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Research on the Strategies of Cultivating Chinese Cultural Awareness in Junior High School English Reading Teaching

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Abstract

In 2014, the Ministry of Education issued Opinions on *Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform* and *Implementing the Fundamental Task of Cultivating Talents through Virtue*, which identified the construction of a core competency framework as a crucial measure in advancing curriculum reform. The subsequent release of *English Curriculum Standards for Ordinary Senior High Schools* in 2017 accelerated a new wave of educational innovation. This document marked the first official proposal to cultivate core competencies as the central goal of English education, within which cultural awareness was accorded significant importance. However, in actual teaching practice, the cultivation of cultural awareness in junior high school English reading instruction remains largely neglected, and existing studies predominantly focus on senior high or tertiary levels. This paper aims to analyze the current deficiencies in cultural awareness cultivation within junior high school English reading classrooms and to propose practical pedagogical strategies, with particular emphasis on integrating Chinese cultural elements. Methodologically, this study adopts a literature review approach, combined with a critical analysis of teaching practices and classroom observation. The analysis identifies four major problems: relatively monotonous teaching methods lacking systematic guidance, limited and unevenly distributed instructional time, insufficient development of course resources, and teachers' inadequate cultural literacy despite their awareness of cultural teaching. In response, this paper proposes a series of reading instruction strategies covering pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities to systematically enhance students' cultural awareness. The findings may provide frontline teachers with some actionable references and suggestions for textbook interpretation, instructional design, and classroom implementation.

Keywords

Cultural Awareness; Reading Teaching; Junior High School; English Teaching; Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Research

With the acceleration of globalization and the continuous socioeconomic development of China, the importance of English learning has become increasingly prominent, and proficiency in English is now regarded as an essential skill.Language constitutes an integral part of culture, which encompasses both material and spiritual dimensions (Constantin et al. , 2015). Consequently, the cultivation of cultural awareness and the acquisition of cultural knowledge are indispensable components of English language learning.The cultivation of cultural awareness is not only the value orientation of English subject core competencies, but also the guaranty of the proper use of language (Zheng, Y. , 2024).*English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (hereinafter referred to as the "*Curriculum Standards*") introduce updated requirements: teachers and students are encouraged to understand cultural differences between China and other countries, cultivate patriotic sentiment, and develop a global perspective(Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022).

Junior high school represents a critical period for the formation of adolescents' values. Within the English learning classroom, reading serves as a highly effective medium for acquiring relevant knowledge and information. Furthermore, reading comprehension performance is heavily influenced by background knowledge pertaining to the passages. Therefore, in middle school English reading instruction, it is imperative for educators to master the skill of narrating Chinese stories effectively and to successfully integrate Chinese cultural elements into text-based learning. By cultivating students' awareness of Chinese culture, fostering cultural confidence, and helping them establish a correct worldview, teachers can enhance students' English reading proficiency and overall learning outcomes, thereby achieving greater results with commensurate effort.

1.2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

Edward Sapir (1921) pointed out that language depends on culture, and it is the transmission of language and belief systems that determine people's customs and way of life. Language cannot be separated from culture and cannot exist independently. The cultivation of cultural awareness in English education is instrumental in enabling students to develop a nuanced understanding of both their native and foreign cultures. This process fosters an appreciation for China's outstanding traditional culture while simultaneously allowing students to benefit from exposure to exemplary foreign cultures. Such an educational aim helps cultivate sound cultural judgment, promotes conscious resistance to the corrosive influence of detrimental cultural elements, and facilitates the formation of correct cultural values. Reading serves as a principal avenue for broadening horizons, gathering information, acquiring knowledge, developing critical thinking, and

nurturing moral character. It is, consequently, a highly effective pathway for fostering students' cultural awareness (Wang, Q. , 2017). Therefore, it is essential for teachers to prioritize the cultivation of students' cultural awareness within reading lessons. However, observational studies indicate that in daily teaching practice, many educators possess a relatively weak conceptualization of cultural awareness, often leading to its neglect in instructional design and delivery.

