

VOLUME 03

AUGUST, 2019

NUMBER 02

SCIENCE INSIGHTS  
**Education  
Frontiers**

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY  
INSIGHTS PUBLISHER

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# Science Insights Education Frontiers

pISSN 2644-058X

eISSN 2578-9813

<http://www.scineer.bonoi.org/>

Is Indexed by



## **Learning Chinese through Picture Book Reading for ethnic Minority Children in China**

*By Chen, S., Lawrence, J.F., Zhou, J., Min, L., & Snow, C.E.*

**S**I Chen and colleagues examined the efficacy of a picture book reading intervention on Uyghur children's first language (Uyghur) and second language (Mandarin Chinese) learning. This study, supported by the Ministry of Education of China, was the first randomized controlled language education intervention conducted in Xinjiang kindergartens.

This study published in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* followed Uyghur children from 31 classes in 12 kindergartens in two cities of Xinjiang in one year. Among the 265 participating Uyghur children aged 4 to 5 years old, 134 of them participated in the experimental group receiving the Xinjiang Project intervention, while 131 of them were allocated to the control group.

The intervention design was based on successful strategies learnt from previous book-reading interventions, including using picture books to provide high-quality second language input in reading and discussion, as well as providing a curriculum of vocabulary instruction and teacher training. Chinese-Uyghur bilingual picture books were used in order to support both first and second language vocabulary acquisition. The receptive and expressive vocabulary of Chinese and Uyghur were both assessed every six months. The evaluation showed:

There was a faster growth rate among children in the treatment group in Chinese receptive vocabulary (E.S. = +0.68) and Uyghur expressive vocabulary (E.S. = +0.38).

However, there were no significant differences between the treatment and control groups in the growth rate of Chinese expressive vocabulary and Uyghur receptive vocabulary.

The authors explained the insignificant growth rate in Chinese expressive vocabulary in terms of developmental age and insufficient intervention time. Nonetheless, they highlighted the potential of a well-designed picture book-reading program to benefit the development of both home and school languages of minority children at the same time.

*Source: Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2018; 44:206-219.*

## Mindfulness for Left-behind Children in China

By Lu, R., Zhou, Y., Wu, Q., Peng, X., Dong, J., Zhu, Z., & Xu, W.

A RANDOMIZED controlled trial published in *Child: Care, Health and Development* examined whether a mindfulness training program was beneficial to left-behind students in China, who stayed in their hometown with extended family members because their parents left to work in other cities.

Sixty three left-behind children who agreed to participate in this study were screened from a sample of 320 grade 5 to 6 students from a primary school in an urban area in Nanjing. Thirty students were randomly allocated to a mindfulness training group, where they participated in an eight-week mindfulness training program that emphasized focusing on the present and practicing non – judgmental awareness. The program consisted of one-hour group sessions once a week. Thirty-three students were allocated to a control group.

Students completed a pre-test before participating in the trainings and a post-test after the eight-week training which included scales measuring their mindfulness, social anxiety, suicide ideation, and self-esteem. However, nine students in the mindfulness training group and three students in the control group did not complete the post-test. The findings were as follows:

- Social anxiety was found negatively correlated with mindfulness and positively correlated with suicide ideation in the pre-test.
- Compared with the control group, students who received the 8-week mindfulness training program improved significantly in level of mindfulness and showed reduced social anxiety and suicide ideation.
- However, improvement in self-esteem was not significant.

The authors suggested that the promising findings of this pilot intervention study support further study of mindfulness training among left-behind children, remarking, however, that the present results should not be generalized to all left-behind children in China.

*Source: Care, Health and Development, 2019; 45 (3): 371-379.*

## Using Expressive Writing to Reduce Test Anxiety

By Shen L, Yang L, Zhang J, & Zhang M.

**T**EST Anxiety can have negative impacts on students' performance and psychological health. This study published in *PLOS ONE* examined whether expressive writing could be beneficial to alleviate test anxiety. Lujun Shen and colleagues conducted a randomized controlled trial among senior high school students in China who were facing The National Higher Education Entrance Examination (China's Gaokao), which is considered the most important exam of a student's life.

The study randomly selected 200 students from three senior-high schools in Xinxiang city. Students were first assessed for eligibility. A sample of 75 students was recruited into the study for having a high level of test anxiety. Then, 38 of them were allocated into an expressive writing group, and 37 of them were allocated to a control writing group. Students in the expressive writing group were instructed to write for 20 minutes about the positive emotions they had each day, consecutively for 30 days. Students in the control writing group were instructed to write about their daily activities consecutively for the same period of time.

Students were assessed using the Test Anxiety Scale (TAS) during the recruitment (late April), and after the end of the writing (early June). The study also analyzed summaries of the writing manuscripts of the 38 expressive writing group students for qualitative data. The findings were as follows:

- The expressive writing group scored significantly lower than the control writing group in the Test Anxiety Scale in the post-test.
- There were no significant gender differences in the post-test TAS score.
- Qualitative analysis of the writing found more elements of positive emotion in the last ten days' expressive writing compared to the first ten days among the expressive writing group.

The authors suggested that expressive writing is an easy, inexpensive, and convenient method since it does not require a psychological counselor nor a specific location.

*Source: PLOS ONE, 2018; 13(2): e0191779.*



## Interleaved Practice Improves Math Test Scores

By Rohrer, D., Dedrick, R.F., Hartwig, M.K., & Cheung, C.N.

THE results of a randomized controlled trial, published in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, suggest that a greater emphasis on interleaved practice may dramatically improve math test scores for seventh graders. Whereas most mathematics worksheets consist of a block of problems devoted to the same skill or concept, an interleaved worksheet is arranged so that no two consecutive problems require the same strategy.

Doug Rohrer and colleagues conducted the study with 54 classes in a large school district in Florida during the 2017-2018 school year. Over a period of four months, the classes periodically completed either interleaved or blocked worksheets, and then both groups completed an interleaved review worksheet. All students completed the same problems. One month later, students took an unannounced test which was set by the researchers. The study found that:

- Students who had completed the interleaved assignments performed much better on the unannounced test than those in the blocked assignment group (effect size = +0.83).
- Majority of the teachers reported that they like interleaved practice and would be able to use it with no or little instruction.
- However, most teachers also considered interleaved practices would be more time-consuming than blocked practices.

The researchers suggested that the large effect sizes observed in the study for interleaved math practice may be due to the learning strategies it involves, which force the student to choose an appropriate strategy for each problem on the basis of the problem itself. They also identified some limitations of the study – particularly which the interleaving students took longer to complete their worksheets so effectively spent more time on each topic.

Source: *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 2019; Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/edu0000367.

## Does Exercise Improve Children's Cognitive Performance?

By Van den Berg, V., Saliassi, E., de Groot, R.H.M., Chinapaw, M.J.M., & Singh, A.S.

**R**ESearch published in *Frontiers in Psychology* looks at the effects of a nine-week program of daily exercise on children's cognitive performance, aerobic fitness, and physical activity levels.

Vera van den Berg and colleagues conducted a cluster randomized controlled trial in 21 classes in eight Dutch primary schools. A total of 512 children aged 9 to 12 participated. The intervention consisted of daily classroom-based exercise breaks of moderate to vigorous intensity. Each break lasted approximately ten minutes, and children were asked to mimic dance moves from a video. Children in the control group watched 10- to 15-minute information and educational videos related to the body, exercise, and sports.

Before and after the intervention, children were asked to perform four cognitive tasks to measure their cognitive performance in selective attention, inhibition, and memory retrieval. Children's aerobic fitness was measured with a shuttle run test, and accelerometers were used to measure physical activity throughout the day. The results were:

- At the end of the nine weeks, the exercise intervention had no effect on children's cognitive performance or aerobic fitness.
- Children in the intervention group spent 2.9 minutes more of the school day involved in moderate to vigorous physical activity compared to the children in the control group.

The study concluded that daily exercise breaks can be implemented in the classroom in order to promote physical activity during school time, but doesn't improve children's cognitive performance.

*Source: Frontiers in Psychology, 2019; 10:174.*

## How do Teacher-Student Interactions Affect Emotions and Behaviors?

By Wang, J., Hu, S., & Wang, L.

A RECENT study published in *PLOS ONE* examined how classroom environment shapes the emotions and behaviors of students. Using a sample of Chinese students, Wang and colleagues examined the association between classroom environment and emotional and behavioral problems across different school stages, while also considering the influences of students' personality and family environment.

In two primary schools and four secondary schools in Liaoning Province, northeast China, the study collected valid responses from 5,433 students (2,039 from primary schools; 2,091 from junior high schools; 1,303 from senior high schools) and 244 classroom teachers (92 from primary schools; 96 from junior high schools; 56 from senior high schools). The students were asked about their emotional and behavioral problems, personality, family environment, perceptions of teacher-student interaction through a questionnaire; and the teachers reported their depressive symptoms. The authors found that:

- The greatest influences on students' emotions and behaviors were personality and family characteristics at the individual level, but the influence of classroom teachers on students gradually increased across different school stages.
- In primary schools and among a high dissatisfaction group in junior high school, students' positive perception of teachers' understanding was negatively associated with their emotional and behavioral problems.
- In senior high schools, students' perception of teachers as "helpful / friendly" was negatively associated with their emotional and behavioral problems.

The authors suggested that the results highlighted the importance of teachers' positive communication with students. The findings also highlighted the diverse classroom needs of younger and older adolescents in order to improve students' mental health.

*Source: PLOS ONE, 2018; 13(8): e0201442.*

## **Executive Functions Training Improves Thinking and Creative Abilities**

*By Lin, W.L., Shih, Y.L., Wang, S.W., & Tang, Y.W.*

**W**HILE executive functions have been found closely related to creativity and thinking, the neuroscientific training for such functions has been regarded as difficult in widespread applications. However, based on the results of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanning, research has indicated that reading aloud and simple arithmetic calculation activities could largely increase prefrontal activation. A recent study published in *Thinking Skills and Creativity* aimed to examine whether such training could improve students' executive functioning, thinking and creative abilities.

Thirty-eight students from a junior high school in Taiwan participated in this study. Half of them were randomly assigned into a training group, the other half were assigned to a control group. Over four weeks on weekdays, the students received 20 fifteen-minute sessions. Students in the training group read aloud and performed arithmetic calculations in each session. There were three difficulty levels for the reading materials and the arithmetic calculations to provide an adaptive training procedure, in order to support activating their prefrontal cortex and increasing their motivation. By contrast, students in the control group played the game Tetris, which should have no effect on students' executive performance. Activities for both groups were conducted through a computer application and the sessions were held in their school's computer room.

Executive functioning assessments, thinking tasks and creativity tests were administered to students before and after the training. Students were also asked to describe their feelings toward the training on a 5-point scale. The results showed:

- Students in the training group did not differ from students in the control group in the executive function test
- However, students in the training group performed significantly better on the syllogism task (which measures thinking abilities) and the Chinese word remote associates test (which measures creative ability), compared to students in the control group.
- Students in the control group regarded the activities as more interesting and fun.

The authors suggested that this exploratory study presented a practical and economical method to activate junior high students' prefrontal cortex in the school educational environment.

*Source: Thinking Skills and Creativity, 2018; 29: 87-96.*

## Is There a Gender Gap in IT?

*By Siddiq, F., & Scherer, R.*

PREVIOUS studies have revealed gender differences in attitudes towards information technology (IT) literacy, with boys generally considering their IT literacy to be higher than that of girls. A new meta-analysis, published in *Educational Research Review*, tests whether the same gender differences can be seen in students' actual performance on IT literacy tasks as measured by performance-based assessments.

In total, 46 effect sizes were extracted from 23 studies using a random-effects model. The main findings suggest that:

- Girls perform better than boys on performance-based IT literacy assessments (ES = +0.13).
- Gender differences in favor of girls are larger in primary schools (ES = +0.20) than in secondary schools (ES = +0.11).
- The overall effect size is robust across several analysis conditions.
- Overall, the gender differences in IT literacy are significant but small.

As these findings seem to contrast those obtained from previous meta-analyses that were based on self-reported IT literacy, the researchers conclude that the IT gender gap may not be as severe as it had been claimed to be.

*Source: Educational Research Review, 2019; 27:205-217.*



## Jilin Li, the Founder of China's Situational Education

Xiaoqiao Cheng,<sup>1</sup> Jianping Xia<sup>2</sup>

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*Abstract: Jilin Li was a famous child educator and founder of Chinese situational education. She has taught for sixty years in the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School in China, and has been studying situational education for 40 years. In the long-term teaching practice and theoretical research, Jilin Li systematically studied and practiced situational teaching, situational education, situational curriculum, and situational learning paradigm, and constructed a complete set of situational education theory and practical operation system. This commentary review will introduce Jilin Li's contributions and major achievements, and comprehensively describes Jilin Li's educational thoughts. We believe that Jilin Li is an original educational theorist who has emerged from educational practice. Her research has solved the worldwide problem of the unity of cognition and emotion, and has become a model for the organic integration of Chinese and Western cultures.*

*Sci Insigt Edu Front 2019; 3(2):275-295.*

*Doi: 10.15354/sief.19.co012*

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**Keywords:** *Jilin Li; Chinese Education; Situational Education*

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**Conflict of Interests:** *None.*



ON September 9, 2014, at the celebration of the 33rd Teacher's Day Commendation Conference in China, Jilin Li, a famous child educator and founder of Chinese situational education, was awarded the first special award for national education excellence in basic education issued by the State Council of China on her study of "Exploration and Theoretical Research on Situational Education Practice". This is the highest award in the basic education in China. The expert group's evaluation comments were, "Jilin Li has excellent research quality of perseverance and seeking truth from facts, and the research results were original. In the research paradigm, the integration of practice and theory was natural, and it has global influence." On July 18, 2019, Ms. Jilin Li died of illness and was aged 81. The news of her death made the Chinese education community grieve, and more than a thousand educators gave her a farewell in the hot summer weather. At the last moment of Jilin Li's life, she first thought of the children she was worried about for a lifetime. The only requirement for her hospitalization was that the ward should face to the school so that she could see the children. From the hospitalization to her last minute of life, Jilin Li had to open the window every morning, sit on the bed, listen to the bustling children at the school, listen to the crispness of the daily school bells, and listen to every sound from the next school. When she fell into deep feelings, she slowly stood up from the bed and looked out at her most concerned children. She once chatted with her apprentice and said, "I can see you from here. When I see you working at the desk and seeing the children playing happily, I am relieved." (China Education News, July 18, 2019).

