

# *Examining the Differences between Chinese and American Classroom Instruction*

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**Abstract:** The most fundamental organizational similarities in teaching job is classroom instruction. We can improve the reform of teaching classrooms and improve the caliber of classroom teaching in China based on the study and analysis to take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses by analyzing and comparing the various characteristics of teachers and students in teaching and learning in two countries from the perspective of cultural differences.

## **1. Study's inception**

We place a strong emphasis on fundamentally altering educational thinking, values, and mindset in the new educational classroom transformation in addition to changing the teaching paradigm. The specific needs of "teacher-student interaction, dynamic generation, respect for students, attention to the individual, and equity" are the basic requirements of the newest curriculum standards for instructors' activities. However, in our actual classroom teaching practice, there is frequently a lack of successful experiences for teachers and students; teachers pay too much attention to the mastery of all the fundamental knowledge, but ignore the organic integration of a wide range of teaching resources, resulting in many phenomena; comprehensive quality education still lacks a significant advancement; test-based education is still a significant market; however, many schools still pursue the rate of advancement.

Due to historical and practical considerations, there are substantial differences between Chinese and American basic education throughout, and these differences may be seen in the principles and traits of classroom teaching and learning.

## **2. Comparison of the cultural distinctions between China and the United States**

China, a nation with a lengthy history and rich culture, is the only one whose last five thousand years have not seen any ruptures in either. Confucianism is the representative and dominant socialist culture and education in China, which has been passed down and carried on continually. Confucianism has had a significant impact on generations of Chinese people. Europe is shorter, thus America's national culture is more varied. People will discover that the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures in the world today is China and the United States in it because among them, the "Anglo-Saxon" civilization, the representative of Western and European culture, has been the

dominant culture of the United States in the pluralistic civilization [2]. The ideologies and ideological systems of Chinese and American cultures differ greatly because of their different histories, geographic locations, and other factors. These differences will further be reflected in teaching and learning, such as different teaching and learning objectives and different teaching and learning designs. Clyde Clarkhoun says that cultural values are what help members of a specific culture come to an understanding of the proper course of action [3].

## **2.1. Chinese and American values diverge**

The West's trend toward a contractual order that stresses science and reason has developed a cultural form with individualist ideals, in contrast to China's drive toward a conscious human order that prioritizes reason and sentiment [8]. What is referred to in this study as collectivism and individualism is the basic divergence between Chinese and American humanistic values. Since the beginning of Chinese civilization, collectivism, or the group interest, has always been regarded as being more significant than anything else. The reverse of our individuality, which is a separate cultural ideal, is what Americans exhibit. Individualism is defined as the goal of self-expression, self-reliance, self-improvement, self-realization, and individual growth. As a result, there are more kids with exceptional personalities, independent spirits, and individualism in American classrooms, and instructors' professional development objectives place greater emphasis on students' particular talents and increase their rights to autonomy and self-selection.

## **3. Chinese and American classroom instruction are compared**

### **3.1. Learning Philosophy**

#### **3.1.1. Communicative-centered and language-structure-centered**

One of the most popular contemporary language teaching approaches in the West is the communicative approach [5]. ZuXiaomei (2015) [7] further suggests that the "communicative principle, task principle, and meaning principle" are the three key principles of the communicative teaching method. Ellis (2003) views task-based instruction as the communicative approach's core. With the help of these educational philosophies, classroom instruction in the United States will place an increasing emphasis on the practical application of learners' professional knowledge and skills, placing a strong emphasis on practical application to recognize knowledge and experience teaching.

For instance, group discussions and work assignments are used to facilitate collaboration and communication. With this type of group activity, students' involvement in class will significantly increase, they will demonstrate their importance as individuals by contributing their own perspectives, and their enthusiasm in learning will inevitably grow as a result of the interaction. Teachers and students in American schools dislike structure and see it as restricting. They favor flexible or even nonexistent schedules, open learning with many objectives and tasks, and open learning in general [4]. When compared to other countries, China's classroom teaching methods will be more rule-based, students will pay more attention to the teacher's explanations, classroom activities will be based on the teacher's narration and students' practice, and the teacher will primarily use the deductive method to teach. As a result, Chinese students won't have a sense of real experience with knowledge, which will make them less adept at expressing their own ideas and opinions. As a result, Chinese pupils won't be able to express their own thoughts and opinions or learn how to think independently.

