

Research on the Path of Integrating Cultural Awareness Cultivation into English Reading Teaching in Junior High School

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Abstract: Cultural awareness is an essential component of the core competencies specified in China's English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education. As a vital carrier for language knowledge instruction, reading competence and cultural communication, junior high school English reading teaching serves as a core approach to cultivating students' cultural awareness and improving their overall cultural literacy. Nevertheless, current junior high school English reading instruction still focuses on language knowledge while ignoring the integration of cultural content. Cultural awareness development is superficial and formulaic, failing to meet the needs of students' all-round development and cross-cultural communication. This paper integrates the cultivation of cultural awareness into the entire process of junior high school English reading teaching by exploring cultural materials in textbooks, optimizing teaching procedures and innovating teaching methods. It aims to enhance students' cultural cognition, understanding and inclusiveness, and improve the overall quality of English reading teaching. This research offers practical guidance for junior high school English teachers to carry out culture-oriented reading teaching, enriches the theoretical research on the integration of reading teaching and cultural education in junior high schools, and helps junior high school English education achieve the dual goals of language acquisition and cultural literacy cultivation.

Keywords: Cultural Awareness; Junior High School English; Reading Teaching; Integration Paths

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* clearly states that the disciplinary core competencies to be cultivated in English courses consist of four dimensions: language competence, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. The cultivation of cultural awareness is crucial to students' growth. The English curriculum plays an especially vital role in enhancing students' understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures as well as their appreciation of fine cultures [1]. Incorporating cultural awareness into the core competency system, the new curriculum standards define it as students' cultural cognition, attitudes and behavioral choices in the new era. It aims to cultivate students' ability of cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication, so as to help them establish correct values, broaden international vision and strengthen cultural confidence.

As a major form of language input and an important carrier of cultural dissemination, English reading contains abundant cultural elements in texts, including diet, festivals, etiquette, values and other cultural contents, which serve as essential resources for cultivating students' cultural awareness. However, guided by exam-oriented education, most current junior high school English reading teaching fails to explore cultural elements in depth and deliver systematic cultural explanation. Consequently, the cultivation of cultural awareness remains superficial, making it difficult for students to truly understand the connotations of diverse cultures. This not only restricts the in-depth improvement of students' English reading ability, but also hinders the development of their cultural literacy, which is inconsistent with the requirements of curriculum standards and the demands of the globalization era. Therefore, exploring effective ways to

integrate cultural awareness cultivation into junior high school English reading teaching and address existing instructional problems is of great practical significance.

1.2 Research Significance

1.2.1 Theoretical significance

From the perspective of the integration of junior high school English reading teaching and cultural education, this study clarifies the core connotation of cultural awareness and the orientation of junior high school English reading teaching, and analyzes their internal correlation, which enriches the theoretical system of integrating cultural education into junior high school English reading teaching. Meanwhile, by investigating the current teaching situation and analyzing the causes of existing problems, this paper puts forward targeted integration approaches. It provides theoretical reference and research ideas for subsequent relevant studies, and promotes the in-depth development of research on cultural education in the field of junior high school English teaching.

1.2.2 Practical significance

Combined with the actual situation of junior high school English reading teaching, this study proposes specific and operable integration strategies for cultural awareness cultivation and verifies their effectiveness with teaching cases. It can offer practical guidance for junior high school English teachers to carry out culture-oriented reading teaching, helping teachers update teaching concepts, optimize teaching methods and improve cultural teaching competence. In addition, the language materials adopted in senior high school entrance examination, especially discourse texts, also reflect exam setters' attention to and assessment of students' cultural awareness [2]. What's more, integrating cultural awareness cultivation into the whole process of reading teaching can enrich teaching content, stimulate students' reading interest and improve their reading proficiency. It enables students to understand multi-cultures, develop the awareness and ability to respect and tolerate cultural differences, facilitate the all-round development of students' core competencies, and meet the talent cultivation requirements in the context of globalization.

