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# Development and Practice of School-Based English Courses Integrating Traditional Culture in Primary Schools

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**Abstract:** Against the dual background of cultivating cultural confidence and promoting the reform of compulsory education courses, integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into the development and practice of school-based English courses in primary schools is an effective way to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and improve students' cross-cultural communication competence. Primary school English teaching is not only a disseminator of language knowledge, but also a transmitter of culture and a nurturer of values. Starting from the characteristics of primary school English teaching and the connotation of fine traditional Chinese culture, this paper explores the significance, development principles and practical paths of integrating traditional culture into school-based English courses in primary schools, providing ideas for the diversified and characteristic development of school-based English courses in primary schools, and helping students inherit Chinese cultural context in English learning and cultivate new-era teenagers with both language ability and cultural literacy.

**Keywords:** traditional culture; primary school English; school-based courses; curriculum development; teaching practice

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## 1. Introduction

As a supplement to national and local courses, school-based courses have the advantages of flexibility, pertinence and characteristics. They can flexibly integrate traditional cultural elements according to the school's educational philosophy and students' cognitive characteristics, make up for the lack of traditional cultural infiltration in national courses, and build an integrated English teaching system based on language and culture. At present, the integration of traditional culture into primary school English teaching has become a research hotspot in the field of education. However, there are still many problems to be solved in the development and practice of school-based courses, such as the lack of systematic curriculum development, unnatural integration of traditional culture and English teaching, and single form of teaching practice. Therefore, this paper mainly starts from the basic ideas and methods of the development and practice of school-based English courses integrating traditional culture in primary schools, providing theoretical reference and practical experience for primary school English educators, promoting the effective infiltration of traditional culture in primary school English teaching, and facilitating the all-round development of students' core competencies.

## **2. Significance of Developing School-Based English Courses Integrating Traditional Culture in Primary Schools**

### **2.1. Implement the Fundamental Task of Fostering Virtue Through Education and Cultivate Cultural Confidence**

Fostering virtue through education is the fundamental task of education. Primary school English teaching should not only impart language, but also play a role in value guidance and cultural cultivation<sup>[1]</sup>. Fine traditional Chinese culture contains many precious ideological and moral resources, such as traditional virtues like honesty and trustworthiness, respect for teachers and the way, diligence and courage, and unity and mutual assistance. Integrating traditional cultural elements into school-based English courses in primary schools allows students to be naturally influenced by traditional culture in the process of English learning, understand the connotation of traditional culture, and establish correct world outlook, outlook on life and values. At the same time, expressing traditional culture in English enables students to experience the charm of fine traditional Chinese culture, generate national pride and cultural confidence, cultivate their family and country feelings, adhere to cultural stance in cross-cultural communication, and inherit Chinese cultural context<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.2. Enrich the Connotation of English Courses and Promote Diversified Curriculum Development**

At present, the national English curriculum for primary schools mainly focuses on language knowledge and language skills, with scattered cultural content, mostly Western culture, which cannot meet students' needs for learning fine traditional Chinese culture. As a supplement and extension of national courses, school-based courses have strong flexibility and autonomy. They can organically combine traditional culture with English language learning according to the actual situation of primary school English teaching, making English classes no longer a simple transmission of language tools, but a platform for cultural communication and exchange. This promotes the primary school English curriculum to move towards a diversified and characteristic path, and improves the interest and effectiveness of the curriculum<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **2.3. Cultivate Cross-Cultural Communication Competence to Meet the Needs of the Times**

Under the background of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an inevitable development trend of the times. As an internationally accepted language, English is the main way of cross-cultural communication<sup>[4]</sup>. Cross-cultural communication not only requires students to master solid language skills, but also requires them to understand different cultural differences and have the awareness of respecting diverse cultures and conducting cultural exchanges. Integrating traditional culture into school-based English courses in primary schools can encourage students to compare Western culture with local culture when learning fine traditional Chinese culture, cultivate their cross-cultural awareness, and improve their cross-cultural communication competence<sup>[5]</sup>.

