

From a Word to a World: An Innovative Teaching at a Higher Educational Institution in China

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China's higher educational reform created innovative ways to cultivate talents urgently needed for social development during the late 1970s. This paper investigates an enlightening teaching reform of English major on the basis of Tianshui Normal College in Gansu Province. The historical course has three typical examples: enthusiastically fostering talents, seeking more profound cultural exchanges, and moving educational reform forward. Professor Hu Dingyi, as a leading implementer, explored and created a good learning atmosphere for collegiate students beyond the classroom teaching and achieved remarkable results. His innovative thoughts are of great value to promote classroom teaching for students' gaining the most precious noble ideal, ethnic culture and more subject expertise.

Keywords: innovative higher education, ethnic culture and integration, Oriental Smile, enlightening teaching

INTRODUCTION

The higher education intends to develop professionals for society. During the late 1970s, the initial wave of reform and opening up policy cultivated in higher education tens of thousands of new generations full of patriotism and craftsmanship in China. Professor Hu Dingyi, over 50 years old at that time, one of the pioneering English major at Tianshui Normal College, ambitiously explored and created an interdisciplinary method to enrich collegiate students' mind during those years. He set up an instructional reformative program to train the students with innovative thinking as an essential goal. He also guided those young to acquire professional linguistic theory to extract novel ideas implied in the course on the one hand; on the other hand, he knew the excellent traditional Chinese ethnic culture, such as the artistic conception defined by the "Oriental Smile" of a statue in the Maiji Grottoes Mountains, which was listed into the UNESCO *World Heritage List*. The unique vision of that over 1,500-year-old statue on the internationally famed ancient "Silk Road" shows purity, kindness and a desire for eternal peace. He also presciently suggested his students to delve into several world-famous English masterpieces, one of which was enrolled into the "Reading Guide Catalogue" for young students by the Ministry of Education in China more than 40 years later.

Hu's teaching style is unique, and he analyzes cases in detail, making inference from a fact to make students deeply understand the objective law. His lecture is so witty that engages students to gain the precious noble ideal, ethnic culture and more subject expertise. Thus, he is esteemed as father by his students, for "whoever taught me once is as respectable as father for life", as is put in a book titled *Great-Grandfather's Family Education*, compiled in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) (Chen, et al., 2019).

NATIONALITY-ANCHORED COURSE

Dynamic and vigorous national spirits are crucial motivation to make a nation sustainable among the forest of countries worldwide. During the long historical period, the Chinese nation has condensed and refined its distinctive national spirits, such as innovation, peace, friendship, etc. A clearly defined objective of Chinese higher educational reform was to cultivate a new generation of inheriting the national spirits.

Innovation as the Constant Competitiveness

Civilization and development are eternal goals pursued by human beings. In October 2005, China selected the first batch of national civilized cities, villages, and units through years of strict review contrasted by the examinational index systems, including 119 scientific criteria. Tianshui Normal College in Gansu Province won the first "National Civilized Unit" honorary title batch since its outstanding educational performance reached those standards. The English major is a typical example in the college. This major has been perfected day by day after years of disciplinary construction. There had been Department of English, Department of Business English, Linguistic Service and Training Center, Gansu Regional Cultural Translation Center, etc., by the end of 2023. It began to recruit Master of Education in Subject Teaching (English) in 2013. As one of the pioneers in the collegiate history of linguistic disciplinary construction, Hu Dingyi's excellent academic attainment, innovative teaching ideas, and flexible managerial methods thrived in English major teaching. Standing on the podium in the classroom every time, he was hale and hearty, passionately lecturing with a magnetic voice, charming, intellectual and philosophical. His teaching practice, removing staleness and bringing forth freshness, was like a ship sailing afar through stormy waters in the sea of higher education.

The nuclear force that drives a nation to prosperity is innovation. The innovative spirit is the first intellectual concept imparted to students by Hu Dingyi. He always carefully plans and duly improves the didactic syllabus to elaborate enterprising academic ideas to students. The syllabus involves three key aspects: the essential educational elements, the frontier of related industrial needs and the curriculum's outline. He particularly emphasizes that learning is never to mechanically memorize English vocabulary but establish innovative thoughts, which requires to be tested in future career., in rigid adherence to correctness to serve the public.

