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Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture Course Based on Social Interaction Combined with Situation-Based Learning to Enhance the Humanistic Quality of First-Year Students

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Abstract

Background and aim: Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture (CETC) education plays a crucial role in fostering students' cultural identity and humanistic qualities. However, conventional teaching methods often lack student engagement, resulting in limited learning outcomes. This study aimed to: (1) study the background information focusing on course components, existing problems, and theoretical foundations of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course. (2) To develop a Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning to enhance students' humanistic quality. (3) To assess the effectiveness of implementing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning.

Materials and Methods: A pretest-posttest design was implemented with 22 first-year film and television students (1 Class) from Chongqing Polytechnic University of Electronic Technology, Chongqing Province, China, in the academic year 2024-2025. Participants were selected using a cluster random sampling method. The course intervention consisted of eight lesson plans emphasizing social interaction and Situation-Based Learning. Data were collected using multiple instruments:1) Eight lesson plans with appropriateness(Mean score: 4.78);2) A traditional cultural knowledge test (Pretest: M = 71.39, SD = 7.16; Posttest: M = 85.82, SD = 6.15; Reliability: 0.82);3) A self-evaluation form using a five-point Likert scale to measure students' humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior (reliability: 0.91);4) An observation form evaluating students' humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior (reliability: 0.89); 5) A student satisfaction questionnaire (reliability: 0.95).

Results: Results indicated significant improvements in students' cultural knowledge, humanistic spirit, and humanistic behavior. Posttest scores of students' cultural knowledge (M = 85.82, SD =6.15), students' humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior measured through self-evaluation was M = 4.25, SD = 0.27 and observation was M = 4.30, SD = 0.23, which exceed the 70% criterion at .01 level of significance (t_{21}=12.79, p=.001 and t_{21} = 16.39, p=.001, respectively). The results showed a statistically significant increase compared to pretest results and the 70% criterion. Students also reported high satisfaction, highlighting the course's effectiveness.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that incorporating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning through CETC education enhances student engagement and cultural understanding. The findings contribute to curriculum development by providing an innovative instructional model that fosters deeper cultural appreciation and student satisfaction. Future research should explore the long-term impact of this approach and its applicability across diverse academic disciplines.

Keywords: Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture, Social Interaction, Situation-Based Learning, Students' Humanistic Quality, Curriculum Development, Students' Satisfaction

Introduction

Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture (CETC) education has been widely recognized as a cornerstone for cultivating cultural identity and humanistic qualities among university students. The Chinese Ministry of Education has reinforced this priority through policies (2014, 2017, 2023) advocating systematic integration of traditional culture into curricula. However, despite strong institutional support, CETC implementation faces significant challenges. Current courses predominantly rely on rote memorization of classical texts, neglecting critical engagement with cultural values (Jia, 2020), while teacher-centered methods fail to bridge historical traditions with contemporary societal realities (Wan,

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2020). These limitations underscore the need for pedagogical innovations that transform CETC education into an interactive, student-driven experience.

The developed CETC course integrates four key theoretical perspectives to address these challenges: (1) Perennialism (Adler, 1982) informs the selection of enduring cultural works (e.g., Analects of Confucius, Tang poetry) as vehicles for universal moral and intellectual cultivation. (2) Progressivism (Dewey, 1938) shapes active learning tasks, such as debating Daoist environmental ethics in modern sustainability contexts, to connect knowledge with lived experience. (3) Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) structures collaborative activities (e.g., team-based design of traditional festival celebration plans with mentor guidance) to scaffold knowledge through guided interaction. (4) Situation-Based Learning (Palmer & Hornby, 1950) designs immersive scenarios (e.g., role-playing Ming Dynasty trade negotiations) to contextualize abstract cultural concepts.

By synthesizing these frameworks, the developed course replaces passive absorption with a six-step model of instruction, including: Preparation–Grouping–Engagement–Collaboration–Reflection–Evaluation, explicitly aligning each stage with theoretical principles (see Methodology).

Existing Problems in the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Course: Insights from Interviews and Documents; (1) Principles: The course lacks depth in exploring historical and cultural diversity and fails to adapt to modern educational concepts, such as promoting student subjectivity, critical thinking, and innovation. (2) Objectives: Course objectives are overly broad, vague, and misaligned with teaching content, leaving emotional and value-based goals unclear and ineffective. (3) Content: The course covers an extensive scope that is difficult to address comprehensively within limited class time. It lacks focus, prioritization, and modern applications, reducing its relevance to students' lives. (4) Instructional Strategies: Teacher-centered methods dominate, limiting interactivity and student independence. Group activities, though implemented, often lack consistent participation and fail to fully engage students. (5) Media and Resources: Resources are outdated, lack diversity, and provide minimal use of interactive or multimedia tools, limiting students' engagement and connection with the content. (6) Evaluation: Assessment focuses too heavily on final exams and traditional grading, neglecting process-based and diverse evaluation tools to measure creativity, progress, and critical thinking.

Research Gap

While prior studies acknowledge the value of interactive learning in cultural education (Zhang, 2020; Wang & Liu, 2019), critical gaps remain:

1. Limited Empirical Evidence: Few studies quantify how specific social interaction strategies (e.g., role-playing) differentially impact CETC learning outcomes.

2. Contextual Disconnect: Existing research seldom integrates situation-based learning with CETC's unique content (e.g., rituals, arts), leaving a gap in culturally grounded pedagogical models.

3. Holistic Assessment: Most evaluations focus narrowly on knowledge retention, neglecting the cultivation of humanistic behavior (e.g., cultural empathy in collaborative tasks).

This study addresses these gaps by:

1. Designing a CETC course that operationalizes interactive learning through cultural practices (e.g., tea ceremony simulations in Unit 7).

