Cultivation of Cultural Awareness of English Normal Students in Local Application-oriented Universities

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Abstract: With the acceleration of globalization and the development of internationalization of education in China, English normal students should not only have solid language skills, but also have high intercultural communication ability and cultural awareness. This paper discusses the cultivation strategy of English normal students' cultural awareness in local application-oriented universities, integrates the cultivation of cultural awareness into curriculum and practical activities inside and outside the school, and proposes to enhance students' cultural perception and practical application ability through practical activities such as cultural salons and cross-cultural exchange projects. The effective strategies for cultivating cultural awareness include integrating more cultural content into the curriculum to enhance students' understanding and recognition of multiculturalism; improving students' cultural perception and practical application ability through practical activities inside and outside the school, such as cultural salons and cross-cultural exchange projects; strengthening the training of teachers' cultural awareness. In terms of the score of cultural discussion participation, the average score before the activity was 3.1 (standard deviation was 0.4), while the score after the activity increased to 3.8 (standard deviation was 0.5). This paper provides effective theoretical and practical guidance for English teacher education in local application-oriented undergraduate colleges and promotes cultural literacy education in the process of educational internationalization.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of information technology and the deepening of globalization, the integration of computer technology and education has become an irreversible trend. As the main language of international communication, English education has gone beyond the traditional language teaching, and gradually involves cross-cultural communication and the cultivation of cultural awareness. However, the current research mostly focuses on computer-assisted language learning and the application of virtual classroom technology, but little is involved in how to improve the cultural awareness of English normal students through information technology. As an important part of China's higher education system, local applied undergraduate colleges have some limitations in their English normal education, such as insufficient understanding of English-speaking countries'

culture and weak cross-cultural communication ability. Therefore, how to effectively cultivate the cultural awareness of English normal students in these institutions has become an important way to improve their comprehensive quality and teaching level. Based on the analysis of the current situation of cultivating cultural awareness of English normal students, this study puts forward a series of targeted strategies in order to provide valuable reference for English education in local applied undergraduate colleges.

The main research content of this paper includes an in-depth analysis of the present situation of cultural awareness cultivation of English normal students in local application-oriented undergraduate colleges and its embodiment in educational practice. First of all, through the combination of literature analysis and field investigation, this paper systematically combs the shortcomings of English normal students in local applied undergraduate colleges in cultural awareness. Secondly, combined with the development trend of computer technology and examples of educational application, this paper puts forward multi-dimensional cultural awareness training strategies, such as integrating multicultural education into computer-assisted language learning and experiencing cross-culture through virtual reality (VR) technology. Finally, the study also evaluates and discusses the effects of these strategies in practical application, aiming at improving the cultural literacy and teaching practice ability of normal students. Through these studies, this paper hopes to provide theoretical and practical guidance for English teacher education in local applied undergraduate colleges and provide reference for future English education reform.

The research framework of this paper is as follows: Firstly, this paper analyzes the background and current situation of cultivating English normal students' cultural awareness in local application-oriented universities by summarizing relevant literature, and emphasizes the necessity and urgency of this research. Then, combined with the development of computer technology and its application in English education, this paper puts forward a variety of effective strategies to cultivate cultural awareness, and expounds the theoretical basis and implementation path of these strategies in detail. Finally, through case analysis and statistics, this paper evaluates the actual effect of these strategies in improving the cultural awareness of English normal students, and discusses the limitations of the research and the direction of future research. The research in this paper not only provides a new perspective and method for English teacher education in local application-oriented undergraduate colleges, but also puts forward new requirements and challenges for the further development of computer-aided education.

2. Related Work

Under the background of globalization, the cultivation of cultural awareness has become an important issue in English education. Previous studies have shown that enhancing cultural awareness can not only improve students' intercultural communication ability, but also promote their language learning. Language learning and cultural learning are inseparable, and the importance of integrating cultural elements into language teaching is emphasized. Zhou Qiqiang [1] thinks that cultural awareness, as an important part of English core literacy, its value orientation plays an important role in developing students' cross-cultural cognition and behavior orientation. From the perspective of cultivating students' cultural awareness, he made a comparative study of the reading sections of English textbooks for Grade One in the People's Education Edition and Yilin Edition, and found that the two editions were biased towards the culture of Britain and the United States in the choice of cultural regions, while the presentation of cultural types focused on cultural products, cultural practices and cultural concepts. China local culture and non-English-speaking countries' culture were neglected to varying degrees. Jian Huang [2] carried out the innovation of English reading teaching strategies in senior high schools from the perspective of cultural awareness

