

Practical Approaches to Integrating British and American Literature into College English Teaching

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Abstract: College English teaching, as an important branch of philosophy and social sciences in colleges and universities, undertakes a more arduous educational task. To effectively enhance the educational effectiveness of college English, British and American literature can be skillfully integrated into college English classrooms. This can be achieved by deeply exploring the literary elements in textbooks, extending classic works to the second classroom, or setting up diversified activities to stimulate students' interest in knowledge exploration. Students can draw inspiration from a wider range of literary works and establish correct values and value orientations during the learning process, thus facilitating their healthy growth.

Keywords: British and American literature; College English; Teaching approaches

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1. Introduction

With the development of economic globalization, English, as an international common language, has become the main tool for daily communication. Colleges and universities, as the main front for cultivating high-quality, skilled talents, have shown increasing emphasis on English teaching. Currently, in the process of English teaching, there is still a phenomenon of emphasizing skill training while neglecting humanistic teaching. As a result, although students have mastered basic language skills, their cultural cultivation and cross-cultural communication abilities are somewhat insufficient^[1]. Therefore, exploring the main approaches to integrating British and American literature into college English teaching can significantly contribute to enhancing students' language practical abilities.

2. The importance of integrating literary education into college English teaching

Firstly, most literary works contain diverse content such as morality, sentiment, and the pursuit of truth, goodness,

and beauty. Through the experiences of characters in literary works, students can understand the true meaning of life in a relatively short time. They can also gain insights into the real experiences of different people in different periods and regions, and thus comprehend the significance of life. For example, the classic work *Jane Eyre* enables students to understand that even after experiencing numerous hardships, one can still adhere to oneself, seek freedom, and defend one's rights. *Jane Eyre* did not give up her right to pursue happiness because of her low social status. She fell in love with Rochester not for his property, but regarded him as a friend and treated him sincerely. She also did not betray her soul and truth to survive and refused her cousin's marriage proposal^[2]. The happy ending of *Jane Eyre* shows that as long as one dares to pursue happiness, remains true to oneself, and never compromises, one can strive towards life goals. Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* allows readers to witness the sanctity and greatness of love. The protagonists are willing to sacrifice their lives for each other. In general, literary works can help people gain a "second life", expand the spiritual and inner world of readers, and contribute to enhancing the moral sentiment of readers.

Secondly, through British and American literature, one can gain an understanding of British and American cultures, which is conducive to cross-cultural interaction and can improve the learning effectiveness of college English. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the two protagonists grew up together and experienced the process from acquaintance, mutual understanding, to marriage, and they even sacrificed their lives for love within just four days^[3]. In contrast, in the Chinese story *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*, the two were classmates for three years and even shared a bed on many occasions, but it was not until they parted that Zhu Yingtai revealed her identity and her affection for Liang Shanbo. Although the two stories share a similar main plot and ending, the different concepts of time and the ways of expressing emotions reflect the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. The Chinese tend to express emotions in a more implicit and long-term way, while Westerners, with their cheerful personalities and straightforward expressions, cherish the present more and are more impulsive.

Thirdly, by appreciating British and American cultural works, students can expand their knowledge reserves and cultivate their understanding and practical application of what they have learned^[4]. First, original Western works contain numerous story scenes, and the experiences of the protagonists can deeply touch readers. This immersive feeling often encourages students to overcome knowledge barriers, obtain vocabulary information from the context, and make annotations. Students can then select their favorite words and phrases, and through text knowledge accumulation, effectively increase their knowledge reserves. Second, British and American literary works usually contain a large amount of information. Completing the reading within a specified time can be challenging for students, as it requires them to improve their reading speed and skills. Over time, students' reading abilities will be continuously enhanced. Moreover, the logic and writing skills of classic British and American literary works can also inspire students, and they can acquire corresponding writing skills^[5].

