



世纪英语专业系列教材



*Introduction to American
Society and Culture*



美国 社会与文化

常俊跃 李莉莉 赵永青 主编



北京大学出版社
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前言

《美国社会与文化》是在内容依托教学理念指导下,依托国家哲学社会科学项目“英语专业基础阶段内容依托式教学改革研究”推出的系列英语内容依托教材之一,是大连外国语学院和辽宁省两级教学成果一等奖并获得国家级教学成果二等奖。这套系列教材的推出具有重要的理论意义和重大的现实意义。

随着我国英语教育的快速发展,英语专业长期贯彻的“以技能为导向”的课程建设理念及教学理念已经难以满足社会的需要。专家教师们密切关注的现行英语专业教育大、中、小学英语教学脱节,语言、内容教学割裂,单纯语言技能训练过多,专业内容课程不足,学科内容课程系统性差,高低年级内容课程安排失衡及其导致的学生知识面偏窄、知识结构欠缺、思辨能力偏弱、综合素质发展不充分等问题日益凸显。

针对上述问题,国家哲学社会科学项目“英语专业基础阶段内容依托式教学改革研究”以内容依托教学(CBI)理论为指导,确定了如下改革思路:

(一)更新语言教学理念,改革英语专业教学的课程结构。在不改变专业总体培养目标和教学时限的前提下,对课程结构进行革命性的变革,改变传统单一的语言技能课程模式,实现内容课程——语言课程的融合,扩展学生的知识面,提高学生的语言技能。

(二)开发课程自身潜力,同步提高专业知识和语言技能。内容依托课程本身也同时关注内容和语言,把内容教学和语言教学有机结合。以英语为媒介,系统教授专业内容;以专业内容为依托,在使用语言过程中提高语言技能,扩展学生的知识面。

(三)改革教学方法手段,全面提高语言技能和综合素质。依靠内容依托教学在方法上的灵活性,通过问题驱动、输出驱动等方法调动学生主动学习,把启发式、任务式、讨论式、结对子、小组活动、课堂展示、多媒体手段等行之有效的活动与学科内容教学有机结合,提高学生的语言技能,激发学生的兴趣,培养学生的自主性和创造性,提升思辨能力和综合素质。

本项改革突破了我国英语专业英语教学大纲规定的课程结构,改变了英语专业基础阶段通过开设单纯的听、说、读、写四种语言技能课提高学生语言技能的传统课程建设理念,对英语课程及教学方法进行了创新性的改革。首创了有英语专业基础阶段具有我国特色的内容——语言融合的课程体系;率先开发了适合英语专业基础阶段的内容依托课程;系统开发了英语国家史、地、社会文化、欧洲文化、中国文化、跨文化交际、《圣经》文化教材;以英语为媒介,系统教授专业内容;以内容为依托,全面发展学生的语言技能;扩展学生的知识面,提高学生的综合素质,以崭新的途径实现英语专业教育的总体培养目标。

经过七年的酝酿、准备、实验,内容依托教学改革取得了鼓舞人心结果。

(一) 构建了英语专业基础阶段内容依托课程与语言课程融合的课程体系。新的课程体系改变了传统单一的听、说、读、写语言技能课程模式,实现了内容依托课程和语言技能课程两种模块的融合;语言技能课程包含综合英语、听力、语音、写作,内容课程包含了美国历史文化、美国自然人文地理、美国社会文化、英国历史文化、英国自然人文地理、英国社会文化、澳新加社会文化、欧洲文化、中国文化、跨文化交际、《圣经》与文化;语言技能课程密切关注听、说、读、写技能的发展,内容依托课程不仅关注系统的学科内容,而且也关注综合语言技能的培养。在课程外和课程内两个层面把内容教学和语言教学有机结合,通过内容教学培养学生综合语言运用能力,扩展学生的知识面,提高学生的综合素质和多元文化意识,从根本上改变英语专业学生知识面偏窄、综合素质偏低的问题。

(二) 系统开发了相关国家的史、地、社会文化以及跨文化交际课程资源。在 CBI 教学理论的指导下,在实施内容依托教学的关键期——英语专业的第一学年,成功开出了美国和英国的历史、地理、社会文化等课程。第二学年开出澳新加社会文化、欧洲文化、中国文化、跨文化交际、《圣经》与文化等课程。内容依托教材改变了传统的组织模式,系统组织了教学内容,设计了新颖的栏目板块,设计的活动也丰富多样,实践教学中受到了学生的广泛欢迎。此外还开发了开设课程所需要的大量资源。在北京大学出版社的支持下,系列教材已经陆续出版。

