

On Integrating British and American Literature into College English Teaching

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Abstract

College English teaching, as an important part of quality education, bears the arduous task of educating people. In order to improve the effect of college English teaching, we try to integrate English and American literature into college English teaching, dig out the literary factors in teaching materials, and introduce the interpretation of classic English and American literary works into the second classroom activities. These teaching methods can stimulate students' interest in learning English, and from the colorful literary works, students can be inspired to form a correct outlook on life and world.

Keywords

College English Teaching; Teaching Method; Literature; Outlook.

1. Introduction

Besides the traditional teaching of grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing, college English teaching should focus on cultivating students' humanistic quality and cross-cultural awareness. Literary works can arouse people's resonance, make people understand life and the meaning of life. There are many British and American literature materials in college English textbooks. It is of great significance to dig out the knowledge of British and American literature in textbooks and integrate British and American literature into college English teaching. It can not only stimulate students' interest in English learning and turn boring language learning into a vivid feast of literature and culture, but also enable students to improve their aesthetic awareness and form a correct outlook on life and world by learning the positive humanistic spirit in textbooks.

2. Constructivism

Constructivism holds that students, as cognitive subjects, play a leading role in learning, while teachers only play an auxiliary role in learning. Therefore, the core content of constructivist learning view is that knowledge is not acquired by teachers, but by learners in a certain situation, that is, under the social and cultural background, with the help of learning and others, using necessary learning materials, and by means of meaning construction. Therefore, the main role of teachers in teaching is not to impart knowledge to students, but to stimulate and encourage students to acquire knowledge, help students set up correct learning goals and stimulate students' learning motivation, interest and enthusiasm. Interest is the best teacher. As long as students have enough interest in learning, master certain learning methods, set correct learning goals and change passive learning into active learning, the learning effect will be greatly enhanced. On the contrary, the traditional college English teaching mode is that teachers speak and students listen, and students are actively informed. Moreover, teachers pay too much attention to the understanding of words, sentences and break away from the teaching of cultural and literary background knowledge in the text. Such boring teaching will make students lose interest in learning, lose the motivation to learn, and most students are passive learners, and study for exams. College English teaching has little effect, and students' English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Inspired by the constructivist learning concept, it is urgent to change the traditional teaching concept in order to improve college English teaching. Teachers are no longer the knowledge givers, but the guides and helpers of students' learning. Therefore, it is the teacher's main duty and function to stimulate students' interest in college English learning and change students from passive learners to active learners.

3. Importance of Integrating Literature Education into College English Teaching

Incorporating literature education into college English teaching can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also enable students to improve their self-cultivation and form a correct world outlook and outlook on life under the subtle influence of literature, thus meeting the requirements of President Xi Jinping for educating people in philosophy and social sciences in colleges and universities. Therefore, the importance of integrating literature education into college English is self-evident. Littlewood, a famous British expert, thinks that literature can promote the achievement of communicative purposes and make creative use of limited sentences. Widdowson believes that literature reading is not limited to text activities, but builds a bridge between authors and readers by means of the content of works. Professor Hu Wenzhong, an English educator from North China, also believes that "choosing excellent foreign literature works in foreign language teaching can enhance students' comprehensive foreign language literacy in depth, comprehensively and vividly". The importance of integrating literature into college English teaching is as follows:

First, literary works are rich in morality, sentiment, truth, goodness and beauty. Through the fate and encounters of characters in literary works, students can experience infinite life meaning in limited time and space, feel the life course of different times, different countries and different characters, and then realize their true life meaning. For example, *Jane Eyre*, a well-known book, shows students Jane who persists in herself, pursues freedom and protects her dignity after all kinds of hardships. Jane did not give up the right to pursue love and happiness because of her low social status. She fell in love with Rochester not because of his property, but because he could treat her as his friend and be honest with her. Jane didn't sell her soul and inner feelings to survive. She refused her cousin St John's proposal. The happy endings of *Jane Eyre* and Rochester in the novel show readers a truth: as long as they dare to pursue happiness, stick to themselves and never compromise, they can realize their dreams. Shakespeare's tragedy makes readers witness the sacredness and greatness of love. Romeo and Juliet can die for each other for love. Ernest Hemingway, an American writer, made readers feel the mystery of nature, and the strength of nature is unmatched. Therefore, Santiago, the "tough guy" old fisherman, lost to the boundless sea and the ferocious sharks. Students get the way of getting along with nature: respecting nature, adapting to nature and keeping harmony between man and nature. Fitzgerald, an American writer, showed readers the disillusionment of Gatsby's American dream and experienced the prosperity and emptiness of American society in the 1920s. In a word, literary works can make us experience colorful life, enrich our spiritual world and inner life, and improve our moral sentiment.