This study examines teaching strategies for fostering cultural awareness through English reading instruction at the junior high school level, grounded in the evolving connotations of cultural awareness in the new era. It addresses identified gaps in current research concerning junior high English reading instruction and seeks to mitigate the disconnect between theoretical principles and practical application. By exploring effective pathways for integrating cultural awareness cultivation into reading pedagogy, this paper aims to provide multi-layered, feasible approaches for its implementation. Furthermore, it seeks to offer insights and practical support for frontline English teachers in areas such as textbook interpretation, instructional design, and classroom practice.

2. Problem Identification

2.1. Teaching Methods Are Relatively Monotonous, Lacking Systematic Guidance and Training

During reading instruction, while a degree of consciousness regarding cultural integration exists among some teachers, the pedagogical methods employed are often restricted to introductory cultural background presentations or supplemental informational inputs. These approaches tend to be monotonous and lack engagement, confining cultural instruction to traditional, transmissive phases of teaching. The resulting instruction lacks depth, failing to leave a lasting impression of cultural knowledge on students or to spark sustained interest in cultural learning. The classroom delivery of cultural knowledge is frequently perfunctory, with cultural elements in textbooks merely glossed over. Students thus acquire only a cursory understanding of Western cultural references, which are seldom treated as focal points of learning. This superficial approach to encountering foreign cultures can diminish students' intrinsic interest in learning about other nations, which in turn may erode teachers' own initiative and conscious effort in fostering students' cultural consciousness. Furthermore, classroom activities are primarily designed to assess comprehension of main textual ideas, which hinders opportunities for deeper cultural engagement and understanding. Consequently, there is an urgent need for systematic training and professional development in this domain.

2.2. Teaching Hours are Relatively Limited, and Instructional Time is Unevenly Distributed

Since the implementation of the new curriculum reforms, a majority of teachers have

recognized the importance of cultural awareness instruction and have begun to articulate cultural objectives within their lesson plans. However, in the practical context of reading classes, a significant portion of instructional time remains devoted to the explanation of foundational knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, and complex sentence structures. Classroom activities and questioning strategies predominantly focus on assisting students in grasping the basic content and grammatical rules of the text, with comparatively fewer activities explicitly designed to cultivate cultural awareness. A noticeable imbalance in time allocation persists.

Most teachers confine the introduction of cultural background knowledge to the brief warm-up or pre-reading phase of a lesson. Due to stringent time constraints, the teaching and exploration of cultural knowledge seldom progress beyond a superficial level. During while-reading and post-reading activities, a small number of teachers may incorporate cultural comparison exercises. However, these are often limited to the enumeration of basic similarities and differences, resulting in limited effectiveness in fostering a deeper, more reflective cultural awareness among students.

Several factors contribute to this situation. Firstly, the fixed and often limited number of English class hours compels teachers to cover an extensive syllabus within a constrained time frame. With minimal time allocated specifically for cultural instruction, and considering that grammar and vocabulary remain focal points of standardized assessments, teachers are pressured to prioritize foundational language skills, inadvertently relegating cultural awareness development to a secondary status. Secondly, the enduring influence of traditional teaching paradigms means that the strategic importance of cultural awareness is not yet fully internalized by all educators. Consequently, when planning lessons and allocating time, they often fail to proportionally increase the focus on cultural elements within the overall teaching process. Cultural knowledge is thus frequently treated as a supplementary aside, leaving a negligible impression on students and failing to catalyze a meaningful enhancement of their cultural awareness.

2.3. Insufficient Course Resource Development, Textual Materials Require Further Exploration

Rich and varied teaching resources are vital vehicles for effective cultural instruction and provide a solid foundation for enhancing students' cultural awareness (Hanvey, R. G. , 1979). Nationally, one of the most widely adopted English textbook series for junior high school is the New Target Junior High School English series published by People's Education Press. Within this series, reading texts are notable for their detailed cultural content, diverse thematic coverage, and opportunities for cultural contrast. They encompass multifaceted cultural knowledge spanning folklore, science, history, society, and value systems, rendering them excellent potential resources for teaching cultural awareness.

However, in practice, some teachers often approach reading texts merely as vehicles for reading comprehension exercises. Their instruction focuses primarily on explaining discrete linguistic points within the material, while the rich cultural contexts and implications created by the reading materials remain under-explored and under-utilized. Teachers frequently neglect to expand upon and deeply teach the cultural knowledge implicitly or explicitly provided by the textbook's reading materials. This underutilization of available resources is a significant factor contributing to the limited effectiveness of cultural awareness instruction.

