

A Study of the Integration of Patriotism and Social Emotional Learning Skills in Primary Chinese language Textbooks

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Abstract

This paper explores the integration of patriotism education and SEL in primary school language textbooks, analyses SEL resources in primary school language textbooks, and points out the limitations of integrating SEL education in the current primary school language classroom based on the analysis of classroom videos. The study found that the content of patriotism education in language textbooks is closely related to the five core competencies of SEL and can effectively promote students' SEL development. However, in classroom practice, teachers' understanding and use of SEL are still inadequate, leading to problems such as generalised assessment of affective attitudes, lack of inspirational questioning style, and insufficient student subjectivity. This paper suggests strengthening the training of teachers' SEL teaching ability, improving the questioning method and enriching the form of homework, so as to promote students' better development of SEL ability in language learning, and to lay the foundation for cultivating future talents with a sense of social responsibility and civic awareness.

Keywords

Patriotism education, social emotional learning, primary Chinese language

1 Introduction

In a globalised educational environment, more and more studies are highlighting the importance of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in the overall development of students. In addition, a number of studies have pointed out that students' Social Emotional Learning Skills are closely related to their cognitive development. According to the OECD Social and Emotional Learning Skills Second Assessment, growth mindset and sense of belonging in school were found to be important for students' development, and the early cultivation of these skills can have a profound impact on their academic achievements. However, despite the growing importance of SEL in the current education system, there is relatively limited research and case studies on the integration of SEL theories into teaching practices at the level of specific curriculum implementation, especially in the field of language education. Chinese language teaching materials for primary schools not only focus on the cultivation of basic language skills, but also emphasize the development of cultural literacy and thinking skills. The text types in the teaching materials are rich and diverse, and the design of these contents provides a good foundation and possibilities for integrating the cultivation of social and emotional learning skills.

Patriotism, as one of the most important themes in Chinese literature, involves all kinds of heroes, red culture, etc., which is a unique cultural background and value system in China, and is very important for the development of socialist core values of national citizens. Based on this, this paper starts from the patriotism-related texts in the Chinese primary school language curriculum standards and unified textbook resources, and interprets the content of the standards and textbooks from the perspective of social and emotional learning skills, with a view to making certain contributions to theory and classroom practice.

2 Literature Review

SEL began in the United States in the 1980s, and today is a well-established framework, with all 50 states implementing SEL standards that are integrated with their state standards. In addition, the implementation of social-emotional curricula has become a priority for states and school districts. The U.S. academic, CASEL, defines SEL as ‘the process by which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.’(CASEL,2013) Social and emotional learning skills refers to the skills that enable young people to develop social emotional learning. In order to facilitate research on social emotional learning design and programme development, CASEL proposes five overarching domains of SEL, comprising five core competencies that are interrelated, namely and Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-awareness, Relationship-skills and Responsible decision-making.(CASEL,2005) This paper will use these five core competencies as the basis for analysis.

2.1 A Study of Language and Literature Curriculum Adaptation to SEL

As mentioned above, the ultimate goal of education is to integrate SEL into all subject areas. In this regard, the development of a ‘social emotional Learning skills’ (SEL) curriculum is being emphasised and supported by more and more countries in order to enhance students’ social and emotional learning, academic performance, health and citizenship, as well as to prevent or alleviate physical and mental health problems and behavioural problems. As the key stage of children’s social and emotional development, primary school is naturally regarded as an important educational stage for social and emotional learning skills development. English Language Arts (ELA) is naturally suitable for the development of social and emotional learning skills among many academic programmes, and because of the special nature of the curriculum and its content, it has become the first choice of carrier for SEL to enter the classroom.

Educator Barbara Tuchman says, ‘Books are printed humanity.’ (Tuchman,B.,1980) While many teachers are already exploring social and emotional concepts to help students make connections and engage in SEL, there is a huge difference between this approach of processing material via the teacher's intuition and the intentional integration that SEL requires. The latter requires theoretical knowledge and an evidence-based approach that aligns with best practices in literacy and numeracy development. ELA, on the other hand, tends to integrate SEL, with curriculum content and assessment methods that align with SEL outcomes. This symbiotic relationship where work in one area naturally supports the other provides developmental connections in both areas.

