

Creative Thinking-Oriented Junior Secondary English Reading Instruction: Current Challenges and a Pedagogical Framework

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ABSTRACT

Creative thinking has become an important educational goal in 21st-century education and has received increasing attention in China's curriculum reform. As a key component of English education, reading instruction may provide a meaningful context for developing students' creative thinking. However, the systematic cultivation of creative thinking in junior secondary EFL reading instruction remains underexplored. To address this gap, this paper adopts a narrative literature review approach to examine how creative thinking has been addressed in previous studies on Chinese junior secondary English education and EFL reading instruction. The findings suggest that English reading instruction has potential for creative thinking development. However, this potential has not been fully realized in current classroom practice, particularly in teaching objectives, reading materials, instructional methods, and assessment practices. Based on these findings, this paper proposes a pedagogical framework that responds to these four areas of concern. The framework may provide pedagogical guidance for integrating creative thinking cultivation into junior secondary English reading classrooms.

Contribution/Originality: This paper reviews the underexplored issue of creative thinking cultivation in Chinese junior secondary EFL reading instruction and proposes a pedagogical framework integrating teaching objectives, reading materials, instructional methods, and assessment practices. Its originality lies in connecting creative thinking development with English reading instruction through a systematic, literature-informed framework.

1. Introduction

In recent years, creative thinking has been widely recognized as an essential competence for 21st-century education. Against this background, recent educational reforms in China have also placed greater emphasis on innovation capacity and scientific

literacy development. The *Outline for Building a Leading Country in Education (2024–2035)* highlights the importance of cultivating students' innovative abilities and proposes the implementation of the "Soil Plan" for scientific literacy development among primary and secondary school students. In addition, the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* stress the development of students' thinking in English learning.

Reading instruction has long been a central component of English education in China and therefore should also serve as an important context for thinking development in English classrooms. In recent years, existing studies have increasingly examined how reading instruction can promote students' reading literacy, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary learning (Li & Li, 2022; Shen, 2026; Yang, 2025). However, relatively limited attention has been paid to the systematic cultivation of creative thinking in junior secondary English reading instruction.

To address this gap, this paper adopts a narrative literature review approach to synthesize existing studies on creative thinking development and EFL reading instruction. It examines the feasibility of cultivating creative thinking in junior secondary English reading classrooms in China, identifies major challenges in current instructional practice, and proposes a pedagogical framework for creative thinking-oriented English reading instruction. By doing so, this paper aims to provide theoretical and pedagogical implications for integrating creative thinking cultivation into EFL reading classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Curriculum Expectations for Creative Thinking Development in EFL Teaching

Recent curriculum reforms in China have placed increasing emphasis on the development of students' thinking abilities in English education. The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) identify thinking as one of the overarching goals of the English curriculum. According to the curriculum standards, thinking reflects learners' abilities in areas such as understanding, analysis, comparison, inference, evaluation, and creation. Among these dimensions, creativity is regarded as an important indicator of thinking development, as higher-level cognitive activities often involve creative engagement with ideas, perspectives, and problem-solving processes (Barak & Levenberg, 2016).

The inclusion of thinking development as a major curriculum goal reflects a broader shift in Chinese English education from the transmission of language knowledge to the cultivation of students' comprehensive competencies (Chen, 2022). Within this perspective, creative thinking is no longer viewed as a specialized ability limited to a small group of highly talented students or to science-related subjects. Instead, it is increasingly recognized as an essential component of general education and an important objective of language learning for all students in compulsory education.

For junior secondary English education, this shift carries important pedagogical implications. As reading instruction occupies a central position in English learning, integrating creative thinking cultivation into English reading instruction is not merely an additional instructional task, but an important way to align classroom teaching with

contemporary curriculum expectations and broader educational goals related to students' intellectual development (Zhang, 2026).

2.2. Existing Pedagogical Perspectives on EFL Reading Instruction

For a long time, one influential pedagogical perspective in EFL reading instruction in China views reading primarily as a process of text comprehension and language knowledge acquisition (Cheng & Wu, 2023). Under this view, reading lessons often follow a three-stage pattern: pre-class preview, in-class text explanation, and after-class exercises (Kou, 1998). Students are usually required to look up unfamiliar words before class, while teachers explain sentence structures, key vocabulary, and difficult expressions during class, and students complete follow-up exercises after class. This approach emphasizes linguistic knowledge and accurate comprehension.