2. Providing quantitative evidence of its impact on both knowledge and behavior.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows;

1. To study the background information focusing on course components,

existing problems, and the theoretical foundations of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course.

2 To develop an excellent traditional Chinese culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning to enhance students' humanistic quality.

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3 To assess the effectiveness of implementing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning.

3.1 To compare students' traditional cultural knowledge, as a component of humanistic quality, before and after the implementation of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course.

3.2 To compare students' humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior after the implementation of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course, with the criterion set at 70%.

3.3 To assess student satisfaction with the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Course After the implementation Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course with the criterion set at 3.51.

Literature Review

1. Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Course

The Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture (CETC) course consists of multiple components designed to systematically introduce students to traditional culture while enhancing their humanistic qualities. The core elements of the course include theoretical foundations, practical applications, interactive learning, and cultural immersion. To achieve these goals, the CETC course integrates Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning, creating an engaging and participatory learning environment. Social Interaction theory, rooted in the work of Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes that learning occurs through social engagement and collaboration, where knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful interactions. Situation-Based Learning, as proposed by Palmer & Hornby (1950), highlights the importance of contextualized experiences, where students learn by actively engaging in real-world scenarios. By incorporating these theories, the CETC course follows a structured six-step framework:

Step 1 Preparation: In this step, teachers gather Materials, set clear learning objectives, and ensure all necessary resources are prepared. Students also understand the goals and expectations for the lesson, laying a solid foundation for effective learning.

Step 2 Grouping: Students are grouped based on course requirements, ensuring diverse skill sets within each group. This step creates a collaborative environment that promotes peer interaction and maximizes the benefits of group dynamics.

Step 3 Engagement: Teachers engage students through scenarios, role-playing, or thought-provoking questions. This approach encourages students to actively participate in discussions and interactions, increasing their involvement and investment in the learning process.

Step 4 Collaboration: Students work together in groups to complete tasks or solve problems, deepening their understanding of the material. Teachers provide guidance and feedback during this stage, facilitating meaningful collaboration and promoting a deeper grasp of the content.

Step 5 Reflection: After the activity, students reflect on their learning experiences, assessing their performance and drawing insights from the process. This step promotes critical thinking and self-awareness, encouraging students to make connections between their learning and real-life applications.

Step 6 Evaluation: Teachers evaluate students' progress and provide constructive feedback on their performance.

This final step helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring continuous growth and reinforcing the learning objectives set at the beginning.

By integrating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning in this structured way, the CETC course fosters deeper understanding, engagement, and the practical application of traditional culture.

2. Curriculum development components

The curriculum serves as a foundation for education, guiding teaching and learning through a structured framework. Scholars offer varied perspectives on its components:

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1. Tyler (1969) emphasized that curriculum components should be derived from clear educational objectives. He argued that these objectives become the criteria by which) Materials are selected;2) Content is outlined;3) Instructional procedures are developed;4) Tests and evaluations are prepared.

2. Taba (1965) expanded on this view by highlighting the importance of needs diagnosis in determining curriculum components. She emphasized that curriculum components should reflect: 1) Diagnosis of needs; 2) Formulation of objectives; 3) Selection of content;4) Organization of content;5) Selection of learning experiences; 6) Organization of learning experiences; 7) Evaluation.

3. Stenhouse (1975) emphasized that curriculum components should be flexible and adaptable, viewing curriculum as a dynamic structure shaped by teaching practices and student feedback. He particularly emphasized) Clear educational goals and values;2) Teachers' professional judgment in content selection;3) Learning activities based on student needs;4) Evaluation processes focusing on both outcomes and effectiveness;5) Continuous innovation and adaptation.

4. Oliva (2001) provided a comprehensive interpretation of curriculum components, describing curriculum as encompassing:1) Philosophical;2) Societal;3) Psychologicaly;4) Aims, goals and objectives;5) Selection of content;6) Organization of content;7) Selection of learning experiences;8) Organization of learning experiences;9) Evaluation strategies;10) Implementation;11)
Support services;12) Time allocation.

Synthesizing these views, the curriculum comprises six key components: principles, objectives, content, instructional strategies, materials, and evaluation, ensuring a structured yet adaptable approach to education.

Table 1 Key Curriculum Development Theories

Scholar	**Core Components**
Tyler (1969)	Objectives → Content → Instruction → Evaluation
Taba (1965)	Needs Diagnosis → Objectives → Content Selection → Content Organization → Learning Experiences → Evaluation
Stenhouse (1975)	Educational Goals → Teacher-Mediated Content → Needs-Based Activities → Process-Oriented Evaluation
Oliva (2001)	Philosophical/Social Foundations → Objectives → Content Selection & Organization → Learning Experiences → Evaluation → Implementation

3. Students' humanistic quality

According to Shi (2012), students' humanistic quality encompasses stable characteristics developed through knowledge internalization, cultural influence, and various other factors. This quality manifests in three key areas: mastery of cultural knowledge, development of a humanistic spirit, and expression of humanistic behavior. These qualities guide students toward meaningful social engagement and a stronger sense of social responsibility.

1 . Cultural Knowledge refers to the understanding and mastery of China's traditional culture, including philosophy, literature, art, life, festivals, customs, and other fields. Course Example: In Unit 4 (Tang Poetry), students recited classical poems and analyzed their philosophical themes (e.g., identifying Confucian "benevolence" in Du Fu's works).

