

The Ideologies, Approaches and Principles of Big Culture Community and New Theme-based Teaching

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Abstract: *Big Culture Community and New Theme-based Teaching (abbreviate as BCCNTT) is an instructional approach centered around the theme of a discourse, employing foreign language as a medium to explore, compare cultural phenomena and trace the root of making cultural phenomena similarities in differences or differences in similarities. The main ideologies of BCCNTT include double subjects, the collision of unfamiliar knowledge, and a focus on critical thinking. This approach emphasizes considering learners' living environment, developmental needs and conditions while reflecting the humanistic and utilitarian nature of language science. It aims to fulfill the requirements of foreign language education in cultivating students' language aesthetics, culture awareness, thinking ability and inquiry ability. The interaction of unfamiliar knowledge in the teacher-student dynamic facilitates the mutual growth of both parties, helping students construct a holistic and dynamic perspective of culture and knowledge while continuously engaging in thought-provoking exchanges. Guided by these ideologies, BCCNTT encompasses various elements, such as the interaction of students and teachers, the integration of curriculum content and extracurricular materials, the combination of in-class and out-of-class tasks, the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures, and the dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures. Nonetheless, it is essential to design the teaching process based on principles that foster the integration of thematic knowledge, language, culture, critical thinking, curiosity, and create room for independent exploration.*

Keywords: *Big Culture Community and New Theme-based Teaching; Teaching Ideologies; Teaching Approaches; Teaching Principles*

1. Introduction

Both domestically and internationally, English education is always on the road of evolution and development with socio-political changes, technological advancements and exploration on the essence of language learning. For colonial expansion, English education primarily focus on rote learning and grammar translation. Later, communicative approach is prevailing for the evolutionary acceptance of language as a tool of communication, which gives the rise of some teaching philosophies like emphasizing the importance of context, interaction, and practical usage. In fact, H. Douglas Brown's principles of language learning and teaching have had a profound impact on English education worldwide. His emphasis on learner autonomy, meaningful interaction, and the integration of language skills has shaped contemporary teaching practices. In the domestic context, English education advocate for learner-centered approaches and the integration of cultural content in English teaching after experiencing from grammar-translation methods to communicative language teaching to meet the need for global competitiveness. Regardless of the direction of educational reform, and no matter in natural sciences or humanities, any teaching approach and principle must adhere to certain unchanging educational philosophies, otherwise it will lose its educational values and feelings. "Big Culture" refers to the outstanding civilized achievements different ethnic group sharing. BCCNTT is still a method of theme-based teaching, while specially plays weight on similarities prior to differences among cultures during foreign language teaching. Based on these ideologies, BCCNTT have attempted to establish teaching dimensions, principles and three pedagogical path: exploration and determination of the big cultural theme—comparison and tracing of the big cultural theme—migration and innovation of the big cultural theme.^[1] BCCNTT believes it may be more efficient that a foreign language teaching take culture knowledge as the learning start, core and fulcrum to direct and organize English teaching and learning activities, cultivate students' language capacity, thinking ability and learning consciousness, bridge the gap between class learning and students' real live.

2. Teaching Ideologies

Educators and learners in any discipline are human beings, thus underscoring the principle of human orientation in foreign language education. The purpose and value of education lie in the growth of individuals, the inheritance of civilization, the development of society, and the progress of the world. Growth, inheritance, development, and progress all begin with the acquisition of new knowledge and aim to attain new skills and foster new ideas. Therefore, BCCNTT cannot be separated from the classroom presentation and thinking activities involving unfamiliar knowledge. The present world is characterized by continuous collisions of cultures, which require unprecedented levels of cultural awareness, cross-cultural competence, and critical thinking. Consequently, intercultural and critical thinking remain constant components of foreign language education.

2.1 *Putting people first.*

Hu Zhongping(2004)believed, "From the perspective of the basic driving force of education development and the basic problems that education needs to solve, the basic contradiction faced by education is the contradiction between human development and social development".^[2] The task of education is to achieve a dynamic balance between individual development and social development, to transform individual development into the driving force of social development, and to incorporate social development into the direction of individual development. In the mutual constraints and conflicts between social development and individual development, there arises a need to stimulate and guide individuals to fully exert their subjectivity, surpassing each other's constraints and limitations, eventually achieving unity and mutual dynamic driving force. Therefore, "education is based on human development and aims to solve the basic contradiction it faces by raising human development to the level required by social development, promoting social development, and thus achieving the interaction between human development and social development mediated by education".^[2]

It is noteworthy that education is not the only way for personal growth and development, life experiences also play a significant role. However, if education detaches itself from the social environment, life realities, and existing life experiences, it not only becomes a mirage but also inevitably becomes ineffective. In addition, learners have their own real-life experiences and have been affected by the experiences. They are also the subject of their own life and development. They have their own initiative in choosing the influence of education and forming and transforming the internal contradictions of their own development. The impact of education on learners can only be transformed into their own qualities through the active subjectivity of learners, and through their cognitive and ideological contradictions and struggles.^[2] If educators unilaterally impose social demands on education or even their own educational desires on learners, ignoring learners' own desires for education, such education seriously deviates from the people-oriented concept and struggles to achieve ideal educational quality. In teaching, educators should always remind themselves to fully respect the social lives of learners, fully consider learners' subjectivity, which is also a process of going through educators' own cognitive, emotional, attitudinal contradictions, conflicts, and development processes. The efficiency of education depends on whether educators can actively face and constantly reconcile such contradictions, and whether they can explore and enhance learners' knowledge level under the inspiration of contradictions to meet their cognitive demands. The people-oriented educational concept undoubtedly is concerned about the coordination and unity of learners' development and social development, but it never overlooks or even cannot overlook the development of educators' own spirit, psychology, and profession, because without the generation, development, and transformation of teachers' inner contradictions, it is difficult to produce meaningful and valuable education. The self-growth of educators and the growth of learners should run through the entire educational process.

In brief, the content of foreign language education is students' real life. The goal is to help students acquire the ability to become masters of life and assist teachers to obtain personal development. The approach of education is to enter social life, and the process is a mutual growth and development between teachers and students.