cultivation. Ji Jingtong [3] believes that cultural awareness refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and the recognition of excellent cultures, which is the cross-cultural cognition, attitude and behavior orientation of students in the context of globalization and reflects the value orientation of the core literacy of English subjects. Zhang Xiushan [4] thinks that in college English teaching practice, cultivating students' cross-cultural awareness not only meets the actual demands of students' future employment development, but also provides a steady stream of cross-cultural communication talents for the development of enterprises and social progress, optimizes the competitive strength of enterprises, and lays the foundation for promoting the sustainable development of society. Therefore, in practice, English teachers in colleges and universities are required to set up more diversified English language and culture courses based on practice, and combine practical experience to enable students to strengthen their communication skills and solve problems effectively in a specific English-speaking social scene, so that students can have a clearer understanding of the relationship between language and culture and cultivate their cross-cultural awareness. Shi F[5] thinks that China is in an era of rapid development of information technology and close cultural exchanges between countries, which requires English teaching to cultivate students' cultural awareness and develop their intercultural communication ability. He provided some suggestions for textbook editors and English teachers, aiming at improving and better using textbooks and cultivating students' cultural awareness. However, although these studies provide theoretical support for the cultivation of cultural awareness, most of them focus on the improvement of language ability, and the practical guidance for local applied undergraduate colleges is limited, especially the lack of systematic training strategies for English normal students.

In recent years, with the rapid development of computer technology, digital teaching tools have been gradually introduced into the field of English education, which provides new possibilities for the cultivation of cultural awareness. Some researchers have discussed the application of computer-assisted language learning in cross-cultural education and pointed out that virtual communication and online cultural experience can help students understand and adapt to different cultures. Fa-De S and Duo-Hang Y[6] had cultivated the intercultural competence of high-quality foreign language talents. Wu J G and Miller L[7] took English learners in China as an example to improve local cultural awareness through WeChat. Sodirzoda M M[8] explored the application skills of folk proverbs in the cultivation of primary school students' oral English, and promoted students' cultural awareness. Hart A, et al[9] explored the cultivation of cultural awareness curriculum ability of humanitarian NGO staff. Soodmand Afshar H and Moradifar M[10] discussed the relationship between critical cultural awareness, institutional identity, self-efficacy, reflective teaching and job performance of Iranian English teachers. Therefore, based on the convenient sampling method, 300 Iranian English teachers from different private language colleges were selected and participated in the study by filling out the critical cultural awareness questionnaire, the teacher's self-efficacy scale, the institutional identity questionnaire and the reflective teaching questionnaire. However, most of the existing research focuses on the application of technical means, and fails to deeply explore the specific implementation effect and long-term impact of these technologies in English normal education in local application-oriented undergraduate colleges, which leads to the limited promotion of these technologies in practical teaching.

3. Method

3.1 Multicultural Integration of Course Content

3.1.1 Adding a culture-oriented curriculum module

In order to improve the cultural awareness of English normal students, a culture-oriented

curriculum module is first added to the curriculum design. These modules include British and American literature and culture, cross-cultural communication skills and so on [11-12]. The course covers the history, society, customs and habits of English-speaking countries, and helps students understand cultural differences through case analysis and cultural comparison. In the specific implementation, the course content selects classic literary works, movies, news reports, etc. as teaching materials, and requires students to read, analyze, discuss and demonstrate in class. This design aims to guide students to think deeply and reflect through real cultural scenes.

Calculating the average rate of change in students' cultural perception scores using the following equation:

$$\Delta S = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \left(\frac{S_{\text{post},i} - S_{\text{pre},i}}{S_{\text{pre},i}} \right) \times 100\% \tag{1}$$

ΔS represents the average rate of change in cultural perception score, N represents the number of students, $S_{\text{post},i}$ represents the cultural perception score of student i after training, and $S_{\text{pre},i}$ represents the cultural perception score of student i before training.

3.1.2 Curriculum design of interdisciplinary cooperation

Interdisciplinary course is designed in cooperation with other literary subjects (such as history, sociology, psychology, etc.) to broaden students' knowledge and enhance their cultural sensitivity and understanding. For example, English language courses can be combined with world history courses to explore the two-way relationship between language and culture. The teaching method adopts group cooperative learning mode, and enables students to understand cultural phenomena from multiple angles through classroom discussion and project report. The specific steps include: first, the interdisciplinary teacher team makes a joint teaching plan; second, setting the curriculum objectives and evaluation criteria; third, carrying out joint teaching to promote the formation of students' cross-cultural perspective [13].

