

The Qualities of English Teachers in Theme-based Instruction—An Exploration about the Humanity of the Different Teachings in the Same Reading and Writing Lesson in Grade 8

Liu Yumei^{1,a,*}, Qin Xiaolin^{2,b}, Xie Jialuo^{1,c}, He Dingxiang^{3,d}, Lv Chunlan^{3,e}

¹College of Foreign Languages, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang, China

²School of Foreign Languages, Southwest University, Chongqing, China

³English Teaching Research Group, Zhanjiang No. 2 Middle School, Zhanjiang, China

^a1045944776@qq.com, ^b70915515@qq.com, ^c2140889871@qq.com, ^dhedxyy568@163.com, ^e1223927256@qq.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: The advantages of theme-led and text-based foreign language teaching lie in that the richest human emotions, the truest society, life and human nature can be observed from the smallest texts. It can help students to go from reading, seizing, distinguishing, appreciating/questioning the text to the development of problem awareness, cultural awareness, critical awareness, and self-consciousness in learning, which is a mental process from sensibility to rationality. This is an ideal form that revolves around the four core competencies and highly integrates the instrumental and humanistic nature of language teaching. However, the practice of teaching one same reading and writing lesson in different ways in Grade 8 shows that teachers do lack the basic qualities to carry out the theme teaching--ability to capture and interpret theme information, ability to reorganize text, cultural awareness, and ability to empathize. Therefore, expanding knowledge of literature, history and philosophy, consolidating professional knowledge, conducting career reflection and emotional introspection are important practices for developing basic qualities.

Keywords: Theme-based Teaching; Qualities of English Teacher; Humanity

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, too many western educational concepts, models, strategies and methods have been introduced in English teaching in China, but too little attention has been paid to our traditional concepts of education. Indeed, western teaching methods have inspired us and benefited our English teaching a lot. However, if we do not look back to the glorious education history of China, it is impossible to form a more suitable teaching form for our country, let alone explore what ideas Chinese foreign language education should hold in foreign language lessons, what should be taught, how to teach, what kind of role teachers should play, and what qualities teacher should have under today's international circumstances. For more than two decades, the saying "Don't let your kids fall behind at the start point" has led to the rapid development of extracurricular training, but the teaching level is remarkably diverse and the teaching concept is only dedicated to persuading parents that extracurricular training is the best choice for further education. In such an environment, children lose the joy of growing up from a very early age, and in the first half of their life, most of them live an anxious life with the sole goal of getting into the best school. Indeed, competition-style education may produce depressed utilitarians with rich knowledge and strong skills, but lack of compassion, or eliminate a group of so-called losers with low IQ, lack of emotional intelligence, and full of resentment, struggling in society. However, neglected depression, pain, anxiety, and resistance are pervasive among young people, and the physical and mental harm and social crisis caused by this are unbearable even for generations. Education lacking humanistic care is non-humane, education lacking a humanistic spirit is irresponsible, and language teaching lacking humanism is soulless. As for this phenomenon, Chinese scholars also had a heated discussion on whether foreign language teaching should be instrumental or humanistic with the help of foreign teaching theories and traditional Chinese educational concepts, which were reflected in a series of teaching reform initiatives and promulgated

curriculum standards. Among these explorations, theme-based English teaching is one of the results of these explorations.