2. Humanistic spirit refers to a deep-seated, inner thought and attitude about human value, meaning, emotion, morality, aesthetics, and other aspects. It included:

- Value recognition: Debating "filial piety" while citing the Analects
- Emotional resonance: Expressing personal connections to classical stories (e.g., "This reflects my family's traditions")

Growth reflection: Journaling about applying "propriety" in campus life

3 . Humanistic behavior refers to the specific actions performed by individuals based on the understanding and practice of common human values, cultural traditions, moral norms, and social ethics in

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daily life, study, and social interactions. These behaviors not only reflect an individual's respect for themselves and others, but also reflect their tolerance and participation in cultural diversity. Humanistic behavior includes: daily etiquette, social ethics, cultural participation, and public welfare activities (Xu, 2010), such as:

- Family etiquette: Performing tea ceremony bows at 90°
- Cultural participation: Co-designing a Mid-Autumn Festival event
- Social ethics: Initiating classroom recycling

4. Student Satisfaction

The study analyzed students' learning experience at university, emphasizing the impact of interactive learning, course quality, and assessment methods on student satisfaction. (Tinto, V. 1997). High student satisfaction is often associated with increased motivation, deeper learning, and greater retention of knowledge (Song & Lü, 2019). Research suggests that student-centered pedagogies, particularly those emphasizing interaction and situational learning, significantly enhance student satisfaction by making the learning process more engaging and meaningful (Hu, 2019). In the CETC course, Student satisfaction refers to an index that is comprehensively evaluated from multiple angles and dimensions. It emphasizes students' subjective feelings and attitudes toward their educational experience, as well as their expectations and assessments of the quality of educational services provided by schools. The evaluation framework encompasses five key dimensions:1) Course Objectives: Evaluates satisfaction with the clarity, relevance, and alignment of course objectives with students' learning goals; 2) Course Content: Assesses satisfaction regarding the relevance, depth, interest, and adaptability of the course material; 3)Instructional Strategies: Gauges student satisfaction with the effectiveness of teachers' teaching methods, interactivity, diversity of instructional materials, and innovative practices; 4) Media and Resources: Measures satisfaction with the availability, quality, and adaptability of educational media, facilities, and resources, as well as their learning support; 5) Evaluation: Evaluates satisfaction with the fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and quality of the evaluation methods and feedback provided.

The five dimensions were measured using quantifiable indicators in the satisfaction questionnaire (5-point Likert scale) as an example.

1. Course Objectives: Clarity of unit goals (e.g., "I understood Confucianism's learning objectives").
2. Course Content: Relevance of materials (e.g., "Tang poetry texts connected to my life").
3. Instructional Strategies: Effectiveness of methods (e.g., "Role-playing helped me understand tea rituals").
4. Media/Resources: Quality of tools (e.g., "Calligraphy brushes enhance my learning").
5. Evaluation: Fairness of assessments (e.g., "Peer feedback improved my poetry analysis").

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework: The development of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course was based on educators' curriculum development theories such as Tyler (1949), Taba (1962), Stenhouse (1975), and Oliva (2001). For the instructional strategy, this research uses social interaction combined with Situation-Based Learning to improve students' humanistic quality. This integrated approach operates through three key mechanisms: (1) collaborative discussions and group tasks enable peer-to-peer knowledge co-construction, developing cultural understanding through social negotiation (Vygotsky, 1978); (2) authentic cultural scenarios (e.g., tea ceremonies, poetry recitals) provide concrete contexts for applying abstract values, bridging knowledge and behavior; and (3) reflective activities after interactive experiences facilitate internalization of humanistic values. The course fosters a deeper understanding of Chinese traditional culture through collaborative discussions, interactive activities, and cooperative research, enhancing knowledge construction and emotional engagement. By combining social interaction's emphasis on collective meaning-making with Situation-Based Learning's focus on contextual application,

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the framework creates a virtuous cycle where cultural knowledge becomes embodied practice, ultimately cultivating students' humanistic spirit and behavior.

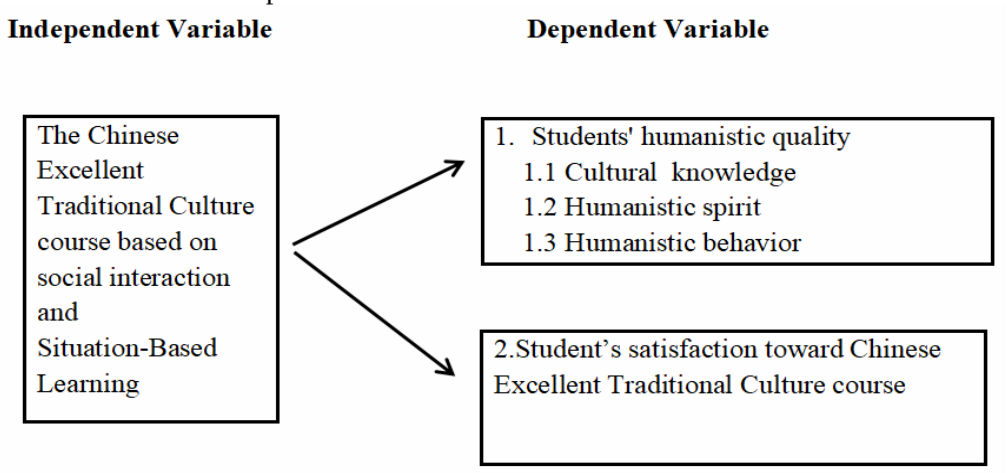

Figure 1 The Independent Variable and Dependent Variables

Methodology

This study follows a three-phase research design to develop, implement, and evaluate the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course, integrating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning approaches to enhance students' humanistic quality.

Phase 1 : Study the background information, focusing on course components, existing problems, and theoretical foundations of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course to enhance students' humanistic quality.

This phase studies the theoretical foundations, course components, and challenges of the current course at Chongqing Polytechnic University of Electronic Technology.

