

**Implementing the Education for International Understanding
and Cultivating students ' consciousness of Learning to Live Together**

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Abstract: The Education for International Understanding is not only an important theme of contemporary international education but also the important content of China's education policy and an integral part of China's quality education. In the basic education field, developing the Education for International Understanding teaching textbooks and implementing the Education for International Understanding teaching activities are beneficial to cultivate the students' awareness of learning to live together ,to promote the students ability of understanding the cross-culture better and to help the students to learn to live together in this interdependent world.

Keywords: Education for International Understanding; consciousness of learning to live together; cultural diversity

Education for International Understanding appeared in the early postwar period. After decades of development, it has become an important theme of contemporary international education , important content of China's education policy and also an integral part of quality education. Since entering the 21st century, the globalization of world economy, the standardization of science and technology and the development of information internet, have inevitably integrated the world into an indivisible world and have made the globalization continues to develop. Deepening mutual contact and interaction between nations have also riched the connotation and extension of Education for International Understanding .

I. The relationship between Education for International Understanding and consciousness of learning to live together

Education for International Understanding is one education which fundamentally aims at the elimination of international and global issues (war, national and racial discrimination and hatred, inequality in development, environment, and so on) .It stems from a belief: all international issues and global problems begins with and reasonably settle from people's minds. The building of concepts on understanding and cooperation in people's mind depends on education.^① Education for international understanding are educational activities which are performed by individual country under the

guidance of international social organizations. With the development of post-war decades, the connotation and extension of education for international understanding has become increasingly abundant.

1. Education for International Understanding is the education of peace and of learning to live together

Education for International Understanding aims at seeking peace and development of mankind on the premise that we admit the interdependent relationship among mankind and the diversity of international culture. Under the background of globalization, mutual understanding and tolerance should be greatly promoted among people of different cultural backgrounds, ethnics, and religions in different regions and countries. Through active cooperation, consensus on major issues concerning human survival and social development should be reached. Moreover, we need to foster people's co-existing awareness and symbiotic consciousness and to probe into the humankind's common values, by means of which, every individual can have a better understanding of the world, himself and other people. We can change factual interdependence relationship among human beings into conscious unity and mutual aid.^② It emphasizes the fostering of consciousness of coexistence, symbiosis and peace.

"We live in an age of interdependence." ^③ Many issues facing every country today such as issues of energy, food, population, environment, disarmament, development have become "global issues" that can not be resolved by individual countries. Taking the nuclear-leak accident in Japan as an example, the nuclear radiation after it has become a big concern far beyond the border of Japan. It has greatly affected the neighboring countries and regions. It needs the common efforts of these countries to resolve this nuclear-leak problem.

2. Education for International Understanding is an Education of cultural diversity

The cultures of different countries and nations are plural and varied. We, human beings, need to learn to tolerate and respect each other, so that we could live together in peace. Meantime, different cultures have intrinsic unity, so there are great possibilities for people to establish common understanding.

When implementing Education for International Understanding in elementary and secondary schools, we can focus our teaching on people's basic necessities of life,

aesthetics, cultural relics, mutual social aid, love of life, the functions of international organizations and global issues to help students to understand the differences between cultures ,to analyze and understand the formation of the cultural differences and to form the awareness of peace culture, cultural democracy, cultural tolerance and to have an attitude of mutual respect, pride and esteem among difference cultures, thus promoting the inheriting, exchanging and blending of different cultures.

Understanding foreign cultures, learning the essence of other cultures, being good at dealing with people of different nations are the basic literacy of contemporary "global village".

II. Development of teaching textbooks: cultivate students ' consciousness of learning to live together

In the eighth round in the reform of basic education courses, to safeguard and satisfy the course requirements for different areas, schools and students, China has adopted a three-level curriculum management systems including state, local and school levels. This system creates favorable conditions for provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions to develop curriculum with local materials . Having grasped this opportunity of education policy, Beijing Institute of Education actively developed the international understanding teaching materials and constructed a platform to implementing the international understanding education and to help students fostering their awareness of learning to live together.

