

Teaching Middle School English Culture through the Integration of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

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ABSTRACT

To improve students' cultural awareness and cultivate all-round development of talents, this paper begins with the *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022)*, adopts the integration of teaching, learning and assessment and takes 'S' Middle School in Huangshi City as the project research base so that analyzing the current situation of middle school students' cultural awareness and giving corresponding teaching cases from the perspective of the process of listening and post-reading.

Key words: Integration of teaching, learning and assessment; Cultural awareness; English teaching in primary school

INTRODUCTION

According to the *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022)*, "cultural awareness refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and the appreciation of excellent cultures, and is the cross-cultural cognition, attitude and behavior choice displayed by students in the new era. The cultivation of cultural awareness helps students enhance their feelings of family and country and the sense of community with a shared future for mankind, cultivate their character, and enhance their civilization and social responsibility." The cultural teaching of students is not only to understand and learn the excellent advanced foreign culture, but also to build students' cultural self-confidence and publicize the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, with the development trend of globalization and the country's demand for cross-cultural communication talents, how to cultivate learners, cultural awareness in English teaching has become an important topic. From the perspective of the integration of teaching, learning and assessment, this paper takes "S" Middle School in Huangshi City as the research object and provides corresponding teaching implementation cases.

INTEGRATION OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Integration of teaching, learning and assessment refers to the combination of teaching and assessment, which will organically combine teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching means, teaching methods and teaching evaluation to form a unified whole. The traditional teaching evaluation takes examination results as the core, ignoring students' comprehensive quality and personality development. The core concept of integration of teaching, learning and assessment is "the unity of teaching and learning, and the unity of evaluation and learning", which promotes students' in-depth learning and all-round development through evaluation. In the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022)*, it mentioned that the English curriculum concept should pay attention to the integration of teaching, learning and assessment, and "teaching" refers to the training direction for teachers to grasp the core quality of English subjects, and teachers are no longer knowledge imparts, but guides and facilitators. They need to identify students' learning needs and interests, so as to design personalized teaching content and methods; "learning" means that under the guidance of teachers, students take the initiative to participate in various language practice activities, and transform subject knowledge and skills into their own core qualities, including thinking ability, innovation ability, cooperation ability and emotional attitude; "evaluation" means that teachers

integrate evaluation into the teaching process according to the teaching objectives, and encourage students to improve their learning methods and strategies through reflection and self-evaluation.

The integration of teaching, learning and assessment is a teaching mode that meets the needs and development of students. It can stimulate students' learning interest and motivation, and at the same time comprehensively evaluate students' learning results and development. Compared with traditional assessment methods, the integration of teaching, learning and assessment pays more attention to students' learning process, cooperation ability, innovative thinking and cross-cultural communication ability. By incorporating cultural awareness in English, teachers can better assess students' overall abilities and provide personalized help and guidance.

LEARNING SITUATION INVESTIGATION

Under the guidance of *the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022)*. The author conducted a questionnaire survey on 176 students in grades 7 and 8 of "S" Middle School in Huangshi City, and interviewed 34 normal students of English major in "H" University. The students' questionnaire is designed according to the gradient of cross-cultural awareness proposed by Fang Xuelian and the students' English learning content, difficulties, opinions and suggestions. The results are as follows :

Percentage of the number of people	Cross-cultural awareness				
	Strong (≥ 90)	Relatively strong (≥ 80)	General (≥70)	Feebleness (≥ 60)	Very weak (<60)
Very good	73.91%	13.04%	8.70%	4.35%	0
Good	19.75%	23.46%	34.57%	17.28%	4.94%
General	6.90%	12.07%	43.10%	20.69%	17.24%
Poor	0	0	70.00%	10.00%	20.00%
Very poor	0	0	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%

Table 1: Cross-cultural awareness score statistics (among students with different English levels)

From the data, we can see that there is a certain relationship between students' English proficiency and their intercultural awareness. The percentage of students with very good and good English proficiency who have strong and strong cross-cultural awareness is significantly higher than that of students with very poor and poor English proficiency. Generally speaking, the better the students' English level is, the stronger their ability to understand foreign language culture is, and the stronger their cross-cultural awareness is. At the same time, students' cross-cultural awareness will also limit the improvement of students' English level. When students' understanding of cultural knowledge deviates, students' interest in English learning will also be affected accordingly. It can be seen that it is necessary to integrate cultural awareness into junior high school English teaching.