## **3. Development Principles of School-Based English Courses Integrating Traditional Culture in Primary Schools**

### **3.1. Interesting Principle**

Primary school students have a short attention span, and learning interest is the main motivation for students to learn. Therefore, in the process of developing school-based English courses integrating traditional culture, the interesting principle should be followed. Vivid, interesting and life-related content should be selected according to the cognitive characteristics and interests of primary school students, and flexible and diverse teaching methods should be used to stimulate students' learning interest. The selection of curriculum content should focus on intuition and imagery, such as traditional festival customs, myths and legends, and folk children's songs. The curriculum form can adopt games, children's songs, dialogues, performances, etc., allowing students to learn English and understand traditional culture in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, realizing "learning through fun and having fun in learning"<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **3.2. Characteristic Principle**

The greatest advantage of school-based courses is their characteristics. A curriculum system with the school's own characteristics can be established according to the school's educational philosophy and regional cultural characteristics. Therefore, in the process of developing school-based English courses integrating traditional culture, the characteristic principle should be followed. According to the actual situation of the school, tap regional traditional cultural resources and create curriculum content with the school's own characteristics. Different regions have different traditional cultures, such as traditional operas in southern regions and folk arts in northern regions. Schools can use local regional cultural advantages to enrich their English school-based courses, ensuring that the courses are comprehensive while emphasizing their regionality. This can also deepen students' understanding and emotional identity of local traditional culture, and promote the inheritance and development of regional traditional culture.

## **4. Development and Practice Paths of School-Based English Courses Integrating Traditional Culture in Primary Schools**

### **4.1. Clarify Curriculum Development Goals and Anchor Practice Directions**

Curriculum goals are the overall direction of development and practice, and also the main basis for determining curriculum content selection, form design and practical activity effects <sup>[7]</sup>. Integrating traditional culture into school-based English courses in primary schools should be based on the four main aspects of English discipline: "language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability", and set up a goal system according to the requirements of traditional culture inheritance, providing a clear direction for subsequent practice. The overall goal is to improve students' comprehensive literacy, cultivate their English language application ability, enable them to understand the basic connotation of fine traditional Chinese culture, enhance cultural confidence, and initially cultivate cross-cultural communication thinking. The stage goals should conform to the cognitive laws of primary school students. Lower grades mainly focus on learning English vocabulary, children's songs and simple story plots related to traditional culture, mainly to stimulate students' learning interest; middle grades focus on sentence pattern and dialogue practice, allowing students to express content related to traditional culture in simple English and improve their language expression ability; higher grades focus on in-depth interpretation of traditional culture, and try to spread traditional culture through English speeches and writing, thereby cultivating students' cultural communication ability <sup>[8]</sup>.

### **4.2. Select Appropriate Curriculum Content and Consolidate Practice Foundations**

Curriculum content is the carrier of development and implementation, and its appropriateness directly affects the effectiveness of the curriculum. The selected content should strictly follow the principles of interest, adaptability, integration, foundation and characteristics. Based on the actual life and cognitive level of primary school students, representative materials that are easy for students to understand and accept should be selected. At the same time, the requirements of English language learning should be considered to make the two naturally combined <sup>[9]</sup>. The selected main content can be divided into five categories: traditional festival culture, traditional food culture, traditional myths and folk legends, traditional art culture and traditional etiquette culture. Select brief introductions to traditional festivals such as Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival to reflect students' daily life experience; choose familiar foods such as dumplings, zongzi and mooncakes to explain their cultural meanings, thereby reducing the difficulty of understanding; select short and touching stories such as Pangu Separating Heaven and Earth and Chang'e Flying to the Moon to attract students' learning interest; select basic knowledge of calligraphy, paper-cutting, opera and other art forms to cultivate students' aesthetic awareness; select simple etiquettes such as greetings and table manners to guide students to inherit traditional virtues. At the same time, attention should be paid to the hierarchy and systematicness of the content to avoid fragmentation. It should be designed hierarchically according to the idea of "enlightenment in lower grades, improvement in middle grades and deepening in higher grades" to form a complete system <sup>[10]</sup>.

### **4.3. Design Flexible Curriculum Forms and Activate Practice Vitality**

Flexible and diverse curriculum forms are important ways to improve practice effects. According to the characteristics of primary school students' curiosity and strong image thinking ability, the traditional mode of teacher teaching and students listening should be broken. Combine interest and effectiveness to design curriculum forms that meet students' cognitive characteristics and can mobilize their enthusiasm, so that students can learn through participation and make progress through experience<sup>[11]</sup>. There are five core curriculum forms: first, game teaching form, which takes traditional festival vocabulary solitaire, festival custom guessing and other activities as carriers to enable students to consolidate learned vocabulary and understand relevant culture in games; second, children's songs and ballads form, create English children's songs with distinct rhythms and concise language around festivals, virtues and other contents, allowing students to experience the beauty of culture in singing; third, dialogue and performance form, design simple English dialogues and textbook plays to encourage students to express content related to traditional culture through role-playing; fourth, practical experience form, organize students to make handicrafts, hold festival celebration activities, etc., so that students can experience culture in practical operations and communicate their experiences in English; fifth, multimedia form, use pictures, videos and other media to show traditional cultural content, add situational colors to teaching and improve teaching effects. The design of curriculum forms should take into account development goals and practical needs. Different stages have different forms. Lower grades focus on games and children's songs, while higher grades focus on performances and practical experiences, ensuring that the forms are compatible with the content and students' cognitive levels, and stimulating the vitality of practical teaching.

