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The Strategies of Integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii into Chinese Language Speculative Reading Teaching for Upper Primary Grades—Take "Tian Ji's Horse Racing" as an Example

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Abstract. Thinking ability is a core literacy that Chinese students should possess. Upper primary grade is a crucial period for the development of abstract thinking. Enhancing the speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades is one of the important tasks of Chinese reading teaching. To further advance speculative reading teaching within the Chinese educational context, the study explores the strategy of integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii into speculative reading teaching. It firstly illustrates the feasibility of the integration of both from three perspectives, which are the resource provision, alignment with learning objectives, and improvement of the learning process. Based on the theory of p4cHI andtheCompulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition),the study takesTian Ji's Horse Racing,a text from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook uniformly compiled by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, as a case to propose three strategies. These strategies are based on the basic procedures of practicing p4cHI, which include facilitating local adjustments to these procedures, providing diverse learning tools and materials, and enhancing assessment. Therefore, this study provides useful references for the practice of speculative reading Teaching and facilitates the exploration of the educational practice of Philosophy for Children Hawaii in the context of China.

Keywords: Philosophy for Children Hawaii, Chinese language speculative reading teaching, upper primary grades, Tian Ji's Horse Racing

1. Introduction

The proposal of the core literacy of "thinking ability" and the task group of "critical reading and expression" in *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)* indicates the necessity of enhancing Chinese Language Speculative Reading Teaching [1]. The upper grades of primary school mark a critical stage in the development of students' thinking abilities [2]. By this stage, students have acquired a certain physiological and knowledge base, which enables them to engage with the teaching of speculative reading [2]. At the same time, students also need to further

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develop their thinking ability through speculative reading teaching [2]. Therefore, how to enhance the Chinese language speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades has becomean important issue in the reform of the Chinese language curriculum.

This study aims to enhance speculative reading teaching in primary schools by integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii (abbreviated as p4cHI). It is based on the alignment of its content with *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)* and also demonstrates a high compatibility with speculative reading teaching in terms of learning objectives and other aspects.

In recent years, research on "speculative reading teaching" in Chinahas shown a significant growth trend, with many studies focusing on the description of the current situation and strategy research. However, there are relatively few papers that integrate the p4cHI into it. Internationally, greater emphasis is placed on the cultivation of individuals' critical thinking ability. The research in this area started relatively early, andthere is also a wealth of research findings regarding critical thinking [3].

Much research on the application of the p4cHI, bothin China and other countries, has focused on specialized children's philosophy courses. In recent years, numerous studies have explored the practical application of Philosophy for Children Hawaii in the Chinese education system. The existing researches are concentrated on the early childhood stage, with diverse research content such as action research on integrating children's philosophy into early childhood life education. Thus, research on its implementation in primary schools is still relatively limited. That not only reflects certain research gapsbeing explored in China, but also indicates that the existing achievements provide a theoretical basis and practical path forintegrating p4cHI into Chinese language speculative reading teaching.

Therefore, this study adopts the methods of literature research and case analysis to conduct strategy research. It elucidates the feasibility of integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching and subsequently proposes relevant strategies. Meanwhile, the text *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook uniformly compiled bythe Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China are selected for the demonstration of strategy application. The paper provides reference significance for front-line teachers to carry out relevant teaching design and conduct related teaching practices.

2. The feasibility analysis of integrating p4cHI into Chinese language speculative reading teaching

The Philosophy for Children Hawaii (p4cHI) is one of the models within the Philosophy for Children framework, grounded in four core principles. The fourprinciples encompass Big-P and Little-p philosophy, not being in a rush, intellectual safety, and the four key pillars. The four key pillars includecommunity, inquiry, reflection, and philosophy [4]. These foundational principles guide the implementation of the procedures of practising p4cHI and aim to systematically cultivate students' critical thinking abilities.

This study, based on the current situation of speculative reading teaching in Chinese language education, demonstrates that p4cHI significantly addresses existing teaching problems to some extentand enhances students' abilities through improvements in learning resources, learning objectives, and the learning process.