2. Humanity in Chinese Education in Past

Looking back at history, China is a country of humanity. Confucianism believes, “Those who want to carry forward fairness should first govern their own country well; those who want to govern their country well should first regulate their family well; those who want to regulate their family well should first cultivate their characters well.”^[1] “Dao” and “Morality” are the ideal shared by individual and the country. A person’s self-cultivation can lay the foundation for his success and is the prerequisite for him to realize his ambition. To receive education and improve self-cultivation is for the interest of the country rather than for the personal interest. It can contribute to the harmony of the state rather than fueling up the struggle for rights. The life pursuit of “sageliness within and kingliness outside” decides the Chinese pursuit of benevolence within and cultivation of a rich spiritual world and a noble personality. If a person lacks benevolence within, then he can hardly learn about the state or become the sage or king. Qian Mu holds that Chinese education attaches great importance to the humanistic spirit. There has not yet been any nation whose educational system can reach the spiritual height of China. Moreover, almost all academic ideas in China regard education philosophy at its core^[2]. Confucian ideas which have a far-reaching influence on Chinese education have given full expression to the profound humanistic characteristics of the positioning of educational objects, identification of the teaching content, and implementation of teaching methods. As the saying goes, “If you govern the masses by political orders and rectify their behaviors by the criminal law, then the masses might lose their sense of honor for the purpose of getting exempt from punishments; if you guide the masses by the morality and assimilate them by etiquette, the masses will not only develop the sense of honor but also submit to the authority.”^[3] This demonstrates the Confucianist understanding of educational functions and that the content of education should revolve around “morality” and “etiquette”. Hence, textbooks like *The Book of Songs*, *The Book of Changes*, *The Book of Rituals*, and *The Book of Music* have been compiled. Ideas like “Men are similar to each other by nature. They differ greatly due to the different growing environment”^[3], “Everyone can be the sages like Yao and Shun as long as he is willing to”^[4], and “provide education for all without discrimination”^[3] suggest that every student can be a gentleman or a distinguished man or even the sage who proposes confidence and fairness in education, respect for difference and dignity, etc. “The benevolent have nothing to worry about; the intelligent will not be bewildered; the brave will never be scared.”^[3] This saying sets down the standards for talent development. Cultivation of morality, values and personality is the most important, which goes through the learning of all subjects. Ideas such as “no explanation unless one is anxious or determined to learn” and “teach students in accordance with their amplitude”^[3] attach great importance to stimulate students’ initiative to learn, pay attention to students’ emotions, and stimulate their passion for learning. These ideas can guarantee the quality of classroom teaching even in the contemporary era. The educational concepts reflected by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in China all show their pursuit of a perfect personality, kindheartedness, and pure sentiments. With “morality”, “history” and “culture” as the content and “humanization” as the method, Confucianist ideas aim at bringing up talents with good personality, positive and moderate sentiments, always thinking for their state and family, and with profound humanistic self-cultivation.

China’s foreign language teaching was introduced to the mainland from Macao when the West learning was gradually spreading to the East. The purpose of this movement was to communicate with the West and learn advanced technology from the West, thus revitalizing China and saving the country from the abyss of suffering. Therefore, the purpose of teaching at that time was pragmatic. However, even in such a special historical period, teaching and learning were still often driven by patriotic enthusiasm, which had become the strategy for teachers to encourage students and the impetus for students to learn. In the subsequent stages of foreign language teaching, instrumentality occupied a dominant position, while humanism was weakened. With the continuous implementation of teaching reform in the 21st century, the orientation of humanism in English teaching in China has gradually become clear. Although the word “humanity” is not clearly mentioned in the 2001 edition of *English Curriculum Standards for Full-Time Compulsory Education in Ordinary Senior High Schools (Experimental Draft)* (hereinafter called *The Experimental Draft*), the interpretation of the nature of the curriculum is all permeated with the humanistic teaching: “Teachers should help students learn the cultural differences among the world, the West, and China, thus expanding students’ horizons. Meanwhile, teachers also need to cultivate students’ patriotism, for doing so will help students foster a sound outlook on life and lay a good foundation for their lifelong learning and development”^[5]. *The*

Experimental Draft stresses the cultivation of students' cultural awareness, as a result, the idea of "ren" (benevolence) in traditional education has been revived. In *The Experimental Draft*, the concept of "essential-qualities-oriented education" has been put forward for the first time, which has been dominating foreign language teaching research and is still growing. *The Experimental Draft* focuses on students' interests and emotions, as well as attaches importance to cultivating students' innovative spirit. The concept of "emphasizing students' initiative, and respecting the individual difference"^[5] fully meets the needs of human dignity, human development and human emotion, which subverts the pragmatism and elite education in the history of foreign language education in China, as well as the utilitarian thought of instrumentality. *The Experimental Draft* embodies a strong humanistic spirit of student-oriented and country-oriented in both teaching content and teaching methods.

