

# Exploration and Application of Life Education Resources in High School English Textbooks

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, life education is widely emphasized to cultivate students' healthy psychology, good morals and optimistic attitude towards life. As English is a humanistic subject which emphasizes nurturing people, English textbooks contain a sea of contents of life education. Therefore, this study aims at exploring the strategies for permeating life education into English teaching by analyzing the proportion and distribution of the contents related to life education in the compulsory course of English teaching textbooks for senior high schools. According to the results, there are a host of life education resources in textbooks, but the proportion and distribution of the contents of life education are not balanced. Therefore, this paper proposes that English teachers should further extent the original materials of life education in English textbooks to cover all categories of life education, create life-oriented teaching situation to arouse life thinking, develop extracurricular activities to cultivate life skills and collect other resources related to life educational to supplement the contents of life education in textbooks.

**Keywords:** Life Education; English Textbooks (ELTRP Published in 2019); Senior High School English

## 1. Introduction

The general Office of the Ministry of Education and the General Office of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology jointly issued a circular in 2020, pointing out that efforts should be made to strengthen patriotism education, life education and mental health education. [1] During the The National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference in the same year, several NPC members also suggested strengthening life education in primary and secondary schools. The Outline of The National Medium and Long term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) lists life education as one of the "four priorities" in the education development strategy. [2] Therefore, it is of great importance to guide students to understand, cherish, revere, enjoy and be grateful for life through life education. However, previous studies show that it is difficult to open life education courses alone in school, so many scholars focus on penetrating life education through subject teaching. As a humanistic subject emphasizing education, some teaching contents in English textbooks overlap with contents related to life education, so teachers can directly carry out life education according to the contents of these textbooks. [3] Therefore, this paper takes the compulsory textbooks of new high school English textbooks (ELTRP Published in 2019) as the research object, and uses text analysis method to study whether current high school English textbooks have enough contents closely relevant to life education. At the same time, this research means to figure out strategies of how to use English textbooks to permeate life education, wishing to catch English teachers' attention to integrating life education into English teaching, to provide suggestions on the use of relevant textbooks, and to fulfill educational function of practical discipline.

## 2. Analysis of materials related to life education in high school English textbooks

This study aims at solving research problems through data analysis. Firstly, it discusse proportion of the contents related to life education and the advantages and disadvantages behind the proportion of contents related to life education. Secondly, according to the results of data analysis, it illustrates the strategies of using English teaching materials to infiltrate life education in English teaching.

### 2.1 Life education elements of each category in English textbooks

In order to analyze contents related to life education more objectively and directly, life education elements will be counted in detail according to the six fields and twelve modules of life education curriculum proposed by Feng Jianjun and Zhu Yongxin.[4] At the same time, for the purpose of doing a systematic research, each plate in the unit is treated as a whole and marked as "1". If a plate contains more than one column, it is marked by the number of columns. For example, the section of "using Language" includes three columns: "grammar", "vocabulary", and "listening". If all three columns contain life education elements, mark them as "3". And all life education elements in FLTRP high school required English textbooks and its overall proportion are presented as follows:

Table 1: Life education elements of each category in English textbooks

Classification		Frequency	Ratio
Fields	Modules		
Safety and Health	Home security	1	1.3%
	Campus security	0	0%
	Social security	9	11.9%
	Physical health	8	10.5%
	Mental health	4	5.3%
	Gender health	0	0%
Formation and Communication	Habit formation	2	2.6%
	Social interaction	26	34.2%
	Living with nature	22	29.0%
Career and Value	Career planning	1	1.3%
	Value and faith	2	2.6%
	Life and death wisdom	1	1.3%

As can be seen from the table above, the contents related to "safety and health" in the textbook appear 22 times in total, accounting for 29.0% of the total. The content related to formation and communication accounted for 65.8% of the total. "Career and Value" was largely ignored, appearing only five times in total. It can be seen from this that although there are abundant life education resources in the foreign research edition of high school English compulsory textbooks, there is an obvious imbalance in the proportion of materials related to life education in various fields.

The field of "safety and health" focuses on students' personal safety and healthy development of body and mind, which is an important part of life education. However, the relevant content in English textbooks is not enough, which requires teachers to properly extend the material of textbooks in the teaching process, so as to cultivate high school students' safety awareness, health awareness, survival ability, ability to resist pressure, etc. "Formation and Communication" focuses on students' habits, social interaction, environmental awareness, etc. As a language teaching subject, English is relatively rich in related resources. However, how to attract students' active attention to self-management, improving social ability, understanding life and other related topics through English teachers' teaching activities needs to be further considered by teachers and relevant researchers. This part of "career and value" is highly consistent with the concept of fostering morality and promoting all-round development of students emphasized in the new curriculum standard. However, there are not many related topics in the textbooks themselves, which requires English teachers not only to sublimate to this field according to the contents of the textbooks, but also to learn to collect and select high-quality related resources as supplements, so as to enrich the life education resources of English courses.