With the development of pedagogical ideas in language education, EFL reading instruction has gradually moved beyond the teaching of language knowledge. Increasing attention has been paid to the development of students' reading literacy, interdisciplinary knowledge, and critical thinking through reading activities.

In the PIRLS 2021 Assessment Framework, reading literacy is defined as the ability to understand and use written language required by society and/or valued by the individual. It also involves constructing meaning from various texts, learning through reading, participating in reading communities, and reading for enjoyment (Mullis & Martin, 2019). Related studies have attempted to move beyond a teacher-centered teaching culture by introducing more curriculum-based resources and exploring new approaches to English reading instruction, such as leveled reading (Zhang, 2018) and mind mapping (Yang, 2025).

At the same time, EFL reading instruction has also emphasized the development of students' higher-order thinking skills. However, existing studies have focused mainly on critical thinking. These studies have identified several limitations in the cultivation of critical thinking in current English instruction in China, particularly in relation to teachers' pedagogical beliefs, instructional objectives, classroom implementation, and assessment practices (Gong, 2024). In response to these limitations, researchers have proposed various instructional approaches, such as question-chain-oriented reading tasks, a three-stage critical reading procedure involving pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities (Yang, 2025), the SIOP model that integrates language learning with application ability and subject knowledge with thinking development (Li & Li, 2022), and problem-based learning (Li & Shi, 2020).

In addition, in response to the requirement in the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022) that no less than 10% of class hours be allocated to interdisciplinary thematic learning, related studies have drawn on the natural advantages of English reading to explore interdisciplinary reading instruction, mainly through theme-based learning (Cui, 2025; Shen, 2026; Wang & Liu, 2023). These studies focus primarily on theme selection and implementation strategies.

In summary, previous studies show that EFL reading instruction has gradually moved beyond a narrow focus on linguistic knowledge. Influenced by updated pedagogical ideas and curriculum requirements, increasing attention has been given to the development of students' reading literacy, interdisciplinary awareness, and higher-

order thinking. However, the systematic cultivation of creative thinking in EFL reading classrooms remains insufficiently explored. As a higher form of thinking, creative thinking should be deliberately integrated into classroom instruction (Lin, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to synthesize previous research, examine the feasibility and challenges of cultivating creative thinking in Chinese junior secondary English reading instruction, and propose a pedagogical framework for creative thinking-oriented reading instruction.

3. Method

This study adopted a narrative literature review approach, synthesizing and interpreting existing research in order to identify major themes related to the development of creative thinking in Chinese junior secondary English reading instruction.

Relevant literature was collected from multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and CNKI (a major Chinese academic database). The literature search focused on studies discussing the role of English reading in higher-order thinking development and pedagogical practices related to creative thinking cultivation in Chinese English education. It involved combinations of keywords such as “creative thinking”, “higher-order thinking”, “creativity”, “English reading instruction”, “EFL reading instruction”, and “Chinese junior secondary English education”. In addition to journal articles, relevant books, curriculum standards, and policy documents related to creativity development and English education were also consulted to provide theoretical and pedagogical support for the study.

4. Findings

Through the review and thematic synthesis of relevant literature, this study explored the feasibility of integrating creative thinking development into junior secondary English reading instruction, analyzed the limitations of existing instructional approaches, and proposed a pedagogical framework for creativity-oriented English reading teaching.

4.1. Potential of English Reading Instruction for Creative Thinking Development

4.1.1. English Reading and Creative Thinking Development

English reading provides important cognitive and pedagogical conditions for the development of creative thinking. First, reading contributes to the expansion and reorganization of learners' knowledge systems, which form an essential foundation for creativity development. Previous studies have suggested that creative thinking relies heavily on rich and interconnected knowledge structures (Sternberg, 2016). Through continuous exposure to texts, learners are able to broaden their knowledge reserves, develop new conceptual understandings, and establish more complex associative networks. In the context of EFL learning, English reading may offer additional advantages for creativity development because learners engage simultaneously with different linguistic and cultural systems (Xu, 2025). Through reading, students encounter diverse cultural perspectives, modes of expression, and patterns of thinking that may differ from those embedded in their first language.