As an ancient Chinese philosopher named Confucius once said, "Learning without thought means a labor lost, and thought without learning is perilous" (recorded by Confucius' disciples). Professor Hu's teaching never confined himself to the book, but connected with the developmental trend at home and abroad. He always reminded us that the information and technology develop rapidly, and we must try our best to keep up with it. Knowledge-driven changes in society and economy require individuals to quickly acquire new skills to broaden horizons. We should consciously adapt to the rising commercial living surroundings and skilfully deal with complex problems in work to better serve the society with innovative education methods and contribute to future national economic construction. Hu repeatedly stated that students should fulfil two specific educational missions after graduation. Firstly, they should ambitiously bring forth new ideas and explore new methods of interdisciplinary education. Secondly, they need to keep international contact and strive for opportunities to participate more in international academic exchanges. These notions are warmly welcomed among students. Thus, the erudition of Hu was deeply admired even when his students took on the teaching career years later.

Such scholars as Freya Wright-Brough, Phoebe Hart and Sean Maher et al. believed innovative knowledge should be transmitted through "a spiral curriculum course structure" to achieve "exemplars of aspirational learning outcomes." As they advocated, "It is a must to confirm how the co-creative process

embedded in a spiral curriculum structure facilitates students' innovative opportunities within a community of practice" (Wright-Brough, Hart and Maher, et al., 2023). Undoubtedly, the above assertion is an essential educational target for universities to foster students' basic theory and improve their practical ability. It deserves our attention that the above scholars studied and worked together at both the Academy of Learning and Teaching, and the School of Creative Practice, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

It is also firmly believed by professors Noreen O'Leary, Nancy Salmon and Marie O'Donnell et al. that "Practice-based inter-professional education (IPE) is both a valuable and complex model of education practice." Participants must be "underpinned by educational theory" and identify "the key factors to be considered before, during and after IPE-based practice." Particular emphasis should be placed on developing "inter-professional collaboration as well as international feedback via conference workshops (O'Leary, Salmon and O'Donnell et al., 2023)." Examples prove that broadening international horizons is critical to achieving high-quality collegiate education. It is worth mentioning that those professors teach and research in institutions such as the School of Allied Health, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, Health Research Institute, University of Limerick, Ireland.

Professor Hu Dingyi adheres to the idea of thought guiding practice. It is a constant competitiveness to build students' innovative thinking rather than imparted knowledge. Innovation is to transcend stereotypes and forge ahead. Any transcendental performance is the combination of creative thinking and scientific practice. Hu's insightfulness enlightened his students, who after graduation have contributed to economic and cultural development at home and abroad. For example, some have cultivated thousands of talents urgently needed in rural areas while they engaged in teenage education in the Chinese western regions. Others have developed the pioneering international economic cooperation between China, Zimbabwe and South Africa and successfully implemented the "Belt and Road Initiative" through industrial projects.

National Spirit of Oriental Smile

National cultural deposit sets the foundation of innovation and productivity. Chinese time-honored and refined traditional culture has forged the Chinese enterprising spirit generation after generation. Professor Hu's teaching has a distinctive feature of adeptly elaborating traditional Chinese culture to enlighten young collegiate students. Along the famous "Silk Road" in ancient China, there are many historical and cultural sites. The picturesque spot named Maiji Grottoes Mountains is one of tourist areas, near Tianshui Normal College. It was often visited by Hu leading a team of his students and buried in their mind for ever.

On June 22, 2014, at the 38th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar, the Maiji Grottoes Mountains successfully was selected into the *World Heritage List* as one of the sites of the "Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor" jointly submitted by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This Routes Network "stretches from Chang'an/Luoyang, the central capital of China in the Han and Tang dynasties (202 B.C.—907 A.D.), to the Zhetysu region of Central Asia. It took shape between the 2nd century B.C. and 1st century A.D. and remained in use until the 16th century, linking multiple civilizations and facilitating far-reaching exchanges in trade, religion, science, technology, culture and arts." In the routes network, there are thirty-three components including "capital cities and palace complexes of various empires and Khan kingdoms, trading settlements, Buddhist cave temples and sections of the Great Wall" etc. (China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, 2014). Maiji Grottoes Mountains is on the first list of China's key scenic spots because of its peculiar grottoes, exquisite clay sculptures, luxuriant vegetation, geologies and landforms, and mountains. Its main area covers 142km² including Maiji Grottoes Mountains, the Immortal Cliff, the Stone Gate, the Quxi Stream and Jieting Hot Spring. Maiji Grottoes Mountains was first built in ancient Chinese Late Qin Dynasty (384—417) constructed successively during the 12 dynasties, which are West Qin (385—400, 409—431), Northern Wei (386—534), West Wei (535—556), Northern Zhou (557—581), Sui (581—618), Tang (618—907), Five Dynasties (907—960), Song (960—1279), Yuan (1271—1368), Ming (1368—1644) and Qing (1636—1912). Despite many earthquakes and conflagration, 194 caves, 7,200 sculptures, and 1,000 square meter fresco are excavated on the cliff about 30-80 meters high from the ground, and more than 70 percent of caves were excavated in the North Dynasty (386-581). Those clay sculptures are still well-preserved with

