problems gradually and effectively in the shortest time.

Based on relevant theories and compared with previous studies, this study reached the following conclusions: 1)the development of English reading for junior high school students is seriously lacking and significantly affects students' interest in reading; 2)this study constructs a junior high school English Jigsaw reading teaching mode effectively and improves students' interest in reading significantly; 3)the junior high school English Jigsaw reading teaching mode effectively cultivates junior high school students English reading, and improves their overall English reading ability. This study constructs a new teaching mode of Jigsaw reading effectively, which promotes the reform of junior high school English reading teaching, and provides an operable new plan for cultivating students' reading.

Key words: jigsaw; junior high school English; reading teaching

CLC Number: G633.41 **Document Code:** A **Article ID:** 2832-9317 (2023) 04-0118-8

DOI: 10.12424/HA.2023.075 **Link:** <https://www.oc-press.com/HA-202304-118.html>

1.Introduction

Nowadays, under the pressure of exam-oriented education in the past, teachers pay more attention to the mechanical drills. Moreover, the situation attracts some teachers' attention to scores to the extent that they do not attach great significance to students' reading skills, which, in the long run, will make a difference in

deciding students' learning interests. According to Wang Qiang (2017), the methods are still limited to language, vocabulary, grammatical understanding and so on. Teachers are unable to improve students' problem-solving ability and students are controlled totally, and students' participation is neglected to improve in the classroom. In order to improve the above problems

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and the level of English reading teaching in junior high schools, many scholars have introduced various advanced foreign theories and teaching methods for applying them to teaching. In a variety of teaching methods, the author chooses the Jigsaw for research since it is necessary for junior high school English teachers to update their knowledge base and explore teaching methods to improve students' English reading ability under the mode. The study of Jigsaw in junior high school English reading class can provide some valuable ideas for teachers in reading teaching.

The research aims to study the method of Jigsaw in English reading teaching in junior high school, and students share the information through group learning and complete the whole lesson, and any lack in any section will affect the overall completion of the task. The characteristics of the Jigsaw are that students are the center of the classroom, and students complete the reading tasks through cooperative learning. First of all, this paper will draw some problems by analyzing the current situation of English reading teaching; then, according to the problems, an influential English reading teaching method, Jigsaw will be proposed, and it will be explained in the English classroom of junior high school. Finally, some key points and suggestions for application are put forward by analyzing each step of the Jigsaw. Teachers should play an active guiding role and use a variety of teaching methods to stimulate students' interest in the process of reading teaching.

Based on what has been studied, the paper tries to develop a set of instruction strategies using the Jigsaw method to modify traditional forms of teacher instruction, to increase students' interest in reading, and to train their ability in reading by using test questions, and then improving their reading performance. The reasons for choosing the Jigsaw and the advantages and feasibility of this method are presented. The method hopes to improve the current situation of

English reading teaching under the cooperative learning mode. The Jigsaw not only builds students' sense of cooperation, but also develops their reading ability and increases their interest in reading (Guo, 2015). From the different definitions of scholars abroad and at home, it can be concluded that the characteristics of the Jigsaw are that students are the center of the classroom, and students complete the reading tasks through cooperative learning.

After learning basic English in elementary school, students in junior high school have several basic knowledge of English reading. They have a foundation with understanding of some simple English words and sentences, and they can think about English reading under the guidance of teachers. At the same time, driven by inner self-awareness and curiosity, students can communicate and cooperate with their classmates in the direction of problem-solving. Reading teaching should be carried out step by step, from easy to complex. Students learn words and sentences, and then learn articles. This process is in line with the law of students' cognitive development. Therefore, a particular English foundation provides a prerequisite for the application of the Jigsaw.

Through the above analysis of Jigsaw to the English reading class in junior high school, it can be concluded that it is feasible to apply the Jigsaw method in the English reading class of junior high school. This part will focus on the classroom arrangement of English reading teaching in junior high school under the guidance of the Jigsaw. Next, the implementation steps of the Jigsaw in class will be discussed in detail, and the method will be further understood through the analysis of the steps.

