

Research on Integrating Chinese Traditional Culture into College English Teaching

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Abstract: English has become the most used language worldwide and is an essential course in college education. In college English teaching, integrating Chinese traditional culture is not only important for promoting international cultural exchange but also a means of developing our own excellent traditional culture. However, current teaching methods lack awareness of traditional culture and students are deprived of practical learning opportunities.

Keywords: College English education, Chinese traditional culture, Integration

1. Introduction

Promoting outstanding traditional culture has a far-reaching impact on the future of a country and its people. In modern society, where China's national strength is growing daily, it is necessary to promote our traditional national culture and eliminate negative international perceptions of it. Through this, the world can understand Chinese culture more comprehensively and accurately. English plays a crucial role in college learning, and integrating Chinese culture into English teaching can effectively stimulate students' patriotic feelings and improve their enthusiasm for learning English. China's excellent traditional culture is a vast treasure of knowledge accumulated over thousands of years and a spiritual symbol. As Chinese citizens, college students should actively learn about the excellent cultural traditions of China to improve their cultural quality. However, in current college English teaching, western culture takes center stage, while our excellent traditional culture has not been fully integrated, leading to a lack of understanding and appreciation of our own culture.

2. The Importance of Incorporating Chinese Traditional Culture in College English Teaching

2.1. Promoting Cultural Exchange^[1]

In today's era of globalization, possessing intercultural communication skills has become a necessary professional quality for college students. Traditional Chinese culture is a significant aspect of the country's cultural heritage, and its unique values, customs, and methods of communication are highly relevant to the development of students' intercultural communication abilities.

For instance, traditional Chinese culture places great emphasis on "harmony as the most valuable" and stresses the importance of maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships. This value system can aid students in comprehending and respecting the cultural backgrounds of others, thereby minimizing potential cultural conflicts. Moreover, by studying traditional Chinese culture, students can gain insights into the similarities and differences between various cultures, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural adaptability.

Furthermore, traditional Chinese culture plays a crucial role in international exchanges. Festivals like the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival have become symbols of Chinese culture, showcasing its charm overseas and fostering friendship and cooperation among different nations and regions. Therefore, incorporating traditional Chinese culture into college English education is an essential means of cultivating students' intercultural communication abilities.

2.2. Fostering Patriotism

The cultural heritage of Traditional Chinese culture has been accumulated over thousands of years in

China. It encompasses various fields such as literature, music, painting, opera, philosophy, religion and more. These cultural elements not only represent China's rich history and culture, but also embody the wisdom and spirit of the Chinese people. The core values of traditional Chinese culture are "benevolence, justice, propriety, wisdom and trust", which emphasize the importance of individual and society, harmony between nature and man, and harmonious coexistence. These values carry profound moral, philosophical and aesthetic implications.

Integrating traditional Chinese culture into education can help students develop patriotic feelings, enabling them to better understand and appreciate the unique charm of Chinese culture, and ultimately love their motherland. The relationship between traditional Chinese culture and patriotic feelings is inseparable. Traditional Chinese culture is the spiritual wealth of the Chinese nation, embodying the values, ethics and ideological concepts of the Chinese people. It plays a crucial role in cultivating students' patriotic feelings.

In particular, traditional Chinese culture emphasizes the concept of "love the country as one's family" and advocates "self-cultivation, family harmony, country governance and world peace". By instilling these beliefs in college students, they can establish a strong foundation for loving and serving their country. This will motivate them to work hard towards realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2.3. Enhancing Student Motivation^[2]

In the aftermath of the pandemic, China needs to focus on economic development, and the role of English language learning is more crucial than ever. Cultural exchanges are vital for both domestic and international students studying abroad. The ability to convey Chinese culture accurately and beautifully is a powerful motivator for students to learn English.

The integration of traditional Chinese culture with English learning provides students with a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural context that underlies the English language. This, in turn, enables them to achieve a more profound mastery of English. Furthermore, the rich and diverse heritage of traditional Chinese culture serves as a source of inspiration, motivating students to engage more actively and passionately in their English studies. Through this process, students not only develop their language skills but also gain a deeper appreciation for the unique beauty and significance of Chinese culture, ultimately enhancing their cultural self-confidence and sense of identity. Therefore, incorporating traditional Chinese culture into English teaching is an effective way to improve students' English proficiency while also cultivating their cultural literacy and global perspective.

