



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE RESEARCH OF CLASSICAL POETRY TEACHING UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF
NEW CURRICULUM REFORM

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ARTICLE INFO

Received 14th, March, 2016,
Received in revised form 27th,
April, 2016, Accepted 13th, May, 2016,
Published online 25th, June, 2016

Keywords:

new curriculum reform background, classical
poetry, teaching, strategy.

ABSTRACT

Classical poetry teaching is one of the major contents in Chinese teaching in high school. Under the background of new curriculum reform, a high level of Chinese teaching is demanded, which enables students to gain aesthetic experience through knowing the world and developing thinking. During the implementation of teaching strategies, classical poetry is appreciated from the aspects of the words and its pronunciation rhythm, artistic conception of key words or sentences, deep analysis, independent thinking, the cultivation of aesthetic interest, the reflection of writer's historical background on the basis of an understanding of the writer and the sublimation of the themes of works. Besides, thought collisions and soul communications are achieved in the conversation among students, teachers and texts.

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INTRODUCTION

The Current Situation of Chinese Teaching in High School in China

The development of the cultural accomplishment of an era is always accompanied by the development of social economy, which is no exception in Chinese teaching in high school. For the students, with snack culture deepening into their life and learning, literary classics in Chinese textbook has gradually been ignored, and the remote era makes it hard for students to get a full appreciation of the ancients' thoughts. Compared with modern poetry, the classical poetry genre is limited, the text is short while the implication is infinite, and thus middle school students find it difficult to learn. From the perspective of middle school students; they are deeply rooted in the thought that learning Chinese is very easy so they pay more attention to other subjects, which leads to a result that only a fraction number of students attach great importance to Chinese, especially the classical poetry, and this phenomenon can be ascribed to assessment system, the exam-oriented style. Under such an exam-oriented environment, the classical poetry cannot be appreciated fully and analyzed effectively. It is modern people's restlessness and strong utilitarianism that makes reciting classics leisurely like the ancients become a hard thing. In respect to teachers, the teaching purpose is to adapt to the requirements of the college entrance examination. If teacher's teaching method varies according to the exam requirements, students can hardly appreciate the true feelings of the poet, and resonate with them. What's more, there is a tendency that

middle school Chinese teachers are almost young teachers. They are also influenced in the process of the development of the era. Being penetrated by the snack culture, young teachers may not read literary classics thoroughly and do little study of it, and definitely, they pay little attention to the classical poetry theory books. In the process of teaching, the artistic skills of the classical poetry and its theoretical depth are still relatively narrow and teachers need to improve their literature quality, and this is also a problem that cannot be overlooked in the middle school teaching.

In terms of teaching equipment, although modern facilities play a role in making classroom teaching full of variety, some teachers are over dependent on modern teaching equipment, so that their teaching skills are weakening, such as chalk and reading. With the purpose of "Great learning makes a teacher; moral integrity makes a model", teacher's words and deeds affect students subtly in the teaching process. Although stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one, teacher's excessive dependence on courseware and demonstration with the help of others make it challenging for students to feel the charm of Chinese characters which have a thousands of years' inheritance, and it is hard for students to understand the implication of Chinese tones which develop from ancient times to the present. If teachers simply use slides to present many pictures and words without considering the stylistic features of the text, it will leave no time for students to concentrate on books and their imaginations are restricted. Teachers tend to be schema oriented, which results in a lack of dictation training. Saving time as it is, schematized teaching do

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not really benefit students. Slides are just a tool for teaching, teachers' interpretation is the core, but many teachers do not make it for the sake of convenience.

The Strategy of Implementing the Classical Poetry Teaching under the Background of the New Curriculum Reform

In the strategy of implementing the classical poetry teaching under the background of the new curriculum reform, *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers*, a piece of work from Li Qingzhao, are used as an example to give the illustration. The original text is as follows (English version):

*To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers
The Double Ninth Festival
Light mists and heavy clouds,
melancholy the long dreary day.
In the golden censer
the burning incense is dying away.
It is again time
for the lovely Double-Ninth Festival;
The coolness of midnight
penetrates my screen of sheer silk
and chills my pillow of jade.
After drinking wine at twilight
under the chrysanthemum hedge,
My sleeves are perfumed
by the fragrance of the plants.
Oh, I cannot say it is not endearing,
Only, when the west wind stirs the curtain,
I see that I am more gracile
than the yellow flowers.*

