

# Raising Students' Awareness of Protecting and Thriving Traditional Handicrafts in Education

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional handicrafts are disappearing rapidly and not many people in the world still knows the inheritance of it. As the pipeline of educating future generation, education plays an important role in embedding the importance of protecting and inheriting traditional handicraft into curriculum so that young students can realize its importance. Thus, this paper aimed to understand students' experiences of being exposed to traditional handicrafts in their education system in order to understand what future procedures can be made to emphasize it in the future educational system setups. A technology-integrated curriculum on raising the awareness of traditional handicrafts was also proposed at the end of this paper as an example to provide insights to teachers who are willing to integrate more content in their curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Traditional Handicrafts, Technology-Integrated Curriculum, Inheritance, Culture*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural inheritance, specifically traditional handicraft, played an essential role in the human history but seems to be forgotten by many people along with the rapid science and technology development. Traditional handicrafts are disappearing rapidly and not many people in the world still knows the inheritance of it. There are many reasons behind the nearly extinction of traditional handicrafts such as low salary for people work worked in this industry and the difficulties and time of acquiring such skills and all leading to many young people's unwillingness to learn or inherit such traditional skills.

Culture is not only the foundation of a country's development, but also the soul of a country. This applies to the traditional handicraft. As a cultural inheritance, traditional handicraft inherited much history and culture that can reflect the essence of our human history[1]. If these cultures via traditional handicraft are forgotten or lost, the soul of the country will also disappear. As the pipeline of educating future generation, education plays an important role in embedding the importance of protecting and inheriting traditional handicraft into curriculum so that young students can realize its importance. Thus, this paper aimed to understand students' experiences of being exposed to traditional handicrafts in their education system in order to

understand what future procedures can be made to emphasize it in the future educational system setups. A technology-integrated curriculum on raising the awareness of traditional handicrafts were also proposed at the end of this paper as an example to provide insights to teachers who are willing to integrate more content in their curriculum.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING AND THRIVING TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT

Handicrafts are the art of producers and they come from the people and serve the people. They always integrate practicality and aesthetics, with the duality of material and spirit. It roots in the most grass-roots level of society, grows continuously in different nationalities and regions, constructs a solid foundation of mass culture, carries the different cultural background of each region, and has a far-reaching impact on other cultures and arts. To a certain extent, the splendid material civilization in ancient China was created by many traditional handicrafts. The rich variety, perfect conception and exquisite technology in traditional handicraft make the Chinese civilization unique in the world [2][3].

In a cultural sense, traditional handicrafts are the carrier of the emotions and ideals of the Chinese nation,

the specific expression of people's wishes and aesthetics, and the source and foundation of China's culture and art. Inheriting, developing and carrying forward traditional handicrafts is also the trend of the world's cultural development, because traditional folk culture is the direct expression of national spirit, emotion and national characteristics, and the place of national affinity and cohesion.

**3. RAISING AWARENESS OF PROTECTING TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT IN EDUCATION**

Education is important in developing the country's science and technology and also culture. Specifically, education is key for inheriting traditional cultures by raising people's awareness of protecting and thriving traditional handicrafts. However, governments usually do a good job in utilizing other tools such as funding and mass media to raise people's awareness instead of fully utilizing education. For example, the state often utilize increasing subsidies for the development of these handicrafts to attract more young people to learn these handicrafts. More festivals about various traditional handicrafts were also created and set up to let people pay more attention to handicrafts while celebrating the festival. Moreover, the mass media were also utilized to publicize and pay attention to the various cultural and traditional handicrafts since the mass media is the main way for people to obtain information. Despite the importance of governmental subsidies, government-hosted festivals about traditional handicrafts, and mass media, the role of education in raising awareness of traditional handicrafts should also be fully emphasized. Specifically, more content on traditional handicrafts should be integrated organically in the regular, content areas curriculum [4][5].

**4. THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN RAISING AWARENESS OF PROTECTING TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT IN EDUCATION**

Nowadays, technology has a great impact on many fields, including education, due to its convenience in connecting people virtually against the physical limitations and boosting learning efficiency and student motivation and engagement. When technology is integrated in education, better outcomes and innovations usually spark. It is extra necessary to integrate technology into the virtual classrooms, specifically during the epidemic when students could not study in the actual, physical classrooms and schools and teachers were "forced" to online teaching and learning.