Ten years after the implementation of *The Experimental Draft*, *The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2011 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as *The Standards*) came into being. For the first time, the revised curriculum standards make it clear that the English curriculum "has a dual nature of instrument and humanity." As for both properties, the instrumentality is reflected in the cultivation of language and thinking ability, while the humanity is committed to expanding students' horizons, cultivating their patriotism, enriching their experience, and helping them to forming cross-cultural awareness and establish a sound outlook on life and world. In language education, the "essential-qualities-oriented education" is embodied as language quality, cultural quality, humanistic quality, and innovation ability^[6]. *The Standards* (2011 Edition) combines the functions of language to carry information and express thinking, the needs of men's growth and the realization of men's social values, thus concretizing the connotation of personality in English education. Undoubtedly, this is the development of foreign language education. In 2017, only the senior middle school curriculum standards were revised, and the revision of the junior middle school part has not been published yet. However, the revised part is more determined to take the moral education as the fundamental task, practice core socialist values, inherit and promote the excellent traditional Chinese cultural view, establish national self-confidence and cultural self-confidence with the guiding ideology of forming a correct aesthetic view and outlook on life. The traditional educational goal of developing men of noble characters and sages has been interpreted with today's point of view under the new international situation and national conditions. They are clearly required to be brought into the English classroom for the first time to regard the Chinese culture as the important teaching content and establish the consciousness of a community with a shared future for mankind as the teaching goal, so that the content of humanistic quality becomes more specific and to the point, which is much easier to implement in all teaching sections. Language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning capacity, the four core qualities condensed emphasize that language teaching should not only be humanistic and instrumental, but also have the attributes of integrating and complementing humanism and instrumentality. Teaching should focus on the concept of "moral education is the soul, ability is the key, foundation goes first and innovation takes the priority", and carry out activities integrating language, culture and thinking on the basis of discourses^[7]. The 2017 curriculum standard interpreted the contemporary humanistic value, national value and national identity of English teaching from different dimensions, established the concepts, specific teaching contents and methods that should be insisted on for the foreign language teaching with Chinese characteristics, and proposed the theme led teaching contents for the first time. Based on the revision of 2017, it further clarifies the value of English education in developing students' core quality, life ideals and beliefs, lifelong learning, and ability to communicate and cooperate in 2020. Specifically, leading by the theme, it promoted the design for the implementation of subject core quality in teaching contents and teaching sections^[8].

Thematic instruction or theme-based instruction has emerged in the United States since the 1950s^[9]. Scholars are constantly exploring this field. For example, they write textbooks according to the students' real life, as well as design teaching activities such as information acquisition, opinion exchange and follow-up reading in a real context so as to explore the characteristics of the thematic instruction, which is very pioneering. The advantages of foreign language teaching guided by themes and relying on texts lie in that the most rich human emotions, the truest society, life and human nature can be observed from the smallest texts, and students go from reading, seizing, distinguishing, appreciating/questioning the text to the cultivating of problem awareness, cultural awareness, critical awareness, and self-consciousness in learning, which is a mental process from sensibility to rationality. This is an ideal form that revolves around the four core qualities and highly integrates the instrumental and humanistic nature of language teaching, which coincides with the three creeds of Confucianism: "manifesting virtue, loving the people, and abiding by the highest good". Parmenides of Elea believed that "those who can be thought and those who exist are unified"^[10]. The moment the reader reads the text, he begins to interact with the text mentally, and has circulatory dialogues with the text, with his ego, and

with the environment. Text, ego and environment have conversation through the bridge of mind. They exchange their opinions to obtain clearer, more rational recognition of the question. This is the same with the way Chinese train their mind - to study natural phenomena to acquire knowledge. Therefore, theme-oriented discourse teaching should explore what is the theme of the text first. Next, readers can identify what is the specific view of the text on theme through linguistic details? Do you agree or question these views according to your own understanding and some external experience? Why do you agree with it or question it? What are the views of peers or strangers? What are the reasons for their opinion? Do I agree? What is my new understanding of the theme? Do I have any doubts? This is a cognitive process from the inside to the outside, from me to others and then back to me. It is also a process aiming at exploring the root and finding the essence. In this process, readers understand things from the literal to profound meaning and they first ask themselves before seek help from the outside world. In this way, they seek confirmation, find false things and have doubts, which help them constantly expand vision and sublimate their spirit.

3. Pros and Cons of the Different Teachings in the Same Lesson

From 8:00 am to 12:00 am on December 14, 2021, at Jinshawan School of Zhanjiang No. 1 Middle School in Guangdong, three different classes of the grade 8 held this lesson, with 50 students in each class. Three different groups of teachers are respectively responsible for one class, and use the method of cooperative teaching to teach the reading and writing lesson of Unit10 Section B, the first volume of the 8th grade of *the People's Education Publishing House*. The duration is 45 minutes per class. The following are the teaching processes of the three groups:

3.1. The First Group

Pre-reading activities

- 1) Students read the teaching objectives together.
- 2) Students answer the following questions after watching the video:

What difficulties did they encounter?

Do you have the same difficulties? How did you solve it?

While-reading activities

- 1) How does Laura solve her difficulties?
- 2) Read quickly to get the main idea of the text.
- 3) Fill in the problem-solving flowchart.
- 4) Answer the following questions:

What is the author's opinion? What's the style of this text? How does the author give examples? What would you do if you made a careless mistake like Laura's? What method of argument is used in the third paragraph? What is Robert Hunt's advice? What proverb did the author cite? What did we learn from this text?

After-reading activities

1) Watch the video again and discuss what to do if you encounter difficulties? Write down the solutions.

2) Write them a letter of advice

The teacher presents the frame of letter; students write; students make a self-examination; students read their essays aloud, tick on the self-assessment sheet, and correct their mistakes.