1. Division of basic groups

To begin with, the first step of action research is conducted for several weeks and took place after the students were introduced to the specific procedures and

requirements of the Jigsaw method. Teachers should assign basic groups, with four to six people in each basic group, and in the initial grouping, the teacher divides the reading material into four to six sections accordingly, and each student in the group is responsible for mastering one of the sections. (For example, a class of 36 students is divided into six basic groups of six students. The teacher divides the reading material into six parts, and each group of six students is responsible for one part.) At this point, each member of the basic group has its own task to be responsible for. In the basic group, each student can participate in the solution of reading tasks, and when assigning tasks, students are more able to accept corresponding tasks according to their own interests and strengths. Yin, through teaching experiments, confirmed that the Jigsaw method could effectively improve students' reading level and English comprehensive ability. This part leads to arouses students' interest in exploring reading problems, and makes them be able to find out what they are interested in. In addition, initial grouping can also enable students to discover their potential, which makes them more motivated to study. Francesca (2010) found that the Jigsaw method could effectively improve students' participation and learning enthusiasm. Through experiments, observations, questions, questionnaires, and other methods. Most students had positive attitudes toward the Jigsaw method, which also changed their attitudes toward English reading to some extent. Zhang Biyin defined reading as the process of extracting information from reading materials, during which, the characteristic and personality of the reader may be affected. Reading activities can not only obtain information, but also have a specific impact on the information of one's emotions and personality. Many students went from disliking or even fearing English reading at first to being interested in English reading today, and indicated that they would take the initiative

to overcome the obstacles they encountered in English reading. The change in their attitudes toward English reading is also conducive to better implementing the Jigsaw method teaching model.

Various experiments show that its application can improve students' English application can improve students' English reading efficiency. Domestic scholars have applied the Jigsaw to different fields to explore its practical implementation. Halimah showed that Jigsaw could improve future teachers' content knowledge and improve their verbal communication skills according to a qualitative research method. Yu Junling was the first scholar to use the Jigsaw for elementary school language teaching in China. She proved through empirical research that the Jigsaw method could improve students' motivation and teaching quality. For example, two groups allow students to choose a topic they are interested in so that they have passion for their tasks. The study was the beginning of the domestic research to introduce Jigsaw into the classroom formally. Meng Fansheng (2003) explained the Jigsaw implementation steps and the operational issues that should be addressed during the process. With that, more and more examples of using the Jigsaw in the classroom appear in more and more subjects. Gong Hefa and Xu Jingbo have spent two and a half years teaching middle school English in their classroom using the Jigsaw method. They found that the Jigsaw optimizes students' learning styles and is more conducive to students' knowledge construction and thinking training. In conclusion, Jigsaw is a method that can be beneficial for students and teachers to improve themselves in various ways.

Grouping reasonably the students is crucial, and this method focuses on the teacher's grouping of students, so reasonable groups assignments are the basis of the Jigsaw. Ma Wen considers that in the Jigsaw teaching model, teachers need to divide the learning task into different sections, and then assign each team to

other students. Therefore, the Jigsaw is not suitable for English reading teaching when the class size is less than 16 because the focus of the Jigsaw is to group students so that they can think in a more diverse and flexible way. Yuan (2017) thought that students could effectively improve their reading abilities and create a good learning environment in cooperative learning groups learning groups for English extracurricular reading. As a result, they can think broadly when doing reading exercises. When assigning groups, teachers are able to follow the principle of “heterogeneity within a group and homogeneity between groups.” Transformation within a group” means that the English proficiency of the students in each group should preferably be distributed in a step-like manner. This form of distribution enables students to complement each other in their English proficiency, and students with weaker abilities will not be too timid to express their opinions because of the large gap between them and the members of the group. Li created a natural language environment and textual materials, helping students understand the inner of the original English language, thus promoting the improvement of students' thinking skills and English reading ability. With the reform of the new English curriculum standards, Shi Jianling, Huang Tao, and Gao Xueqiang explore the meaning and role of the crucial indicators for examining students' learning in large class sizes. Suggesting that students' learning motivation is continuously stimulated under cooperative group learning mode, while participation, experience, and intrinsic potential are gradually enhanced. This shows that the requirements for students' reading ability under the cooperative learning mode are also higher, so how to improve students' English reading ability has become an urgent problem to be solved. In addition, teachers should pay more attention to the students' personalities and other characteristics when assigning so that a harmonious learning atmosphere can be formed among

the members of the group, which is conducive to the communication of students. “Heterogeneity between groups” means that the overall English proficiency of different groups in the same class should be kept at a balanced and comparable level. Group assignments based on this principle can narrow the gap between the level of class members, and it will be easier for teachers to teach English reading in the follow-up.