In addition, the reading process itself involves a range of higher-order cognitive activities that are closely related to creative thinking. Effective reading is not merely a passive process of information reception. Rather, learners actively engage in prediction, inference, interpretation, critical evaluation, and imaginative meaning construction while interacting with texts (Wu & Wang, 2019). During this process, learners' curiosity, imagination, reasoning ability, critical thinking, and expressive capacity are continuously practiced and developed (Wang, 2012). These cognitive abilities are widely recognized as important components associated with creative thinking.

Therefore, English reading instruction possesses considerable potential for fostering creative thinking by supporting both knowledge development and higher-order cognitive engagement. If teachers are able to make effective use of reading materials and design appropriate instructional tasks, language learning and thinking development can be meaningfully integrated within classroom instruction. In this sense, the English reading classroom can serve as an important space for cultivating students' creative thinking alongside language competence.

4.1.2. Classroom Instruction and Creative Thinking Development

Creative thinking is commonly understood as the process through which individuals generate ideas that are novel, original, and appropriate within a particular context (Shen et al., 2015). Previous studies often conceptualize creative thinking as the integration of divergent thinking and convergent thinking (Guilford, 1967). Divergent thinking involves the generation of multiple ideas, possibilities, or perspectives, whereas convergent thinking focuses on evaluating, refining, and selecting appropriate solutions to a problem. Both dimensions are considered important components of creativity development (Guilford, 1967).

Within educational settings, classroom instruction plays an important role in shaping students' thinking processes and learning experiences. However, many traditional classroom practices continue to place greater emphasis on convergent thinking than on divergent thinking (Yang & Zhao, 2021). In conventional classroom instruction, activities and assignments are predominantly teacher-directed, guiding students to establish connections between different pieces of knowledge and integrate perspectives, which thereby facilitates analytical reasoning, comprehension and the development of convergent thinking (Yang & Zhao, 2021). However, such practices may also limit students' opportunities to explore alternative perspectives, generate original ideas, and engage in open-ended thinking.

In recent years, growing attention has been paid to the relationship between classroom pedagogy and creativity development. Empirical studies have shown that student-centered instruction, collaborative learning, exploratory discussion, and structured classroom activities can effectively support divergent thinking and creative engagement (Marcos et al., 2020). These findings suggest that the cultivation of creative thinking depends not only on curriculum goals but also on the design of classroom interaction and instructional practices.

For English reading instruction in particular, this implies the need to move beyond traditional comprehension-oriented teaching approaches and create more opportunities for students to question, interpret, imagine, and respond creatively to texts. Purposeful instructional design that encourages divergent thinking may therefore play an

important role in achieving broader educational goals related to students' thinking development and innovation capacity.

4.2. Challenges in Cultivating Creative Thinking in Junior Secondary English Reading Instruction

4.2.1. Insufficient Integration of Creative Thinking into Instructional Objectives

Transforming the cultivation of creative thinking from a broad curriculum goal into concrete and operable instructional objectives remains a significant challenge in junior secondary English reading instruction. At present, instructional objectives in many reading classrooms continue to focus primarily on language knowledge acquisition and reading skill development. Influenced by traditional subject-based perceptions, some teachers still tend to associate creativity mainly with science-related subjects and may not fully recognize its importance in language learning and reading instruction.

Although recent curriculum reforms have encouraged teachers to incorporate thinking development into English teaching, many teachers still experience difficulties in translating these educational concepts into practical classroom objectives (Chen, 2023; Yan, 2026). In particular, insufficient understanding of the nature of creative thinking, its pedagogical value, and possible cultivation strategies often makes it difficult for teachers to design specific and achievable instructional goals related to creativity development (Zou & Chen, 2023). As a result, the integration of creative thinking into reading instruction may remain relatively superficial or implicit rather than systematically embedded in classroom practice.