Literature embodies human emotions and experiences, allowing readers to feel and experience them indirectly.ELA provides ample opportunities for meaningful personal engagement, connection making, meaning making, and deep reflection.At the heart of ELA lies its complex structure with strong connections to social and emotional experiences. In-depth exploration and deconstruction of themes such as emotions,

relationships, conflict, motivation, decision-making, perspectives, and worldviews in the study of a variety of literary genres is an important part of the ELA curriculum. Through literary characters, students are able to understand the world from the perspective of others, listen to different ideas, analyse motivations, interpret behaviours, and share a variety of life lessons and experiences.

ELA and SEL also fit well together in terms of methodology and assessment. Strategies commonly used by language arts educators naturally promote engagement in SEL, such as creative writing, persuasive writing, reflective writing, reading and analysis(Doyle,B.G.,& Brmwell, W,2006), debate and dialogue(Belend,K.,2007), and projects and performances(Vadeboncoeur, J. A., &Collie,R.J.,2013). Numerous studies have demonstrated the compatibility of ELA strategies and SEL, including the use of discussion, questioning, and dialogue, journaling and blogging, and other forms of writing response to develop students' empathy, communication, and metacognitive skills.

Similarly, reading has been identified as an effective 'therapeutic' tool both in and out of school. Numerous studies have highlighted the power of literature to promote reflection, insight and empathy, which are particularly important in children(McCuliss,D.,& Chamberlain, D.,2013). Reading also improves Theory of Mind, such as the ability to consider different points of view, and helps us to understand our own social behaviour and that of others(Bosacki, \$.L.,1999). Theory of Mind focuses on the ability to 'mentalise' or interpret others and predict their behaviours, emotions and thoughts based on social feedback.SEL theory places a particular emphasis on this ability by encouraging children to compare their own perspectives with those around them and to recognise that different individuals can experience the same situation in different ways(CASEL, 2015; Domitrovich, Durlak, Goren, & Weissberg, 2013; Oberle & Schonert- Reichl, 2017). This ability is essential for promoting a positive self-concept and building healthy peer relationships.

The ELA curriculum greatly facilitates in-depth exploration of social and emotional issues by prompting students to closely examine emotions, perspectives, identities, dispositions, relationships, personal and group conflicts, motivations, decision-making, and consequences, and by allowing students to explore, deconstruct, and make judgments. By linking universal themes to students' interests, concerns, and experiences, ELA provides opportunities for individual student voices, making it an ideal SEL complement to support the development of outcomes in both areas(Ontario Ministry of Education,2006).

2.2 Linking Language Core Literacy to SEL

Table 1. Core Competence in Primary Languages in the New Curriculum (2022 Edition)

Core Competence	A Concrete Explanation
Language Construction and Usage	Active accumulation, sorting and integration - Gradual mastery of the characteristics of the motherland's language and characters and its use of the law - Formation of individual speech experience - Correctly and effectively in specific language situations Communicate correctly and effectively in specific language situations
Thinking Development and Enhancement	Thinking Skills Development and Quality of Thinking
Aesthetic Appreciation	The ability and quality of experiencing, appreciating, evaluating,

and Creativity	expressing and creating beauty. Reading and appreciating excellent works and savouring the art of language - experiencing rich emotions, stimulating aesthetic imagination and feeling the charm of ideas - gradually learning to use oral and written language to express and create beauty -Form conscious aesthetic awareness and aesthetic ability - Develop refined aesthetic interests and noble tastes.
Cultural Transmission and Understanding	-Inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture -Understanding and learning from different national and regional cultures -Cultural vision, sense of cultural self-awareness and attitude of cultural self-confidence

Table2. SEL's five competency areas

Self-awareness	Understands his/her emotions, personal goals and values, correctly assesses his/her strengths and limitations, has a positive mindset and self-efficacy, and is able to identify the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
Self-management	Demonstrate skills and attitudes to regulate emotions and behaviours, including delayed gratification, stress management, impulse control and perseverance, to achieve personal and educational goals.
Social-awareness	Ability to understand the perspectives of people from different backgrounds or cultures and be empathetic, understand social norms for behaviour, and identify resources and support at home, school and in the community.
Relationship-skills	The ability to build and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, including communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressures, resolving conflicts constructively and seeking help.
Responsible decision-making	Knowledge, skills and attitudes to make constructive choices in a variety of situations, including consideration of ethical standards, safety issues, consequences of behaviour and the health and well-being of self and others.