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2.1. Analysis of the current situation of Chinese language speculative reading teaching

In accordance with *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)*, speculativereadingteaching for upper-grade primary school students refers to a structured teaching process in which teachers purposefully guide students to engage in a series of thinking activities such as association and imagination during Chinese reading lessons. Through engagement in these practices, students gradually form a personalized understanding of the text, learn thinking methods, and cultivate rational thinking [1].

The current situation analysis is conducted from the setup of learning objectives, the teacher's professional competence, and theassessment of the learning process. First, the objectives of speculative reading teaching are currently ambiguous, reflecting the influence of traditional utilitarian teaching paradigms. This ambiguity arises partly because teachers lack sufficient analysis of students' actual learning situations [2]. Secondly, many teachers have limited familiarity with thinking tools and lack knowledge of philosophy for children as well as related fields, which impedes their ability to effectively cultivate students' rational thinking skills. Finally, the evaluation of speculative reading teaching needs to be improved.The evaluation subjects are limited in diversity, the process evaluation is neglected, and thestandards of speculative reading teaching remain overly general [2].

2.2. The reason for selecting the p4cHI

The study examines the feasibility of integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching from three perspectives: learning resources, learning objectives, and the learning process.

Firstly, the Chinese language textbooks for the upper primary grades offer substantial resourcesthat are conducive to implementation of the p4cHI theory. Thomas E. Jackson, the founder of p4cHI, shifted the focus of Philosophy for Children from the Lipman novels and teacher manuals to the wondering, interests, and personal questions arising from students' own experiences and backgrounds [5]. Chinese language textbooks are systematically designed based on students' daily lives, encompassing a broad range of the mes from nature tosocialinteractions. Therefore, the integration of p4cHI and speculative reading teaching can facilitate deeper textual interpretation, enable students to strengthen cultural confidence, and enhance the educational efficacy of the Chinese language curriculum.

Secondly, the p4cHI is aligned with the requirements for Chinese language speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades. The core of p4cHI is the thinking ability, encompassing five aspects: critical thinking, creative thinking, caring thinking, interpersonal communication ability, and team thinking [4]. The learning objectives of speculative reading teaching in the upper gradesare aligned with the core literacy of "thinking ability" and the requirements of the third learning stage of the "critical reading and expression" learning task group in *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)*. The "thinking ability"requires students to possess logical thinking, dialectical thinking, and other related abilities [1]. The requirements of the third learning stageplace higher demands on the type of reading texts,the mastery of thinking tools, and the level of thinking and expression. This can be demonstrated by articulating personal viewpoints withsubstantialevidence and presenting learning content in a clear and concise manner through tools such as mind maps [1].

Finally, the p4cHI activities provide practical pathways with reference value for improving speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades. The most popular p4cHI activities from Jackson's model are as follows: fostering *Intellectual Safety* to ensure all participants feel respected,

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making and using a *Community Ball* to mediate turn-taking, applying the language of *the Good Thinker's Tool Kit*, participating in *Plain Vanilla* discussion-based inquiries, using *Magic Words* to support student facilitation, and reflecting on the *Community of Inquiry* with assessment questions [5]. This procedure not only encourages students to think about the internal coherence of the text, but also enhances the connections between the text and students' lived experiences, as well as other academic subjects. Moreover, the procedure aligns with *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)* for contextualized and practical teaching implementation [1]. The structure for participating in *Plain Vanilla* discussion-based inquiries is as follows: generating questions, voting on which question to pose to the group, investigating and discussing the selected question, and finally developing assessment criteria to aid in reflecting on the inquiry [5]. It canbestated that the procedures activelyconstruct problem-solving scenarios andimplement diverse activities within these contexts to facilitate the transformation of learning ways. Additionally, the procedure enhances theformative assessment. This program places greater emphasis on assessing the inquiry process and developing students' competencies, as opposed to relying solely on teacher-centered lecturing.

In summary, integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades is highly feasible. The repetitive practical process canestablish a closed-loop framework that systematically progresses from ability cultivation to consolidation, promoting the effective achievement of core literacy and the grade goals.