In addition, the strong examination-oriented nature of junior secondary education also creates practical constraints on creativity-oriented instruction (Qian & Li, 2024). Because classroom teaching is still largely influenced by high-stakes entrance examinations, instructional time and classroom resources are frequently directed toward vocabulary learning, grammatical accuracy, and reading comprehension practice. Under such conditions, teachers may find it difficult to allocate sufficient time to classroom activities that are closely associated with the development of creative thinking.

4.2.2. Limited Diversity and Excessive Difficulty of Reading Materials

Current junior secondary English reading instruction in China tends to rely heavily on standardized textbooks, while the incorporation of supplementary reading materials and extended reading resources remains relatively limited (Bi, 2025). Such dependence on a narrow range of instructional materials not only reduces opportunities for students to apply the language knowledge learned in class in more authentic and meaningful contexts, but may also restrict the development of students' overall English proficiency and broader language competence.

In addition, limited exposure to diverse English reading materials may constrain students' access to multiple sources of knowledge and perspectives. As a result, students' knowledge construction continues to depend largely on reading experiences in their first language. Although first-language reading plays an important role in cognitive and intellectual development, such materials often focus primarily on local linguistic and cultural content and may provide comparatively limited exposure to diverse cultural

perspectives and alternative ways of thinking. In contrast, English reading can expose learners to a wider range of global ideas, cultural experiences, and conceptual frameworks, thereby helping students develop richer associative networks and more diversified knowledge structures that are closely related to creativity development.

At the same time, the difficulty level of current English reading materials may also create challenges for creative thinking development in junior secondary classrooms. According to Cognitive Load Theory (Paas & Sweller, 2003), human working memory has a strictly limited capacity. When instructional texts are far beyond learners' current language proficiency, the inherent difficulty of decoding vocabulary and parsing complex syntax generates an overwhelming intrinsic cognitive load. As a result, students must allocate the vast majority of their finite cognitive resources to these lower-level processing activities. Under such conditions, fewer cognitive resources remain available for higher-order thinking activities including analysis, inference, critical reflection, imagination, and creative interpretation. This imbalance in cognitive engagement may limit students' opportunities to participate in deeper meaning construction and creativity-oriented thinking processes during reading activities.

4.2.3. Teacher-Centered Instruction and Limited Openness in Classroom Interaction

Although various instructional innovations have been proposed in recent years, junior secondary English reading instruction in many classrooms still relies heavily on teacher-centered approaches that are closely associated with grammar-translation practices (Chen, 2026). In such instructional settings, teachers typically guide students through detailed explanations of vocabulary, grammatical structures, sentence patterns, and textual meanings, while students focus primarily on memorization, language analysis, and comprehension activities.

These instructional approaches may help teachers manage classroom progress efficiently and support students' performance in language examinations (Wu & Wu, 2014). However, they also tend to place strong emphasis on linguistic accuracy, correct interpretation, and the mastery of formal language knowledge. As a result, classroom learning may focus more on convergent thinking processes, such as identifying fixed answers and establishing logical relationships within the text, than on divergent thinking processes that encourage multiple interpretations, exploratory thinking, and creative responses.

The influence of such instructional practices can also be observed in classroom interaction patterns. In order to improve students' academic performance within limited instructional time, teachers may prefer students to provide quick and standardized answers to reading questions (Chen, 2026). Under these conditions, classroom discussion often centers on correctness rather than on the exploration of ideas and perspectives. Consequently, students may have limited opportunities to express alternative viewpoints, engage in imaginative interpretation, or participate in open-ended meaning construction.

Over time, classroom interaction may become increasingly procedural and less dialogic in nature, reducing the openness and cognitive flexibility necessary for creativity development. In such learning environments, it may be difficult to create classroom conditions that effectively encourage students' curiosity, creative engagement, and divergent thinking during English reading activities.