excellent art, reaching the peak of early sculptural works. They represent the preliminary fusion of ancient Chinese traditional culture and Indian Buddhist culture. Subsequently, the syncretic cultural treasures stand out as new and robust Chinese characteristics, captivating with artistic appeal. For the natural plants and beautiful scenery of Maiji Grottoes Mountains, there are two plant areas named China-Japan and China-Himalayas in the mountain. The plants are ranged from North China, Central China and the Himalayas. There exist “223 genera, 873 categories, 2,738 species of higher plants, including 53 genera, 98 categories, 138 species of moss plants, 21 genera, 43 categories, and 92 species of ferns, 141 genera, 712 classes, 2,456 species of angiosperms, and 8 genera, 20 categories, and 48 species of gymnosperms”. There are also many wild animals including 12 categories, 34 genera, and 95 species of birds, and 6 categories, 18 genera, and 29 species of mammals, which belong to 6 categories, 7 genera, and 18 species of rare animals under national protection” (National Commission of PRC, 2001). In brief, they display an intricate historical course and natural scenic abundance.

The exquisite sculptures of the Maiji grottoes Mountains attracted the overall visitors. While revelling in the splendid civilization created by humans 1,596 years ago, Professor Hu put forward a sparkling question: “what is the most influential ancient sculpture?” There came multiple voices from his students, such as the one that is vivid, informative or antique. Hu, while consenting to them, made a supplement: “What makes Maiji Grottoes Mountains distinctive is the smiling sculptures.” Then, he specifically mentioned Cave 133 and spoke in detail about the treasures therein.

The maximum space and the most preserved sculptures are in the inner part of Cave 133. A smiling little acolyte is the most famous one in this cave (Pu, 2020). This 88-cm-tall sculpture shows his age of about ten years old. The little monk quietly stands, wearing a kasaya and beaming a sweet smile. His smile spreads from the corners of his mouth and thin eyebrows, mixing delight and timidity. An unprecedented sculptural art— “Oriental Smile,” is so true to life and rich in culture (Fu and Du, 2003). Human emotion essentially mirrors social circumstances, and artwork is its microcosm. A smile lasting more than 1,500 years has been emerging on this little monk’s complexion, and it is the most extended innocent smile in human history. The human most frontal emotional expression is vividly displayed on this statue: purity and innocence, and beauty and kindness, worshipping for eternal peace.

Theresa Flanigan, associate professor at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, USA, remarked: “One of the most famous emotional expressions in the history of art is the simile in Leonardo da Vinci’s painting of *Mona Lisa* in the Musée du Louvre in Paris” (1503—1517 or so). Further, “the simile” of the painting reveals “Mona Lisa’s Smile as a socially constructed emotional expression, which can best be comprehended by contextualizing it within the particular Italian Renaissance emotional community in which the portrait was made and viewed” (Flanigan, 2019). Indeed, the “Mona Lisa’s Smile” is a cultural treasure dedicated to ancient Europe. It is a typical expression of the female multi-emotions in that era. People’s appreciation also manifested a social recognition and resonance at that time. However, the vivid “Oriental Smile” has a unique flavor and inimitable charm in Cave 133 of the Maiji Grottoes Mountains (Peng, 2020). According to research, this statue was carved in China during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386—534). Leonardo da Vinci (1452—1519), one of the “three masters of art” after the Italian Renaissance, painted the *Mona Lisa*’s smile nearly a thousand years later. Undoubtedly, the “Oriental Smile” presented by the little monkish statue is a treasure the Chinese people had dedicated to human history and civilization even longer ago (Zhao, 2014).

Thanks to the ancient Chinese artists, who with their wisdom unreservedly engraved humankind’s true nature and preferences on the little monk’s complexion, the descendants are expected to inherit and pursue peace and tranquillity. Professor Hu, with sincere words and earnest wishes, taught his students in the front of the caves: “Descendants should inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture and grow to be first-class educators with a smile and love, and build the young into talents in economic construction.” Even if most students would blur their memory once they come back from scenic spots, together with the unparalleled beauty of the “Oriental Smile” (Wang, 2021), the heartfelt teachings of Professor Hu are as ever tinkling in their mind. As a result, the Chinese national spirits are passed from generation to generation through diversified and innovative teaching.

INTEGRATION OF CULTURES AMONG NATIONALITIES

Human history indicates that cultural exchanges are the driving force for civilization prosperity. Based on Professor Hu's teachings, the collegiate students come to deeply understand the social integration through cultural exchanges.