2. Composition of the expert groups

Based on the reflection on the implementation of the Jigsaw method in the first round of action, the second action research made targeted adjustments. When the students are assigned the corresponding tasks in the initial group, the teacher then divides the students who study the same task in each group into secondary groups, and the group formed by these students is called the “expert group.” Silberstein pointed out that the hidden background knowledge of the reading is also a factor that affects students' reading comprehension. In addition, Brown pointed out that the lack of background knowledge will hinder the understanding of the reading material. In the expert group, the teacher guides the students to discuss the reading tasks independently, exchange their ideas about the problem with each other, and study and research the parts they have learned, so as to complete the requirements put forward by the teacher. The research results of Nevo and Nusbaum showed that the inclusion of a reading motivation program in regular reading acquisition courses could improve children's reading motivation and reading skills. After the discussion of the task, the students return to their basic group to explain the part they are responsible for to others. Finally, after all the members of the basic group have finished explaining, they will form the original whole of the reading task. In this process, after thinking, researching and discussing problems, students have a clear understanding of the reading tasks arranged in the classroom, and also have a clearer idea of

solving problems. When explaining to others, their own ideas are to be consolidated again, and it can improve students' ability to explore problems. Srivastava (2019) found that poly-affective teaching can improve young people's English reading ability. In the second place, the information collected from the students' interviews indicated that the students' self-efficacy in English reading had improved to some extent through the Jigsaw method. This is evident in the changes students talked about, as they became more confident in their English reading and worked harder to solve the difficulties they encountered in English reading.

As for the research on reading outcomes, the effect of the Jigsaw on students' English reading ability is a popular research topic among domestic scholars. For instance, Sahin (2011) demonstrated through a teaching experiment that the third generation of the Jigsaw is more beneficial to students' written expression performance than the conventional method. Wang Kangni and Zeng Meeting used the Jigsaw in their English reading class. They found that the students' English reading scores improved significantly after comparing their pre and post-test scores. After conducting a 16-week classroom experiment on Jigsaw, Jin Haiyu and Liu Yi analyzed that the students' interrogative thinking skills were also substantially enhanced by analyzing the questions tested. After implementing the fourth-generation Jigsaw in middle school teaching, Pei Yongjun concluded that the Jigsaw teaching plays an irreplaceable role in teaching. Thus, it can be seen that English reading in middle school can effectively improve students' reading comprehension skills. In the reading learning process, students had better know that they cannot just work alone but properly communicate and communicate with others to improve reading efficiency.

The appropriate allocation of the material given demands the teacher to prepare the lesson well. When

the Jigsaw is applied to English reading teaching in junior high school, teachers are required to understand the reading materials to a very familiar level before assigning reading tasks, so that teachers can reasonably divide the tasks into various parts according to the characteristics of the materials. Runqing (1996) said that "Foreign language teaching is the same as teaching in other subjects. To master a foreign language, one needs to read a lot. During reading, independent thinking process, and an analysis of the reading material are valuable." Then the teacher starts from the whole teaching material and divides the material into each part task, then distributes it to the student group. At the same time, teachers should be aware of the time planning for each stage, and be transparent about the teaching process, and difficulties of this reading material in advance. Zhang believed that "reading" was a vital means of acquiring information in writing and a communication process for readers to understand the author's ideas. The characteristics of the Jigsaw are that students are the center and give full play to the subjective initiative of students. At this time, teachers need to be able to take into account the emergencies that may occur in the process of classroom teaching and have corresponding response plans to ensure a better classroom order.

3. Analysis and evaluation of achievements

Utilizing rational evaluation standards to give students feedback is essential for them to improve themselves. Self-efficacy is a mental condition in which people react to their surroundings in a predictable manner (Ashton & Webb, 1986). It is necessary for teachers to know about the students' achievement. After the whole reading task in the basic group is completed, the teacher uses the methods of questioning new words, complicated sentence translations, and the overall structure of the article to test the students' task discussion. The purpose of this link is to check the

students' learning effect. According to some questions, teachers should pay attention to the problems that students have in the discussion process, summarize and explain the problems that students have, so as to make knowledge more systematic, highlight the critical points in reading tasks, and make up for students' learning loopholes. This part can also make students' discussion of knowledge is more targeted, and students will exercise their expressive skills through the discussion. Secondly, teachers should evaluate students' learning performance, so that students can get feedback in time, then check and fill in omissions to realize their problems in reading learning, and make corrections as soon as possible. At the same time, teacher evaluation can also encourage students, stimulate students' desire to learn, improve learning efficiency, and guide students to the subsequent learning process can have more excellent performance. Tran and Lewis believe the Jigsaw method positively impacts students' English reading. The action research explored a more appropriate and effective teaching process for the Jigsaw method based on the actual situation of the participants. It concluded that the Jigsaw method positively impacts junior high school English reading instruction.