2. Analysis on the Current Situation and

Problems of Integrating Cultural Awareness Cultivation into Junior High School English Reading Teaching

2.1 Summary of Core Problems

In English reading teaching, the input of linguistic knowledge occupies a dominant proportion, while receives little attention to cultural awareness. Junior high school English reading teaching remains largely exam-oriented, with little focus on in-depth text interpretation, and cultural elements in reading materials are easily neglected. Restricted by disciplinary barriers, the traditional single-subject teaching model fails to provide students with diverse perspectives needed for cross-cultural understanding, which undermines their overall cognition of cultural phenomena [3]. In daily reading classes, teachers only briefly mention culture-related vocabulary concerning festivals, diet and other superficial topics, without guiding students to explore cultural connotations or analyze cultural differences. As a result, cultural awareness cannot be truly integrated into the whole teaching process.

In addition, the reading teaching process is not well structured. There is no cultural background introduction before class, in-depth cultural exploration during class, or cultural expansion after class, making normalized cultural infiltration difficult to achieve.

English teachers generally lack adequate cultural knowledge. As the guides of cultural education in teaching, teachers' cultural accomplishment and teaching competence directly determine teaching effectiveness. At present, some junior high school English teachers have inadequate cultural reserves and unsystematic understanding of the cultural backgrounds and values of English-speaking countries. They are unable to dig deeply into the cultural connotations of texts or answer students' cultural questions accurately. Meanwhile, the lack of systematic training on cultural teaching makes it difficult for teachers to design effective cultural teaching activities. In terms of reading texts, cultural materials are underutilized and superficially presented in a simplistic way. Reading passages in junior high school English textbooks contain abundant cultural resources. However, most teachers only teach superficial cultural elements such as festivals and food, while

ignoring in-depth exploration of underlying cultural connotations including values and ways of thinking. Faced with the common problems in current junior high school English teaching, namely the single type and insufficient quantity of traditional cultural teaching resources, teachers should actively explore traditional cultural elements in English textbooks and local traditional cultural resources, so as to promote the organic integration of the two [4].

Furthermore, teachers seldom supplement extracurricular cultural reading materials, failing to meet students' diverse needs for cultural learning.

From the perspective of teaching evaluation, the evaluation dimensions are vague and incomplete. Current evaluation of junior high school English reading teaching mainly includes diagnostic assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment, which focus excessively on students' reading scores and mastery of linguistic knowledge, while lacking targeted evaluation on cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding.

Moreover, evaluation methods are overly unitary. Written examinations are adopted as the major assessment means, with a shortage of process-oriented and diversified evaluation methods. Therefore, the improvement of students' cultural literacy cannot be fully reflected. The imperfect evaluation system leads to insufficient attention from both teachers and students to cultural awareness cultivation, which hinders the comprehensive integration of cultural education into reading teaching.

2.2 Analysis of the Causes of Existing Problems

First of all, it is restricted by the exam-oriented education system. Senior high school entrance examination and college entrance examination remain the major selection mechanisms in basic education in China. English teaching is largely centered on improving students' academic performance, and reading accounts for a large proportion in English examinations. Most schools and teachers take students' reading scores as the core criterion for evaluating teaching quality, while neglecting the cultivation of core literacy such as cultural awareness, thus marginalizing cultural education in reading teaching. Besides, some

teachers hold outdated teaching concepts. They regard the instruction of language knowledge as the core of reading teaching, fail to recognize the significance of cultural awareness cultivation, and lack the initiative to infiltrate cultural elements in daily teaching.

Secondly, there is a lack of systematic training for teachers' cultural teaching competence. Current training for junior high school English teachers mainly focuses on linguistic knowledge and teaching skills, with few targeted and systematic courses on cultural awareness cultivation. Most teachers have not received professional cultural education training, and their understanding of cultural theories and cultural teaching strategies is inadequate, restricting the improvement of their cultural literacy and teaching ability. In addition, schools lack regular teaching seminars and communication activities on cultural education. Teachers have few opportunities to share experience and learn from excellent teaching cases, which makes it hard to achieve sustainable improvement in cultural teaching.