2.2 *"Pain" is an inevitable path to achieve personal growth.*

Byung-Chul Han (2023) argues that "only through pain can the mind gain new insights and attain higher forms of knowledge and consciousness."^[3] The growth of the mind is based on the negativity of pain. Through negativity, the mind develops into a more advanced form, thereby overcoming the contradictions that cause its suffering. In the dialectical process of spiritual growth, pain can be seen as

an engine that transforms the mind. Without pain, the mind remains stagnant, gradually withering away. Throughout the spiritual journey, encountering others, negation, contradictions, and conflicts become inevitable. It is through questioning, confrontation, and dialogue that new cognition can be obtained.

Since Herbert Spencer advocated pleasurable discovery-based teaching, the concept of "happy education" has evolved through generations of educators. But in today's classrooms, many teachers overlook the significance of anxiety, fragmentation, and negation in personal growth. Some even use the pretext of protecting the delicate minds of children and presenting the beauty of the world to exclude misery, hardship, and shock from the classroom. Merely showcasing a positive classroom environment does not align with societal realities and can lead students to cognitive inertia, and fear of critical thinking. Without experiencing pain, profound reflection cannot be triggered, and without profound reflection, growth cannot be fostered. In fact, discovery-based teaching, which involves conflicts between new and old knowledge, is necessary for learners to truly acquire knowledge and further develop their intellectual framework. In Arthur Schopenhauer's "The Wisdom of Life", it is believed that each individual encounters varying degrees of sorrows and difficulties, and the degree of suffering they can endure varies, depending on their personal awareness.^[4](2020) The perception and coping abilities towards suffering determine one's level of happiness. Depriving students of opportunities to face, experience, and cognize pain results in psychological fragility, mental numbness, and emotional emptiness, leading to their marginalization in society. When confronted with stress, conflicts, and setbacks, they exhibit resistance and helplessness, lacking problem-solving skills. Ultimately, they either choose self-deception and compromise or indulge in a self-constructed illusion of happiness and pleasure. In turn, our society and the world then sink into a stagnant apathy, devoid of creative vitality, disregarding the pain of others, and unable to express one's own anguish, as individuals become isolated in their lonely spaces. Therefore, through education, utilizing texts and themes, students need to listen to the voices of suffering from life, society, and the world, undergo stress, anxiety, struggles, contradictions, and conflicts. Only through this process can they achieve true spiritual growth, maintain mental agility, possess the impetus for cognition, and experience the truth of beauty.

Thus, a classroom that presents reality, experiences pain, and engages in confrontations can guide students to consciously observe meticulously, empathize wholeheartedly, dare to question, and obtain sincerity, kindness, and tolerance. In constant refinement of their understanding of humanity and society, their knowledge structure and characters are sublimated. Therefore, the realization of the value of foreign language education lies in basing it on textbooks, transcending the boundaries of textbooks, venturing into the real world, and experiencing genuine emotions.

2.3 Follow the natural flow of thought

The natural flow of thought suggests that the emergence of thought is not inherently logical, but rather spontaneous and organic. Innovative thinking often entails divergent and even disjointed processes. Thus, the classrooms focusing on thought and innovation should not be always stick into strict logical reasoning at all times, but encourage students to boldly express themselves and delve deep into the fluidity of thought. The breadth and depth of thought are to some extent contingent upon the completeness of one's knowledge system, yet innovation is not solely determined by this factor. Establishing an increasingly complete knowledge system is also the essence and significance of education as the most important means of human civilization inheritance. Such a system does not merely stem from the inheritance of existing knowledge but also relies on its continual development and innovation. In the era of massive fragmented information, a complete knowledge system comes from education and self-education.

According to Zankov (2020), "The relationships between the whole and its constituent parts, as well as the relationships among the parts, play a significant role in various domains of practical activities. Since the teaching and educational process is one of the most complex phenomena, the problems of the whole and the parts have a special practical significance here".^[5] Therefore, the principle of holistic education primarily mean the completeness of knowledge, helping students establish awareness of the connections between knowledge systems within and outside the textbooks and between different disciplines, and understanding the interconnection between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Moreover, it involves building a well-rounded character within the knowledge system, enhancing students' ability to objectively perceive the world, and fostering a dynamic view of culture. The principle of holistic education in foreign language teaching also implies experiencing a complete thinking process from a comprehensive language knowledge system. Such a system includes not only language knowledge but also cultural connotations, cognitive significance, and value expressions of

language knowledge. The completeness of the thinking process is reflected in the activities of observation, organization, analysis, reasoning, induction, summarization, and evaluation, progressing from the local to the overall. Additionally, the completeness of abilities lies in imitation, deduction, transfer, and innovation. Knowledge is the foundation of thinking, and thinking is the process of enhancing abilities. The ultimate goal of accumulating knowledge, training thinking, and enhancing abilities is to enable individuals to thrive and integrate into society, and possess critical interpretive abilities of social phenomena. Therefore, holistic philosophy requires immersing students in real-life, social, and historical contexts.

Human beings always live in a human society intertwined with diachronic and synchronic dimensions, with modern era characteristic of cultural integration and clash of ideas. It is within these temporospatial intersections that students immerse themselves, experience, and cognize human language and cultural knowledge, thereby enhancing their wisdom within authentic contexts. In the course of time, students have the opportunity to trace the past glory of traditional civilization, and discern the origins and flows of traditional aesthetics and values. In the contemporary world, students experience the exchange and conflict between Chinese traditional culture and modern civilization, encountering the turbulence of ideas and gaining inspiration to establish their beliefs. Amidst the crisscrossing temporospatial dimensions, students constantly reinvent, necessitating a consciousness of philosophical thinking. However, philosophical thinking is not entirely equivalent to the training of specific thinking skills in the classroom; rather, it emphasizes exploring the essence of phenomena and tracing their roots. While skills training is crucial in language teaching, without philosophical thinking, students cannot question adeptly and think critically in a world of continuous development and turbulence. They would struggle to grasp the essence of life, understand the core of social contradictions and conflicts, and become clear-minded and wise individuals in the modern world. Therefore, foreign language education and teaching need to be accomplished through the process of speculation.