Furthermore, while some teachers attempt to supplement instruction with relevant external materials, the selection and utilization of these resources often remain superficial. Cultural knowledge introduced through such means is frequently presented in a fragmented manner without deeper exploration of underlying values, beliefs, or historical contexts, resulting in underdeveloped teaching resources and missed opportunities for meaningful cultural learning.

2.4. Teachers Possess Cultural Teaching Awareness, but Lack Cultural Literacy

For teachers, possessing robust cultural literacy and a sensitivity to cultural differences forms the essential foundation for effective cultural teaching and ensures the achievement of cultural awareness objectives (Wen, A. , 2021). Currently, many activities designed to introduce culture in English classrooms remain relatively monotonous. Cultural background knowledge is often presented passively through videos, pictures, or similar audiovisual aids. Due to time constraints, these cultural activities seldom progress beyond basic informational introduction to engage with the deeper cultural factors, values, or worldview perspectives. The content tends to be simplistic, the methodologies limited, and consequently, the effectiveness in enhancing students' cultural awareness is constrained.

Beyond possessing solid subject-specific knowledge, teachers are tasked with cultivating students' cultural sensitivity (Gulin, O, 2021). This requires the creation of authentic, lifelike cultural scenarios in the classroom to help students perceptually and cognitively understand differences. Designing in-depth cultural comparison and analysis activities demands even higher levels of cultural literacy from educators. Therefore, teachers should proactively acquire knowledge of both Chinese and Western cultures that extends beyond the immediate confines of the textbook. They should also actively explore and experiment with richer, more interactive forms of cultural teaching activities to fundamentally enhance the depth and impact of students' cultural learning.

3. Reading Instruction Strategies for Cultivating Cultural Awareness in Junior High School English

3.1. Pre-Reading Activity Strategies

Prior to formal reading instruction, teachers should engage in meticulous lesson preparation utilizing existing textbooks and other pedagogical resources. This involves conducting an in-depth analysis and adaptive processing of reading texts based on unit themes and instructional objectives. During this phase, teachers must first clarify their instructional aims and deliberately identify embedded cultural awareness goals. Building on this foundation, a thorough exploration and comparative analysis of the cultural content within the materials should be undertaken. This process allows for the expansion of the scope and depth of cultural knowledge addressed, while ensuring the relevance, appropriateness, and contemporary resonance of the selected materials and designed content, thereby creating a structured framework for enhancing students' cultural awareness.

3.1.1. Defining Teaching Objectives with a Focus on Cultural Awareness

The new curriculum standards establish specific and clear objectives for junior high English instruction. As outlined in the five-level standards for cultural awareness, students throughout junior high school are expected to acquire knowledge of Chinese and foreign cultures, understand underlying cultural values, and engage in basic cross-cultural communication activities based on this foundational knowledge (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). The teaching objectives within these standards encompass three integrated dimensions: cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, and intercultural communication skills. These dimensions are designed to progressively deepen in complexity while maintaining both depth and breadth, providing a coherent reference framework for enhancing students' cultural awareness.

Therefore, before commencing formal reading instruction, teachers should thoroughly scrutinize the cultural awareness objectives relevant to the curriculum unit and use them as a guiding framework to rationally design teaching content. A practical illustration can be drawn from the reading lesson " An Accidental Invention " from Section A 2a-2e of Unit 6 in the People' s Education Press Grade 9 English textbook. This unit revolves around the theme " Discussing Inventions ". The reading text primarily recounts the history of tea's invention and its subsequent dissemination across the world. By presenting the story of tea in English, the text inherently embodies rich Chinese cultural characteristics. When designing teaching objectives for this lesson, teachers should not only aim to help students understand factual knowledge about tea culture and the traditional Chinese values embedded within it, but also incorporate corresponding contextualized activities to better develop students' cross-cultural communication skills. For instance, teachers could design simulated scenarios or research tasks themed around contrasting tea-drinking customs, etiquettes, and social meanings in China and other countries. Such authentic cross-cultural comparisons enable students to grasp cultural differences experientially while honing their ability to describe, compare,

and negotiate cultural practices in English, thereby more comprehensively achieving the multidimensional teaching objectives outlined in the cultural awareness standards.

