

The Application of KWL Model in Junior High School English Reading Teaching

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Abstract

The KWL model, an instructional strategy that stands for 'Know, Want to know, Learned,' has been increasingly recognized for its effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension and engagement in the classroom. This paper presents the conceptual framework and theoretical merits of the KWL reading instructional strategy. Additionally, it elucidates the procedural steps and practical considerations in teaching English reading at the junior high school level, aiming to offer novel insights for junior high school English educators and enhance students' proficiency in English reading.

Keywords

KWL Model; English Reading Teaching; Junior High School.

1. Introduction

Junior high school English reading plays a vital role under the new curriculum standards, which has a profound impact on junior high school students' comprehensive quality and the improvement of English level. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of frontline English reading instruction is inadequate. According to Wang Qiang and Chen Zehang(2016)[1], "For English reading teaching, it is mainly reflected in the fact that first-line teachers do not know how to design or choose strategies or tools to support students' English reading. As a result, many students still adhere to inefficient reading methods such as word-by-word reading, full native language translation, and satisfying superficial information interpretation, which hinders the improvement of students' English reading ability and reading character." This paper will explore how English teachers can effectively implement KWL reading forms in the classroom to facilitate efficient English reading instruction, based on the KWL reading teaching strategy.

2. The Definition of KWL Model

KWL Model was proposed by Donna Ogle in 1986. KWL consists of three specific steps. The letter "K" stands for "what I know". The letter "W" stands for "what I want to know". The letter "L" stands for "what I learned and what I still need to learn".

2.1. The "K" Step——"What I know"

Ogle(1986)[2] points out that the brainstorming activity is usually conducted by the teacher during this session. Before starting the class, introduce the new topic and ask students what they know about it. Students are encouraged to think about everything they think they know about the topic, whatever comes to their mind. Then, they write their existing knowledge about the topic on the "K" column of the KWL chart.

2.2. The "W" Step——"What I Want to Know"

When all students have identified what they already know about the topic, the teacher should ask them what they want to know. According to Ogle(1992)[3], "Not everyone should have the same ideas; some disagreements and misconceptions begin to surface. The teacher notes these differences and helps students frame them into questions. These then become the beginning of

the second column, what we want to know.” Students often get stuck in this section because it requires them to think about things the teacher haven’t introduced to them yet. To fix this, it’s advisable to split the class into smaller groups and encourage each group to bounce ideas off one another to fill up the *W* column of the KWL chart. Besides, Xu Guohui(2017) [4] holds that the teacher can ask students to write one of each of the following types of questions: *Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?*

2.3. The “L” Step——“What I Learned and What I Still Need to Learn”

After completing the reading, students are instructed by the teacher to complete the “L” column of the KWL chart. Furthermore, the teacher should inquire if there are any aspects that remain unclear to the students and encourage them to fill in this section accordingly. Finally, students are directed to revisit the text and locate pertinent answers.

3. The Advantages of KWL Model

3.1. Put Students in the Center of Learning

Students acquire knowledge based on their existing understanding and the subject matter of the article. The teacher's role in the classroom is no longer dominant; instead, they facilitate students' pursuit of their desired learning objectives. The KWL model empowers students to take charge of their own learning process.

3.2. Purposive Learning

Students engage in purposeful reading, learning based on their own inquiries, and actively tackle problems to seek solutions independently rather than simply following the teacher's instructions. This approach enables students to maintain a higher level of focus and learn more efficiently.

3.3. Active Learning

Students engage in active learning to pursue their own knowledge interests, rather than passively receiving predetermined content from teachers. Throughout the learning process, students take a subjective approach, actively acquiring and assimilating knowledge points instead of merely accepting what is taught by instructors.

3.4. Timely Reflection

After the students have completed reading this article, the instructor will prompt them to articulate a summary of their acquired knowledge and identify areas for further exploration. This pedagogical approach fosters introspection and self-assessment, empowering students to engage in purposeful, proactive learning. Shi Zhijian(2021)[5] points out that a timely summary following reading enables students to engage in self-evaluation, document their learning, and facilitate knowledge sharing with peers.

4. Teaching Design

This paper will employ the KWL model to facilitate the instruction of English reading in junior high school, utilizing the text 'He Lost His Arm But Is Still Climbing' as an illustration. The teaching material is from the People’s Education Press, Grade eight, volume two. As for what, it talks about the story of an American mountain climber who lost his arm but is still climbing. As for why, it can be fully used to help students pay attention to the time order, the mind map, “who, what, when, where, how, why” of the narration and the importance of making the right decision. As for how, it is a narration and is arranged by the time order.

Step 1: The “K” step——“what I know”

The instructor presented images of rock climbing and inscribed the term 'rock climbing' on the blackboard. The instructor informed the students that rock climbing was the focal point of the lesson and encouraged them to engage in a brainstorming session to explore their existing knowledge about rock climbing, prompting them to record their thoughts in the respective columns of a KWL chart. Not all students align with each other, and some may challenge the existing knowledge of their peers. These divergences prompt students to critically evaluate concepts, enabling them to discern what they are about to learn, marking the commencement of the "W" stage in the KWL model.

Step 2: The "W" step—"what I want to know"

Initially, the teacher directed the students to engage in peer questioning and record their desired knowledge in the 'W' column of the KWL form. Then, the teacher asked students to write one of each of the following types of questions: *Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?* The following questions are arranged by the teacher. Certainly, the teacher will not directly disclose these questions to the students; instead, they will encourage the students to contemplate and address the problems independently. Who climbed the mountain? What happened to the main character of this article? Where did the main character climb? Why did he cut his arm and keep climbing? How did he choose to cut his arm? How did he climb after losing his arm? When did he lose his arm? Why did he cut his arm? Why did he keep climbing after the horrible accident?

Step 3: The "L" step—"what I learned and still need to learn"

During the reading process, the teacher instructed the students to complete the 'L' column of the KWL form with information they discovered while reading. Upon finishing the article, students were prompted by the teacher to populate the 'L' column with their acquired knowledge and encouraged to reflect on areas where further learning is needed. The teacher instructed the students to record any remaining questions in the 'L' column and then directed them towards additional reading material. Many students want to understand more about the mood of the main character when he made this choice. The teacher showed the real video of the protagonist making this choice to the students, so that the students could further understand it.

5. Conclusion

The application of KWL model to junior high school English reading teaching is a very successful practice. This reading practice class effectively empowers students to take ownership of the classroom and their own learning. It is anticipated that the KWL model will be more widely implemented in English reading classes in the future, thereby facilitating the integration of the KWL model into English reading instruction and enhancing students' reading proficiency.

References

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