## 3.2. Teaching Model

### 3.2.1. Teacher-centered and student-centered

The classroom setting in China exhibits a teacher-centered education mode, in which the teacher is the main body and focuses primarily on teaching, and the students are the audience and focus primarily on listening and practicing. Under the catalytic environment of exam-oriented education, the teacher is the focal point of the classroom, while the students are only able to passively receive information and not actively, only through mechanical imitation. As a result, learning is passive and there is a lack of autonomy and the capacity for independent thought. However, class sizes in China frequently have at least 40 pupils and occasionally even 60, making it challenging for the instructor to manage the size of the class. The less time a teacher has to devote to each student in a class, the more likely it is that they will neglect the unique characteristics of each student, limit opportunities for student-teacher interaction, and limit their ability to personalize their instruction. The choice of seating arrangements in the classroom is also limited due to the limited number of students that can be accommodated; typically, the rice-field seating arrangement is chosen because it is better for the teacher to teach and the students to listen to the lessons being taught in the classroom. This will, in part, have an impact on students' subjective initiative, which is detrimental to igniting their interest in and love for learning as well as to the development of creative minds and creative persons. In fact, if a one-sided emphasis on "teaching" or "learning," or even a means to separate the two, is not desired, the most appropriate approach is to emphasize both the teacher's leadership role and the students' primary position [1].

The American educational system promotes a "teacher-centered" approach to instruction, in which the instructor serves as both an organizer and a guide. A key duty of the teacher is to help students understand how to perceive and solve problems. The teacher uses a range of activities, including simulations and role-playing, to encourage students to use their initiative and participate fully in class. She places a strong emphasis on group work and task-based discussions. American classrooms are "student-centered" because of their modest class sizes and teacher-to-student ratios that are roughly 1:18. Students have more opportunities to participate in class when there are fewer individuals in the class, which allows the teacher to give each student more individual attention. Since there are more horseshoes, circles, T-shapes, and other shapes in the seating arrangement compared to the rice paddy model, it encourages student interaction in small groups and gives the kids back their initiative. The "student-centered" teaching approach, in which the instructor advocates that "all actual learning is active, not passive, and needs the use of the mind to master procedures, in which the student is the key role, not the teacher".

### 3.2.2. Teaching Method

Engaging students in the classroom through first-hand experience and information comprehension through experience are two key components of experiential learning. A core and essential objective of basic education in the United States has been characterized as the development of critical thinking abilities [6]. Famous American educator Dewey promoted the concepts of "learning by doing" and "the unification of knowledge and action," as well as the ideas that "all learning derives from experience" and that "teaching is the process of doing" and "the process of experience. "The guiding principle of American education is: "Tell me and I will forget; show me and I will remember; include me and I will understand. This is how American schooling operates [9]. As a result, they place a focus on the students' active participation in the learning process and provide special attention to oral synthesis abilities and the desire for cooperation. Through group projects, oral presentations, and other methods, their courses are evaluated and rated.

Instead of relying just on a single final exam, teachers frequently evaluate students' performance based on their involvement in class and their ability to collaborate with others.

Chinese classroom instruction is more content-led and goal-oriented, whereas Chinese teaching methods are more didactic, or teacher-centered. By paying close attention and taking thorough notes, students can grasp the material, though the course material and final tests are equally crucial. Such a test will encourage the development of the teacher's monologue. In China, students are typically silent in class and always acting as listeners, thus many of them are hesitant to participate in conversations and ask questions out of concern that they may provide incorrect information. The single-teaching approach does ensure that the entire lesson plan is carried out, but it also prevents students from developing their own independent thought, developing the habit of self-inquiry, asking questions of the teacher, and even if they do learn the material, they are unable to innovate and apply it in a flexible manner, which is detrimental to the development of critical thinking. Professor Lin Dazin, editor of *Intercultural Communication Studies*, notes that "teacher-centered lectures in China largely overpower all other types of student discussion, in contrast to British and American colleges, which rely more on student-centered seminars."

#### 4. Conclusions

Because they are so heavily affected by Chinese and American cultures, Chinese and American teaching philosophies clearly differ from one another. There is no right or wrong culture; the one that fits best. Both Chinese and American education bear recognizable traces of their respective history and culture, so if resources can be used sensibly, the two might be complementary. Teaching activities based on various teaching philosophies can produce diverse learning results. The objectives and requirements of educational design, however, differ due to historical considerations and variations in national conditions; the only constant is that, regardless of these differences, educational design must begin with our own national conditions, while at the same time maintaining our heritage through innovation and breaking through the framework of the existing education. To innovate and integrate based on inclusion and tolerance, we must be more open-minded and cross-cultural in order to go past the constraints of the current educational and teaching model.

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