

Exploration of the Cultural Connotation of “Traditional Festivals” Eco-Curriculum in Primary Schools

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Abstract: Chinese traditional festivals with rich historical and cultural connotations fully reflect Chinese children’s national cultural emotions and values. It is of great significance to explore the cultural connotations behind traditional festivals in primary school’s civics and political curriculum, and to cultivate primary school students’ traditional cultural identity and increase their cultural self-confidence and patriotism through multi-channel and multi-form innovative educational strategies and curriculum design.

Keywords: Traditional festivals eco-curriculum; Chinese excellent traditional culture; Educational strategy; Cultural connotation; National self-confidence

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1. Introduction

Chinese traditional festivals are the representatives of Chinese excellent traditional culture and highlight the rich connotations of Chinese culture. Schools should actively develop traditional festival eco-curriculum through diversified practices, integrate the excellent traditional culture into the civics and political education ^[1], combine with the school situation, and carry out the theme activities of traditional festival eco-curriculum through all-round, all-mobilization, and multi-channel methods, so as to let the students fully understand the cultural connotation embedded in traditional festivals ^[2], and enable them to know and understand the excellent traditional Chinese culture, enhancing their sense of national pride and self-confidence.

2. Creating special activities to implement festival leadership

The unique charm of Chinese traditional festivals is the unique charm of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. As the main position of education, schools should make good use of these festivals and dig deeper into their cultural connotations.

2.1. Taking Chinese traditional festivals as the carrier, digging deeper into “festivals” and “festival culture”

Starting from “festivals,” and utilizing “traditional culture” as the main content, we need to understand the historical and cultural heritage and understand the meaning of education behind the festival. For example, by utilizing the theme activities of “Our Festival” to promote excellent Chinese traditional culture, during the winter vacation, we will rely on traditional festivals such as Spring Festival and Lantern Festival to carry out the “Dragon Moves into the Future” ecological series of courses. In the “Strong Flavor of the Chinese Dragon” section, students are guided to engage in festive cultural activities such as paper cutting, making lanterns, writing Spring Festival couplets, hanging “Fu” characters, shopping for New Year goods, and family riddle contests. Through these activities, they will discover “dragon” elements around them, learn about “dragon culture,” and experience the joy of traditional festivals in conjunction with the Spring Festival and Lantern Festival.

2.2. Designing appropriate activities according to the age characteristics of students to infiltrate traditional cultural knowledge

For example, in the Qingming Festival-themed ecological curriculum “Send Qingming, Carry on the Tradition, Recite the Classics,” according to the age characteristics of students, students are led to deepen their understanding of the traditional culture of the Qingming Festival through practical experience in the form of themed class meetings, Qingming studies, handcrafts, and recitation of the classics. Theme class teachers tell students the heroic stories of revolutionary heroes and martyrs, and recite the classics, art class leads students to make small white flowers, and the civics class leads students to visit the Martyrs’ Mausoleum for the “Remember the Martyrs and Honor the Heroes and Strive to be a Good Teenager of the Times” Qingming Study. It makes students realize that the Qingming Festival is a traditional festival for remembering martyrs and giving thanks to ancestors, stimulates patriotic feelings, and presents a comprehensive eco-curriculum rich in Chinese excellent traditional culture.

2.3. Building a bridge for home-school-society co-education and utilizing parents and social educational resources

Home, school, and community tripartite linkage create a good atmosphere, so that students can be immersed in traditional culture in the ecological program of practical activities^[4], while harvesting a wealth of practical experience in society. In the “Dragon Boat Festival” themed ecological class, a community event titled “Zongqing Dragon Boat Festival, Full of Love for the Elderly” is organized. During this event, students interact with elderly community members, allowing them to appreciate the traditional virtues of respecting and honoring the elderly. Through hands-on activities such as making, cooking, delivering, and tasting Zongzi (a traditional Dragon Boat Festival food), students gain a deeper understanding of the festival and develop a love for its culture. For the “Mid-Autumn Festival,” a family-school interactive course is designed. Using a Q&A format, students learned about the festival’s background through conversations with their family members. They also record scenes of their family celebrating the festival together, enabling them to personally experience the significance and atmosphere of “reunion” and feel the joy of the Mid-Autumn Festival.