## **Jilin Li's Life and Her Achievements**

Jilin Li was born in Nantong City, Jiangsu Province, China in May 1938. In 1956, she graduated from Nantong Women's Normal School in Jiangsu Province. After graduation, she taught at the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School. In 1958, Jilin Li, who was only 20 years old, had just been a teacher for two years, was invited by the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education to participate in the preparation of reference books for elementary Chinese teaching. In 1962, she was invited to participate in the symposium on Chinese teaching hosted by the Propaganda Minister of Jiangsu Province and educator Tianshi Wu. She was praised by Wu for her novel speech. In 1978, she was awarded the first batch of special teachers in Jiangsu Province.

In the fall of 1978, Jilin Li, as a representative of Nantong City, attended the inaugural meeting of the Jiangsu Provincial Education Association. She was confirmed by the organizing committee of the conference to make a speech at the conference. Her topic of the speech was "How to Develop Children's Intelligence in the Teaching of Chinese in the Lower Graders of Elementary Schools". Jilin Li explained in her speech that "in the language teaching of elementary schools, attention should be paid to cultivating students' interest in learning, to guide them to observe the accumulation of perceptual materials, to inspire their positive thinking, and to train their language", which caused a strong reaction of the participants. After the meeting, Jilin Li was invited to give special reports to primary school teachers in Nanjing and Shanghai.

In 1979, Jiangsu Education published the full text of Jilin Li's paper "How to Develop Children's Intelligence in Primary School Chinese Teaching" in the Volume 1, Issue 3. This was the first paper on children's intelligence in the field of basic education in China at that time, which attracted great attention from Chinese academic fields.

In April 1979, when Jilin Li attended the Nantong City Model Workers Symposium, Zhaoyi Jiang, her English teacher in middle school, suggested her to use the situational teaching method that was already used in English teaching in elementary Chinese teaching. Since then, Jilin Li has summed up the common characteristics of English teaching and elementary Chinese teaching scenarios: First, the created situation is what children have experienced in life; second, the situation is connected with the text language.

In the spring of 1980, the Shanghai Education Delegation visited the Second Affiliated Primary School of Nantong Normal School. Jilin Li set up five observation classes for them, including three types of elementary Chinese teaching: reading, oral composition, and essay commentary. The experts and famous teachers from the Shanghai Education Delegation evaluated Jilin Li's lessons to inspire students to think and guide the students to imagine through context; this is very conducive to cultivating students' attention, memory, observation, thinking and imagination, and further affirmed the effectiveness of situational teaching in all aspects of children's intellectual development. This event enabled Jilin Li to meet professors from East China Normal University and Shanghai Normal University and famous teachers from Shanghai, laying the foundation for his later study and research.

In the summer of 1980, Jilin Li took the paper "Combining Training Language with Developmental Intelligence" to participate in the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Elementary School Chinese Teaching Research Association and to make a speech at the conference. She mentioned in her speech that one of the effective ways to train students' language and intelligence development was to create situations based on textbooks and essays, bring students into context, provide them with a specific and vivid language environment, and unify language training and intelligence development in situational teaching. Li's speech at the conference was praised by experts and peers, which aroused the attention of the national elementary Chinese community on situational teaching. Jilin Li's paper was published in *Middle School Chinese*, and Jilin Li was elected as the executive director of the Association. Jinsong Wang, a journalist from *Guangming Daily*, who participated in the conference, specially wrote a report entitled "Jilin Li and Situational Teaching Method", and published in the September 2008 issue of *Guangming Daily*.

In the fall of 1980, Jilin Li was invited to participate in the academic activities organized by the China Education Union Education Experimental Group in Shanghai, and gave an academic report entitled "Using Situational Teaching and Cultivating Children's Aesthetic Competence" to teachers in Shanghai. During this academic activity, Jilin Li met Diankun Du, a professor at East China Normal University. Professor Du suggested that she should form her own primary school Chinese teaching system based on the existing teaching practice and research, and clearly pointed out that the system is

for students' general development. According to Professor Du's opinion, Jilin Li summarized the five basic principles of the development of Chinese teaching in the first round of experimental classes, from the forms and cases of children's development, and wrote a long essay "From the Whole, Focusing on Children's Development", and published in the first issue of *Education Research* in 1985. In 1986, under the guidance of Professor Du, she applied the theory of "field theory" and wrote an article entitled "Situational Experiment and Research".

In 1981, Jilin Li published a paper entitled "Creating Situations in Chinese Teaching" based on the report "Using Situational Teaching and Cultivating Children's Aesthetic Ability" to teachers in Shanghai, published in *Education Research*, No. 8 (1981). This article focused on Jilin Li's practical exploration of "using situational teaching and cultivating aesthetic ability". Jilin Li believed that in the teaching of Chinese language, children should be educated in the ideological education while giving them full access to the Chinese language tools. Based on this, she wrote "Ideological Education and Emotional Cultivation in Elementary Reading Teaching", and published in *Education Research*, No. 4, 1982.

In 1987, in the 23rd issue of "Jiangsu Education", the paper "The Exploration Process of Situational Teaching and Its Theoretical Basis" was published. She clearly stated in the article that "situational teaching is to create children's warm emotions and emotions by creating optimized situations, a teaching model that combines activities with cognitive activities." In 2017, Jilin Li was based on his own research on how children learn to write and to read, how children learn mathematics, etc., and wrote an article entitled "Building a Situational Education Children's Learning Paradigm" and published in *China Education News* on November 22, 2017.

Since 1991, Jilin Li has presided over the key topics of the National Education Science "Eighth Five-Year Plan", "Use of Situational Teaching, Comprehensively Improve the Quality of Chinese Teaching and Experiments", and the National Education Science "Ninth Five-Year Plan" key task, "Using Situational Education, Experiments and Research on Promoting the All-round Development of Children's Quality", and National Education Science's "Tenth Five-Year Plan" key project "Development and Research of Situational Curriculum", and National Education Science "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" key project "Children's Situational Learning Research". Jilin Li's research results of these projects have won the National Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research. The monograph "Situational Experiments and Research" won the first prize of the first national outstanding scientific achievement in education, and the monograph "Primary School Chinese Situational Teaching" won the second national education the first prize of the outstanding achievements in scientific research; the monograph "Experiment and Construction of Situational Curriculum for Children" won the first prize of the 4th National Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research, and the study "Learning Science and Children's Situational Learning" won the 5th National First Prize of Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research and First Prize of Outstanding Achievements in the 14th Jiangsu Philosophy and

Social Science. The “Divisional Education Trilogy” won the fifth China Excellent Publication Award.

Since the 1990s, Jilin Li's exploration of situational education has gradually influenced the country. In 1993, Jilin Li's 15 episodes of “Elementary School Chinese Situational Teaching” was filmed by the Ministry of Education and the Central Electronic Education Center and broadcasted throughout the country. In the same year, Jilin Li participated in the “Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the ‘Three Faces’ Comrade Xiaoping Deng held by the China Education Society, and presented the paper “Exploration and Reflection on Situational Education”, which attracted the attention of experts and scholars. In December 1996, the former Central Institute of Educational Science and the Jiangsu Provincial Education Commission jointly organized the “National Situational Teaching – Situational Education Academic Seminar”. In July 1996, Jilin Li went to Hong Kong to participate in the “High-performance Chinese Teaching Seminar” and gave a speech on “Situational Teaching, Effective Ways for Children to Learn Chinese”, which made the Hong Kong education community begin to understand situational teaching. From 1996 to 1998, People's Education opened the “Jilin Li's Teaching Art” column to promote situational teaching to the whole country. In December 1998, Jiangsu Institute of Situational Education was established in Nantong City, and Jilin Li served as the director of the Institute. In 2002, Jilin Li participated in the “Constructivist International Forum” organized by East China Normal University, and presented the paper “Situational Education: Promoting Children-Knowledge-Society Perfect Construction”. From the perspective of the complexity of learning knowledge, the uncertainty of the learning process, the openness of the learning system, and the difficulty of learning to mobilize potential, she elaborated on how to design a happy and efficient learning environment for children. On the basis of the conference papers, she wrote the article “Situational Education: Children - Knowledge - Society”, published in the China Education News (Basic Education Edition) on March 21, 2003. In 2006, People's Education Publishing House published a 3.6 million-word eight-volume book *Jilin Li's Anthology*. The Chinese Education Association, the China Academy of Educational Sciences, the China Education Press, and the People's Education Publishing House jointly held the “Jilin Li Education Thought Symposium - Jilin Li's Anthology” premiere. In 2006 and 2008, the “Course • Textbooks • Teaching Methods” respectively opened up a column of “Jilin Li: An Educator Who Came out of Elementary School Teachers” and a column on “Situational Education Research”. In 2012, the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education, East China Normal University and *Guangming Daily* jointly organized the “Jilin Li Situational Education Thought Seminar”. In 2013, East China Normal University and Jiangsu Academy of Educational Sciences jointly hosted the “35 Years of Reform and Innovation, the 15th Anniversary of Jiangsu Situational Education Research and the Exhibition of Situational Education Achievements”.

In the new century, Jilin Li's research on situational education began to have an impact on the world. In 2008, the “Jilin Li Situational Education International Forum” was held. Jilin Li's main report, “Construction of Chinese Situational Education and Its Unique Advantages”, was highly praised by Chinese and foreign experts. In 2014, the

National Science Foundation (NSF) of the USA, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) jointly organized the “International Conference on Learning Science”. Jilin Li was invited to give a keynote speech at the conference. In 2017, Jilin Li’s monograph “Theory and Application of Children’s Mother Language Situational Learning”, “The Course of Children’s Situational Learning Paradigm Construction”, and “Children’s Situational Learning Curriculum System and Operation” (English version) were published by the *German Springer Publishing Group*. This is a major event in which Jilin Li’s theory of situational education has been spread globally. To this end, China Education International Exchange Association, China Education Science Research Institute, China Education Association, China Education Press, Germany Springer Publishing Group, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education, Nantong Municipal People’s Government deliberately in the working place of Jilin Li – the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School, jointly held the “International Symposium on Chinese Situational Education Children’s Learning Paradigm and Jilin Li’s Children’s Situational Learning Monograph (English Edition)”.

Jilin Li, as an outstanding figure in the education field due to his excellent teaching and research, was elected as the representative of the Seventh National People’s Congress in 1988 and was elected as a member of the Presidium of the General Assembly. In 1993, he was elected as the representative of the Eighth National People’s Congress. Because of its outstanding achievements, she won the first batch of national “May 1st Labor Medals” in 1989, won the National Model Worker and the national “3-8 Red Flag Bearer”, and won the honor of the national outstanding teachers and national outstanding educators. In 2011, Jilin Li as the only elementary school teacher and Xiaoyan Zhou, a tenured professor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Zhanpeng Jin, a professor at Central South University, won the title of National Education and Education. In 2017, Jilin Li was selected as one of the 90 contemporary Chinese educators. In December 2018, Jilin Li was awarded the “2018 China Good Education Candlelight Award” at her age of 80. He was honored as “an influential educator in China’s basic education and a pioneer in China’s education reform.” Jilin Li also serves as the vice president of the China Education Society, a member of the Textbook Review Committee of the Ministry of Education, a member of the National Curriculum Textbook Expert Working Committee, a vice chairman of the National Elementary School Language Research Association, an adjunct professor at Nanjing Normal University, and an adjunct professor at Nantong University, a part-time researcher at the Central Academy of Education, and a part-time researcher at East China Normal University.

## **Jilin Li’s Educational Thoughts**

Every educator’s educational thought has its own characteristics. The characteristic of Jilin Li’s educational thought is that she not only put forward her ideas and correspond-

ing action plans, but also personally practiced and verified her own thoughts. Jilin Li has taught for 60 years and has practiced and studied situational education for 40 years. She constantly explores in educational practice, continuously proposes new theories, and constantly verifies her new theories. From the initial situational teaching, to the situational education and situational education curriculum, to the contextual learning paradigm, it involves teachers' teaching, students' learning, and the content and methods of education. It is a comprehensive educational thought.

## **Situational Teaching**

Jilin Li's situational teaching practice began in 1978. At the beginning, her original intention was to cultivate students' interest and encourage students to love learning and study. In order to cultivate students' interest in learning, she pays particular attention to the class, the fun, and not boring. In the teaching of Chinese pronunciation (Pinyin), in order to avoid monotonous repetition, she used the method of learning ancient poetry to consolidate the syllables, using intuitive teaching aids and movements to help students remember the fonts and learn the ancient poems by means of poetry and painting. Two semesters passed, and she found that there were no extra learning classes, but the correct rate of dictation was 99.8%. Additionally, students also learned 20 ancient poems, 20 children's songs, 9 small stories, and 11 oral essay training in combination with the learning of general textbooks. This kind of teaching encouraged her to embark on the path of situational teaching research.