The model for improving cross-cultural communication skills is as follows:

$$I_{\text{comm}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} (C_{\text{post},i} - C_{\text{pre},i})}{N} \tag{2}$$

I_{comm} is the average improvement in cross-cultural communication skills, $C_{\text{post},i}$ is the score of students^' communication skills after using the platform, and $C_{\text{pre},i}$ is the score of students i' communication skills before using the platform.

3.2 Cross-Cultural Experience Based on Information Technology

On the basis of traditional teaching, introducing VR technology, create immersive experiences of British and American cultures, such as family, celebration, classroom and other scenes, select VR software and hardware, design targeted content, and integrate teaching objectives [14]. After the experience, students need to write and share reflection reports to enhance cultural sensitivity. At the same time, we will build a cross-cultural online communication platform, integrate text, voice and video functions, and set up a discussion area and a resource area. It is built with advanced technology, tested and optimized, and then launched. Various activities such as lectures, discussions and language partner programs are held to encourage students to interact and strengthen cross-cultural communication skills and cultural understanding.

3.3 The Combination of Innovation in Teaching Mode and Practical Activities

3.3.1 Project-based learning and culture salon

Combined with the teaching mode of Project-Based Learning, (PBL), students are organized to carry out research projects on cultural themes, such as "educational differences in British and American cultures" or "cultural symbols in British and American literature". Each project requires students to collect data, analyze data, compare across cultures, and finally form a research report or presentation. Through such projects, students can deeply understand cultural differences and their influence on language teaching in the process of autonomous learning. In addition, cultural salons are held regularly to invite foreign teachers or teachers with rich experience in cross-cultural communication to have face-to-face cultural discussions and share experiences with students. The organizational steps of salon activities include: determining the theme, inviting guests, preparing the discussion content and activity flow, and evaluating the effect of the activity.

The equation for the change rate of teaching practice grading is as follows:

$$R_{\text{teach}} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{M}\left(T_{\text{post},j} - T_{\text{pre},j}\right)}{\sum_{j=1}^{M} T_{\text{pre},j}} \tag{3}$$

R_{teach} is the change rate of teaching practice rating, M is the number of teachers, and $T_{\text{pre},j}$ is the teaching practice rating of teacher j before training.

3.3.2 Practical teaching of cross-cultural education

Assigning students to international schools, language training centers and other practice bases with cross-cultural environment to carry out cross-cultural teaching practice. Students need to use their cultural knowledge in practice, design and implement teaching programs, and solve cultural conflicts and communication obstacles in actual teaching. The specific implementation steps include: signing a cooperation agreement with the internship base to clarify the internship objectives and requirements; training students' cultural awareness and teaching skills before practice; during the practice, teachers give guidance and feedback, students complete the practice report and reflect on the application of cultural awareness in teaching.

3.4 Teachers' Cultural Awareness Training

3.4.1 Contents and forms of teachers' cultural training

Cultural awareness training for teachers is an important measure to improve teaching quality. The training content includes cross-cultural education theory, cultural differences and teaching strategies, methods of cultural comparison, etc. The training forms are diverse, such as lectures, workshops, case analysis, etc. The specific implementation steps include: first, determining the training objectives and plans, and equationte the corresponding curriculum outline; second, inviting cross-cultural education experts or teachers with rich practical experience as lecturers; third, through practical cases and interactive discussions, helping teachers understand and apply cross-cultural teaching strategies.

3.4.2 Teachers' classroom reflection and peer review

Encouraging teachers to reflect on cultural awareness and peer review in daily teaching. Teachers should regularly write teaching reflection logs to record the application and effect of cultural awareness in teaching. Schools can organize exchanges and discussions among teachers, learn from

each other through peer review and improve teaching methods. The specific process includes: first, making reflection log template and evaluation standard; second, organizing teachers to exchange reflection results regularly; third, forming a summary report to provide improvement suggestions for follow-up teaching.

The standardized formula for the difference in training effectiveness is:

$$d = \frac{\bar{X}_{\text{post}} - \bar{X}_{\text{pre}}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_{\text{post}}^2 + \sigma_{\text{pre}}^2}{2}}} \tag{4}$$

d is the standardized difference, $\bar{X}_{\text{post}}$ is the average score after training, $\bar{X}_{\text{pre}}$ is the average score before training, σ_{post} is the standard deviation of the score after training, and σ_{pre} is the standard deviation of the score before training.

