

Innovative Strategies for Integrating English and American Literature with College English Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Classical British and American literary works have experienced historical precipitation, contain profound thoughts and full feelings, give people spiritual cultivation and life enlightenment, and are the accumulation of the essence of human civilization. The language and characters that constitute classical British and American literary works also represent the highest achievement of the English language. All these make classical British and American literary works a rare model text for learning the English language. Integrating English and American Literature into College English teaching can play a very important role in improving the English level of college students. The integration of English and American literature with College English teaching has sufficient theoretical support. Innovative strategies for integrating English and American Literature with College English teaching are proposed from the dimensions of curriculum reconstruction, AI technology empowerment, evaluation reform, etc., to deeply explore the synergistic effects of literary texts in improving comprehensive language abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, critical thinking, and cross-cultural awareness.

KEYWORDS

Innovative strategies; English and American Literature; College English Teaching; integration

1 Introduction

English and American literature encompasses classic texts such as poetry, novels, and dramas, as well as their derivative cross-media works. There are many well-known classic literary works in English and American literature, such as the dramas of William Shakespeare, Samuel Beckett and Eugene O'Neill, the poetry of John Keats, Emily Dickinson, and T. S. Eliot, the novels of Emily Bronte, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald and Ernest Miller Hemingway, the essays of Francis Bacon, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and so on. These literary works are pearls in the treasure trove of human civilization. Excellent literary works have cultivated human temperament, elevated human spirit, enriched human language, and promoted the progress of human civilization.

Reading literary works is an important way of language input, and it can also promote learners' cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication ability. Kramsch (2014) points out that literary texts can provide authentic language input and enhance learners' cultural awareness. Lazar (2018) proposes cultivating critical reading skills through literary texts. Byram (2019) advocates using literature as an important carrier for cross-cultural communication teaching. Research shows that through reading literary works, learners' metaphorical comprehension ability can also be promoted. Paran's (2016) meta-analysis shows that literary teaching improves learners' metaphorical comprehension ability by 29%.

As for how to conduct literature teaching, Lazar (2017) proposes that literature teaching should be combined with task-based teaching methods to enhance interactivity through activities such as role-playing and creative writing. Wang Shouren (2018) points out that literature teaching should break away from the traditional "writer & work" model and shift towards the integration of "language, culture & thinking", emphasizing the value of literature in enhancing students' cultural confidence.

And some researchers have put forward their respective theories concerning the relationship between literary context and English language acquisition and how to apply literary reading to English language teaching. Kramsch (2014) proposes the theory of "symbol boundary breakthrough", emphasizing the role of literary context in reconstructing second language cognition. Hirsch's (2017) "Cultural Literacy Theory" emphasizes the central role of literature in language acquisition; Krashen's (2020) "Input Hypothesis" provides theoretical support for the application of literary reading in language teaching.

2 Theory and Model of Integration and Innovation between English and American Literature and College English Teaching

In the context of globalization, college English teaching is undergoing a paradigm shift from imparting language skills to cultivating comprehensive literacy. The deep integration of English and American literature with English teaching is not only an upgrade in language education, but also an innovative practice in cultivating cultural cognition and thinking

abilities. This integration path is based on multidimensional theories, constructing a system that combines academic depth and teaching practicality.

The integration of English and American literature with College English teaching has sufficient theoretical support, including but not limited to the following theoretical theories:

① Input and Output Hypothesis

Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985, 2014) and Swain's output hypothesis provide theoretical basis for AI enabled language teaching. Literary texts provide "i+1" comprehensible input, promoting language acquisition. AI can intelligently push suitable literary materials and provide real-time feedback to promote language output. Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis form the underlying logic of language acquisition. Krashen's "i+1" theory emphasizes the moderate challenge of comprehensible language input - literary texts are ideal carriers: the complex social narratives in Dickens' novels and the exquisite dialogue art in Jane Austen's works provide learners with language materials beyond their current level. The intervention of AI technology has made this process intelligent: by analyzing the language hierarchy of learners, intelligent systems can accurately push selected passages of *Pride and Prejudice* (suitable for intermediate and advanced learners) or simplified versions of *Animal Farm* (suitable for the basic stage), achieving "personalized teaching" input optimization. Swain's output hypothesis emphasizes the active construction of "doing things with language". In literature teaching, AI can create virtual scenes, such as allowing students to generate dialogues as characters in *Hamlet*. The system uses natural language processing (NLP) technology to analyze grammar accuracy and pragmatic appropriateness in real time. This "input-output feedback" loop transforms literary texts from static reading materials into dynamic language training fields.

② Cross-cultural communication theory

According to Byram's Cross-cultural communication theory (Byram, 1997, 2021), literature is an important medium for cultural cognition, constructing a cross-cultural competence model that promotes the coordinated development of the three elements of knowledge, skills and attitude. Byram's intercultural communication theory deconstructs competence into three elements: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Literary texts, as a "mirror" of culture, provide a natural field for the coordinated development of the three elements: reading Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* can understand the cultural characteristics of the American South (knowledge dimension), analyzing the class conflicts in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can cultivate cultural comparison skills (skill dimension), and discussing multicultural values nurtures an open and inclusive attitude (attitude dimension).