4.2.4. Standardized Assessment and Constraints on Creative Thinking Development

At present, assessment practices in junior secondary English reading instruction rely heavily on multiple-choice questions and other highly standardized testing formats. Such assessment tasks typically focus on learners' lower-level cognitive processing, particularly accurate comprehension of vocabulary, sentence meaning, and explicit textual information. In many cases, assessment emphasizes speed, accuracy, and the identification of predetermined correct answers. Even when short-answer questions are included, they often remain limited to literal understanding and rarely require students to engage in open-ended higher-order thinking activities such as inference, synthesis, imagination, or creative interpretation (Wang & Ge, 2022).

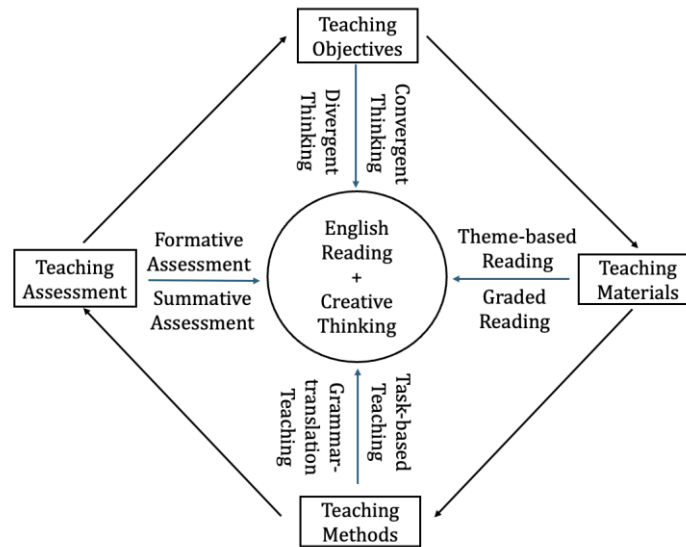
Research has suggested that assessment formats may significantly influence the relationship between academic performance and creative thinking. In a longitudinal study, Chamorro-Premuzic (2006) found that divergent thinking was positively associated with performance in more open-ended forms of assessment, such as oral examinations, group projects, and dissertations, but negatively associated with performance in more restrictive assessment formats, including multiple-choice tests and timed writing tasks. These findings indicate that students with stronger divergent thinking abilities may perform more effectively in tasks that allow for flexibility, originality, and creative expression, whereas highly standardized forms of assessment may not fully capture such abilities.

From a pedagogical perspective, assessment practices that place excessive emphasis on standardized responses and rapid processing may provide limited opportunities for students to demonstrate creativity-oriented thinking (Au, 2007). When reading assessment focuses primarily on linguistic accuracy and fixed answers, students may become more concerned with identifying expected responses than with exploring multiple interpretations, generating original ideas, or engaging critically and imaginatively with texts. Under such conditions, assessment may have limited capacity to support the development of divergent thinking and creative engagement in English reading classrooms.

4.3. A Pedagogical Framework for Creative Thinking-Oriented Junior Secondary English Reading Instruction

The cultivation of creative thinking requires teachers to adopt new pedagogical concepts and explore new instructional approaches (Lin et al., 2025). In response to this need and the problems identified in the previous sections, this study proposes a pedagogical framework for junior secondary English reading instruction (see Figure 1) with the aim of effectively integrating creative thinking cultivation into classroom teaching. The proposed framework consists of four interrelated dimensions, namely teaching objectives, teaching materials, teaching methods, and teaching assessment, which together aim to support the integration of creative thinking cultivation into junior secondary English reading instruction.

Figure 1: A Pedagogical Framework for Creative Thinking-Oriented Junior Secondary English Reading Instruction



4.3.1. Teaching Objectives

To integrate divergent thinking into instructional objectives, teachers may align creativity-oriented objectives with unit themes and design classroom activities that encourage creative cognitive engagement. In this way, broad expectations related to creative thinking can be translated into specific and operable instructional objectives. For example, instructional objectives may require students to engage deeply with texts through activities such as prediction, inference, and critical reflection, or to extend the meaning of a topic through tasks involving discovery, imagination, and creation.

