

Research Related to Teaching Chinese Language and Culture in U.S. Classrooms: A Guide to Teaching Foreign Languages in U.S. Elementary and Secondary Schools

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Abstract: Language and Children: A Guide to Teaching Foreign Languages in American Elementary and Secondary Classrooms is a classic second language teaching series co-authored by two language educators, Helena Cotton and Carol Ann Dahlberg. The book reflects the latest advances in language classroom research and is the only comprehensive guide to foreign language classroom methods for K-12 and college students, using language learning objectives as the guiding principles for classroom rules and instruction. [Cheng Liang: "The Golden Key to Second Language Acquisition: A Review of the American Guide to Teaching Foreign Language in Elementary and Secondary Schools," Journal of Jiamusi Vocational College, 2019 (05)] Through careful reading, I have gained deeper thoughts and knowledge about various aspects of immersion teaching, teaching integration of language and culture, and teaching communication. Because I am very interested in "how to realize the organic integration of language and culture teaching in second language teaching classrooms," I focused on Chapter 9, "Experiencing Culture in the Classroom: Interaction of Language, Culture and Curriculum," and came up with a series of reflections, including insights into children's cultural teaching, academic associations, thoughts on overseas Chinese cultural I have a series of reflections, including insights on teaching children's culture, academic associations, thoughts on teaching Chinese culture overseas, and reflections on some of the contents of the book.

Keywords: Teaching Chinese culture to American children in the classroom; Cultural experience teaching; Teaching reflection.

1. Implications for cultural teaching

Through reading the contents of this chapter, I have formed a clearer perception of how to achieve cultural teaching in a second language, including the following aspects.

1.1. Culture is the most important context for language learning.

As Lange (1999) points out, "The new standards make culture a central and critical component of foreign language learning." The standards clearly state that "the real content of a foreign language learning program is not the grammar or vocabulary of the language, but the culture expressed through the language" (1999), therefore, whether it is the construction of students' experiential cultural environment, or the revelation of cultural products and practices, the cultivation of students' global and multicultural consciousness. Therefore, whether it is constructing a cultural environment for students to experience or revealing cultural products and practices, the cultivation of global awareness and multicultural consciousness for students is an educational strategy based on the important and crucial role of culture in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

1.2. Teachers need to clarify the cultural concepts represented by products and customs, which is the basis for effective cultural teaching

As mentioned in the book, in the classroom, by making tasting food represented by the target language culture, making simple folk crafts, and attaching the unique national characteristics of the language and culture in the activity

design, these activity sessions can liven up the classroom atmosphere, and the immersion experience can also strengthen students' memory and stimulate their interest in learning. The use of visual aids such as bulletin boards, tabletop games, and picture books can also be beneficial in reinforcing students' knowledge of the target language and culture. However, it is more important to make clear in teaching activities that the ultimate goal of teaching is the cultural concepts behind the products and customs, which is a prerequisite to ensure that culture teaching is effective.

1.3. Pesola's Thematic Unit Information Theory: Not all second language teachers have personal experience of living and working in a second language country, and this theory provides an entry point for teachers to draw on, both in terms of cultural products and cultural practices.

This book focuses on the great role that stories and art can play in enhancing students' cultural experiences. The cultural values and concepts implicit in myths and folklore can be shared through storytelling, story reading, and the adaptation of stories into dramatic performances. Students can be drawn into a culture in a variety of ways through the visual arts, thereby constructing deep cultural understanding.

1.4. Fostering global awareness and multiculturalism in the elementary foreign language teaching classroom is also critical to students' foreign language learning and cultural understanding.

By showing students the connections between various countries through visual demonstrations, song games and other forms of activities, and by constructing the interconnections between national cultures through multiple channels and using various resources, teachers can help students better achieve connections with the world at large and understand the concepts and perspectives of the target language culture, which helps learners correctly understand and evaluate the cultures of various regions of the world and evaluate different cultural perspectives.