Peer-assessment: companions mark good words and sentences, point out deficiencies, and give suggestions for revision.

Assignments

Required: write a second draft based on self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Optional: share an experience that you have encountered with difficulties and resolved them

reasonably.

Class evaluation: As a reading and writing lesson, the teaching process of this lesson is complete with reading activities running through the entire lesson and writing task being the final output. In the process of organizing classroom activities, teachers strive to achieve teacher-student and student-student interaction. However, there are some shortages. One is that the problem is not specific enough, for example, the problem that “do you have the same difficulty?” in pre-reading activity refers to the difficulty of learning geography in the video, or the difficulty of learning in general. In addition, this lesson lacks logic, such as the while-reading question “What would you do if you made a careless mistake like Laura’s?” is out of the context. Last but not least, too much activity content leads to the focus of reading is not prominent, and the difficulty of writing has not been solved.

3.2. The Second Group

Task 1 Read the second paragraph and fill out the Problem-Solutions form.

Task 2 Role playing: Perform the communication between Laura and her parents; the communication between Laura and Mr Hunt Hunter; students evaluate the role-playing effect according to the evaluation criteria.

Task 3 Homework: After the video is played, students need to make suggestions on the problems that Mary faces in the video, and shoot them into TikTok: give examples like Laura’s; give suggestions like Mr. Hunter’s; teachers list available sentence patterns.

Class evaluation: Due to the whole class was run through with three tasks, the teaching purpose is more clear, the important points are more prominent, and the discourse mode around the problem-solution has been extended from the textbook to the outside of the textbook, which offers students opportunity to train repeatedly. In addition, this class also uses new media to stimulate students’ interest. As a reading and writing class, the shortcomings of this class are the lack of careful reading, insufficient writing training, and far-fetched activity design. Besides, the role-playing, which requires students to evaluate the effect of role-playing, also deviates from the teaching focus.

3.3. The Third Group

Pre-writing activities

1) Watch videos, brainstorm daily difficulties that people may encounter, and try to offer suggestions.

2) Look at the picture and the title to predict the content of text.

3) Read the text quickly and get the main idea.

4) Complete the mind map by reading again the questions posed by the text and the suggestions from Laura and Robert.

5) Analyze the elements of discourse: text structure, key words, argumentation way, illustration method.

6) Answer question: What do you do if you make a careless mistake like Laura’s?

7) Answer the question: What is the style of the text?

8) Answer the question: What proverb did the author quote in the third paragraph? Why quote?

Writing training

1) Watch the video again and focus on the difficulties encountered by students in the video. What should you do if you encounter similar problems?

2) Read the text again and underline useful expressions.

3) Give suggestions to the students in the video and share your suggestions

4) Writing Task: write a letter of advice

5) Evaluation of Task completion

Discuss the writing evaluation criteria; what will you write? How many paragraphs will you write?

What else needs to pay attention to?

6) Students write.

Post-writing activities

With the help of the evaluation table, the students evaluate the composition of themselves and their peers.

After-class assignments

Required: revise the first draft of the composition

Optional: share an experience that you have encountered with difficulties and resolved them

Class evaluation: The advantages of this lesson are as follows: the teaching objectives are clear, the logic is clear, the key points are prominent, and the teaching processes are complete. Abundant class activities are carried out around the teaching purpose of writing, paving the way for the completion of writing tasks step by step, which offers time and space for students to think in class. The disadvantage is that there is so many class activities that the class run overtime. Besides, some activities do not really serve their purpose because there is not enough time, such as discussing writing assessment criteria.

However, it is obvious that the three groups of teachers' lesson did not achieve the purpose and effect of the different teachings in the same reading and writing lesson from the perspective of theme-oriented. Teachers were all very anxious because the exam-oriented guidance teaching that always revolves around language points has fallen into the rigid language knowledge teaching, and even the language knowledge teaching only stays at the basic grammar level. The teaching objectives of the three classes are the same, and the teaching focuses on extracting the writing framework from the text, so as to serve the writing of a letter of suggestion. In terms of pedagogy, only the third group of teachers had discussions on the topic in the pre-writing activities. Teaching which almost completely disregards the theme causes teachers and students to lose the opportunity to delve into the theme of anxiety, which is a life problem that resonates deeply with us in this era. From the perspective of language ability development, the teacher wants to teach the students to write a letter of advice urgently, so he focuses on the method of mimicking, and fails to lead the students to read the text closely and appreciate the language. Therefore, students' abilities - to find the framework of the text via the sentence of theme, to predict the meaning of words through sentence structure, and to find the implied meaning of the text - will not be developed, and their ability to question the author's opinion and think critically will not be enhanced. In this lesson, the cultural awareness and learning ability of the four core competencies are missing. Although the four core qualities may not be fully covered in one lesson, the lesson staying on the surface of language is far from realizing the value and function of foreign language teaching, which are to cultivate morality, to broaden horizons, to perfect personality, and to develop and expand culture.