At the same time, Nelson(1987) states that "thought structures are never linear; in fact, our thinking process is never sequential."^[6] A classroom that adheres strictly to conventions, lacking in imagination and critical thinking, inevitably stifles, regulates, and discourages active cognitive processes, thus impeding creative vigor. Without imagination and criticality in the foreign language classroom, it is difficult to enrich interdisciplinary perspectives or foster cultural identity consciousness, leading to a lack of inevitable ideological innovation. Therefore, classroom teaching should respect the laws of human thinking, starting from the immediate doubts that students have and continuously expanding around the theme, exploring the connections of knowledge together, and weaving a network of knowledge. All teaching processes conducted according to an unchanging pedagogical approach will inevitably become rigid, limiting and constraining both critical thinking and knowledge exploration. Therefore, organizing teaching around themes and following the natural flow of thought is an important method of pedagogical organization.

2.4 Confront the social reality of the "transcultural" space

Since a complete knowledge system determines the depth of one's thinking and their level of happiness, therefore, the key question for people in the era of globalization is how to enhance their knowledge dimension. Byung-Chul Han (2023) agrees with G. W. F. Hegel's viewpoint in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which states that strangeness (otherness) plays a significant role in the formation and reconstruction of culture. The spirit draws strength from its own "strangeness" and overcomes it, making the presence of strangers essential for the formation and improvement of the self.^[7]

Chinese traditional civilization is the only surviving ancient civilization in the world, and it remains vibrant to this day. It has been continuously enriched and given new connotations, contributing to the prosperity of the Chinese nation and forming an indispensable cultural force in today's world civilization. This is precisely because, throughout its thousands of years of civilization, it has continuously assimilated foreign cultures and drawn from new spiritual sources, resulting in a contemporary form of Chinese civilization that is better suited for global development. One's knowledge system originates from their cultural system, and it must possess vitality and dynamic development characteristics.

Furthermore, Byung-Chul Han (2023) believes that the process of globalization brings together heterogeneous cultural content, forming a "transcultural space" in a linked and networked manner, characterized by intertwining or structurally entangled elements.^[7] In this transcultural space, culture

no longer has boundaries, centers, authorities, or even a fixed abode; it can wander at any time. The trans-temporality and trans-spatiality of culture provide abundant sources of information for contemporary people's cognitive world and also pose a challenge to their self-development. To navigate the vast world of cultural information readily available, it is crucial to adopt an attitude of tolerance and openness towards the unfamiliar. Building upon a critical interpretation of massive amounts of information, individuals need to continuously reflect on themselves and overcome the sense of unfamiliarity. Only then can they gain new cultural understanding and strengthen their spiritual power while exploring in the networked space of transculture. Byung-Chul Han's "transcultural" space is the material source of the formation of a "big culture" consciousness, representing the real space for developing the ability of a "big culture." Foreign language education is enveloped by the process of globalization, situated in the space of transculture. To cultivate the ability of a "big culture," it is necessary to constantly embrace the unfamiliar world, integrate into broader cultural domains, and engage in cultural networks and connections.

Therefore, presenting a world of unfamiliar civilizations should be the direction that contemporary foreign language education adheres to. It should foster an awareness that embraces the diverse contemporary civilizations with discernment and a critical attitude. The continuous elevation of one's spiritual world through self-reflection exemplifies the capability demonstrated in foreign language education. Hence, foreign language education must break free from the constraints of mainstream and authoritative civilizations and recognize Chinese civilization within the context of world civilizations.

In summary, the concept of 'big culture' theme-based teaching still places human beings at the center. Teaching takes into full consideration the learners' living environment, growth needs, and conditions, embodying the humanistic and instrumental nature of language science. It aims to meet the requirements of foreign language disciplines in cultivating students' sense of patriotism, international perspective, as well as their worldview, life orientation, and values. In the classroom, teachers need to respect students' cognitive desires, gain deep understanding of their real lives, and guide them to integrate the pursuit of self-value realization with the demands of social development needs. In the meantime, teachers continually expand their perspectives, reflect on teaching methods, and address challenges through interactive processes with students, thereby achieving mutual growth. The reality faced by foreign language education is the era of globalization where the cultural center is shifting. Strangeness has become the most important factor in everyone's living environment. Therefore, using unfamiliar knowledge to help students construct a holistic and dynamic perspective on culture and knowledge undoubtedly embodies the value of contemporary foreign language education. The collision with unfamiliar cultures and knowledge inevitably requires certain cognitive activities to overcome the barriers of knowledge and reach new heights of thinking consciousness. Consequently, thinking serves as the sole pathway for organizing teaching and the sole means for unfolding pedagogical endeavors.

3. Teaching Approaches

Under the guidance of the fundamental principles of human-centeredness, the collision of unfamiliar knowledge, and teaching through thinking, the approach to BCCNTT is constituted by the interaction of students and teachers, the integration of curriculum content and extracurricular materials, the combination of in-class and out-of-class tasks, the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures, and the dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures.

3.1 Interaction of Students and Teachers

"Students" and "teachers" are the essential elements in education and teaching, representing the fundamental purpose and significance of education, and also determining the quality and value of education. BCCNTT emphasizes a collaborative process of mutual growth between teachers and students under the guidance of educators. BCCNTT requires tracing the roots of differences based on commonalities between cultures and demands both teachers and students to comprehend the essence of cultural diversity. However, from a societal perspective, both students and teachers possess unique identity awareness and cultural markers, exhibit varying levels of language aesthetics, cultural awareness, and critical thinking abilities. The fundamental educational objective of BCCNTT lies in reconciling and addressing conflicts and contradictions between individual growth and societal development to help individuals and society flourish. This educational value is reflected in the teacher-student relationship, which involves broad exploration and in-depth understanding of both domestic and foreign cultures, gradually fostering profound emotional depth and profound life

contemplation abilities. As a result, teachers need to harmonize the conflicts between social development and students' personal growth aspirations while helping students transcend the limitations imposed by social values, thus achieving maximum individual value. This necessitates a thorough understanding and grasp of both societal demands and students' personal value aspirations, encompassing the awareness and art of reconciling these two sets of needs. On the basis of universally accepted values, embracing individual differences and supporting students in enjoying greater freedom and space for personal growth not only embodies the principles of BCCNTT but is also an essential quality of educators. The proactive teaching approach is demonstrated by the teacher's strong consciousness and willingness in shaping the teaching content, methods, and strategies, as well as determining the intensity and scope of education, all while elevating their understanding of life, humanity, and society, thereby achieving self-enlightenment for professional development. Throughout the process of receiving education, students act as conveyors of learning desires, monitors of quality of their own learning, and active reconcilers and unifiers between their self-value realization and societal demands. BCCNTT not only serves as a space for knowledge exchange, skill enhancement, and capacity building but also fosters emotional communication and strengthening between teachers and students. It serves as a platform for teachers to continuously explore students' inner worlds, reflect on teaching, learning, and assessment practices, while gaining emotional support and initiating personal professional development.