1.Building a theoretical framework and educational objectives consistent with students ' cognitive level^④

On the basis of the sprits and declaration of relevant conferences for international understanding education by UNESCO, the fact of china's social development and the need of China's quality education ,We have constructed a theoretic framework of Education and set up key concepts and research perspectives for international understanding. The specific aims are as follows:

Based on the acceptance of our own culture, teenagers should get to know the origin, development and present situation of other countries' history ,culture ,social customs; They should master the skills of communicating with people from foreign countries and behavior norms and cultivate the basic common value of human beings; Learn and correctly analyze the development of different countries' politics and economy and its effect on our own country. We also want them to understand and handle international issues such as economic competition and cooperation, ecological

environment, the coexistence of multi-cultures and peace and development; Cultivating their sentiment of kindness, fairness , democracy, cleverness, peace-loving, concerning others so that they can shoulder the responsibility and duty of “ global citizen”.

Generally speaking, by performing international understanding education ,our aim is to foster their awareness of the cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious group, to show their respect for people of different countries and their cultures, civilizations, social norms and ways of life, to guide them to respect the diversity of culture and maintain the world peace.

International Understanding Education is an education of values.We just regulate the the concept that students of different ages should form but we have no specific restrictions of activities forms and knowledge content. We encouraged students to cultivate their concepts by studying hot social issues, things happening in their lives and their own life experiences. We also have no specific restrictions on the quantity of their knowledge and the quantity of their activities. The limit is set up on whether the students can form their values.

The concept formation goes through the following process: get to know—become familiar—experience—get the feeling—set up the concept—analyze and deal with the new situation by using the concept. Chart One; key concepts of education for international understanding and ability development.

Students of different ages have different Cognitive structure , communication range and communication levels, so we refine the core concepts and capacity development goals in accordance with different grade levels

Table 1: core concepts of education and capacity development for international understanding ^⑤

Grade	Key concepts	Sub concepts	Ability development
Grade four	Multi culture	difference tolerance	Expressing and communicating at an early stage Compare, classify preliminary analogize and generalize

Grade five	humanism responsibility	Respect and communication National characteristics and universality	Expressing and communicating at an early stage Compare, classify preliminary analogize and generalize Search and sort out resources
Grade seven	Coexistence	Respect and communication Competition and cooperation Independence and reliance	Search and sort out resources Primarily analyze, assume and infer
Grade eight	Reform and Responsibility	Take in, localize Integrate, innovate	Collect and sort out information and use it primarily Analyze, assume, infer, apply

At primary and middle school, education for international understanding is implemented by studying the culture phenomenon to find out political and economic origin . The content for study is chosen according to students understanding for multi-culture so as to form a logical system through a culture line: (1). varied multi-culture, which means people all over the world adopt the living style that fits for their natural environment and production mode.(2) the sense of pride and dignity for culture , that is the dialectical relationship between racial characteristics and universality, (3)culture tolerance and respect, that means that each country decides its own culture and each culture contributes to the culture of the world. (4) key culture elements with common value, that is the inheritance, interflow and integration of culture.

2.The teaching material 《International understanding》 has the following characteristics: ⑥

(1)**Comprehensive:** which is firstly indicated by its content covering facts and phenomenon of literature, history, art, politics, law, environment, population, resources, development of natural sciences to lead students to learn to look at the world in a reasonable way, gets to know how the people in the world think of our country, then to

integrate the ideal of international understanding with real life of man kinds, and finally integrate concepts, knowledge, ability and attitude in a logical way.

(2) **culture-based:** the textbooks are based on the main line of culture, which not only embodies the thought of peace culture and democratic culture and also explain the implication of culture difference and unity, emphasizing culture's pride and dignity ,tolerance and respect as well as inheritance and integration.

(3) **people-based:** the teaching material presents student-oriented concept with content close to students' daily life, stimulating their learning interests easily, representing key common social issue globally and the content is represented by ways that students enjoy, like case study, material study, tasks, charts and other activities, emphasizing learning methods of autonomous research and experiencing to help them get new understanding and new concept in this learning process.