1. Participants:

Teachers: 6 experienced teachers (each with a minimum of six years' experience in teaching the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course)

Students: 20 second-year students who have completed the course， using purposive sampling.

2. Data Collection & Analysis:

Document analysis: Review of educational theories, course policies, and institutional guidelines.

Structured interviews: Conducted with teachers (covering course principles, objectives, content, instructional strategies, media and resources， and evaluation) and students (focusing on objectives, content, instructional strategies, media and resources， and evaluation）

Content analysis: Applied to identify key issues affecting course effectiveness.

Phase 2 : Developing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction, combined with Situation-Based Learning

1. Building on Phase 1 findings that identified six core deficiencies in the current CETC course (superficial principles, vague objectives, overloaded content, teacher-centered instruction, outdated resources, and exam-focused evaluation), this study developed a new course framework integrating Social Interaction Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and Situation-Based Learning (Palmer & Hornby, 1950). The course development process followed a structured six-stage framework, integrating perspectives from various

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scholars: 1）Formulation of principles; 2）Formulation of objectives and learning goals; 3）Selection of contents; 4)

Selection of instructional strategy to accomplish these objectives;5）Organization and selection of materials;6) Selection of evaluation methods.

The course development process followed a structured six-stage framework, integrating perspectives from various scholars. Formulation of principles;2) Formulation of objectives and learning goals;3) Selection of contents;4)

Selection of instructional strategy to accomplish these objectives;5）Organization and selection of materials;6) Selection of evaluation methods.

2. Expert Evaluation:

The five experts who evaluated the appropriateness and consistency of the course consisted of 2 specialists in the course field,2 specialists in instruction relevant to specific content, and 1 specialist in the measurement and assessment field (Two Thai experts and three Chinese experts).

Feedback was incorporated to refine course materials.

3. Lesson Planning & Instrument Development:

Eight structured lesson plans covering core themes of traditional Chinese culture.

Phase 3: The implementation of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and situational-based learning

The researcher implemented the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning for first-year students. This instructional program utilized eight lesson plans over 16 weeks (totaling 16 hours), followed by an evaluation of the teaching results.

1. Research instruments are the tools for researching to collect data. The research instruments that were used in this study were as follows:

Instruments for data collection consisted of: (1) A test paper on traditional cultural knowledge, which consisted of 40-item multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The content of test paper covered all 8 course units:1）Introduction to Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course;2）Ancient Philosophical Thoughts;3）Ancient Myths and Novels;4）Poetry in Tang and Song Dynasties;5）Calligraphy and Painting;6）Architecture, Music, and Dance;7）location of traditional Chinese food and tea culture;8）Technology: The Four Great Inventions. (2) A Self-evaluation form to assess students' humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior, which was a 27-item 5-point Likert rating scale (1=Never → 5=Always) and covered the 2 dimensions as follows:

Humanistic Spirit (15 items):

Value recognition (3 items, e.g., "I apply traditional virtues in daily interactions")
Philosophical understanding (3 items, e.g., "I use Confucian principles to solve problems")
Cultural identity (3 items, e.g., "I reference traditional culture in discussions")
Growth reflection (3 items, e.g., "I share how cultural learning changed me")
Emotional connection (3 items, e.g., "Traditional stories inspire my life goals")

Humanistic Behavior (12 items):

Daily etiquette (3 items, e.g., "I follow traditional greetings properly")
Social ethics (3 items, e.g., "I conserve resources in public spaces")
Cultural participation (3 items, e.g., "I actively join traditional activities")
Public welfare (3 items, e.g., "I volunteer to help community members")

(1) An observation form to assess students' humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior, which was a 5-point frequency/quality rating scale (1 = Poor → 5=Excellent) and covered the 2 dimensions as follows:

Spirit Manifestations (15 behaviors):

Verbal indicators: Uses virtue-related terms, quotes philosophies
Engagement signs: Shares cultural stories, reflects on growth

Behavioral Metrics (12 actions):

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Physical demonstrations: Ritual accuracy, environmental care
Social interactions: Collaborative tasks, volunteer dedication

(2) A student satisfaction questionnaire to assess student satisfaction toward the course, which was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (1=Strongly Disagree → 5=Strongly Agree). The questionnaire measures student satisfaction across five key dimensions: Course Objectives: Clarity and appropriateness, Course Content: Depth and relevance, Instructional Strategies: Effectiveness of social interaction and situation-based methods, Media & Resources: Quality and utilization, Evaluation: Fairness and comprehensiveness, Additional Measures: Learning outcomes (Items 10-11) and overall satisfaction.

2. Data Collection: In the first semester of the 2024 academic year, the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning will be implemented for the sample. The data collection process is as follows:

1) The student had the pretest of students' traditional cultural knowledge constructed by the researcher before teaching the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course.

2)The experimental group learned the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course through social interaction and Situation-Based Learning.

During the teaching process of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course, the researcher observed and recorded the data of students' behavior and performance in the classroom of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in the process of classroom teaching.

After completing the instructions, students in the experimental group took the posttest using the same instruments as the pretest, completed the Self-evaluation form with a 5-point rating scale to assess their humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior, and filled out the student satisfaction questionnaire on the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course. Meanwhile, the teacher completed the observation form, assessing students' humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior.

3. Data Analysis: In this study, due to the small sample size (N = 22), a normality test (Shapiro-Wilk test) was conducted before performing statistical analysis to determine whether the distribution was in terms of normality, then a decision of parametric or non-parametric statistics should be applied to analyze the collected data. Quantitative data were analyzed by using the statistical program in line with the research objectives as follows:

1) Comparing the students' achievement in traditional cultural knowledge before and after the implementation of the Chinese excellent traditional culture course by using a t-test for dependent samples.