### **Basic Principles of Situational Teaching**

- (1) Premised on cultivating students' interest in learning. Jilin Li believed that elementary school students (especially the lower graders) cannot use rational knowledge to control their emotions and will. In the process of learning, unintentional attention plays an important role, and interest becomes an internal factor that causes and maintains unintentional attention. If students are interested in learning activities, they can often pay attention for a long time. Therefore, cultivating students' interest and motivating them to learn and study is a prerequisite in elementary school.
- (2) Based on guiding students to accumulate sensory materials. Jilin Li believed that perception is the basis of the development of thinking. Accumulating perceptual materials is the first step in developing students' intelligence. To accumulate perceptual materials, students should be guided to observe them carefully and to arouse their intentional attention by observation to help them form a distinct deep impression. The scene of real life is the most realistic and vivid, and the scenery of nature is more colorful. The teacher combines the teaching content to guide the students to carry out purposeful observation, and inspires the students' imagination and thinking in the observation, which plays an important role in understanding the teaching content and language expression. If teachers often carry out purposeful

and planned observation and guidance, the students' observation will gradually become sharper and their thinking ability will be improved.

- (3) Focus on inspiring students' positive thinking. Jilin Li believed that perception is the emotional stage of cognition, and the real task of cognition is to reach the mind through perceptual consciousness. To this end, the focus of situational teaching should be to inspire students' positive thinking. The thinking of elementary students is gradually developed from concrete to abstract, from imperfect to perfect. Positive thinking that inspires students should also follow this pattern. By creating a situation with the help of students' perceptual experience, on the basis of developing students' image thinking, through the repeated observation and analysis of the teaching situation, the students' logical thinking is developed.
- (4) Train students' language as a means. Jilin Li believed that in the past, the traditional method of reading analysis in Chinese teaching made the text fragmented, undermined the artistic conception and overall beauty of the article, and weakened the appeal of the textbook. She believed that in order to make students learn vivid, fun and happy, it is necessary to create situations according to the textbooks and essays, bring students into the situation, and provide them with a specific and vivid language environment, so that it can be unified of both the language training and intelligence development. Situational teaching can bring students into the situation, prompting them to observe and understand objective things in detail, deeply understand their feelings, and deepen their understanding of the teaching materials. Through the means of pictures, photos, music and literary depiction, the teacher reproduces the context, allowing students to experience the accuracy and vividness of the language; via the demonstration of the teacher-student action, set the context related to the teaching materials, and carry out basic language training. Combining teaching materials and essays, students are directly brought into the real situation of life. Through observation, they obtain rich perceptual materials, restore the context in the text to understand, use and master the texts, and conduct oral and written composition training. After summing up her own multiple use of situational teaching, Jilin Li believed that if situational teaching is to be effective, first, the situation to be created is what students have experienced in life, which makes them feel particularly cordial. Second, to connect the situation to the text language, they have the vocabulary to describe it, and then they can very smoothly and naturally motivate them to use the text language.

## **Basic Method of Situational Teaching**

After a few years of exploration, Jilin Li realized that situational teaching should be a kind of "developmental teaching", which aims to promote the all-round development of students. She believed that contextual teaching based on the dialectical unity of "form" and "idea", "feeling" and "object" is a way to make full use of the image, create a concrete and vivid scene, and learn the emotions of the students, thus guiding them understand and use the language as a whole, which is characterized by the integration of

“words, forms and feelings”. Based on her many years of research, Jilin Li has summarized her own situational teaching methods from the perspective of situational teaching to promote student development:

- (1) In the process of teaching reading, create a situation, combine “speech” and “shape” to carry out segment training of language.
- (2) Through the “observation of situational composition” to guide students to study and observe, let them deepen the experience in the context, and develop association in the context; when writing, they conceive in the context of reappearance, present in the context, promote the feelings of the students and lead to wording.
- (3) Through the six channels of “life display of the situation, physical demonstration of the situation, music rendering of the situation, picture reproduction of the situation, play to understand the situation, language description of the situation”, create contextually related materials, and the aesthetic education of the students is motivated to make them feel beautiful and enter the amazing world.
- (4) Based on the concept of “formal freshness and specificity, practical content, and methodological enlightenment”, to promote further development of students.

Jilin Li believed that the core of situational teaching is to “inspire students’ emotions” and mobilize students’ subjective initiative through “bring into context”. Teachers should unify the knowledge of single word, words and sentences in the teaching of Chinese, and the training of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the context. With the inner feelings and emotions of the students entering the situation, they are tempered by moral quality, aesthetic emotions and willpower. Therefore, it is guaranteed to complete the teaching tasks of “literature” and “morality” in Chinese teaching, and promote the harmonious development of students’ intellectual and non-intelligent factors.

## **Situational Education**

Under the guidance of the former president of East China Normal University, Fonian Liu, and Professor Diankun Du, Jilin Li began to explore the development of situational teaching to situational education on the basis of certain achievements in situational teaching, and formed a systematic thinking of situational education.

### **The Core Elements, Basic Principles, Operational Principles and Basic Strategies of Situational Education**

#### ***The Core Elements of Situational Education are “True, Beauty, Emotion, and Thinking”***

“True” is to give students a real world, let symbol learning and colorful life links. “Beauty” is to bring pleasure to students’ learning, to enable students to obtain the high efficiency of learning, and to promote students’ active and comprehensive development in the immersion. “Emotion” is the driving force for students to generate learning



through edification, and let emotions accompany cognitive activities. "Thinking" is to expand the space of thinking and imagination, and to develop the potential wisdom of students.

### ***Basic Principles of Situational Education***

These principles include inducing initiative, strengthening aesthetics, focusing on creativity, infiltrating education, and running through practice.

### ***The Operational Essentials of Situational Education***

Take "beauty" as the realm, "love" as the link, "children's activities" as the way, and "the surrounding world" as the source.

### ***The Basic Strategy of Situational Education***

The strategies include set children be the first, inspire intelligence with emotion, foster beauty with beauty, combine learning and application, and link to real life.

## **Use Situational Teaching to Promote the Overall Development of Students.**

Jilin Li believed that traditional indoctrinating teaching turns learning into a process of continuous accumulation of knowledge and training memory. The brain function of the mobilized and fully utilized students is only related to the mechanical, logical and emotional part. This will inevitably make students become dull and slow. Obviously, this is incompatible with the promotion of student development. Situational education must always unify education and student development. The overall harmonious situation will bring about the coordinated development of students' knowledge, ability and psychological quality.

When considering the relationship between situational teaching and student development, Jilin Li believed that the core of situational teaching is "inducing students' emotions", and teachers mobilize their subjective initiative by bringing students into context. In the multi-year practice of Chinese teaching in elementary schools, she concluded that uniting the knowledge of single words, words and sentences in the teaching of Chinese, the training of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the context, and relying on the inner feelings and emotions of students entering the situation, so that they can be cultivated by moral quality, aesthetic feelings and will. Effectively guarantee the completion of the teaching tasks of "literature" and "morality" in Chinese teaching, and promote the harmonious development of students' intellectual and non-intellectual factors.

Jilin Li believed that situational teaching needs to involve five aspects in promoting the development of students. (1) It is necessary to cultivate the interest as the

premise and induce initiative, including arousing students' curiosity and curiosity, cultivating students' self-esteem and self-confidence, and cultivating their good study habits. (2) Based on the guidance observation, strengthen the sensibility, including the choice of the image of beauty, gradually increase the difficulty of learning, and broaden the imagination space. (3) It is necessary to cultivate emotions as a motivation and infiltrate education. (4) Focus on development thinking and focus on creativity, including developing the accuracy of children's thinking in the understanding and application of words, guiding children to use rhetorical techniques, enriching the imagination of thinking, strengthening the training of children's texts, and developing the logic of thinking. Develop the creativity of thinking in children's imaginative homework. (5) It is necessary to use language training as a means to practice, including learning to read in reading, learning to write in writing, combining training language with developmental thinking, and gradually increasing creative ingredients and fostering independence from the beginning of imitation.

### **Use Situational Teaching to Carry Out Aesthetic Education**

Jilin Li believed that art is image, beautiful, and affectionate. Education should introduce art into education, use art's intuitive and language portrayal to create a situation, reproduce the context of textbook description, and find ways to conduct aesthetic education in teaching.

- (1) Introducing the situation and perceiving the appearance of beauty. The teacher brings the students into the situation depicted by the pictures and feels that there is movement in the stillness; the teacher brings the students into the situation of life and feels the sound and the color; the teacher brings the students into the imaginary situation and feels visible and audible.
- (2) Analyze the situation and understand the essence of beauty. Teachers should provide conditions for analyzing beauty and understanding beauty, guiding and helping students to analyze and understand beauty; teachers should also give students a ruler to let students learn to analyze and understand beauty in self-practice.
- (3) Reproduce the situation and express the feeling of beauty. Teachers should inspire students to express their desires, teach students how to express beauty, and inspire students to develop a world of beauty.
- (4) Control the situation and induce the aesthetic motivation. The situation created by the teacher and the emotion expressed by the teacher should be true and emotional. Teachers should be enthusiastic, so that students can feel the enthusiasm and warmth in the situation, ignite the spark of wisdom; the aesthetic situation created by teachers should be far-reaching, so that students can develop ideas.

Jilin Li believed that the educational function of "beauty" is all-round, beauty can be stimulating, and beauty can speak, beauty can be tempered, and beauty can be bred. In order to carry out aesthetic education for children, it is necessary to reflect aesthetics from the aspects of teaching contents, teaching methods, teaching language, and teacher manners.

- (1) To show the beauty of teaching content. Both the language subject and the mathematics subject contain aesthetics, and all teachers need to be fully revealed in the teaching to show the students and let the students feel.
- (2) Choose the teaching method of beauty. Through the static beauty of the space of the picture, the dynamic beauty of the time of the music and the dynamics of the drama combined with the beautiful teaching methods, the students can experience the beautiful situation of the content of the textbook and gain the beauty feeling, thus enriching the students' appearance and activating the students' thinking, association, imagination, Emotional activity.
- (3) Use the beautiful teaching language. The aesthetically pleasing language of instruction allows students to feel beautiful, associate beauty, and guide students to pursue beauty, inspiring students to comprehend beauty, and bring them into the realm of beauty.
- (4) The teacher's manners that perform beautifully. Teachers are the wise, demonstrative, respectful, and authoritative in the minds of students. To this end, the image of the teacher should be infiltrated, rejuvenated, and attractive. Students look at the teacher's appearance, listen to the teacher's beautiful language, feel the teacher's beautiful emotions, and will enable students to obtain a distinct, friendly beauty.

### **Use Situational Teaching to Carry Out Ideological and Moral Education**

Jilin Li believed that all moral actions are born with moral emotions. If the education of emotions is neglected, then the ideological education of reading teaching must be an empty concept of preaching and abstraction, which cannot impress the students' mind. On the contrary, it will lead to students' rigid thinking and mental retardation. To this end, the most effective means of school moral education is to arouse the emotional resonance of students.

- (1) Starting from the image of feelings, carrying out ideological and moral education. The textually touching, association-rich, and aesthetically pleasing texts are also vivid and esoteric texts. Teachers can use situational teaching to make students feel like to be on the way, as if to see someone and listen them in the real situation. Therefore, being influenced by subtle influences on thoughts and feelings.
- (2) Inspire the students' emotions with the teacher's true feelings. In the process of letting students feel the image, the teacher's emotion is a very important external condition for the students' inner feelings and emotions. The student's emotions are generated in the process of knowing the object, and the image in the textbook and the teacher's emotion are the objects of the student's understanding. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers must be placed in the situation to stimulate the students' emotions.
- (3) Use noble emotions to guide students to form correct ideas. Ideological and moral education in situational teaching can not only stay in the generation of emotions, but also consciously guide students to form correct concepts on the basis of students' emotions, that is, from "moving them with emotions" to "promoting them

with reason” In the process of stimulating emotions, judge whether it is right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, from moral emotions to moral concepts, and then to moral behaviors.

## **Use Situational Teaching to Develop Students' Creativity**

Jilin Li believed that the cultivation of elementary students' innovation is mainly to cultivate an innovative spirit, innovative desire, and different thinking qualities, so that they can initially experience the joy of innovation.

- (1) Aesthetic education in situational teaching is the soil for cultivating innovation. Jilin Li believed that innovation is related to students' interest in learning, learning attitude, keen observation, diversified thinking quality, and rich spiritual world. Among these factors, it is the student's experience and pursuit of beauty that can drive and adhere. The pleasure of aesthetic feeling affects students' imagination, association, emotion and behavioral movements, which enables students to generate innovative desires and motivations in the process of obtaining aesthetic sense, thus promoting students to form a spiritual world and values that pursue innovation.
- (2) The harmonious teacher-student relationship in situational teaching can stimulate the potential of students' innovation. Jilin Li believes that in today's promotion of innovative education, efforts should be made to establish a friendly teacher-student relationship. Teachers should establish the concept of activating students' creative potential. We must firmly believe that every student with normal brain function has the potential for innovation. We must believe that students' ability to innovate can be cultivated and developed. The expectation of teachers in students in situational education, the true blending of teachers and students, and the cooperation and interaction between students all provide a relaxed and unfettered environment for students' innovative activities, thus enabling students' creative potential to be stimulated.
- (3) Observation and imagination in situational teaching can broaden the space for innovation. Jilin Li believed that cultivating students' creative thinking is to intentionally cultivate the broadness of students' thinking, the fluency of thinking and the originality of thinking. To cultivate students' creative thinking, teachers need to optimize the teaching situations that can encourage students to observe. Guide students to discover in observation, to explore in observation, to imagine in observation, and to express in observation. Teachers should also use the intuition of pictures, music, and performing arts in an optimized situation to give students a clear and direct impression and provide psychological and emotional preparation for students to imagine. When students are full of observation and imagination in situational teaching activities, their innovative thinking space will continue to expand.
- (4) Discipline training in situational teaching lays the foundation for innovation. Jilin Li believed that certain basic knowledge and practical ability are the necessary foundation for innovation. She has always combined the discipline ability training and development thinking in her many years of situational teaching practice. For

example, in the language subject, combining the training of words, cultivating the accuracy of students' thinking; combining the training of rhetorical techniques to enrich the image of students' thinking; through the training of texts, developing the orderliness of students' thinking; through comprehensive language training To cultivate the flexibility and broadness of students' thinking; to develop the creativity and the oppositeness of students' thinking through the practice of imaginative composition. In the mathematics discipline, combined with computational training to cultivate the agility of students' thinking, combined with the understanding of geometric form training to cultivate the image of students' thinking, combined with the calculation of applied questions to cultivate the broadness and logic of students' thinking, combined with the exploration of formula theorem to cultivate the creativity of students' thinking.

