

An Exploration of the Cultivation Path of Cross-cultural Competencies in Senior High School English Classroom from the Perspective of Key Competencies

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ABSTRACT

From the perspective of key competencies, cultivating cross-cultural competence in Senior high school English classrooms is not only a significant avenue for enhancing students' cross-cultural communication skills but also a crucial means of fostering a global perspective among students, as well as a necessary measure to meet the talent demands of the globalized era. However, the current cultivation of cross-cultural competence in Senior high school English classrooms faces several challenges, including a focus on grammatical knowledge in language ability development at the expense of integrating cultural contexts, a superficial understanding of cultural awareness that lacks in-depth interpretation of cultural connotations, a lack of higher-order thinking training such as cross-cultural comparative analysis in the development of thinking qualities, and a failure to guide students in mastering cross-cultural learning methods and strategies in the cultivation of learning abilities. To address these issues, schools must create immersive cross-cultural communication scenarios targeting language abilities to facilitate language output, construct comparative teaching modules between Chinese and foreign cultures centered around cultural awareness to deepen understanding of cultural connotations, design cross-cultural debate topics focusing on thinking qualities to cultivate dialectical thinking abilities, and develop cross-cultural learning resource packages based on learning abilities to guide strategic learning.

KEYWORDS

key competencies; senior high school English classroom; cross-cultural competence; cultivation path

1 Introduction

With the continuous deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication and interaction between different cultures have been carried out with unprecedented frequency and depth, and cross-cultural competence has become an indispensable part of the talent cultivation system in the new era. As a key field connecting Chinese and foreign languages and cultures, the English classroom in senior high school has already gone beyond teaching language knowledge and taken on the important mission of cultivating cross-cultural competence. The key competencies of senior high school English include four dimensions: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. These elements support the formation of cross-cultural competence and achieve mutual development through their interaction with cross-cultural competence. However, given the current teaching practice, there are some practical problems in cultivating cross-cultural competence in senior high school English classrooms, such as vague goal orientation, insufficient content integration, and lagging in method innovation. It isn't easy to adapt to the diversified needs of globalization for talent literacy. Based on this, it is not only a theoretical appeal to improve the subject education system but also a practical necessity to respond to the development needs of the times to explore an effective way to cultivate cross-cultural competencies in senior high school English classrooms from the perspective of key competencies.

2 Current Dilemmas in Cultivating Intercultural Competence in Senior High School

2.1 English Classrooms

Cultivating intercultural competence in senior high school English classrooms is still in the preliminary stage. Although the new curriculum standards emphasize cultural awareness, there are issues in actual teaching, such as the fragmentation of cultural content and a lack of multicultural comparisons. The specific challenges in cultivation are as follows:

2.2 The Cultivation of Language Competence Focusing on Grammatical Knowledge and Ignoring the Integration of Cultural Context

A prominent issue in the cultivation of language skills in senior high school English classrooms is the serious neglect of the integration of language knowledge and cultural context. The teaching process often involves the mechanical impartation of explicit knowledge, such as vocabulary spelling, grammar rules, and sentence structures. Still, it fails to adequately focus on the essential characteristic of language as a carrier of culture. Although students can grasp the

correctness of grammatical forms, they have difficulty understanding the appropriateness of language use in different cultural contexts, such as euphemisms in English, cross-cultural greetings strategy, and the Chinese context. There are significant differences^[1]. Grammar exercises and standardized tests orient most classroom activities and lack contextual simulation of real cross-cultural communication scenarios such as business communication and daily dialogue; this leads to students' cognitive bias that linguistic form takes precedence over cultural meaning. This tendency to emphasize the imparting of grammatical knowledge and despising the integration of cultural context makes students' language output often conform to grammatical rules but deviate from cultural logic, making it difficult to achieve effective communication in cross-cultural interaction.

2.3 The Cultivation of Cultural Awareness Staying at the Surface of Cultural Phenomenon and Lacking the Interpretation of Deep Connotation

Regarding Cultural Awareness Training, the current English classroom teaching in senior high schools often stays at the surface of cultural phenomena and does not interpret the deep connotations. Most of the teachers limited the teaching content to explaining surface cultural symbols such as festival celebrations, food and clothing, and geographical landscapes in English-speaking countries, and it fails to lead students to explore the value system, thinking mode and social norms behind cultural phenomena. For example, when explaining Western festivals, we only describe the customs of festivals but do not analyze the values of individualism contained in them; when comparing Chinese and foreign family concepts, we only stay in the list of phenomenon differences; it does not touch the cultural and philosophical roots of collectivism and individualism. This kind of surface teaching makes students' cognition of different cultures a fragmented and labeled state, forming a learning mentality of cultural curiosity rather than cultural understanding. It is difficult to establish a deep cognitive relationship between different cultures, and it is difficult to deepen the conscious cognition of local culture through cultural comparison. It is also difficult to form an essential understanding of cultural diversity, so the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness is reduced to a simple accumulation of cultural knowledge.