The primary task of theme-based instruction is to guide students to get the main information of the text through close reading, so as to figure out the theme of the text. In this text, the first sentence "Students these days often have a lot of worries." implies the theme of anxiety and indicates that the object of the discussion is students. After the text lists a series of daily problems faced by students, the protagonist Laura says that "Problems and worries are normal in life." which echoes the theme again. But, how to solve the problem? In Laura's opinion, it is necessary to talk to someone to relieve the bad feeling for she had a similar experience. Laura once was in pain because she lost her wallet and dared not tell her parents. But after telling her parents, she got their understanding, expert Robert Hunt also suggested she do so. From this example, it can be found that the themes of anxiety is easily figured out from the framing analysis and the text is organized in a problem-posing --- problem-solving fashion. The second step of theme teaching is to observe the real life of teachers and students from the theme details of the text, inspiring teachers and students to face the reality and think about the reality, and figuring out the root of the problem. Starting from the viewpoint put forward by the text keyword "worries", teachers and students have discussed a series of issues, which is an effective approach to explore the theme layer by layer. Is it accurate for Laura to compare the word "worries" with "problems"? Is the opinion "Problems and worries are normal in life" precise? Is anxiety exclusive to students? What is the source of anxiety and problems? Why does people get into in these reasons? In face of these causes, do you talk to your parents or others when you are anxious, just as the experts recommend? Parents are different, but both parents and children have anxiety; in addition, it is "normal in life", so is it reasonable or practical to seek help from parents or others for everything? If it is unreasonable, unrealistic and unpractical, how can we solve the anxiety and problems? At present, what

am I not able to solve? What can I do in the future? Under the guidance of a series of questions, teachers and students eventually get the life perception of the theme from sensibility to rationality, from intuition to spiritual cognition, through jointly involvement in the text, common sharing of the sentiment, and heart-to-heart dialogue. As the dialogue goes on, it can be found that anxiety comes from the problems encountered in daily life. Everyone can be anxious because there is always a positive and aggressive side of human nature, such as the pursuit of beautiful emotions, which is manifested in the following aspects: longing for love, expecting to be recognized, accepted, supported and praised. This means that our value is constantly defined by the people around us, and the definitions and judgments of others greatly affect our judgment of self-worth. Naturally, we will question the authoritative conclusions of the text: "Sharing a problem is like cutting it in half." The way to self-solve anxiety lies in establishing a sense of self-identification of value by increasing the amount of reading, broadening the horizons and other means of self-construction, in this way, one can view the judgments of others objectively. This theme shows concern for teachers and students, who are under great pressure and in an environment where everyone wants to succeed. At the same time, this theme also reflects the sense of social responsibility of the editor who has incorporated factors such as social hotspots, characteristics of adolescent children and teachers in professional distress. Teachers and students must go through the process of repeatedly scrutinizing, thinking, and grinding the chapters, sentences, and words around the theme to organizing thinking with language and then to express their thoughts. Only in this process can students explore the theme, develop dialogue with texts and others, and form an understanding of the problem. For example, only after analyzing the structure of the text can students discover that the author's intention is not only to inspire readers to think about the source and nature of anxiety, but also to look forward to solutions. Only by comprehending the deep meaning of the word "and" can students understand that the author thinks that the root of worries lies in problems, and the solution is "sharing" and "cutting". Laura's direct speech and Robert Hunt's indirect speech, though with the same personal pronoun, have achieved different textual effects, with the former being cordial and gentle, telling stories to readers, and the latter authentic, objective, clam and rational, trying to persuade readers. Only after one has understood the different textual effects can he/she really understand the author's intentions and put it into practice in a proper way. After having an in-depth and meticulous discussion on the topic of anxiety, students should not be limited to write a letter of advice when writing but to explore their inner anxiety dilemma by writing.

As a tool of thinking, language is the channel through which we grasp the world. It is doomed that language teaching cannot deny the highly integration, mutual complementation, indivisibility and inseparability of instrumentality and humanism in the process of teaching. Themes are teaching clues as well as ways to prove the four core qualities of language ability, cultural consciousness, thinking quality and learning ability. With the combination of language instrumentality and humanism, theme can be implemented to all teaching processes through the channel of teaching contents. The four core qualities are closely related to the whole process of foreign language learning, they can prevent the teaching from falling into the dilemma of being separated from the reality, falling into boring states, staying superficial and lacking profound humanistic feeling and language application.