3.1.2. Adapting Textbook Content and Developing Course Resources

Textbooks serve as direct and primary resources for both teaching and learning, occupying a pivotal position within the educational ecosystem with multifaceted functions. They concretely and authoritatively embody prescribed instructional objectives and content, significantly influence teaching methodologies, shape the learning environment and pedagogical processes, and ultimately impact student assessment and holistic development.

An examination of the cultural content within widely used textbooks, such as the 2011 edition of the People's Education Press junior high school English series, reveals a wealth of integrated cultural knowledge. However, as previously noted, teachers have not consistently exploited this potential, often providing only superficial cultural information dissemination. This falls short of the systematic engagement required to cultivate deeper cultural awareness. The direct input and output of cultural information cannot replace the cultivation of cultural awareness, and the understanding and excavation of cultural materials should be strengthened (Wang, Y. , 2019). Therefore, prior to reading instruction, teachers should meticulously prepare and, where necessary, adapt reading texts. The focus should not be solely on linguistic fundamentals but must extend to a deliberate exploration of cultural connotations, historical backgrounds, and value perspectives embedded within the text.

Additionally, teachers should select appropriate supplementary reading materials to enrich cultural content before or during class. When selecting such materials, priority should be given to authentic language resources originating from the target culture or providing authoritative perspectives on the native culture. For example, carefully selected clips from documentaries produced by broadcasters like the BBC or fair-minded cultural reports from sources like China Daily can be used. These resources should be contemporary, culturally relevant, objective, and accessible to the students' proficiency level. Such materials help broaden students' international perspectives, enhance their understanding of global issues and diverse cultures, and cultivate their capacity for critical intercultural understanding.

Furthermore, teachers should endeavor to develop a diverse portfolio of course resources across various genres and formats. These may include film clips, folk tales, idioms and proverbs, excerpts from literary works, news articles, and digital media content that embody authentic cultural characteristics. These resources should possess authenticity, reflecting genuine communicative features and societal realities of the target language culture or native culture, while maintaining representativeness. Critically, all course materials should be closely aligned with students' life

experiences and cognitive levels, avoiding scenarios that are significantly detached from their reality or exceed their comprehension. Authentic and relatable social situations help students tangibly perceive cultural similarities and differences, fostering a deeper, more empathetic comprehension of cultural variations, which is essential for preventing misunderstandings in future cross-cultural communication.

For instance, consider the reading passage "Dinner Customs about Colombia and Switzerland" from Unit 10 of the People's Education Press English textbook for Grade 9. This unit focuses on "Communication Traditions Across Cultures". The text primarily discusses cross-national differences in time perception related to social dining, using Colombia and Switzerland as comparative case studies. It explains that Colombians typically adopt a more relaxed attitude towards time, often arriving later than the stipulated time for dinners at friends' homes, while Swiss culture places a high premium on punctuality, valuing others' respect for agreed-upon times. Such differences in nonverbal communication and social expectations vividly reflect deeper cultural values. However, this reading passage presents a springboard for further exploration. Before teaching, educators can proactively gather additional resources that illustrate corresponding time-related cultural concepts, such as the Chinese emphasis on "准时" (punctuality) in formal settings versus more flexible "弹性时间" (flexible time) in certain social contexts, or the Polynesian concept of "island time" . This enriches the comparative framework and connects the foreign concepts to students' own cultural frame of reference.

3.2. Reading Activities Strategies

3.2.1. Creating Cultural Contexts to Optimize Classroom Atmosphere

A well-constructed cultural context is indispensable for effective cultural instruction, given culture's distinctive and often implicit nature. Teaching within simulated or discussed contexts that approach authenticity fosters students' cultural sensitivity and their awareness of both cultural commonalities and divergences (Mei, D. , 2020). Whether through explicit communicative activities or implicit cultural immersion, achieving cultural teaching objectives requires teachers and students to collaboratively cultivate a positive, inquisitive, and respectful cultural atmosphere within the classroom.

During reading instruction, teachers can design communicative environments aligned with the text's theme. For example, role-playing activities can help students overcome the potential "fatigue" or disengagement associated with passive cultural indoctrination. They facilitate active cross-cultural dialogue, provide low-anxiety opportunities for oral communication practice, and allow students to "step into the shoes" of others. English teachers can also employ a variety of established cultural teaching methods such as film analysis, cultural simulations, educational games, and "cultural capsules" to aid students' cultural adaptation and understanding in the classroom.