3. The Challenges of Infusing Traditional Culture in College English

3.1. Insufficient Awareness

Chinese traditional culture is undoubtedly a precious asset of the Chinese people, which boasts a profound history and abundant connotation. Regrettably, in contemporary society, a large portion of individuals lack sufficient awareness of Chinese traditional culture. This regrettable situation is primarily attributed to the rapid pace of modernization, transformations in the educational system, and alterations in lifestyle. The majority of people nowadays tend to prioritize modern technology and entertainment over the significance of traditional culture.

The primary objective of college English teaching is to equip students with the ability to communicate in two languages and facilitate communication between different cultures, including the spread of Chinese culture. While there is a growing consensus on the significance of Chinese traditional culture, many students and teachers lack clarity on how to integrate it into college English teaching. Some students believe that English and their mother tongue are relatively independent, while some teachers are concerned that adding Chinese elements will result in Chinglish, which could affect the effectiveness of English learning. This lack of understanding impedes the effective fusion of the two cultures and hinders students' comprehensive development.

3.2. The Challenge of Students' Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

Based on research findings, it has been observed that students hailing from different regions exhibit varying levels of comprehension when it comes to traditional culture. This can be attributed to the fact

that diverse cultural backgrounds and historical legacies prevalent in different regions have a significant impact on how students perceive and interpret traditional culture. For instance, there are stark contrasts in terms of cultural ambiance between southern and northern parts of China. While the southern culture places emphasis on Confucianism and the artistic pursuits of the literati, the northern culture prioritizes the spirit of samurai and pragmatism. As a result, students from the south and north tend to have distinct interpretations of traditional culture. Furthermore, other factors such as personal family background and educational attainment also play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of traditional culture.

3.3. Overemphasis on Western Culture^[3]

Overemphasis on Western Culture can lead to the marginalization of other cultures and the loss of cultural diversity. While it is important to appreciate and learn from different cultures, it is also crucial to recognize and celebrate the unique aspects of one's own culture. The dominance of Western culture in media, education, and other spheres of society can create a sense of inferiority among those who do not identify with it, leading to a loss of cultural identity and heritage. It is important to strive for a balance between appreciating and learning from other cultures while also valuing and preserving one's own cultural traditions.

Traditional college English teaching methods tend to prioritize English thinking and language environment, which undoubtedly contribute to students' English proficiency. However, as descendants of Yan and Huang, students should not solely focus on Western culture. Effective cross-cultural communication requires a nuanced understanding of both cultures.^[4]

4. Strategies for Incorporating Chinese Cultural Traditions into College English Teaching^[5]

4.1. Integrating Chinese Cultural Traits into College English Teaching

In today's context, college English teaching should not only emphasize the importance of English language skills, but also take into account the unique characteristics of Chinese culture.^[6] Teachers should consciously integrate Chinese cultural traits into their English classes, such as introducing English words with Chinese cultural connotations, like "typhoon," "tai chi," "Confucianism," and "long time no see." However, many students may not fully comprehend these expressions, and even some teachers may lack knowledge in this area. Therefore, it is necessary for college English teachers to pay attention to these issues, explain and discuss the content related to Chinese traditional culture, and help students understand the historical and cultural significance behind the vocabulary. Although these contents may not be directly applicable to students' future studies or work, they can serve as a form of cultural inheritance, helping them to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture while learning English. This will also enrich their knowledge system and deepen their cultural heritage^[7].

4.2. Comparative Learning

Teachers can also encourage students to compare and contrast Chinese and Western cultures during the course of their English studies. This approach will not only enhance their understanding of Western culture, but also deepen their appreciation of Chinese culture. For instance, students can learn about the timing and customs of important events in both China and the West, as well as the differences between the educational systems of these two regions. Additionally, students can compare the meanings of certain words in Chinese and Western cultures, such as the word "dog." It is evident that the term "dog" carries negative connotations in both English and Chinese languages. Nevertheless, the cultural nuances of each language lead to different interpretations of this term. In Chinese culture, "dog" is frequently employed as a form of self-deprecating humor, whereas in English, it is seldom used to describe oneself, but rather to criticize others. Despite these differences, there are some similarities in how both languages use dog-related expressions, such as the well-known adage "a barking dog never bites."