2.2.1 Mutually Reinforcing

Thinking skills in the core language literacy and logical and collective thinking in SEL are mutually reinforcing. In the process of language learning, students exercise logical thinking through thinking activities such as analysis, reasoning and judgement, which helps them make responsible decisions in social situations. At the same time, the cultivation of collective thinking enables students to better integrate into the group and improve teamwork. At the same time, the aesthetic creativity in the core language literacy helps students to

discover and create beauty in their understanding of the collective and the society, which in turn creates a beautiful classroom and school atmosphere, an atmosphere that is conducive to the SEL.

2.2.2 Complementing Each Other

Cultural self-confidence and the ability to use language in the core language skills enable students to know themselves better and express themselves. This self-knowledge is expressed in SEL as the ability to communicate with others, and the two complement each other. Cultural self-confidence and aesthetic creativity in language core literacy enable students to love Chinese culture more and develop a strong sense of social integration and pride. This emotion is reflected in SEL as a sense of responsibility towards the country and society.

2.2.3 Common Objectives

The objectives of both Language Core Literacy and SEL are to promote the all-round development of students, so that they will have good moral character, rich cultural literacy, healthy psychological quality and strong social adaptability. Both Language Core Literacy and SEL emphasise the identification and inheritance of Chinese culture, so that students can build up cultural self-confidence and promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

Language core competence and SEL are interrelated and mutually reinforcing in terms of objectives, contents and implementation. Through the language programme, students can not only improve their cultural literacy, but also develop good social emotional learning, laying a solid foundation for their future growth and development.(Zhang,X.,&Wang,J.,2024)

2.3 A study of patriotism and SEL in the content of language texts

Existing research focuses on the penetration of patriotism in primary school language, and does not further explore the relationship with SEL, but focuses on the presentation of patriotism education in textbooks, the penetration in primary school language teaching, and penetration strategies. Zhang Meile pointed out in her study that the main contents of patriotism presented in textbooks include national territory education, revolutionary role model education, traditional culture education, national unity education, and national identity education(Zhang,M.,2022);Dai Shuping mentioned that the penetration of patriotism education in primary school language teaching can help students better explore and understand the ‘red memory’ in textbooks, appreciate the country’s magnificent mountains and rivers, and the heavy historical and cultural precipitation, so as to set up correct ideological cognition and values(Dai,s.,2019); Yu Li analysed the previous studies and teachers’ classroom videos and proposed that specific strategies for the infiltration of patriotism education can be proposed from five major sections, namely, literacy and writing, reading, writing, oral communication, and comprehensive learning(Yu, L.,2021).

However, most of the existing SEL infiltration language classes are inseparable from the teaching of words and phrases. Regarding how to extend from single language teaching to SEL education, it is necessary to further expand from teaching strategies, questioning methods, evaluation systems, extracurricular practices, and other strategic approaches.

3 Social Emotional Learning Resources in Language Textbooks

3.1 Topics of SEL resources

The 2022 version of the curriculum standards also has new adjustments and additions in terms of curriculum content, clusters of learning tasks and academic quality standards. For example, new themes and carrier forms have been added to the curriculum content, and traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture have been integrated into the curriculum to enhance the ideological nature of the curriculum. Meanwhile, six new clusters of language learning tasks have been added, each of which runs through four academic segments, aiming to promote students’ practical ability and comprehensive quality(Zhao,N.,2023) . These changes aim to better meet the educational needs of the new era, cultivate students’ all-round abilities and comprehensive qualities, and strengthen their cultural confidence and sense of national identity.

