

# ***The Strategies of Integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii into Chinese Language Speculative Reading Teaching for Upper Primary Grades—Take “Tian Ji’s Horse Racing” as an Example***

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**Abstract.** Thinking ability is a core literacy that Chinese students should possess. Upper primary grade is a crucial period for the development of abstract thinking. Enhancing the speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades is one of the important tasks of Chinese reading teaching. To further advance speculative reading teaching within the Chinese educational context, the study explores the strategy of integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii into speculative reading teaching. It firstly illustrates the feasibility of the integration of both from three perspectives, which are the resource provision, alignment with learning objectives, and improvement of the learning process. Based on the theory of p4cHI and the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), the study takes Tian Ji’s Horse Racing, a text from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook published by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, as a case to propose three strategies. These strategies are based on basic procedures of practicing p4cHI, including facilitating the local adjustment of the basic procedures of practicing p4cHI, providing diverse learning tools and materials, and strengthening evaluation within the process. Therefore, this study provides useful references for the practice of speculative reading Teaching and facilitates the exploration of the educational practice of Philosophy for Children Hawaii in the context of China.

**Keywords:** Philosophy for Children Hawaii, Chinese language speculative reading teaching, upper primary grades, Tian Ji’s Horse Racing

## **1. Introduction**

The proposal of the core literacy of “thinking ability” and the task group of “critical reading and expression” in the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) indicates the necessity of enhancing Chinese Language Speculative Reading [1]. Speculative reading teaching is in accordance with the cognitive development patterns of students. It addresses the developmental needs of upper-grade primary school learners, serving as an effective approach to fostering their critical thinking skills [2]. Therefore, how to enhance the Chinese language speculative reading

teaching for upper primary grades has become an important issue in the reform of the Chinese language curriculum.

This study aims to enhance speculative reading teaching in primary schools by integrating Philosophy for Children Hawaii (abbreviated as p4cHI). It is based on the alignment of its content with the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) and also demonstrates a high compatibility with speculative reading teaching in terms of learning objectives and other aspects.

In recent years, research on "speculative reading teaching" in China has shown a significant growth trend, with many studies focusing on the description of the current situation and strategy research. However, there are relatively few papers that integrate the p4cHI into it. Internationally, greater emphasis is placed on the cultivation of individuals' critical thinking ability. The research in this area started relatively early, and there is also a wealth of research findings regarding critical thinking [3].

Much research on the application of the p4cHI, both in China and other countries, has focused on specialized children's philosophy courses. In recent years, numerous studies have explored the practical application of Philosophy for Children Hawaii in the Chinese education system. The existing researches are concentrated on the early childhood stage, with diverse research content such as action research on integrating children's philosophy into early childhood life education. Thus, research on its implementation in primary schools is still relatively limited. That not only reflects certain research gaps being explored in China, but also indicates that the existing achievements provide a theoretical basis and practical path for integrating p4cHI into Chinese language speculative reading teaching.

Therefore, this study adopts the methods of literature research and case analysis to conduct strategy research. It elucidates the feasibility of integrating A into B and subsequently proposes relevant strategies. Meanwhile, the text Tian Ji's Horse Racing from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook published by the Ministry of Education are selected for the demonstration of strategy application. The paper provides reference significance for front-line teachers to carry out relevant teaching design and conduct related teaching practices.

## **2. The feasibility analysis of integrating p4cHI into Chinese language speculative reading teaching**

The Philosophy for Children Hawaii (p4cHI) is one of the models within the Philosophy for Children framework, grounded in four core principles: Big-P and Little-p philosophy, not being in a rush, intellectual safety, and the four key pillars--community, inquiry, reflection, and philosophy [4,5]. These foundational principles guide the implementation of the procedures of practising p4cHI and aim to systematically cultivate students' critical thinking abilities.

This paper, based on the current situation of speculative reading teaching in Chinese language education, demonstrates that p4cHI significantly addresses existing teaching problems and enhances students' abilities through improvements in learning resources, learning objectives, and the learning process.

### **2.1. Analysis of the current situation of Chinese language speculative reading teaching**

Speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades is a structured instructional process guided by teachers and aligned with the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) in which students actively engage in some thinking activities such as systematic reading practices

during reading classes. Through cognitive processes such as textual analysis, comparative reasoning, and critical discourse, students participate in collaborative inquiry and deep reflection, gradually developing an individualized and reflective understanding of the text, internalizing thinking methodologies, and cultivating rational thinking [1].

The current situation analysis is conducted from the setup of learning objectives, the teacher's professional competence, and the evaluation of the learning process. First, the objectives of speculative reading instruction are currently ambiguous, reflecting the influence of traditional utilitarian teaching paradigms. This ambiguity arises partly because teachers lack sufficient analysis of students' actual learning situations [2]. Secondly, many teachers have limited familiarity with thinking tools and lack knowledge of philosophy for children as well as related fields, which impedes their ability to effectively cultivate students' rational thinking skills. Finally, the evaluation of speculative reading teaching needs to be improved. The evaluation subjects are limited in diversity, formative evaluation is neglected, and the criteria for evaluation remain overly general [2].