It is one of the highlights of Professor Hu to practice innovative teaching to elaborate cultural communication and integration in the social developmental processes. He encourages students to read English classics to explore multicultural integration and its social effects. For example, Professor Hu, in class and after class, narrated with different methods the story of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, written by Mark Twain (1835—1910), a master of short novelists in the world. His teaching objectives were sound and reasonable. On the one hand, students were supposed to seek historical transition and enrich knowledge from different social circumstances. They were encouraged to acquire excellent traditional Chinese culture and enhance national confidence and pride. Hu's teaching was totally forward-looking. In 2020, the Ministry of Education of PRC officially stipulated the "Reading Guide Catalogue (RGC)" for young students, including 300 kinds of books carefully selected from abundant ancient and modern works at home and abroad. There were 76.7 % Chinese books and 23.3 % foreign ones in that country-level RGC. The Ministry of Education (ME) pointed out that the RGC aims at guiding students to read worthy books." Students are required to "enhance scientific literacy, inherit Chinese national spirits, broaden international horizons, and improve comprehensive quality." The Developmental Center for Basic Educational Curricular Materials of ME, is entrusted to assume specific responsibilities. The sequence number of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was No.89 in RGC (Developmental Center for Basic Educational Curricular Materials of ME, 2020).

Professor Hu's innovative teaching unfolded from multiple levels. He first and briefly introduced Mark Twain, who was formerly known as Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He grew up at Hannibal Town (City at present) in northeastern Missouri State, where flowed the Mississippi River, and once worked on a steamboat during his salad days. As a result, the river became the backdrop for his many famous stories, an enduring presence in his artistic concepts. He profoundly narrated the social changes in the Mississippi River Valley in the 1870s, as accounted in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Thus, the students understood some exciting history. It is a particular period of rapid industrialization and frequent social changes in the United States. The novel manifests the economic and cultural status of various ethnic groups on both sides of the river. It shows people's behaviors on ships, such as sailors and passengers, local officials, immigrants, etc. The novel objectively discloses the historical process of multi-ethnic groups living together and integrating with different cultural backgrounds. As Hu observed, "The exquisite and vivid description of the Mississippi River, flowing under the moonlight, running miles-long with silence, keeps lingering in readers' mind with artistic charm". It was reminded by Hu that some Chinese people, like immigrants from other countries, made their way across the sea to the Mississippi River Basin. Those new immigrants bore hardships and stood hard work to create wealth. Through pioneering labor, many different ethnic groups integrated into oneness. As for students' comprehension, more classics are encouraged to read in order to enrich their life and enhance their capacity. Nevertheless, a hasty browse seems shallow and ridiculous! Rather, they are urged to read more classics in their future career. An equally crucial motivating force is the teaching of Professor Hu, which keeps refreshing from time to time. They went to the China National Library in Beijing to obtain historical, economic, and cultural data about that far-off basin for more information and broad horizons. The world-renowned literary works are favorably received by the readers around the world, fostering their soul and cultivating their taste. It is widely considered thought-provoking in the following perspectives.

Integration of Chinese Immigrants Into American Society

The historical stories of Chinese immigrants in the Mississippi River Basin are rich but tough, manifesting a robust and enlightening significance. The lower region of the Mississippi River Delta (the Delta) is a vast and vital part of the American landscape. This alluvial broad plain reaches from southern Illinois to the southeastern tip of Louisiana, covering over 90,000 miles of rivers and streams over 3 million

acres of land (National Park Service, 2022). The ancient Mississippian cultural activity was the last primary prehistoric regional form in the North American continent, lasting from around 700 A.D. to the arrival of the first European explorers. At various times throughout the development and definition of “Mississippian” as a cultural tradition, maize has been cast as a central feature of Mississippian adaptation. Besides, “other traits include long-distance exchange” (Vanderwarker, Bardolph and Scarry, 2017) and the development of ranked social systems, etc. The culture was centered on maize, beans, squash, and other crops, resulting in “large concentration of population in towns along riverine bottomlands” (Anderson, 2017).