Taking Unit 3 “Keep Fit” from Book 1 of the Grade 7 People’s Education Press English textbook series, one of the textbook series widely used in Chinese junior secondary schools, as an example, one of the textbook series widely used in Chinese junior secondary schools, as an example, teachers may supplement language knowledge and reading skill objectives with creativity-oriented objectives such as the following: “to develop interdisciplinary knowledge related to health and establish connections among different areas of knowledge”; “to express different opinions on the text content and justify personal viewpoints in English”; “to identify and summarize at least four health-related problems faced by junior secondary students based on the reading materials”; and “to design a health-promotion poster independently by using the language learned in the unit.”

Through the accomplishment of these objectives, students are encouraged to acquire interdisciplinary knowledge related to health through reading and apply such knowledge to analyze real-life situations and problems. During this process, students generate multiple ideas, evaluate alternative perspectives, and gradually form their own viewpoints and solutions to problems. As a result, both divergent thinking and convergent thinking can be developed alongside students’ English reading abilities.

4.3.2. *Teaching Materials*

The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) emphasize that unit-based instruction should incorporate different types of texts and integrate diverse forms of knowledge. Similarly, the cultivation of creative thinking depends on broad and well-connected knowledge foundations. Therefore, junior secondary English reading instruction should move beyond an exclusive reliance on textbooks and provide students with richer and more diversified reading materials (Ao & Wang, 2022). When selecting reading materials, teachers should take into consideration both the richness of content and the appropriateness of difficulty level.

With regard to content expansion, teachers are encouraged to supplement textbook materials with additional readings related to the unit theme. On the one hand, reading materials should incorporate interdisciplinary content by introducing texts related to science, history, society, art, and other fields. Such materials can help students expand their thematic vocabulary and establish connections across different areas of knowledge. On the other hand, attention should also be paid to genre diversity, including expository texts, short stories, news reports, and other text types (Guo et al., 2021). Because different genres vary in their purposes, structures, and linguistic features, they can guide students to understand a topic from multiple perspectives, including logical organization, emotional experience, and social reality. This diversified reading input can help optimize students' knowledge structures and provide rich resources for creative thinking activities.

In terms of difficulty level, reading materials should be matched appropriately to students' English proficiency. For example, graded readers such as the Oxford Bookworms Library and the Cambridge Bilingual Graded Readers series may be introduced into classroom reading. These materials cover a wide range of themes and are professionally leveled, thereby helping students at different reading proficiency levels obtain comprehensible input. Teachers may also make use of high-quality online reading resources such as ReadWorks, Times for Kids and British Council LearnEnglish Teens, etc. These platforms typically provide texts at different levels of difficulty, and some even adapt the same article into multiple versions for different proficiency levels. In addition, AI-based tools can also be used to adapt reading materials into different levels of difficulty according to students' language proficiency.

Through these approaches, students can select reading materials that are appropriate for their own language levels without devoting excessive cognitive resources to language decoding during reading. As a result, more cognitive resources can be allocated to deeper comprehension, interpretation, and creative engagement with texts.

4.3.3. *Teaching Methods*

To foster the development of learners' creative thinking, junior secondary English reading instruction should adopt a student-centered approach (Aytaç & Kula, 2020). Specifically, task-based language teaching can be integrated as the primary framework to foster active engagement, while selectively retaining the strengths of grammar-translation instruction to provide necessary linguistic support. Based on instructional objectives, teachers may design open-ended and communicative tasks closely related to students' real-life experiences, such as information-gap tasks, jigsaw tasks, problem-

solving tasks, and opinion-debate tasks. Through participation in these activities, students can gradually develop creative thinking within authentic language contexts.

Taking the unit “Keep Fit” as an example, the following section illustrates the design and implementation of an information-gap task aimed at achieving the instructional objective of “developing broad knowledge related to health.” In the pre-task stage, teachers may integrate interdisciplinary and multi-genre reading materials of different difficulty levels related to the unit theme according to the material-selection principles discussed above. Students are then encouraged to select and read materials before class. Example texts may include *Mental Health of Adolescents* (psychology/popular science), *Healthy Food and Exercise Can Help a Young Brain* (neuroscience/popular science), *Exercise Machines in Classrooms* (education/news report), *New Exercise Guidelines: Move More, Sit Less, Start Younger* (sports science/news report), *The Olympians* (sports studies/popular science), and *The Crossover* (literature/fiction).