A pertinent example is the reading lesson “Qomolangma --- the Most Dangerous Mountain in the World? ” from Unit 7 of the People's Education Press English Grade 8, Volume 2. The unit theme is “ The Highest Mountain in the World,” falling under the category of geographical and exploratory knowledge within the cultural awareness spectrum. The text's specific focus introduces the history of human ascents of Mount Everest and expresses themes of human endeavor, courage, and the spirit of exploration. Given the geographical and experiential distance between the text's subject matter and most students’ daily lives, creating a vivid, multi-sensory knowledge-cultural context during reading activities is crucial for bridging this gap. In this lesson, teachers can simulate the harsh, awe-inspiring natural environment of Everest through evocative textual descriptions, dramatic video presentations, and powerful image displays. This not only aids students in comprehending the mountain’s formidable geography and inherent dangers but also builds an emotional connection to the narrative. Additionally, teachers can design a collaborative role-playing or project-based activity titled “Planning a Mount Everest Expedition”. Students work in groups to research and organize the various preparations required and present their expedition plans. Such activities invigorate the classroom atmosphere, enhance collaborative and English presentation skills, and deepen students’ appreciation for the interplay between human ambition, natural forces, and cross-cultural respect.

3.2.2. Integrating Teaching Content and Strengthening Cultural Comparison

An analysis of current junior high school English textbooks indicates that reading materials contain a mixture of target language culture and native culture content. However, quantitatively, target language cultural references still account for a higher proportion than sustained, in-depth content on Chinese culture, leading to a perceptible imbalance. Furthermore, in common reading instructional practices, issues such as weak integration between Chinese and Western cultural elements and insufficient emphasis on meaningful, reflective cultural comparison are prevalent.

To address these issues, a two-pronged approach is recommended. First, teachers should proactively supplement their lesson preparation by seeking out native or other target language cultural knowledge that aligns with the cultural themes of the reading text. Given the identified under-representation of native culture in many textbook passages, teachers have a particular responsibility to gather and integrate high-quality Chinese cultural materials. This promotes a more balanced integration between native and target cultures, thereby enhancing students' understanding, appreciation, and ability to articulate their own cultural heritage in English.

Second, teachers should deliberately design cultural comparison activities based on the similarities and differences between Chinese and relevant foreign cultures touched upon in the reading materials. These activities should not be limited to simple lists of factual cultural knowledge. Instead, they should employ diverse,

interactive formats such as structured group debates, creation of short "textbook dramas" or skits, or perspective-taking writing assignments to deepen students' personal engagement with and understanding of cultural differences. The scenarios for these comparisons should be authentic and closely aligned with students' lived experiences or plausible future interactions to increase their sense of relevance and participation. The content of cultural comparisons should also strive for balance, including not only traditional cultural aspects but also modern cultural phenomena.

For example, in the People's Education Press English Grade 9 Unit 8 reading text "Stonehenge-Can anyone explain why it is there? ", the unit theme is "Unsolved Mysteries". This reading text discusses the historical enigma of Britain's Stonehenge. Before teaching, teachers can collect relevant materials on analogous historical or archaeological mysteries from Chinese culture, such as the San xing dui ruins or the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor with its Terracotta Army. During guided cultural comparisons, the discussion can be steered towards understanding that such historical puzzles and achievements represent shared treasures of human civilization and ingenuity. This approach fosters national pride in local heritage while cultivating a genuine interest in and respect for world history and culture. It also helps students develop an awareness of the importance of preserving humanity's collective cultural patrimony, thereby enhancing their broader cultural consciousness.

3.2.3. Updating Teaching Methods Based on Practical Needs

The selection and creative adaptation of appropriate teaching methods for cultural awareness instruction is both a requirement of Curriculum Standards and a fundamental prerequisite for elevating students' cultural learning outcomes. An analysis of common textbooks confirms the availability of rich content, but its distribution and depth vary. To better address specific classroom needs and student profiles, teachers must be prepared to update their methodological repertoire. They should flexibly adjust teaching content, adding, omitting, or re-sequencing material to better align with the developmental goals of the cultural awareness competency standards.

