

Exploration and Practice of Integrating Cultural Confidence into Higher Vocational English Teaching: Based on Textbook Supply-Side Reform Under the Background of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: Against the strategic background of comprehensively promoting curriculum ideological and political education and implementing cultural confidence, higher vocational English teaching faces practical challenges such as fragmented cultural education content and rigid integration methods. Taking the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” series textbooks co-edited by the authors as a practical case, this paper systematically elaborates an integration path of cultural confidence centered on “textbook supply-side reform”. The study proposes that through systematic content supply, the textbooks construct a three-dimensional content system with Chinese feelings and an international perspective as the dual-core guidance, organically integrating three major cultural connotations. Through innovative method integration, they practice a “learning by doing” teaching model supported by a task-driven approach, school-enterprise dual cooperation, and multimodal resources. Practice has proved that this reform effectively realizes the in-depth integration of cultural education and language teaching, provides a referenceable textbook paradigm for cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents needed in the new era, and is a beneficial exploration and positive response to implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education in higher vocational English teaching.

Keywords: Cultural confidence; Higher vocational English; Curriculum ideological and political education; Textbook construction; Action orientation

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1. Introduction

The “Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities” clearly points out that to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, it

is necessary to integrate value shaping, knowledge impartment, and ability training into one^[1]. The “Curriculum Standards for English in Higher Vocational Education (2021 Edition)” (hereinafter referred to as the “Standards”) also emphasizes that English courses should strive to cultivate “high-quality technical and skilled talents with Chinese feelings and international perspective, who can communicate effectively in English in daily life and the workplace”^[2]. However, in practical teaching, the integration of cultural confidence often faces two major dilemmas: first, insufficient and fragmented content supply, where cultural materials often appear sporadically as attachments to language points, lacking systematicness; second, rigid and explicit integration methods, where forced indoctrination is difficult to resonate with students, resulting in poor educational effects. Essentially, this reflects a mismatch between supply and demand in teaching resources and methods^[3].

To address these issues, the research team led by the authors has carried out “supply-side reform” practice centered on textbooks under the guidance of research projects, with the core achievement being the compilation and publication of the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” series. Fully implementing the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, these textbooks aim to explore an effective path for integrating cultural confidence into higher vocational English teaching through systematic content reconstruction and method innovation. This paper will elaborate on this practical exploration in detail from the aspects of textbook compilation philosophy, content supply, method innovation and value reflection.

2. Systematic supply: Constructing a content system for integrating cultural confidence

As the core carrier of teaching, the top-level design of textbooks directly determines the effect of integrating cultural confidence^[4]. Traditional practices often treat cultural content as appendages to language points or after-class supplements, leading to fragmented and superficial cultural teaching. Abandoning the simple “labeling” method, the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” has made systematic planning from the beginning of compilation, constructing a multi-level, three-dimensional cultural content system that meets the cognitive and career development needs of higher vocational students. Guided by a clear philosophy, this system organically integrates the three connotations of cultural confidence into the entire process of language learning through modular columns.

2.1. Top-level design: Dual-core guidance of Chinese feelings and international perspective

Effective educational practice cannot do without scientific top-level design. In the “Preface”, the textbooks clearly state the mission of “cultivating talents for the Party and the country”, aiming to promote the comprehensive development of students’ core academic literacy, with special emphasis on fostering Chinese feelings and an international perspective. These two “cores” form the coordinate axis of cultural identity: Chinese feelings, as the vertical axis, guide students to explore the national spirit and establish cultural subjectivity; international perspective, as the horizontal axis, promotes students to achieve cultural mutual learning in the global context and understand cultural diversity and commonality. This design grasps the dialectical relationship of cultural confidence, confidence stems from inclusiveness and comparison^[5].

Under the guidance of this coordinate axis, the unit themes of the textbooks are closely aligned with the three categories in the “Standards”: “Career and Individual,” “Career and Society,” and “Career and Environment,” forming a progressive sequence from the individual to the collective. For example, the themes

gradually transition from “College Life” and “Job Hunting” to “Craftsman Spirit” and “Workplace Culture,” and then to “Green Development” and “New Era.” This arrangement internalizes cultural confidence into students’ development needs, guiding them to align their personal ideals with the country’s future.

2.2. Organic integration of three connotations: Constructing a hierarchical and interconnected cultural content matrix

Cultural confidence is a concept with rich connotations, including three levels: excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture^[6]. Through carefully designed characteristic modules, the textbooks do not mechanically separate but organically integrate these three connotations, constructing a hierarchical and interconnected cultural content matrix (Table 1).