Thirdly, high-quality cultural teaching resources are insufficient and underutilized. Rich teaching resources are essential support for integrating cultural awareness into reading teaching, whereas high-quality cultural reading materials are greatly lacking in current junior high school English teaching. On the one hand, cultural contents in textbooks are presented in a single form and not fully explored, which cannot meet the needs of in-depth cultural teaching. On the other hand, schools are deficient in extracurricular cultural reading resources. The shortage of diverse cultural materials limits teachers' teaching design and ultimately weakens the overall effect of cultural awareness cultivation.

3. Principles of Integrating Cultural Awareness Cultivation into Junior High School English Reading Teaching

3.1 Student-Centered Principle

The student-centered principle emphasizes that in the process of integrating cultural awareness cultivation into junior high school English reading teaching, students should be taken as the main body. Teachers need to fully respect students' cognitive characteristics and learning needs, and guide students to actively perceive,

explore and understand cultural knowledge. Junior high school students have certain independent learning ability and exploratory desire. Teachers should design targeted teaching activities to encourage students to actively explore cultural elements in texts, analyze cultural differences and delve into cultural connotations. In this way, students can enhance their cultural awareness through active participation, rather than receiving cultural knowledge passively.

3.2 Relevance Principle

The relevance principle requires that the cultivation of cultural awareness be closely combined with the content and objectives of junior high school English reading teaching. Teachers shall infiltrate corresponding cultural knowledge based on the themes and contents of reading texts, so as to realize the organic integration of linguistic and cultural knowledge. In reading teaching, teachers should tap into cultural elements related to the text content. For instance, when teaching passages about festivals, teachers can introduce festival cultures of relevant countries; when teaching articles on etiquette, they can compare the differences between Chinese and Western etiquette cultures. This prevents the separation of cultural knowledge from reading instruction and ensures the pertinence and effectiveness of cultural awareness cultivation.

3.3 Hierarchical Principle

The hierarchical principle means that in accordance with the cognitive characteristics of junior high school students, cultural knowledge should be infiltrated and cultural awareness cultivated in a gradual and progressive order from the shallow to the deep. The cognitive ability of junior high school students is in a stage of gradual development, and their ability to understand cultural knowledge is limited. Teachers should start with basic cultural cognition, and then gradually advance to cultural understanding and cultural inclusion. Complex cultural knowledge should not be presented all at once, so that students can gradually accept, comprehend and master relevant cultural knowledge and steadily improve their cultural awareness.

3.4 Practicality Principle

The practicality principle advocates the

combination of cultural awareness cultivation with practical activities. In reading teaching, teachers should design practical activities such as cultural inquiry, cultural comparison and role-playing based on text contents. These activities enable students to perceive cultural differences and interpret cultural connotations through practice, and internalize acquired cultural knowledge into their own cultural literacy. It also avoids making cultural learning overly theoretical and abstract.

4. Specific Paths for Integrating Cultural Awareness Cultivation into Junior High School English Reading Teaching

4.1 Exploring Cultural Materials in Textbooks to Consolidate the Foundation of Cultural Teaching

Junior high school English textbooks serve as the core materials for cultural awareness cultivation. Teachers should thoroughly explore cultural elements in reading texts, sort out cultural contexts, and realize the simultaneous teaching of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Firstly, teachers shall categorize cultural elements in textbooks into superficial culture and in-depth culture. Superficial culture covers festivals, diet, etiquette and others, while in-depth culture includes values and modes of thinking. It is necessary to clarify the cultural focus of each reading text and formulate targeted cultural teaching objectives. In accordance with the concept of "interdisciplinary integration" in the new curriculum standards, teachers may integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and methods after clarifying the unit theme, build a systematic learning ecology, and promote the all-round development of students' core competencies [5]. Secondly, teachers should deeply interpret the cultural connotations behind texts to avoid cultural misunderstandings. In teaching reading passages, teachers are required to teach not only vocabulary, grammar and other linguistic knowledge, but also the cultural backgrounds and connotations embedded in the texts. For example, when teaching the reading text themed *digital life* from the Foreign Language Research Press junior high school English textbooks, teachers may guide students to summarize typical scenarios and applications of digital life in China. By comparing the similarities and differences of digital

civilization between China and Western countries, students can intuitively recognize diversified cultural practices, strengthen their sense of national identity and the community with a shared future for mankind, and develop an inclusive and rational cultural temperament.