③ Critical thinking theory

Literary analysis cultivates logical reasoning and evaluative abilities. Critical thinking theory regards literary analysis as a "laboratory" for logical training. The deconstruction of the dystopian narrative in *1984* can guide students to analyze how language becomes a tool of power; The interpretation of rebellious language in *The Catcher in the Rye* cultivates the ability to make value judgments. AI can provide thinking assistance here: intelligently analyze the argument structure in student literary reviews, mark logical gaps or weak points in arguments, and guide the deepening of arguments like a "thinking fitness coach".

④ Learning theory of constructivism

The learning theory of constructivism attaches importance to the active constructiveness of knowledge. It emphasizes that learners construct a knowledge system through interaction with the environment. Under the guidance of this learning theory, in literature teaching, a "virtual literature community" can be designed: students can reconstruct the narrative perspective of *Paradise Lost* through AI tools, or create modern sequels for *Wuthering Heights*, constructing personalized knowledge systems through interaction with text, technology, and peers. This "learning by doing" model breaks the one-way indoctrination of traditional classrooms and makes literature a scaffold for generating meaning.

⑤ Text close reading theory

The theory of close reading of texts advocates excavating deep meanings in the texture of language. The text analysis technology of AI can achieve "digital close reading": revealing the metaphorical network of the "water" image in *The Waste Land* through word frequency statistics, and using sentiment analysis models to interpret the emotional fluctuations of the stream of consciousness narrative in *To the Lighthouse*. This technological analysis complements traditional literary interpretation - machines provide data support, teachers guide value judgments, and together achieve a cognitive leap from words and sentences to worldviews. The theory of close reading of texts provides theory basis for micro language analysis and macro meaning construction.

⑥ AI technology support system

AI technology support system includes natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), intelligent recommendation systems, etc., providing technical support for teaching content analysis and personalized learning path design. Natural language processing, machine learning, and intelligent recommendation systems form the technological foundation for integrated innovation. NLP can develop "literary language intelligent mentors" to analyze the accuracy of literary citations in students' writing in real time; The intelligent recommendation system establishes a personalized path

between Shelley and *Harry Potter* series based on reading preferences; Machine learning models can predict learning difficulties, such as early warning of potential comprehension barriers caused by stream of consciousness paragraphs in *Ulysses*, and prompting teachers to adjust teaching strategies. When Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale" meets the intelligent analysis of AI, and when Austin's ballroom scene becomes the starting point of cross-cultural dialogue, English and American literature in college English teaching is no longer an isolated collection of texts, but a life form of language, culture, and thinking that develops in synergy. The interweaving of these theories and technologies not only provides methodological support for teaching innovation, but also heralds a new possibility for humanistic education in the digital age - to make classic texts the source code for activating language potential and cultivating global literacy while maintaining literary aesthetic characteristics. This integration is not a subversion of tradition, but a more resilient way of survival for humanistic education in the wave of technology, ultimately achieving a return to the essence of education .

3 Innovative Strategies for Integrating English and American Literature with College English Teaching

3.1 Course Content Reconstruction and Embedded Integration of Unit Themes

Reasonably arrange courses related to English and American literature in the college English curriculum system. For example, offer elective courses on English and American literature appreciation, selecting classic works such as poetry, novels, and dramas for systematic learning. Teachers can incorporate fragments of literary works into college English teaching, such as introducing Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" as a model when explaining argumentative writing, analyzing its argumentative structure and language characteristics, while allowing students to feel its profound social significance. At the same time, the content of college English courses can be restructured, with embedded integration of unit themes. When teaching the unit themed around "environmental protection" in *New Horizon College English - Reading and Writing*, college English teachers can deeply bind the unit theme with literary works. Teachers can introduce Rachel Carson's excerpt from *Silent Spring* to achieve an organic combination of theme teaching and literary resources, and enhance students' emotional resonance with ecological issues through literary texts.

College English teachers can design a special topic on "Cross-Media Adaptation of Literary Classics" in the course of teaching *New College English - Reading and Writing*, carry out cross-media comparative teaching, compare the novel *The Great Gatsby* with the movie, guide students to analyze the differences in narrative perspectives, and cultivate media literacy and text interpretation ability.

In the course of teaching *New College English - Viewing, Listening & speaking*, college English teachers can design a "literary dubbing" task, selecting clips from the *Harry Potter* movies and requiring students to imitate the voice and intonation of characters to enhance their language proficiency and performance skills.

Unit 5 of *New Horizon 3*, which is themed around "the power of words", selects Emily Dickinson's poem "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" Multidimensional goals can be achieved through the following design: Analyze the pragmatic functions of modal verbs in the context of inverted sentence structures ("How dreary to be somebody!") at the linguistic level, explore the literary mapping of identity construction in 19th century American society from a cultural perspective, and organize a debate on the relationship between hermit philosophy and modern values at the speculative level.

