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An exploration of the transmission path of cross-cultural knowledge through multimodal pedagogies in middle school English classroom

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Abstract

Under the requirements of the new curriculum standards, English classroom teaching should constantly meet the needs of students to improve their cultural literacy, cultivate students' cultural cultivation under the corresponding discourse context, and then deepen students' cross-cultural communication ability, so that students can grow into high-quality cultural communicators with bilingual ability. Therefore, English classroom teaching needs to constantly explore cultural innovation activities, and teachers need to boldly carry out teaching reform. Under the guidance of multimodal pedagogies and combined with practical teaching cases, this paper intends to explore practical and inclusive teaching activities, which will closely link language learning with the cultivation of cultural awareness, and provide feasible reference for contemporary teaching activities in teaching design and implementation.

Keywords

Cultural knowledge; Multimodal Pedagogies; Teaching Design; Secondary Education

1. Introduction

"English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 edition, 2020 revision)" clearly states that the core quality of English includes the identification and understanding of Chinese and Western cultures, so as to accelerate the cultivation of new people with international vision and cultural confidence in the context of globalization [1]. Once this curriculum standard is promulgated, how to implant cross-cultural content in English classroom has become a hot topic for teachers. The introduction of cross-cultural teaching into middle school classroom is not a simple teaching based on cross-cultural content, but a deep learning of foreign culture and domestic culture, understanding cultural differences, and building cultural confidence. Therefore, teachers need to create specific cultural discourses, encourage students to learn to solve cross-cultural communication problems with their cultural knowledge on the premise of comparing the cultural differences between China and the west, and help students truly understand the meaning,

intention, emotion and attitude behind culture, so as to apply what they have learned and enjoy learning.

The goal of intercultural communication teaching is to train students' ability of language and literature as well as their ability of intercultural expression. However, many teachers are discouraged from the implementation of cross-cultural content teaching due to such factors as the complexity of cross-cultural content, limited class hours and single and inefficient teaching methods. In view of such problems, curriculum standards also put forward higher requirements for teachers. For example, "In the teaching of Chinese and foreign cultural knowledge, teachers should create meaningful contexts, make proper use of information technology, guide students to dig out the meaning and connotation of the cultural knowledge carried by the texts, and help students learn and internalize language and cultural knowledge in various activities of language practice and application" [1]. "Teachers should change the fragmented teaching methods of teaching knowledge points out of context, and let students realize that the purpose of language learning is to apply the knowledge in the real context, understand the meaning, transmit information, express personal feelings and opinions, and compare and identify different cultures and values" [1]. "Teachers should try their best to integrate the teaching of cultural knowledge into language learning, fully tap the cultural and educational value in the texts, explore the connotation of culture with students in activities, and enrich the cultural experience of students" [1]. Thus, the importance of creating real context in cultivating students' cultural awareness is self-evident. This paper takes the multi-modal teaching method as the starting point, and focuses on constructing teaching cases with pictures, music, videos, tables and symbols as the elements, so as to provide practical implementation plans for the efficient introduction of cross-cultural classroom teaching, so as to better implement the requirements of curriculum standards and comprehensively improve the comprehensive quality of students.

2. English teaching concept under multi-modal teaching theory

The theory of multimodal teaching was first put forward in the West. Educationist Kress & Leeuwen proposed to construct a multi-modal learning framework of mixed images, colors and sounds from the perspective of social semiotics [2]. At the beginning of the 21st century, the theoretical system of multimodal teaching was issued in foreign countries. Since 2007, domestic scholars have gradually begun to study the theory and practice of multimodal teaching. Multi-modal teaching focuses on students' sensory stimulation, activates the sensitivity of multiple senses to mobilize students' learning enthusiasm and enhance the learning effect. Under the guidance of multimodal teaching theory, middle school English class should focus on students' learning needs, with the help of various audio-visual equipment and teaching tools, so that students can understand the connotation, meaning and

expression of texts in multiple experiences.

2.1. Situational exercises of English discourse under visual effects

Middle school is a critical period of cognitive development for students, who pay more attention to intuitive and perceptual learning styles. The addition of visual elements can help students carry out text conversion, which is embodied in the conversion of boring and tedious text content into pictures, GIFs, videos, knowledge graphs, mind maps and other forms. Different from the traditional repetition memory practice method, vivid visual presentation can imprint knowledge in the learner's brain and generate long-term memory. For example, in the word teaching module, teachers can show students the specific context and usage of words by presenting word cards and playing videos. In the reading course, teachers can list the mind map according to the text logic, so that students can understand the structure of the article faster, grasp the important and difficult points, and carry out targeted learning, so as to improve the learning efficiency.