BCCNTT advocates for the construction of a community where teachers and students inspire, guide, and rely on each other within immersive teaching environments. In the teaching and educational process, teachers and students constitute dual subjects, both requiring and deserving ample humanistic care and self-reflection, engaging in mutual inspiration, guidance, and reliance for collective growth after breaking down the boundaries between them as teaching entities. Overcoming the phenomenon of "mutual isolation in the realms of knowledge and ideological consciousness" between teachers and students, and transcending the teacher's role as an "abandoned child" in traditional education and teaching, are critical in BCCNTT. However, undoubtedly, the quality and value assurance of BCCNTT originate from the dynamic growth of teachers' humanistic literacy, subject knowledge, and educational cognition. Teachers lacking dynamic knowledge perspectives and self-development abilities are ill-equipped to serve as guides and inspirations for adolescents growing up in the digital age. The idea of dual subjects 'Students + Teachers' emphasizes that teachers always fully respect students' independent identity and deeply understand their life experiences to construct and promote a humanistic field, in which both teacher and students may enjoy emotional equality, knowledge interaction, and common growth.

3.2 Integration of Curriculum Content and Extracurricular Materials

Curriculum content refers not only to the content within the current volume of the same subject related to the theme but also to the organization of content from other subjects. The content within textbooks aims to help students build a comprehensive existing knowledge network and develop preliminary interdisciplinary awareness. This involves organizing the knowledge acquired in the subject as well as integrating knowledge from other interdisciplinary areas. Extracurricular materials include the sum of the material and spiritual aspects of students' extracurricular lives. The knowledge within textbooks provides a solid foundation for students to fully prepare for the acquisition of knowledge, broaden their horizons, and develop skills in critical thinking. The teaching activities associated with extracurricular materials primarily focus on the application of the knowledge within textbooks, expanding and enhancing the knowledge construction found within. Moving from curriculum content to extracurricular materials, with the teaching theme as the context, the knowledge within textbooks as the basis, and students' cognitive desires as the driving force, the education value and teaching objectives are considered. Guided by curriculum standards, the social aspects of life are incorporated into the teaching content.

Byung-Chul Han (2023) believes that we live in a hyper-textual culture that goes beyond boundaries and habitats. "In hyper-text, we are not limited by order; we create new writing forms to better represent the structure of the content we write. Readers can choose their paths and read in ways that were previously thought impossible, based on interests or current lines of thought".^[7] In reading instruction, teachers should adjust the sequence of teaching content based on students' cognitive interests and lines of thought, aligning with teaching objectives and existing knowledge, to effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and guide their thinking. The content within textbooks serves as the starting point for constructing knowledge networks, while extracurricular activities provide the space for dynamic knowledge construction. From reorganizing curriculum texts and

examining learning histories within textbooks to improving the completeness of knowledge outside textbooks, this process establishes the material foundation for developing higher-order thinking abilities such as comparison, questioning, reasoning, evaluation, and innovation. Any higher-order thinking ability is a comprehensive skill formed by language knowledge, language proficiency, cultural understanding, and critical thinking. Therefore, the transition from curriculum content to extracurricular materials requires the completion of the knowledge system, including organization, accumulation, migration, innovation, expansion, and improvement. The way of the integration of curriculum content and extracurricular materials addresses the selection and application of teaching materials, emphasizing the completeness, timeliness, and applicability of knowledge.

The way of "Curriculum Content and Extracurricular Materials" extends thematic knowledge and cultural phenomena beyond the confines of the textbook. Students have chances to refine intra-textbook knowledge through repeated practice in real-life scenarios to deepen their understanding, "transforming from passive observers and recipients of knowledge to active generators and recipients of cultural literacy"^[8]. Therefore, selecting extracurricular materials that resonate with students' real-life experiences is crucial for stimulating continuous and dynamic knowledge construction. Solidifying intra-textbook content is essential for smooth transition to extra-textbook materials. Engagement with extracurricular content enhances the authenticity of teaching scenarios and enriches and structures teaching content.

3.3 Combination of In-class and Out-of-class Tasks

Based on the teaching subject, the determination of teaching content and its application, the task setting of in-class and out-of-class teaching and learning should adhere to the principles of thematic consistency, progressive thinking levels, the process from within textbooks to beyond textbooks, and feasibility. The teaching theme determines the content of in-class and out-of-class teaching activities, while the progression of thinking levels determines the form and difficulty of these activities, and feasibility determines the logical design and environmental construction of activities.

Currently, although the policy of "reducing workload and burden" has been implemented for some time, issues still persist with out-of-class assignments, such as large volumes of homework, being limited to consolidating language knowledge, and mechanical knowledge transfer. Knowledge that lacks relevance to students' lives cannot foster their intellectual growth and fails to develop their awareness of actively exploring the world. Consequently, knowledge loses its value and becomes a theoretical construct. Only through teaching processes and tasks centered around the same theme can sufficient time and space be provided to guide students step by step under the "double reduction" policy, enabling them to comprehend language connotations and perceive cultural essence through linguistic forms and cultural phenomena, thereby achieving teaching quality. Ranging from language aesthetics and progressing to cultural understanding, as well as engaging in critical thinking exercises involving the exchange of ideas and contrasting viewpoints, these are pathways to delve into the theme, broaden perspectives, and enhance abilities. Consolidation of in-class learning is essential to determine the direction, form, and extent of out-of-class expansion, as well as the difficulty gradient of teaching tasks from in-class to out-of-class. In-class teaching serves as a demonstration for completing out-of-class tasks and becomes the foundation for extending out-of-class assignments to various areas of life. Out-of-class tasks, manifested in various forms of assignments, serve as bridges connecting in-class and out-of-class teaching and tools for assessing learning outcomes. Moreover, by incorporating extensible materials with diverse themes, regional characteristics, and contemporary relevance, out-of-class tasks further broaden students' perspectives, strengthen knowledge transfer, and enhance learning abilities. The unity of themes between in-class and out-of-class tasks is crucial in that deviating from the theme easily disperses students' understanding of the theme, hindering the construction of a broad and comprehensive cognitive network. For example, when the theme shifts from interpersonal anxiety based on interactions with parents in class to passionate experiences exemplified by successful individuals like Gu Ailing in out-of-class tasks, the fragmented thematic continuity would undoubtedly prevent students from understanding the pressures in real life arising from aspects such as economy, reputation, and others' evaluations. When the task transitions from facing personal challenges in class to writing a thank-you letter in out-of-class tasks, students miss the chance to explore the root causes of challenges, understand their attitudes toward challenges, and discover ways to overcome them. Similarly, when discussing psychological fear versus social harmony, students' understanding of both fear and social harmony remains superficial.