3.5 Effectiveness Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism

Designing a scientific and reasonable cultural awareness evaluation system to evaluate students' cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural understanding and practical application ability. The evaluation methods include cultural knowledge test, cultural case analysis and cross-cultural communication ability test. The specific steps are as follows: equationting evaluation criteria and question bank, organizing tests and collecting data, analyzing evaluation results and giving feedback, helping students find their own deficiencies in cultural awareness and providing corresponding improvement suggestions.

4. Empirical Evaluation of Cultural Awareness Training Strategies

4.1 Evaluation of Multicultural Curriculum Module

Experimental design and environment:

100 English normal students from two local application-oriented universities were selected and divided into experimental group and control group. The experimental group participated in the new multicultural curriculum module, while the control group was taught according to the traditional curriculum. Conducting culture-related courses once a week for one semester. The content of the course involves cultural case analysis, cultural comparative discussion, literary classics reading, etc.

Evaluation indicators and calculation methods: The cultural knowledge test scores are scored using standardized test papers; the cross-cultural cognition questionnaire survey was scored using the Likert scale; classroom participation is evaluated through a combination of teacher ratings and student self-assessment. The score of cultural knowledge test is calculated as the average score; the results of the questionnaire survey are the statistical frequency distribution and average value; the classroom participation rating is based on the average score and standard deviation of two groups.

Table 1: Evaluation results of multicultural curriculum module

Evaluation criteria	Experimental group (avg score)	Control group (avg score)
Cultural knowledge test	85.4	73.2
Cross-cultural cognition	4.2	3.1
Class participation	90	65

The evaluation results of multicultural curriculum module are shown in Table 1. The results show that the average score of students in the experimental group in the cultural knowledge test is significantly higher than that in the control group (experimental group: 85.4, control group: 73.2), the score of cross-cultural cognition is significantly improved (experimental group: 4.2, control

group: 3.1). The data shows that the multicultural curriculum module can effectively enhance students' cultural awareness and learning enthusiasm.

4.2 Effect Analysis of Virtual Reality (VR) Cultural Experience

Experimental design and environment:

Fifty English normal students participated in the simulation of British and American cultural scenes (such as festival celebrations and campus life) with VR equipment. Arranging a VR experience class every week for 8 weeks. Cultural perception test and reflective paper evaluation were conducted before and after the experiment.

Evaluation indicators and calculation methods: The cultural perception score is scored using situational simulation tests; the evaluation criteria for the quality of reflective papers include depth of cultural understanding, reflexivity, criticality, etc. Cultural perception score calculates the percentage change; reflective papers use quantitative scoring methods combined with qualitative analysis.

The effect analysis result of virtual reality (VR) cultural experience is shown in Figure 1 (the change of cultural perception score is shown in Figure 1(a), and the change of cultural perception score is shown in Figure 1(b)).
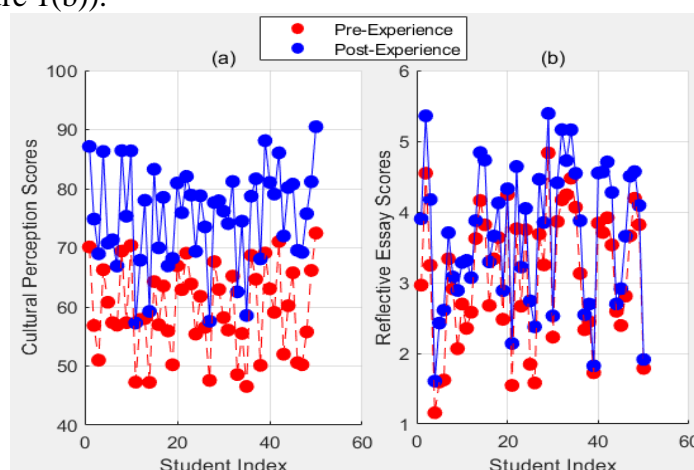

Figure 1: Analysis results of virtual reality (VR) cultural experience

Experimental results and analysis: VR experience has significantly improved students' cultural perception ability (average perception score increased by 30%), and the quality of reflective papers has significantly improved (average paper score increased by 1.5 points, out of 5 points). The experimental results show that the immersive experience provided by VR technology effectively enhances students' cultural perception and reflection ability.