2.4. Integration of disciplines, enrichment of teaching content, penetration of Chinese excellent traditional culture

We can utilize the main classroom platform to learn through practice, develop through learning, and innovate through development. The school incorporates excellent traditional Chinese culture into the overall planning of school education and teaching, combining the inheritance of traditional Chinese culture with the development

goals of the national foundational curriculum. Teachers are actively encouraged to integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture organically into their daily teaching of various subjects. Subject teachers explore the cultural content and elements of Chinese culture within the teaching materials and, based on the characteristics of different learning stages, conduct holiday practice activities and learning activities. For example, Chinese language teachers organize a series of class activities based on the cultural background of traditional Chinese festivals for second-grade students in “Traditional Festivals” and third-grade students in “Comprehensive Study of Traditional Chinese Festivals.” These activities help students understand the timing, origins, customs, foods, activities, and cultural significance of the festivals. Music teachers guide students to experience the happiness brought by traditional festivals through music such as “Joy of Spring,” “Long Dong Qiang,” and “Spring Festival Overture.” Civics and political teachers incorporate traditional Chinese virtues and humanistic spirit, combined with legal concepts and national spirit, to enhance the educational flavor of the festivals. Art teachers use creative crafts, intangible cultural heritage paper-cutting, woodblock printing, and Chinese knot art to guide students in expressing the art of traditional festivals through hands-on practice, planting the seeds of traditional culture inheritance in their hearts.

3. Constructing curriculum mode to deepen the connotation of festivals

3.1. Closely following the festival culture and generating festival theme courses

Different traditional festivals contain different traditional cultures and spiritual cores (Table 1). In order to better present the whole picture of traditional festivals, we closely follow the eco-curriculum series and special regional activities, and let the cultural essence penetrate the eco-curriculum in a diversified way, according to different time nodes and festival themes, to stimulate students’ sense of pride of being the descendants of the Yan and Yellow Emperors.

Table 1. Traditional festivals series theme eco-curriculum

Month	Festivals	Series of thematic eco-curriculum
January–February	Laba congee festival, on the 8th day of the 12th lunar month	The Fragrance of Laba Congee and the Warmth of Love
	Lunar New Year	Lunar New Year the Best Reunion Day
	New Year’s Eve	Observing the New Year’s Eve to Mark the New Year
	Spring Festival	Experiencing the Auspicious Dragon Culture to Kick Off the New Year of the Dragon
April	Lantern Festival	Lantern Festival and Lantern Soup Dumplings
	Qingming Festival	Talking about Qingming and Reciting Classics
		Remembering the Martyrs, Pay Homage to the Martyrs, and Striving to be a Good Teenager of the Times
June	Dragon Boat Festival	Online Martyrs’ Day “Zong” is full of love and the setting sun enters the community Class meeting on the theme of “Our Festival - Dragon Boat Festival” Promoting traditional culture and practicing the taste of the Dragon Boat Festival
September–October	Mid-Autumn Festival	A series of practical classes on “Mid-Autumn Festival Family Celebration”
October	Chung Yeung Festival	Community Arts and Culture Volunteer Service for the Elderly

Before designing the series of eco-curriculum on “Our Festivals,” teachers need to make in-depth preparations, fully grasp the culture and characteristics of the festivals, discover specific contents that are in line with the curriculum, and set up various forms of practice that are easy to understand, operative, and effective, in accordance with primary school children’s age characteristics, developmental personalities, cognitive and comprehension abilities, and other factors, to fully mobilize students’ enthusiasm and cultivate their interest in traditional cultural heritage.

3.2. Creating thematic areas to build a festive cultural environment

In the special area activities of schools and classrooms, we provide colorful teaching materials and integrate the contents and elements of traditional festivals, so as to make a better inheritance of Chinese excellent traditional culture ^[7].

- (1) We can use the main campus culture to create a traditional culture area block. Through campus windows, red scarf radio stations, reading booths, open book corners, and other cultural dissemination areas, traditional culture is widely disseminated.
- (2) We enrich classroom areas with traditional cultural materials from multiple angles and channels, motivating students to learn traditional culture, and creating a cultural dissemination platform based on classroom units.
- (3) We create a school corridor culture, presenting the traditional festival culture in the form of pictures and words in front of the students, so that they can be immersed in the traditional cultural environment and feel the inculcation of traditional culture ^[8].
- (4) We take the discipline regional corner as a handhold, carry out learning in a targeted, planned, and hierarchical manner, and guide students to collect festival information, create festival handbills, search for classics, write and create their own textbook dramas, display festival harvests and feelings, and participate in folklore, etc., so as to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural connotations of each festival.