Additionally, due to exam-oriented approaches, traditional assignment designs are still prevalent, with teachers strictly defining the content, format, and answers of out-of-class tasks. While

closed-ended question types have a noticeable effect on consolidating language knowledge, this approach also deprives students of their role as active learners, limits their thinking space, and negates their individual styles. Therefore, designing open-ended assignments undoubtedly fosters students' motivation for critical thinking and learning. Allowing students to freely explore the ocean of knowledge based on their knowledge, abilities, and preferences aligns better with expectations for individual growth and is more likely to inspire further exploration in related knowledge domains. The openness and democratization of out-of-class learning is a tangible embodiment of a student-centered approach, serving as a form of interaction between students' intrinsic thinking and external embodied practice, ensuring the appropriate cognitive complexity and operational feasibility of out-of-class tasks. However, it is important to note that openness does not entail aimless exploration devoid of thematic guidance; rather, it involves divergent and speculative thinking within the framework of thematic knowledge architecture.

The teaching approach of "in-class + out-of-class" emphasizes the coherence and integration from in-class teaching content to the design of out-of-class tasks, presenting tasks in a graded manner. Moderately increasing the openness of assignment formats and enhancing students' involvement in assignment design can help achieve a gradient of thinking from in-class to out-of-class tasks, stimulate students' exploration enthusiasm, and enhance task operability. The process of students participating in assignment design and completing open-ended assignments is also a process of embodied practice in scenario-based thinking activities and a process of knowledge reconstruction.

3.4 Integration of Chinese and Foreign Cultures

If the exchange and interaction between civilizations is the driving force of civilization development, then estrangement is the source of civilization self-transcendence. The growth and development of people marked by culture cannot go through an unfamiliar environment, unknown knowledge, different people and events. To continuously grow, develop, and improve, students need to continuously engage with, understand, learn, internalize, and contemplate the diverse world beyond their own knowledge domain and perspectives. If a foreign language classroom excludes other cultures and rejects the stimulation of estrangement, cultivating talents by curriculum will become an empty talk. Zhu Guangqian (2021) argued, "When you encounter a person or nation without a spiritual thirst, you can conclude that their souls have reached a state of illness and decline."^[9] A culture trapped in self-satisfaction, while building a solid barrier against other cultures, will also lose the opportunity to transcend itself, integrate into the world, and become the most perfect subject possible. Therefore, presenting diverse cultural phenomena, tracing their cultural origins, and deeply contemplating the present world are crucial pathways to achieving foreign language education.

In BCCNTT, "culture" encompasses both the comprehensive aspects of human material civilization and spiritual civilization, as well as specifically referring to the products of spiritual civilization. Hence, it covers almost all aspects of human life and methods. Considering the ethnic attributes of culture and the nature of foreign language teaching, the entire world's culture is simplistically categorized into two domains: "Chinese culture" and "foreign culture". "Chinese culture" includes the essence of traditional Chinese culture and contemporary spiritual civilization. "Foreign culture" includes the main types of world traditional civilizations and contemporary major ethnic cultures. The teaching format of "Chinese culture plus foreign culture" determines a classroom approach that primarily relies on cultural comparison as the fundamental teaching method. Moreover, within the domain of foreign language education, which involves cultural collision, exchange, and dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures, this approach concretizes the content and orientation of grand culture thematic teaching. It serves as a pathway for cultivating cultural awareness and a foundation for stimulating students' critical thinking.

The pedagogical approach of integrating Chinese and foreign cultures determines the significance of cross-cultural education in foreign language instruction, emphasizing value-oriented pedagogy. The curriculum showcasing diverse Chinese and foreign cultures dictates the format of comparative cultural education in classrooms and necessitates the establishment of a highly integrated approach to language and cultural knowledge instruction.

3.5 Dialogue between Chinese and Foreign Cultures

Bakhtin Michael (1998) stated, "... in every sentence, every gesture, and every feeling, there is an echo of dialogue."^[10] Dialogue is the fundamental way of human existence, serving as the basic form

for social activities, emotional exchanges, and self-expression. It can be said that dialogue occurs constantly in every aspect of individuals' lives and in every corner of the world. Dialogue not only facilitates the exchange of ideas among individuals but also shapes human cognition. Education itself is a form of dialogue: a dialogue between the development of schools and the destiny of nations, a dialogue between talent cultivation and social development, a dialogue between educators and learners, and a dialogue between different values and aesthetics, among others. "A person enters into dialogue as a complete voice. They participate in the dialogue not only with their thoughts but also with their destinies and their entire personalities."^[10] (Bakhtin Michael, 1998) In the activity of "dialogue," individuals are not passive receivers of information; instead, they bring their knowledge, emotions, thoughts, and experiences to select, reason, and judge the information comprehensively. Therefore, critical thinking is a prominent characteristic of dialogue activity, as Paulo Freire (2001) put it, "Regardless of how ignorant a person may be or how deeply they may be submerged in 'silencing culture,' they can critically examine the world through dialogue with others."^[11] The emergence of "dialogue" arises from existing differences, which provide topics and driving forces for dialogue. However, the ultimate purpose of dialogue is to reach consensus and form a common understanding. "dialogue seems to be a meaningful stream flowing among people, allowing all participants in the dialogue to engage with and share this stream of meaning, thereby fostering new understandings and consensus within the group."^[12] (Bohm David, 2004) Continuous cognitive recognition and understanding of other civilizations enable individuals to enrich their own connotations. Human growth, akin to the growth of civilization, lies in the ongoing process of communication and dialogue with others, allowing for alignment between individuals' intrinsic thoughts and their surrounding contexts, thereby nurturing new perspectives and ideas. In an era of increasingly developed online media, civilizations come closer to each other, and diverse cultures enter people's lives more frequently. In fact, modern individuals living in online media are almost constantly facing the conflicts of the mind brought by interactions between civilizations. Learning to communicate and engaging in effective dialogue become the most important objectives of foreign language education within the framework of a globalized culture.