2) Comparing the students' humanistic quality in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior after the implementation of the Chinese excellent traditional culture course with the criterion of 70% by using a t-test for one sample.

3) Comparing the student satisfaction toward the course with the criterion of 3.51 by using a t-test for one sample.

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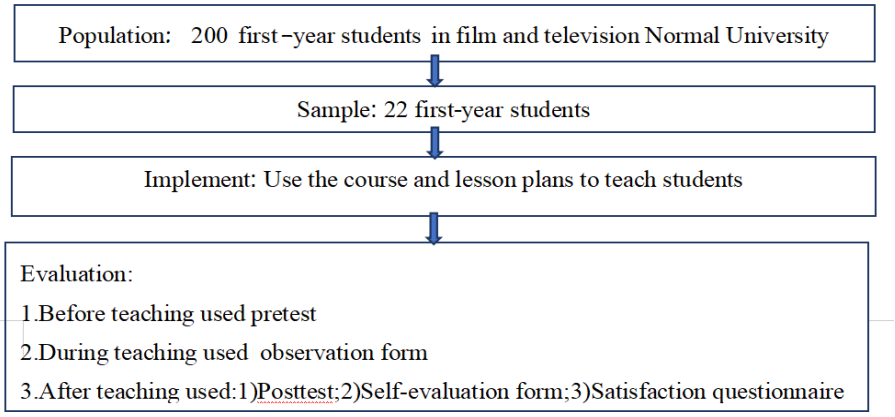

Figure 2 The procedural framework of implementation

Results

This study followed a three-phase research design to develop, implement, and evaluate the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course, integrating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning to enhance students' humanistic qualities.

Phase 1: The findings of studying the background information, focusing on course components, existing problems, and theoretical foundations of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course

1. The findings of the course components

1.1 Principles: The course aims to help students deeply understand and appreciate Chinese traditional culture, interpret its essence, and gain life insights. It also fosters national self-esteem, confidence, moral integrity, and correct values.

1.2 Objectives) Knowledge: Understand Chinese traditional ideas, arts, and customs; 2） Ability: Cultivate love for traditional culture and strengthen national confidence;3) Quality: Promote holistic development, shaping good character and values.

1.3 Content: The course covers an introduction to Chinese traditional culture, pre-Qin philosophies, traditional etiquette, ancient education, classical literature, traditional arts, folk customs, and ancient science and technology.

1.4 Instructional Strategies: Primarily teacher-led, using systematic methods and textbooks to communicate the development and evolution of Chinese culture through classroom teaching.

1.5 Teaching Media & Resources: Core materials include A Summary of Chinese Excellent Cultural Traditions (Fang Jianhua, Jiangsu Phoenix Education Press), multimedia courseware, and online resources.

1.6 Evaluation: Total score (100%) = Attendance & homework (40%) + Online course (10%) + Exam (50%).

2. The findings of the existing problems of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course

The findings of the interviews with teachers and students could be summarized as follows:

2.1 Principle of the course) Lacks depth in exploring specific historical and cultural aspects.2) Insufficient focus on cultural diversity, complexity, and critical thinking.

2.2 Course objective) Objectives are vague and misaligned with teaching content.2) Emotional and value-based goals are unclear, confusing teachers and students.

2.3 Content) Overly complex and dense, neglecting key historical figures and modern applications.2) Limited flexibility and overlapping modules fail to meet diverse student needs.

2.4 Instructional strategies) Over-reliance on teacher-led methods limits interactivity and student independence.2) Group activities lack consistent participation, reducing effectiveness.

2.5 Media and resources) Resources are outdated, lack diversity, and fail to meet current teaching needs.2) Multimedia materials are limited and fail to engage students effectively.

2.6 Evaluation) Overemphasis on final results neglects the learning process and progress.2) Lacks diverse assessments to capture students’ creativity and ongoing development.

3. The findings of the theories in education

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3.1 Philosophy of Education: The current course follows Perennialism, emphasizing the preservation and transmission of timeless cultural knowledge, focusing on classical texts and universal truths. It advocates for intellectual and moral cultivation through engagement with enduring philosophical and literary works, fostering critical thinking and a deep appreciation for traditional wisdom (Adler, 1982).

3.2 Learning Theories: The current course follows a teacher-centered approach, relying primarily on direct instruction and lecture-based delivery.

Phase 2: The findings of the development of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction and Situation-Based Learning

1. The findings of the Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course

The Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course integrates Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning to foster cultural understanding, engagement, and practical application. It consists of six key components: principles, objectives, content, instructional strategies, materials and resources, and evaluation.

1.1 Principles: This course emphasizes cultural inheritance, adaptability, and real-world application through active learning.

1.1.1 Principles Based on Educational Philosophy) Practical Application (Constructivism & Progressivism) – Engages students in experiential learning, linking theory to practice (Vygotsky, 1978; Dewey, 1938);2) Cultural Continuity (Perennialism) – Ensures preservation and modern adaptation of classical knowledge (Adler, 1982).

1.1.2 Principles Based on Learning Theories: Social Interaction & Situation-Based Learning – Encourages collaborative discussions and immersive cultural experiences (Vygotsky, 1978; Palmer & Hornby, 1950).

1.1.3 Principles Based on Government Policy: Cultural Literacy & National Identity – Aligns with policies on moral education and cultural heritage preservation (Ministry of Education of China, 2017; State Council, 2019).

1.2 Objectives

The course follows Bloom's Taxonomy, focusing on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Cognitive: Develop a deep understanding of traditional Chinese philosophy, arts, and customs.2) Affective: Strengthen national identity and appreciation for cultural heritage;3) Psychomotor: Apply cultural knowledge in real-world contexts through interactive learning.

