

Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into English Teaching in Middle Schools

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Abstract: *The integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into middle school English teaching has been a hot research topic. It has been explored in recent years in primary and secondary school English teaching. Chinese traditional culture is vast and profound. How to enable students to better grasp their own ethnic culture during the process of learning English is a question worth pondering. Based on this background, this article is committed to organically integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture with English teaching, aiming to find new teaching strategies that enable students to better understand and apply traditional Chinese culture; Improve students' ability to express these traditional cultures in English, and stimulate their active interest in English learning, ultimately achieving comprehensive development of middle school English teaching level.*

Keywords: *English teaching, traditional Chinese culture, teaching strategies*

1. Introduction

The 2017 edition of the General High School English Curriculum Standards (hereinafter referred to as the "New High School Curriculum Standards") states that "to enhance the understanding of China's excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and socialist advanced culture, form correct values and moral emotions, and become people with civilized literacy and social responsibility[1]." Understanding advanced foreign culture and scientific knowledge can also promote the development of their mind, emotions, attitudes, and values, as well as the improvement of their comprehensive humanistic literacy [2]. Currently, countries and ethnic groups around the world are more or less within the scope of international exchanges. Therefore, providing English education and teaching to primary and secondary school students can not only enhance their learning, understanding, and appreciation of excellent foreign cultures, but also promote China's foreign exchange and opening up, cultivate Chinese sentiment, enhance cultural confidence, enhance international identity, expand global perspectives, and enhance the level of cross regional cultural exchange. At the same time, the New Curriculum Standards for Full time Ordinary High Schools also propose that middle school students in the new century should not only have English acquisition skills and application abilities, but also recognize the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. We hope to introduce traditional Chinese culture to China in simple English and absorb the essence of Western culture. However, the new generation of students nowadays are very unfamiliar with China's traditional culture and spirit, many of whom are deeply influenced by Western values and have a weakened and indifferent attitude towards China's traditional culture. The "Guidelines for the Curriculum and Textbooks of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in Primary and Secondary Schools" points out the need to establish a solid foundation for national cultural confidence and value confidence [3]. In English classrooms, teachers should deeply explore the profound cultural heritage contained in the textbook content. This is not only a necessary means of imparting language knowledge, but also a key link in achieving the goal of education. Closely combining the essence of traditional culture with English learning can stimulate students' interest in learning and enhance their understanding and respect for the cultural connotation behind the language. This teaching method is not only a requirement for students' core qualities in English courses, but also an effective way to implement the basic task of cultivating morality and talent. In this process, students can cultivate their sentiments and form correct values during the learning process, laying a solid foundation for becoming well-rounded talents in the future. At the same time, in the process of practical English teaching, teachers can use digital technology to improve the diversity, interactivity, and fun of teaching according to the actual learning needs of students, thereby enhancing the fun and interest of middle school English teaching.

In recent years, with the rapid development of China's economy and high quality, Chinese traditional culture has begun to go to the world and become a hot spot for people to learn.

Confucius Institutes have been established all over the world. However, in countries with a boom in learning Chinese traditional culture, few people can speak fluent English to spread Chinese traditional culture to the world, which limits foreigners' understanding of Chinese traditional culture to a large extent and hinders the spread of Chinese culture to the outside world.

China has always attached great importance to education. In order to implement the CPC Central Committee's guideline, the Ministry of Education issued the Guidelines on February 5, 2021. Based on the above situation, our primary and secondary school education still needs to further strengthen the linkage and integration with China's excellent traditional culture.

2. Research significance

2.1 To play the foundation of cultural confidence

Primary and secondary school students are in a critical period of the formation of outlook on life, world outlook and values, which can cultivate their ability to correctly understand and understand Chinese traditional culture. China's fine tradition is the root and soul of our Chinese nation, which can strengthen their cultural confidence and national pride [4].

2.2 Making clear the role and direction of English learning

Helping primary and middle school students to better understand English is only a way to spread their own national culture, but also a way to communicate with various ethnic groups in the world. To help primary and middle school students to learn English better and use English more flexibly, its role is to communicate, and to better spread the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

2.3 Integrating the excellent traditional Chinese culture with English teaching deeply

In various ways and means, it makes English classroom full of "artistic style, fun and flexibility". Better improve the cultural quality and bilingual communication ability of primary and secondary school students to promote their all-round development.