4.2 Optimizing Reading Teaching Procedures to Normalize Cultural Infiltration

It is essential to optimize the whole reading teaching process and integrate cultural awareness cultivation into pre-class, while-class and post-class sessions, so as to achieve normalized cultural infiltration. In the pre-reading stage, combined with the theme of reading texts, teachers can adopt multi-media resources such as pictures and short videos to introduce relevant cultural background knowledge, including national conditions, folk customs and cultural traditions involved in the texts. This helps students gain a preliminary understanding of cultural elements, activate existing cultural cognition, stimulate reading interest and cultivate inquiry motivation. For instance, before learning the reading passage about tea culture, teachers can play short videos about tea planting and tea picking, and introduce the origin and development of tea culture, laying a solid cultural foundation for in-class reading.

In the while-reading stage, teachers can integrate cultural explanation and cross-cultural comparison into text analysis to guide students to deeply understand cultural connotations. When explaining vocabulary and sentence patterns, relevant cultural implications should be supplemented. In text analysis, teachers need to lead students to explore cultural concepts and thinking modes reflected in the passages, so as to improve students' cultural cognition and understanding. Meanwhile, cultural inquiry activities such as group discussions on ancient and modern Chinese cultural changes and the inheritance of Chinese etiquette culture can be arranged to encourage active cultural exploration and deepen the understanding of cultural connotations.

In the post-reading expansion stage, diversified cultural practical activities should be designed to consolidate students' cultural cognition and enhance their cultural awareness and practical competence. Students can be assigned to

collect stories about traditional Chinese culture, participate in role-playing to simulate cross-cultural communication scenarios, and apply cultural knowledge in practice to improve cross-cultural communication skills. Teachers can also assign reflective assignments on cultural experience, requiring students to write reflections on traditional culture in reading texts, so as to deepen their recognition of cultural connotations and consolidate cultural awareness.

4.3 Innovating Teaching Methods to Improve the Effectiveness of Cultural Teaching

To break away from the traditional teacher-centered teaching mode, diversified teaching methods should be adopted to stimulate students' learning motivation and enhance the effectiveness of cultural teaching.

4.3.1 Situational teaching method

Creating immersive cross-cultural situations can strengthen students' emotional involvement. Teachers design authentic cultural communication scenarios based on reading texts, enabling students to perceive cultural differences and apply cultural knowledge in specific contexts. For example, when teaching the text *Six Chi Lane, Harmonious Neighborhood*, teachers can set up etiquette communication situations and invite students to act as different roles to simulate daily dialogues, so as to directly experience the differences between Chinese and Western etiquette culture. In addition, artificial intelligence resources can be used to create virtual scenes, such as the conflicts between two families in the Six Chi Lane story and the harmonious coexistence after mutual concession, allowing students to immerse themselves in and appreciate the profound traditional Chinese etiquette culture passed down for thousands of years.

4.3.2 Comparative teaching method

Cross-cultural comparison between China and Western countries helps deepen cultural cognition. As a crucial approach to cultural awareness cultivation, cultural comparison enables students to recognize cultural diversity and understand internal cultural logic. By integrating cultural comparative analysis into reading teaching, teachers can not only help students better understand the cultural connotations behind language, but also

cultivate their global vision and cross-cultural communication competence [6]. When learning passages about family, teachers can compare Chinese and Western family values: Chinese culture emphasizes family reunion and collectivism, while Western society values personal independence and individualism. Such comparison helps students establish a rational view of culture and enhance their recognition of local culture.