Sense the Beauty of Rhythm from Words and Its Pronunciation According to the requirements of the classical poetry teaching, it is essential to have a clear understanding of words and pronunciation. *Ordinary High School Language Curriculum Standard (experiment)*² points out that, "Read loudly and fluently in the process of reading and appreciation." And it is said that if one is familiar with the 300 Tang poems, even he cannot write a poem, he can recite one, which also alludes that the basic way to appreciate poetry is to read it. Teacher helps students to master the basic pronunciation and the meaning of the word, then they will sense the beauty of the rhythm through reading, and the rhyme of the ancient poetry is a feature of classical culture. In the unit objectives of Chinese textbook it is also mentioned that words have a strong sense of rhythm and beauty of music which needs repeatedly chanting to experience this kind of rhythm, for example, when reading the rhyming words in *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers*, "zhou", "shou", "tou", "hou", "xiu", "shou" (Chinese version, Pinyin), people can have a sense of rhythm and cadence. Students' reading interest can be stimulated which helps their memorization. And when reading, students try to read first, following teacher's reading, and then students read again, during the whole process, students and teachers are working together to appreciate the charm of the poetry, obtain the knowledge and cultivate their temperament.

Construct Artistic Conception from Key Words and Sentences

It is difficult for students to grasp the thoughts and essence of the poem just after reading. Teachers should guide the students

to find out the key words and sentences from which students can grasp the emotional tone of the poem and then get close to the artistic conception, and finally, students can have a full understanding of the whole poem

For example, finding the sentences in *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers*: "melancholy the long dreary day", "It is again time for the lovely Double-Ninth Festival", "Oh, I cannot say it is not endearing", and "I see that I am more gracile than the yellow flowers" and you can discover that the word "melancholy" represents the whole poem's emotional tone from which we can extract the poet's sadness and longing feelings. *Ordinary High School Language Curriculum Standard (experiment)*² points out that, "guide students to put themselves to the context to feel and experience, pay more attention to the overall perception of the image and emotion in the works", which demands students to interpret the whole poem and then merge in the poet's inner world.

The fog was thin while the clouds were thick, the whole day were haunted by melancholy. Rui Xiang in the yellow beast-shaped incense burner was burnt out. In the lovely Double-Ninth Festival, sleeping alone in this white porcelain, transparent gauze, I felt cold and hard to settle into sleep, especially in the middle of the night.

This afternoon I went to the east courtyard to appreciate chrysanthemum and drunk some wine. The fragrance of chrysanthemum penetrated deeply into my sleeve. Who says I looked not enchanting? The west wind rolled up the curtains; originally I was thinner than chrysanthemum.

"If the work has, it has its self-style and famous quotations."³ Wang Guowei thinks that only the work has its spiritual realm can people moved by it. Li Qingzhao creates the aesthetic artistic conception which belongs to her, and the reader can feel her sorrow.

Analyze Deeply and Think Independently to Cultivate Aesthetic Interest.

After the overall grasp of the whole poem, a deeply exploration of the connotation of the poetry is needed. So where does the connotation meaning appear? In order to find the answer, teacher should guide students to think questions deeply and explore further by asking questions. "Questions can really initiate thinking, guiding students to ponder and explore from the shallow to the deep, from the near to the distant and from one point to another, and it can also cultivate the students' spirit of inquiry and the habit of exploration."⁴ for example, for the Ci poem, *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers*, teacher can raise questions, such as, what kind of sorrow and sadness the poet want to express? What is the function of environmental description in the first part? What can you feel in this sentence "It is again time for the lovely Double-Ninth Festival"? What allusions are used in this poem? How about the function of these allusions? Why it is "when the west wind stirs the curtain" rather than the curtain stirs the west wind? Why this sentence "I see that I am more gracile than the yellow flowers" is a famous quotation? Is the melancholy in *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers* the same as it in *Slow, Slow Tune*? Those questions can give hints to students to explore from different angles.