## **Build a Situational Education Course**

### **Three Dimensions of the Situational Education Curriculum**

- (1) The first dimension of the situational education curriculum is the student. Students are the starting point and destination of situational education. The ultimate goal of education is to enable all students to achieve comprehensive and full development. The development of students takes place in certain situations, and the situation is an indispensable resource for students to build knowledge. It is also an irreplaceable realistic scene for students to use experience and knowledge. In situational education, students are the first, the real subject of learning. Without the construction activities of the subject, there is no possibility of knowledge generation, and even less the development of students.
- (2) The second dimension of the situational education curriculum is knowledge. Jilin Li believed that knowledge is interdependent with the situation. Any knowledge is generated in a certain situation and will eventually return to the situation. The situational curriculum combines the teacher's language description with the intuitive means of drawing, music, performance, multimedia, etc. to create a situation, and knowledge is embedded in the situation. A true, authentic situation that gives knowledge roots, connections, and backgrounds. The knowledge acquired by students in such situations is not a single knowledge point and an isolated symbol, but a harmonious, comprehensive, vivid, aesthetic-containing, and culture-rich one.
- (3) The third dimension of the situational education curriculum is society. Jilin Li believed that society is an irreplaceable situation for students' knowledge construction, the most extensive classroom for students' learning activities, and the most vivid experimental field for students' comprehensive practice. If the knowledge that students learn is far from the society, and if the learning activities are isolated

from social life, it is impossible to truly understand the essence of knowledge, and learning will lose its true meaning.

Students actively develop in the context, knowledge is generated and constructed in the context, and social life reveals its value and significance in the context. As a result, the separation and opposition between students and knowledge and society, and between knowledge and society disappears, and the curriculum of the subject knowledge center no longer exists.

## **Four Areas of the Situational Education Curriculum**

### **Field Situation Curriculum**

Get out of the closed classroom and let students learn to communicate with their lives. Develop field education courses, link classroom learning with nature, combine symbolic learning with life, and gradually cultivate students' emotions towards nature, cherish life, pay attention to the environment, and promote the use of knowledge in practice. Through the development of field education courses, it not only provides inexhaustible scenes and rich resources for students' cognitive activities, language activities, thinking activities, emotional activities and will cultivation. It has built a broader platform for new types of comprehensive school activities and research learning.

### **Kindergarten and Elementary School Curriculum**

Take the first step in the happy learning of children in elementary school. Open a transitional situational curriculum with elementary schools in kindergartens. Follow the principle of combining indoor short-term and outdoor observation, reduce the slope, and carefully design the curriculum so that the learning content and learning form are close to the kindergarten and higher than the kindergarten teaching requirements.

### **Thematic Large Unit Comprehensive Curriculum**

Meet the needs of students' diverse development. Jilin Li realized that the progressive integration of the curriculum is the direction of the development of the situational education curriculum. Therefore, in the lower grades of elementary school, she optimized the structure of teaching content, uses the interaction between Chinese teaching elements, and adopted the strategy of "literacy, reading, and writing" to start at the same time, forming a multi-directional structure, reciprocating, spiraling course sequence. In the middle and upper grades of elementary school, according to the content of Chinese textbooks, "tools" and "humanities", "reading" and "writing", "training language" and "development thinking", "in-class" and "out-of-class" are combined to carry out "four combined thematic unit education". The teaching content focuses on the theme, classify similar content in the unit, and carry out concentrated training with the concept of mutual connection to help students to bypass the class and master the learning law. The

principle of “thematic large-unit comprehensive curriculum” is based on moral education, with language learning as the leader, all subjects blending, and the combination of internal and external sources. At the operational level, the various disciplines and activities are horizontally communicated with distinct themes, which run through the semester-level stage education center, complementing and promoting each other under the same theme, so that the educational content as a whole acts on children’s perception and mind.

**Core Area Discipline Situation Course:** The combination of subject courses and student activities. By rethinking the successful experience of classroom teaching in various situations of situational education for many years, Jilin Li proposed combining the subject curriculum with the student activities in the optimized situation, so that the students can act under the influence of suggestion, empathy, role and psychological field. With the emotions actively involved in the education and teaching process, active activities, cognitive activities, language activities, thinking activities, physical activities such as touch, imitation, and operation. Combining the content of the subject curriculum with the student activities will also make learning a subjective requirement for students. Students’ active learning will bring joy to success, resulting in fun of exploration, fun of aesthetics, fun of understanding, fun of creation and positivity.

## **Situational Learning Paradigm**

In the process of exploring the situational learning of students, Jilin Li learned from the “artistic conception” of Chinese national culture and refined it, summarizing the four key elements of “truth, beauty, affection and thinking” needed for children’s education. It is a common feature of children to think that beauty, affection, activity, and wisdom are hidden. In the process of situational education, seeking truth, seeking beauty, calling for emotion and inspiring can generate a kind of internal driving force to meet children’s learning needs. After 40 years of exploration, Jilin Li unveiled the secrets of children’s learning and built a paradigm of situational education.

## **The Basic Law of the Situational Learning Paradigm**

- (1) The paradigm of learning writing. Teachers should combine observation and situational language training, combine observation and situational thinking development, and combine observation with situational imagination to deepen students’ feelings about the picture in the situation and arouse the desire expressed by students. So, it is necessary to develop and design essay styles such as “observing the situation to speak, writing words”, “observing situational composition” and “imaginative composition”, so that the students’ work is sentimental and willing to express. This paradigm of learning and writing is also in line with the idea of “moving things with emotions and resigning with emotions” in the “artistic conception”.

- (2) The paradigm of learning reading. The process of students learning language and writing is the process of bringing the world to the front of them, and it is also the process of letting students enter the world and enter social life. Each text in the reading textbook almost shows a specific situation. The so-called “The author has content in mind” and the situational teaching in the reading class reproduces the situation described by the textbook itself. Teaching students to learn to read is to bring the students to the situation in the author’s situation. When the students enter the situation described in the works, they will inevitably have a sense of intimacy, and will also combine the language symbols in the text with the situation. The abstract language also enters the students’ consciousness with the image and emotional color.
- (3) The paradigm of learning mathematics. Mathematics comes from life. Teachers should guide students to discover mathematics in life, combine mathematics with life, and let students learn mathematics and use mathematics in real or simulated life situations. It is necessary to create a situation of inquiry, let students accompany happy emotions, use abstract images in the context to carry out abstract thinking activities, and combine image thinking with logical thinking to reflect that mathematics is the subject of “thinking gymnastics”. Combine life presentation, physical demonstration and artistic means to reproduce the situation in which humans invented mathematical formulas, and to understand the cultural and aesthetic sensibility of mathematics. The combination of mathematics knowledge acquisition, mathematic skill and mathematic culture and mathematic aesthetics in mathematics education.
- (4) The principle of active learning for students in situational education. First, the emotion-driven principle. In the process of situational education, students can show a positive attitude, and then form a relatively stable emotional attitude, and encourage students to actively participate in learning activities. Second, the tendency principle. Students enter the situation created by teachers, produce unconscious psychological inclinations, stimulate strong emotions, and they cannot help getting themselves into learning activities. Third, the principle of role transformation. In the specific context of optimization, it contains the intent of the educator. It causes the students to enter the role, experience the role, and evaluate the psychological course. This process can be summarized as “entering the situation - acting as a role - understanding the role - experiencing the role - expressing the role - the same as the role - generating epiphany.” Through this process, students are transformed from a passive accepting position to an active participation. Fourth, the principle of psychological field integration. The optimized situation makes the student’s learning space no longer a living space in a natural state, but a learning situation with rich educational connotations, beauty, wisdom and children’s tastes, that is, a psychological field. This psychological field can encourage students to learn through the whole body and mind, making the ideal realm of students’ self-learning and self-education become a reality.



## **Create the Best Learning Environment**

- (1) Broaden the educational space. Create an open space for situational learning, allowing students to enter the real world and choose a space that is aesthetically pleasing and suitable for their growth.
- (2) Shorten the psychological distance. Through the creation of the “friendly, helpful, happy” teacher-student interpersonal situation and the “beauty, interest, wisdom” learning situation, shorten the psychological distance between students and teachers, peers, teaching content.
- (3) Guarantee the position of the subject. Situational learning should conform to the emotional drive of students and guide students to engage in a series of academic activities, so that students become the real learning subject driven by emotion and role consciousness.
- (4) Emphasize innovation practice. Students should be guided to innovate in contextual learning and achieve the greatest possible development.

## **The Operational Strategy of the Context Learning Paradigm**

- (1) Learning in the situation. In the context of students, the knowledge of learning is no longer an isolated, abstract symbol, but a scene, an event, a role, and a plot.
- (2) Doing in the situation. In the process of learning, students should get the most harmonious and coordinated excitement of their vision, hearing, touch, and limbs, and their whole body and mind are invested.
- (3) Thinking in the situation. Students should be guided to learn with imagination, through comparison, preference, classification, and consciously unfolding associations and imaginations.
- (4) Edification in the situation. Students should be guided to cultivate in the situational learning, to feel the beauty, to understand the beauty, to express the beauty and to create the beauty in the environment.

## **Commentary Perspective**

### **An Original Educational Theorist Who Came out of Educational Practice**

Jilin Li was an educator and thinker who has grown up from the front line of teaching. Each of her research results came from her hands-on practice and experimentation, which has had an important impact on teaching practice. In the course of the research, she often personally led the students to the observation site, hand-made teaching aids, and personally organized the students to carry out demonstration activities. Jilin Li be-

lieved that the teacher is not only a practitioner, but also a thinker. In the process of exploring the situational education, she went from the teaching scenes and cases she had personally experienced. She believed that from perceptual to rational, from individual to general, looking for similar things for abstraction and generalization. In the process of practice and thinking, Jilin Li also conducted extensive reading and learning, absorbed theories of traditional Chinese culture, modern psychology, brain science, and learning science, and integrated the theory of learning with her own practice to generate her own theory of situational education, and then put the formation of situational education theory into practice.

In this process of rethinking exploration, Jilin Li has formed a unique research strategy combining “thinking, learning, acting, and writing”. In order to record her own gains in practice, sort out thoughts, enlightenment, and write down the trajectory of thoughts, she almost gave up all the rest time, wrote hundreds of papers, and published 13 books. Professor Jie Lu of Nanjing Normal University said: “A person has been pegged to one problem for decades to study and find the answer is such a rare spirit to be praised”. Professor Mingyuan Gu, former president of the China Education Association, spoke highly of the “Jilin Li Education Thought Symposium and the Jilin Li Collection”, “We have finally seen our own native educators. Jilin Li is not only created in educational miracles in practice, but also cultivated a large number of high-quality talents. In the process of education, she diligently pondered and worked hard to explore and created a set of situational education ideology, enriching the treasure house of China’s educational theory.

## **It Has Solved the Worldwide Problem of the Unity of Cognition and Emotion**

The value of Jilin Li’s discussion and research on situational education is that it not only points out the drawbacks of traditional education, but also provides solutions. There are three logical sequences for the organization of school curricula: the first is knowledge-centered, the second is social-centered, and the third is child-centered. The traditional Chinese curriculum organization is mainly built around subject knowledge. Its greatest advantage is the systematicization of knowledge learning, but its inherent deficiency is the removal of contextualization. This way of removing the contextualized curriculum for students, they do not know where the knowledge comes from, why they should learn this knowledge, and therefore are generally not interested in what they have learned. Jilin Li discovered this problem. She first tried to create a meaningful situation in the language teaching of the lower grades of primary school, linking the surrounding world and real life with classroom teaching, stimulating students’ willingness to take the initiative to learn, and cultivating students’ imagination and creativity. She encouraged students to integrate their brain, body and mind into learning activities, which effectively promotes the overall development of students’ aesthetic, intellectual, emotional and moral, and makes “cognition and emotion” unified.

## A Model for the Organic Integration of Chinese and Western Cultures

At the beginning of the research, Jilin Li's situational teaching learned about the English situational teaching method through the introduction of his middle school English teacher. She found that through the creation of situations in English teaching, students can learn vocabulary and perform sentence-style training, which makes students learn vivid and very easy. She transplanted the situational teaching method in English into the primary school Chinese teaching, which formed the prototype of the situational teaching method. However, Jilin Li also realized that Western educational theories were nurtured in the Western cultural background. If you want to take root in the Chinese cultural background, you need to find the theoretical source from Chinese traditional culture. She absorbed the ancient literary classics "Carving the Dragon with the Heart of Culture" and "The Words of the World" about "the movement of the color of the object, so that the heart is also shaken", "the emotion follows the movement of the object, and the words are motivated by emotion". Combining the emphasis on "emotion" in traditional Chinese education with the emphasis on "situation" in Western education, it extracts the four elements of situational education such as "truth, beauty, affection, and thinking", and summarized the four characteristics of "reality, emotion, truthfulness, and reason." She combines the "artistic conception" of ancient China with the aesthetics and psychology of the West, and puts forward the five major operational principles as the "beauty" as the realm, the "thinking" as the core, the "love" as the link, the "children's activity" as the pathway, and the "surrounding world" as the source. It is this perfect combination of Chinese and Western culture that makes Jilin Li creatively construct a situational education theory and operating system with worldwide influence.■

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*Received: 21 July 2019*

*Revised: 29 July 2019*

*Accepted: 10 August 2019*



# Classroom Teaching Strategy under the Background of Situational Teaching: The Application of Jilin Li's Situational Teaching in Basic English Teaching

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*Abstract: Jilin Li's concept of situational teaching creatively combines students' activities in both emotion and cognition, greatly mobilizes students' enthusiasm for learning, and explores an effective path for students' happy and efficient learning. Based on Li's theory of situational teaching, we created a real language teaching environment as much as possible allowing students to understand the information and language materials expressed by the situation in the process of experiencing the situation, focusing on how to study effectively in the English class. The situational teaching method is used to stimulate students' interest in English learning and to cultivate students' independent creativity, so that they can master the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and finally form comprehensive language application ability.*

*Sci Insigt Edu Front 2019; 3(2):297-310.*

*Doi: 10.15354/sief.19.ar092*

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**Keywords:** Jilin Li; Situational Teaching; English Teaching; Student Development

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**Conflict of Interests:** None.