3. The current situation of the integration of British and American literature into college English teaching

3.1. A small proportion of British and American works in textbooks

In the process of college English teaching, the integration of British and American literary works can effectively improve students' cultural cultivation, language practical abilities, and cross-cultural communication abilities. However, it is still a common problem that the proportion of British and American literary works in college English textbooks is small. On the one hand, the selection of textbook content is inappropriate^[6]. Current college English teaching materials mainly focus on application-oriented, popular-science, and story-type content to

meet students' daily communication and work needs. Although such text types can enhance students' language practical abilities, their application depth and breadth are somewhat insufficient. The small proportion of British and American literary works in textbooks makes it difficult for students to directly access more diverse cultural content and classic works, restricting students' cultural cultivation and cognitive horizons to a certain extent and failing to promote the improvement of students' cross-cultural abilities. On the other hand, there is a lack of teaching orientation. Under the influence of exam-oriented education, college English teachers tend to focus on text vocabulary, grammar training, and reading comprehension exercises, which weakens the inheritance value of literary works to some extent and neglects the training of students' thinking abilities. This teaching orientation has led to a continuous reduction in British and American literary works. Furthermore, teaching resources are limited. Some schools, due to insufficient funds and an incomplete teaching staff, cannot integrate high-quality British and American literary materials or educational resources, affecting the richness and diversity of subject textbooks^[7].

3.2. Insufficient cultivation of teachers' humanistic literacy

In college English teaching, it is an undeniable fact that many teachers do not attach sufficient importance to the cultivation of students' humanistic literacy in practical teaching, which is also reflected in the teaching of British and American literature. First, from the perspective of the teaching system, college English teaching is influenced by exam-oriented education. Based on this, the teaching goals and evaluations set by teachers tend to focus on the improvement of students' abilities, aiming to enhance students' academic performance while neglecting the cultivation of students' humanistic literacy and failing to achieve the expected educational goals of the discipline^[8]. Therefore, in terms of curriculum arrangement, teaching content design, and teaching mode application, teachers mostly focus on the parts that can directly test students' application abilities and pay less attention to the reading and thinking parts of knowledge, such as British and American literature. Second, teachers' humanistic and literary qualities are also crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of British and American literature teaching. Many English teachers, due to the limitations of their professional construction, learning experiences, and educational experiences, do not have a deep understanding of British and American literary works and cannot achieve a perfect integration of teaching and literature. Some people believe that British and American works are too profound and divorced from reality for college students, and thus cannot arouse students' emotional resonance.

4. Effective approaches to integrating British and American literature into college English teaching

4.1. Optimizing and transforming disciplinary educational materials

College English teaching materials can appropriately increase content related to British and American literature to ensure that students are exposed to more diverse literary materials during the learning process. Representative, classic, and readable content should be selected for textbooks. In addition to essential novels, poems, dramas, and plays, other genres such as prose biographies, essays, and memoirs can also be appropriately integrated. This approach can not only expand students' reading horizons but also enhance their comprehensive qualities. In addition, university administrators should strengthen the construction of educational platforms, integrate different types of educational resources, and promote teaching innovation. Platforms and websites related to British and American literature can be established to integrate relevant resources and carry out diversified teaching activities^[9]. Through these platforms or websites, students can

easily obtain rich British and American literary works and their interpretation materials for independent learning and exploration. Moreover, colleges or universities, as well as teachers, should effectively utilize network resources for teaching or expanding students' horizons. Teachers should actively use network resources such as e-books, online databases, and video materials to provide students with more learning channels and options. These resources can not only enrich teaching content and forms but also stimulate students' learning interest and improve their classroom participation.