3. Analysis of strategies for integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades -- taking "Tian Ji's Horse Racing" as a case

3.1. The reason for selecting Tian Ji's Horse Racing

The studyselects the text *Tian Ji'sHorse Racing* from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook uniformly compiledby the Ministry of Educationas a case example to demonstrate the application of these strategies.

*Tian Ji's Horse Racing*is a text in the sixth unit. That unit closely adheres to the humanistic theme of "Spark ofThinking" and the language learning element of understanding the thinking process of the characters. The humanistic themes and language elements of this unit both focus on thinking, aiming to cultivate advanced thinking skills such as dialectical and innovative thinking [6]. Thus, *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* is an important teaching text for conducting the teaching of speculative reading and developing students' thinking abilities.

3.2. Facilitating the localized adjustment of the basic procedures of practicing p4cHI

Facilitating the localized adjustment of the basic procedures for practicing p4cHI represents a core strategy for adopting andenhancing the teaching of speculative reading in Chinese language lessons. It is reflected in the setting of appropriate learning objectives and the localized adjustment of the learning process.

The basic procedures for practicing p4cHI mainly involve the following stages: building an intellectually and emotionally safe community of inquiry; selecting topics through the *Plain Vanilla* activity; using the *Good Thinker's Tool Kit* to explore questions; and systematically assessing the quality of the *Community of Inquiry* [7].

The first adjustment is the setting of appropriate learning objectives. Appropriate learning goals should be established by taking into account multiple factors, such as the physical and psychological

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development characteristics of senior-grade students, the requirements of *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)*, and the content of the text. The second adjustment is on the overall process. Building on the original process, the study designs an additional stage following theassessment stage. Students complete homework or participate in after-class activities at either a basic or advanced level, tailored to their individual ability levels and personal learning preferences. The selected question can come from many aspects such as whether Sun Bin's strategy in the horse racing contest should be regarded as a tactical innovation or an act of deception. The teacher designed the project-based learning (PBL) activity called “Class Rules Designer”. Students analyze existing class rules and identify and evaluate potential loopholes, which might lead to bad behaviors. Finally, students organized a special discussion meeting and formed a final proposal on improving the class regulations.The third adjustment is on the specific details of some steps. To begin with, the source of learning resources is diverse, includingarticles, post-class supplementary reading materials, and even some sentences. In the instruction on *Tian Ji's Horse Racing*, the teacher utilizes a variety of resources, such as textual and visual materials, including the text content and battle chart. It is aimed at facilitating students' deeper comprehension of the text and their personal cognitive engagement with the context.

Moreover, thus study structures the inquiry process into two distinct phases: a group inquiry phase followed by a whole-class inquiry. The adjustment of the inquiry process is based on the number of students enrolled in Chinese language classes in China, with class sizes maintained at approximately 45 students [8].

The group inquiry adheres to the following requirements to establish a learning environment fostering intellectual and emotional safety and cultivating students' capabilities. Teachers should organize students to build several groups at first, which helps establish small communities of inquiry [8]. Each group should conduct discussions in a circular formation and establish discussion rules prior to beginning the inquiry. These measures foster intellectual safety, which ensures all community members feel empowered to ask questions or express viewpoints, as long as they remain respectful of others in the group [5]. The second one is to carry out division of labor within the team [8]. Members are respectively assigned specific responsibilities such as recording, and the groups operate through a rotation system in order to utilize diverse abilities.The most important thing is to enhance students' participation in both group andwhole-class inquiry.Teachers closely monitor the progress of each group and are poised to provide appropriate guidance to facilitate in-depth exploration. Moreover, students are encouraged to share their viewpoints in response to the opinions of others and are required to respect others’perspectives. To ensure the high effectiveness ofthe whole-classinquiry, teachersrecommend that each group document the perspectives of all members in writing, systematically integrate and refine these inputs, and synthesize a well-supported final conclusion for their presentation, thereby ensuring clarity and coherence during thewhole-class inquiry.

The localized adjustment of p4cHI within the Chinese language learning context is closely aligned with the actual needs of local students, thereby effectively fostering a school culture and climate characterized by intellectual safety, learner-centered inquiry, integration of experience, and a reputation to be proud of [9].