John Jung, former honorary professor of psychology at California State University, Long Beach (1962-2007), published a long paper titled *Chapter 6 Chinese in the South: Mississippi Delta Chinese Migration Chains* in 2016. He narrated Chinese immigrant history in the Mississippi River Basin. Chinese immigrants gradually moved to many places, including the Delta, after their arrival in the United States. “The Delta Chinese settled over a large area, covering roughly one hundred miles from just below Memphis in the north to just above Vicksburg in the South and extending roughly twenty to thirty miles from the Mississippi River on the west toward the eastern foothills...The Delta Chinese formed a unique community in many respects” (Jung, 2016). It is true that many Chinese families’ forefathers believed in what Confucius once said: “Never travel afar for the sake of filial respect” (Confucius’s disciples, 540—400 B.C.), for the concept of family union and elders-respect are privileged. However, the Chinese immigrant wave began in the 19th century during the Qing Dynasty (1636—1912). Many Chinese took a departure from their hometowns, heading for strange places overseas. Why was it happening? How was that? Bearing in mind the enlightenment of Professor Hu, some students continued to explore Chinese immigrant history in the United States.

Driven by market demand in the 1870s, some Americans cultivated large cotton fields in the South. Cotton sowing and picking needed a huge amount of laborers. Dr. John Thornell published in 2004 a paper titled “*Struggle for Identity in the Most Southern Place on the Earth: The Chinese in the Mississippi Delta*”. As he stated: “In June 1869, at a meeting in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, cotton planters built the Arkansas River Valley Emigration Company.” He wrote that one corporate decision was to recruit Chinese laborers. Dr. Thornell once served as the provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of North Alabama from 2009 to 2017. According to the scholar, the cotton planters believed that they would try to recruit Chinese laborers, and they might be “great numbers and at cheap rates, and made efficient in the cultivation of cotton, and are malaria-proof during the climate change.” Dr. Thornell also gave an example: “Recruiters were dispatched to Hong Kong (in China) in search of farm laborers. Two ships, the *Villa de St. Lo* and the *Charles Auguste*, arrived in New Orleans in 1870 with approximately four hundred Chinese laborers” (Thornell, 1992). The vast land near the lower Mississippi River estuary is under New Orleans’s jurisdiction. Thus, others followed suit, and many “labor contractors sought Chinese immigrant men as cheap laborers for the Delta cotton fields.” On March 8, 1880, the *New York Times* reported Chinese laborers titled with “Chinese for the South”. “Planters in their regions were seeking Chinese laborers,” said the author, and then he concluded: “Probably some more Chinese will be dispatched to the Southern Mississippi in a few weeks”.

Official documents in the Delta accurately record Chinese laborers’ distribution. For example, “Census records for Mississippi in 1870 listed seventeen Chinese farm laborers in Bolivar County who came from Hong Kong”, and “In Arkansas, over fifty of the seventy-three Chinese residents listed in 1870 for Arkansas County were farm laborers” (Jung, 2016). Chinese migrants, including some teenagers, moved and worked from state to state and finally came to the Delta. Those migrants planted, weeded and picked cotton in the broad fields there. They spent long hours bending over to pick cotton under the scorching sun. Long work hours exceed ten hours a day. The housings where the laborers lived were low, and simple huts without clean drinking water. They survived only by a rough diet with small portions. Nevertheless, Chinese laborers along with others opened up vast cotton fields and produced significant amounts of cotton to sell to other places.

The Chinese laborers came to the United States to pursue their dream. Even facing numerous difficulties, those who travelled across the Pacific did not complain at all. Rather, they assumed responsibilities to survive the family and thrive on the land. Together with the immigrants from other

countries, they actively built small towns and created new businesses. A new life began to be gradually established in a strange country.

Co-Existence of Chinese Tradition With American Culture

Professor Hu's innovative teachings are so thought-provoking that have inspired his students as deeply as ever. In elaborating the story of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, he stated that the Mississippi River Valley was a place where people from India, African, UK, China and other nations lived together and multi-ethnic economy and culture integrated each other. By successively collecting and reading some relevant works, students came to realize the empowerment in the innovative teaching of Hu.

It is found that after arriving in the Delta, Chinese immigrants as hired laborers first picked cotton in the ranchero's fields. They seized some potential commercial opportunities by hard work and quick wits. Some opened grocery stores following frugality and loans from relatives (Loewen, 1987). Professor Charles Reagan Wilson researched the Chinese immigrant history in the American South. He mentioned a prominent Chinese named Wong On and his work and life. Wang On, a native of Guangdong Province in China, was a well-known early foreign settler in the Mississippi River Delta. Born in Chinese hometown in 1844, Wang, as an employed laborer, later came to California in 1860 to build the railroad that would cross the American continental east and west coasts. Shortly afterward, he again was hired to pick cotton on a plantation near Leland, Washington County in Mississippi. He married a black woman later. Then, he opened a grocery store at Stoneville in Washington County. Wilson believed that "The first Chinese grocery store in Mississippi likely appeared in the early 1870s." He described Wang's grocery store in some detail. "His first grocery was probably like those of other Chinese groceries in this period — small, one-room shacks which carried only a few basics, such as meat, corn meal, and molasses. The people who shopped at his store were mostly poor African Americans working on plantations, relatively well-off laborers who had cash from their work draining swamps and cutting timber in the Delta in the late 19th century..." The store's initial operation was complex, facing different demands for commodities. "Merely a sack of corn meal was a complicated matter—the Chinese store-owners initially did not speak English, and their customers failed to understand Chinese." However, the Chinese overcame difficulties and worked hard to learn how to run business. It won the praise of Wilson: "Hard work, experience in business operations, and a reputation for commercial integrity soon led to good credit ratings for the Chinese merchants" (Wilson, 2002). It is worth mention that Wilson was once the Center for the Study of Southern Culture Director at the University of Mississippi.