2.4 The Cultivation of Thinking Quality Lacking Higher-order Thinking Training, such as Cross-cultural Comparative Analysis

The higher-order thinking training system based on a cross-cultural perspective has not yet been established in the process of thinking quality training in senior high school English classrooms. Most of the current teaching activities focus on memory and the simple reproduction of language knowledge, and there are obvious deficiencies in the deep thinking guidance of comparison, criticism, and integration required by cultural phenomena. For example, in analyzing English literary works, teachers rarely guide students to compare the different interpretations of the same themes, such as familial love and friendship, in Chinese and Western cultures; the unique expressions of these themes in both cultures are often overlooked. In discussing social issues, students are not effectively guided to make a dialectical analysis of the conflict between Chinese and Western cultural values, making it difficult for students to establish the relationship between different cultures at the level of thinking. Students' thinking process is often limited to a single cultural framework, only linear understanding, and they cannot form a cross-dimensional thinking path of "Cultural difference identification-behind the reason tracing-logical relationship construction"^[2]. This lack of training makes students easily fall into the one-sided judgment of local cultural centralism when facing cross-cultural problems, or they can not accurately identify the nature of cultural differences due to their lack of comparative analysis ability; this hinders the development of their cross-cultural problem-solving skills and critical thinking.

2.5 The Cultivation of Learning Ability not Guiding Students to Master Cross-cultural Learning Methods and Strategies

There is a systematic vacancy in the guidance of Students' intercultural learning ability in the current senior high school English classroom. Teachers have failed to build a student-centered training framework. They lack targeted guidance on the acquisition of cultural materials (such as original films and television, foreign language journals and other multiple channels), and they also fail to build a cognitive basis for knowledge integration, which leads to students' ability fault in the key links such as information screening, critical analysis and transfer application. Especially in the face of cognitive conflicts or value collisions emerging in dynamic cultural situations, students fall into the dilemma of mechanical coping due to the lack of metacognitive strategies training, and they can not analyze the core of cultural heterogeneity through a comparative framework; it is also difficult to use negotiation strategies to resolve communication barriers. This tendency of fragmentation of learning ability guidance substantially weakens the possibility of students constructing cross-cultural learning autonomy. It makes their cultural cognition stay at the level of

memorization of surface symbols for a long time.

3 The Cultivation Path of Cross-cultural Competencies in Senior High School English Classroom from the Perspectives of Key Competencies

Under the framework of key competencies, the cultivation of cross-cultural competence in the senior high school English classroom needs to construct a systematic and operable practical path to establish a dynamic balance between cultural input and output, promoting an English education paradigm shift from "Language Tool Theory" to "Culture Education Theory."

3.1 Creating Immersive Cross-cultural Communication Situations for Language Competence to Promote Language Output

Given the problem of emphasizing grammar and neglecting context in English language teaching in senior high school, teachers should construct a multi-level communicative situation system in line with the cognitive characteristics of senior high school students and promote the deep integration of language form training and cultural context understanding. In textbook text processing, the cultural annotation embedding mechanism is established to analyze the cultural elements of language carriers such as dialogues and letters in mainstream textbooks. Taking The teaching of The Million Pound Bank Note as an example, in addition to analyzing the syntactic features of 19th-century British English, social class differences and the social symbolism of "Pound Note" are introduced to help students understand the culturally conditioned nature of language use^[3]. The teacher can design a text-culture comparison table to guide students in independently annotating the vocabulary related to the cultural context in the text and forming the corresponding cognition of language form and cultural function.