According to the follow-up feedback, the author also found that although some students have initially realized the importance of cultural knowledge, and some teachers have also integrated cultural elements into teaching, they still need to be further expanded, deepened and refined. At present, there are still some defects in the teaching of integrating cultural awareness into middle school English classroom, that is, teachers' actual teaching focus is still the basic knowledge, skills and skills of the subject, ignoring the cultural background knowledge of the article. According to the results of the survey, students suggest that the teaching of cultural knowledge can be carried out by increasing English class hours or setting up elective courses. The vast majority of teachers believe that cultural sublimation only exists in the after-class discussion section, or that they can only operate it in the after-class discussion section.

In view of this situation, the author believes that the scope of cultural knowledge is very extensive (such as

customs, thinking differences and geographical differences). It is undoubtedly very isolated and not conducive to students' in-depth understanding to explain each aspect of knowledge. The teaching of cultural background knowledge and the teaching of basic subject knowledge are two different aspects in the teaching process. When teaching the basic subject knowledge, teachers should guide students' learning enthusiasm to the learning of cultural background knowledge. As for whether and to what extent students understand cultural background knowledge, there is still no clear measurable standard. Therefore, based on the survey results, the author expects to conduct a case analysis of cultural integration under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment from the two links of listening and speaking and reading, and provide useful suggestions for teachers' actual teaching activities.

CASE ANALYSIS

Cultural listening and speaking teaching activities under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment

General president Xi said in a report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, "It is our duty to promote international communication capacity, present compelling China stories in order to show a true, multidimensional and panoramic view of China, and enhance China's cultural soft power." The purpose of presenting compelling China stories is to let the world have a comprehensive understanding of China and a correct recognition of China's development path. In conclusion, how to make students present compelling China stories in English is a worthwhile discussion in English teaching.

In the current middle school English listening and speaking class, there are some problems such as "lack of information literacy of teachers", "teaching models to be optimized", "neglect of strategy teaching and guidance" and "monotonous after-school activities." (刘道红, 2022). Therefore, in the process of cultural listening and speaking teaching, teachers should take the existing problems seriously. Combined with our research results of "S" Middle School, we have these following solutions. First, teachers should improve her own cultural awareness. Second, according to the principle of cultural teaching, teachers achieve the purpose of "present compelling China stories in English" through "synergistic effect" generated by combining "language effect" with "output combination ". Finally, according to the four different level activities, different level students can all participate in this lesson, so that every students will cultivate cultural awareness. The following will take *An old man tried to move the mountains* Section A which is a listening text of Grade 8 English Go for it (Part II) Unit 6 as a case study to analyze cultural teaching under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment.

The text type is a dialogue material and begins with a strong about the introduction of Chinese fables. Through this class, students can learn about Chinese fables and understand the profound meanings behind them, so as to expand their knowledge about Chinese culture and lay a foundation for students to "presenting compelling China stories" The key words and phrases of this text are mainly about the vocabulary of Chinese fables. The case flow chart of cultural listening and speaking teaching is drawn based on the " synergistic effect" generated by "language understanding " and "output combination" (王明初, 2012), as shown in Figure 1.

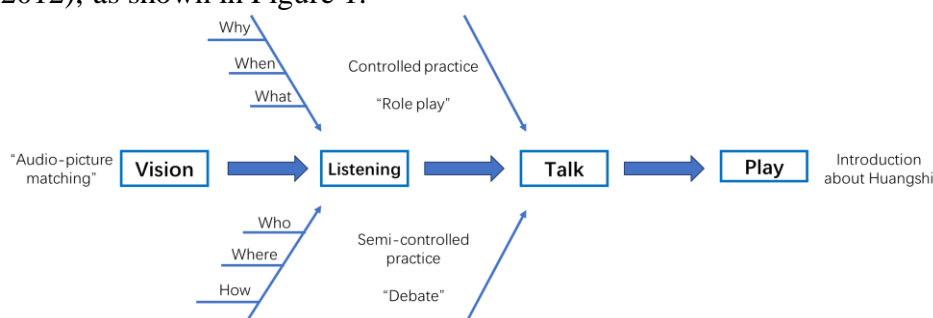


Figure 1. Cultural listening and speaking teaching flow chart

Listening task design

(1) “Scaffolding” pre-listening teaching activities

Listening design generally includes three aspects: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. In the pre-listening activities, teachers should lead students understand the background knowledge of the text and solve vocabulary barriers for them. It can better help students to conduct listening training by building these scaffolds. Therefore, in this text’s pre-listening activities, teachers can use information technology to carry out “audio-picture matching’ activity. According to this activity, students can correspond to the Chinese fables through the display of audio clips, so as to activate students’ exiting cognition and arouse the class.

- **While-listening teaching with “5W1H” as the clue**

In the while-listening teaching process, teachers can help students sort out the whole text from the perspectives of “Why”, “What”, “Where”, “When”, “Who” and “How”, which is also called “5W1H”. In addition, teachers can also combine the listening teaching strategies and the existing listening teaching activities in the textbook to lay the foundation for the subsequent post-listening teaching activities.