### **4.4. Integrate Diversified Curriculum Resources and Strengthen Practice Support**

Diversified curriculum resources are the guarantee for the smooth development and practice of the curriculum. It is necessary to break the limitations of on-campus resources, integrate on-campus, off-campus and online resources, enrich curriculum materials and provide strong support for practical teaching. In terms of on-campus resource integration, use school venues such as libraries and cultural walls to arrange content integrating traditional culture and English, and display students' excellent works; give play to teachers' professional advantages, organize interdisciplinary cooperation between English teachers and Chinese, art teachers to jointly develop high-quality curriculum resources and improve the quality of resources. In terms of off-campus resource integration, strengthen cooperation with families and communities, let students work with their parents to make some traditional foods in classroom practice, and use resources such as museums and folk custom museums to take students on field trips to feel the charm of traditional culture up close and express it in English. For online resource integration, collect and sort out English versions of traditional cultural stories, festival introductions and other contents to enrich the curriculum resource library and provide support for classroom practice and after-class expansion<sup>[12]</sup>.

### **4.5. Optimize Classroom Teaching Implementation and Implement Practice Core**

Classroom teaching is the main place where curriculum development and practice connect. It is necessary to effectively integrate the developed curriculum content and forms into the classroom, improve teaching methods, promote the organic integration of culture and language, and ensure the realization of curriculum goals<sup>[13]</sup>. In classroom teaching, traditional culture should be integrated into vocabulary, sentence patterns, reading, writing and other parts. When teaching vocabulary such as "Spring Festival" and "zongzi", supplement relevant cultural backgrounds; when teaching sentence patterns, set up exercises according to traditional cultural scenarios and guide students to express cultural content with learned sentence patterns; select English versions of traditional cultural materials for reading teaching to stimulate students' reading interest and guide them to feel the connotation of culture; design simple writing topics in writing teaching, allowing students to introduce their favorite festivals and foods in English. In addition, it is necessary to change teachers' teaching concepts, attach importance to students' main status, and guide students to participate in classroom activities in an independent, cooperative and inquiry-based way. Teachers should strengthen their own cultural accomplishment and cross-cultural

teaching ability, learn relevant cultural knowledge and English culture, cultivate students' ability to compare different cultures, enhance their awareness of cross-cultural communication, and turn the classroom into a combination of cultural communication and language acquisition<sup>[14]</sup>.

#### 4.6. Carry Out Characteristic Practical Activities and Extend Practice Scenarios

Characteristic practical activities are a supplement to classroom teaching, which can expand practice venues, increase students' cultural experience, and improve their language application ability and cultural literacy<sup>[15]</sup>. Schools should regularly carry out characteristic activities integrating traditional Chinese culture and English according to the content of school-based courses, so that students can deepen their cultural understanding and improve their ability to express in English in the process of practice. Four main types of characteristic activities should be held: first, traditional festival theme activities, such as parties, lantern riddles guessing and zongzi making during festivals, allowing students to experience customs and introduce their feelings in English; second, traditional culture English display activities, organizing English speeches, recitations, textbook play performances, etc., to show students' achievements and improve their language expression and cultural communication ability; third, practical experience activities, organizing students to make traditional handicrafts, calligraphy and painting, etc., and tell the practice process in English; fourth, cross-cultural communication activities, carrying out Chinese and Western cultural comparison activities according to Western festivals, helping students understand cultural differences and enhance their cross-cultural communication ability.

### 5. Conclusion

Integrating fine traditional Chinese culture into the development and practice of school-based English courses in primary schools is an important way to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, cultivate students' cultural confidence and improve their core competencies. It is also an inevitable path to promote the diversification and characteristic development of primary school English courses. The development and practice of school-based English courses integrating traditional culture in primary schools should follow the development principles of interest, adaptability, integration, foundation and characteristics. It is necessary to determine curriculum development goals, select appropriate curriculum content, design suitable teaching methods, integrate various curriculum resources, and promote the in-depth integration of traditional culture and English teaching through improving classroom teaching, holding characteristic activities and other ways, so as to solve the problems encountered in the curriculum development process and improve the quality and implementation effect of curriculum development.

### Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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