For another example, Tuck Chon or George Seup, also born in Guangdong Province in 1912, came to the United States at 13 to seek refuge with his elder brother, Shui Tuck Hi and worked in his laundry in Chicago for several years. In 1929, George Seup came to the Mississippi River Delta. He joined his elder brothers and an uncle who had two grocery stores at Greenville in Washington County, one in a black neighbourhood and the other in a white one. "In 1940, George returned to China for an arranged marriage, returning with his bride in 1941 to operate the MIN SANG grocery store, which he operated for over seventy years in Greenville" (Quon, 1999).

It is proved that it really matters that Chinese immigrants followed the traditional Chinese virtues: "A Gentleman is respectful and courteous, never negligent to others, since all are brotherhood in this world" (Confucius' Disciples, 540 B.C.—400 B.C.), which was firmly believed and practiced in running business. Therefore, Chinese grocers carved out a successful and unique role one after another. Chinese immigrants set up their stores in the black neighbourhood of the Delta to make it more convenient for customers. "Chinese grocers generally lived in the back of their stores, making it possible to open early and close late. Finally, and more importantly, they established a more informal and cordial relationship with black laborers of cotton field and were willing to extend credit to reliable customers in the first month, which was unprecedented for white grocers" (Jung, 2016). Despite the different cultures between China and Africa, Chinese immigrants in shop management adhered to the traditional commercial philosophy— "Harmony leads to wealth". Hearts can be connected by kindly treating each other. As a result, they run their grocery stores with integrity and intelligence.

“Chinese immigrants, even though they lacked proficiency in English, succeeded in operating grocery stores. For example, one remedy for poor language skills was to display goods so that customers could point to what they could reorder by showing it to their supplier” (Jung, 2016). Those stores were so successful that almost every Chinese family soon engaged in running business there (Lagerstrom, 2017). The yellow-skinned Chinese socialized with the dark-skinned Africans, keeping honest and trustworthy to each other. Chinese shopkeepers were polite to customers, promoting their commercial credibility. With good popularity, fair trading, and higher turnover, the grocery stores’ sales expanded, and profits increased eventually. For example, when the population reaches over 40,000 at peak times at Greenville in the Delta, Chinese-owned grocery stores added up to 50 simultaneously (Shepherd, 1999). As mentioned above, the Chinese MIN SANG grocery store in Greenville is still in operation today, bringing convenience to the residents in communal daily life. Therefore, Jerome Sue, the shop-owner, is highly esteemed by the locals.

After delving into the grocery store opened by Wang On, one of the earliest Chinese immigrants, Professor Wilson believed that one critical successful factor of running a store was to demonstrate the dual function: sell products and share culture. “The Chinese grocery was, to some extent, an agreeable place for African Americans in the Delta: a place to chitchat, kill time, and even job-hunt from landowners who would offer assistance” Therefore, he concluded: “They won the friendship of both the African American clients and the White American natives” (Wilson, 2002). This typical case study reveals a universal truth. The descendants of Chinese immigrants got over difficulties in the business and trade in the Mississippi River Delta, and contributed to the social and economic development of the United States and eventually integrating their life into the continent, hence the early Chinese Americans.

From above, Chinese immigrants have shown the essence of China’s centuries-old virtues, adhering to honesty, and trustworthiness in interacting with other ethnic groups, thus gradually integrating themselves into the interracial, co-existent American society. Chinese immigrants have worked hard generation after generation. For instance, a report on the Chinese website of the *New York Times* on March 15, 2018, mentioned a fourth-generation Chinese-American, Taylor Pang, who worked for the State Department of Agriculture in Clarksdale City, Mississippi. He has operated a family farm to grow cotton with his father. He said: “I am a fourth-generation farmer in my family, and I want to carry on the tradition.” Another Chinese-American, Lark Rong, was very civic-minded. He passionately served the community and took the initiative to interact with white people. The three Chinese-Americans actively involved in the community and were successfully elected mayors, among whom was Lark Rong, the first Chinese-American mayor of Sledge City in Mississippi (Kung and Hahn, 2018).