During reading instruction, if the dominant method remains the supplementary lecture on cultural background, student engagement may remain low, and the immersive experience of cultural "lived reality" may be absent. Methodological innovation should therefore address the fundamental requirements of each cultural awareness dimension while being responsive to students' grade levels, proficiency, interests, and learning contexts. Teachers should creatively update methods based on practical needs. A clear example can be seen in the reading text "Beauty in Common Things" from Section B 2a-2e of Unit 5 in the People's Education Press Junior High School English Grade 9 textbook. This reading explores traditional Chinese artworks, introducing quintessential crafts like sky lanterns, paper-cutting, and clay sculptures. It disseminates knowledge while implicitly cultivating aesthetic appreciation rooted

in Chinese cultural values, thereby fostering cultural confidence. Given that ninth grade represents an advanced junior high stage where students possess a stronger English foundation and greater cognitive maturity, the teaching approach for this passage can be multi-faceted: 1) Expanding Textbook Resources: Centered on Chinese traditional arts, teachers can guide students to explore parallel outstanding traditional art forms from other cultures. Students can research and introduce related artworks, creating a classroom gallery or digital presentation. 2) Updating Classroom Activities: To provide tangible understanding, teachers can arrange a practical session where students learn basic paper-cutting techniques before class and then demonstrate and describe their creations in English during class. For cultural comparison, a "Traditional Arts Knowledge Quiz Bowl" pitting teams against each other on facts about Chinese and global arts can be organized. 3) Post-Reading Consolidation and Valorization: After studying the text's language and cultural content, teachers can facilitate reflective group discussions on themes like "How can we, as young people, better inherit, innovate, and promote traditional Chinese culture in a globalized world? " or "What challenges do traditional arts face today? " This elevates the learning from knowledge acquisition to value clarification and personal engagement, solidifying cultural confidence and critical awareness.

3.4. Post-Reading Activity Teaching Strategies

3.4.1. Focusing on Assessment Goals and Selecting Evaluation Content

Teaching assessments can be categorized based on their objectives and functions. In research exploring how teachers cultivate students' cultural awareness through reading instruction, the primary focus is on evaluating students' acquisition levels of cultural awareness. Since cultural awareness possesses greater specificity compared to foundational language knowledge, the corresponding evaluation content must also be targeted. In current junior high English textbooks, reading passages are typically followed by exercises designed to assess comprehension of textual information. After understanding the reading material, students complete these exercises to reinforce learning. These exercises generally cover language points, comprehension of textual content, and exploration of the article's theme. Some teachers design post-reading activities primarily to test and consolidate textual information, which aids comprehension but lacks strong specificity. Defining evaluation content facilitates the diagnostic, motivational, and regulatory functions of teaching assessment while ensuring smooth instructional progress. When selecting evaluation content, teachers should reference the reading text's subject matter and themes, appropriately incorporating related cultural knowledge. Integrating diverse cross-cultural communication concepts or cultural comparative insights allows for more accurate measurement of students' cultural awareness levels and further solidifies acquired knowledge.

Taking Section B 2a-2b "Birthday Food Around the World" from Unit 10 of the

People's Education Press Junior High School English Grade 7 Textbook as an example, this reading passage explores birthday traditions across countries and delves into the meaning and history of Chinese-style birthdays. This theme not only cultivates students' understanding of their own culture but also helps them recognize cultural differences between China and other nations. For post-reading activities in this lesson, teachers can first design language knowledge instruction based on the text content. This segment aims to assess students' grasp of fundamental language elements within the reading passage, using the accompanying exercises following the text as a reference: Next, teachers may incorporate cultural Q&A segments centered on the text's theme, selecting relevant cultural knowledge to assess students' awareness of cultural differences. For instance, questions like "What other traditional birthday customs in China or other countries do you know?" can be posed for student discussion and response. Finally, appropriate writing instruction extensions can be implemented to achieve reading-to-writing integration, using writing tasks to evaluate students' reading comprehension outcomes.