(三) 牵动了教学手段和教学方法的改革,取得了突出的教学效果。在内容依托教学理论的指导下,教师的教学理念、教学方法、教学手段得到更新。通过问题驱动、输出驱动等活动调动学生主动学习,把启发式、任务式、讨论式、结对子、小组活动、课堂展示、多媒体手段等行之有效的活动与学科内容教学有机结合,激发学生的兴趣,培养学生自主性和创造性,提高学生的语言技能,提升思辨能力和综合素质。曾有专家教师担心取消专门的英语泛读课以及缩减基础英语精读课会对阅读技能发展产生消极影响。实验数据证明,内容依托教学不仅没有对学生的语言技能发展和语言知识的学习产生消极影响,而且还产生了多方面的积极影响;在取消专门英语阅读课的情况下,阅读能力发展迅速;内容依托教学对学科知识的学习产生了巨大的积极影响。

(四) 提高了教师的科研意识和科研水平,取得了丰硕的教研成果。项目开展以来,团队对内容依托教学问题进行了系列研究,活跃了整个教学单位的科研气氛,科研意识和科研水平也得到很大提高。课题组已经撰写研究论文 17 篇,在国际、国内学术研讨会交流 12 篇,在国际学术期刊 *World Englishes*、国内外语类核心期刊《外语与外语教学》、《中国外语》、《教育理论与实践》等发表研究论文 8 篇。

教学改革开展以来,每次成果发布都引起强烈反响。在 2008 年 3 月的第三届中国外语教学法国际研讨会上,与会的知名外语教育专家戴炜栋教授等对这项改革给予关注,博士生导师蔡基刚教授认为本项研究“具有导向性作用”。在 2008 年 5 月的“第二届全国英语专业院系主任高级论坛”上,研究成果得到知名专家博士生导师王守仁教授和与会专家教授的高度评价。在 2008 年 7 月的中国英语教学研究会东北地区年会上,改革的系列成果引起与会专家的强烈反响,研究论文获得 3 个优秀论文一等奖,3 个二等奖,1 个三等奖。在 2008 年 11 月在中国英语教学研究会年会上,成果再次引起与会专家的强烈反响,博士生导师石坚教授等给予了高度评价。在 2008 年 10 月和 12 月,本项改

革成果分别获得大连外国语学院教学研究成果一等奖和辽宁省优秀教学成果奖一等奖,而且还被辽宁省特别推荐参评国家教学成果奖。在2009年5月的“第三届全国英语专业院系主任高级论坛”,本项改革成果再次赢得专家同行们的关注和赞誉。

目前,该项成果已经在全国英语专业教育领域引起广泛关注。它触及了英语专业的教学大纲,影响了课程建设的理念,引领了英语专业的教学改革,改善了教学实践,必将对未来英语专业教育的发展产生积极影响。

本项改革开展过程中得到了全国各地专家的关注、支持和帮助。衷心感谢戴炜栋教授、王守仁教授、文秋芳教授、石坚教授、蔡基刚教授、杨忠教授等前辈们给予的关注、鼓励、支持和帮助,衷心感谢大连外国语学院校长孙玉华教授、赵忠德教授、杨俊峰教授及其他各位领导的大力支持,感谢大连外国语学院教务处刘宏处长、姜凤春副处长以及工作人员们在改革实验中给予的大力支持,感谢大连外国语学院科研处张雪处长和工作人员们给予的热情帮助,感谢大连外国语学院英语学院的领导全力支持和同事们的无私的帮助以及团队成员的共同努力。同时也真诚感谢为我们内容依托教学改革提供丰富教学材料的国内外专家们。特别感谢的是北京大学出版社富有远见的张冰主任和刘强助理,没有他们对新教学理念的认同,没有他们对英语专业教育的关注和支持,这套教材不可能如此迅速地面世。

《美国社会与文化》教材针对的学生群体是具有中学英语基础的大学生。适用于英语专业一、二年级学生,也适用于具有中学英语基础的非英语专业学生和英语爱好者学习。总体来看,本教材具备以下主要特色:

(一) 遵循了全新的教学理念

本教材改变了“为学语言而学语言”的传统教材建设理念,在具有时代特色且被证明行之有效的内容依托教学理论指导下,改变了片面关注语言知识和语言技能忽视内容学习的做法。它依托学生密切关注的美国社会文化内容,结合社会文化内容组织学生进行语言交际活动,在语言交流中学习有意义的知识内容,既训练语言技能,也丰富相关知识,起到的是一箭双雕的作用。

(二) 涉及了丰富的教学内容

当代的大学生兴趣广泛,朝气蓬勃。为了满足学生身心发展的需要,本教材提供的材料贴近社会,贴近学生,生动鲜活,丰富多彩,具有时代气息。教材以美国社会文化为主线,涉及美国人的性格、价值观、宗教信仰、学校教育、政治政体、生活方式、风俗节日、大众传媒、文学艺术、体育竞技、音乐赏析等主题。一切围绕大学生感兴趣的话题组织教材,以期用青年喜爱的好材料感染学生,影响学生,帮助学生了解美国社会文化,正确地认识美国社会文化,培养学生对异域社会文化的敏感性,培养学生对其他民族包容的态度和国际的视野。

(三) 引进了真实的教学材料

英语教材是英语学习者英语语言输入和相关知识输入的重要渠道。本教材大量使用真实、地道的语言材料,为学生提供了高质量的语言输入。此外,为了使课文内容更加充实生动,易于学生理解接受,编者在课文中穿插了大量的插图、表格、照片等真实的视觉材料,表现手段活泼、形式多种多样,效果生动直观。

(四) 设计了新颖的教材板块

本教材每一单元的主体内容均包括 Before You Read、Start to Read、After You Read 和 Read More 四大板块,不仅在结构上确立了学生的主体地位,而且系统的安排也方便教师借助教材有条不紊地开展教学活动。它改变了教师单纯灌输、学生被动接受的教学方式,促使学生积极思考、提问、探索、发现、批判,培养自主获得知识,发现问题和解决问题的能力。

(五) 提供了有趣的训练活动

为了培养学生的语言技能和综合素质,本教材在关注英语语言知识训练和相关知识内容传授的基础上精心设计了生动多样的综合训练活动,例如头脑风暴、话题辩论、角色扮演、主题陈述、故事编述等等。多样化的活动打破了传统教材单调的训练程式,帮助教师设置真实的语言运用情境,组织富于挑战性的、具有意义的语言实践活动,培养学生语言综合运用能力。

(六) 推荐了经典的学习材料

教材的这一特色在于它对教学内容的延伸和拓展。在每个章节的最后部分,编者向学生推荐经典的书目、影视作品、名诗欣赏以及英文歌曲等学习资料,这不仅有益于学生开阔视野,也使教材具有了弹性和开放性,方便不同院校不同水平学生的使用。

作为一项探索,我们团队成员虽然为打造这套精品教材做出了巨大努力,但由于水平所限,教材中难免存在疏漏和不足,希望全国各地的同仁不吝赐教,希望亲身体验内容依托教学的同学积极提出改进意见和建议,以期不断完善教材,为提高英语专业教育的质量共同努力。

编者

2009年6月

于大连外国语学院

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Unit 1

Understanding American Society and Culture

In a low-context culture, very little is taken for granted. Whilst this means that more explanation is needed, it also means there is less chance of misunderstanding particularly when visitors are present.

—Edward T. Hall

Unit Goals

- To gain a general knowledge of American society and culture
- To adopt a right attitude towards cultural differences
- To get acquainted with some basic cultural concepts concerning American society and culture
- To learn useful words and expressions about American society and culture and improve English language skills

Before You Read

Test your knowledge about American culture.

1. When people talk about the U. S. as a nation of immigrants, you may think of the nickname _____.
2. When people talk about freedom, you may think of the Statue of _____ in New York.
3. When people talk about going to the U. S. to pursue success, you may say they want to achieve their _____.
4. When people talk about the Civil Rights Movement in the U. S. , you may think of the leader _____ and his speech _____.
5. When people talk about popular American sport, you may think of the ball game _____.