Secondly, there is a great imbalance in the proportion of contents related to life education in each module. For example, the content of "social communication" and "getting along with nature" is very large, accounting for 34.2% and 29.0% respectively. Teachers can carry out life education with the help of unit themes. On the other hand, the contents of "home safety", "campus safety", "gender health", "career planning", "life and death wisdom" and other aspects of the textbook are little or even absent. Take "gender health" as an example. High school students are in the period of adolescence, and they are ignorant and full of curiosity. Proper teaching of gender health can help some of them to avoid unnecessary mistakes. English has extensive exposure to Western culture. Compared with other subjects, some materials have a broader vision and a more open mind. It can be used to help students understand youth development, master normal heterosexual communication, prevent sexual behavior and so on. However, the lack of relevant resources in the textbook is not only a lack of relevant life

education resources, but also a reflection of the incomplete implementation of the textbook in education.

In addition, the contents of "value and faith" and "habit formation" are nothing much, only accounting for only 2.6% respectively, but they have their own uniqueness. In terms of "value and faith", although there are not many passages directly mentioned it in textbooks, many articles can be further sublimated to the level of value and faith. In terms of "habit formation", although there are few related text, the whole process of English learning is also a process of habit formation. To a large extent, habit formation depends on the subtle guidance in the whole learning process rather than the content of the chapters. Finally, the content related to "social security", "physical health" and "mental health" accounts for a moderate proportion. English teachers can analyze the specific situation of students in their classes and make targeted and selective supplementary extensions according to the situation and needs of students.

In general, FLTRP high school English textbooks contain a large number of contents related to life education, which is worthy of high school English teachers to fully explore the English textbooks and cultivate students' life consciousness. However, the proportion of modules in various fields of life education is very imbalanced, which must be compensated by relevant strategies.

## 2.2 The distribution of life education elements in each unit of High school English textbooks

In the new FLTRP High School English required textbooks, each unit consists of six sections, including starting out, understanding ideas, using language, developing ideas, presenting ideas, and project. In this study, life education elements of each section of each unit are counted, and their specific distribution is as follows:

Table 2: The distribution of life education elements in each unit of High school English textbooks

Sections	Frequency	Ratio
Starting out	7	9.2%
Understanding ideas	13	17.1%
Using language	28	36.9%
Developing ideas	14	18.4%
Presenting ideas,	4	5.3%
Project	10	13.1%

As can be seen from the above table, the most abundant part of life education is using language, accounting for 36.9%. This may be partly because this section includes grammar, vocabulary and listening and speaking, there are a lot of language practice activities, and there are three columns in the statistics. Another is that the content itself is extensive. Secondly, understanding ideas and developing ideas accounted for 17.1% and 18.4% respectively. In addition, the proportion of starting out, presenting ideas and Project is 9.2%, 5.3% and 13.1% respectively, which are relatively rare.

In general, the distribution of life education elements in FLTRP high school English textbooks is not balanced. Huang Junjie puts forward that the goal of "life education" lies in "people" rather than "things", especially in the transformation of learners' "hearts", whose ultimate goal is to make learners' "hearts" to be able to see virtue with wisdom and transform the acquired knowledge into the intrinsic value of moral practice[5]. So there is no doubt that each unit plays a unique function, high school English teachers can combine the characteristics of each section to optimize learning results when carrying out life education.

Life education is a pluralistic collection, including many dimensions and fields. Life education in its broad sense holds that education itself is a career related to life, and life education is education "about life", "through life" and "for life". Life education in the narrow sense is proposed based on solving the problems existing in life. In general, no matter focusing on life education in narrow sense or in broad sense, we should make good use of teaching materials[6]. For example, the main purpose of the using language section is to activate students' existing background knowledge and language knowledge. There are many life education resources in the textbook. Teachers can use it directly and infiltrate it into the teaching process. However, there are relatively few life education resources in starting out, presenting ideas and project sections, so English teachers need to expand life education resources appropriately according to unit themes. Especially in the section of project, as this part involves a large number of extra-curricular activities, and life education itself not only needs to infiltrate relevant concepts in teaching, but also needs to practice life education activities in practice to improve students'

survival, life and other skills, we should expand relevant activities base on life education.