- **Post-listening teaching activities on the basis of “student subjectivity”**

In order to improve the students’ English communication activity, in post-listening teaching activities, teachers should follow the principle of student subjectivity and guide students gradually from mechanical simulated dialogue practice to semi-controlled debate practice and finally to meaningful real situation practice. According to different level activities, students finish different activity by themselves.

First of all, according to the dialogue materials, students are given enough time to practice and then are invited to have a mock conversation. After that, teachers propose a topic that many people think Yu Gong’s behavior is stubborn and then ask students to have a debate about this opinion. Finally, teachers point out the reasons for the differences in views and created a situation for the students: if you will have a spring outing with foreign teachers, how do you do to introduce the development story of Huangshi and its historical and cultural heritage to foreign teachers.

Evaluation design

At the end of this lesson, teachers can flexibly use the evaluation form in order to get real feedback from students. As shown in table 2 and table 3, teachers can not only further clarify the specific goals and requirements of this lesson by analyzing students’ evaluation of the five dimensions, but also complete the mutual evaluation between teachers and students with the help of this form, give play to students’ initiative and creativity, and stimulate their interests in learning. In a word, the evaluation form plays an important role in optimizing teacher’s teaching and improving teaching activities.

Dimension	Score	Improvement
Content	Completion and affluence	★ ★ ★ ★
Language	Accuracy and fluency	★ ★
Pronounce	Standard and coherence	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Play	Accuracy and spectacle	★ ★ ★ ★
Culture	Richness and interest	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Table 2. Listening and speaking effect feedback sample form

Design of learning activity and evaluation form						
Teaching/ learning Aims	Activity forms and procedures	Design intention	Activity level	Evaluation of learning effect	Evaluation of teaching effect	Cultural awareness learning effect

Table 3. Design of learning activity and evaluation form

Post-reading teaching activities under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment

With the gradual enhancement of China’s discourse power in the world, the “humanism” of English subjects has become increasingly prominent, and the “humanistic” teaching of English subjects is mostly reflected in the post-reading link. Teachers can adopt the four-stage theory of Hanvey and the principle of integration of teaching, learning and assessment to form a teaching loop, so that students can deeply perceive the charm of the topic of the article while developing their core competencies in English subjects. Hanvey’s (1979:46-55) four-stage theory mainly includes four stages: the first stage is the identification of obvious cultural characteristics on the surface, and people’s reactions are usually to think that they are novel and exotic; The second stage is the identification of subtle and meaningful cultural characteristics that are very different from one’s own culture, and the response is usually considered unbelievable and difficult to accept; The third stage is similar to the second, but the difference is that it is considered acceptable through rational analysis; The final stage is to be able to feel the culture from the other person’s point of view.

The following will take *Birthday Food Around the World* as a case study to analyze cultural teaching under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment. *Birthday Food Around the World* is an article by Grade 7 English Go for it (Part II) Unit10 *I’d like some noodles* Section B 2b, which is an introductory expository essay. The overall structure of the essay presents the overall score, and the key vocabulary mainly involves food nouns and attitude adjectives. In this unit, “I’d like...” is the key sentence form.

With the theme of birthday eating customs, it focuses on the different things that Canada and China love when celebrating birthdays, and finally extends to the different cultural customs and the same core of meaning behind different birthday diets – “Lucky”. Therefore, after studying this article, students can develop a global cultural vision and enhance cultural confidence. Based on the education system engineering designed and implemented by “the integration of teaching, learning and assessment” (王蕾, 2019), the post-reading cultural teaching display map was drawn, as shown in Figure 2.