Table 1. Integration matrix of the three connotations of cultural confidence in textbooks

Cultural Connotations	Textbook Integration Modules	Specific Examples and Teaching Objectives	Value Guidance
Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture	1. Lead-in (Task 1): Ancient Proverb Matching 2. Appreciating Diverse Cultures: Tell China’s Story	Example: U1 Lead-in: “A young idler, an old beggar” Objective: Embed cultural genes at the starting point of language learning and inherit wisdom in subtle ways	Promote traditional wisdom, enhance historical awareness and cultural heritage
		Example: U3 of Volume 2 introduces Tai Chi; U4 of Volume 2 introduces hot pot Objective: Showcase dynamically inherited traditional culture and highlight its contemporary value and life charm	
Revolutionary Culture & Advanced Socialist Culture	1. Theme Reading / Career Reading 2. Appreciating Diverse Cultures: Tell China’s Story 3. Think Critically	Example: Reading text “Great Power Craftsman: Li Kaijun” in U4 of Volume 1; Story of Huang Wenxiu in U2 of Volume 1 Objective: Concretely interpret spirits such as dedication, struggle, and innovation through stories of role models and advanced figures of the times	Continue the red bloodline, identify with core socialist values, and establish professional role models
		Example: Think Critically sessions conduct discussions on topics such as the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and technological self-reliance Objective: Guide critical thinking, combine national development policies with personal reflections, and realize value internalization	

2.2.1. Infiltration of excellent traditional Chinese culture: From ancient proverbs to new stories

The integration of traditional culture in the textbooks goes beyond symbolic display, focusing on subtle infiltration. Task 1 in the “Lead-in” section of each unit is designed as “matching given English sentences with corresponding ancient Chinese proverbs,” such as “Where there is a will, there is a way.” This design places Chinese and Western cultures in dialogue at the beginning of the unit, guiding students to experience common philosophies and Chinese wisdom through language comparison.

More uniquely, the “Tell China’s Story” section under the “Appreciating Diverse Cultures” module breaks the previous practice of only introducing historical sites and delves into new-era stories. For example, Unit 4 of Volume 1 connects traditional craftsman spirit with the pursuit of contemporary manufacturing through the story of great power craftsman Li Kaijun; Unit 7 of Volume 2 showcases the “Sunway TaihuLight” supercomputer,

reflecting Chinese wisdom in modern science and technology. These contents link the past and the present, making traditional culture no longer a static exhibit but a dynamic resource full of vitality.

2.2.2. Manifestation of revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture: Learning from role models and engaging in critical thinking

The textbooks manifest these cultures through two main approaches: role model narratives and thematic critical thinking. In the “Tell China’s Story” section, the textbooks select role models of the new era, such as Huang Wenxiu, winner of the “July 1st Medal” (Unit 2 of Volume 1), and Yuan Longping, the “Father of Hybrid Rice” (Unit 5 of Volume 1). Their stories are the continuation of the revolutionary spirit in peacetime and vivid manifestations of advanced socialist culture, which can inspire students’ admiration and willingness to learn.

The “Think Critically” section guides students to discuss topics such as green development and the community with a shared future for mankind from documents, including the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. This design goes beyond simple value indoctrination, aiming to cultivate students’ logical and critical thinking abilities. In the process of collecting data, organizing viewpoints and expressing themselves, students will inevitably conduct in-depth reflections on the value orientations behind the topics, thereby achieving rational identification and active acceptance of advanced socialist culture.

2.3. International comparison: Deepening cultural identity from the perspective of the “belt and road”

The establishment of cultural confidence needs to be achieved through openness and comparison^[7]. The textbooks ingeniously set up the “Get to Know the Belt and Road Country” section, systematically introducing one country along the “Belt and Road” in each unit, such as Thailand, Pakistan, Greece, Russia, Iran, and Egypt. This design has dual meanings: first, it serves the cultivation of students’ international perspective, enabling them to understand diverse cultures and lay a foundation for future workplace foreign-related communication; second, and more importantly, it provides a “other” mirror for students to deepen cultural identity. By understanding the history, culture, customs and development status of countries along the route, students can conduct intuitive comparisons in cultural mutual learning, thereby more clearly recognizing the uniqueness of Chinese culture, the rationality of China’s development path, and the inclusiveness and sharing of China’s “Belt and Road” initiative. This helps them consolidate the awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind, making their cultural confidence based on a more open, inclusive and rational foundation rather than narrow nationalist sentiments^[8].

3. Innovative integration: Exploring methodological paths for cultural confidence teaching

High-quality content systems are like rootless trees if they cannot be effectively delivered to students. To ensure that cultural confidence can be quietly internalized into students’ value identification and behavioral awareness, the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” has carried out systematic innovations in teaching methods, breaking the stereotype of cultural indoctrination in traditional language teaching and constructing an integration path centered on “student-oriented, action-guided, and technology-empowered”^[9].