3. The infiltration status of traditional culture in middle schools

3.1 The content of traditional culture in the textbook is not enough

First of all, under the guidance of the educational purposes and guidelines of quality-oriented education, we require the cultivation of all-round socialist builders and successors in the new era. The reform of the new curriculum is also steadily advancing. At the same time, the content of the textbooks should also meet the requirements of The Times, and pay attention to the depth and breadth of the content of the selection of materials, so as to lay a solid foundation for future learning. But there are still many textbooks of little traditional culture; the world is changing and conflict between countries. The duel between countries is not only in military force, but also in culture. The "poison textbook" incident is an example. Attempts to poison children's minds through cultural integration, through the imperceptible integration of adverse effects on children [5]. As a carrier, textbooks have the mission of inheriting human culture. On the one hand, they should put the achievements of modern human civilization in history, and on the other hand, they should continue the traditional culture, which is the foundation and source of modern culture [6]. Middle school English textbooks provide a lot of information and content to help students better understand western culture, western customs and western life. However, traditional Chinese culture is a part of the history of world civilization, and there are many essence that have not been included in middle school English textbooks.

3.2 Teachers do not extend the extension of traditional culture enough

With the emphasis on the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and under the requirements of the new curriculum reform, many teaching materials and teaching resources have begun to cover the content of the traditional Chinese culture. There are many materials about excellent traditional culture, such as

poetry, festivals, celebrity stories and so on. However, in the process of teaching, many teachers are often affected by the traditional test-oriented teaching concept, and many teachers only stay on the surface language knowledge without other extension. When designing teaching plans, they tend to focus on grammar knowledge, English vocabulary, essay exercises, etc., and pay less attention to the content of traditional Chinese culture education.

3.3 The inspection and practice of traditional culture are not enough

Under the influence of the current education model, the examination mechanism often only focuses on the examination of theoretical knowledge, such as the common test types in middle school: single-choice questions, reading questions, compositions, etc. Students only deal with the exam, and there is not much content about traditional culture. If this goes on for a long time, teachers and students are more likely to ignore the learning of traditional culture. Compared with the familiar four parts of "listening", "speaking", "reading" and "writing", Chinese English education is more inclined to "reading" and "writing". Therefore, there are great defects in the practical application and operation of English in daily learning and life.

4. The importance of inheriting traditional Chinese culture

It is very common for English teaching in primary and secondary schools to adopt the method of culture introduction. However, in the current English teaching practice in primary and secondary schools, culture introduction is still a one-way target language and culture input, lacking the introduction of China's excellent traditional culture. This imbalance hinders the process of cross-cultural communication to a certain extent. As an international lingua franca, English is no longer tied to English-speaking countries. Instead, as a medium, it plays a role in the construction of international communication. A better second language learning requires students to have a deeper understanding of foreign cultures, and it is of great significance for Chinese excellent traditional culture to penetrate into English teaching in primary and secondary schools. Foreign language educators should also pay attention.

The new curriculum standards clearly point out that English in primary and secondary schools should cultivate students' intercultural communication ability and build teenagers' cultural self-confidence and national pride. As they are exposed to more British and American cultures, it is easy for them to admire British and American cultures in learning, especially enjoy British and American festivals, such as Valentine's Day and April Fool's Day. In order to let the excellent traditional Chinese culture continue to spread, it is necessary to guide them to realize the charm of the excellent traditional Chinese culture and form a rational cultural concept of foreign culture.

The socialist core values with the excellent traditional Chinese culture as the foundation are the guiding values for the country, society and individuals, and are also the compass for primary and secondary school students to learn traditional Chinese culture and foreign cultures.

Only the determination of the subject status can make students pay attention to and respect traditional Chinese culture, and gradually develop students' cultural literacy in a subtle way. Primary and secondary school students are in the critical period of physical and mental development, so they should cultivate correct values. With the input and guidance of excellent culture, the importance of our excellent traditional culture in English education cannot be ignored. Inspire the national self-confidence and pride of primary and secondary school students, and train qualified socialist successors. The inheritance of traditional Chinese culture plays an irreplaceable role in foreign language education. The quality and effect of foreign language education can be effectively improved by cultivating students' cultural awareness, enhancing their intercultural communication ability and enhancing their learning interest and motivation. Educators should be aware of this and actively explore effective ways to combine traditional Chinese culture with foreign language teaching in order to cultivate more talents with international vision and cultural accomplishment.

5. Integrating Chinese traditional culture into English teaching

5.1 A selection for a good textbook

Carefully selected English textbooks containing Chinese classic literature works, historical stories and traditional art and other relevant content, so that students can learn more about the excellent

traditional Chinese culture in the process of learning English. Articles and reading materials about Chinese traditional culture, such as ancient Chinese poetry, traditional festivals and traditional customs, can also be added to the textbooks. By studying these contents, students can understand the unique features of Chinese culture and combine this knowledge with their English studies. These materials will also involve Chinese festivals, traditional customs, culture and art, etc., to help students understand the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

The use of fables and stories from Chinese traditional culture can be incorporated. Chinese traditional culture is flourishing in meaningful stories and fables, such as "Stories of Confucius" and "Idiom Stories." It is helpful for students understand and master English by reading and explaining these stories while also conveying the values and wisdom of Chinese traditional culture. It can also encourage students to explore the values and ways of thinking behind Chinese traditional culture and deepen their understanding of Chinese traditional culture.