### **3. Strategies for permeating life education with English teaching materials**

As a result of the different characteristics of the subject, the way of infiltration is different[7]. If high school English teachers want to use textbooks to infiltrate life education in English teaching, on the one hand, they should make full use of the content of life education in textbooks. On the other hand, the teaching process should reflect the concept of life education.

#### ***3.1 Extent the original content related to life education in English textbooks to cover all fields of life education***

Due to the imbalanced proportion and distribution of the original contents related to life education in various fields in the textbooks, teachers must appropriately expand and extend the life education resources in English textbooks according to the needs of education. In High school English textbooks, some teaching materials cannot be directly used in life education, but they are actually somehow related to life education. Teachers should expand these kinds of original teaching contents in order to evenly penetrate all fields of materials related to life education in English teaching.

When high school English teachers teach the lesson "Saying Sorry to Family members" of Unit 3 Family Matters, teachers can further expand the theme of parenting based on the original content and guide students to pay attention to the hardships of parents. This helps students understand that life comes from parents, and individual growth comes from parents' careful care and further guide students to respect, understand and appreciate their parents.

#### ***3.2 Create life-oriented teaching situation to arouse life thinking***

Teachers should consider students' subjective needs to create teaching scenarios and build platforms for students to communicate and learn. High school English teachers can create situations according to different theme contexts in class, so that students can try to use English language to find problems independently. Through cooperation, communication, discussion, investigation, collection and processing of information and other inquiry activities, acquire the ability to analyze and solve problems. In general, if the teacher connects the student's life to create the scene, not only can stimulate the student's interest, but also is conducive to deepen the student's perception of life.

For example, when students learn the text "like Father like Son", teachers can take the life education module "Career planning" as the theme. And lead students to discuss the life planning dilemma faced by the son in the reading passage, and then thinking and sharing their own life planning. For one thing, this process is beneficial to cultivate students' critical thinking ability and critical thinking. For another, it can arouse students' deep reflection on life.

#### ***3.3 Develop extracurricular activities to cultivate life skill***

Life education not only pays attention to the formation of life consciousness, but also attach great importance to the cultivation of survival ability and living habits. Therefore, life education should not be limited by classroom space. Many contents of life education can be practiced and learned through extracurricular activities. For example, to cultivate students' safety awareness, labor awareness, health awareness, social skills, and outdoor survival ability need to go out of the classroom so as to achieve the purpose of education through real practice. And as FLTRP English Senior High School textbook Project sets up many extra-curricular activities, teachers can directly use these activities to permeate life education. In addition, there are many life education elements in the using language section, which can be used by teachers to further design extracurricular activities.

For example, after learning Unit 3 Running into a better life of compulsory 2, English teachers can organize a sprinting entertainment competition on the school playground, so that students can truly experience the pleasure brought by sports. After exercise, students sit around and discuss the benefits of exercise in English freely. In this process, students are aroused to pay attention to health and develop passion for sports.

### **3.4 Collect other resources related to life education to supplement the contents of life education in textbooks**

High school English teaching materials have limited resources, so teachers should appropriately select other life education resources to complement textbooks, so as to achieve the purpose of educating students through subject teaching. For example, in the process of appreciating literary works, those kinds of wonderful works are more attractive and inner touch for readers than some content in the textbooks, and these works can cause readers to cherish the resonance of life. Therefore, it is a good way to select literary works as expansion resources combined with unit theme.

High school English teachers can recommend movies and literature works related to life education to students, and they can also play videos or show pictures related to life education in the introduction of class. For example, when teachers explain articles about natural disasters, they can show English videos of disaster response measures in class. This not only enhances the classroom atmosphere, but also teaches students practical skills to deal with natural disasters.

## **4. Conclusion**

In general, the connotation of life education is rich and profound, and there are a host of materials related to life education in high school English textbooks. Although the relevant materials in English textbooks are insufficient in some fields and modules of life education, it can be solved by English teachers to appropriately sublimate, supplement and extend the themes. At the same time, the texts in the high school English textbooks vary greatly, and accordingly countless teaching modes can be generated to infiltrate life education in the development and application of textbook resources. Therefore, in general, if we make good use of senior high school English textbooks to properly infiltrate life education in English teaching, it will be beneficial to enrich the life connotation of senior high school students and improve their quality of life. Moreover, high school English teachers should not attach too much importance to language knowledge in teaching, but should make full use of and expand teaching resources, pay attention to students' mental development in teaching, and actively explore life education resources to cultivate students' healthy and upward feelings for life.

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