**S**INCE 1978, Chinese elementary school teacher Jilin Li has devoted herself to the study of situational teaching. In the past four decades, she has continuously summarized and finally formed a situational teaching system in teaching practice. Situational teaching is a teaching mode that makes full use of the image, creates typical scenes, stimulates students' learning emotions, and combines cognitive activities with emotional activities (Li, 2007). Situational teaching started with the reform of Chinese teaching and explores the teaching mode that combines the activities of both cognition and emotion. Her teaching and educational exploration has achieved great success. The educational process and the vivid experience of the teaching process and the ideas she embodied are precisely the responses to the confusion and crisis in contemporary education. It possesses distinct characteristics of the times (Zhu, 1999). At present, this system has not only been widely used by Chinese educators, but has also received attention internationally.

Jilin Li considered that situational teaching should pursue “formality”, “sentimentality”, “intentionality”, and “rationality”; it emphasizes “beauty” as the boundary, “emotion” as the link, “thinking” as the core, “children’s activity” as the path, and “the surrounding world” as the source (Li, 2003). Jilin Li’s teaching system provides a theoretical and practical basis for Chinese teachers to carry out the situational teaching. We hereby started with English class practice and explored the application of situational teaching in basic English teaching through a large sum of relevant literatures.

## **Research Status of Situational Teaching**

The concept of situational teaching created by Jilin Li was originally from Chinese language, but it did not stop over there. Instead, it raised the discipline-specific rules of children’s learning explored in the practice of Chinese contextual teaching to be a general law applicable to other subjects, and proposed the “five elements” of children’s development: 1) taking the premise of cultivating interest, inducing initiative; 2) based on guiding observation, strengthening sensibility; 3) taking development thinking as the core and focusing on creativity; 4) stimulating emotion as motivation and infiltrating education; 5) using training ability as a means of practicality. Continuously, she led teachers of each subject to combine the “five elements” with the characteristics of the subject and children, and extracted individual principles of the situational teaching of each subject (Li, 2013).

## **Research Status in Europe and America**

As an effective educational method, situational teaching has always been the focus of scholars. In the Europe and the United States, educators have carried out researches on situational teaching from both theoretical and practical aspects. The earliest application of situational teaching to practice was Socrates. Socrates used the problem situation when teaching. He advocated that students should think in the process of answering

questions instead of giving the answers directly. His teaching method was called “Childbirth Manner”. He once said, “I don’t teach by knowledge, but by like childbirth to invoke knowledge happen” (Teng, 2008). In 1632, the Czech educator Comenius published *The Great Teaching Theory*. In the book, Comenius wrote that “everything starts from the senses” (Fu, 1979). From this we can see that Comenius had already realized that after the concrete visualization of abstract knowledge, it can stimulate students’ interest in learning and thinking, and contribute to the formation of knowledge.

For situational teaching, American educator Dewey also made a positive exploration. He pointed out that “we advocate that there must be a practical scene as the beginning stage of thinking” (Wang & Zhao, 1981). Dewey believed that the creation of teaching situations plays an important role in the education process, and he developed the theory of situational teaching further. The Soviet educator Suhomlinski paid great attention to the role of nature’s situational education. He wrote in his book *Dedicating the Whole Mind to Children*, “I strive to do so, throughout the childhood, to make the surrounding world and nature always provide the nourishment for students’ ideology with vivid images, pictures, concepts and impressions...” (Tang, 1981). In his teaching process, he strives to allow students to achieve comprehensive and healthy development while letting them be close to the nature. In the 1950s, under the efforts of Olki Lozhanov, situational teaching entered a stage of great development. His pioneer teaching method was more humanized than the traditional teaching method. He pointed out that “for the learning process, there is not only the brain, but also the body; not only the left hemisphere of the brain, but also the right hemisphere; not only the conscious activities and the unconscious ones” (Liu, 1990). In the implied teaching method, it is to use certain situations to influence students, so that the potential of students can be maximized, and their ability can be developed.

## Research Status in China

Research on situational teaching in China was no that late than that of the Europe and the United States did. As early as more than 2,000 years ago, Chinese educators have begun to explore and study situational teaching. Ancient Chinese educators attached great importance to the impact of the environment on people’s learning. Mencius once suggested that if you wanted a person from the Tribal State of Chu to be proficient in using the language of the neighbor state Qi, the best way was to let the person from Chu live in Qi for several years. This emphasizes the impact of the environment on people, and indicated that environment is an important part of the situational teaching. Educator Confucius in China has also put forward his own ideas for situational teaching, including “Opportunity Teaching” and “Inspiration Teaching”, which emphasized that a reasonable situation should be created at the right time to inspire students to learn effectively.

Jilin Li composed the first theoretical work, *Situational Experiments and Research*, on the situational teaching in contemporary China, which opened up a new situation in Chinese situational teaching. At the same time, she also published *Operation*



and *Cases of Situational Courses* and *Jilin Li and Situational Teaching* that provide theoretical and practical guidance for Chinese scholars. In her point of view, situational teaching has four characteristics: the image is real, the emotion is deep, the meaning is profound and the reasoning and meaning are in it. Based on Li's theory, Xiaoman Zhu put forward the soul of the situational teaching model to pursue the coordination of children's cognitive and emotional activities. It has great generality for elementary education, and is also suitable for higher education in enlightening adult education" (Zhu, 1999).

Situational education is based on emotion. "Love" is the essence of life, and "love" is also the true nature of life. As a perceptual existence of children, teachers are emotionally alive, and children's education is the first and foremost. Teacher's emotions interact with children's demands, and form a poetic and affectionate environment. This is exactly the very aesthetic situation the situational education wants to realize. In Li's book *Psalm of Situational Education*, she wrote (Li, 2004),

*I watch the mountains and see the waters  
Elementary school is the most beautiful  
Children are the most beloved  
From then on, I like a farmer  
Faithfully plowing the field  
Constantly working  
The land is replenished  
And harvest continuously  
The earth-smelling atmosphere  
The aroma of rice  
Seems to have a clear river flowing  
I enjoy the idyllic purity and sweetness*

In the language of poetry, she told her love for children, talked about her deep affection for education, and expressed her joyful feeling.

From the perspective of the occurrence of learning, the meaning of sentimental situation is the ultimate reality and fundamental of life. This "love", which is the foundation, reality and return of life, bears the heavy responsibility of saving people from the machine philosophy of ignoring real value and the animal philosophy of anti-rationality, and is responsible for bringing people back to the reality from the distant shore. This is responsible for re-establishing order for the contradictory modern people and re-building their homeland. Li mentioned that, "Innovation is the spark of the most vivid and spiritual wisdom of human life. Even in an instant, it is brilliant; even if it is shallow, but valuable. It is related to students' learning interest and attitude, keen observation, different thinking quality, and rich spiritual world" (Li, 2001).

## **Create a Situation to Improve the Path of Classroom Teaching Efficiency**

The continuous development of the “new curriculum” reform puts forward new requirements for middle school English teaching. The reform emphasizes the student-centered, student-learning ability as the core, and focuses on the learning process and learning curriculum to truly realize the education be “focusing on people”. It has criticized the traditional education, but in some points it was overestimated and excessively pursuing the innovation of teaching mode, and ignored the essence of education. “Knowledge-instilling class is criticized, but it instead becomes questioning-class, acting-class, and even exaggerating-class; and the independent, cooperative exploration becomes vulgarization, flamboyant, and empty in contents” (Zhou et al, 2018).

Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the effectiveness of teaching in practice, adopt appropriate methods according to specific contents. In order to stimulate students’ interest in learning, and help them actively participate in classroom teaching to meet their own development, and then improve the classroom teaching efficiency (Zhang, 2019). Therefore, the emergence of situational teaching provides teachers with an effective path for improving the ability of comprehensive language use.

## **Taking the Initiative as the Premise of Cultivating Interest**

Learning interest is a psychological tendency for students to learn selectively and happily to approach or study certain things. Educator Confucius once said that “the person who knows is not as good as the one who is good, but the one who is good is not as good as the one who is happy”. As educator Xingzhi Tao emphasized that “the combination of knowledge and practice”, which all reflect the importance of interest to learning (Lu, 2015).

## **Create Language Situations to Stimulate Students’ Interest in Learning**

In traditional English teaching, “writing” is over-emphasized with less attention paid on “speaking”, which makes students’ high scores but low ability. The embarrassing situation of “Dumb English” is frequent enough for teachers to reflect the phenomenon. Therefore, teachers should provide students with the opportunity to “speak” through creating a linguistic situation, and stimulate students’ interest in learning, and improve their spoken ability (Yu & Zhang, 2019). For example, in the teaching of the seventh grade of the text book *Unit 10. Where Did You Go On Vacation?*, teachers can create interactive situations to shape the context of the English language. First of all, teachers can ask students questions such as “Where did you go on vacation?”, ask students questions randomly, encourage them to answer questions in English and give a timely feed-

back and comments on their responses. So a simple free talk formed with students. In addition, teachers can also let students use the group as a unit to tell each other their experiences of their vacations in English. Given the group communication can easily be used by students in an open way and then enhance their confidence in English communication. In this way, via the learning topics to communicate each other and shaping the active language situation can effectively stimulate students' interest in learning.

## **Use Body Language to Drive Students to Learn Enthusiastically**

American psychologists have proved with experiments that a valid message equals to 7% of text plus 38% of vocal and 55% of facial expressions. Based on this, the body language of teachers in English instruction much easier to enable students to concentrate on the language and promote the learning efficacy. For example, when teaching a single word, the teacher can use the meaning of the word to show in an expressive body language, so that the student can understand and memorize the word easily. Like the word "amaze", the teacher can make a surprised facial expression, and even in an exaggerated expression to make it easier for students to remember the word. On this basis, we can classify the emotional words, and let students perform in groups to help them learn English in a situational event.

## **Strengthening Susceptibility Based on Guided Observation**

Studies have shown that in people's cognitive activities, perception and experience are much more superior to understanding and memory. Because sentiment not only enables students to acquire knowledge, but also is accompanied by a profound emotional experience and the enlightenment of wisdom, so it is more rewarding and functions as a leap in awareness activities. The most striking feature of situational teaching is to emphasize the inner experience and feelings of the students themselves with certain forms of expression, such as music, pictures, and language.

## **Use Pictures to Enhance the Feelings of the Situation**

In the creation of situational context, teachers can use some auxiliary tools, such as multimedia, pictures, videos, music, etc., to make the situation more realistic and attractive. For instance, when instructing the four seasons, due to the specificity of the contents, the teacher can select some representative pictures that can highlight all seasons to attract students, and simultaneously use multimedia to directly display to give an intuitively feel of the situation. When showing up, the teacher needs to take the opportunity to interact with the students. Teacher asks: What season is this? (Teacher shows picture of winter skiing, and let guess the season through the picture), and then students quickly answer *Winter*. Therefore, teachers use this method to instruct students the

summer, autumn, and spring, and enhance the learning effect of vocabulary. Through the pictures, students directly feel the four seasons, and have a certain understanding of each season. Meanwhile, teachers then guide students to tell the activities at different seasons and activate the classroom teaching. In such kind of teaching, teachers use pictures to attract students' attention, and then ask corresponding problems, and guide students to have intuitive feelings about the seasons by scenery and activities in pictures and videos (Yang, 2017).

## **Use Music to Create the Right Reading Atmosphere**

Music is the second language of human beings. Different music can lead people into different emotional worlds. In the English teaching process, teachers can also use music skillfully to create a different atmosphere. During the extracurricular reading, teachers can play different types of music according to the selected article, and convert the boring text contents into a music atmosphere that can be directly felt, which enables the students to intuitively feel the real atmosphere of the story and stimulates students' interest in reading.

## **Imitate Life and Strengthen Students' Feeling**

Knowledge comes from life. When teaching knowledge that is closely related to life, we can return knowledge back to life through creating a vivid situation to let students get more realistic and strong feelings of the situation. For example, in the teaching of middle school English vocabulary about positions, the teacher can place objects in different positions and plan a peek-a-boo game. If the teacher asks where book is, students should answer based on their observations. In particular, when there are similar position nouns (such as on, over, and above), the teacher can intuitively let students feel the meaning of them (Huang, 2015).

## **Focusing on Development Thinking and Creativity**

The stage of middle school is an essential period of the formation of students' thinking mode. How to inspire students to think independently and cultivate students' independent exploration and innovation is a critical topic. Therefore, we must change the traditional teaching mode with knowledge instillation as the core and teacher-centered mode, and create a new type of teaching relationship using situational teaching mode to stimulate students' self-directed learning, and cultivate their innovative and explorative spirit (Gan, 2017). In *The Analects of Confucius*, Confucius indicated that "Learning without thinking will be confused, and thinking without learning will be doubtful." emphasizes the importance of individual independent thinking and learning. Students' initiative to acquire knowledge will have a multiplier effect compared to passive acquisition.

## Create a Dialogue Situation to Stimulate Students to Think

Taking the *How Often Do You Exercise?* as an example, teachers can start the situational teaching mode using a dialogue, such as:

A: *How often do you exercise?*

B: *Let me see. I don't do much exercise. How often do you exercise?*

A: *I do exercise every day.*

This type of dialogue allows students to clearly understand the theme of the text and the usage of specific sentences, and communicate freely can also invoke thinking that is conducive to the formation of English thinking (Tan, 2018).