Analysis of the left figure (change of cultural perception score): The data shows that almost all students' cultural perception scores have improved after VR experience, and the blue solid line (post-experience score trend line) has risen as a whole, showing a significant upward trend. Especially for some students with low initial scores, their later scores have improved more obviously, which implies that VR experience has a significant effect in helping students understand and perceive multiculturalism. The increase of the slope of the trend line further proves this point, indicating that VR cultural experience not only enhances students' interest and understanding of cultural content, but also makes up for the shortcomings of students with weak cultural cognitive foundation to some extent. Analysis on the right (the change of reflective paper quality score): This shows that VR immersive experience has deepened students' insight into cultural differences, and writing is more critical and reflective, or it is attributed to its enhanced cultural perception and

understanding.

4.3 Application Effect of Online Cross-Cultural Communication Platform

Experimental design and environment: 80 English normal students were selected and divided into two groups: using online platform and not using platform. The platform provides opportunities for cross-cultural communication, such as language exchange and cultural discussion with foreign students. Communicate not less than 3 hours a week for 6 weeks.

Evaluation indicators and calculation methods: The intercultural communication competence score is based on simulated dialogue tests and situational role-playing; the frequency of communication and participation are analyzed based on platform backend data. The communicative competence score is calculated as the average value; the frequency of communication is measured by the number of times, and participation is analyzed by click through rate and time.

The application effect of online cross-cultural communication platform is shown in Figure 2 (cross-cultural communication ability score changes as shown in Figure 2(a), and communication participation changes as shown in Figure 2(b)).
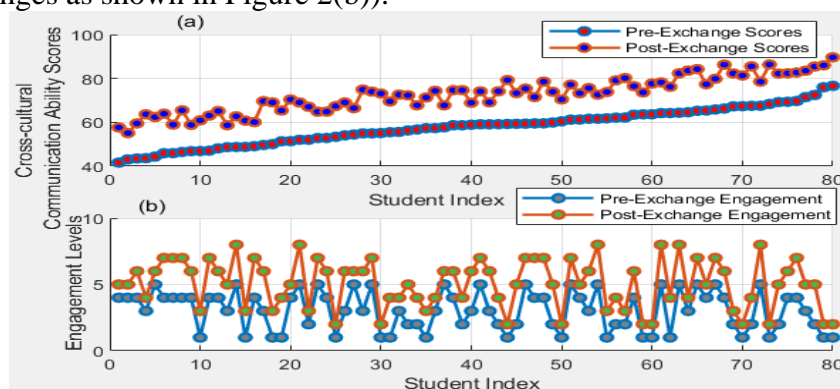

Figure 2: Application effect of online cross-cultural communication platform

In the form of two subgraphs, the figures respectively show the changes in students' cross-cultural communication ability scores and communication engagement before and after using the platform. Each data point is marked with a solid circle, and the connected data lines reflect the changes in individual students' ratings at two time points (before and after using the platform).

Figure 2 (a) (changes in cross cultural communication ability scores) Analysis: From the distribution of data, the vast majority of students' scores after using the platform are significantly higher than before, and the solid line is significantly higher than the red solid line, reflecting the positive role of the platform in improving students' cross-cultural communication abilities; Figure 2 (b) (changes in communication participation) Analysis: The overall trend shows that the participation of most students has increased after using the platform, indicating that the platform has stimulated students' higher enthusiasm for participation and interaction frequency.

4.4 Project-based Learning (PBL) and the Evaluation of Cultural Salon

Experimental design and environment: Project-based learning is implemented, students are divided into groups to conduct research on cultural theme projects, and cultural salons are organized to show and discuss the results. The implementation period of the project is 10 weeks, with a total of 60 students participating.

Evaluation indicators and calculation methods: The project achievement score is jointly evaluated by teachers and foreign reviewers, using the Rubric scoring criteria; cultural discussion

participation is the frequency and quality rating of students' speeches in salon activities. Achievement evaluation combines with teacher and evaluation average values; the participation score is combined with the number of speeches and teacher evaluation. The evaluation results of project-based learning (PBL) and cultural salons are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation results of project-based learning (PBL) and cultural salon

Evaluation criteria	Project outcome scores	Discussion participation
Pre-activity mean score	70	3.1
Pre-activity std dev	7.5	0.4
Post-activity mean score	82	3.8
Post-activity std dev	6.8	0.5

Analysis on the score of participation in cultural discussion: In terms of the score of participation in cultural discussion, the table shows that the average participation of students has also improved significantly. The average score before the activity was 3.1 (standard deviation was 0.4), while the score after the activity was improved to 3.8 (standard deviation was 0.5). Although the improvement is slightly less than the project achievement score, it is still significant. This result reflects that students' participation in class and their enthusiasm in cultural discussion have been enhanced through interactive teaching activities such as cultural salons.