"Dialogue" has the nature of ideological and viewpoint confrontation, Contrast to the other disciplinary education, the most distinguished feature of foreign language teaching and learning is the unavoidable dialogue among cultures. Since this dialogue is ultimately completed by specific individuals, the subjects engaging in dialogue should first have a full and clear understanding and a relatively complete knowledge network of their own culture and possess the consciousness and ability to demonstrate their culture adequately, enabling them to critically evaluate different cultural phenomena while simultaneously reflecting on themselves. Inevitably, possessing accurate language proficiency is a prerequisite for dialogue to occur on an equal footing. Therefore, the consciousness and ability of dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures reflect comprehensive abilities in comparative thinking, questioning, self-reflection, and language, making them the key abilities for disseminating one's own culture and achieving personal growth and development. The teaching approach of "dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures" addresses the fundamental educational methods and models for BCCNTT.

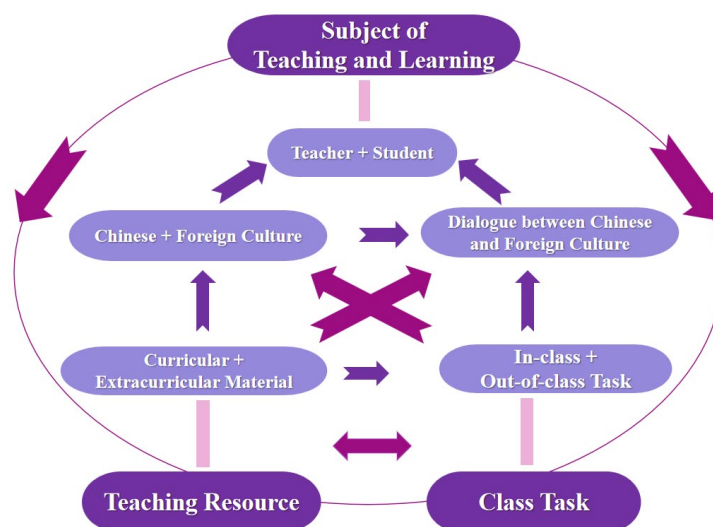


Fig.1. The Basic Thoughts of BCCNTT

As illustrated on *Fig.1. The Basic Thoughts of BCCNTT*, the main participants in BCCNTT are students and teachers. Through discourse-based instruction, they jointly explore the thematic connotations of the discourse, extending towards each other's real life and spiritual world or during the process of exploring external themes, achieving mutual growth in language literacy, humanistic literacy, and critical thinking abilities. Teachers, through interactive teaching, escape the marginalized role of traditional education and become integrated as both educators and learners. The curriculum serves as the fundamental learning resource for the teaching of BCCNTT and mark the starting point of learning. The vertical integration of previously learned knowledge within the discipline and the horizontal connections with interdisciplinary knowledge guide students to delve into the deeper meanings of knowledge and construct an ever-enriching, abundant, and open knowledge network as they extend beyond the curriculum. This represents the second level of material resourcing. Beyond textbooks, contextualized materials reflecting societal realities serve as the third level of instructional resource. The selection and utilization of teaching materials across these three levels largely reflect the socialization of English education and determine the humanistic content of English teaching and the potential for the integration of instrumentalism and humanism. Every teaching segment's design, from in-class to out-of-class, needs to closely align with the theme. In-class activities provide demonstrations and knowledge preparation for out-of-class tasks, determining the content and format of those tasks, with a key principle being the incremental progression in critical thinking level and application difficulty from in-class to out-of-class. The gradual shift from in-class to out-of-class task design toward more open-ended formats can better stimulate students' subjective initiative. The specific content of the teaching comprises Chinese culture and foreign culture, where language knowledge pertains to the thematic expression of culture. Through language representation and communication training, learners manifest and enhance cultural awareness and critical thinking abilities. The juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultures as specific teaching content not only signifies an entry point for cultivating cultural awareness but also integrates the teaching model of language proficiency and critical thinking. Furthermore, it represents the fundamental teaching format of cultural dialogue. Dialogue is not merely a form of communication, in reality, it is the fundamental way of human existence. Since dialogue involves contrasting viewpoints, it becomes a fundamental approach and manifestation of fostering critical thinking in foreign language education. In summary, the fundamental approach to BCCNTT involves structuring instruction around the theme, integrating vertical and horizontal aspects of material themes, expanding material beyond textbooks, designing in-class and out-of-class tasks of increasing openness and comprehensiveness according to teaching objectives, and adopting language aesthetics, cultural comparisons, and ideological confrontations to enhance students' language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and learning abilities. Within the domain of teaching on major cultural themes, students and teachers are dual subjects engaged in mutual knowledge exchange, emotional communication, and shared growth.

4. Teaching Principles

BCCNTT adheres to the principle of putting people first and combining instrumentality with humanism. It is based on five dimensions of teaching: students and teachers, material content and supplementary material, in-class and out-of-class activities, Chinese culture and foreign culture, and intercultural dialogue. This pedagogical approach is guided by the integration of thematic knowledge, the fusion of language, culture, and critical thinking, the combination of thought and interest, and the principle of leaving room for teaching implementation.