1.3 Content: The curriculum consists of eight learning units, balancing theory and practice.

Introduction to Traditional Chinese Culture – Philosophical foundations and historical significance; 2)Ancient Philosophical Thought – Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism;3) Ancient Mythology & Classical Fiction – Foundational myths and literary traditions;4) Tang & Song Poetry – Themes, styles, and historical impact;5) Calligraphy & Painting – Major artistic styles and techniques. 6)Architecture, Music & Dance – Cultural symbolism and artistic expression;7) Food & Tea Culture, Traditional Festivals – Culinary traditions and heritage;8) Technological Achievements – The Four Great Inventions and their global influence.

1.4 Instructional Strategies: The teaching model is divided into two stages with six key steps:

Stage 1: Pre-Class

Step 1: Preparation – Teachers set learning objectives and provide materials.

Step 2: Grouping – Students collaborate in structured teams.

Stage 2: In-Class

Step 3: Engagement – Real-world scenarios and discussion questions.

Step 4: Collaboration – Group work and teacher-facilitated discussions.

Step 5: Reflection – Self-assessment and critical thinking exercises.

Step 6: Evaluation – Teacher feedback and progress assessment.

1.5 Materials and Resources) Traditional Culture Materials: Chinese Traditional Culture (Wang, 2021), multimedia resources, and case studies;2) Social Interaction & Situation-Based Learning Materials: Digital platforms, cultural simulations, and interactive tasks.

1.6 Evaluation:

1.6.1 The assessment framework measures student learning outcomes and course effectiveness. Student Learning Assessment: 2) Knowledge Test – Traditional culture comprehension;3) Self-Evaluation & Observation Forms – 5-point scale assessing humanistic qualities.

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1.6.2 Course Effectiveness Evaluation: Student Satisfaction Questionnaire – Engagement and overall learning experience.

2. The findings of the evaluation Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course by experts

The draft course was evaluated by five experts in curriculum and instruction to assess its appropriateness and alignment with course objectives before implementation. The results indicated a very high level of expert approval, with an overall Mean score of 4.87 (SD = 0.18). These findings confirm that the course is well-structured, aligns with educational objectives, and is suitable for implementation.

3. The findings of the lesson plan evaluation by experts

The eight lesson plans were reviewed by the same five experts to ensure their quality, alignment with course objectives, and instructional effectiveness. The results showed consistently high approval ratings, with an overall Mean score of 4.78 (SD = 0.41). These indicate that the lesson plans effectively support course findings and promote student engagement in learning Chinese traditional culture.

The findings of implementing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course based on social interaction, combined with situational-based learning

The course was implemented with 22 first-year students at the Chongqing Polytechnic University of Electronic Technology School. The one-group pretest-posttest design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) was used as a procedure to investigate the effectiveness of course implementation. The findings were presented as follows.

1. The findings of the comparison of students' achievement in traditional cultural knowledge before and after learning through the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course

The effectiveness of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course in enhancing students' traditional cultural knowledge was assessed using a paired-samples t-test. Due to the small sample size (n = 22), a Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to check for normality. The results indicated that both pretest (W = 0.963, p = 0.550) and posttest (W = 0.959, p = 0.476) scores followed a normal distribution (p > 0.05), validating the use of the paired-samples t-test for comparison.

Table 3 The findings of comparing the different scores of students' traditional cultural knowledge achievement before and after learning

Group	n	Full score	Pretest scores		Posttest scores		*t*	*p*	Cohen's d
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Experimental group	22	100	71.39	7.16	85.82	6.15	9.05**	.001	1.93

**p < .01

As presented in Table 3, the results showed a significant improvement in students' traditional cultural knowledge after completing the course. The posttest scores (M = 85.82, SD = 6.15) were significantly higher than the pretest scores (M = 71.39, SD = 7.16), t(21) = 9.05, p = .001, with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.93). These findings confirm the course's effectiveness in enhancing students' cultural knowledge.

2. The finding of comparing the Students' Humanistic Quality in Humanistic Spirit and Humanistic Behavior through Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture Course Using Students' Self-Evaluation Form

The finding of a comparison of students' humanistic quality, specifically in terms of humanistic spirit and humanistic behavior, after the implementation of the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course, with the criterion set at 70%, was analyzed using students' self-evaluation forms with a 5-point rating scale and observation forms. The analysis was conducted using a t-test for one sample. This comparison aimed to address the research objective of whether the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course had a significant impact on students' development of humanistic qualities in both spirit and behavior.

Before conducting the t-test, a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to assess normality due to the small sample size (n = 22). The results showed that p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data followed a normal distribution, allowing for the use of the t-test for analysis.

Table 4 The findings of comparing the students' humanistic quality (observation ratings) after implementing the Chinese excellent traditional culture course with the criterion of 70% (3.51)

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Group	n	Full score	Criterion score of 70%	Mean	SD	t	p
Experimental group	**22**	**5.0**	**3.51**	**4.30**	**0.23**	**16.39****	**.001**

**p < .01

As presented in Table 4, the mean scores of the students' humanistic quality in terms of Humanistic Spirit and Humanistic Behavior, as measured through an observation form after completing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course were 4.30 from a possible full mark of 5.00, and the standard deviation was 0.23, which was statistically higher than the criterion of 70% (3.51) at the .01 level of statistical significance (t21 = 16.39, p = .001).