1.5. Immersive teaching

Immersion is also widely used in teaching foreign language and culture in American classrooms. As scholars who have made their mark in the areas of immersion and two-way immersion, many of the examples and pedagogical ideas the duo discusses in Chapter 9 on teaching language and culture in second language classrooms have shades of immersion. Immersion refers to the idea that the target language becomes the medium through which the teacher teaches the target language and the subject matter, and that the target language environment is created for the students to "immerse" themselves in the target language environment and develop their bilingual skills. Immersion is defined as "the use of a second or foreign language to teach an intellectual subject in the classroom." [For example, beginning French language students can fully experience the unique French April Fools' Day custom by participating in a game of putting fish on the backs of others on April Fools' Day (9.2.2), and by integrating elements of cultural information resources such as folklore, fairy tales, contemporary children's books, songs, children's songs, and finger plays into the teaching of a second foreign language (9.5).

However, the implementation of immersion requires consideration of various factors, such as the creation of fantasy trips and virtual experiences to meet students' cultural experience needs, which is undoubtedly mentioned in the book. The practical application of immersion is still a long way off.

2. Academic Research

In recent years, academic research results on teaching Chinese as a second language in overseas classrooms have become increasingly rich, and their research involves the ways and principles of cultural teaching. For example, in response to the characteristics of children learning Chinese in non-target language environments, some scholars have proposed that the design of language and culture courses for overseas children should grasp the following principles:

1)The principle of fun: fun drives attention retention and stimulates the principle of learning motivation.

2)The principle of cognitive development: the principle of synergistic development of language level and cognitive ability.

3)The principle of differentiated focus on language elements: strengthening phonetics, vocabulary teaching and implicit grammar rules.

4) The principle of debuggability: the principle that the curriculum design can be debugged according to the cognitive level of the learners. This is basically consistent with the concept of culture teaching implied in the book. Classroom culture teaching should follow the cognitive rules of students and meet the needs of children's cultural experience in learning foreign languages to the greatest extent possible, and enrich the form of teaching activities so as to enhance the interest of the classroom and thus mobilize students' learning interests. With reference to the book, when teaching Chinese as a second language overseas, teachers can also select cultural elements and design corresponding cultural activities according to children's interest in Chinese culture. According to the results of questionnaire surveys and observations by scholars, ten cultural themes are more popular among the public: Chinese painting, calligraphy, paper-cutting, sports activities, Chinese knots, Beijing opera, musical instruments, festivals, food, and history. These ten cultural themes are more interactive and interesting. For example, to teach Chinese Peking Opera culture, students are led to appreciate Peking Opera and understand the different meanings of Peking Opera faces, are led to draw some simple face patterns, and are invited to play some simple roles in Peking Opera, so as to experience the unique Chinese Peking Opera culture, etc.

3. Personal Reflection

3.1. The advantages of fantasy experiences

The book devotes a great deal of ink to explaining the importance of building large scale fantasy experiences, especially virtual trips, in the classroom. "Fantasy experiences use a handful of props, as well as children's imaginations, to bring children and cultures together in fantasy scenarios." Whether it is cultural experiences for everyday life in the early stages of language acquisition or other more creative experiences such as airplane travel or steamship travel, the author believes that these ideas are different from the traditional style of single instruction and can promote opportunities for students to experience new cultural experiences and ways of combining them, and different solutions to different problems corresponding to different cultural contexts. Fantasy experiences can provide students with a very vivid and memorable experience of the culture of the target language. Since fantasy needs to be "unpacked", it is important that these major or large-scale fantasy experiences are not abused or they will lose their special character.

3.2. Questioning points

The author finds that although the construct of fantasy experience is novel, its feasibility is worthy of deep consideration, and at the same time the practical effect is difficult to be consistent with teaching expectations.

(1) First of all, the construction of fantasy experiences requires a great deal of preparation by teachers during lesson preparation, and the time and effort spent on it is difficult to estimate. The ultimate goal of teaching culture is for students to understand the culture of the target language country, so teaching cultural ontology is fundamental. The book (showing the blue part) obviously requires a lot of preparation work by the teacher before the lesson, as well as a lot of human, material, and financial resources, which is very demanding for the teachers themselves and the teaching conditions of the school, so the universality of this method

will be limited.

(2) Secondly, it is doubtful whether the virtual travel, airplane travel, steamship experience, elevator fantasy and other activities mentioned in the book can reflect the cultural characteristics of the target language country to the greatest extent.