However, despite the transitions and adaptations teachers and students had to make, when using appropriately and adequately, the effect of the online

classes could be the same and even better than in a physical classroom. Specifically, technological components of the online teaching could greatly improve student engagement and student motivation, and thus further improve student learning outcome. The top seven important concepts to understand when examining the use of technology for educational or instructional purposes include: 1) active engagement with the learning material; 2) use of real-world issues; 3) simulation and modeling; 4) discussion and debate boards and forums; 5) working groups; 6) coaching; 7) formative assessment.[6]

Thus, the integration of technology, specifically interactive software such as Nearpod into online teaching, can raise students' awareness of protecting traditional handicraft and thus improve the efficiency and maximize the outcome of such efforts. This study will (1) interview students and teachers on their perceptions and their prior experiences of receiving education at schools in terms of protecting and thriving traditional handicraft; and (2) propose a technology-integrated curriculum on the topic of protecting and thriving traditional handicraft that schools and teachers could further adapt into the existing curriculum.

**5. METHODS**

**5.1 Context and Participants**

This study happened in Shandong, China, where heavy industry is more relatively developed than the light industry. This study applied convenient sampling strategy to recruit participants from the same school the author is studying at. 5 students and 3 teachers agreed to participate in this study and be interviewed for the purpose of this study. Please see Table 1 for the details of the participant information and Table 2 for a list of interview questions.

**Table 1** Detailed Participant Information

Participant	Teacher/Student	Age Range	Grade Level
Anna	Teacher	26	Bachelor
Bonny	Teacher	29	Bachelor
Crystal	Teacher	28	Bachelor
Zoe	Student	17	Senior high
Alien	Student	16	Senior high
Bonnie	Student	17	Senior high
Agar	Student	17	Senior high
Rae	Student	16	

**Table 2 Detailed Interview Questions**

Interview questions:

- Do you know what traditional handicrafts are? If yes, give an example (glazed, bamboo).
- Have you ever been exposed to traditional handicrafts? (I've seen it, bought it, experienced it locally...)
- How do you feel about traditional handicrafts? (this kind of thing is very exquisite. I'm surprised that someone still makes this kind of thing?)
- Do you think traditional handicrafts are important in modern science and technology society?
- Do you know what traditional handicrafts are? If yes, give an example (glazed, bamboo).
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- How do you feel about traditional handicrafts? (this kind of thing is very exquisite. I'm surprised that someone still makes this kind of thing?)
- Do you think traditional handicrafts are important in modern science and technology society?
- Why do you think traditional handicrafts are lost?
- Have you ever given a lecture on traditional handicrafts in your school? Has the teacher popularized the knowledge / current situation of traditional handicrafts to you? If so, how many times? How often? In what form?
- Do you think it is necessary to popularize the knowledge / current situation of traditional handicrafts to students in school?
- Do you think it is possible to popularize the knowledge / current situation of traditional handicrafts to students regularly and early in the school? Is it possible to change the situation that traditional handicrafts are facing loss in the near future?
- Why do you think traditional handicrafts are lost?
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- Do you think it is necessary to popularize the knowledge / current situation of traditional handicrafts to students in school?
- Do you think it is possible to popularize the knowledge / current situation of traditional handicrafts to students regularly and early in the school? Is it possible to change the situation that traditional handicrafts are facing loss in the near future?
- What are your suggestions for changing the situation that traditional handicrafts are facing loss?

## 5.2 Data Analysis

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim as soon as the interviews were conducted. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese and translated into English for data analysis. The English transcripts were examined for patterns and patterns were then categorized to form themes.

## 6. RESULTS

All the participants I interviewed, including teachers and students, had some knowledge about the traditional handicrafts, specifically the more famous ones such as glass, ceramics, bamboo weaving and so on. However, none of them have been exposed to systematic lecture or training on traditional handicrafts in any of their educational training experiences. Most of them have only seen and purchased handicrafts products in certain stage of their life. Only 2 out of 8 people I interviewed indicated that they have experiences with the production process of traditional handicrafts locally and personally.

Most people think that the traditional handicrafts are very exquisite, but they also indicated that they were surprised why some people spend a lot of energy and time to make this product. Moreover, surprisingly, they indicated that feel that traditional handicrafts have less significance for modern society as compared to science and technology as they contribute the development of this society to the advancement of science and technology. Also, the participants mostly indicated they may not have such patience and time to learn how to make traditional handicrafts. These types of attitudes can explain why traditional handicrafts are nearly extinction as many young people do not consider traditional handicrafts important. Even though they consider traditional handicrafts important, they are most likely unwilling to spend the time and efforts to learn and acquire the skills. This explains why many inheritors are really old and about to retire as few young

people are willing to be the successors. Many young people would rather devote themselves and their time and efforts to education or technology, Therefore, the traditional handicrafts are facing the danger of extinction.