Table 5 The findings of comparing the students' humanistic quality (self-evaluations) after implementing the Chinese excellent traditional culture course with the criterion of 70% (3.51)

Group	n	Full score	Criterion score of 70%	Mean	SD	t	p
Experimental group	**22**	**5.0**	**3.51**	**4.25**	**0.27**	**12.79****	**.001**

**p < .01

As presented in table 5, the mean scores of the Students' Humanistic Quality in terms of Humanistic Spirit and Humanistic Behavior, as measured through a self-evaluation form, after completing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course were 4.25 from a possible full mark of 5.00, and the standard deviation was 0.27, which was statistically higher than the criterion of 70% (3.51) at the .001 level of statistical significance (t21 = 12.79, p = .001)).

3. The Result of comparing the different scores of students' satisfaction after implementing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course with the criterion set at 3.51 scores

Before conducting the t-test, a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to assess normality due to the small sample size (n = 22). The results showed that p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data followed a normal distribution, allowing for the use of the t-test for analysis.

Table 6 The findings of comparing the students' satisfaction after implementing the Chinese excellent traditional culture course with the criterion of 70% (3.51)

Group	*n*	Full score	Criterion score of 70%	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Experimental group	22	5.0	3.51	4.25	0.27	12.62**	.001

**p < .01

As presented in Table 6, the mean scores of the students' satisfaction after implementing the Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course were 4.25 from a possible full mark of 5.00, and the standard deviation was 0.27, which was statistically higher than the criterion of 70% (3.51) at the 001 level of statistical significance (t21 = 12.62, p = .001). This finding indicated that the students were highly satisfied with the CETC course.

Conclusion

A developed Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture course which includes 6 steps of teaching: 1) Preparation, 2) Grouping, 3) Engagement, 4) Collaboration, 5) Reflection, 6) Evaluation. The developed course can effectively enhance students' humanistic quality. Particularly, teaching steps 3), 4), and 5) provide a lot of opportunities for students to learn and practice humanistic quality through the engagement in learning activities in these teaching steps.

Quantitative results support this conclusion:

1)Students' traditional cultural knowledge showed substantial improvement from pretest (M = 71.39, SD = 7.16) to posttest (M = 85.82, SD = 6.15), which was statistically higher than before learning at a .01 level of significance (t21=9.05, p=.001) with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.93).

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2)Students' humanistic spirit was measured through self-evaluation (M = 4.25, SD = 0.27), which was significantly higher than the criterion of 70% at the .01 level of significance (t21 = 12.79, p = .001).

3)Students' humanistic behavior was assessed through observation (M = 4.30, SD = 0.23), also significantly exceeding the criterion at the .01 level of significance (t21 = 16.39, p = .001).

4) Student satisfaction scores (M = 4.25, SD = 0.27) were significantly higher than the criterion scores of 3.51 at the .01 level of significance t21=12.62, p=.001), indicating high course effectiveness.

These results highlight that combining Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning into CETC courses provides a more engaging and effective alternative to traditional rote learning methods. Instead of relying solely on memorization, this approach encourages active participation, real-world application, and collaborative learning, making traditional cultural education more meaningful and impactful.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that integrating social interaction and situation-based Learning into the CETC course led to significant improvements in students' traditional cultural knowledge, humanistic qualities, and overall satisfaction. These results align with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of interactive and contextual learning strategies in fostering deeper engagement and retention of cultural content.

First, students showed significant improvement in traditional cultural knowledge, indicating the effectiveness of our structured six-step instructional framework. By incorporating grouping, engagement, collaboration, and reflection, students developed deeper cultural understanding through interactive discussions and real-world applications. These results confirm Song's (2020) and Wang & Liu's (2019) findings that social interaction enhances knowledge internalization and critical thinking.

Our results align with Vygotsky's Social Interaction Theory (1978), which emphasizes knowledge construction through social engagement. The improvements in humanistic qualities also support Palmer & Hornby's Situation-Based Learning Theory (1950), highlighting the importance of contextualized, real-world learning experiences. Together, these theoretical frameworks validate our approach, showing that active, socially embedded learning effectively enhances both cultural knowledge and humanistic development.

Second, the improvement in students' humanistic qualities—including cultural knowledge, humanistic spirit, and humanistic behavior—indicates that an experiential and discussion-based curriculum fosters a stronger sense of cultural identity and ethical awareness. The structured engagement in role-playing, ethical decision-making exercises, and reflective discussions helped students internalize cultural values. This aligns with Zhang (2020) and Liu & Chen (2021), who found that interactive and situational learning approaches enhance students' civic responsibility and moral reasoning.

Finally, the high level of student satisfaction suggests that integrating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning into CETC courses meets students' learning expectations. The findings confirm previous research, such as Sun (2018), which demonstrated that interactive and student-centered learning approaches contribute to greater engagement and course satisfaction.

Practical Implications for CETC Education:

The findings of this study have important implications for CETC curriculum design. Traditional CETC courses often emphasize rote memorization, which limits students' ability to apply cultural knowledge in meaningful ways. This study suggests that incorporating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning can make CETC courses more engaging, interactive, and applicable to real-world scenarios. Educators can enhance CETC instruction by:

1. Incorporating group discussions and collaborative projects to foster peer learning and critical discussion of cultural values, educators should implement structured group activities such as the Confucian ethics debates used in Unit 2, where students work in small groups of 4-5 with assigned roles (Traditional Scholar vs. Modern Ethicist) to analyze and apply classical concepts to modern contexts through guided prompts like "How would Confucian 'filial piety' apply in contemporary families?" - with peer evaluations assessing use of classical references and demonstration of active listening skills. Additionally, collaborative research projects that compare ancient and modern cultural practices, such as analyzing parallels between Tang Dynasty poetry and modern songwriting, can deepen understanding when students present their findings through creative formats like posters or short videos, combining academic rigor with practical application.