4.1 Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness refers to the integration and of knowledge from within and beyond the curriculum and the seamless spatial linkage from inside and outside the classroom. Inclusiveness is the essence of knowledge and also the current state of contemporary social space. Knowledge never exists in isolation but always emerges through the interaction and blending of existing knowledge systems with the external world. Learning tasks within the curriculum are derived from the space beyond the curriculum, and thus, the learning space within the classroom must be connected to the space beyond the classroom to attain educational value. Inclusiveness is also reflected in foreign language teaching through the integration of instrumentality and humanism, blurring the distinction between the cognitive process of language knowledge and the mastery of cultural knowledge. Clearly, the fusion of knowledge and space in foreign language teaching is demonstrated in the integration of subject knowledge and the organization of interdisciplinary knowledge. Expanding and extending knowledge beyond the

curriculum and the discipline involve the migration of theoretical knowledge to practice, resulting in the acquisition of updated knowledge and further blending and completion of knowledge systems. Benefiting from recent practice in theme-based teaching, teachers have paid more attention to the organization of subject knowledge within the discipline, but they have often overlooked the application of interdisciplinary knowledge. They have focused on summarizing knowledge within the textbook but struggled to achieve knowledge transfer and innovation beyond the textbook.

For instance, when discussing friendship, students not only need to learn relevant English expressions from the textbook and understand basic etiquette and taboos for making friends in different cultures, but they also need to explore further, beyond the textbook, the etiquette and taboos associated with friendship in various civilizations and trace the historical and cultural origins that lead to different forms of friendship etiquette. This exploration will shed light on the fundamental reasons behind the convergence of contemporary friendship etiquette and the national sentiments underlying traditional customs. When discussing cuisine, teachers should not only help students understand the food preferences and dining etiquette of people from different countries within the textbook but also guide them to proactively explore the historical and geographical reasons behind these preferences and the inevitability and importance of folk exchanges and fusion in today's culinary world outside the textbook. When addressing cybersecurity, teaching should not be limited to the depiction and description of common cybercrimes. Instead, teachers should lead students to delve into the current global cybersecurity crises and their underlying causes, as well as encourage them to seek potential solutions from the perspective of young learners beyond the textbook. When it comes to music, we should not only help students grasp information about musical instruments, genres, and personal music preferences, but we should also guide them to explore the social functions of music outside the textbook, the inheritance and development of traditional folk music, the historical status, development, and communication of music both domestically and internationally, and even issues related to music creation. Regarding tourism, we should not merely focus on the introduction of famous scenic spots, descriptions of historical sites, and customs and taboos of foreign travel within the textbook. Instead, we need to assist students in investigating the significance of tourism for personal growth, its value for societal development and cultural exchange, and the present-day social issues concerning the image, development, and environmental impact of tourism. Discussing stress should go beyond just exam pressure, academic stress, and parental pressure. It is essential to help students recognize the sources of stress experienced by people of different identities, eras, ethnicities, and regions. The key is to guide them in exploring the fundamental reasons behind human stress to enable them to handle the ubiquitous pressures and challenges in life.

Clearly, interdisciplinary integration should become one of the principles of foreign language teaching. Foreign language teaching can only break away from being a purely instrumental subject and achieve higher teaching efficiency and greater educational value by extensively involving humanities such as history, geography, religion, politics, folklore, law, psychology, and philosophy. Foreign language teaching, from within the curriculum to beyond the curriculum, should connect with students' real-life experiences, allowing them to see the social landscape and explore global hot topics. The incorporation of interdisciplinary approaches and venturing beyond the textbook will help students continuously construct thematic knowledge systems, broaden their horizons, deepen their thinking, and stimulate their desire for exploration. The integration of thematic knowledge follows human cognitive principles and meets the requirements of quality and quantity in foreign language teaching, endowing foreign language education with profound social value and reflecting foreign language education's full attention to the needs of individuals' development and growth.

4.2 Integration

Integration refers to the mutual permeation and inseparability of language aesthetics, cultural consciousness, critical thinking, and other qualities during the teaching process. BCCNTT revolves around the cultivation of cultural consciousness and is designed in a "three-stage teaching path": exploration and determination of the big cultural theme—comparison and tracing of the big cultural theme—migration and innovation of the big cultural theme. Cultural themes serve as the entry point for instruction, threading cognitive activities through the entire process of integrating language proficiency and cultural awareness cultivation. Typically, open-ended speculative activities conclude the entire unit of study, with the aim of continuously triggering the self-improvement mechanism of knowledge systems in subsequent learning processes, and establishing a dynamic view of cultural development and knowledge construction. The capture, tracing, and migration of cultural themes cannot be separated from discourse analysis, language aesthetics, and critical thinking activities. Therefore, the cultivation

of cultural awareness and abilities blurs the boundaries between language proficiency development, conscious thinking, and occurs as an integrated whole. In the process of instructional design, there is no need to deliberately distinguish activities aimed at developing different competencies or qualities. It is sufficient to engage in interactive exchanges based on students' cognitive needs and the realization of educational values, mobilizing the substantive content of each instructional activity in the teaching process to collectively achieve instructional objectives.

Currently, most high school English classrooms are able to demonstrate an awareness of capturing instructional themes. However, in many cases, they struggle to engage in activities requiring strong critical thinking, such as language aesthetics and viewpoint confrontation. This is largely due to most classrooms still being in a state where teachers dictate what students should learn, without considering what students truly want or need to learn. Consequently, the setting and implementation of instructional objectives are inconsistent, sometimes even contradictory. The title of Unit 3 "STRONGER ENOUGH: HOW WE HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY THE INTERNET" in the People's Education Press version of "Senior High School English" begins with two words with three syllables each, creating a strong, catchy, and attention-grabbing tone. The use of the comparative degree of adjectives achieves a powerful textual effect with a distinct viewpoint. Moreover, the substitution of the single-syllable noun "how" for the noun phrase "the way that" echoes the concise and powerful writing style used earlier, explicitly indicating the content of the writing. The use of the first-person plural "WE" suggests that the content of the text concerns not an individual case but rather the collective experience of humanity as a whole. By employing the passive voice in the perfect tense, the author expresses an underlying viewpoint: the facts described in the text have long existed, and humanity has already undergone changes, though this realization has been relatively limited. This naturally leads to the opening sentence, "Much has been written about the wonders of the World Wide Web," which, like the last two sentences introduced by "but," also uses the passive voice in the perfect tense. The language remains concise and sharp, not only reflecting the author's confidence and assertiveness in writing but also emphasizing the novelty of the content. The concise, lucid, rhythmic, and straightforward expression of viewpoints leaves a profound impression on readers and provides an example for students to learn how to present their ideas convincingly. The phrase "online communities and social networks" at the end of this paragraph not only concretizes the objects of writing but also emphasizes the current state of interdependence and mutual support among people across spatial limitations. Throughout the paragraph, the introductory functions are fulfilled: providing background information, expressing the significance of the theme, presenting viewpoints, and expressing attitudes. From a language aesthetics perspective, students should learn the author's diction, style, and expression of viewpoints, emotions, and attitudes. On a cultural level, students should grasp the author's concern for common human life. On a critical thinking level, students should contemplate whether online communities or social networks genuinely exist, what they are like, how people's lives have been changed by them, and in what ways.