## Establish an Activity Situation and Cultivate Students' Self-Creativity

In teaching, teachers can use students' current English level and curiosity, and create an activity situation that is in line with their psychological development. Under the premise of making full use of the existing knowledge, help students to explore independently and cultivate their ability creativity.

In the *Ninth Grade English, Unit 15: We're Trying To Save The Manatees!*, the teacher can organize students to talk around the topic *Whether To Build Zoos*. First, the teacher sets up supporters and opponents based on whether the zoo should be established, and the students are free to choose the debate position. The supporting side expressed their view on "Zoos are terrible places", while the opponents express their ideas based on "Zoos are important places". Through the debate of the two viewpoints, the teacher guides the students to further understand the context of the text. Then, during the debate, the teacher consciously guides the students to learn the knowledge and abilities, such as the skill required for the debate, "Try to speak loudly and clearly", "Try to make it convincing", so that the students gradually strengthen the debate skill in the activity. For another example, the basic debating sentences like "I think that ...", "I believe that ...", "I feel that ...", "I agree/disagree with you", "Could you tell me ...?", "Why do you think ...?", "Do you think ...?", etc. After the final debate, the teacher can extend the activity to the after-school and write a dialogue with humans on his favorite little animals. Let students write down the knowledge they gained in the debate, and further enhance the students' sense of caring for animals and the responsibility to protect the environment.

A debate contest in English, from pre-event preparation to the competition and then to the final summarization, allow students to fully understand the relevant knowledge of animal protection in China and other countries in the world in the process of preparing the debate materials, and exercise positive thinking during the debate. It will enable students to deepen their sense of responsibility for animal protection and

environmental protection in the summary of activities, “Let students consolidate textbook knowledge, and promote knowledge directly into competence.” (Li, 2012)

## **Inspiring Emotions as a Starting Point and Infiltrating into Educational Traits**

Lenin (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) said, “If a person has no feelings, it is never possible for the person to pursue the truth.” “People-oriented” is the educational idea of emotional teaching and the core concept of situational teaching. From the perspective of cognitive psychology, English teaching requires teachers to pay attention to emotional factors in teaching, make the teaching objectives more perfect in emotional transmission, and improve teaching quality, so as to promote students’ abilities of emotional cognition and English learning to develop in an all-round way.

### **Use Pictures to Infiltrate Teaching in Emotions**

When teaching middle school English, using pictures to create situations can make students have an intuitive feeling and enhance students’ emotional awareness. For example, in teaching the *Unit 4 How Do You Get To School?* from the eighth grade middle English, teachers can use the means of display and guidance for emotional education. The content of this module is related to the transportations such as car, bus, metro, taxi, bike, etc. that help students to go to school, so teachers have carried out emotional education and teaching activities in traffic safety. In order to make students aware of the importance of obeying traffic rules, teachers select some common pictures of traffic accident from the internet, such as accidents caused by intentional passing the red lights, motorcycles colliding with trucks, etc., and show them using multimedia. In this way, students can understand the importance of traffic safety and remind themselves to obey the traffic rules, thus achieving the goal of emotional education.

### **Use Fable Stories to Convey Spiritual Power in Comprehension**

Teaching is both a cognitive and an emotional process. The use of fable stories in the teaching allows students to establish a correct outlook on life and values while gaining insight. For example, the story entitled *Where Can You Find the Riches?* tells that two farmers looking for diamonds. The first farmer had just a few acres of diamonds, but he did not know how to find out. He heard the fake news, sold his land and went to other places to find diamonds. In the end, he did not find anything and desperately committed suicide by plunging himself into the river. Whereas the other farmer accidentally possessed the most productive ore in the entire African continent after he noticed the sparkling nuggets. The story is not long, but the teacher can mark the harder words in Chinese, so that the students can understand better. In addition, teachers can retell the story

after reading by students. By summarizing the story into a short paragraph, it can not only deepen the understanding, but also exercise the language expression. Then, the teacher can ask the students questions about the two farmers' characteristics. Finally, lead the students to understand the last paragraph together and sublimate the theme of the story, let them realize that "Each of us is, at this moment, standing in the middle of our own land of diamonds". Each of us has a huge treasure in it. As long as we have the confidence and patience to explore ourselves, we will one day be able to find all the wealth that will allow us to succeed. The final sublimation allows students to understand the importance of the self-awareness and self-discovery, while motivating students to be confident and delivering the correct spiritual power (Online English Listening Room, 2010).

It can be seen that creating a teaching scenario that can stimulate the emotional resonance of the students and achieve emotional penetration. In daily teaching, teachers can also explain and develop their English learning ability, and help students establish correct values and cultivate them into a modern youth that meets the needs of the times (Yang, 2017).

## **Using the Ability of Training Disciplines as a Means of Practicality**

As a language subject, English mainly develops students' ability to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, in the process of English teaching, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of these four parts, set up situations in the class, and exercise and cultivate students' abilities in the context.

## **Use Game Interaction to Develop Students' Practical Ability**

Compared to other methods, game interaction is the most interesting way for students. The application of game activities in English teaching is extremely beneficial to the active classroom atmosphere and enriches the teaching methods. The setting of the game situation must be closely combined with the content of the class; otherwise the efficiency of the teaching activity will be reduced. Therefore, teachers should set up a game with strong operability to enrich the classroom teaching, and stimulate the students' enthusiasm for learning, so as to cultivate students' practical ability better (Sun, 2018). For example, in the *Seventh Grade, Unit 7 How Much Are These Socks?* When you teach, you can create a trading situation simulation game, a group of students play the seller, and another group of students play the buyer (after the end of the round, the student roles are exchanged), let them conduct inquiry and trading. This not only allows students to deepen their understanding of the text and sentence patterns in the communication, but also enables them to enhance the comprehensive application in the interaction.

## **Create Colorful Activities to Enhance Students' Practical Ability**

In addition to situational teaching of textbook contents, English teaching requires more colorful extracurricular activities. For example, Teaching is full of fun through English language games, reading sessions, speech contests, dictation competitions, essay competitions, and listening competitions. Let students improve their interest in English learning and ability to use English by self-editing English essays, creating English tabloids and greeting cards, and even designing English personal homepages. In the PEP version of the English textbook, it not only introduces the traditional culture of China, but also pays attention to the festivals, etiquette and culture of European and American countries. Such a blend of Chinese and foreign cultures gives teachers a good opportunity for educational activities. Teachers can let students learn and introduce the small and short drama about cultural conflicts on the basis of further understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures after class. For example, Chinese people participate in the sitcoms of European and American friends. The story is written by the students themselves, and the characters can be set by the teacher or freely selected by the students. Such a sitcom not only allows students to further understand the cultural differences between China and foreign countries, but also enhances the students' comprehensive practical ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **The Enlightenment of Jilin Li's Situational Teaching**

Situational teaching has distinct characteristics and a strong sense of the times. On the one hand, it reflects the new achievements and new ideas of China's elementary and middle education reform in the new era; on the other hand, it shows the new trend of China's education development in the 21st century.

Situational teaching pursues the coordinated development of both cognitive and emotional activities, and achieves the purpose of promoting students' emotional development. There are several ways to achieve this goal. First, human emotional development is not a spontaneous process of physiological phenomena. Although the "focus" of emotional mobilization is on the amygdala of the limbic system of the human brain, the level of emotional quality is inseparable from the frontal lobes and their cognitive processing. Through thinking operations, the concept of words is used to find appropriate expression of emotional energy, that is, controlled expression, as thus regulating emotional activities to reflect it as a social-cultural-psychological combination. Jilin Li has summed up the relationship between them as "objects stimulate emotions, emotions stimulate words, and words promote thinking", and "thinking" deepens the understanding of "objects". We understand that "thinking" here has a certain emotional power, and is the emotion accompanied by "sentimental thinking". At this stage, emotional development and cognitive progression are inextricably linked. Second, Human emotion development has different signs from cognitive development. The core symbol is the level



of experience - the scope, content and feeling of experience. If formalism masters a large amount of knowledge, it will inevitably cause people's feelings to shrink. However, situational teaching uses its vivid means to create aesthetically pleasing situations, thereby taking advantage of the strong appeal of the situation and preserving the susceptibility of students (Zhu, 1999).

The ideological connotation of situational teaching is rich and profound, and the operation method is concrete and effective. It has many achievements in the development of teaching reform and situational curriculum. Generally speaking, the characteristics of the era implied by this theoretical system are concentrated in three aspects.

### **Paying Attention to Emotional Factors and Realizing the Organic Integration of Educational Goals through “Cultivating People with Emotions”**

One of the outstanding characteristics and important contributions of situational teaching is that it re-emphasizes the long-neglected emotional factors in the proper position of education, and integrates morality, intelligence and beauty into the situation, thus realizing a real education in the teaching process. The organic integration of the “Goal of Human Education” enables students to learn to be a human being while seeking knowledge, and to form a healthy and rich spiritual world.

### **Emphasizing Active Development, Creating a Realistic Way for Students to Live and Actively Develop through Situational Creation**

The basic focus of situational teaching is the harmony and active development of students' mind and body. The “situation” of situational teaching is essentially an artificially optimized environment, which is an environment that encourages students to move in. Situational teaching strives to place people's active participation and active development at the core. Through the students' perception, operation, experience, inquiry and discovery, they can fully and actively develop.

### **Based on the Local, Paying Attention to Practice, Enriching the Educational Theory and Practice with Chinese Characteristics**

Situational teaching is not an exotic product, but a product of Jilin Li's practical exploration in the past 30 years. This achievement has a strong local flavor and national characteristics. At the same time, this achievement is highly practical and targeted. It is gradually formed and developed in the long-term teaching practice by Jilin Li. She based her teaching theory on the practice of teaching reform with full enthusiasm and sincerity, through experiencing and understanding of the true meaning of education, and deepening rational recognition. The contribution of situational teaching is multifaceted. Not only does the achievement itself effectively enrich the educational theory and prac-

tice with Chinese characteristics, but also the development process of it also gives a lot of enlightenment to educational researchers (Tian, 1997).

As a great child educator who came out of the ranks of teachers, Jilin Li, as Hegel said, is precisely a “this one”, a typical figure who possesses the commanding heights of history. Jilin Li has won numerous awards in her life. The rarest thing is to win the first prize of the *National Basic Education Teaching Achievement Award*. This is the highest award in China’s basic education. General Secretary Jinping Xi personally presented her in the Great Hall of the People. Jilin Li has written numerous books. As a world-renowned publishing house specializing in academic publishing, the German Springer Publishing House purchased the copyright of her work and published it worldwide. There is still no second among all elementary and middle school teachers to date.■

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*Received: 10 July 2019*

*Revised: 29 July 2019*

*Accepted: 07 August 2019*

# Reforming School-Based Curriculum and Cultivating Students' Core Literacy: Taking Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School as an Example

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*Abstract: The exploration of school-based curriculum with the core literacy concept is a new trend in the world's education reform and development. Starting from the background of core literacy school-based curriculum construction, combined with the school-running characteristics and concepts of Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School, we carried out the practical exploration of school-based curriculum, determined the curriculum objectives, and constructed a school-based curriculum system generated by core literacy. Through the reform of classroom teaching mode, the construction of learning groups, and the transformation of student learning methods, the core literacy of students has been cultivated.*

*Sci Insig Edu Front 2019; 3(2):311-321.*

*Doi: 10.15354/sief.19.ar099*

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**Keywords:** *Core Literacy; School-Based Curriculum; Student Development*

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**Conflict of Interests:** None.

**I**N September 2016, China announced the *China Student Development Core Literacy*, which aroused widespread public attention. For the first time, this document has carried out systematic and authoritative discussion on what kind of talents to be trained and how to cultivate them from the perspective of “core literacy”. The promulgation of this document has critical guiding significance for the current reform and development of China’s basic education.

As a highly dynamic and innovative school, Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School has long been promoting quality education with people-oriented and student-based focuses, and to comprehensively develop and cultivate students’ abilities. What kind of people is cultivated and how are they cultivated? What are the connotations and standards for cultivating student literacy? How to develop students’ ability to learn for life? These have always been the core concerns in the school management process.

After the announcement of the core literacy of student development, the school pays more attention to the new round of school-based curriculum construction and teaching reform led by core literacy, and finds the carrier, method and strength of core literacy in the Experimental School of Chengdu Qizhong, forming a school-based distinctive curriculum system (**Table 1**). We have accumulated the experience and path of cultivating students’ core literacy through the reform of school-based curriculum in the context of China’s national education, and promoted the professional growth of teachers and the overall development of students. Such reform and exploration is not only important for the development of the school, but also a microcosm of China’s current education reform, with important theoretical and practical value.

## **The Background of the Core Literacy School-Based Curriculum Construction**

### **Time Background**

In the context of globalization, informatization and the era of knowledge economy, UNESCO published the report “Education: Wealth Contains It”, and the European Union (EU) has developed the Core Literacy of Lifelong Learning: European Reference Architecture. The International Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has carried out a research project on the definition and selection of literacy (European Commission, 2012). The United States proposed that learning and innovation literacy, information, media and technical literacy, and life and professionalism are key literacy for students to prepare for the 21st century. Many countries, such as Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Poland, have also regarded core literacy as an important source of educational goals and have planned them into an important curriculum framework for learning to promote curriculum reform (Cai, 2015).