In addition, the addition of visual elements can also increase the classroom interaction and interest, stimulate students' learning interest and initiative. Especially for middle school students and English as a second language learners, visual stimulation can attract their attention more, so as to help students understand and master the text from multiple dimensions.

2.2. The expansion space of English text under awakening auditory stimulation

With the development of science and technology, the application of sound modes in language education has a broad prospect, and its role and significance will be more significant [3]. The cultivation of hearing in English learning must go through the process from the basic input represented by letter pronunciation to the output centered on oral communication. Therefore, after arousing the auditory system of language learners, teaching resources should break the limitation of teaching materials and return to the underlying logic of language learning, that is, play the pragmatic function of language. After playing the audio materials, teachers should actively create theme scenes, encourage students to carry out situational dialogues, exercise students' oral communication ability, enrich students' cultural background, so as to adapt to and meet the requirements of core literacy.

2.3. Explore the cultural representation of text under the potential logical thinking

The abstract logical thinking of middle school students began to develop and become mature. In order to adapt to the law of physical and mental development of students and cultivate the quality of independent and dialectical thinking, the English textbooks in middle school also show the characteristics of multi-dimension,

openness and complexity. Therefore, simple visual and auditory presentation is difficult to meet students' growing thinking needs, while diversified symbolic representations can well grasp the potential logical evolution of text, such as spatiotemporal order, causal order, comparison and contrast order. The effect of language learning is closely related to the depth of cognitive processing of learning materials. Symbolic representation, by using multi-modal information to access semantics, can provide deep and detailed language processing, which is also of great significance to foreign language learning, which is sensitive to the depth of cognitive processing [4]. In the process of applying multi-modal teaching, teachers should restore clear logical sequence with selected quotation symbols according to students' physical and mental characteristics, as well as text types, so as to help students clarify the text more quickly, learn the corresponding logical evolution sequence, and improve students' learning ability and critical thinking ability.

3. Innovative English classroom design under the cultivation of cultural awareness

Based on the importance of cultural consciousness cultivation from the perspective of the new curriculum standard mentioned above, the following will lay out the practical path of introducing cultural consciousness into the middle school classroom based on the multimodal teaching theory, and give examples respectively.

3.1. Guide students to experience cultural differences in the comparison of pictures and texts

The language skills specified in the curriculum standards have added the skill of "seeing", breaking through the traditional way of "listening, speaking, reading and writing" to understand and express meaning. In the context of the rapid development of big data and multimedia, the skill of "seeing" is particularly important. On the other hand, cultural knowledge is relatively complex and obscure, and it is difficult for students to truly understand the connotation and expression meaning of culture through direct teaching, resulting in low interest of students and low efficiency in class. Therefore, how to combine vivid pictures with cultural knowledge and get practical practice in middle school classroom has become an urgent topic. Here are some examples of how the teaching of cultural knowledge can be integrated into the development of language skills.

【Example 1】Write the following words in the correct places on the picture.

Ship	Boat	River	Ferry	Ocean	Raft



Figure 1. City Scene

Work in pairs and ask each other the following questions:

1) Have you ever caught the boat? If yes, please describe your experience in detail.
2) Have you ever caught the raft? If yes, please describe your experience in detail.
3) Have you ever saw the ocean? What are the differences between river and ocean?
4) Which country does this picture show us? And Why?

Example 1 is a vocabulary teaching activity, which requires students to observe the features of things in the pictures and match these features with the information in the pictures. It not only tests students' ability of information conversion and interpretation, but also tests their ability of information discrimination. Through the real presentation of pictures, vocabulary learning is simplified and interesting. In the word filling, students need to focus on identifying the differences between the words "ship", "ferry" and "boat". First, a ferry means a ferry. In Europe, islands run between continents, so a good way to cross the islands on a river is to use a large boat or take a ferry. Ferries are a great and fun way to move around the city and are responsible for taking passengers to short destinations. Therefore, ferries are a common way to travel in Europe, and there are special ferry stations, such as "New York Ferry Station". "ship" means a ship that carries goods, a large ship we would say ship. "boat" is a boat, we usually go to the park, the boat in the artificial lake is the boat. "ship" and "boat" are common in China, but "ferry" is a mode of transportation that is unique to the geographical waters of Europe. Through this kind of vocabulary discrimination activity and matching corresponding pictures, students can better visualize "ferry", "ship" and "boat" and help students remember the words.