Up to now, the case-based ethnic integrated teaching of Professor Hu Dingyi who took *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* as an example may shed light on international affairs concerning Chinese immigrants in other countries. In the current economic and cultural globalization, only by integrating different ethnic groups, exchanging traditional virtues and enhancing mutual understanding might the human civilization progress and prosper.

Identification of Success Depending on Details

Details, in the pursuit of perfection, contribute to an attitude and a realm. As a Chinese sage named Lao Tzu (c. 571 B.C.—471 B.C.) said: “Anything great in the world must be worked out of minute excellence” (Lao, c.473 B.C.). Professor Hu is meticulous and precise in his teaching, as is shown through his sentence analysis in the following.

Attention to the Relevant Tone of the Sentence and Its Correlated Social Situation

Professor Hu always meticulously prepares lesson in teaching. Because of his refined case analysis in education, he profoundly reveals its deep meaning. As one of his students recalled an annotation in his English homework: “Can you still remember our play in uncle’s home?” It replaces “Do you still remember our play in uncle’s home?” To differentiate “can you” and “do you”, Hu, admitting the superficial similarity, identified the tonal nuances that exist in social life. Grammatically, “can you” is a tentative question for solicit opinions or cordial interaction rather than bluntness or harshness. For language is a crucial tool for human life, it conveys people’s thoughts, knowledge, and feelings. But tones determine response. A

meticulous sentential study helps to reveal subtlety. Hu's careful analysis proved that the speaker and listener must have had a close social relationship in that case. Since both of them were familiar with the "uncle", they were likely to be family members or relatives. It might be at the uncle's house for them to play together. It was joyful to get together. Professor Hu kindly smiled and said: "Try to recall this scenario, a scene from a classic titled *The Chronicle of Zuo* written during the ancient Chinese Spring and Autumn Period (770—476 B.C.). "Family gatherings bring joy and harmony" (Zuo, c. 479 B.C.). Hu's careful analysis of the subtle meaning in the sentence revealed his meticulous attitude in work and insightful teaching into the law of nature.

Success depends on details. The successful revelation of cultural background by Professor Hu is merely worked out of an English phrase, mood, or a simple interrogative sentence. This insightful pedagogical analysis pays off remarkably. Any exquisite work can lead to the nature in itself. The production of elaborate artificial works is undoubtedly a prerequisite. Only through personal experience can one awaken his subconsciousness during the early cognitive stage. It is no exaggeration to speak highly of Professor Hu for his meticulous analysis in English teaching.

It is convinced that Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), German philosopher in the 20th century, observed that an artistic work is art simply for art's sake. He cited a pair of old shoes painted by a Dutch painter named Vincent Willem van Gogh (1853—1890), one of the greatest post-impressionists. In order to achieve the desired effect, a work often involves drawing of dozens of manuscripts. He carefully depicted scenes in different weather while observing the scenic changes from different perspectives. He was so addicted to the painting that he was even misunderstood by people. However, a meticulous art work always deserves much more than gold. For example, in March 1987, van Gogh's painting "Sunflowers" was auctioned off on the international market for a whopping £ 22.5 million after his death. Van Gogh left eight paintings related to shoes as one of themes during his life. Eugène-Henri-Paul Gauguin (1848—1903), a French post-impressionism painter, printmaker and sculptor, once saw van Gogh painting a pair of shoes again and then asked him why. Van Gogh answered: I wore those shoes when I taught the coal miners, and they have turned a part of me ever since. He added further: a pair of muddy shoes could be as engaging as a rose. Undoubtedly, a pair of old shoes tells people its days in the past. Thus, from every detail, the truth comes out by and by.

Philosophically, the painting of a pair of old shoes is illustrated by Heidegger. Rather than something ordinary, the painting presented to us something more. Heidegger profoundly analyzed it in the following (Heidegger, 1977):

From the dark opening of the well-worn inside of the shoes, the workers stare in the distance. The crudely solid heaviness of the shoes accumulates the tenacity of the slow trudge through the far-stretching and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by raw wind. On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. The shoes vibrate with the silent call of the earth.

—Martin Heidegger

Heidegger's description defies artistic appearance, which means that the denial frees our minds from a narrow technological approach of using existence as a consumptive object. It is necessary for artists and ordinary people alike if they want to reveal the value of their career. If this pair of shoes manifests the owner's daily toil and the various factors involving individual hard work, the shoes, then, suggest that the painting deals with the essence of multiple details as a whole rather than a particular existence. Professor Hu's exquisite teaching is as artistic as the painting. It enjoys a distinctive personal style that shows strong appeal and profoundly reveals its essence.