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2. Using real-life scenarios and role-playing exercises to effectively connect abstract cultural concepts with real-world applications, educators should design immersive role-playing activities such as the Tea Ceremony Negotiation from Unit 7, where students assume the roles of Ming Dynasty merchants practicing authentic etiquette, including proper bowing techniques and tea-serving rituals, followed by guided discussions comparing these traditional practices to modern business interactions. Additionally, historical reenactments like simulated Tang Dynasty poetry gatherings can bring classical literature to life, with students actively reciting and analyzing poems in an authentic social context that mirrors ancient scholarly exchanges. These experiential learning activities create meaningful bridges between historical traditions and contemporary applications while developing students' practical understanding of cultural values.

3. Integrating technology, such as digital storytelling and online simulations to enhance student engagement through digital tools, educators should implement a multi-faceted technology integration approach beginning with immersive virtual tours using VR/360° videos to explore historical sites like Song Dynasty tea houses, providing authentic cultural context. Building on this foundation, students can create concise 3-minute digital storytelling videos analyzing cultural concepts such as "The Philosophy Behind Chinese Calligraphy," which develops both technical and analytical skills. Complementing these activities, interactive online simulations featuring scenario-based quizzes (e.g., "How would you handle this situation in ancient China?") reinforce learning through practical application while catering to diverse learning styles. This comprehensive digital strategy bridges traditional cultural content with contemporary technological literacy, creating a dynamic learning environment that resonates with today's students.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged.

1. Sample Size: The study was conducted with only 22 students, which may inflate effect size estimates (e.g., the observed Cohen's d=1.93 could be 20-30% lower in larger samples) and limits the generalizability of the findings.

2. Study Duration: This research was conducted over 8 weeks, and while significant improvements were observed, the long-term effects of these instructional approaches remain unknown. A longitudinal study could assess whether these learning gains persist over time.

3. Single Institutional Context: This study was conducted in one university with first-year students majoring in film and television. Future research should examine different academic disciplines and educational institutions to determine the broader applicability of these methods.

4. Absence of a Control Group: This research did not include a control group, meaning that alternative explanations for the observed improvements cannot be ruled out. Without a comparison group, it is unclear whether students' learning gains were solely due to the CETC instructional approach or other influencing factors. Future research should incorporate a control group and a more robust experimental design, such as randomized controlled trials or quasi-experimental studies, to strengthen causal claims and further validate the effectiveness of this instructional approach in CETC education.

Future Research Directions

To further explore the impact of interactive CETC education, future research should:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess whether students retain their cultural knowledge and humanistic qualities over time.

2. Compare different instructional models (e.g., project-based learning, flipped classrooms) to determine the most effective pedagogical strategies for CETC education.

3. Explore the role of technology (e.g., virtual reality, AI-based learning) in enhancing student engagement in CETC courses.

4. Investigate the impact of these teaching strategies on different student demographics, including older students, international students, or students in different cultural contexts.

By integrating Social Interaction and Situation-Based Learning, this study presents a scalable and innovative approach to CETC education, making it more interactive, engaging, and effective. These findings highlight the need for continued research and curriculum development to improve CETC teaching methodologies further and ensure that students develop a deeper connection to their cultural heritage. These findings also suggest that CETC courses should formally incorporate interactive and situational learning strategies to enhance student engagement. Universities should consider training faculty members in these methodologies, ensuring that teachers are equipped with effective pedagogical strategies. Moreover,

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educational policymakers should develop guidelines to integrate these approaches into national CETC curricula, providing institutional support for curriculum innovation.

Future implementations could explore digital learning tools, hybrid instructional models, and interdisciplinary applications to further enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of CETC education. By embracing these advancements, CETC education can continue to evolve, offering students a more meaningful and culturally immersive learning experience.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practical Implications

1. The course design emphasizes interactive methods, such as role-playing, group discussions, and collaborative tasks. However, some students found it challenging to engage fully due to varying levels of prior knowledge and willingness to participate. Future implementations should explore more structured scaffolding techniques to support students in interactive learning environments.

2. Instructional Strategies: Ensuring Equitable Participation in Teaching Activities. Group discussions and role-playing can be highly effective, but some students may be less confident or reluctant to engage. Assigning specific roles within group tasks (e.g., facilitator, researcher, presenter) can help ensure balanced participation.

3. Develop Contextualized Teaching Resources: Effective social interaction and Situation-Based Learning implementation require well-structured teaching materials. However, many existing resources rely heavily on text-based content, limiting students' engagement with authentic cultural experiences. Future course development should integrate multimedia resources, case studies, and experiential learning materials that align with students' interests and contemporary contexts. Providing diverse learning resources will enhance students' understanding and application of traditional cultural values in real-world situations.

4. Establish a Comprehensive Evaluation Framework: While this study measured students' knowledge acquisition and humanistic qualities, a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional evaluation system is needed to assess the long-term impact of cultural education. Future course assessments should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as student reflections, peer evaluations, and real-world application projects. Additionally, longitudinal studies that track students' retention of cultural knowledge and ethical development after course completion could provide more comprehensive insights into the long-term impact of interactive and Situation-Based Learning approaches.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Longitudinal Studies: Future studies should examine the long-term impact of the course on students' humanistic qualities, cultural competence, and career development through longitudinal tracking.

2. Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Investigating the adaptability of this course framework across Different cultural and educational contexts can identify universal principles and region-specific modifications, contributing to global discussions on cultural education.

3. Exploring Hybrid Instructional Strategies: Future research should explore the integration of other methods teaching example: project-based, inquiry-based, and cooperative learning with situational-based approaches to determine their impact on student engagement and learning outcomes.

4. Technology Integration: Studies should explore how AI-driven platforms, virtual reality, and gamification enhance engagement, interactivity, and accessibility in cultural education.

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