In China, the Ministry of Education issued the “Opinions on comprehensively deepening the reform of curriculum reform and establishing the fundamental tasks of ethics and educating people” in 2014, proposing that “the Ministry of Education will

**Table 1. School-Based Curriculum System of Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School.**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Course Core</b>	<b>Specific Implementation</b>
Etiquette course	Taking human education as the core	Use morning meetings or class meetings to educate civilized etiquette and character development; open etiquette, physical and international understanding education courses.
Life course	Focusing on cultivating independent living ability	Study life skills (sleeping indoors, carry out dumplings, Yuanxiao and other activities); experience the fun of planting and breeding (planting vegetables on campus plantations; feeding small goldfish, silkworms, and entering the red scarf farm to take care of the white rabbits); Carry out labor education.
Artistic course	Focus on cultivating individuality	According to different age groups, different art courses are offered: practicing martial arts and xylophone in the first and second grades; adding calligraphy courses in the third and fourth grades, electing tie dyes and African drums; learning clarinet in the fifth and sixth grades, electing golf, football, basketball Volleyball; ceramics from the first to the sixth grade. And a variety of sunny sports and cultural festivals; student art exhibitions.
Activity course	Focus on the activity practice experience	The first, second and third grades read classical poetry performances; fourth, fifth and sixth grade study tours; school-wide science and technology activities monthly series activities: ship model, model aircraft, car model, Rubik's cube competition; technology caravan into campus activities.
Learning course	Focusing on enhancing academic literacy	In addition to the guidance of teachers' classroom teaching, they also carry out related academic competitions to promote the improvement of students' academic literacy, such as hard pen calligraphy competition; mathematics week activities (bead mental arithmetic competition, "digital Huarongdao" competition, three-dimensional graphic group activities); English speaking contest; scientific knowledge contest. The third and fourth grade elective STEAM courses.
Vitality course	Focus on life vitality education	Swimming courses in the second to fourth grades; moral education series activities (firefighting, earthquake drills; safety lectures on campus, transportation, etc.; military training; small cadre training, etc.).
Local course	Inheriting regional culture as the core	In the fourth grade, the root-catching fish show was held; in the fifth grade, he entered the top ten celebrity activities in Sichuan province.

organize research and put forward the core literacy system for students in each semester, and clarify that students should have The necessary character and key ability to meet the needs of lifelong development and social development”, the report on “China Student Development Core Literacy” was released in September 2016. Core literacy is centered on cultivating “all-round development people”. It is divided into three aspects:

cultural foundation, independent development and social participation. It comprehensively includes six aspects: humanistic heritage, scientific spirit, learning to learn, healthy living, responsibility, and practice innovation (Beijing Normal University Research Group, 2016).

The core literacy of Chinese students' development is rooted in the soil of Chinese excellent traditional culture. From the experience and deep reflection of the basic education curriculum reform, it draws rich nutrition, gains important enlightenment, and closely follows the reality of Chinese students' development. It starts from the characteristics and needs to shape the soul of Chinese education.

## **School Reform Background**

“Setting the development of both teachers and students as the main body, so that help each student achieve goals, jointly lead the values, and support high-quality courses” is the core concept of the development of Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School. We pay attention to the construction of integrated courses and special courses. On the basis of inheriting the existing experience of running schools, it not only realizes the educational goals of the national curriculum, but also fully demonstrates the characteristics of the curriculum implementation of the school itself.

Based on the new situation, the state proposes to cultivate students' core literacy, which has more advanced guiding significance for the reform of the curriculum system. The school transforms the unified requirements of the core literacy of Chinese students into the concrete content of the school-based exploration and education process of the Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School. With the core purpose of cultivating students' core literacy, the school develops curriculum resources suitable for the students of the school.

## **Exploration of School-based Curriculum for the Cultivation of Students' Core Literacy**

### **The Goal of School-Based Curriculum Construction**

**Focus on the core literacy of students and realize the effective integration of school-based curriculum construction and people education.**

We continue to explore and practice on the basis of clear direction. Under the premise of fully using the courses required by the state, the school takes the core literacy of students as the basis and starting point for the development of school-based curriculum, and offers special school-based curriculum to enrich students' cultural vision and real-

ize effective integration of specific educational goals and tasks at all grades and disciplines with school-based curriculum construction.

## **Combine the school-running philosophy to cultivate modern people with Chinese soul and international competitiveness.**

With reference to the core literacy of Chinese students, according to the age characteristics of the students and the school culture, the students' training objectives are refined as "cultivating modern people with Chinese soul and international competitiveness". Through the setting of school-based curriculum, it is necessary to cultivate students with the spirit of unity, peace-loving, diligence and courage, self-improvement, and the spirit of progress with times, pioneering and enterprising, seeking truth and being pragmatic, and courageously fighting for the times. This kind of spirit is a gathering of strength, is to revitalize and enhance the soul of the school, that is, we must cultivate students with spirits of social responsibility, citizen consciousness, national identity, international understanding, humanistic heritage, scientific spirit, aesthetic taste, physical and mental health, and practical innovation.

The school's training objectives clearly stipulate that students should have the world's vision, that is, they should have the following three qualities, 1) Global vision: absorb the excellent cultural achievements of all nations in the world with an open mind. 2) Global skills: learn to master international communication and language skills, and integrate with internationalization in terms of perspective, language, culture, knowledge, ability, etc. 3) Global quality standards: modern students with international competitiveness must also develop innovative models to enable them to solve problems, obtain information, communicate, strengthen teamwork cooperation, and self-plan and management.

## **Content System Based on Core Literacy School-Based Curriculum**

Based on the training objectives, the school constructs a school-based curriculum system based on core literacy and focuses on the cultivation of students' individuality. The relevant contents of the three-level courses of national, local and school-based curriculum will be integrated and streamlined, the basic courses required by the state will be fully implemented, and the curriculum reform will be vigorously carried out to meet the core literacy of students to form seven school-based curriculum systems. This truly realizes that "students have characteristics, school has vitality, and education has special features."

We implement reforms of different curriculums, such as through the "localization of the national curriculum", to construct high-quality classroom learning mode; through the "classification of the school curriculum", to establish a distinctive school-based curriculum and promote the growth of students' individuality; through the "clas-



sification of practical activities” to create a quality school life. Therefore, the mainstream values of “advocating talents, promoting individuality, enhancing self-confidence, and pursuing success” were realized to provide a broader space for students’ individual and superior ability development.

## **Classroom Teaching Reform for the Cultivation of Students’ Core Literacy**

### **Establish a “Student-Oriented” Classroom Teaching Concept**

In the school’s education and development experience, students are the main participants, and the value orientation of students’ spiritual pursuit and personality development is their development direction. According to the school’s mainstream values as “advocating talent, enhancing self-confidence, promoting individuality, and pursuing success”, the educational activities carried out by the school are unique and colorful. For instance, the military training, the parents Open House, the sunshine sports culture festival, the reading month, the walking inspiration between teachers and students, and “I am the champion”, etc., and strive to provide student opportunities to build appropriate personality growth and comprehensive development. These educational activities are splendid, and the fruits are flourishing, showing the profound foundation of quality education.

The school advocates and practices “cultivating and forming one or two specialties and expertise” to train students in all aspects of physical and mental health, level of consciousness, personality quality, specialty expertise, and academic performance. Cultivate students to participate, be brave in competition, be fully displayed, passionate performance, show performance, be high spirits, self-confidence, and generosity. Through subject learning competitions, cadre campaigns, moderator selection, artistic talents, event organization, community activities, practical planning; “being the first”, “I am the champion”, subject competition, speech contest, military training, graduation and other ceremonies (entrance ceremony, etc.), life skills competitions, pottery art, art and technology festivals, sports meets, welcome parties, and commendation activities are the carriers to cultivate the value orientation and core accomplishment of students’ independent development.

### **Constructing a “Vibrant Growth” Classroom Teaching Model**

The structure of the course affects the quality of classroom teaching, and the quality of classroom teaching affects the quality of student accomplishment. On the basis of per-

fecting the school-based curriculum system, the school advocates “energy classroom” and focuses on the “growth learning attitude” of the classroom to cultivate students’ core literacy. The school practices the classroom teaching mode of “vigorous growth” by polishing various types of courses such as qualified courses, demonstration classes, and observation classes. This kind of classroom is the main front for implementing quality education, forming students’ personality and developing students’ core literacy.

The learning mode of “vigorous growth” classroom advocates that students combine learning knowledge with practical operation, and obtain knowledge as a carrier to develop “learning power” and “creativity”. This teaching model includes the following aspects: vigor self-study questioning to cultivate students’ ability to “focus on learning”; discussion and comprehension to cultivate students’ ability to learn to solve problems effectively; display and sharing to train students’ abilities of expression, thinking and speech, and systemic thinking, and thus cultivating students’ leadership; testing and consolidating to give students a happy time of harvest, which helps them improve their happiness; evaluation and promotion, to achieve evaluation, promote learning level, and cultivate their self-confidence.

The “vigorous growth” classroom has established a new way of classroom learning. The quality, ability, talents and academics of the students have been comprehensively and effectively cultivated and improved. Individuals of different ages have developed vividly, energetically and fully. Every aspect of the “vigorous growth” classroom carries the responsibility of cultivating students’ core literacy.

## **Building Learning Groups**

Establishing a learning group helps to develop students’ core literacy. The build-up of the learning group gives opportunity to everyone including teachers and students, and realizes a state that everyone is happy to participate, everyone can perform their duties, and everyone can interact. The quality of students is cultivated in the process of classroom learning, so as to realize the practical ability and innovative ability to solve problems in daily learning activities.

The changes in the organizational structure of students in the classroom, the changes in the way of teaching and learning, and the changes in the evaluation of classroom teaching effectively promote the active participation of all students in classroom learning activities, so that students are brave enough to undertake their tasks and responsibilities. Reasonably build class learning groups, fully mobilize the initiative, enthusiasm, persistence, cooperation and strong learning ability and collective learning, and enhance the sense of responsibility and the spirit of innovation, thus forming an organization that mobilizes and recognizes students themselves.

## **Conduct Theme Education and Theme Activities**

The school carries out five “learning” series of education: learn to respect, learn to be grateful, learn to cherish, learn to cooperate, and learn to obey. At the same time, the school sponsored a series of theme activities: subject (learning) activities, talent show activities, team training activities, development training, and social practice activities. Through these activities, students are trained to be patient, proficient in skills, focus on accumulation, understanding limitations, adequate preparation, and attention to detail, calmness, independence, courage, state, and frustration.

Broaden the path and innovate the model of moral education, and establish multi-faceted, diversified and multi-field moral education activities. Combining the different ages, physical and mental characteristics, knowledge level and the development of morality of elementary and middle school students, closely related to the study and life practice of students of different grades, determine the fulcrum of moral education in different grades, and concentrate on the systematic education of moral education. We have a theme every month, and we have activities every week to implement an activity course centered on the activity experience (**Table 2**).

## **Preliminary Results of School-Based Curriculum Exploration**

According to the core literacy of students’ development, combined with the actual situation of the school, the development of school-based curriculum, constructing a school-based curriculum system suitable for the development of students’ core literacy, and creating opportunities for students’ development through and through, has achieved initial achievements.

## **Cultivate Interest in Learning and Improve Student Academic Achievement**

The school builds an open learning space based on core-based school-based curriculum, focusing on interactive and immersive teaching. Students start from interest, “learning in playing” and “learning in doing”. Everyone is their own master. Thinking, learning, and enjoying the happiness of learning improve their academic performance invisibly. Taking mathematics teaching as an example, the fifth-grade students’ hand-painted mind maps, they seriously think about and carefully layout, effectively combing a certain knowledge point, forming a knowledge framework, and using it more freely, and displayed as an obvious improvement in academic performance of relevant knowledge.

## **Develop a Variety of Abilities and Cultivate Students’ Core Literacy**

**Table 2. Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School Theme Activities.**

Month	Theme	Main Activities
September	Thanksgiving education	“Teacher’s Day” celebrations; “ Mid-Autumn Festival “ thoughts and activities; Parents’ Open Day on September 30 (opening ceremony for the first-year enrollment, opening of the class, opening of the class, opening of the work, opening of the parent’s meeting, etc., parents visiting the school and attending classes, exchanges, etc.)
October	Patriotic love school education	I am adding color to the five-star red flag, striving to bend over the seven real people, and caring for the campus environment;
November	Talent education	Carry out the “I am the champion” student personality talent contest; I am the speaker; carry out activities such as the Sunshine Sports Culture Festival.
December	Character Education	Carry out character education activities such as learning to be grateful, learning to cherish, learning to take responsibility, learning to be tolerant, and learning to cooperate.

Our school has a variety of school-based curriculum; students actively participate, experience in the experience, feel in the experience, enhance in the perception, and develop in the promotion. When more than 2,000 students in the elementary school learn ceramic art, students are interested and creative through kneading, splicing and shaping. The large group gymnastics performance at the opening ceremony of the Sunshine Sports Culture Festival, all students came on the scene, and exercised their ability to cooperate, coordinate, aesthetic and interact. The “Book Aroma Campus” speech contest, the ability of students to express, regulate, communicate and listen has been cultivated. Fire safety drills help students improve their self-rescue ability, making them more cherished. This series is based on a school-based curriculum that enhances students’ core literacy, allowing students to forge core literacy in their experience – to benefit their physical and mental health, to cultivate aesthetic appeal, and to improve Practice and innovation capabilities.

## **Focus on Curriculum Development and Promote Teacher Professional Growth**

In the school-based curriculum construction led by core literacy, teachers continue to study the students themselves, explore the existing resources, and effectively combine regional characteristics and superior culture to develop school-based curriculum suitable for the students of the school, which enriches the curriculum resources of the school. It strengthens the cultural heritage of students, helps students to develop personally, and promotes the professional development of teachers. For example, the art teacher inherits

the ancient Chinese traditional skills, sets up a tie-dye school-based curriculum, sets up a “Light-Picking Staining Room” studio, uses a simple tool, a simple method of bundling, but interprets thousands of changes in tie-dyeing skills, which thereby cultivates students’ unlimited imagination and creativity. Teachers think, teach and reflect in the whole process, while their teaching ability is improved, the ability to write school-based textbooks, and the ability to develop and research school-based curriculum has also been greatly improved.