4.3.3 Task-driven teaching method

Cultural inquiry tasks can stimulate students' active exploration. Based on the cultural focus of reading texts, teachers design hierarchical and targeted inquiry tasks for group cooperation. In the teaching of *Fantastic Friends*, teachers can assign tasks such as comparing Chinese and Western environmental protection concepts and putting forward personalized suggestions for ecological protection. By accessing materials and conducting group discussions, students can understand diverse cultural concepts and improve their cultural awareness. In accordance with junior high school students' cognitive level, tasks should be arranged from easy to difficult to ensure all students can participate and gain a sense of achievement.

4.3.4 Cooperative Learning Method

Group cooperation promotes the exchange and sharing of cultural perception. Teachers divide students into learning groups to discuss cultural elements in texts, share cultural experience and learn from each other. To further expand students' dimensions of English learning and consolidate their cultural cognition, teachers should enhance the practicality and openness of English teaching and organize practical activities that students enjoy [7]. Cooperative cultural tasks, such as making cultural handwritten newspapers and delivering cultural themed speeches, can cultivate students' cooperative awareness and cultural expression ability.

4.4 Improving Teachers' Cultural Literacy and Teaching Competence

Teachers' cultural accomplishment and teaching capacity are the key guarantees for integrating cultural awareness into reading teaching. Junior and senior high school English teachers should continuously deepen their understanding and cognition of Chinese and foreign cultures, keep track of the latest

developments and trends in cultural evolution, broaden their cultural horizons, and enhance cultural sensitivity, so as to provide solid theoretical support and practical guidance for the cultivation of students' cultural awareness [8].

Firstly, teachers should carry out systematic cultural learning, enrich their reserves of cultural theories and Western cultural knowledge, and enhance their ability to interpret in-depth cultural connotations in reading texts. For the explicit cultural knowledge in texts, teachers should introduce, explain, and provide necessary supplementation and expansion, enabling students to learn about the history and inheritance of cultural phenomena, as well as the social background and historical roots behind them [9]. It is also necessary to study high-quality cultural teaching cases, draw on advanced teaching experience and broaden teaching ideas.

Secondly, teachers should actively participate in cultural teaching seminars and online and offline academic exchanges. By visiting demonstration schools with featured cultural reading teaching, teachers can learn advanced teaching models and optimize them according to practical teaching conditions. Sharing teaching experience and puzzles in communication activities also helps realize collective progress in cultural teaching.

4.5 Perfecting the Teaching Evaluation System to Strengthen the Orientation of Cultural Awareness Cultivation

A sound evaluation system can raise teachers' and students' attention to cultural education and promote the full integration of cultural awareness cultivation into reading teaching. Firstly, a diversified evaluation subject system should be constructed, combining teacher evaluation, student self-evaluation and group mutual evaluation to comprehensively reflect the development of students' cultural literacy. Teacher evaluation focuses on reading ability, mastery of cultural knowledge and performance in cultural practice; self-evaluation guides students to reflect on their learning process, gains and deficiencies; group evaluation assesses students' inquiry ability, cooperative awareness and cultural expression, ensuring the comprehensiveness and objectivity of evaluation.

Secondly, evaluation contents should be expanded to incorporate cultural awareness. Apart from linguistic knowledge and reading competence, evaluation should cover students' cultural cognition, cross-cultural understanding, cultural inclusiveness and practical ability. In reading assessment, teachers shall evaluate not only students' mastery of literal meaning, but also their interpretation of cultural connotations. We should establish a development-oriented teaching evaluation system. The developmental teaching evaluation system aims to promote the sustainable development of students' cross-cultural awareness and constructs a multi-dimensional and whole-process evaluation model [10]. In daily performance evaluation, classroom participation and practical performance in cultural activities should both be taken into consideration.

Finally, diversified evaluation methods should be adopted to combine process evaluation with summative evaluation. Process evaluation adopts classroom observation, homework feedback, group assessment and practical performance tracking to monitor students' cultural learning and provide timely guidance for improvement. Summative evaluation relies on written tests, cultural practice reports and themed speeches to conduct overall assessment on students' cultural literacy. Within the framework of academic quality standards, teachers need to formulate evaluation indicators in combination with specific teaching content, ensure that these indicators align with the learning objectives of students' grade levels, and prevent the evaluation goals from being either too high or too low [11]. Moreover, evaluation results should be fully utilized as an important part of students' comprehensive quality assessment, so as to guide students to attach importance to cultural learning and provide empirical reference for teachers to optimize cultural reading teaching.