The increase in participation in cultural discussion shows that cultural salon activities effectively stimulate students' interest and encourage them to actively express and discuss different cultural perspectives in class. Cultural salon not only provides a safe communication environment, but also enhances students' cross-cultural communication ability and self-confidence by guiding them to have open discussions. The increase in participation also indirectly shows the potential of cultural salon activities in improving students' cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

4.5 Analysis of the Effect of Teachers' Cultural Awareness Training

Experimental design and environment: 30 English teachers participated in cultural awareness training, including cross-cultural education theory and classroom practice strategies. Evaluating teachers' cultural awareness and teaching practice before and after training.

Evaluation indicators and calculation methods: The cultural awareness questionnaire survey was scored using the Likert scale; teaching practice observation grading is a combination of classroom observation and student feedback grading. The survey results are statistical averages; teaching practice observation combines qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The three-dimensional evaluation of the training effect of teachers' cultural awareness is shown in Figure 3.
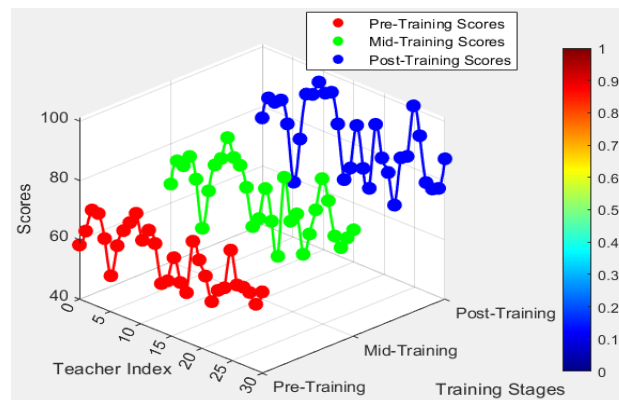

Figure 3: Three-dimensional evaluation of teachers' cultural awareness training effect

Figure 3 presents the growth trajectory of 30 teachers throughout the cultural awareness training process through a three-dimensional scatter plot. The cultural awareness and teaching practice evaluation of teachers have significantly improved with the deepening of training, and each stage (before, during, and after training) is distinguished by different colors, clearly demonstrating the progress process. Although the overall trend is positive, there are still differences in the extent of improvement among teachers, and the scattered initial ratings reveal the diversity of cultural awareness foundations. In the later stage of training, the trend of centralized scoring indicates the wide applicability of the training content, effectively narrowing the gap between teachers and reflecting the inclusiveness and efficiency of the training. However, it is worth noting that despite the general improvement, the room for improvement of individual teachers still needs further attention and customized support.

5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the cultivation of cultural awareness of local applied undergraduate English teachers, and deeply analyzes the strategic effects of multicultural courses, VR cultural immersion, online cross-cultural interaction, PBL projects and cultural salons, and teacher cultural training. Using empirical and experimental design, this paper verifies its role in improving cross-cultural ability, deepening cultural cognition and promoting cultural participation, and examines its far-reaching influence on educational practice from multiple dimensions. The research shows that multicultural courses and VR immersive experience strengthen students' cultural perception and reflection; online cross-cultural platform promotes practical communication and classroom interaction; project-based learning and cultural salon promote autonomous learning and cultural comparison ability. Teachers' cultural training has significantly improved teaching guidance, and the overall strategy has effectively promoted students' cultural literacy and teaching level, demonstrating its application value of efficient education. The results of this study are fruitful, but there are also limitations: the sample is limited to local applied undergraduate colleges, and its universality needs to be tested; the data is based on short-term experiments, and the long-term effect is unknown; the scoring method may be subjective, so it is necessary to introduce quantitative indicators to increase credit. The future exploration direction focuses on cross school and interdisciplinary comparative research to expand its scope of application; long term longitudinal tracking strategy to ensure sustained effectiveness; integrating cutting-edge technologies such as AR and AI to enrich teaching methods; deepening the research on the role of teachers and gain insight into their profound impact on the cultivation of cultural awareness. In summary, this study injects new vitality into English teacher education and should be further explored in the future to build a multicultural training system that meets the demands of global education.

Acknowledgement

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