6. When people talk about Thanksgiving in the U. S. , you know the bird served on the dinner table should be _____.

Start to Read

Text A American Culture

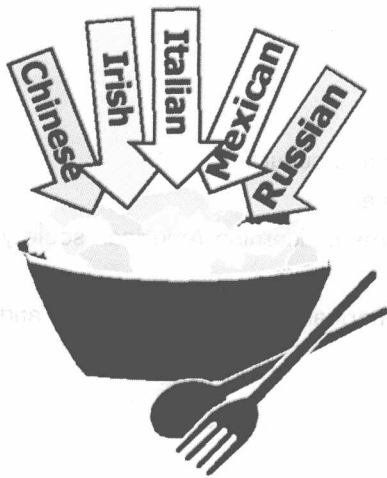
1. American culture is of Western culture in general. Having been developing since long before the United States became a country, it gradually obtains its own unique characteristics as is reflected in its dialect, music, arts, cuisine, etc. Today the United States of America is a **diverse** and **multi-cultural** country as a result of mass scale **immigration** from many countries.

2. Because of its colonial ties with the British, early American culture was strongly influenced by other European cultures as well, **prominently** those of Germany, Ireland and countries from which large numbers of **immigrants** came. Influences also came from Latin America, Asia, and Africa, especially the western part of Africa from which the ancestors of most African Americans came. American culture also shares some features with the cultures of its neighbors in the New World.

3. The United States has been traditionally known as a melting pot, but recent developments reveal the characteristics of cultural **diversity** and **pluralism**, presenting the image of a salad bowl rather than a melting pot. In American culture, there are many **integrated** but unique **subcultures** which are connected with social classes, political **orientations** and a **multitude** of demographic characteristics such as ancestral traditions, sex and sexual orientation, making American culture **heterogeneous**.

The Culture of Its Own

4. Americans come in all different colors and **nationalities**. Americans practice different religions, and live many different lifestyles. Important differences exist between geographical regions, between rural and urban areas, and between social classes. In addition, the presence of millions of immigrants who came to the United States from all corners of the world with their own culture and values adds even more **variety** and flavor to American life. Although Americans do not always agree with each other, they are **united** by a very special thing: the values and ideals that were originally described in the U. S. Constitution over 200 years ago.



5. Probably above everything else, Americans consider themselves individuals. There are strong family ties and strong loyalties to groups, but individuality and individual rights are most important. If this seems like a selfish attitude, it also leads Americans to an honest respect for other individuals and an insistence on human equality.

6. Related to this respect for individuality are American traits of independence and self-reliance. From an early age, children are taught to “stand on their own two feet”, an idiom meaning to be independent. Honesty and frankness are two more aspects of American individuality, and they are more important to Americans than personal honor or “saving face”.

7. Americans place a high value on achievement and this leads them to constantly compete against each other. You will find friendly, and not-so-friendly, competition everywhere. Americans can also be obsessed with records of achievement in sports, in business, or even in more mundane things. On the other hand, even if Americans are often competitive, they also have a good sense of teamwork and of cooperating with others to achieve a specific goal.

8. Americans are often accused of being materialistic and driven to succeed. How much money a person has, how much profit a business deal makes, or how many material goods an individual accumulates is often their definition of success. This goes back to American competitiveness. Many Americans, however, do not agree with this definition of success; they enjoy life's simple pleasures and are neither overly ambitious nor aggressive. Many Americans are materially successful and still have time to appreciate the cultural, spiritual, and human aspects of life.



After You Read



Knowledge Focus

1. Write T if the statement is true and F if it is false according to the cultural knowledge presented above.
 - 1) The United States has traditionally been known as a melting pot, but nowadays people prefer to call the nation a salad bowl. _____
 - 2) The strongest influences on American culture came from Southern European cultures. _____
 - 3) There are great regional and subcultural differences, making American culture mostly homogeneous. _____
 - 4) American people value family or group interests more than anything else. _____
 - 5) To American people, “face” is more important than honesty. _____

6) Americans are often competitive, and they do not have a good sense of teamwork. _____

2. Pair work: work with your partner and consider the following questions.

- 1) What might be the charms of America that attract immigrants from different parts of the world?
- 2) What could the U. S. gain from its immigrants?
- 3) How do you understand "individuality"? Is this value acceptable to you?
- 4) What is your definition of success? Share your ideas with your partner.