3.3.2. Refining Assessment Methods and Expanding Assessment Subjects

The significance and value of assessment lie not only in evaluating the quality of learning outcomes, but also in monitoring and promoting learning (Tang, Q. , & Zhou，J. , 2023). It helps students promptly understand their learning progress, reflect on and adjust their learning strategies and methods, thereby continuously enhancing learning effectiveness. By appropriately incorporating cultural elements into evaluations, the cultivation of cultural awareness can be effectively integrated with language learning. This approach emphasizes the examination of traditional Chinese culture, guiding students to enhance their cultural consciousness and confidence. It is important to note that teachers should foster a supportive classroom environment to reduce students' anxiety about cultural learning, enhance their willingness to participate in assessment activities, and improve learning efficiency (Gardner, R. C. , 1985).

Given the diversity of cultures and the influence of multicultural knowledge, the assessment of students' cultural awareness must adopt diversified evaluation methods. Diversified assessment approaches must achieve two objectives: the diversification of evaluators and the variety of assessment methods. First, teachers should comprehensively consider the target requirements and characteristics outlined in *Curriculum Standards* and subject-specific core competencies—specifically the four dimensions of language proficiency, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning abilities—when selecting assessment content. Based on the five-level objectives for cultural awareness specified in *Curriculum Standards*, teachers should incorporate open-ended, multifaceted subjective questions to evaluate students' cultural awareness levels. Second, incorporate items involving cultural knowledge where students commonly make

cultural pragmatic errors into daily exercises and tests, skillfully integrating cultural awareness assessment into the questions. This approach enables teachers to leverage examinations and assessments to emphasize the importance of cultural knowledge, consciously enhance students' cultural sensitivity, and introduce linguistic variations and cultural differences between China and other countries through test content. Furthermore, diverse assessment methods must be tailored to different cultural awareness teaching content. For learning outcomes that cannot be quantified by scores, it is essential to comprehensively evaluate students through classroom performance, activity participation, and other measures. In traditional assessment, teachers were the sole evaluators. However, contemporary curriculum values center development on the student. Therefore, curriculum evaluation must possess a clear and complete understanding of students as the primary agents of development to better highlight their intrinsic value. As the primary agents of learning, students should actively participate in the evaluation process. Methods such as peer assessment within groups or between deskmates can significantly boost student motivation and aid in deepening their understanding of the cultural awareness embedded within texts. The profound depth, rich content, and far-reaching significance of cultural heritage cannot be underestimated. Consequently, evaluations of students must also fully consider comprehensiveness. Taking the reading text "Rethink, Reuse, Recycle!" from Unit 13 of the People's Education Press Grade 9 English textbook as an example, this text centers on the theme of "Protecting the Environment and Turning Waste into Treasure". It aims to help students understand the benefits and common practices of waste sorting while cultivating their environmental awareness. This topic has practical relevance to students' lives, so the assessment methods for this lesson should not be limited to designing Q&A formats. Given this, post-reading activities for this lesson could include environmental knowledge quizzes to assess students' understanding. Alternatively, a group activity titled "Creative Upcycling Tips" could be implemented. Students would design eco-friendly solutions through group discussions. After each group's presentation, other groups would provide feedback and knowledge supplements. This approach not only reinforces cultural knowledge but also hones students' communication skills. Furthermore, students' participation in group discussions during classroom activities can serve as one criterion for evaluating their learning outcomes.

4. Conclusion

Language serves as the vehicle for culture, with both mutually influencing and constraining each other (Wang, L. , 2021). The junior high school stage represents a critical period for students' learning and development. Cultivating cultural awareness during this phase not only lays a foundation for their future studies but also helps shape their value systems. In today's era of cultural convergence, cultivating students' cultural awareness, enhancing their intercultural

communication skills, and thereby fostering international understanding and cultural confidence represent new demands for 21st-century talent development. Reading texts in English textbooks often contain rich linguistic and cultural knowledge, playing an irreplaceable role in nurturing students' cultural awareness. Therefore,This paper has analyzed prevailing deficiencies in current junior high school English reading instruction regarding the cultivation of cultural awareness. In response, it has proposed a framework of integrated reading teaching strategies designed to enhance students' cultural awareness across the three key stages of the reading lesson: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. These strategies offer concrete recommendations for teachers concerning instructional content selection and adaptation, teaching methodology innovation, and the thoughtful design of cultural assessment. It is hoped that by implementing such a holistic and culturally responsive approach to reading instruction, educators can more effectively empower students to navigate and contribute to our interconnected world with both linguistic proficiency and cultural wisdom.

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