3.2 Building a Comparative Teaching Module of Chinese and Foreign Cultures Around Cultural Awareness and Deepening the Interpretation of its Connotation

Senior high school English cultural teaching often stays at the superficial level of phenomena such as festivals and clothing. Teachers should closely adhere to the core of "cultural understanding" required by the curriculum standards, constructing a tiered teaching module that involves phenomenon comparison, connotation exploration, and value association, guiding students to grasp the deeper logic through cultural symbols. Firstly, based on the unit theme of the textbook, a thematic cultural contrast framework is built, and the core issues closely related to high school students' lives, such as family responsibility, friendship concepts, and online social culture, are selected. Using the homologous text comparison method, the English materials in the textbook are paired with the Chinese classical texts. For example, the reading materials of the compulsory unit "Friendship" in the People's Education edition are compared with the description of friendship between "Runtu" and "I" in Lu Xun's "Hometown." Students are asked to analyze the differences between Chinese and Western views of friendship regarding expression (direct confiding and implicit and restrained) and maintenance (interest-oriented and responsibility-oriented) and then trace back to the cultural roots of collectivism and individualism. Teachers provide a cultural comparative analysis form to clarify the three-level analysis dimensions of phenomenon description, social background and values to prevent fragmented knowledge listing. Secondly, introducing cultural depth analysis tools to help students understand the multi-layer structure of cultural phenomena^[4]. Taking the teaching of the concept of "Harmony Between the Hevean and Human" as an example, the first layer of analysis symbols by comparing the Chinese and Western classroom seating arrangements (scattered western-style and neat Chinese style), body language differences (hugging ceremony and handshake ceremony applicable scene); the second layer of analysis system layer, this paper introduces the legal protection of the right to privacy in western society, the social function of residential porch culture; the third layer analyzes the value layer, combining the "Right to pursue happiness" in the declaration of Independence, and explains the influence of individualistic values on spatial culture, at the same time, it relates to the Chinese tradition of "Harmony Between the Hevean and Human." It guides students to realize that cultural phenomenon is the external expression of value system.

3.3 Focusing on the Design of Thinking Quality in Cross-cultural Debate Topics to Cultivate Dialectical Thinking Abilities

Given the lack of cross-cultural perspective in senior high school English thinking training, teachers should combine senior high school students' cognitive development characteristics to construct a debate-based teaching model of issue-driven, role-replacement and reflective construction, leading students to cultivate dialectical thinking in cultural conflict.

Teachers should select open topics close to their lives and follow the principles of topic relevance, cultural conflict and thinking development, such as "The Impact of Short Video Culture on Young People's Values," "Festival Celebration of Traditional Preservation and Integration of International Elements," etc., and supporting bilingual background materials in Chinese and English, students are asked to draw arguments from the dimensions of language and culture, social norms, and educational concepts. In the debate preparation stage, implementing a dual-role stance shift, students must complete the argument framework preparation and position-switching expression from local and target cultural perspectives in English. The teacher provides a cross-cultural argument toolbox that includes logical connectors, rebuttal strategies, and pathways for value enhancement. It also sets up a cultural blind debate segment, where cultural position labels are omitted to allow the audience to make judgments, enhancing their sensitivity to different cultural thinking patterns.

3.4 Developing Cross-cultural Learning Resource Packages Based on Learning Ability and Guiding Strategic Learning

To solve the problem of insufficient guidance on English cross-cultural learning strategies in senior high schools, teachers should construct a resource system of tool support, method demonstration and independent practice that fits the cognitive rules of senior high school students, focusing on cultivating students' metacognition ability. A multi-level cross-cultural learning resource package is developed. It includes three core modules: tools, methods and materials. Tools include a cultural contrast mind map template, a cross-cultural communication etiquette quick look-up table and an English resources search guide. Method resources include "3W inquiry" - What cultural differences, -Why the reason behind it, -How practical application) and "Double cycle reflection" (record cultural cognitive conflict and resolution process). Resources include a thematic library of bilingual cultural examples and a list of English-language documentaries for senior high school students (such as the Blue Planet cross-cultural environmental case and TED-Ed cultural science videos).

4 Conclusion

Cultivating cross-cultural competence in senior high school English classrooms from the perspective of core competencies is of great significance. In the future, schools need to create immersive cross-cultural communication contexts targeting language proficiency to facilitate language output. They should also establish teaching modules that contrast Chinese and foreign cultures centered around cultural awareness to deepen students' understanding of cultural connotations. Additionally, schools ought to design cross-cultural topic debates focusing on thinking quality to cultivate students' dialectical thinking abilities. Meanwhile, based on learning capacity, schools should develop cross-cultural learning resource packages to guide strategic learning. By doing so, they can effectively advance the process of cultivating cross-cultural competence in high school English classrooms within the framework of core competencies. This is not only an inevitable approach to enhancing students' cross-cultural communication skills but also a fundamental requirement for meeting the demands of globalized talent.

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