

The Comparison of Different Instructional Styles in China and the United States on Early Education

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Abstract: Instructional styles play a critical role in shaping student outcomes. They determine the extent to which students participate in class. They also shape the resource allocation efforts assumed by instructors. While there are multiple studies which examine the implementation of different instructional styles, more research is needed to establish the variabilities in different instructional styles across different regions. Accordingly, this study examines the impact of instructional styles on early education, with a specific focus on China and the United States. In its comparative approach, it highlights the contrast between student-centered, constructivist teaching in the United States and the teacher-centered, Behaviorist approach in China. The comparison is intended to shed more light on the culture influences shaping teaching across different geographical settings. It provides a model of comparison for similar analyses in the future. The paper also discusses how societal and parental expectations shape instructional preferences and explores the effects of these styles on academic achievement, creativity, and critical thinking.

Keywords: Instructional Style, Culture Influences, Early Education, Constructivist Teaching

1. Introduction

By definition, instructional styles refer to the methodologies, practices, and approaches integrated by educators to facilitate learning. According to research, they are the tangible and intangible resources used to transmit information to students [1]. As necessary constructs in the learning process, they address the multiplicity of student experiences and backgrounds. The implementation of instructional styles is a collective effort. It is defined by specific frameworks that are integrated across the institution. However, instructional styles vary from one institutional purview to the next as witnessed across the early education levels in China and the United States of America.

2. Role of Instructional Styles

Instructional styles are critical in promoting the engagement of students. Effective instructional styles have the potential to capture students' attention [2]. Accordingly, it maintains their interest throughout the learning process. For instance, an instructor teaching English might use multimedia resources to inspire focus among the students. Equally, a science instructor might prioritize hands-on experiments to spark curiosity. By adapting their instructional styles to align with students' interests, educators can create a more engaging learning environment. With increased engagement, the students will be

increasingly motivated leading to better learning outcomes. Moreover, as reinforced by researchers, instructional styles facilitate the adaptability and differentiation of students [3]. Students reflect different background. For them to internalize the class material, there is a need to tailor the delivery of information. For instance, students who experience challenges in reading efforts can be inspired through the use of visual aids. Furthermore, students who are relatively slower than others can be offered additional classes. The instructional style implemented in such a situation varies from that reflected in the traditional capacity.

3. Effects of Instructional Styles in Early Education

Varying instructional styles impact students differently. In reflecting on the influences of a Confucian instructional style, research found that it encourages discipline [4]. Therefore, students become more committed and disciplined to their curricular activities. The process of motivating them becomes relatively easier as it is predicated on the element of conformity rather than individual expression. Still, it risks mainstreaming rigidity in the learning experience. Thus, students become less creative because the efficacy of the learning process is based on conformity and discipline [5]. Conversely, the constructivist approach informing the American instructional style leads to more student expression. It makes early education a fluid process informed by both teacher and student perspectives [6]. Generally, students become more well-rounded in both curricular and co-curricular activities. The independence reinforced in the learning process manifests in the form of individual initiative. In becoming more curious, the students get to perform better. Thus, instructional styles greatly affect engagement and information reception in early education.

The implementation of instructional styles is informed by preexisting cultures. They must complement the existing contexts. Such culture is often reflected in the attendant education systems. A fitting example of the overriding influence of culture in educational instructional styles is evinced across America and China. To begin with, America implements an instructional approach predicated on the constructivist theory. Research contends that the constructivist approach to learning reinforces the ideals of creativity, independence, and critical thinking [7]. The prevailing belief is that education should not merely be about acquiring facts, but fostering a love for learning and the ability to think critically. As a framework, the constructivist ideal encourages a student-centered approach to the learning experience [8]. Furthermore, students are called upon to engage actively in class initiatives. They are afforded the freedom to openly seek clarifications and ask pertinent questions.

In contrast, China's instructional style for learning is predicated on the Confucian values [9]. In the Chinese educational landscape, adherence to rules are esteemed virtues. Teachers assume a central role as authoritative figures. The primary value in the Chinese learning complex is the element of discipline. Unlike the American context, the instructional style in China is teacher-centered. The teacher delivers information and students internalize it as it is. Essentially, children are expected to absorb and retain vast amounts of knowledge [10]. It lays the foundation for future academic success. The approach seeks to instill a strong work ethic, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to scholastic achievement. However, it gives the students little room for freedom and expression outside the limits defined by the teacher-centric context.

4. Social factors Influencing instructional styles

The world of early education is not confined solely to classrooms and teachers. It is intricately enmeshed into the fabric of societal and parental expectations. Such expectations play a pivotal role in shaping the preferences for instructional styles and, in turn, the experiences of young learners [11]. In China, there is a predominant social expectation that educational achievement is the pathway to a prosperous future. Parents often view academic success as a reflection of their own parenting skills

and family honor [12]. The resultant societal pressure imposes a considerable weight on children to excel academically from an early age. In contrast, the United States exhibits a more diverse range of societal expectations. While academic achievement is valued, a well-rounded development is critical. Thus, revealed that many American parents prioritize their children's happiness, creativity, and social skills [13]. Such values transcend academic excellence. The diversity of expectations reflects the belief in the multifaceted nature of success.

5. Different instructional styles reflect different impacts across America and China

5.1. Academic Achievement

In China, where there is a strong emphasis on discipline and teacher authority, students often excel in standardized tests. The rigorous curriculum and structured instructional style prepare students well for examinations which fosters a competitive environment [14]. However, the pressure to perform can be overwhelming for some students. Such pressure leads to stress and mental health challenges. As a concern, they threaten the sustainability of academic excellence in the long run. In contrast, American instructional style emphasizes all-roundedness, which does not primarily focus on academic excellence [15]. However, the American system is not without its challenges. The emphasis on individual exploration can lead to disparities in academic achievement. Mainly it is because students have varying access to educational resources and support.

5.2. Creativity and Critical Thinking

Instructional styles are instrumental in nurturing creativity and critical thinking among early learners. In China, the focus on rote memorization and structured instruction may limit opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and creativity. Conversely, the student-centered and experiential approach in America encourages students to question, experiment, and innovate [15]. Such an environment fosters creativity and critical thinking.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this paper reinforces the intricate relationship between instructional styles and early education outcomes. It illustrates the pivotal role played by instructional styles shaping the educational experiences of young learners across different cultures, with a specific focus on China and America. Such styles profoundly impact students' engagement, information reception, and overall learning experiences. Thus, students in America are more likely to be creative and independent minded because of the constructivist instructional style while students in China are more likely to prioritize discipline given the Confucian approach to teaching. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that cultural and societal expectations shape the attendant instructional styles in different regions. In China, academic excellence brings honor and parental satisfaction. Therefore, there is more pressure for students to perform well academically. Conversely, American parents wish for their children to be more well-rounded, which makes the instructional style less focused on academic excellence.

From a theoretical standpoint, this paper contributes to our understanding of the intersection between instructional styles, cultural influences, and societal expectations in early education. When deciding on the appropriate instructional style, there is a need to examine the related societal influences. Such a dynamic will make related research into instructional styles more comprehensive. Thus, this research highlights the need for a balanced approach to early education through the implementation of appropriate instructional styles. Such knowledge can play a critical role in shaping learning policies. It can also enhance the effectiveness of teachers' efforts in the teaching enterprises. Future research should focus on investigating the potential for a hybrid instructional style. By

focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese and American instructional models, researchers will be able to tailor a more comprehensive teaching process in early education. Such research can help address the existing disparities in outcomes between different students across the world.

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