3.3. Carrying out innovative and colorful practices to enrich festival culture activities

Innovative and colorful practical activities can enrich students’ festival culture experience, enhance their cultural literacy and self-knowledge, cultivate their interest in and love for traditional culture, and promote their overall development and growth.

- (1) Innovating campus practice activities for traditional festivals: Innovative elements are introduced into the celebration of traditional festivals, such as cultural exhibitions, traditional handicrafts production, traditional music and dance performances, etc., which are planned and organized by students themselves. Through these activities, they experience traditional customs and rituals firsthand and enhance their sense of identity and belonging to traditional culture ^[9]. For example, students can make their own mooncakes and lanterns during the Mid-Autumn Festival to demonstrate traditional customs, or a Mid-Autumn Festival party can be organized where students perform traditional dances and songs and share stories and legends related to the festival.
- (2) Carrying out a series of cultural activities to promote the spirit of festival culture: For example, traditional cultural exhibitions are held at the Spring Festival to let students learn about Chinese New Year customs and habits, or students can participate in traditional dragon and lion dances and setting off firecrackers to let them experience the joyful atmosphere of traditional festivals first-hand.
- (3) Enhancing students’ cultural literacy and self-knowledge: By learning the historical background and

cultural connotations of traditional festivals ^[10], students can broaden their horizons and increase their understanding of and respect for different cultures. For example, students who participate in dragon boat races during the Dragon Boat Festival can learn about the origins and legends of the Dragon Boat Festival, which guides them to think about the value and significance of traditional culture in modern society.

4. Optimizing the evaluation function to enhance cultural confidence

The implementation of the curriculum needs to be examined through curriculum evaluation. Evaluation of traditional festival-themed eco-curriculum must be carried out in accordance with the characteristics of the course, and motivational evaluation activities pointing to improvement and development must be carried out.

4.1. Process evaluation

Students' participation, motivation, and plan implementation in the learning process undergo self and group mutual evaluation, teacher evaluation, and parent evaluation (**Table 2**), with five stars as the full score.

Table 2. Process evaluation table

Process evaluation				
	Self-evaluation	Group evaluation	Teacher evaluation	Parent evaluation
Participation				
Motivation				
Program implementation				

4.2. Evaluation of reporting and presentation

It is necessary to develop a program for reporting on the results, with each group developing a debriefing program, drawing a timeline, and binding their own learning booklet (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Reporting and presentation evaluation form

Evaluation of reporting and presentation	
Evaluation content	Other
1. Be able to focus on the key activities carried out during the festival, and be innovative, distinctive, and effective.	
2. The process of explanation is scientific and reasonable, illustrated with pictures, and points can be added for physical display.	
3. The speakers are clear-minded, fluent in language, spirited, and infectious.	

The learning outcomes presented in the report are only a part of the evaluation. More evaluations take place during the learning process. For example, students learn about local celebrities and place name culture by conducting field visits and reviewing materials, then complete the records "Respect the Virtuous, Follow Their Example: Celebrities in My Hometown" and "Explore My Hometown: Promoting Place Name Culture." They also look for "dragon" elements around them, learn about "dragon culture," and share this knowledge with classmates—all of which are part of the formative evaluation. Additionally, students' participation, enthusiasm, and execution of plans during the learning process can be assessed through self-evaluation, group peer evaluation, teacher evaluation, and parent evaluation. After the course concludes, a reflection and summary

meeting is held. Evaluation is not just feedback on students' learning but also a comprehensive reflection on the course plan and implementation.

Traditional festivals not only feature celebrations, remembrance, nostalgia, family reunions, and respect for the elderly but also carry the function of promoting traditional virtues and invigorating the national spirit. The school delves deeply into the connotations of traditional festivals, gradually exploring a complete folk ecological curriculum and integrating it into students' learning and lives. This approach not only helps guide students in inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese culture but also serves as an effective method for cultivating and practicing the core values of socialism.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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