4. The Defects and Improvements of Teacher Quality

An important reason why the different teachings in the same lesson does not achieve the desired effect is that the quality of teachers is not good enough, which plays a leading role in the teaching process. First of all, the three groups of teachers is short of thematic awareness. Although the course standards of 2017 has pointed out that: "The teaching of English, which is a core quality, should rely on text, should integrate knowledge of language and culture, linguistic skills and learning strategy, should help students to learn in an independent and collaborative way, and encourage them to participate in the exploration of the theme"^[7], most teachers are still not clear about the meaning of "theme" teaching that is based on text learning, and they don't know the methods to provide such teaching, as a result, they can't give play to the function and value of theme in text teaching. Theme awareness and text interpretation are closely related. Lacking of theme awareness can lead to disorientation in text interpretation, conversely, it is impossible to grasp the theme of the text without close reading. The theme cannot be viewed as the central idea simply, but is the axis of the work, the construction of the plot, the shaping of the characters, the establishment of the tone, and the orientation of the style selection. The lack of theme consciousness means that readers ignore the emotion, attitude and purpose of the text, thus they are unable to explore the value of creation. However, these contents are the key to cultivate students' knowledge, affection, will and action, which is also the basis for the cultivation of the four core qualities. However, teachers fail to pay attention to the text themes and they never think

about themes. What is worse, they cannot face their inner feelings in the teaching design and real teaching scenes and they are unable to put themselves in the life and emotion of students. It is cruel and inhumane to completely ignore seven emotions and six sensory pleasures of people and the contemporary confusion and pain brought about by them. In this aspect, they lack educational spirit and humanistic feelings. If one reading and writing lesson ignores cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability, and focuses on the cultivation of language ability and the tool attribute of language, then teachers should realize that literacy is actually the ability to organize language, reason and express ideas through reading and writing, which is far from imitating writing and framing writing. Hence, teaching should rely on the theme-based text, integrating instrumental and humanistic. Only in this way can the cultivation of the four core qualities be truly implemented in the class in various types of courses. Thus, the ability to grasp and interpret thematic information, discourse reorganization, cultural awareness, and empathy are the basic qualities that teachers should have. The development of these abilities and consciousness all depend on the teachers' professional quality, for they are not tired of learning, always gain new insights through restudying old material, and consider others in their place.

4.1. Capability to Grasp and Interpret Thematic Information

The capability to grasp the thematic information is closely related to the ability of fine text reading and language appreciation. Language is the carrier of culture and the tool of thought expression, and the theme is reflected in the emotion of the text. If language learning only stays in the level of grammar, syntax, pronunciation and so on, ignoring the charm of culture, the depth of thought, and the value of humanity, the theme will be submerged in the coherent discourse of words and sentences. If teachers only treat texts as a source of language knowledge, and teach by mechanically practicing sentence patterns and imitating writing, this is undoubtedly a failure in the use of quite ingenious classroom material. Consequently, the students who are cultivated are just speech generators with poor language, test machines with indifferent emotions, and language replicators lacking in thought. Besides, students waste their time in the classroom, which is the extinction of the educational spirit and the loss of humanistic. Text is not only the corpus of language knowledge, but also the foundation of language ability training, the source of spiritual dialogue between teachers and students, and the object of critical thinking. The theme of the text is the teaching content and skeleton; the cultivation of language ability, cultural awareness and thinking ability around the theme is the teaching method; understanding the theme, thinking on the theme, and forming follow-up learning ability are the teaching goals; broadening the horizons, sublimating the spirit, and improving the personality are the teaching concepts. Therefore, teachers need to have the ability to guide students to read the text repeatedly by using discourse aesthetic knowledge, the ability to feel the emotion of the text, as well as the ability to convey the aesthetic content and emotional understanding to students, thus triggering students' thinking.

4.2. Discourse Restructuring Ability

The teacher's teaching wisdom is reflected in the teacher's ability to grasp the subject content of the text, as well as to get the fleeting reactions of the students in the classroom, thus jumping out of the text at any time to have a spiritual dialogue with the students. Moreover, teachers' teaching wisdom guarantees classroom teaching efficiency and teaching quality. It is crucial for the teachers to monitor the students' reactions to the text, to grasp key words and sentences, to guide students to think, and to reorganize the full-text. Here, the Confucian thought of adaptable to changing circumstance is very enlightening. As a teacher, it is important to do something like setting goals, thinking about teaching methods, and setting teaching modes in advance. But more importantly, teachers should be aware that there are many ways to achieve their teaching goals and many scenes that cannot be ignored in the teaching process, and even a particular teaching model has many variations. If teachers are unable to adjust their teaching methods at any time in the class, students' confusion may not be resolved, and it will be difficult for students to see a richer and more meaningful scene and understand the meaning of what they have learned. If teachers cannot be flexible in a certain teaching mode, it may lead to the boring of classes and students' loss of enthusiasm in learning. In the teaching process, teachers must always carefully observe the words and deeds of students which is the external manifestation of the student's inner knowledge. In teaching, teachers, in any time, must observe in details what the students say or do as this comes from their internal knowledge. In this way can teachers know what their students have learned and continuously inject new information to enlighten them, providing resources, directions and suggestions for establishing new knowledge-learning mechanism. Following the cognitive rules of students, respecting their emotional needs, and empathizing with students is the basic