This book was released in 2011, 11 years after the interval, and with the current rapid development of information technology and the increasing standard of living, children are no longer as unfamiliar with the new things in life and cultural experiences as they were in the past. Information in movies and television, various communication media and social tools enable students to learn about various cultural information and news events in a very short period of time. The level of education, understanding of the culture of the target country, family income, and daily life experiences of each student in the classroom all contribute to the nature of the students' sense of experience of the target culture. Therefore, it is worth considering whether the experiential activities designed by teachers can satisfy students' curiosity and desire to learn, otherwise the activities may not be adapted to students' cultural needs, be superficial and formal, or be too difficult and low in students' sense of experience.

(3) At the same time, it is questionable whether some of the cultural teaching design aspects in this book follow the principles of practicality, adaptability, and fun at the same time.

The principle of practicality means that the content of culture teaching should be helpful to learners' communication, and the main goal is to make learners feel the importance of culture to language rather than its extensiveness. And some of the classroom games and activities mentioned in this book.

The principle of adaptability means that cultural teaching should take into full consideration the language ability and acceptability of the learners. A large amount of incomprehensible cultural knowledge will affect and discourage learners' interest in learning, and culture should be taught in a purposeful and step-by-step manner according to the stage of language learning in order to stimulate learners' learning motivation. Some of the activities covered in this chapter, such as teaching poetry and art appreciation, can be difficult for adults. On the one hand, the content itself is difficult, and on the other hand, the target language learning level of the students cannot be determined, and the age and level of the target audience are not specified in the book, so the cognitive rules of students in elementary and junior high schools cannot digest such difficult content in time.

3.3. The cognitive characteristics, behavioral characteristics and thinking characteristics of students should be fully considered in teaching preparation.

Focusing on the design of interesting teaching activities can indeed be conducive to mobilizing students' interest in learning, but students at the primary and junior high school levels are not yet focused enough and carry a strong curiosity, so if teachers cannot drive the classroom rhythm well, they will easily become inattentive and watch the hilarious situation, and finally learn poorly. Therefore, the principle of debuggability should be followed, and the course design can be debugged in time according to the cognitive level of the learners. According to the actual response of students in the classroom to make timely adjustments in the teaching process.

4. Thoughts on teaching Chinese culture

4.1. Realize online cultural experience network teaching, and fully realize "education informatization" of international Chinese teaching in the post-epidemic era is imperative.

(1) Background

In the context of international Chinese language education, with the global outbreak of Newcastle pneumonia in recent years, online teaching has been popularly used around the world instead of traditional teaching mode to meet the needs of epidemic prevention and control. Although the modernization of teaching and learning and the rapid updating of online resources and technologies have reduced the negative impact of the epidemic on international Chinese language teaching, the development of international Chinese language education has been plagued by the deep integration of language teaching and cultural export, and there is still a significant gap between the teaching effect of Chinese culture and other languages. The restrictions on time, space and geography of online teaching further hinder the process of teaching Chinese culture. Clarifying the development status of international Chinese language teaching in the post-epidemic era and exploring effective cultural teaching strategies are substantially effective in enhancing the influence of international Chinese language education.

(2) The Need to Explore Online Classroom Cultural Teaching Channels

As mentioned in this book, culture teaching needs to create an experiential cultural environment, and the cultural information and subject contents combined with language teaching need to be effectively transmitted through diverse interactive games, group cooperation and teacher-student interaction, and students' neurosensory organs are effectively mobilized through the use of whole-body response method, audio-visual method and other methods of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. However, in the post-epidemic era, online teaching cannot realize face-to-face contact and can only ensure language communication between teachers and students, but the mobilization of whole-body perception, including the necessary physical contact in cultural customs experience, cannot be realized. Faced with these challenges, how to achieve effective cultural teaching in the online classroom is an issue of concern since the epidemic.