Language Focus

1. Build your vocabulary.

A. Write the correct word next to its definition.

accumulate	obsess	prominent	insistence
heterogeneous	variety	integrate	compete

- _____ to measure oneself against others
- _____ conspicuous in position or importance
- _____ make into a whole
- _____ be preoccupied with something
- _____ continual and persistent demands
- _____ a collection containing different sorts of things
- _____ to increase gradually in quantity or number
- _____ consisting of elements that are not of the same kind or nature

B. Use the proper forms of the words to complete the sentences.

- 1) The fear of death _____ her throughout her old age.
- 2) By investing wisely she _____ a fortune.
- 3) His lecture ranged over a _____ of topics.
- 4) Things have changed. What's the point of _____ on the rotten rules?
- 5) A popular culture is a large _____ group, often highly individualistic and constantly changing.
- 6) He is a _____ scholar in the field of linguistics.
- 7) Our school _____ against many other schools in baseball.
- 8) This is an important measure to _____ science and technology with economy.

2. Fill in the blanks with the proper forms of the words.

- 1) The oldest son will _____ (inheritance) the title.
- 2) When boundaries between countries are not clearly _____ (definition), there is usually trouble.
- 3) Nobody can entirely keep away from this _____ (compete) world.
- 4) I may say in all sincerity that you have been my most _____ (loyalty) friend.

- 5) We should get a thorough understanding about the cultural _____ (diverse) of the United States.
- 6) A _____ (frankness) discussion can help to clear the air.
- 7) Ambition is a _____ (character) of all successful businessmen.
- 8) A good salesman must be _____ (aggress) if he wants to succeed.

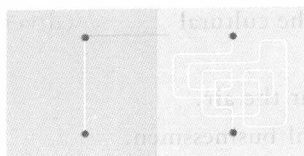
3. Fill in each blank with a suitable preposition or adverb.

- 1) The society or culture of the United States has been developing since long _____ the United States became a country with its own unique characteristics.
- 2) American culture also has shared influence _____ the cultures of its neighbors in the New World.
- 3) Due _____ the extent of American culture there are many integrated but unique subcultures within the United States.
- 4) Americans come _____ all different colors and nationalities.
- 5) Important differences exist _____ geographical regions, _____ rural and urban areas, and _____ social classes.
- 6) Millions of immigrants came to the United States from all corners of the world _____ their own culture and values.
- 7) Although Americans do not always agree _____ each other, they are united by a very special thing.
- 8) Probably _____ everything else, Americans consider themselves individuals.
- 9) There are strong family ties and strong loyalties _____ groups, but individuality and individual rights are most important.
- 10) Individuality also leads Americans to an honest respect _____ other individuals and an insistence _____ human equality.
- 11) Americans place a high value _____ achievement and this leads them to constantly compete _____ each other.
- 12) Americans can also be obsessed _____ records of achievement in sports, in business, or even in more mundane things.
- 13) Americans also have a good sense of teamwork and of cooperating _____ others to achieve a specific goal.
- 14) Americans are often accused _____ being materialistic and driven to succeed.
- 15) Many Americans, however, do not agree _____ this definition of success.

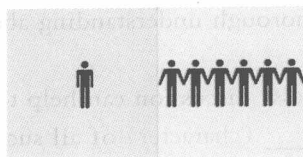
Comprehensive Work

Talk about the differences between American culture and Chinese culture.

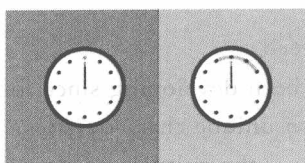
- 1) Have you detected any major differences between the American and the Chinese? You may make reference to the following pictures and talk about the differences with your partners.



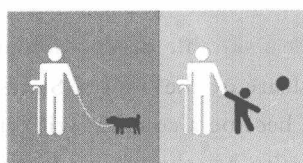
Opinion



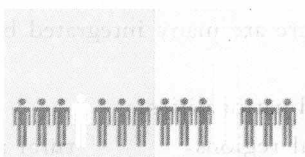
Way of life



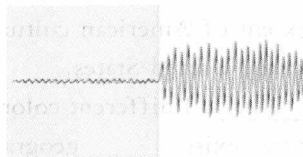
Punctuality



Life of the elderly



The boss



In the restaurant

- 2) Can you think of any other cultural differences between the American and the Chinese besides the differences illustrated above?
- 3) What do you think is the right attitude towards cultural differences?

2. Essay Writing

Do you know any American friends or any teachers or any persons from the United States? How do they impress you? Write about the most impressive and share your writing with your classmates.

Read More



Scanning and Skimming

Scanning is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you are looking for, so you are concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. Scanning is also used when you first find a resource to determine whether it will answer your questions. Once you have scanned the document, you might go back and skim it.