

# English and American Children's Literature Teaching and the Cultivation of English Normal Students' Core Accomplishment

Nawei Ma<sup>1, a</sup>, Junfeng Zhang<sup>2, b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Humanities & Sciences of Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China

<sup>2</sup>Jilin Sport University, Changchun, China

<sup>a</sup>1343508697@qq.com, <sup>b</sup>605055603@qq.com

**Abstract.** English and American children's literature teaching of English education major should be oriented towards cultivating English normal students' core accomplishment, not based on knowledge, such as literature history, writers, and works, but on its value of education and students' all-round development.

**Keywords:** List English and American children's literature teaching; English normal students; core accomplishment.

## 1. Research on Core Accomplishment

“Core accomplishment” in China, first put forward as “core accomplishment system” is a key word of a formal document issued by the Ministry of Education on April 24, 2014, on comprehensively deepening curriculum reform and implementing the fundamental task of building moral education. The emphasis on “core accomplishment” at the national level shows the urgency and importance of “quality education”. A press conference on the research results of development of Chinese students' core accomplishment was held in Beijing Normal University on September 20, 2016 when “Chinese students' development of core accomplishment” was officially released, receiving wide social attention. “The core accomplishment” in the document is divided into three aspects, cultural foundation, independent development and social participation, which are comprehensively reflected in six kinds of accomplishment, cultural foundation, scientific spirit, learning studying, living a healthy life, responsibility, practice and innovation, and detailed into 18 points totally.

The concept of “core accomplishment system” has been a global view. At the beginning of this century, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) took the lead in putting forward the structural model of “core accomplishment” in order to solve the problem what core knowledge, ability and emotional attitude students should be trained in the 21st century so that they can successfully integrate into the future society and promote social development while satisfying the needs of individual self-realization.

Over the years, different countries and regions have made similar explorations. For example, the focus on core accomplishment in the United States originates from high-tech enterprise teams that focus on knowledge innovation. These enterprises, from the feedback of problems encountered by employees to education, point out the abilities and qualities that basic education should cultivate, which they call “skills”. These skills which everyone in today's society should master, are not simple or specific, but essential to survival in the 21st century.

Liu Enshan, a professor of College of Life Science of Beijing normal university, thinks that “core accomplishment is an interdisciplinary quality that emphasizes what can be developed in each discipline and what is most useful to students. Such as the concept of language accomplishment of core accomplishment, which is not the concept of Chinese subject, but a generalized concept of language, an effective expression and communication, far beyond the scope of Chinese subject. Core accomplishment is the integration of knowledge, ability, attitude or values, including both “cognitive accomplishment” such as solving problem, inquiry ability and critical thinking, and “non-cognitive accomplishment” such as self-management, organizational ability and interpersonal communication. The word “accomplishment” has a broader meaning than “knowledge” or “skills.”

“Skill” is defined from the perspective of ability. However, “accomplishment” means not only ability, but also comprehensive qualities, especially moral requirements.

## **2. Innovation of English and American Children’s Literature Curriculum**

There are many problems and contradictions in English and American children's literature curriculum of normal colleges and universities that students take learning notes carefully with less innovative thinking ability. Online fast-food literature and culture are sought after, while English and American classic literature are ignored. English practical courses are supreme, and the content of literature and humanities education is missing. English normal students’ learning attitude is influenced by English utilitarianism and pragmatism. Under the pressure of TEM-4 and TEM-8, the market-oriented business English, interpretation and translation certificate examination, they lose interest in literature course learning and think that literature course is not important at all. This trend of weakening the English literature course has greatly affected their understanding and acceptance of western literature and global culture, which is not conducive to the recognition and construction of multi-cultural concepts of students, and more difficult to realize the teaching purpose of promoting students' basic language skills and cultivating students' core accomplishment.

To solve these problems, it is necessary to reform and innovate the traditional teaching mode of English and American children's literature curriculum, which are mainly embodied in three aspects: the innovation of concepts, models and contents, and methods and means. Among them, ideas are the premise, models and contents are the core, and methods and means are the guarantee of innovation.

English and American children's literature teaching mode should combine traditional text analysis teaching method and modern teaching mode, make full use of modern teaching methods and means to make classroom teaching more colorful and vivid, and embody the teaching concept of student-centered, so that English and American children's literature teaching become innovative, challenging, interactive and exploratory.

English and American children's literature classroom teaching adopts mixed teaching mode. Relying on the network teaching platform, teachers release the high-quality courses before class as the students' independent learning resources, monitor the students' learning progress, answer students' learning questions online, discuss and exchange speculative questions offline, and focus the time in the classroom as much as possible on the key and difficult issues of teaching, so that students can understand the works better and apply what they have learned. Use the network community to establish a good relationship between teachers and students, students and students. Such teaching mode improves the effectiveness of interaction, and passive learners can become active sharers. After class, teachers instruct students to compile English short plays and rehearse.

“Promoting learning by acting” gives full play to students’ English learning enthusiasm and initiative, and students can exchange real, appropriate and pleasant ideas and feelings, which are language practice activities that traditional classroom teaching lacks. As well as, students understand the characters of the works' psychology in a more multidimensional way, experience the aesthetic feeling of literature and its enduring artistic charm when their comprehensive skills are strengthened.