In this regard, teachers can use online resources to combine virtual online teaching with reality vividly through blended learning, with the help of web technologies such as virtual classroom and mobile learning, and with a mixture of constructivist and activist teaching methods and teaching techniques. Through retrieving many audio-visual materials including mobile apps, "Culture China DVD", "Hello China", "China Culture", "China.com" and other resources, we explore many possibilities of online online teaching. By making full use of educational technologies such as catechism, spoc, and micro-lesson, students can fully experience the culture of the target language through a blended online culture teaching mode that combines flipped classroom, personalized teaching and cooperative learning, and constructs an online culture experience similar to offline teaching. Since the outbreak of the new crown epidemic, many schools and foreign language training institutions have chosen to teach

through online platforms, the pros and cons of which are very significant. Compared with face-to-face teaching offline, online teaching lacks communication and cooperation between teachers and students, and teachers cannot observe students' learning status in real time, resulting in lower learning efficiency. For this reason, how to improve the teaching interest in online teaching, to be able to mobilize multiple network resources and database platform to build a good window of interaction between teachers and students, students and students, this is the current need to pay close attention to the issue.

4.2. Body-act Culture Teaching

In the late 90's, Professor Rick Wu of the Center for East Asian Languages at The Ohio State University proposed the "body-act culture teaching method". At the beginning of its introduction to China, this teaching method was called "experiential culture teaching method", "body" means experience and "acting" means performance. It focuses on the practical use of the language and requires learners to organize and express themselves correctly in a specific environment; the body-act culture teaching method focuses on the second language learners' learning of the target language culture, emphasizing that learners "follow the customs" and get rid of the interference of the native language culture, creating a real communicative environment for learners to learn by doing. It emphasizes the fun and student-centered nature of teaching and learning and the practical application of knowledge. Therefore, in teaching Chinese culture and Chinese as a foreign language, teachers can make full use of various forms of cultural and communicative activities, including but not limited to drama performances, cultural context creation and dialogue communication, thematic speeches, and class meetings to let students experience the differences in narrative logic and usage situations of different languages, thus stimulating students' interest in learning and giving full play to their subjective initiative.

The story and culture method of "body-acting culture teaching" advocates the use of stories as the basic unit of language teaching, where stories form a complete expression pattern and are trained and reinforced through practical lessons to reduce learners' anxiety in the target language culture and to achieve "assimilation" of the target language culture. "This assimilation does not mean that the learner is "overwhelmed" by the target language culture, but that the learner builds a view and understanding of the target language culture based on the native language culture, that is, a "target language cultural view", or the "second language worldview".

4.3. Strengthen students' sense of identity with Chinese culture

The second language cultural perspective is based on the identification with the target language culture, and through the presentation of different situations, a new second language worldview of the learners is established. For different cultural schemata, the stimulus response allows learners to gradually adapt to such cultural corporal activities, so that they can cope with them and gradually build up the worldview and values of the target language culture on the basis of the native language culture. Therefore, in culture teaching, it is especially important to consciously make cultural comparisons and develop students' cross-cultural awareness. For example, comparing different countries' festivals and customs, digital culture, interests and habits,

architecture and art, etc., can show the differences in cultural concepts more comprehensively and achieve cultural identity in comparison.

4.4. Develop interesting cultural teaching

In the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, we create a teaching scene to put learners in the target language culture, create pleasant memories for learners, assign roles to students with stories as the unit of analysis, make teaching sessions and forms vivid and interesting, so as to stimulate learners' motivation and interest, make the boring culture learning process enjoyable, draw students closer to the story, make them become the characters in the story, and experience the meaning of the target language culture. Students can become the characters of the story and experience the connotation of the target language culture. For example, when teaching Chinese festivals such as Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and Dragon Boat Festival, teachers can use stories such as "Meeting on the Magpie Bridge", "Chang'e Runs to the Moon" and "Driving away the "New Year Beast" to teach the story, and can set up the cultural environment in the class with the help of physical props and assign students corresponding roles to perform the story through role-playing so as to deepen the cultural understanding. The students can role-play the stories to deepen their cultural understanding.

4.5. Student-centered, learning and thinking.

In teaching, students should always be the main focus. Through the physical performance of the target language culture, students' cross-cultural awareness is cultivated. In the process of cultural rehearsal, teacher-led and student-centered, students perceive cultural differences and regulate learners' behavior in the target language culture; through cultural teaching, students are allowed to think about the reasons for differences, it is conducive to improving learners' cultural self-awareness and reducing cultural misunderstandings.