Only one of the five students I interviewed indicated that the school had held a lecture on the inheritance of traditional handicrafts, but only once. Generally, art classes will explain this part, but art classes may only happen once a month due to the fact that many art classes in middle and high schools in China are used for and occupied by other major subjects such as Mathematics and Physics. Arts classes that are actually being open are usually not enough for art teachers to cover non-required contents such as the inheritance of traditional handicrafts. However, even though they were not exposed to much of the content on the inheritance of traditional handicrafts in education, all participants being interviewed believes that popularizing this knowledge is very important and may change the current situation of contemporary traditional handicrafts

All interviewees indicated that holding more lectures or activities on the inheritance of traditional handicrafts is very necessary to raise the future generation's awareness of protecting and thriving the traditional handicrafts. They agreed that it is necessary to let children and young adolescents start to realize, understand, and advocate the importance of the inheritance of traditional handicrafts from early on. They also agreed that it is important for them to develop the habit of paying attention to traditional handicrafts and traditional culture, so that they can pay attention to or experience it when they grow up.

Participants provided some suggestions on how they consider as being able to help prevent traditional handicrafts from being extinct. For example, they suggested that the government should strengthen intervention strategies on protecting and thriving traditional handicrafts. Strategies such as the following can be made: issuing national policies, spending special funding to subsidize people who inherit traditional handicrafts or work in the traditional handicraft industry, providing more preferential benefits for people who inherit traditional handicrafts or work in the traditional handicraft industry, strengthen students' knowledge of handicrafts during school via more integrated content in the curriculum, and cultivating talents in this field from an early age by setting up a system of training and rewarding talents.

## **7. PROPOSING A TECHNOLOGY-INTEGRATED CURRICULUM USING NEARPOD**

The results of the data analysis indicated that, despite the importance of integrating more content into

the curriculum in education system, children and young adolescents nowadays usually were not exposed any content on the inheritance of traditional handicrafts. Near to none lectures or activities were purposefully designed and integrated into the content area learning. Even for the art classes, where suposingly to be a space for teachers to expose students to the knowledge about the inheritance of traditional handicrafts, did not have the time and space the cover such content. Thus, I propose a technology-integrated curriculum using Nearpod to inform teachers who are willing to integrate more content on the inheritance of traditional handicrafts into the existing curriculum.

### **7.1 Introducing Nearpod**

Nearpod is a free teaching website that can be used on mobile phones, tablets or computers. It is very convenient for online teaching. This app is used for synchronized learning among a group of iPads in a classroom. Teachers could assess student learning in real time. Students launch the Nearpod presentation through their own devices, but teacher can remain the controller of the slides and presentation [8].

The free version of Nearpod does have limited number of how many students can join a class session. Thus, teachers have the option to upgrade their account to the Nearpod Platinum Edition to allow 74 students to participate in the learning activities during the class time. By using the Nearpod features, teachers can convert the designed PowerPoint slides and PDF into Nearpod classes format and created new ones.[7]

The significance of Nearpod is to create interactive classrooms. It has many functions for teachers to prepare lessons. These functions can greatly improve students' classroom participation.

Teachers can upload their lessons to Nearpod, or they can create lessons within the web browser in Nearpod website. If teachers would like to pose a question for students to respond to, they have the option to embed the question into the presentation slides. Students will participate into the lesson by joining and participating on their own device with the lesson presenting on their individual screen.

Some other the interactive features in Nearpod include:

1.Open-ended questions: this function can greatly develop students' way of thinking and let students answer questions with divergent thinking;

2.Matching pairs: this is made to examine students memorize

3.Quiz: it is always used at the end of the class to test the knowledge which learned in the class

4.Draw it: let students draw the object they think

5. Collaborative board: Let the students type their answers anonymously on the public screen. Everyone can see the content written by the other party, but they don't know who the other party is

6. Poll: This can test students' views on the subject

7. Fill in the blank: This function is very useful for many subjects of recitation. It can be used as an exam to test students' mastery of this class

8. Memory test: Students will see 6-10 pictures. They need to remember their location and pair them successfully within a certain time.

With such interactive feature, students can learn more answers and ideas, and also take into account the ideas of some students who don't want to expose their answers. Students will use symbolic forms from the visual media as cognitive tools to help them learn. They can also explore and summarize relevant knowledge on other websites provided by the teachers, and they can also learn this course more deeply.

Nearpod has the option to present the lesson live or to turn each presentation on "student-paced" so students can work at their own pace, at home or in the classroom. Teachers also have the option to set up stations and have students work on different lessons, depending on their needs. Teachers can also have students pair up and work together on student-paced mode, encouraging discussion and teamwork. Teachers can also let students and parents work together at home, which keeps parents involved in the student's learning and creates valuable discussion and reinforcement at home. Teachers can also create a flipped classroom that students need to preview the information before coming to class to allow greater time for discussion and hands-on practice in class. [9][10]

## 8. CONCLUSION

Traditional handicrafts are disappearing rapidly and not many people in the world still know the inheritance of it. As the pipeline of educating future generation, education plays an important role in embedding the importance of protecting and inheriting traditional handicraft into curriculum so that young students can realize its importance. Thus, more efforts should be made to integrate more contents about the inheritance of traditional handicrafts into the existing education system and curriculum to raise young students' awareness.

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