(4) **flexibility:** The content of the textbooks is the form to help students build up the key concepts of international understanding. In choosing the teaching content ,teachers are not restricted in the order and time, having complete freedom to choose and integrate both content and activities.

(5) **Openness:** teaching resources are dynamic and open, and ways of thinking and problem solving are not limited , embodying the concepts of devising strategies, selecting the better ones and balancing

III. Teaching activities: cultivate the students' conciousness of learning to live together

“The guiding principle of National middle and long term educational development plan(2010-2020 ”pointed China will encourage primary and secondary schools engage in various forms of foreign exchanges, actively expand students ' international horizons and improve cross-cultural communication ability and promote education for international understanding. ”This plan sets out the importance of education for international from the height of the national education policy. This prospect has also embodied in compulsory education curriculum standard version 2011 of all subjects. For example, Moral and Social Courses Standard under (2011 version) pointed out that: "love homeland, value history and cultural of homeland, has sense of belonging and pride of China, respect different cultural differences of different countries, preliminarily form open international

vision"; Compulsory Education Thought Moral Courses Standard under (2011 version) pointed out that: "identity China culture, inherit revolutionary tradition, carry forward national spirit, has global awareness and international vision, love peace"; General High School Courses Reform Program under (2003 version) noted that: "properly learn oneself, respect for others, learning communication and cooperation, has team spirit, understand cultural diversity, has open awareness with the world" and so on .

As an education of values , Education for International Understanding is needed to transformed the education concepts into teaching behavior by teaching activities. The concept formation goes through the following process: get to know—become familiar—experience—get the feeling—set up the concept—apply and deal with the new situation by using the concept.

In General, cultivating students ' consciousness of coexistence through can be achieved through curriculum construction, subject education activities, social practice, intercommunication. Particularly, interdisciplinary teaching of national curriculum is the main way.

Interdisciplinary teaching is fused together among the teaching of several subjects. This means the crossover and convergence of knowledge of different disciplines and subjects in the teaching and learning processes. Interdisciplinary teaching is reflected in different combination of teaching course resources, the cooperation of teachers team, teaching ability

Currently, the schools which have implemented Education for international understanding mainly mine the content that contains international understanding education knowledge from the subjects of English, Chinese, and History, Moral and Geography .They penetrate the thought of , international understanding as far as possible. Students can understand Earth, know the knowledge of the world , set up the concept of "global village", and "I am a world citizen", thus guiding the students to learn coexistence, , cooperation and learn to live together.

Interdisciplinary teaching helps to break down disciplinary barriers between teachers of different disciplines, to cultivate students ' comprehensive ability, to make teachers teach and students learn more productively. In interdisciplinary teaching, teachers should emphasize students ' independence, cooperation, probing learning, pay attention to

guiding students' learning processes, learning methods and cultivate students' cultivation of cross-cultural communication ability, and continuously improving classroom teaching control ability.

In addition to interdisciplinary teaching methods, we also offer courses on international issues in primary and secondary schools to implement the education for international understanding. For example, the opening of curricula about World History, World Geography, International Economics, International Politics and so on. Our purpose is to make the students learn the diversity of different culture, understand the historical courses and tendency of the world development, then promote their international understanding and learn to live together.

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^② Delors.Learning:The Treasure Within [M] Beijing:Education and Science Publishing House.1996.

^③ Luobote·Joumph, Joseph Nye.The Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition[M]Beijing:Beijing University Publishing House. 2001.

^④ Wang Yuanmei. Review and thoughts about the implementation of Education for International Understanding in Beijing[J].Journal of Beijing Institute of Education. 2010.04.

^⑤ Li Jing.Reflection on implementing Education For International Understanding in China[J].XinHua News Agency, 2005.14

^⑥ Wang Yuanmei.Understanding Cooperation and Share- the Theory and Practice Exploration of the Education for International Understanding [M].Beijing:Beijing Publishing House.2011.