After filling in the blanks, students need to discuss and interact. In this activity,

students need to activate relevant background knowledge, combine their own life experience, and carry out oral expression exercises with the language form prompts given in the questions. In discussion and interaction, students need to apply not only language knowledge, but also logical and innovative thinking skills in order to effectively organize and develop their own discourse and maintain dialogue with peers.

3.2. Guide students to expand their cultural knowledge through audio-visual integration

Stimulated by the colorful elements in the picture, the students' subjective initiative is improved. But the visual presentation alone can be a little monotonous. In English class, teachers can also try to convert text information by combining pictures and sounds to fully mobilize students' multiple senses.

【Example 2】Listen and match the traffic signs with their meaning.

(1) ( ) No parking
(2) ( ) No U-turn
(3) ( ) Watch out for animals
(4) ( ) Sharp bends ahead
(5) ( ) Turn left or right
(6) ( ) Let others pass first
(7) ( ) No left turn
(8) ( ) Elderly people



Figure 2. Traffic Signs

First of all, the activity can help students acquire language knowledge. Students learn vocabulary related to traffic signs and understand how traffic rules are expressed in real life. Traffic signs generally appear on the side of the road, due to the high speed of the vehicle, the driver's sight stays on the sign for a short time, traffic signs with bright colors, image images, short words to convey information. The meaning of these traffic signs is usually only expressed in phrases composed of verbs, nouns, key adverbs, etc., rather than complete sentences. This specific language form serves the need of meaning communication in real traffic scenes.

Secondly, the activity can help students develop their thinking ability. Matching

pictures to meanings involves the ability to transform information, and students need to convert non-verbal information into written information. Although the symbols in the pictures are images, they are not directly connected with the text information. Students need to listen to the sounds, identify, understand, reason, judge, association and other thinking activities, as well as compare the same elements and different elements in the traffic signs, in order to correctly match the pictures with the text.

In addition, the activity can help students increase their cultural knowledge. There are some traffic signs that are rare in China, but more common abroad. When studying these traffic signs, students can understand the traffic culture of foreign countries. For example, the traffic sign shown by d means "Elderly people", which is intended to remind motorists to pay attention to the elderly around them and slow down. This traffic sign often appears in European countries, because Europe is the most serious area of the world's aging problem, so in the traffic, the elderly can often be seen across the road, need to be vigilant. In China, this phenomenon is not universal, so it is rare to have this sign. The traffic sign shown in Figure h means "Watch out for animals". Since many foreign suburban roads do not have protective nets, wild animals occasionally appear and cross the road, and most of them are deer. Therefore, when the signs shown in Figure h appear on the road, it reminds the driver to pay attention to avoid wild animals, so as not to cause traffic accidents.

3.3. Guide students to obtain cultural information under the guidance of text

3.3.1. Cultural differences and cultural knowledge integration in listening teaching

Cultural differences are often overlooked but crucial factors in language learning. Take the expression "view a house." In daily communication, "look at a house" is often used to mean to rent a house. "view a house" is a more formal expression, often used when buying a house. However, in rental advertisements, because the written language needs to be concise, there will be an expression of "for view", which is easy to confuse learners. The following is a multiple-choice listening question about cultural differences:

【Example 3】Choose the correct answers according to what you have heard:

Q: I'm thinking of viewing a house, do you have any suggestions?

A: A: Ensure that the lessor is the owner of the property.

B: Inspect the quality of the house before buying it.

It is of great significance to integrate cultural knowledge into listening teaching. As can be seen from the above examples, if the listening content is integrated with cultural knowledge, it can test students' language ability and cultural understanding ability at the same time. For example: "I'm thinking of viewing a house, do you have any suggestions?" Option A: "Ensure that the lessor is the owner of the property." Option B: "Inspect the quality of the house before buying it." applies to the scenario

of buying a house. If students do not understand the cultural meaning behind "view a house", they will easily make the wrong choice.