teaching method. To be able to grasp the set goals in the changes of the class, uphold the existing teaching concepts, and carry out teaching with ease in a certain teaching mode, teachers must have a strong text reorganization ability. The purpose of text restructuring is not only to focus on the topic, but more importantly, to inspire students to think. The realization of textual reorganization must be based on the understanding of the subject, as well as on the teacher's own interdisciplinary understanding of relevant humanistic knowledge and interpretation ability.

4.3. Cultural Consciousness

Cultural awareness is, first of all, the sensitivity to cultural knowledge, the ability to compare and trace the similarities and differences of cultures, and the ability to think critically on this basis. The Teacher's cultural consciousness is the guarantee of the temperature and depth of the classroom, the duty of morality education, the foundation of the cultivation of thinking quality, the source of developing a broader, more intelligent and more compatible life attitude and creative life consciousness, it is the premise of cultivating national consciousness and national feelings. Teachers, who lack of cultural awareness and are spiritually impoverished, cannot fully understand the connotation of the text with the guide of the theme, find the aesthetic value of the text, nor view the significance of the text in the era. As a result, it will cause teachers to lack humanistic care and academic charm, that making more difficult in meeting the requirements of the times for a teacher who can train students ability to communicate across cultures, broaden their vision, and share Chinese stories. A classroom lacking cultural connotation exploration is uninteresting, and then teachers and students become the mouthpiece of knowledge, lacking aesthetics and feelings. If the theme-based text reading and discourse reorganization are based on language ability, then its ultimate goal will inevitably lead to the realization of cultural awareness and critical thinking ability at the spiritual level. If the theme-based text reading and discourse reorganization are based on language ability, then its ultimate goal must be the cultivation of cultural awareness and critical thinking ability. At the same time, cultural awareness and critical thinking are the strong support for discourse reorganization and close reading of texts, otherwise they will both become a mirage.

4.4. Empathy Ability

The cultural phenomenon in the text or something that is inconsistent with expectations is the cultural pain point, which is also what teachers and students should focus on. During the dialysis process of anxiety, trouble and pain, teachers need to help students to adapt to negative moods like discomfort and frustration, so as to obtain a new understanding of life, spirit realm and life, which is the core value of cultural identity training. Therefore, respecting and truly experiencing these negative feelings can help students accept a certain level of pain. Teachers' empathy for students reveals their benevolence. Adhering to the teaching principle of putting students first, teachers should probe into what students are thinking through texts and cultivate an atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust and inclusiveness, in which students will therefore want to learn, be willing to learn and enjoy learning while teachers will find teaching a flexible, easy and joyful job. To develop a theme-guided and text-based class should be jointly contributed by students, teachers and authors, with texts being the motivation that facilitates the inter-communication among them. The author expresses his emotions and views through the text. On this basis, students and teachers can have a dialogue with the author around the theme of the text. Furthermore, a communication may happen between teachers and students or among students. As a result, a real space full of emotion, confusion and motive power comes into being. In this space, the three parties approach each other, understand each other, inspire each other, gradually realize mutual recognition and become a community in multiple dimensions such as education, life, spirit, culture, and thinking. In the end, teachers and students all get the settlement of the soul, the growth of the spirit, and the perfection of the personality. Empathy is the foundation of building a teaching community, a sky where students' thoughts can fly freely, and a place where teachers can get inspiration and bring forth new ideas. To teach is to learn is one of the basic qualities that teachers should possess. What is more, teachers should learn wisdom about life from teaching research and the interaction between teachers and students.

5. The Strengthening of Teacher's Qualities

Possessing solid subject knowledge and having a benevolent heart for students are the two important contents that President Xi summed up the character of "Four Good Teachers", and a teacher

who can control a theme teaching lesson well is no exception. Rich knowledge of literature, history and philosophy and abundant professional feelings are the necessary knowledge and emotional attainments for teachers to enhance the ability to carry out the theme teaching.