The construction of English and American children's literature curriculum should take the cultivation of English normal students’ core accomplishment as the value orientation, stimulating students' interest in literature, whose goal is to strengthen the human side of literature, encourage students to understand the connotation of works from their own perspective, so as to cultivate students with humanistic background and scientific spirit, while the traditional literature class takes the mastery of knowledge such as literature history, writers' works background as the curriculum goal, which makes it hard to improve students’ ability and ignore students’ overall development. Based on the new curriculum orientation, English and American children's literature curriculum shows the educational value, sublimating “teaching” to “education”.

### 3. Cultivation of English Normal Students' Core Accomplishment

In the process of advocating socialist core values and realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, it is an inevitable trend for the development of higher education to comprehensively improve the core accomplishment of college students. In the talent training of colleges and universities in China, it is a good way to combine the professional teaching with the core accomplishment training of college students. It is English and American Children's Literature Teaching that cultivates the normal students' core accomplishment. The teaching helps normal students to accept aesthetic education.

It is Wang Guowei who was the earliest scholar who advocated "aesthetic education" in school education in modern China. He was the founder of modern aesthetics and the advocator of modern education. He published an article On the Purpose of Education in the magazine Education World in 1903, in which he proposed that educators should not neglect aesthetic education, and aesthetic education is an integral part of education. "We are now carrying out quality education, which is to get out of the misunderstanding of only morality and wisdom, and fully realize that aesthetic education should be an educational concept throughout the whole educational process; it is not a general specific education, but a high-level cultural quality education(Wang,2004)."

English and American children's literature works are the carrier of beauty, through which its teaching carries out aesthetic education for students, so that they can understand better and transform the world. When the English normal students are teachers, fathers or mothers, they will make full use of the unique aesthetic characteristics of the classic works of English and American children's literature to cultivate their children's ability to understand and comprehend beauty. Guided to grasp the beauty of the characters, the environment and the plot in the works, children will have unique emotional experience through the emotional experience to learn to control their own positive and negative emotions rationally.

"The aesthetic guidance of children's literature to people cannot be ignored, which starts from the childhood of human beings, most of whom are cultivated great men. It may not turn into money immediately, but its role in the history of human civilization is obvious. (Xu, 2008)" When the English normal students start to work as teachers, they will pass on the artistic charm of excellent English and American children's literature works to their students, and their students will also have the same soul experience. Reading and appreciating literary works is a kind of aesthetic activity, where mental activities such as imagination, recollection and emotion must also be involved, which are conducive to the cultivation of individual thinking ability (Zhuang, 2014).

English and American children's literature teaching is good way to shape students' sound personality, which is important content of the core accomplishment. Feng Zikai once compared the sound personality to a tripod. Truth, goodness and beauty are like the feet of the tripod. Without any one of the three, the tripod cannot stand steadily. The sound personality of students is like this tripod, which must also include the three elements. English and American children's literature teaching has a unique advantage in shaping students' sound personality. When students are confused in life, the protagonist's experience may tell them how to deal with all kinds of problems. They will find answers in the works, such as *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Wolfman and Me*, *The Pigman*, *Julie of the Wolves*, which teach students how to deal with friendship, family, growth, nature and other issues. The breakdown of the friendship between Mark and Byron in *Among Friends* by American writer Caroline Cooney teaches students how to choose when justice conflicts with friendship; *Little Woman*, the masterpiece of American writer Louise May Alcott, tells the story of the Marches' hard toil and suffering and the growing experience of the four sisters, from which students can understand how to overcome fear and suffering and how to care for their beloved; Karana of Scott O Dell's *Island Of the Blue Dolphins* teaches students how to be strong, brave and optimistic and respect nature and life.

English and American children's literature teaching guide students understand classic children's literature works containing profound philosophy of life and value of life, which nourish students' spirit and purify their soul, edify their sentiments, and shape their sound personality. In addition, children's literature is a reflection of life from a child's perspective and psychology, the best way

for English normal students to understand children's growth process and psychological characteristics, which is beyond adult literature. We take the themes of English and American literature in the 20th century as an example, which mainly involve war themes and urban themes, among which Hemingway's works are the most dazzling, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom The Bells Toll*, *CATCH-22*...; J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* describes the competition, ups and downs, love of urbanites. These heavy themes are difficult to absorb for ESL students and impossible to get nutrition.

#### **4. Conclusion**

English and American children's literature teaching of English education major as a kind of emotional education cultivates English normal students' core accomplishment, because while improving students' English level and literary appreciation ability, the students' attain aesthetic taste, artistic accomplishment, and sound personality. When the normal students go to the post of teacher, they will cultivate their students to be what they are. Just think, if we pay attention to emotional education and strengthen the cultivation of students' core accomplishment in the process of teaching, can there be fewer children like Wu Xieyu (A grade2012 student of Peking University escaped for three years after killing his mother. On April 2, 2019, he was arrested when boarding at Chongqing Jiangbei Airport.)?

#### **References**

- [1]. Wang, Ying. (2004). Aesthetic representation in the teaching of British and American literary works. *Journal of Heilongjiang institute of education*, (1),91-92.
- [2]. Xu, S.F. (2008). Humanistic return in children's Literature Teaching in Normal University. *Journal of Hunan University of Science and Engineering*, (1), 20-22.
- [3]. Zhuang K. (2014). Research and reflection on teachers' aesthetic quality in the new era. *Liaoning Higher Vocational Technical Institute Journal*,16(04), 79-82.