4.2. Strengthening teachers' professional qualities and humanistic connotations

First, strengthen the training of professional teachers, provide more practical services for college English teachers, and create more diversified educational resources. For example, regularly organize teachers to participate in training and further education courses related to British and American literature, and invite experts and scholars to give lectures and provide guidance^[10]. This can help teachers deeply understand the connotations and values of British and American literature and master the methods and techniques of integrating it into teaching. At the same time, colleges and universities should encourage teachers to actively participate in various literary and academic exchange activities, seminars, and lectures to broaden their horizons and knowledge. Second, relevant institutions or colleges and universities need to establish or reform the evaluation system, and include teachers' awareness of cultivating students' humanistic literacy and their practical effects in the assessment scope. By setting up awards and providing financial support, teachers can be motivated to actively engage in the teaching and research of British and American literature and integrate the cultivation of students' humanistic literacy throughout the teaching process. Schools should also regularly organize teaching observation and evaluation activities to promote communication and sharing among teachers and jointly enhance the awareness of cultivating humanistic literacy. Actively establish and cultivate a British and American literature teaching team for college English. The team can be composed of teachers who are interested in British and American literature or whose main research direction is British and American literature, especially teachers who teach British and American literature courses for English majors, who should be the backbone of the team^[11]. There is a vast number of British and American literary works, and it is impossible to cover everything. Teachers should make choices, aiming for both a broad knowledge of British and American literature and specialization to better serve teaching. Given this, team members can consider the following aspects.

British and American literature encompasses a wide range of genres, such as short, medium-length, and long novels, prose biographies, and poetry. Teachers can select a teaching focus based on their strengths and design corresponding course content, which will make their teaching more professional and in-depth. For example, many British and American literary works are written by Chinese-American writers. Chinese-American literature occupies a special position in world literature, demonstrating the history of the collision, absorption, and integration of Chinese and Western cultures. Works like *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan and *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston are such examples. If teachers are interested in such works and introduce them to students, it will undoubtedly arouse students' strong learning interest. Since these works are closely related to Chinese traditional culture, the integration of Chinese and Western cultures in the works can also enhance students' understanding of the connotations of cross-cultural communication. There is no more vivid teaching material than this. This is just one example of teacher training. Once teachers choose a research direction, deeply explore works of the same genre, and continuously accumulate knowledge, it will surely contribute to the integration of British and American literature into college English teaching^[12].

4.3. Becoming an internal driving force that stimulates students' active participation

First, teachers can lay a solid foundation for students in teaching, enhance students' enthusiasm for exploration by incorporating interesting content, and carefully select appropriate text materials. Works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* can not only provide rich language materials but also enable students to understand the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds of the British and American countries, thus stimulating their interest in English learning^[13].

Second, teachers should innovate teaching methods. The traditional spoon-feeding teaching method often makes students feel bored. Therefore, teachers should adopt innovative teaching methods such as role-playing, group discussions, and theme speeches to enable students to learn through interaction. For example, students can be divided into groups, and each group selects a literary work to perform roles in it. This can not only improve their oral expression abilities but also deepen their understanding of the works. In the information age, teachers should make full use of multimedia technology such as PPTs, videos, and audio materials to make the classroom more vivid and interesting^[14]. For instance, playing movie clips related to literary works and having students watch and discuss them can improve their listening comprehension abilities and enhance their perception of the works.

Third, teachers should regularly assign reading tasks, asking students to read British and American literary works independently and write book reports or reading impressions. This can not only exercise their reading comprehension abilities but also improve their writing skills. At the same time, through writing, students can express their understanding and perception of the works, enhancing their learning initiative and depth^[15]. Teachers can also encourage students to try literary creation, such as writing poems, novels, or plays. This can not only improve their writing skills but also stimulate their creativity and imagination, making them more passionate about English learning during the creation process.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the process of college English teaching, the teaching of literary elements should not be ignored. Combining traditional language elements such as words, phrases, sentences, and grammar can strengthen the effectiveness of college English teaching. The constructivist theory holds that students are the main body of learning activities and play an important role in the learning process. Teachers should consciously assume the role of guides in teaching. Therefore, it is their unremitting responsibility to stimulate students' interest in learning college English and actively encourage students to participate in independent exploration. Integrating literary education into college English can not only stimulate students' learning interest but also help students improve their self-cultivation and form correct worldviews and outlooks on life under the subtle influence of literature, meeting the educational requirements of philosophy and social sciences in colleges and universities. In college English teaching, exploring literary elements in textbooks, introducing the interpretation of classic British and American literary works into second-classroom activities, and offering elective courses can effectively integrate British and American literary education into college English teaching.

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