For another example, teachers can compare the differences between Chinese breakfast and Western breakfast, so that students can understand the food culture under different cultural backgrounds, and guide them to use English for comparison and communication.

Moreover, teachers can encourage students to explore cultural differences through literature. Reading works by Chinese and Western authors can provide students with a unique perspective on the values, beliefs, and customs of different cultures. By analyzing these works, students can gain insight into the ways in which culture shapes individuals and societies. This approach can also foster empathy and

understanding towards people from different backgrounds. Ultimately, incorporating cultural comparisons into English studies can broaden students' horizons and prepare them for success in an increasingly globalized world^[8].

4.3. Making Full Use of the Elements of Traditional Chinese Culture

It is imperative for educators to employ traditional Chinese cultural stories, poems, and other resources as a means of fostering students' language sense and cultural refinement^[9]. In doing so, teachers may opt for culturally significant stories or renowned epigrams. By immersing themselves in these works, students will not only appreciate their literary value but also comprehend their cultural significance. Furthermore, the practice of reading aloud and delivering speeches will undoubtedly enhance students' oral expression skills.

It is recommended that educators make use of Chinese traditional cultural festivals and other significant occasions to facilitate English language learning activities.^[10] For instance, during the Autumn Festival and Spring Festival, teachers can organize interactive sessions where students can learn English while participating in culturally relevant activities such as making traditional Chinese moon cakes and dumplings^[11]. This approach not only enables students to gain a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture but also enhances their English language proficiency through practical application.

4.4. Teaching Students in Accordance with Their Aptitude to Improve Their English Application Ability

For students of different English levels, we can understand their cognition, interest and needs for traditional Chinese culture and English learning through questionnaires and interviews, and formulate personalized teaching programs accordingly. For example, for poor learners, they can start with the differences between Chinese and English cultures, so that students can increase their interest in English learning by comparing the differences between Chinese and Western cultures; for senior students, they can choose some classic Chinese and English bilingual literature works, guide students to think deeply about the cultural background and historical background, and improve their reading and writing ability. In addition, we can also use a variety of media means, such as English movies, English songs, etc., to create an interesting English learning environment, so that students can learn English in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. We also encourage students to think creatively in their learning, improve their English application ability through writing, speech and other ways, and organically combine traditional Chinese culture with English learning.

4.5. Expanding Knowledge Through Online Resources

In today's digital age, the internet plays a crucial role in our daily lives. Therefore, college English teachers can encourage students to browse relevant articles online during their free time. They can also access bilingual websites, such as "China Daily," to learn how to express Chinese culture in English and gain a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture.

In addition, online resources such as e-books, academic journals, and educational videos can be utilized to expand students' knowledge beyond the classroom. Teachers can recommend specific websites or platforms, such as Coursera or Khan Academy, to supplement their lectures and provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. By incorporating online resources into their teaching methods, college English teachers can create a more dynamic and engaging learning experience for their students. This will not only increase their national pride but also foster a greater interest in learning English.

5. Conclusion

Learning English is of utmost importance for China's economic development and cultural exchange. It should be recognized that the ability to communicate in English is not only a means to enhance personal competitiveness, but also to facilitate cross-cultural communication and promote China's integration into the global community. Moreover, English proficiency enables individuals to better understand the world, expand their knowledge, and increase their international competitiveness.

To achieve these goals, it is imperative that we prioritize English education and strive to improve our English language skills. We can learn from the success of other civilizations and seek guidance from

English-speaking experts to enhance our proficiency in English. By doing so, we can contribute to the dissemination of Chinese culture worldwide and potentially elevate traditional Chinese cultures to the status of world cultures.

In conclusion, it is crucial that we acknowledge the significance of learning English, not only for personal development but also for the advancement of China's position on the world stage. We must take action to improve our English language abilities and embrace the opportunities that come with cross-cultural exchange and integration.

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