5. Analysis of Practical Teaching Cases

Under the framework of core competencies in English, cultural awareness refers to students' cultural cognition, attitudes and behavioral orientations developed through English learning. It serves as a vital carrier for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

5.1 Background of Case Design

This case selects the reading text *Six chi away, but closer together* from Unit 2 *Getting along* in Grade 8 of the junior high school English textbook published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Taking English as the medium, the text narrates the historical allusion of the Six-chi Lane in Tongcheng, Anhui Province. In the Qing Dynasty, the Zhang family and the Wu family fell into a dispute over the boundary of their homestead land. Zhang Ying, an official from the Zhang family, persuaded his relatives to make concessions with a poem: *A letter comes only for a wall; why not yield three feet more?* Moved by such generosity, the Wu family also retreated three feet, and the famous Six-chi Lane came into being. The story embodies fine traditional Chinese virtues including neighborhood harmony, modesty, tolerance and the pursuit of harmony.

As a typical material for integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into junior high school English reading teaching, this text is highly consistent with the research topic. It bears the instrumental function of language teaching as well as the humanistic value of cultural education, providing high-quality support for exploring effective ways to cultivate students' cultural awareness in reading classes.

5.2 Design of Teaching Objectives Integrated with Cultural Awareness

Language competence: To master key vocabulary and expressions such as *reach agreement*, *argue over*, *give up* and *kindness*, as well as relevant sentence patterns. Students are expected to sort out the cause, process and result of the story and retell it coherently.

Cultural awareness: To understand the traditional Chinese virtues embodied in the Six-chi Lane story, compare the differences between Chinese and Western neighborhood cultures, tell the story of Six-chi Lane in English, and enhance cultural confidence and cross-cultural communication awareness.

Thinking quality: To dialectically interpret the cultural connotation of "making concessions" by analyzing characters' behaviors and the moral of the story, so as to cultivate students' empathy and critical thinking.

Learning ability: To deepen independent learning and cultural practical competence

through group cooperation, cultural inquiry and other interactive activities.

5.3 Practical Paths of Integrating Cultural Awareness into Reading Teaching

Pre-reading Stage: Teachers adopt cultural situation introduction to build a bridge between language learning and cultural understanding, so as to activate students' existing cultural cognition. By displaying real photos of Six-chi Lane and calligraphy works of Zhang Ying's poem, teachers raise guiding questions: *Do you know this ancient lane in Anhui, China? What story does it tell us?* Such activities activate students' prior English expressions related to traditional Chinese virtues, such as *kindness, harmony* and *respect*, and help them initially perceive the cultural connotation of modesty and comity.

Design intention: Taking local traditional culture as the entry point, this part breaks the stereotype that "English equals Western culture". It helps students form the recognition that English is an important tool for spreading Chinese culture and lays a solid foundation for the long-term cultivation of cultural awareness.

While-reading Stage: Teachers combine language knowledge instruction with cultural connotation interpretation, in order to realize the in-depth combination of language acquisition and cultural understanding. In the fast reading session, students are guided to sort out basic information including time (the Qing Dynasty), location (Tongcheng, Anhui), characters (the Zhang family, the Wu family, Zhang Ying) and main plot (dispute→mutual concession→the formation of Six-chi Lane), constructing the basic story framework and grasping the core cultural theme.