According to the "backwash effect", examinations have a great influence on teaching and learning. A set of qualified test papers should not only attach importance to language knowledge, but also combine language application with knowledge and integrate into cross-cultural knowledge. This enables students to actually use the language in their learning, deepen their understanding of knowledge in the process of application, truly achieve "learning in Chinese and learning in English", improve their comprehensive language literacy, enable students not only to master the surface form of the language, but also understand the cultural connotation behind it, and avoid similar pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication.

3.3.2. Cultural differences and cultural knowledge integration in grammar teaching

In language teaching, integrating cultural knowledge into grammar teaching is an innovative and productive way. Taking the unique legal provisions of some countries or regions as examples, we can understand the significance of this teaching method more deeply.

【Example 4】 The following are the laws of some countries or regions. Choose the appropriate modal verb or modal expression. Do you think these laws are true?

(1). You are not allowed to/don' have to buy or chew gum in Singapore.

(2). In Canada, 35% of the pop songs played on radio can/must be sung by a Canadian.

(3). In Saudi Arabia, a girl mustn't/doesn't have to be of any particular age to get married.

(4). France, you are allowed to/mustn't marry a dead person.

(5). You can/mustn't forget your wife's birthday in Samoa — it's illegal.

(6). Dogs owners in Turin, Italy are allowed to/have to walk their dogs at least three times a day.

(7). In Alabama, USA you mustn't have to carry an ice cream in your back pocket.

The highlight of this activity is to combine the study of modal verbs and modal expressions with laws and regulations. In Singapore, it is forbidden to buy and chew chewing gum, which reflects Singapore's great attention to the cleanliness of the urban environment, and strict laws help maintain a good image of the city. Canada requires that 35% of the popular songs played on the radio must be sung by Canadians, reflecting Canada's protection and support for its own music culture. In Saudi Arabia, there is no specific age limit for girls to marry, which is related to local marriage customs and sociocultural attitudes. There is a complex historical and cultural background behind France's special law allowing marriage to the deceased. In Samoa, forgetting your wife's birthday is illegal, reflecting the importance placed on family ties. The Italian city of Turin has shown concern for animal welfare by requiring dog owners to walk their dogs at least three times a day. The US state of

Alabama prohibits carrying ice cream in the back pocket, which may have something to do with local habits or historical events.

It is necessary to integrate this kind of cultural knowledge into grammar teaching. On the one hand, it can make the boring grammar study interesting. Students are no longer simply memorizing modal verbs and modal expressions, but using these interesting legal provisions to understand and use grammar knowledge in specific situations. On the other hand, it can effectively cultivate students' cultural awareness. While learning grammar, students can understand the cultural differences of different countries and regions, broaden their international vision, and enhance their intercultural communication skills. Although it may be difficult for students in the compulsory education stage to understand these legal knowledge, as a supplementary example of extracurricular knowledge expansion, it can greatly stimulate students' interest in learning languages and exploring world cultures, laying a foundation for their all-round development.

4. Conclusion

With the deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication competence has become a key indicator to measure talents and has been deeply integrated into the whole process of English teaching. Among them, the organic integration of cross-cultural knowledge is an important way for English teaching to break through traditional limitations and move towards an international perspective.

This paper takes the multi-modal teaching perspective as the breakthrough point, and deeply analyzes the transmission path of cross-cultural knowledge in middle school English classroom, which provides a very forward-looking thinking and direction for English teaching reform. By integrating a variety of teaching resources and organically combining language, image, audio, video and other elements, the multi-modal teaching method creates an immersive learning environment for students, effectively stimulates students' learning interest, strengthens their cultural awareness, and significantly improves their cross-cultural communication ability.

Through this innovative teaching mode, students can better adapt to the needs of the development of globalization, not only master fluent bilingual expression skills, but also become high-quality cultural communicators with international vision and cross-cultural communication skills, show the style of Chinese youth on the international stage, and promote the in-depth exchange and integration of different cultures. In the near future, in order to further promote the integration of cross-cultural knowledge into the middle school classroom, it needs the cooperation and efforts of various forces. Only through multi-party cooperation can cross-cultural knowledge be truly integrated into the middle school classroom and more international talents can be cultivated to adapt to the development of The Times.

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