In *New Progressive College English 4*, Unit Two, which is themed around "cultural encounters", uses excerpts from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. For this selection, English teachers can design vocabulary extensions: semantic evolution in colonial discourse (such as the frequency statistics of the word "civilization"). Meanwhile, they can design critical writing: narrative reconstruction exercises from a postcolonial perspective.

3.2 Innovation in Teaching Mode and Modular Integration of Skill Training

College English teachers can adopt diverse teaching methods. For example, utilize the group discussion method. Students can be divided into groups to discuss characters, themes, and ideas in literary works. When studying O. Henry's short story "The Gift of the Magi", college English teachers can organize students to discuss the protagonists' views on love and sacrifice spirit.

Make use of the method of role-playing, organizing students to play characters from literary works. For example, when studying *The Merchant of Venice*, students can deepen their understanding of character personalities and dramatic conflicts by playing roles such as Sherlock and Portia, and improve their language expression and performance skills.

Multimedia technology can also be used to play movie and TV drama clips adapted from literary works, enhancing the intuitiveness and fun of teaching. For example, play clips from the *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* film series to guide students in comparing the differences between the original work and the film and television works and deepen their understanding of the works.

Based on the "Literary Micro Project" of *New Horizon*, task-driven teaching can be carried out, such as creating a sequel based on *Wuthering Heights* and designing a "Character Diary Writing" task, requiring students to create diaries from the

perspective of Heathcliff so as to deepen their understanding of character psychology, and enhance their creative writing ability.

In the course of teaching the contents in *New College English*, teachers can introduce the use of AI and virtual reality (VR) technology to recreate the dramatic scenes of *Hamlet* and enhance the immersive learning experience.

Unit 7 of *New Horizon College English - Reading and Writing 2* integrates Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Teachers can guide students to conduct scriptwriting, dialogue dictation and character tone analysis in the listening module, compare the translation strategies of Victorian era rhetorical devices in the translation module, and conduct simulated academic discussions on aestheticism and pragmatism in the oral module.

3.3 Evaluation System Reform and Innovative Practice

College English teachers can establish a diversified evaluation system. In addition to the traditional written test scores, increase the evaluation of students' literary appreciation ability, classroom participation, group cooperation performance, and other aspects. For example, students are required to write reflections on literary works, analyze the themes, artistic features, etc. of the works, in order to evaluate their literary understanding and writing abilities. In group discussions and role-playing activities, students are scored based on their performance to comprehensively evaluate their language proficiency and overall literacy.

The literary module of *New Horizon* adopts a "procedural portfolio evaluation" approach to incorporate multiple achievements such as text analysis reports and group discussion records. Establish a "process oriented+expressive" evaluation mechanism, incorporating classroom debates and literary criticism writing into the assessment and increasing their proportion in the literature module of *New Horizon*.

The literary appreciation unit "Literary Creative Works Exhibition and Evaluation" of *New College English* comprehensively evaluates students' language comprehensive application and innovation ability through "literary creative works display", such as poetry rewriting, short drama creation, poetry recitation, drama performance and other forms. A literary literacy assessment scale can be developed in the supporting testing system of Foreign Language Education Press textbooks, including: micro dimension - literary rhetoric recognition (such as Frost's poetry metaphor analysis in *New Horizon 4* published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press); Middle-dimensional analysis of textual intertextuality (such as comparing *Hamlet* with the revenge theme in Unit 8 of the textbook); Macro dimension - cultural stance argument (such as the contemporary value of the growth theme in *The Catcher in the Rye*).

4 Conclusion

The learning of English language complements the study of English and American literary works. We should not learn a language just for the sake of learning it. Integrating English and American Literature into College English teaching is of great importance and necessity. Combining the study of English language with the study of English and American literary works can not only play a very important role in improving the English level of college students but also play a more positive role in cultivating the quality of college students. By integrating British and American literary works into English language learning, students can improve their critical thinking ability, promote their cultural awareness, absorb the essence of the world's outstanding culture, cultivate a sound personality and world outlook, and so on. Classroom teaching time is limited.

As a college English teacher, it is necessary to carefully select fragments of English and American literary classics based on the theme of each teaching unit, making classroom teaching more rich and interesting, mobilizing students' enthusiasm for learning, and achieving more remarkable results in English classroom teaching. Innovative strategies are essential for integrating classic works of English and American literature into English language teaching.

On the basis of previous research and teaching practice, this article proposes a series of innovative strategies for integrating classic works of English and American literature into English teaching through theoretical analysis. These innovative strategies are proposed from the dimensions of curriculum reconstruction, AI technology empowerment, evaluation reform, etc., to deeply explore the synergistic effects of literary texts in improving comprehensive language abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, critical thinking, and cross-cultural awareness.

In integrating English and American Literature into College English teaching, there still exist some challenges. The existing challenges mainly manifest in the following three points: insufficient literary literacy of teachers, lagging development of digital resources, and difficulty in quantifying evaluation standards, which constrain deep integration. Based on the multiple values of English and American literature in college English teaching, the following three suggestions are proposed: increasing the proportion of selected contemporary literature in textbooks, designing task-based activities based on literary texts, and training teachers' literary teaching abilities.

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