Ordinary High School Language Curriculum Standard (experiment) mentioned that Chinese teaching should focus on personalized reading, fully mobilizing person's life experience and knowledge accumulation, getting a unique feeling and experience in the active thinking and emotional activities and knowing how to do creative and inquiring reading, developing imagination ability, thinking ability and critical ability. Literature is extensive and profound, and there is no fixed answer, so while understanding the content of the works, we need to associate it with our imagination to comprehend the artistic conception. Teachers can only guide students to use their imagination fully to appreciate the unique charm of poetry; after all, limited words have infinite meaning. Such as the question, why it is *when the west wind stirs the curtain* rather than the curtain stirs the west wind? Students' answers will be diversified. Some students think that this is an inverted sentence; wind and curtain are intertwined with each other, which showed the west wind is in a hurry while other students may give such an explanation, the west wind lets the poet mistakenly think that her husband is coming back, which shows her thoughts to her husband. All of the answers are students' personalized interpretations based on their unique feelings and experience, so teachers should give a respect to this kind of personality.

As mentioned in *Ordinary High School Language Curriculum Standard (experiment)*, figuring out the meaning of the sentence in the context and using the prior language knowledge to understand the complex sentence structure thus finally achieving the appreciation of the wonderful expressions.

Teachers can ask questions based on the aims of this lesson. In this sentence, *"I am more gracile than the yellow flowers"* why the word "gracile" is always been praised by people? For such a famous quotation, we can appreciate it from various perspectives. Firstly, from the rhetorical device aspect, the word "gracile" is a kind of personification which uses the chrysanthemum slender petals to signify the thin of the human body vividly. What's more, are people really thinner than the chrysanthemum? So exaggeration is also employed. Secondly, coming to the reason for thin, for the whole poem, melancholy is the cause of thin which is originally invisible and untouchable, however, the word "gracile" specifies and visualizes melancholy. This poem begins with "melancholy" and ends with "gracile". Melancholy is the reason for gracile while gracile is the result of melancholy. It is the "gracile" that helps melancholy get a full embodiment. In addition to these obvious questions, teachers can also guide students to raise questions by themselves and solve on their own. Wei Shusheng, a famous educator, once said that teachers should not dominate the class. Students are the highlight of the class, and teachers just need to guide students to finish their tasks by themselves.

Ordinary High School Language Curriculum Standard (experiment) also said that Chinese course in high school should improve students' Chinese accomplishment further and enable students to develop strong language application ability, aesthetic ability and probing ability, besides, it should enhance their ethical and scientific quality, so as to lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning and personal development. It also mentioned that high school language

curriculum should pay attention to the development of students' emotions, so that students are nurtured in the aesthetic perception. Furthermore, it should cultivate students' aesthetic awareness and aesthetic attainment, and develop their ability of aesthetic perception and aesthetic creation. In fact, in the process of guiding students to solve the problem, students' aesthetic attainment has been cultivated. When people are doing the aesthetic appreciation, their physiological and psychological structure are infected and edified in a subtle way. Thus, not only their aesthetic ability and aesthetic attainment but also their temperament and spirit will get improved.

Understand a Writer with the Reflection on His Historical Background and Sublimate the Gist of the Work.

"Understand a writer with the reflection on his historical background (Zhi Ren Lun Shi)" is originated from *Mencius under Chapter 10000*. "Chanting his poems and reading his books without knowing this person, which is not acceptable. It is necessary to understand the writer and reflect his historical background. For example, is the melancholy in *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers* the same as it in *Slow, Slow Tune*? In order to answer this question, it is essential to comprehend the people and his historical background in this poem. Li Qingzhao (1084-1155) was a well-known Ci poetess in the Song Dynasty of China and recognized as a representative personage of the euphemistic ci poem in Song Ci Poems. Li Qingzhao had received well education when she was a child and showed her literary talent in the early years. Besides, as she was intelligent, she was called the eternal first talented woman.

With the experience of the North-South division, her Ci was divided into two periods by Nandu, pre one mainly expresses lovesickness while later one focuses on life of sorrow and her pain to the country. *To the Tune of Intoxicated under the Shadow of Flowers* is a pre period work and *Slow, Slow Tune* belongs to the later one. In Song Huizong period (1101), when Li Qingzhao was eighteen years old, she married to Zhao Mingcheng. However, two years later, Zhao Mingcheng worked outside, leaving her alone in Qingzhou. Nobody accompanies her in the Double Ninth Festival so Li Qingzhao made this Ci poem, showing her sorrow and sadness. The background of the poetry and the introduction about the poet's life encounter is not an isolated part of teaching but should merge into the whole process of the appreciation of poetry, making students put themselves to understand poet's thoughts and feelings.

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