4.6. Learn from the actual situation and apply it to the actual situation

In the primary stage of teaching, we can introduce the culture of the target language and explain the culture of the target language in a purposeful and phased manner according to the students' language level, which expands the students' cultural horizons; and in the practical classes, we let students apply the cultural knowledge they have learned and turn the cultural knowledge into communicative competence, so as to achieve the real application of learning. [] Either way, we should avoid blindly pursuing formal renovation and neglecting the ultimate goal of teaching, which is to let students apply and integrate the knowledge of the target language and culture.

4.7. Make full use of relevant academic theories and apply them in teaching

Schumann proposed the "cultural adaptation theory" from the perspective of the culture of the second language learners' native language and the target language. He argues that language learners' learning effectiveness is closely related to the social and psychological distance of the target language culture; Krashen's affective filtering hypothesis suggests that a strong sense of cultural acquisition can greatly facilitate the development of learners' communicative competence and increase motivation to learn the target language. He also

confirms that the communicative competence of language learners is developed within the context of cultural competence, which determines the communicative competence of learners.

In the process of teaching culture, it is very important to reduce students' cultural barriers and to promote the development of cultural comparative awareness. Teachers need to grasp the teaching scale and cultural barriers, make students clear the differences between the native language culture and the language and culture of the target language country, and show the unique charm of Chinese culture through various channels so as to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning Chinese. In particular, the use of cultural comparison allows students to fully understand the similarities and differences between cultures and reduces the difficulty of teaching, thus reducing the psychological and social distance while preventing students from becoming intimidated.

4.8. Principles to be followed in teaching language and culture

(1) The principle of practicality.

The purpose of culture teaching is not only to promote Chinese culture to learners, but the content of culture teaching should be helpful to learners' communication, making learners feel the importance of culture for language rather than its extensiveness is the main goal, teaching cultural knowledge that is not helpful to language learners' language ability should not be the focus of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and distract students' attention.

If teachers guarantee the practicality of students' learning, they should give full play to the practical characteristics of the language itself, always combine the use of knowledge and learning memory, give students the opportunity to give full play to it by creating time situations, and pay attention to the fact that language teaching should be closely related to students' daily life, so that students can learn and use it.

2)The principle of adaptability.

The language ability and acceptability of the learners should be fully considered. A large amount of incomprehensible cultural knowledge will affect and discourage learners' interest in learning, and cultural teaching should be carried out in a purposeful and step-by-step manner according to the stage of language learning to stimulate learners' motivation.

3)Interesting principle.

Language and culture teaching should fully guarantee the teaching content, teaching methods, teaching links of interest, teaching content is too concentrated easily cause students aesthetic fatigue and burnout, teachers should design a variety of forms of teaching activities, flexible change the medium of instruction, to give students a sense of novelty.

5. How to Practice Virtual Fantasy

With regard to the characteristics of children's Chinese

learning in non-target language environments and the principles of curriculum design, Chinese scholars have made many attempts and accumulated some academic results. In response to some of the problems mentioned above, Zhao Yanfeng (2012) proposes four characteristics of children learning Chinese in non-purpose language environments and the corresponding concepts that Chinese teaching should uphold: (1) Insufficient intrinsic motivation and the concept of the primacy of fun in the curriculum. (2) Growing cognitive abilities and the concept of cognitive development in the curriculum. (3) Extremely strong ability to guess semantics, extract rules, and memorize phonology and the curriculum's philosophy of lexical leniency and grammatical implicitness. (4) The wide variation in cognitive levels across age groups and the efficient and debuggable philosophy of curriculum design.

Based on these four concepts, we believe that the design of language and culture courses for overseas children should grasp the following principles:

(1) Interesting principle: Interestingness drives the principle of attention retention and motivation for learning.

(2) The principle of cognitive development: the principle of synergistic development of language level and cognitive ability.

(3) The principle of differentiated focus on language elements: strengthening the principle of teaching phonetics, vocabulary and implicit grammar rules.

(4) The principle of debuggability: the principle that the curriculum design can be debugged according to the cognitive level of the learners.

Therefore, in teaching, virtual fantasy is not an activity program that cannot be practiced, but teachers should do a good job of anticipating and avoiding the problems that may arise in the class. First of all, the virtual fantasy should be constructed in accordance with the students' current learning and spiritual demands, otherwise it will be counterproductive. The language communication scenario designed in the activity should be in line with students' current language cognitive ability, and the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, and syntax should be balanced to fully integrate the language elements in the virtual fantasy.

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