Secondly, through the British and American literature works, we can have a glimpse of the British and American culture, deepen our understanding of the British and American culture, effectively carry out cross-cultural communication and promote college English learning. Taking Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* as an example, it took only four days for Romeo and Juliet to get to know each other, love each other, get married secretly, and then get to double suicide. In the story of butterfly lovers in China, butterfly lovers shared the bed for three years or even many times, but only when they finally said goodbye did Zhu Yingtai implicitly imply his daughter's body and love for Liang Shanbo. The same story theme and ending, different concepts of time and different ways of expressing love are enough to see the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. Chinese people's implicit character makes them insist on the love with a long flow of water.

Thirdly, reading English and American literature can enlarge students' vocabulary and enhance their reading comprehension and writing ability. First of all, the vivid story of the hero's fate affect the students' hearts. The feeling of being there enables students to overcome the obstacles of new words, guess the meaning of words from the context, and then let students extract their favorite words and sentences. Over time, students' vocabulary will be greatly increased. Secondly, British and American literary works are usually voluminous works, even if they are short versions, they are also informative, and students need to

finish them in a limited time, which requires students' reading speed and skills. Over time, students' reading ability will be enhanced.

4. Exploration of Integrating Literature Education into College English Teaching

The contents of British and American literature are vast, but students' study time is limited and college English class hours are limited. How to integrate British and American literature into college English teaching in limited time and class hours is a difficult problem faced by college English teachers. In many years of teaching practice, the author summed up the following experiences:

First, dig out the contents of British and American literature and culture in teaching materials and combine them with classroom teaching contents. Taking Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishing House's New Comprehensive Course of Advanced English for example, the theme of Unit 1 of Volume 1 is *The pursuit of Dreams*, which tells the inspirational story of an American blind man pursuing his musical dream. The protagonists of the three stories come from different countries and different times, but they all have a common theme: chasing dreams. The focus of this unit is to guide students to learn the spirit of these protagonists and encourage students to face difficulties and not give up easily. Therefore, in addition to the regular preview, the author also assigned some learning tasks to the students, and combined with their interests and hobbies, let the students understand that it takes determination and perseverance to realize their dreams, and unremitting efforts will bring success. Therefore, it is of great significance for freshmen to encourage students to face the difficulties in study and life bravely, set clear learning objectives and clarify the learning mission in universities. Most freshmen have experienced the rigorous college entrance examination, and the high-pressure high school life suffocates them. Therefore, many students pin their hopes on the university, hoping to live a "paradise" life in the university after the hardships of the college entrance examination. In addition, the education system of Chinese universities is strict and lenient, and most students are in a lax state. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to use the theme of "chasing dreams" to guide students to set clear goals for college study, to think about the way out after college graduation as soon as possible, and to encourage some students to set goals for postgraduate entrance examination. In this way, boring language learning becomes a colorful study of literature and culture, and students can learn the hero's aggressive, persistent and indomitable spirit, so as to motivate their study and life.

Secondly, the interpretation of classic British and American literature works is introduced into the second classroom activities. In order to improve students' reading and understanding of English and American literature, the author encourages students to take the study group as a unit, and according to the time sequence of the development of English and American literature, each group finishes reading a writer and his representative work within the scope given by the teacher after class. After group discussion, they make PPT and show it to classmates and teachers, and finally pass PPT to QQ group to learn together. In this way, students can not only read selectively in numerous literary works, but also learn more knowledge of British and American literature in a limited time, and understand the history and schools of the development of British and American literature.

Thirdly, elective courses should be offered to extend students' college English study and English and American literature. College English is a required course in colleges and universities, which is only offered to sophomores in most colleges and universities. In order to enable students to further study college English courses and knowledge of British and American literature, the aim is to enable students to learn the main literary works of British and American countries from film images, cultivate students' humanistic feelings, publicize humanistic spirit, cultivate students' sentiment and broaden their horizons, thus cultivating students' humanistic quality and aesthetic ability. In addition, this course can also enable students to learn western culture, understand western civilization, way of thinking and living habits through the window of British and American literature, view western culture and core values critically, familiarize themselves with the cultural differences between China

and foreign countries, and cultivate the humanistic function of intercultural communication ability, so as to achieve the goal of "communicating effectively in English".

5. Conclusions

Students are the main body of learning and play a decisive role in learning, while teachers are guides and helpers in teaching. Therefore, it is the primary duty of college English teachers to stimulate students' interest in learning and encourage students to study independently. Incorporating literature education into college English can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also enable students to improve their self-cultivation and form a correct world outlook and outlook on life under the subtle influence of literature, so as to meet the requirements of educating people in philosophy and social sciences in colleges and universities. In college English teaching, dig out the literary factors in teaching materials; Introduce the interpretation of classic British and American literary works into the second classroom activities; Offering elective courses can effectively integrate English and American literature education into college English teaching.

6. References

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