3.1. Task-driven approach and constructivism: realizing value internalization in “Learning by Doing”

Following the compilation logic of “theme as the thread, activity-oriented, and task-driven,” the textbooks are based on constructivist learning theory, emphasizing that knowledge is actively constructed in contexts^[10]. This concept is concentrated in the “Unit Project” section. Instead of scattered language exercises, this section designs comprehensive, output-oriented tasks with challenges and authenticity around unit themes. For example, after learning the “Craftsman Spirit” unit, the project task is “Work in groups to share craftsmen’s stories”; after the “Innovation and Entrepreneurship” unit, the task is “Work in groups to make a career plan.”

These tasks create a nearly real micro-social context, requiring students to go through the entire process from information collection, screening and integration to planning, creation and presentation in the form of group cooperation. In this process, students’ understanding of values such as craftsman spirit and innovation awareness no longer relies on mechanical memory but is actively constructed in the practice of solving problems. To tell craftsmen’s stories well, they need to deeply understand the spirit behind the characters; to formulate career plans, they need to combine personal ideals with social needs. By decomposing task steps and building “scaffolds”, the textbooks guide inquiry-based learning, practice the action-oriented concept of vocational education, and realize the transformation of cultural confidence education from knowledge to action^[11].

3.2. School-enterprise dual development: Anchoring cultural values in real workplace contexts

The vocational nature of higher vocational education requires that cultural confidence education must be closely linked to students’ future career development^[12]. The textbooks adopt a school-enterprise dual cooperation development model, where enterprise experts deeply participate in the creation of workplace contexts and the provision of real corpora, closely connecting cultural confidence education with career development. This authenticity is reflected in the “Career Reading” and “Practical Writing” sections. The workplace reading covers a variety of genres, including “Recruitment Notice,” “Employment Contract,” “Product Description,” and “Medicine Package Insert”. Practical writing directly corresponds to core workplace skills, such as writing “Résumé,” “Cover Letter,” and “Meeting Minutes.”

Cultural values are thus contextualized and functionalized. For example, when learning employment contracts, honesty and keeping promises become professional requirements for safeguarding rights and avoiding risks; when writing company profiles, promoting craftsman spirit and innovation awareness become elements to enhance corporate image and competitiveness. This transforms literacy such as integrity, responsibility and collaboration from external moral norms into essential abilities related to students’ career development, enhancing the practicality and persuasiveness of cultural confidence education^[13].

3.3. Integration of multimodal resources: Activating learning experience with digital means

Facing higher vocational students who are digital natives, traditional single-paper textbooks can no longer fully meet their learning needs^[14]. The textbooks construct a three-dimensional learning system of “paper textbooks + digital resources,” realizing multi-sensory presentation of cultural content through digital courses, micro-lectures and QR codes embedded in textbooks. For example, in the “Tell China’s Story” section, students can scan QR codes to watch short videos about Saihanba, intuitively feeling the shock of the green miracle, thereby generating strong emotional resonance with the arduous pioneering spirit and the ecological concept of “lucid waters and

lush mountains are invaluable assets.” Similarly, through watching animated explanations of the “Micius” quantum satellite, abstract high-tech achievements become understandable and perceptible.

This multimodal design not only conforms to the cognitive characteristics of higher vocational students who prefer audio-visual and interactive learning, effectively enhancing learning interest and solving the potential tediousness of cultural content, but also expands the depth and appeal of cultural expression, making the narration of Chinese stories more vivid. Digital means transforming the integration process of cultural confidence from static text reading to a dynamic experience, achieving the educational effect of teaching through fun and nourishing the heart silently ^[15].

4. Conclusion

The compilation and publication of the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” is a key step in transforming research from theoretical conception to practical application. It is not only a teaching tool but also a successful practice of textbook supply-side reform. Its value is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

- (1) It realizes the systematization and structuring of integrating cultural confidence. Through top-level design, the textbooks construct a cultural main line running through 16 units in 2 volumes, solving the problem of fragmented content and forming a replicable content system framework.
- (2) It explores a model of in-depth integration of cultural education and language teaching. Through methods such as a task-driven approach, situational creation and digital empowerment, value guidance is seamlessly embedded in language skill training, realizing the unity of explicit and implicit education and responding to the methodological problem of “how to integrate.”
- (3) Textbook construction is a continuous and dynamic process. In the future, empirical research on teaching effects based on the textbooks can be further carried out, the digital resource library can be continuously updated, and supporting teachers’ books can be developed to provide support for teaching practice on a larger scale.

In summary, the supply-side reform path exemplified by the “Practical English for Higher Vocational Education in the New Era” proves that through systematic content supply and innovative method integration, cultural confidence education can be effectively and deeply integrated into higher vocational English teaching, thereby providing solid support for cultivating new-era talents who can shoulder the responsibility of national rejuvenation. This practice provides a useful reference for English teaching reform in similar institutions and is a powerful response to implementing “promoting cultural confidence and self-improvement” in the field of higher vocational education.

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