5.1. Abundant Knowledge of Literature, History and Philosophy

By reading a large number of Chinese and foreign classic literary works, and experiencing the common emotional concerns and different humanistic thinking in different cultural forms, teachers can stand on the commanding heights of human life perception and face the difficulties of themselves and students. In this way, teachers can become good teachers and friends of students, helping students to become people who can fully rely on their own heart and strength, and have the ability to be happy and kind to the world. The well-know saying “learn the new by restudying the old” not only refers to the students’ learning method, but also the teaches’ growth method. Only by knowing the history can teachers think deeply about contemporary society, form forward-looking foresight, fully understand the teaching content, thus giving students convincing life guidance. Thus, teachers must have a certain knowledge of Chinese and Western philosophy. Philosophy is a science about science. Without certain philosophical knowledge, teachers will not be able to grasp the essence of the problem, nor make simple explanations. What ensues is a greatly diminished class effectiveness, and students’ disappointment or, consequently, contentment with superficiality. Both Chinese and Western philosophies originated from worries, but they recognize the world from different perspectives and complement each other in thought. Therefore, those who teach foreign language in China, must command both basic knowledge of Chinese and Western philosophy. There is saying goes, “deficient learning would turn out to be nothing”. Teachers should constantly improve their professionalism and teaching skills and always stick to lifelong learning. Before nourishing students’ learning capacity and awareness, teachers should first make sure that they have been proactive in pursuing virtue, knowledge and integrity, which is the prerequisite for a teacher. Education comes from teachers but goes to students, which is a mutually-reinforcing process for both. Therefore, teachers should read and think, teach and explore, learn and advance.

5.2. Abundant Professional Feelings

The three creeds of *The Great Learning* “manifesting virtue, loving the people, and abiding by the highest good” can still be regarded as the goal of school education, helping students to get rid of selfish desires and sacrifice self for the greater good. Teachers should integrate what they have learned in their life into the society, observe the conditions of the people, and take serving the society and the country as their goal. Having pure life emotions, teachers become people with clear goals, firmness and integrity. To be able to educate people anywhere is what an educator must first have. In teaching, teachers should remove utilitarianism, and walk into the real world of students with a benevolent heart, so as to feel the emotions of students, guide students out of their spiritual predicaments, meet their growth needs, and help them become good people. Teachers first need to start from themselves, observe and introspect their own lives and emotions, observe social and students’ emotions, and cultivate their sincere life feelings, and have a love of students, occupation, society, and nation. Teachers should always reflect on the gains and losses of teaching, so as to make up for it in time, and always be full of professional vitality. In addition, teachers also need to often review their professional value, return to their original aspiration, enhance their educational feelings, strengthen their educational beliefs and their professional responsibility. This is also an effective way for teachers to find their own shortcomings, form lifelong learning awareness and obtain emotional perception, and avoid occupational burnout. Once, the young teachers, who came to the podium full of enthusiasm and had a good vision for their educational career, have wiped out their ideals and feelings in the test-oriented teaching again and again. Consequently, students are faced with teachers who lack vitality, attraction and creativity, and do not see any profound thinking, interesting class and soul. This is not only a disappointment to the students, but also a teacher who has buried himself and is ashamed of his reputation as a soul shaper.

6. Conclusion

The ancient education concept of China is a typical humanistic education of cultivating virtuous gentlemen based on the principle of benevolence. However, since modern times, the traditional spiritual home of the Chinese people has been lost and full of material desires, and the humanity in education

has been greatly weakened. If we fail to rebuilt our spiritual home in the 21st century, the fruits of economic prosperity will inevitably be lost. The great rejuvenation of the nation should, first of all, be the humanization of education and the revival human culture. With the launch of the teaching reform of basic English education in the 21st century, the humanities have revived after four revised curriculum standards, and the theme teaching has become a powerful means to implement the four core qualities, but it also brings new challenges and requirements to the teachers in the new era. Many teachers cannot really carry out English teaching guided by themes and relying on texts, they are still limited to the mechanical teaching of language knowledge. To get out of the predicament, teachers' ability to capture and interpret thematic information, ability to reorganize texts, cultural awareness, and ability to empathize need to start from the three aspects of knowledge reserve, emotional and professional care. Teachers always have multiple identities. First, a teacher is a teacher who conducts specific teaching, then a teacher is a member of the educational educator, and finally a teacher is a social person, which is also a job issue, education issue, and literacy issue for teachers. Ultimately, everything needs to return to the concept of people-oriented.

Acknowledgement

Fund: The stage achievement of Cultivation of Cross-culture Communicative Ability Based on the Identity Awareness in the Exploration and Practice of Middle Schools funded by The 14th Five-Year Research Project of Educational Science led by The Guangdong Society of Education (Project Number: GDES14066).

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