During the task stage, students who have read different materials are organized into heterogeneous groups for classroom sharing and discussion. While one group member summarizes the main ideas from the text they have chosen, the other members listen and record newly acquired information. After the sharing session, the group collaboratively completes a health-information chart or diagram and presents the results in English to the whole class. In the post-task stage, the teacher guides students to reflect on task completion and provides focused practice on linguistic difficulties encountered during the activity.

This instructional design encourages students to use English for meaning negotiation in authentic communicative contexts. Through the process of input, interaction, and information integration, students can improve both their English proficiency and their knowledge structures, thereby achieving the instructional objective of developing broad knowledge related to health.

4.3.4. Teaching Assessment

To align with the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition), which emphasize the role of assessment in promoting both learning and teaching, junior secondary English reading instruction should adopt an assessment approach that integrates formative assessment with summative assessment (Wang & Jiang, 2023). Such an approach should pay close attention to students’ language development and thinking development throughout the instructional process and allow teachers to adjust instructional strategies based on assessment feedback in order to better achieve instructional objectives.

Formative assessment may combine self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment to evaluate students’ reading volume, depth of reading reflection, and performance in classroom tasks (Zhang, 2020). More specifically, students may be asked to keep reading journals in which they record their weekly extracurricular reading, document their personal interpretations and real-life associations related to the texts, and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their own reading practices. In addition, students may complete task-reflection forms to evaluate their language use and divergent thinking demonstrated during classroom activities.

At the group level, students may exchange and review each other's reading journals and conduct peer evaluation during the post-task stage, thereby learning to recognize and appreciate the originality and uniqueness of others' ideas through collaborative interaction and discussion. Meanwhile, teachers may gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' reading behaviors, language performance, and creative thinking development through regular reviews of reading journals and task-reflection forms, together with classroom observation and immediate feedback (Wang & Jiang, 2023). During this process, teachers should pay particular attention to identifying and encouraging students' reasonable questioning, original perspectives, and creative expression so as to create an open, inclusive, and intellectually engaging classroom atmosphere. Assessment feedback can then be used to further adjust instructional strategies and classroom arrangements in ways that support both learning and teaching.

Summative assessment, by contrast, focuses primarily on evaluating the extent to which instructional objectives have been achieved and on measuring students' learning outcomes. In addition to conventional multiple-choice questions, more open-ended short-answer tasks may be incorporated into reading assessment (Wang & Jiang, 2023). For example, students may be asked to discuss their views on a text based on personal experiences or to place themselves in the position of a character in the text and explain how they would respond to a similar situation. Such tasks require students to engage deeply with the text, draw upon multiple forms of knowledge, and participate in higher-order thinking activities such as inference, evaluation, critical reflection, and creative thinking in order to express individualized viewpoints. Compared with multiple-choice questions alone, these forms of assessment can not only reflect students' English reading abilities more accurately but also provide a more effective evaluation of their creative thinking development.

5. Conclusion

This paper adopted a narrative literature review approach to examine creative thinking-oriented junior secondary English reading instruction. The review suggests that English reading instruction has considerable potential for fostering students' creative thinking because reading involves meaning construction, interpretation, association, evaluation, and personal response. However, existing studies also indicate that this potential has not been fully realized in current classroom practice. In particular, the cultivation of creative thinking remains insufficiently integrated into instructional objectives, reading materials, instructional methods, and assessment practices.

Based on the synthesis of previous research, this paper proposed a pedagogical framework for creative thinking-oriented junior secondary English reading instruction. The framework aims to promote the coordinated development of students' language competence and creative thinking by aligning teaching objectives, reading materials, instructional methods, and assessment. It may provide useful pedagogical implications for English teachers seeking to integrate creative thinking cultivation into reading classrooms.

Nevertheless, as a narrative review and conceptual study, this paper does not empirically validate the proposed framework. Future research may examine its effectiveness through classroom-based studies, such as teaching experiments, classroom observation, interviews, and questionnaire surveys. Based on empirical evidence, the framework can be further refined and improved.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable. This study is a systematic review based on publicly available and previously published data. No primary data collection involving human participants or animals was conducted.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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