

Cultural experience teaching in senior high school

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Abstract

Review the senior high school English teaching, senior English teaching is no longer a process which the senior high students can learn only by remembering the words and grammars, but it is a process which they need to experience English through different forms of activities to truly understand the different cultures. This paper is an attempt to introduce the culture teaching theory and discuss how to apply the cultural teaching theory into classroom from the theoretical aspect.

Keywords: cultural experience teaching, senior high school, culture, language

1. Introduction

Issued by the Ministry of Education in 2008, *The New English Curriculum Standard* specifically points out that it is necessary to concentrate on all the improvement of the students and develop their English integrating skills through perception, experience, practice and cooperation to realize the aim of the assignments. But in our traditional English teaching class, language skills are emphasized more than cultures, especially in the senior high school. As a result, after several years of learning English, our students can't use English to express their thoughts specifically and they can't communicate with the foreigners effectively in a given situation. Therefore, cultivating the intercultural communication ability is required explicitly by *the New English Curriculum Standard*. Our teaching aim is to cultivate the students who can not only acquire strong language basis but also can apply it to different situation. In this degree, culture teaching is as important as language teaching.

The concept of cultural experience was proposed by Patrick R. Moran in 2001^[1], which means the encounter with another way of life. It can be acquired through direct involvement with people who have other culture background or through indirect learning materials in the classroom. Moran points out that this encounter with another way of life involve five aspects about culture, involving cultural products, cultural practices, cultural perspectives, cultural communities and persons. Applying the cultural experience teaching to the classroom is the necessary teaching method to cultivate the students intercultural communication ability.

2. Need of the Study

While in the background of the rural urbanization, a large number of the left-behind children go to the city and learn in the city schools, thus forming the rural-urban fringe schools. However, in the teaching process, we gradually find most of these students have poor English basis and lack of interest in

English in these schools. Interest is the key to learning, how should we do to improve their interest in English? In our traditional English teaching class, language skills are emphasized more than cultures. Especially in the senior high school, explaining grammars and words always seems to be the main content, while the cultures about the history or custom are rarely introduced. As a result, after several years of learning English, our students can't use English to express their thoughts specifically and they can't communicate with the foreigners effectively in a given situation. The study will help us to analyze the cultural experience teaching theory proposed by Patrick R. Moran, it will discuss how to apply the cultural experience teaching into classroom from the theoretical aspect and show the importance of the cultural experience teaching in senior high school.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study about the cultural experience teaching
2. To discuss how to apply the cultural experience teaching into classroom

4. Research Methodology

The study focuses on extensive study of cultural experience teaching collected from books, National & international Journals, government reports, publications from various websites which focused on various aspects of cultural experience teaching theory.

5. Cultural Experience Teaching Theory

In order to study the concept of cultural experience, we should pay attention to culture first. According to Moran, Culture is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts.

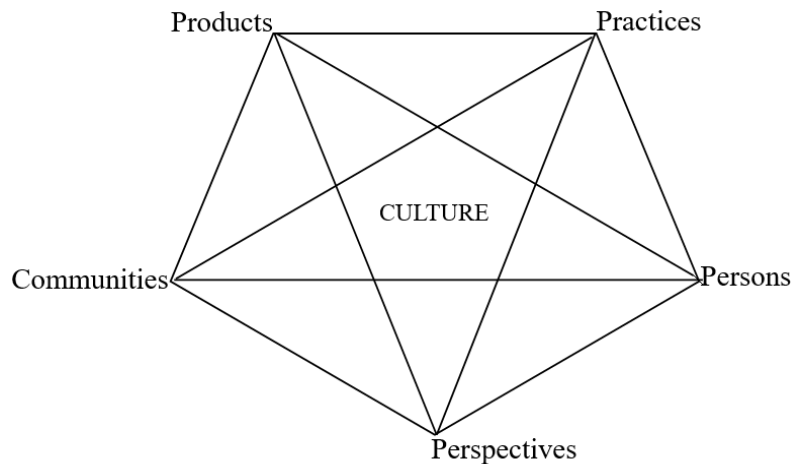


Fig 1: The Five Dimensions of Culture (Adopted from Teaching Culture, Patrick R. Moran, 2001: 24)^[1]

Patrick R. Moran (2001)^[1] proposed cultural experience which adopted the experiential learning cycle proposed by Kurt Lewin (Kolb, 1984). According to Moran, the cultural experience comprises any encounter between learners and another way of life, be it first-hand through direct involvement with people of the other culture or indirectly through learning materials in the language classroom. And the cultural experience consist of four interconnected learning interactions: knowing about, knowing how, knowing why and knowing oneself, which Moran calls cultural knowings framework.

6. Cultural Experience Teaching in Senior High School

As mentioned above, the four cultural knowings correspond to the four stages of the experiential cycle: students learn, students experience, students explore, student reflect upon. In the process of learning English in senior high school, we can combine culture and language teaching by applying the cultural experience teaching in senior high school from three aspects as follows: firstly, receive the culture information, secondly, experience and explore the culture information, lastly, reflect the culture information.

6.1 Receive the Culture Information

In this stage, it is equal to the culture knowing, which includes all activities that consist of gathering and demonstrating acquisition of cultural information which is about the specific culture and language, as well as about the nature of culture and the processes of leaning and entering other cultures in general, or information about students' own culture. Learners need to master information about the culture. Acquiring the information, knowing about is the foundation of the culture learning.

6.2 Experience and Explore the Culture Information

To experience and explore the culture information, it is necessary to encourage students to join the activities. According to their customs and traditions, using their tools or technology-and their language-to establish bona fide relationships with them. Learners need to be able to adapt or integrate into the culture. This means changing behaviors to develop others that are appropriate for the culture. In the process, it helps students to cultivate the cultural perspective,

which is the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie or permeate all aspects of the culture. It is a process of learners' structured inquiry into observations, information, and experiences with the culture.

6.3 Reflect the Culture Information

It equals to knowing oneself and concerns the individual learners, which is their values, opinions, feelings, questions, reactions, thoughts, ideas, and their own cultural values as a central part of the cultural experience. Individual learners need to understand themselves and their own culture as a means to comprehending, adapting to, or integrating into the culture. They need to recognize and manage the emotional highs and lows involved in the culture learning process. Ultimately, it is the learners who decide the extent to which they engage in, accept, explore, or become part of the culture and develop expertise as culture learners.

7. Conclusion

With the analysis did above, language and culture are inseparable. It is the new trend to combine culture teaching and language teaching in the senior high school. However, as for how to combine them effectively in the classroom, there need more scholars and researchers to do the research and discussion.

8. References

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