In the intensive reading session, targeted detailed questions are designed to explore the internal cultural logic of the text: *Why did the two families argue? What did Zhang Ying do to help his family? How did the Wu family react after the Zhangs stepped back?*

Teachers further guide students to understand that the Zhang family's concession is not weak compromise, but a vivid reflection of traditional Chinese values featuring modesty and harmony. In the teaching of language points, cultural infiltration is naturally combined. When explaining words such as *give up, kindness* and *neighbour*, teachers expand

relevant expressions including *harmony between neighbours, mutual respect* and *cultural tolerance*, enabling students to comprehend the cultural implications behind language forms and achieve simultaneous development in language and cultural learning. **Post-reading Stage:** Focusing on cultural inquiry and output, three levels of activities including cultural comparison, cultural expression and cultural practice are arranged to realize the sublimation of students' cultural awareness.

Cultural comparison and inquiry: Group discussion on the topic *How is Chinese neighbour relationship different from Western ones?* Students are guided to recognize that Western neighborhood culture highlights privacy protection and proper distance, while Chinese neighborhood culture values mutual assistance, modesty and harmony. Neither culture is superior to the other, and students are required to respect cultural differences and embrace cultural diversity.

Cultural output practice: Group task — *Introduce the story of Six-chi Lane to foreign friends, including its content, cultural meaning and real-life value.* In the process of English expression, students spread excellent traditional Chinese culture and strengthen cross-cultural communication competence.

Cultural practice extension: The question *How can we use the "six-chi lane spirit" in our daily life?* leads students to apply the virtues of modesty and tolerance to getting along with classmates, family members and community residents, realizing the transformation from cultural cognition to practical behavior.

5.4 Homework Design for Extended Cultural Practice

In order to ensure long-term cultivation of cultural awareness, hierarchical cultural practical assignments are designed to extend in-class cultural learning. **Basic level:** Write a short passage of about 80 words in English to retell the story of Six-chi Lane. **Intermediate level:** Interview elders around you, record ordinary stories about modesty and harmony, sort out the content in English and share it in class. **Extended level:** Design an English poster introducing Six-chi Lane and display it on the class bulletin board to spread fine traditional Chinese virtues.

5.5 Teaching Effects

Centering on the historical allusion of the Six-chi Lane, this lesson integrates the cultivation of cultural awareness into the whole process of reading teaching, and effectively realizes the unity of the instrumental function of language and the humanistic value of culture. In classroom practice, students not only mastered core vocabulary and sentence patterns and sorted out the storyline, but also deeply understood fine traditional Chinese virtues such as valuing harmony, modesty and tolerance through cultural inquiry. The lesson helps students break the stereotype that English learning is only connected with Western culture, and gradually establishes their initiative to tell Chinese stories well in English. Through the comparison of Chinese and Western neighborhood cultures, students can view cultural differences rationally and develop a cultural attitude of respecting diversity and embracing mutual learning. In group presentations and discussions on real-life application, students actively connected the spirit of the Six-chi Lane with interactions on campus, family communication and community life, achieving progressive development from cultural cognition and emotional identity to behavioral practice. Overall, students' cultural confidence, national feelings and cross-cultural communication competence have been improved simultaneously. The fundamental task of fostering virtue through education under the guidance of core competencies is fully fulfilled, and the educational value of the classroom is fully demonstrated.

5.6 Teaching Reflection

High-quality teaching materials rooted in local culture are selected. Taking the classic allusion of the Six-chi Lane with rich narrative and cultural connotations as the starting point, the in-depth integration of fine traditional Chinese culture and English reading teaching is naturally realized. It avoids rigid cultural indoctrination and conforms to the cognitive characteristics of junior high school students.

A complete teaching chain of "situation introduction — text study — comparative inquiry — practical output" is constructed. The cultivation of cultural awareness runs through pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading and homework arrangements with clear and

progressive objectives, which effectively promotes the formation of students' cultural character. Attention is paid to the connection between cultural knowledge and real life, guiding students to internalize traditional virtues into daily codes of conduct. It makes traditional culture perceptible, learnable and practicable, and enhances the effectiveness and appeal of cultural education.

5.7 Directions for Teaching Optimization

Cultural comparison materials can be further enriched. In addition to theoretical analysis of cultural differences, supplementary resources such as videos about Western neighborhood communication, real community cases and typical stories of mutual assistance among Chinese neighbors can be added. This makes cultural comparison more specific and persuasive, and deepens students' intuitive understanding of multiculturalism.