In the People's Education Press version of "English" Grade 8, Unit 8 "Thanksgiving in the United States," the compound word "Thanksgiving" formed by "giving thanks" suggests the theme of "gratitude" and establishes the emotional color and genre of the text. The text uses degree adverbs such as "most," "usually," and "still" to express objectivity accurately. The third-person omniscient perspective allows readers to maintain a distance from the narrative events, enabling them to think rationally about the objectivity and accuracy of the events. The author employs time adverbial phrases like "at this time" and "these days" to shape the modern connotations of historical celebrations and to pay tribute to ancestors. The use of "these travelers" to refer to the first group of English people who arrived in North America vividly evokes the hardships of their journey over 400 years ago, elevating Thanksgiving to not only a feast of eating turkey but also carrying profound historical value and significant national significance for the American people. On a critical thinking level, readers should contemplate how the first group of English people settled in North America, whether traditional festivals both domestically and internationally have their historical legends, and the similarities and differences in the ways festivals are celebrated and the reasons behind them.

Integration in middle school English teaching involves using language as a tool to deeply analyze, feel, and learn the author's language style in word choice, sentence structure, and narrative arrangement to convey emotions and meanings; using culture as a starting point to delve into life, understand society, and explore the world; using critical thinking as a method to distinguish truth, goodness, and beauty, to grasp the underlying essence behind phenomena, and to cultivate thinking and personal growth. The integration of language aesthetics, cultural consciousness, and critical thinking is both the content and the goal of BCCNTT.

4.3 Interest-Thinking Combination

Curiosity is inherent to human nature; therefore, stimulating students' interest in learning is closely related to their thinking and exploration. If English teaching can enter students' lives, resonate with their hearts, and address their concerns, their interest in thinking and exploration will naturally be activated. Therefore, factors such as the age group, existing knowledge domains, living environment, emotional challenges, and social hot topics should all be fully considered in the process of instructional design. Topics such as animation, online games, violence, war, and gender relations should no longer be taboo in teaching. In-class teaching should avoid detached and broad-ranging topics that consume too much time and instead focus on connecting each element around the main theme. Attention should also be given to extending and delving deeper into in-class topics during out-of-class activities. Each question set in and out of class should have inherent value for contemplation and contribute to the expansion and exploration of cultural themes.

From the perspective of cultivating language aesthetics, cultural awareness, and critical thinking, instructional questions can be categorized into three types. Language aesthetics focuses on how diction, grammar, and sentence structures reflect style, emotions, and attitudes, as well as how narrative arrangement contributes to coherence, fluency, and integrity of thoughts and viewpoints. Cultural awareness seeks to understand the main theme of the text, what is universally acknowledged, what are the main differences, and what are the underlying reasons. Critical thinking addresses the existence of the interpreted phenomena, whether viewpoints are accepted, the flaws in viewpoints, the presence of similar phenomena, the essence of various phenomena, and the shortcomings of the "self" relative to others. Aesthetic appreciation and critical thinking are manifestations of human subjectivity, which all students possess regardless of their age, with differences lying in depth and scope. The lack of aesthetic appreciation and critical thinking in middle school English classrooms is a significant reason for the prolonged implementation of educational reforms and students' inadequate humanistic literacy. By integrating interest and inquiry, the fusion of language, culture, and critical thinking can be effectively put into practice. Aesthetic appreciation and critical thinking are also essential elements of teachers' self-development.

4.4 Instructional Leeway

In the cultivation of innovation and learning abilities, continuously posing questions and ongoing exploration of these questions are far more significant than simply providing answers. In the teaching process, providing appropriate explanations, selective task designs, and open-ended homework assignments to students constitutes instructional leeway, with the purpose of leaving space for students' thinking and exploration, thus enhancing their cognitive awareness and learning abilities. For instance, when teachers and students are exploring contextual nuances of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, if there are three identical knowledge points, the teacher only needs to elaborate on one of them, jointly comprehend the second point with the students, and let the students independently complete the third point as an extracurricular exercise. When interpreting discourse knowledge and rhetorical techniques, teachers can first guide students to apply their acquired language skills to analyze the textual effects, and then collaboratively compare the differences between Chinese and English. When conducting cultural phenomenon comparisons, it may be encouraged for students to draw on their knowledge of politics, history, and geography to attempt analysis, with the teacher supplementing or providing further guidance. Homework types should be diverse and graded, allowing students to make choices based on their abilities, preferences, and interests. Assignments that involve critical thinking should be open-ended, providing students with ample space for discussion and reflection.

Throughout any era, self-study remains the most fundamental and efficient pathway for personal growth and development. "Leeway" serves to stimulate learners' curiosity and desire for knowledge, guiding students to seek solutions independently, deeply understand themselves, and foster learning awareness and abilities. BCCNTT encourages exploration and reflection, allowing students to perceive and appreciate the inherent connections between language, culture, and critical thinking.

5. Conclusion

BCCNTT reinterprets the connotation of "people-oriented" in the contemporary educational context, explores the essence of thinking and the characteristics of contemporary civilization exchanges on foreign language teaching, advocates that foreign language teaching should start from cultural

noumenon to stimulate the interaction between language and thinking. Through teacher-student dual subjects, inside and outside textbook dual resources, inside and outside classroom dual channels, Chinese and foreign dual cultures and the dialogue among cultures, BCCNTT fully excavates the inclusive and integration of foreign language teaching, and tries to organize a class of combination of thought and interest filled with instructional leeway art to achieve the aims of cultivating students' language aesthetics, cultural consciousness, and critical thinking abilities.

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