Taking the May 4 academic system as an example, with genre as the classification standard, it involves poetry, mythology, ancient texts, poems, etc.; with content as the classification standard, the themes related to SEL can be distilled into three major themes, namely, human beings and nature, interpersonal communication and patriotism, which are further classified into secondary levels based on the distillation of the specific contents of the texts, as follows:

Table3. SEL's five competency areas

Three topics	human and nature	Protecting Nature
		Love and Appreciation of Nature
		Understanding Nature
		Expressing emotions through scenery (nature)
		Harmony between man and nature
	interpersonal relationship	Interaction and co-operation, sharing
		Intimacy: (1) Affection: homesickness, father's and mother's love, trust (2) Friendship: homesickness, childhood friendships (3) Love: loyalty and perseverance
		Courage & Sacrifice
		Caring Respecting and Helping
		Communication and Expression
		Identifying and Coping with Power and Influence

		Overcoming Difficulties
		Learning to Know
		Self-Esteem & Inclusion
		Integrity and Commitment
		Hope and Resilience
		Competition
		Growth
		Labour and Dedication
	Patriotism	Flag Etiquette
		National Sentiment
		Dream Spirit
		People's Consciousness
		Traditional Culture and Identity
		Spirit of Leadership
		Heroic Mission

3.2 SEL resources related to Patriotism

From Grade 1 to Grade 3, patriotic education resources mainly focus on basic concepts such as ‘flag etiquette’, ‘family and country sentiment’ and ‘people’s awareness’, which are easy for younger students to understand and closely related to their daily lives. These themes are easy for students in the lower grades to understand and are closely related to their daily lives, focusing on cultivating basic patriotic feelings and behaviours, and the contents are more intuitive and concrete, easy for students to accept and practice. In the fourth grade, students begin to have a certain degree of abstract thinking ability, and the content of education begins to involve the relationship between personal dreams and the country, and to cultivate students’ lofty aspirations. The ‘Spirit of Dream’ and ‘Heroic Mission’ are designed to lead students to consider the relationship between personal aspirations and the development of the nation, and the role of the individual in history and society. Upper Primary (Year 5): Students’ cognitive and comprehension abilities are stronger, and the content of the education is more in-depth and complex, aiming to cultivate students’ social commitment and leadership skills. The themes are more diversified, including a greater emphasis on the ‘Spirit of Leadership’, which also aims to cultivate students’ leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for the future of the country.

Table4. Patriotic resources in primary (5-4) language texts

first year	National Flag Etiquette 1
	National Sentiment1
	People's Consciousness1

	Traditional Culture and Identity3
Second year	Traditional Culture and Identity2
	Spirit of Leadership3
	Heroic Mission1
Third grade	Heroic Mission 2
Fourth grade	Spirit of Leadership 2
	Dream Spirit 1
	Heroic Mission 5
Fifth grade	People's Consciousness 1
	Leadership Spirit 2
	Heroic Mission 1

4 The relationship between patriotism and SEL

4.1 Dimensions of Patriotism Summarised

Chinese patriotism is a multidimensional concept that combines historical inheritance, national rejuvenation, political identity and social practice, and is an important spiritual force that drives China's social development and national progress. First, historical and cultural inheritance. Patriotism has been a main theme in the thousands of years of history of the Chinese nation. It originated in the love of one's native land and is reflected in the deeds of many heroic figures in history, such as Yue Fei's loyalty to the country and Qi Jiguang's resistance to the Japanese. This patriotism is also embodied in the spirit of ancient China in governing the country and benefiting the people. Secondly, salvation and national rejuvenation. Modern China is facing internal and external troubles, and patriotism is manifested in the struggle for salvation and national rejuvenation. From the patriotic actions of Lin Zexu and Qiu Jin to the founding and leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), patriotism has been an important force in promoting national independence and national liberation. In the new era, realising the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has become the new theme of patriotism. Third, love of the Party and love of socialism. An important feature of contemporary Chinese patriotism is the unity of love of the country with love of the Party and love of socialism. This is reflected in the adherence to the leadership of the CPC and the identification with and pursuit of the socialist road. Patriotism is closely linked to the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, emphasising the high degree of unity between the country's wealth and strength, the nation's revitalisation and the people's happiness. Fourthly, personal responsibility and social practice, patriotism is not only an emotional belonging, but also an embodiment of action. Patriotism in the new era requires individuals to transform patriotic sentiments into practical actions, such as actively participating in social construction, innovation and development, and safeguarding national unity and national solidarity. For the young generation in particular, patriotic education is seen as an important way to cultivate new men of the times who will take on the great responsibility of national rejuvenation. (Liu J.,2016&Lv Bensiu,2019)