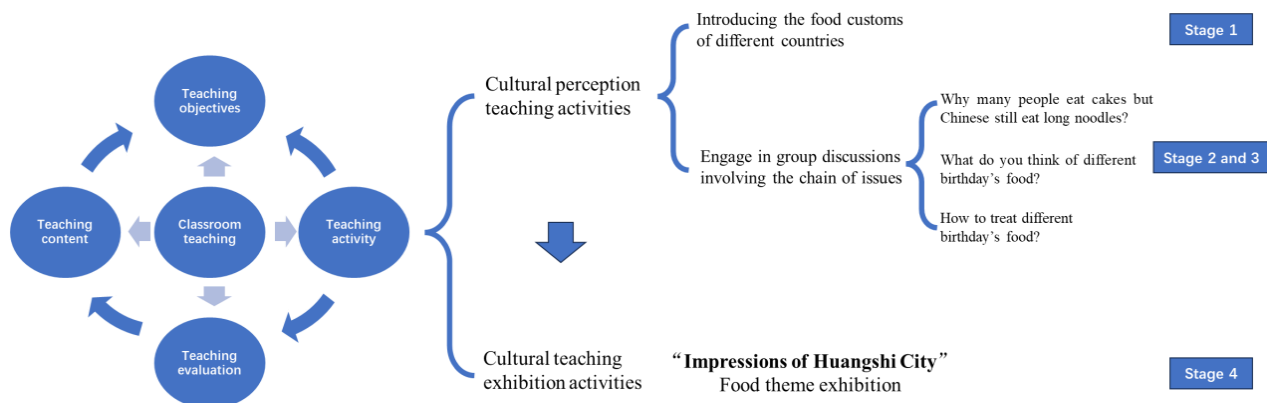


Figure 2. Post-reading cultural teaching display map

Post-reading task design

The theme of the essay is that although birthday diets vary from country to country, they represent the same meaning of good luck. Therefore, in the post-reading activity of this paper, teachers can teach students

cultural teaching under the integration of teaching, learning and assessment in two ways as a whole.

• **Cultural teaching perception activities**

First of all, teachers expand from the perspective of birthday food customs in different countries, so that students can understand the birthday customs of other countries on the basis of understanding the birthday celebration methods of their own ethnic groups. For example, Japan has the custom of eating red bean rice on birthdays, which symbolizes happiness and joy throughout the year.

Teachers can show students more birthday customs in different countries according to the “Around the Earth” in the above figure, and design question chains accordingly to guide students to carry out group discussion activities. In the process of discussion, students are perceiving the birthday customs of different countries, building cultural self-confidence and enhancing cultural understanding.

Why many people eat cakes but Chinese still eat long noodles?

What do you think of different birthday’s food?

How to treat different birthday’s custom?

(2) Cultural teaching exhibition activities

Based on the above activities, teachers can continue students’ enthusiasm for discussing the “Zibo barbecue” and let the students imagine that Huangshi will soon hold a “special food festival” at Huaxin Cement Plant to entertain foreign friends. How to introduce Huangshi cuisine to foreign friends to enhance the image of Huangshi in foreign friends’ mind as a secondary school volunteer? In this process, teachers can instruct students to use analogy, starting from different food cultures and the same core of meaning.

Evaluation design

The integration of teaching, learning and assessment includes formative assessment, dynamic evaluation and learning-oriented evaluation, among which formative assessment is conducive to correcting students’ mistakes, stimulating students’ enthusiasm, and promoting the smooth progress of teaching activities. Therefore, in the post-reading session, teachers should carry out formative evaluation around teaching content, teaching objectives and teaching activities. For example, in the group discussion and presentation session of activity 1, teachers can use oral evaluation in the classroom to give timely affirmation to students. In the student demonstration session of Activity 2, teachers can evaluate students through the evaluation scale, and give students more detailed and targeted feedback after class, so as to continuously improve students’ actual communication level.

Dimension	Evaluation criteria	Self-evaluation			Group evaluation			Teacher’s evaluation		
		A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Language competence	Be able to use the knowledge learned to communicate with “foreign friends”									
Cultural awareness	Be able to introduce the characteristics of Huangshi to each other from the perspective of “foreign friends”									
Thinking quality	Be able to respond quickly and summarize the needs of the other person involved									
Learning ability	Be able to work well with partners									

Table 4. Display activity evaluation form

REFLECTION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

In the process of investigation, the author finds that teachers tend to impose culture for the sake of cultural teaching, while ignoring the logic of teaching itself and the comprehensiveness of core qualities. At the same time, most students have realized the importance of cultural awareness, and normal university students also have a strong interest in this topic. Nevertheless, in the process of teaching cases, the author find that students have different levels and how to take this lesson by a logical way and merging culture is difficult. Therefore, to implement the requirements of the core quality of English subjects and embody the value of educating English subjects, teachers should make good use of the tool of integration of teaching, learning and assessment. In the process of this kind of teaching, first, teachers should clarify the issues of “what to teach”, “what to learn” and “how to learn” and according to these teaching aims, teachers consciously arrange teaching tasks of different difficulty for students of different levels. Then, teachers should take the cultural teaching goal as the guide, and promote learning and teaching through the diversity evaluation process, to help students find the shortcomings in learning, better cultivate students’ English learning ability, and enhance students’ cultural self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

The *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022)* emphasizes the importance of subject education. According to the principles of different teaching methods, teachers should actively use the tools of integration of teaching, learning and assessment design in teaching, from multiple perspectives and aspects innovatively, cultivate students’ cultural awareness level, and lay a foundation for cultivating intercultural communication talents.

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