Chengdu Qizhong Experimental School adheres to the aim of promoting the development of students, actively explores the core literacy school-based curriculum, strives to find the core of literacy, and trains students to form the necessary character and key ability to meet the needs of personal lifelong development and social development, and eventually trains students to be “take the world road with a Chinese heart”. ■

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*Received: 10 June 2019*

*Revised: 28 July 2019*

*Accepted: 12 August 2019*



# How to Cultivate Students' Core Literacy in the Unit Introduction Course? Take Middle School English as an Example

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*Abstract: Cultivating students' core literacy is an important mission of contemporary education. Teachers should fully understand the core literacy and infiltrate the core literacy of English subjects into daily classroom teaching. Comic Strip & Welcome to the Unit is a unit introduction course, which plays a key role in the teaching of English texts. However, in daily teaching, there are problems of patterning and surface layering. We will discuss how to cultivate students' core literacy in the middle school English unit introduction course. Based on the analysis of excellent class cases, we will propose corresponding teaching strategies.*

*Sci Insigt Edu Front 2019; 3(2):323-330.*

*Doi: 10.15354/sief.19.ar102*

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**Keywords:** *Core Literacy; Unit Introduction Course; Teaching Strategy; Middle School English*

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**Conflict of Interests:** *None.*



**T**HE Ministry of Education of China put forward the concept of “core literacy” in the “Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform and Implementing the Fundamental Tasks of Establishing Morality and Educating People” in 2014. In September 2016, the “China Student Development Core Literacy” was promulgated, in which a systematic and authoritative discussion on what kind of people should be cultivated and how to train people was made. In English teaching, teachers should combine the instrumentality and humanity of English subjects to cultivate students’ core literacy of English subjects (Cheng & Zhao, 2016), and lay a solid foundation for students’ lifelong development.

Introduction is a way for teachers to guide students into learning behavior quickly before starting new teaching contents (Feng & Ge, 2008). A good unit introduction course can guide students to understand the central topic of the unit and stimulate students’ interest, thus laying the foundation for the whole unit learning. *Comic Strip & Welcome to the Unit* as a unit introduction class, mainly through the interesting dialogue between Hobo and Eddie in the Comic Strip section, and then through the simple exercises in the Welcome to the Unit section and the characters in the book to let students learn about the central topic and core grammar knowledge of this module.

However, in daily teaching, the introduction process has not been well valued, and it is often perfunctory with a few minutes of “reading” and “speaking”. Such views and teaching methods cannot invoke students to be interested in the topic, and cannot effectively introduce the whole unit, and cannot reach the purpose of cultivating students’ core literacy.

## **The Basic Content of the Core Literacy of English Subjects**

In combination with the practical needs of the English course for basic education in China, the core literacy of English can be summarized into four aspects: language ability, cultural character, thinking quality and learning ability (Cheng & Zhao, 2016). Language ability mainly refers to the ability to understand and express by language in social context (Cheng & Zhao, 2016). In addition to basic listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, it also includes the ability to communicate with others. Cultural character refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and the recognition of excellent culture. It is the cultural awareness, humanistic cultivation and behavioral orientation of students in the context of globalization (Zhang, 2019). The quality of thinking is an indicator that distinguishes one’s thinking and evens the level of intelligence and level, including profundity, flexibility, creativity, criticality and agility (Chen, 2019). Learning ability refers to students actively using and actively adapting English learning strategies, broadening English learning channels, and improving the awareness and ability of English learning efficiency.

## **Frequently Asked Questions in the Middle School English Unit Introduction Course**

At this stage, the research on core literacy majorly focuses on reading teaching, because English reading plays a key role in improving students' core literacy, especially language ability, cultural character, thinking quality and learning ability (Wang, 2017). The content of the conversation in the unit introduction also belongs to the reading, so the introduction course plays an essential role in cultivating the core literacy. However, in the daily teaching of middle school English, the unit introduction has the following common problems:

- (1) Classroom teaching is too modeled. The *Comic Strip* section only allows students to take a look and play. The *Welcome to the Unit* section only allows students to complete questions and imitate conversations.
- (2) The teacher did not have an in-depth interpretation of the teaching materials. The classroom questions lacked the thinking depth and the questions were too simple.
- (3) The classroom pays too much attention to the explanation of words and grammar, but ignores the cultivation of students' cultural character and learning ability.

The above problems reflect that the focus of middle school English is mostly on language learning, but not on the development of students' literacy (Lu, 2015).

## **Teaching Strategy and Operation Cases of Middle School English Unit Introduction Course**

### **Set Up an English Learning Situation**

Language comes from life, and language is used in real life situations. In order to make students feel the sense of reality, reality and demand for learning and using English, teachers should create situations that are close to their life experience (Wang, 2016).

The *Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standard (2011 Edition)* advocates language learning and usage in corresponding context. In the teaching of the unit introduction, the whole class should have a main line to create a learning situation, and then design a series of tasks around the situation, so as to achieve the final teaching goal, that is, "a main line, a series of tasks, and a goal."

#### **Case 1**

Taking the teaching of *7B Unit 8 Pets* as an example, the introduction course of this unit is mainly about different kinds of pets and let students talk about their favorite pets and reasons.

According to the content of the textbook, the teacher created the situation of participating in the pet club, and designed the three links as know about pets, why we like pets, and be a good master. In the part of know about pets, teach different types of

pets, such as goldfish, mouse, and parrot, etc. In the second part, why do we like pets? Based on the dialogue in the book, organize students to discuss their favorite pets and reasons. In the last part, according to the story of Hobo and Eddie, the question of *Is Eddie a good master?* is given to guide students to think about how to be a good master, to stimulate the emotional experience of the students, and to change students' thinking and promote individual students.

In the process of teaching, teachers purposely create specific situations, let students learn new words, practice dialogues in real situations, and stimulate students' emotional experience.

## **The Blending of Chinese and Foreign Cultures**

The ultimate goal of cultural character in core literacy is to cultivate people with a global vision and a feeling of home nation, culture and social responsibility (Gao, 2017). Cultural knowledge is the basis for shaping cultural character. In teaching, teachers can integrate Chinese and foreign cultures, such as Chinese and Western cultural differences, British and American traditional culture and so on.

### **Case 2**

Take *7A Unit 5 Let's Celebrate* as an example. The introduction course of this unit is mainly to introduce traditional festivals at home and abroad.

The teacher first introduces traditional Chinese holiday customs through pictures, such as the watch fireworks, get red packets, eat dumplings, and visit relatives and so on. In addition, the wonderful Western festivals should also be integrated into the classroom, such as the traditional activities of Halloween pumpkin lanterns, dress up as a ghost, play trick or treat, and Thanksgiving family reunion to eat turkey. Through the blending of these Chinese and foreign cultures, it not only stimulates students' interest, but also makes students recognize the cultural differences between different countries and enables students to have an international perspective.

The textbook contains a lot of Chinese and foreign cultural knowledge, such as *7B Unit 1* introduces famous countries and their capitals; *8B Unit 4* explains famous Chinese and foreign books. We should start with the textbooks, find cultural information, infiltrate into the teaching, and broaden the horizons of students. In addition, the development of cultural experience between Chinese and foreign schools can also promote the formation of cultural character.

## **Broaden Thinking Space**

The quality of thinking in the four aspects of English core literacy is relatively stable. The thinking quality is not formed within a day, but it requires gradual guidance and penetration through daily teaching. More ideal middle school English classes should allow students to think constantly than that as a seemingly lively class. The questions in

the classroom should not only the closed questions like “Yes” or “No” answers, but should overcome the students’ thinking obstacles and broaden their thinking space.

### Case 3

Take *8B Unit 8 A Green World* as an example. This unit is about green living. The teacher creates a situation with questions like: What is a green life? How to live a green life? Why do we live a green life? In the section of “How to live a green life?”, Hobo said “Trees are good for us.” In the process of teaching, the teacher continued to ask “Why are trees good for us?”, which let the student think in different ways. From the perspective of thinking, there is no fixed answer, students can speak freely and broaden the spectrum of thinking, and the teachers are also very pleased to get the students’ wonderful answers: keep the air clean, reduce dust, and keep soil in place and so on. After understanding a lot of green lifestyles, then the students start to think about the meaning of green life. This training students’ thinking quality helps students develop their thinking ability.

At the end of this lesson, the instructor inspires students to review the connotation of green life according to **Figure 1**, so that students can resonate emotionally, and then let students begin to think about what is green life, and correspond to each other. The students also said “A green life is a balance between development and environment, a balance between cities and forests and other answers”.

To cultivate students’ thinking quality, first of all, teachers should have a thorough understanding of the text. Secondly, they should cultivate students’ self-confidence in the classroom; discover the bright points in the students’ thinking, and give encouragement in time, not because they are different from their own presets. Students are interrupted and students are encouraged to express themselves in the English class.

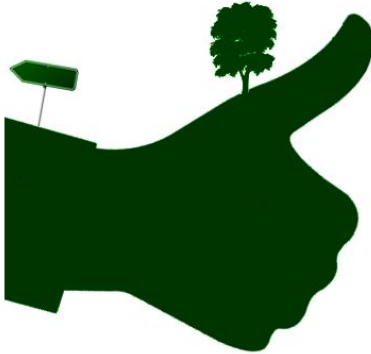
## Advocate Self-Directed Learning

English learning ability includes not only learning methods and strategies, but also understanding and attitudes. In addition to the traditional instillation teaching mode, we need to adopt rich and innovative teaching methods to achieve better teaching results in the daily teaching.

### Case 4

Taking *7B Unit 8 Pets* as an example, in the final stage, four students form a group (each responsible for leader, recorder, reporter, time-keeper) to complete the task of *Part A Pet’s Self-Statement* in **Figure 2**. Through the group learning model, the time is returned to the students, the student’s classroom subject status is strengthened, the students are exchanged and discussed in the group, and their English thinking is activated. Through the form of peer learning and promotion, the enthusiasm and efficiency of learning has been significantly improved. In addition to the group learning mode, “Mr.

Figure 1. Illustration of A Green World Teaching.



**A Green Life**



**Green Energy**



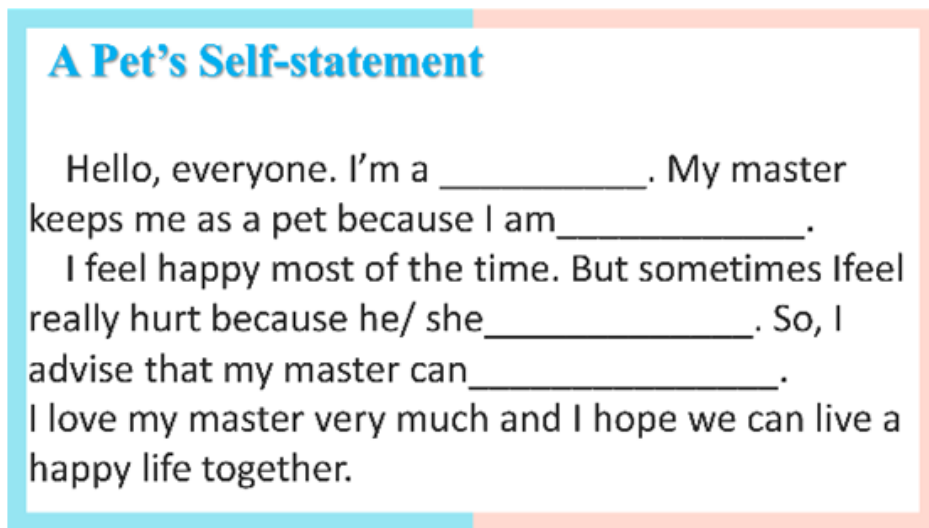
**Natural Resources**

**A Green World is  
A Balance between  
\_\_\_ and \_\_\_**



Master Mode” is also a method that can be tried. If the teaching content is relatively simple, students can come to the lecture. Students are more willing to learn from each other than to listen to the teacher. In this way, the students in the lectures are carefully prepared for the lesson, and the knowledge is digested in the course of preparing lessons. The cultivation of students’ core literacy is not something that can be done independently in a certain class or at a certain stage. This requires teachers to always cultivate the core literacy of students in the teaching, and to regard the “all-round development” as the core of training. In order to realize the effective implementation of the unit introduction course, it is necessary to use the core literacy as a guide to determine clear teaching

Figure 2. Illustration of A Pet's Self-Statement Teaching.

The illustration is a rectangular box with a light blue border on the left and top, and a light orange border on the right and bottom. Inside the box, the title "A Pet's Self-statement" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the title, there are three paragraphs of text in a black, sans-serif font. The first paragraph is a greeting and a statement about being a pet. The second paragraph describes feelings of happiness and sometimes being hurt, followed by a suggestion for the master. The third paragraph expresses love for the master and a hope for a happy life together. All text in the paragraphs has blank lines for student input.

**A Pet's Self-statement**

Hello, everyone. I'm a \_\_\_\_\_. My master keeps me as a pet because I am\_\_\_\_\_.

I feel happy most of the time. But sometimes I feel really hurt because he/ she\_\_\_\_\_. So, I advise that my master can\_\_\_\_\_.

I love my master very much and I hope we can live a happy life together.

objectives, create a situation close to real life, and design a task that can broaden students' thinking and integrate certain Chinese and foreign cultures. Advocate students to learn independently, give full play to their initiative and imagination, enable students to actively integrate and fully enjoy the whole class, and truly realize the cultivation of students' core literacy of English subjects.■

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*Received: 06 July 2019*

*Revised: 18 July 2019*

*Accepted: 15 August 2019*

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# Science Insights Education Frontiers

Vol. 3, No. 2, 2019

*pISSN: 2644-058X*

*eISSN: 2578-9813*

*DOI: 10.15354/sief*

**Science Insights Education Frontiers**

**Vol.3, No. 2, 2019**

**Insights Publisher**