4.2 Patriotic connotations in relation to SEL

Table5. Overview of the relationship between patriotic connotations and SEL

Themes related to patriotism in primary school language	Connotation of patriotism	SEL Competency Dimension
National Flag Etiquette	love of the Party and love of socialism、 personal responsibility and social practice	Self-awareness、 Social-awareness
National Sentiment	historical and cultural inheritance、 love of the Party and love of socialism	Self-awareness、 Social-awareness
People's Consciousness	love of the Party and love of socialism、 personal responsibility and social practice	Self-management、 Social-awareness、 Relationship-skills、 Responsible decision-making
Traditional Culture and Identity	historical and cultural inheritance	Social-awareness、 Relationship-skills、 Responsible decision-making
Heroic Mission	historical and cultural inheritance、 salvation and national rejuvenation	Self-awareness、 Self-management、 Social-awareness、 Relationship-skills、 Responsible decision-making
Dream Spirit	love of the Party and love of socialism、 personal responsibility and social practice	Self-awareness、 Self-management、 Social-awareness、 Relationship-skills、 Responsible decision-making
Leadership Spirit	love of the Party and love of socialism、 personal responsibility and social practice	Self-awareness、 Self-management、 Social-awareness、 Relationship-skills、 Responsible decision-making

Patriotism education in primary school language textbooks is not a simple slogan propaganda, but a profound socio-emotional learning skills development that guides children to build up a deep affection for the country, the nation and the culture, and shapes their values and behavioural patterns.

Many of the stories in the textbooks involve the protagonist's exploration and identification of self-identity. For example, The Song of Family Names guides children to understand their family history and cultural background and build up a sense of identity in their own cultural identity by introducing the origin and meaning of family names. In contrast, mythological stories such as 'Pangu opening up the world' and 'Nuwa

mending the sky' inspire children's sense of national pride and identification with traditional culture through recounting the feats of mythological characters in opening up the sky and mending the sky.

Many of the stories in the textbooks deal with how the protagonists manage their emotions and seek social support in the face of difficulties and challenges. For example, Liu Bocheng in 'The God of the Army' demonstrated strong emotional management skills by enduring immense pain during an operation. And Liu Hulan in 'Liu Hulan' demonstrates perseverance in faith and desire for social support by remaining steadfast in the face of enemy threats.

Many of the stories in the textbooks involve co-operation and communication between the protagonists and how to establish and maintain good interpersonal relationships. For example, Chairman Mao digs a well with soldiers and townspeople in 'Eating Water, Not Forgetting to Dig Wells', which demonstrates the spirit of co-operation and respect for community members. Premier Zhou's celebration of the festival with the Dai people in The Unforgettable Water Festival demonstrates understanding and respect for different cultures.

Many of the stories in the textbook deal with how the protagonists make responsible choices when faced with moral dilemmas. For example, Mao Zedong's decision to leave his son's body in North Korea in 'Loyal Bones Buried Everywhere in Green Hills' reflects consideration for the interests of the state and the nation. Zhao Yiman's choice to pour the rice in the big bowl back into the pot in 'A Big Bowl of Coarse Porcelain' reflects consideration for the collective interest and concern for the well-being of others.

Many of the stories in the textbooks encourage children to set up lofty ideals and work hard for them. For example, the efforts made by scientific and technical personnel to realise the dream of spaceflight in 'A Thousand Years of Fulfilled Dreams in the Present Day' demonstrate the spirit of perseverance and determination to pursue excellence. The expectations of children and young people in 'Sayings of Young China', on the other hand, inspire children to strive for the future of the country and the nation.