Implicit Emotional Impact of the Sentence

The implicit emotional impact of the sentence is attached with great importance by Professor Hu. The slight differences between the two sentences disclose the subtle emotions of humans. If a proper word

conveys the speaker's greatest concern, the listeners will receive the warmest care. Nevertheless, they would be severely hurt if they speak blunt and harsh to each other on the occasion that family members, relatives and colleagues are reminiscing the past together. For kind words render warmth and bring friendships long-lived, our society will get even more harmonious and prosperous. As a result, a simple interrogative sentence leads to such a profound truth due to Professor Hu's excellency in social-cultural references in his teaching.

Different English sentential moods conveyed disparate emotions, as is noted by Professor Hu, which is the high level of human mental activity that exerts a significant influence to a person. As is mentioned by the "James-Langer Theory of Emotion", emotions are entities, substances and forces that engage a person and pour into his/her body and mind, such as "as happy as a clam" or "break one's heart into pieces," etc.

William James (1842—1910) was one of the foremost ideologists during the late 19th century and the first educator to offer a psychology course in the United States. He was elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1904 and an academician of the National Academy of Sciences in 1906. Carl George Lange (1834—1900) was a Danish physician and psychologist. James in 1884 and Lange in 1885 independently developed the James-Lange Theory of Emotion successively (James, 1890; Lange, 1885). According to this theory, external stimuli lead to a physiological response. One's emotional reaction depends on how those physical reactions are interpreted. James found that the bodily change directly follows the perception of the exciting fact. Successively, the exact change we feel is the emotion (James, 1884). Emotion makes up such an impressive part of our lives, so it is no wonder that researchers make so much effort in understanding the how and why our emotions response.

It is of great help to learn and master the linguistic use or theory. As is shown in *Romance of the Western Chamber*, a famous drama of the ancient Chinese Yuan Dynasty (1271—1368), the linguistic and emotional effects are impressively remarked: "If kind words bring warmth to severe winter, harsh words may even make the summer icy" (Wang, 1295). Thus, mentally and physically, words may cause warmth or pain. The pragmatic pursuits are the excited and joyful trope. As psychologist Lange said: "It is known that our entire mode of existence, our daily dietetics, has been formed during generations essentially to promote the agreeable emotions, and to lessen or entirely to remove the pain" (Lange, 1885). The James-Langer Theory of Emotion was embodied by Professor Hu in combination of the traditional Chinese culture in his English teaching.

That teacher-student talk revolved around two common English sentences. Professor Hu began with an emotionally nuanced analysis of English sentential mood and ended with a social context connected by relevant kinship. Hu's teachings shed light on students even in their future career. It is also noted by Jean Lave, professor of Education and Geography at the University of California (UC), USA and Etienne Wenger, Ph.D. artificial intelligence at UC Irvine, who pushed forward a notion of "Situated Learning" that learning is a socialized process. The situated, relational nature of knowledge and the social, experiencing nature of effective learning are foundational theoretical principles of Situated Learning. It is a reciprocal determination among surroundings, personality, and behavior because these factors influence one another while shaping learning situations. They believed that learning should be viewed as a situational activity. Further, its core feature should be defined as a "natural integrating and experiencing process" (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

In short, Chinese teaching design and practice in combination with international theories such as the Theory of Emotion by James-Langer achieves an impressive effect. Professor Hu incorporates multifaceted, experiential circumstances in teaching to facilitate students to establish a meaningful connection between abstract concepts and practical social activities. In this way, the noble ideas, national culture, and scientific knowledge are received with a sound effect.

CONCLUSION

From a word to a world, Professor Hu's innovative teaching has laid a solid foundation for the contemporary sustainable development of Chinese higher education. As is known to all, Guan Zhong (c. 723—645 B.C.), a famous statesman during the Spring and Autumn period (770—476 B.C.), formulated a

renowned metaphor for talents cultivation—A ten-year plan is no better than planting a tree; a lifetime plan is no better than nurturing a talent (Guan, c. 646 B.C.). Thus, an innovative teaching is a must in the process of education. First, move educational reform forward. Innovation leads to a nation’s self-reliance. The innovative approaches of the elder generation are assumed to be adopted for building more talents for social, economic and cultural construction. Secondly, seek further cultural exchanges. With the prosperity of world’s classical works, different social cultures need further exchanges in order to be shared in human civilization. Finally, be devoted to education. As the guide of human soul, a teacher is to be devoted to the establishment of moral integrity and innovative enlightenment.

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