

Thinking about Middle School English Reading Teaching Based on Cultural Awareness

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Abstract: Language is the carrier of culture. English reading teaching is an effective way to enrich students' cultural knowledge and an important source to cultivate students' cultural awareness. The article analyzes the problems in the cultivation of cultural awareness in English reading teaching in junior high schools, seeks a method of teaching English reading with cultural awareness as the core, enriches and expands the cultural elements in teaching, enhances secondary school students' sense of identification with Chinese culture, and improves secondary school students' cultural self-awareness and cultural confidence.

Keywords: cultural awareness; reading teaching; junior high school English

1. Introduction:

Culture itself is an educational force. Culture in a particular time and space constitutes the cultural environment and cultural atmosphere, which has a subtle effect on students and plays a powerful educational role; the culture of a certain society also influences education in a unique way to play a powerful influence on educational activities. The unique nurturing function of culture is particularly important for the development of students' cultural awareness in the subject. Let students understand Western culture is conducive to strengthening students' understanding of reading content, enhancing students' sense of identity with Chinese culture, and allowing students to receive the baptism of advanced human culture in a subtle way. In the process of reading teaching, teachers allow students to learn about Western culture while enhancing their knowledge of excellent Chinese traditional culture, so that they can shoulder the historical mission of spreading Chinese civilization, improving students' cultural quality and enhancing their cultural connotation. However, in the actual teaching, most teachers do not cultivate students' cultural awareness well in the process of teaching reading.

2. The lack of cultural awareness in junior high school English reading teaching

2.1 Teaching content ignores Chinese traditional culture

One of the important topics of English teaching is English reading class, but at present most junior high school English reading teaching focuses on learning Western culture and less on spreading excellent Chinese traditional culture, which only stays on the surface of learning Chinese culture. For example, in reading classes, English teachers ignore the nurturing value of culture and the importance of spreading good culture to students in reading classes, which is not conducive to developing students with cross-cultural awareness. When teachers make language input to students, most of them will take one-way input, failing to combine the excellent Chinese and Western cultures organically, which seriously deviates from the original intention of education. In the long run, our students will not be able to express Chinese culture exactly in the target language, thus creating "aphasia". The lack of teachers' knowledge of Chinese traditional culture is another reason for the current state of cultural education. Some teachers fail to update their educational concepts and take the traditional reading teaching model, and their understanding of Chinese culture is still shallow. Reading teaching plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' cultural awareness. When students read texts, they are exposed to the cultural elements of different countries, and these cultural elements will influence students' cognition in a subtle way. This is also the drawback of exam-oriented education, in which the teachers focus on instilling students with the idea that "the one who reads gets the world" and neglect the cultivation of cultural awareness, which is not conducive to improving students' cultural literacy.

2.2 A single teaching method for cultural awareness

Most teachers lack the concept of cultural identity, neglect the learning of Chinese excellent traditional culture and teaching methods, and have a single teaching method for cultivating cultural awareness. For example, when teachers explain vocabulary, they only let students memorize the surface meanings of words by rote and cannot dig deeper into the root etymology of words. For example, when teachers talk about the words Train and subway, they can explain to students the taboos of Westerners in choosing words, and discuss the Chinese and Western cultural connotations with students to deepen their impressions of words. Teachers set up teaching activities only limited to single cultural knowledge, such as food, music, customs, etc. They lack rich and colorful cultural activities and fail to raise students' cultural knowledge to the level of cultural awareness. The learning of cultural knowledge is only limited to the surface, not really internalized and externalized. Language is an important carrier of culture, and teaching without cultural orientation is imperfect teaching. Teachers who emphasize vocabulary, grammar, and question answering skills to the detriment of cultural awareness are not conducive to promoting students' learning. Teachers also lack a deep understanding of English textbooks. If students are proficient in the content of secondary school English textbooks, it is easier for them to pass general English exams, and there are many elements of Western culture in English textbooks that are helpful to students in understanding Western culture. However, many English teachers fail to use English textbooks properly, fail to dig deeper into the cultural information in the textbooks, and put too much emphasis on mastering words, grammar, and long and difficult sentences, which is not conducive to improving students' cultural quality.