These elements of patriotic education are infiltrated through subject content and at the same time point to the development of children's social emotional learning skills as they learn how to know themselves, understand others, manage their emotions, take responsibility and pursue excellence, laying a solid foundation for their future learning and life and helping them to become citizens with a sense of responsibility and a spirit of commitment.

5 Classroom video analysis

After analysing 64 classroom videos and lesson plans of different texts for different grades in primary schools, it was found that SEL education in primary school language classes was mainly implemented in the form of vocabulary, with teachers leading students to experience the content of the text and the thoughts and feelings of the characters through 'repeated reading'. In the classroom, some teachers will adopt group division of labour to solve problems, but the focus is on the words and other knowledge problems, and do not guide the students to gain, feelings, etc. in the cooperation, and the 'intellectualisation' is still serious. However, teachers have paid attention to the cultivation of students' SEL in the classroom, for example, by creating close-to-life scenarios or talking about revelations in relation to students' daily lives, that is, certain questions can be asked to guide students to express their inner feelings.

Specifically, it can be roughly summarised as the following problems: firstly, in the evaluation of emotional attitude, the teacher's feedback and evaluation of students are more general and not specific enough, making it difficult to achieve one-to-one targeted improvement. Secondly, in the way of questioning,

the teacher's questions may be too direct and lack of inspiration, such as what have you learnt from this character? What revelation do you have? What should you do in life? Once again, in most of the classroom teaching process, the teacher dominates too much, and the students' subjectivity is not enough, mainly because many times the teacher raises questions and the students answer the teacher's questions, and the teacher's attention is not enough for the students to question whether they are in the process of learning the text. Finally, in terms of homework setting, more often than not, teachers tend to focus on bookwork such as vocabulary, exercise books, etc. It is necessary to think carefully about how to transform classroom content into students' extracurricular practice, and to promote students' development of affective attitudes and values in a more detailed manner.

Therefore, the training of teachers' SEL teaching ability should be strengthened in terms of evaluation methods, and the improvement of teachers' ability to ask questions and guide in the classroom should be promoted through classroom observation, teaching and research, differentiation of the same class, and guidance by experts. In terms of questioning, teachers can let students deepen their understanding of abstract ideas and spirit in solving practical problems by creating certain situations. Regarding classroom forms, more attempts can be made to practice different forms of division of labour and cooperation to help students develop SEL in a subtle way, such as the Canadian BOPPS six-step teaching method, etc., to learn from and practice localised experiences. After-school homework is not only to consolidate knowledge, but also to think more about the development of students' emotional attitudes, and to help students consolidate their learning better through the mode of linking the classroom with the outside of the classroom, and guiding theory to practice, so as to achieve better growth and development.

6 Conclusion

This paper explores the integration of patriotism and SEL in primary school language textbooks. It is found that the content of patriotism education in language textbooks is closely related to the five core competencies of SEL and can effectively promote students' SEL development. SEL resources in language textbooks are rich and diverse, covering a variety of topics such as man and nature, interpersonal communication and patriotism. There are limitations in the integration of SEL education in primary school language classrooms, which are mainly manifested in such problems as generalised evaluation of emotional attitudes, lack of inspirational questioning methods, too much teacher domination, insufficient student subjectivity, and a single homework setting. In terms of specific measures to solve the problem, teachers' SEL teaching ability training can be strengthened and more effective SEL teaching strategies can be mastered. Teachers themselves need to improve the way of questioning, focusing on inspiration and context creation; at the same time, enriching the form of homework and focusing on the cultivation of emotional attitudes and values.

There are some limitations in this study, which mainly adopts the methods of literature analysis and classroom video analysis. In the future, more diversified research methods can be used, such as interviews and questionnaires, to gain a deeper understanding of students' and teachers' perceptions of and needs for SEL cultivation, especially focusing on whether there is a change in students' understanding of patriotism after the end of the classroom teaching and whether they have been improved in their emotional attitudes and values. The survey will be conducted in the form of a questionnaire.

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