5.2 Introduction of engaging activities related to Chinese traditional culture

We organize English cultural competitions and other activities to allow students to experience cultural charm, improve learning enthusiasm and participation.

We introduce traditional Chinese art forms, such as Chinese painting, Paper Cuttings, Chinese dance, etc., as auxiliary tools for English teaching. By learning and experiencing these art forms, students can develop an appreciation for art and gain insights into the uniqueness of Chinese traditional culture. We also help students explore various aspects of Chinese traditional culture by creating posters showcasing it in class.

We cultivate students' interest in traditional Chinese culture by organizing visits to museums, ancient temples, and other related cultural sites. These visits can spark students' curiosity and interest in Chinese traditional culture.

We will integrate traditional Chinese cultural content into teaching activities. It is important to connect teaching goals and content with Chinese traditional culture throughout various teaching activities. For example, when teaching Unit 8 "Is there a post office near here?" from the People's Education Press (PEP) textbook for Grade 7, teachers can assign homework related to introducing places associated with Chinese traditional culture and have students make presentations. This way, students can practice their English speaking and writing skills while exploring and familiarizing themselves with Chinese traditional culture.

5.3 Utilizing information technology for teaching

Multimedia technology is used to play audio-visual materials related to English, so that students can experience traditional Chinese culture through sight and hearing. In recent years, with the increased importance given to traditional culture in English teaching, various English documentaries have been produced that vividly showcase the unique charm of Chinese culture through engaging language and beautiful visuals. For example, the documentary series "Four Seasons in China" produced by CNC of Xinhua News Agency introduces the profound meaning of China's twenty-four solar terms and their influence on contemporary China. As a bilingual documentary series of national importance, it provides an innovative and appealing resource for English teaching.

We actively utilize online resources to guide students in conducting online research and exploring knowledge related to traditional Chinese culture. Students can deepen their understanding of Chinese traditional culture through activities such as watching videos and reading articles.

5.4 An Implement for interdisciplinary teaching

We implement interdisciplinary teaching by combining traditional Chinese culture with other disciplines. For example, learning about ancient Chinese culture in history class and then discussing related topics in English class deepen students' understanding of traditional Chinese culture.

We express and perform in English through the use of stories, poems, and scripts from traditional Chinese culture. In this way, students can improve their oral expression skills while also enhancing their understanding of traditional Chinese culture.

5.5 Teaching methods should be diversified

Interactive and experiential teaching methods, such as role-plays, group discussions, and cultural comparisons, are used to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the connotations and characteristics of traditional Chinese culture.

5.6 Creating a strong cultural atmosphere

We strive to create a language environment full of traditional Chinese culture, such as arranging Chinese cultural elements in the classroom, using Chinese words and expressions for English communication, etc., to help students better adapt and use English expressions related to traditional Chinese culture.

5.7 Improving the overall quality of teachers

We promote the improvement of teachers' comprehensive quality, including solid knowledge of traditional Chinese culture and English teaching ability. Through continuous learning and progress, teachers are able to skillfully combine these two aspects to guide students to have an in-depth understanding of traditional Chinese culture in English learning.

5.8 Engage in cross-cultural communication

Cross-cultural communication skills involve three levels: knowledge, attitude, and skills, and the combination of Chinese and Western styles in the new textbook is convenient for teachers to compare Chinese and foreign in teaching, and cultivate students' cross-cultural communication skills from three aspects: knowledge, attitude, and skills [7]. Students are encouraged to exchange and cooperate with foreign students, share traditional Chinese culture, enhance understanding and friendship between different cultures, and cultivate students' intercultural communication ability and global vision.

6. Conclusion

By incorporating traditional Chinese culture into English teaching, students can develop a strong interest and motivation in English learning. At the same time, through understanding Chinese culture, students can better understand their own cultural traditions, discover its charms, and develop cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, teachers should actively explore and apply various ways to integrate traditional Chinese culture into English teaching to promote the all-round development of students.

Foreign language teachers are the direct transmitters of English knowledge and culture. Reading and explaining these stories inherit the understanding of Chinese traditional culture knowledge. The teaching concepts and explanations of Chinese traditional culture in the classroom directly or indirectly affect students' understanding and absorption. In order to integrate traditional Chinese culture into the English classroom, teachers should consciously learn and cultivate knowledge and cultivation of traditional Chinese culture, explore the traditional Chinese culture behind each lesson, pay attention to the comparison between traditional Chinese culture and Western culture, and consciously integrate traditional Chinese culture into the English classroom. We look forward to the day when traditional Chinese culture can be spread to all corners of the world, not only to us Chinese, but also to people of different skin colors.

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