3.3. Providing diverse learning tools and materials

Diverse learning tools and materialsserve as a critical support for implementing the overall process.The tools and materials can be provided by teachers or actively collected and made by student groups or individuals.

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In the overall inquiryprocess, learning tools and materials should be utilized to foster Intellectual and emotional Safety. These include *Community Ball*, the *Good Thinker's Tool Kit*, and *Magic Words*. Using the Good Thinker's Tool Kit can help students think about questions in depth and articulate claims. In addition, each group completes a group exploration sheet, which serves as a structured tool for documenting key viewpoints, points of disagreement, and novel insights emerging during group discussions.

Furthermore, applying modern technology to teaching can broaden the sources of learning, deepen the exploration of problems, and promote the individualized development of students.Teachers can guide students in effectively using electronic devices to access online resources for reading and obtaining additional information and learning materials, such as those related to the political systems of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, during lessons on *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* [10].

3.4. Strengthening the evaluation within the process

Enhancing theassessment is crucial for understanding the development of students' cognitive and competencies in the teaching of speculative reading.

First and foremost, it is essential to adjust the assessment questions and criteria in a flexible and context-sensitive manner. The community of inquiry uses the assessment questions to evaluate the quality of the inquiry [7]. The design of the assessment questions focuses on two core dimensions: group and the inquiry process.

To better improve speculative reading teaching, assessment questions and criteria should be adjusted according to the context of the text, learning objectives, and other relevant factors. In the teaching of *Tian Ji's Horse Racing,* teachers and students collaboratively examine the rationale behind Sun Bin's strategic decisions, connected with mathematical reasoning and historical knowledge. Therefore, interdisciplinary ability can be added as an assessment criterion.

Moreover, teachers should enhance the construction of a diversified speculative reading teaching assessmentsubject [2]. Assessmentmethods caninclude self-assessment, peer assessment, teacherassessment, and intergroupassessment. Students are encouraged to invite their parents and other teachers to participate in theassessment process, enabling them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their developmental progress across key competencies such as inquiry skills and teamwork ability. Additionally, teachers can guide students in creating growth portfolios to systematically document their learning trajectories over time.

In summary, enhancing theassessment enables students to develop a comprehensive understanding of their capabilities, recognize individual and collective progress, and further strengthen their appreciation for p4cHI.

3.5. Analysis of the practical application of strategies

This study is based on related theories to examine the practical applications and inherent limitations of the strategy.Although this strategy takes *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* as an example, it has a strong degree of transferability. The strategy is based on the text type, text content, and requirements of *the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)*. However, this strategy has certain limitations.First, this strategy places higher demands on teachers' professional qualities. The second challenge is that during the initial stage of implementing the p4cHI procedures, establishing a high-quality community of inquiry can be particularly challenging. Meanwhile, the learning

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objectives ofspeculativereadingteaching are mainly focused on the acquisition of thinking methods and the improvement of thinking ability, which requires long-term monitoring and feedback.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to enhance speculative reading teaching in Chinese language lessons for upper primary grades through integration with p4cHI. It first analyzes the feasibility of this integration across three key dimensions: learning resources, learning objectives, and learning process. It further presents three integration strategies: facilitating localized adjustment of the procedures for practicing p4cHI, providing diverse learning tools and materials, and enhancing the assessment. To illustrate the application of these strategies, the text *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* from the fifth-gradevolume 2 textbook uniformly compiled by the Ministry of Education is selected as a case example. This study offers valuable reference significance forrelated research andstrategic support for improving speculative reading teaching. It also increases research on philosophy for children in Hawaii in the context of primary education.

The primary limitation of this study lies in its theoretical nature, focusing on feasibility analysis and strategic exploration in the absence of empirical data.Therefore, it can verify the actual effect of the strategy through the real teaching practice in the future. Moreover, the genres of primary school Chinese language textbooks are diverse, encompassing classical Chinese and narrative texts. This study selects the historical text *Tian Ji's Horse Racing* as a case study, thereby enabling future research to concentrate on analyzing the implementation pathways for integrating p4CHI into teaching practices within inquiry materials of various genres.

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