2.3 Outdated teaching methods and dull classroom atmosphere

Teaching English reading class with the traditional grammar-translation method is a common problem for some English teachers after the lecture, and they treat the reading class as an intensive reading class or a translation class. The specific steps are as follows: 1. students read the words silently, and then the teacher leads the reading; 2. quickly browse the article, let the students find out the grammatical structure and knowledge points in the article; 3. the teacher analyzes the syntax and lexis in the article read, focusing on the main sentences and long and difficult sentences; 4. the teacher demonstrates, students imitate the reading; 5. paragraph by paragraph, the general idea is described in Chinese, that is, the original text is translated into Chinese; 6. assign class work and recite the text. In the traditional English reading classroom, some English teachers do not pay attention to the setting of reading comprehension questions, the questions are relatively simple, and they are eager to get students' answers, which makes the whole reading classroom become depressing and boring. Teachers should create a learning environment for students to think and communicate on their own to avoid a depressing learning atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers should also pay attention to reading tutoring for students outside of class. Reading is generally done outside the classroom, mainly by students' independent reading, teachers only play a supporting role, teachers tutoring requirements have some strong measures to ensure that reading outside the classroom continued to be effective. Teachers should record students' reading in real time and give feedback to students in a timely manner, so that students can master reading skills under the guidance of teachers. As the saying goes, the one who gets reading gets the world, and reading is very important for students to improve their performance, but the main obstacle to improve students' reading ability is the vocabulary problem, and improper understanding of vocabulary can cause reading difficulties. Students' reading difficulties are mainly caused by new words and new meanings of old words. To solve the problem of vocabulary barriers, students can be taught to use word formation or context to understand new words and new meanings of old words, and to grasp the main "pulse" of the text. For example, narrative texts are often character-centered, and the layers of descriptions are progressively deeper, so that students can grasp the characteristics and patterns of the text and help them understand it more quickly.

3. Strategies for developing cultural awareness in junior high school English reading teaching

3.1 Create cultural awareness situations

The essential function of language is to express meaning, but getting rid of the language environment makes it very difficult to express meaning precisely, therefore, language should be taught from the context. Before reading, teachers should create cultural contexts related to real-life situations, so that students can feel the practical value of language and enrich their cultural experience. The learning of cultural knowledge should ultimately return to learning cultural knowledge in real-life contexts, activating students' cultural background knowledge and feeling the rich cultural connotations in reading. Help students understand the cultural information carried by the reading text, guide them to explore the meaning and connotation of the text, and internalize the language knowledge. Teachers should understand students' physical and mental development, cultural cognitive level differences, personality characteristics and other factors, and fully mobilize students' subjective initiative; create situations in connection with real life, show problems encountered in life through real situations, and improve students' problem-solving skills; teachers can also choose different types of activities according to changes in the content of teaching materials, teaching objects, teaching objectives, teaching processes, etc.; use videos to create different activities. Choose different types of activities; activate background knowledge with multimodal means such as videos and pictures to stimulate students' senses, increase reading motivation, and activate students' existing cultural experiences. Teachers need to accurately understand the definition of cultural activities and the relationship between learning activities and culture; these factors are extremely important in enhancing students' cultural awareness. Although teachers' teaching styles may vary, they cannot abandon the cultivation of students' cultural awareness. Teachers must correctly understand and master the teaching materials and teaching objectives, and implement the creation of cultural situations into their teaching, so that cultural elements can be familiar to students and improve the efficiency of English teaching.

3.2 Enhance students' interest in English and improve their cultural connotation

One of the core qualities of cultivating English subjects for secondary school students is to pay attention to the cultivation of students' cultural awareness. Teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' cultural awareness, enrich students' cultural connotation, let students learn the differences between Chinese and Western cultures while enhancing their personal independent judgment ability, satisfy curiosity about students' English reading, enhance students' interest in reading, experience the cultural differences between Chinese and Western through real situations, understand the differences between Chinese and English. Students will experience the cultural differences between China and the West through real-life situations, understand the different charms of the Chinese and English languages, and avoid the emergence of Chinese English. Guiding students to read according to an outline. The purpose of reading by outline is to attract students' interest in understanding reading materials. Teachers should update their educational concepts, break the old reading teaching model, and take the initiative to learn from good experiences, explore and summarize in the process of teaching, and choose the right teaching methods to improve students' interest in reading. To improve students' interest in reading, there are certain requirements for reading materials. For example, when students read an article, no matter how rich the content of the article, but read like wax, students can not accept, the effect of reading will also be greatly reduced. Secondary school students are infinitely curious about some unknown events, and choosing an interesting reading can make students have the desire to read and be curious about the background of some reading contents. Teachers can choose some hot topics or news to make students' imagination of reading endlessly and produce a "silent effect".

4. Conclusion

To sum up, cultivating students' reading habits and cultural awareness and is a systematic project which exists in the whole stage of students' English learning. Students in traditional English teaching are overly dependent on teachers, lack inductive reasoning ability and have insufficient cultural awareness. In the actual teaching process, teachers should keep learning and reflecting, enrich teaching activities, update their educational philosophy, and take the core literacy of students' English subjects as the starting point to enhance students' cultural awareness and thinking habits.

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