At the same time, some scholars have begun to pay attention to the effects of teaching the Jigsaw on students' motivation toward English reading. In the grouping process, students interpret their own tasks according to the division of reading tasks, so as to stimulate students' interest and sense of responsibility in solving problems. Maftai demonstrated that implementing the Jigsaw method in physics classes can effectively increase students' interest and attention. Meng Lijun pointed out that the Jigsaw classroom using the Jigsaw method focuses more on students' communication and exchange, in which students' practical interpretation skills can be cultivated, and problems such as off-topic, sloppy, language and

unclear expressions that tend to occur in the process of communication can be effectively improved. In addition, some scholars have expanded the research on Jigsaw approach to reading instruction to focus on its effects on students' reading anxiety. Liu Ying first explored the relationship between the Jigsaw and students' reading anxiety and applied the Jigsaw in the English classroom of non-English majors in a vocational school for one semester. Moreover, the study finally confirmed that students' reading anxiety was effectively relieved by analyzing the data.

It is of significance that the system of evaluation should be completed, and the tasks should be designed carefully, which can help get familiar with Jigsaw more quickly. Farouk studied the effects of the Jigsaw model on English in-service teachers' reading anxiety and cognition and experimentally showed that Jigsaw method was effective in reducing English in-service teachers' reading anxiety. In the Jigsaw, the evaluation process plays an important role, which is an essential guarantee for the Jigsaw to be effective. When the teachers have used the Jigsaw for about two to three weeks, it is necessary for teachers to evaluate the students' reading ability. Nurbianta and Dahlia conducted a teaching experiment on the Jigsaw method for students. So, what teachers need to do is the following. Firstly, before using the Jigsaw, the teachers collected the students' reading scores three times. Secondly, students' reading scores were collected three times after two weeks of using the Jigsaw. The teachers should make sure that the reading test was the same difficulty before and after the Jigsaw was used. Finally, the scores were put together and compared to observe whether the students' reading scores improved before and after the Jigsaw. In addition, students' reading ability cannot be evaluated only by scores. Patrick, Rebecca, Silberman, Harrington, and Hartranft implemented the intervention teaching plan. He found

that it had a practical impact on the academic language and reading comprehension of senior primary school students. Teachers should keep records of students' performance in class, such as group discussion activity, the correct rate of answering questions, learning attitude, etc. Additionally, Jigsaw is not suitable for poorly disciplined classes. Without regular classroom order, it is difficult for teachers to ensure that students' discussions are centered on the learning content. As a result, the method can actually reduce students' learning efficiency.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the current situation of English reading teaching in junior high school, this paper finds the problems existing in English reading teaching. Then proposes a teaching method of Jigsaw to provide new ideas for teaching. The introduction of Jigsaw, analyzes the concept, and advantages of the method in detail to further analyze the steps of Jigsaw applied to the teaching of English reading in junior high schools. It provides more practical theoretical knowledge for applying Jigsaw to English reading teaching in junior high school. Through a series of arguments, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The Jigsaw method emphasizes students' self-awareness and self-direction in the teaching process: that is to say, students need to learn consciously, which is the aim of the Jigsaw method. According to the procedure of Jigsaw reading, students need to find the central idea of each paragraph in expert group discussion, then report to a home group in order to get the main idea of the whole article. Wang and Guo used the Jigsaw method in the junior high school English reading classroom to solve the problems that arose in the traditional reading classroom and to bring out the advantages of the Jigsaw method in reading teaching. While communicating with peers, students could master a variety of reading skills. These reading skills can help

students to read fast and logically, and their reading achievement has gradually improved. Firstly, the Jigsaw can improve students' subject consciousness. Secondly, it will give full play to students' subjective initiative and improve students' classroom participation. Besides, Jigsaw can also help junior high school students to improve their English reading scores.

To sum up, positive interdependence can urge students to make a great effort in order to finish the learning goal so that reading achievement can be improved as well. With the improvement in reading achievement, students' attitudes toward English tend to have a positive change. Neda et al. , through experimental research, found that the Jigsaw method improved students' autonomous learning ability and learning motivation. They no longer fear and hate English; on the contrary, they face English actively. Although the Jigsaw has plentiful advantages, it still has certain shortcomings. Inspired by the method of Jigsaw, teachers should realize that students' physical, mental development, and emotional needs should also be paid attention to in English reading teaching. Teaching is not only the process of learning knowledge, but also guides students to acquire an agile way of thinking and a good attitude towards life through the acquiring of knowledge.

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