Classroom interaction and output forms can be more diversified. Immersive activities including situational role-playing and cross-cultural dialogues can be arranged to offer students more opportunities to express cultural views and spread Chinese culture in English, so as to strengthen the coordinated development of language application and cultural expression.

Hierarchical teaching can be further refined. Graded cultural tasks should be designed for students at different language levels to ensure that every student can gain a sense of accomplishment in cultural exploration and expression. Meanwhile, diversified evaluation methods can be introduced to incorporate cultural understanding, cultural expression and cultural practice into the evaluation system, so as to comprehensively reflect students' development of cultural awareness.

Appropriate cultural expansion contents can be added, connecting with traditional Chinese ideas such as "harmony in diversity" and "good-neighborliness", so as to further deepen the depth of cultural teaching and help students form systematic cultural cognition.

5.8 Conclusions of the Case Study

This case verifies the effective paths of integrating cultural awareness into junior high school English reading teaching: taking local culture as the foundation to explore fine traditional Chinese cultural elements in texts;

regarding language teaching as the carrier to infiltrate cultural interpretation in every reading session; setting cultural output as the goal to improve students' cultural literacy through cultural comparison, practical activities and cultural communication; and adhering to the guidance of core competencies to fulfill the fundamental task of moral education. This set of paths provides a promotable practical model for cultivating cultural awareness in junior high school English reading teaching, and helps students develop core competencies with both linguistic ability and cultural feelings.

With systematic teaching design, this case effectively integrates cultural awareness cultivation into junior high school English reading teaching, realizes the coordinated development of language instruction and cultural education, and provides practical support for relevant theoretical and pedagogical research.

6. Prospects

Based on literature research, classroom observation and case analysis, this study systematically investigates the current situation of cultural awareness cultivation in junior high school English reading teaching, analyzes the existing problems and their causes, and puts forward targeted integration paths. Meanwhile, the feasibility and effectiveness of these paths are verified through teaching cases. The research shows that by exploring cultural materials in textbooks, optimizing teaching procedures, innovating teaching methods, strengthening teachers' training and improving the evaluation system, the cultivation of cultural awareness can be effectively integrated into the whole process of junior high school English reading teaching. It helps improve students' cultural literacy and reading ability, and further optimize the overall quality of English reading teaching.

Nevertheless, this study still has certain limitations. First, the scope of research participants is relatively narrow. Only teachers and students from three junior high schools in the local area were selected as research subjects, so the generalizability of the research results needs further verification. Second, the number of teaching cases is limited. Only one reading text was adopted for teaching practice, and the effectiveness of the proposed paths

requires verification through more teaching cases. Third, the research on the long-term mechanism of cultural awareness cultivation is not in-depth enough, making it difficult to guarantee the sustainability and stability of cultural education.

In the future, further research on integrating cultural awareness cultivation into junior high school English reading teaching can be carried out in the following aspects. First, expand the scope of research participants by selecting teachers and students from junior high schools in different regions and at different levels, so as to enhance the universality of research findings. Second, increase the number of case studies. Reading texts with diverse themes and difficulty levels should be adopted in teaching practice to continuously optimize integration paths and improve their pertinence and operability. Third, conduct in-depth research on the long-term mechanism of cultural awareness cultivation. Combined with information technologies such as multimedia, online teaching platforms and artificial intelligence, new models of cultural reading teaching can be innovated and teaching resources enriched, so as to realize the normalization and long-term development of cultural awareness cultivation. Fourth, promote the systematicness and pertinence of teachers' cultural literacy training, establish a sound teacher training system, and continuously improve teachers' cultural teaching competence. Fifth, deepen the research on cultural teaching evaluation, and construct a scientific and comprehensive evaluation system for cultural literacy. It will boost the in-depth development of integrating cultural awareness into junior high school English reading teaching, help English teaching achieve the dual goals of language acquisition and cultural literacy, and lay a solid foundation for cultivating new-era teenagers with sound cultural accomplishment.

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