## 2.2. The reason for selecting the p4cHI

The study examines the feasibility of integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching from three perspectives: learning resource, learning objectives, and the learning process.

Firstly, the Chinese language textbooks for the upper primary grades offer substantial resources that are conducive to implementation of the p4cHI theory. One of the greatest features of p4cHI is the “little p” philosophy, which indicates the philosophy is from the wondering, interests, and questions of student experience and background [5]. Chinese language textbooks are systematically designed based on students' daily lives, encompassing diverse themes ranging from nature to social life. Therefore, the integration of p4cHI and speculative reading teaching can enhance in-depth interpretation of texts, help students build cultural confidence, and leverage the educational function of the Chinese language curriculum.

Secondly, the p4cHI is aligned with the requirements for Chinese language speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades. The core of p4cHI is the thinking ability, encompassing five aspects: critical thinking, creative thinking, caring thinking, interpersonal communication ability, and team thinking [4]. The learning objectives of speculative reading teaching in the upper grades are aligned with the core literacy of “thinking ability” and the requirements of the third learning stage of the “critical reading and expression” learning task group in the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition). The “thinking ability” requires students to possess logical thinking, dialectical thinking, etc. [1]. The requirements of the third learning stage place higher demands on the type of reading texts, the mastery of thinking tools, and the level of thinking and expression. This can be manifested in articulating their personal viewpoints with substantial evidence and presenting their learning content clearly and concisely by using mind maps and other tools, etc. [1].

Finally, the procedure of practicing p4cHI provide an implementation path for improving speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades. They are building an intellectually and emotionally safe community of inquiry, selecting topics through the Plain Vanilla activity, and using the Good Thinker's Toolkit to explore questions and assessments. This procedure not only promotes students to think about the internal coherence of the text, but also enhances the connections between the text and students' lived experiences, as well as other academic subjects.

To begin with, the procedure aligns with the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) for contextualized and practical teaching implementation [1]. The Plain Vanilla problem-selection structure consists of five stages: generating questions, voting on the

questions to be discussed during the inquiry process, investigating and discussing the selected question, and finally developing assessment criteria to support reflection on the inquiry [5]. It can be stated that the procedures actively construct problem-solving scenarios and implement diverse activities within these contexts to facilitate the transformation of learning ways. It can greatly foster students' autonomous, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning, developing higher-order thinking [1]. Additionally, the procedure enhances the process-oriented and comprehensive nature of course evaluation [1]. This program places greater emphasis on assessing the inquiry process and developing students' competencies, as opposed to relying solely on teacher-centered lecturing.

In summary, integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades is highly feasible. The repetitive practical process can establish a closed-loop framework that systematically progresses from ability cultivation to consolidation, promoting the effective achievement of core literacy and the grade goals.

### **3. Analysis of strategies for integrating p4cHI into speculative reading teaching for upper primary grades -- taking "Tian Ji's Horse Racing" as a case**

#### **3.1. The reason for selecting Tian Ji's Horse Racing**

The study selects the text Tian Ji's Horse Racing from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook published by the Ministry of Education as a case example to demonstrate the application of these strategies.

Tian Ji's Horse Racing is a text in the sixth unit. That unit closely adheres to the humanistic theme of "spark of thinking" and the language learning element of "understanding the thinking process of the characters". The humanistic themes and language elements of this unit all focus on thinking, aiming to cultivate advanced thinking skills such as dialectical thinking and innovative thinking [6]. Thus, Tian Ji's Horse Racing is an important teaching text for conducting reflective reading teaching and developing students' thinking abilities.

#### **3.2. Facilitating the localized adjustment of the basic procedures of practicing p4cHI**

Facilitating the localized adjustment of the basic procedures of practicing p4cHI represents a core strategy for adopting and improving the circumstances of speculative reading teaching in Chinese language lessons. It is reflected in the setting of appropriate learning objectives and the localized adjustment of learning process.

The implementation of p4cHI typically involves five key stages: building an intellectually and emotionally safe community of inquiries; selecting topics through the Plain Vanilla activity; utilizing the Good Thinker's Tool kit to examine and explore philosophical questions; and systematically assessing the quality of the community of inquiries [7].

The first adjustment is the setting of appropriate learning objectives. Appropriate learning goals should be established by taking into account multiple factors, such as the physical and psychological development characteristics of senior-grade students, the requirements of the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), the content of the text, etc.

The second adjustment is on the overall process. Building on the original process, the study designs an additional stage following the evaluation stage. Students complete homework or participate in after-class activities at either a basic or advanced level, tailored to their individual ability levels and personal learning preferences. The selected question is whether Sun Bin's strategy in the horse racing contest should be regarded as a tactical innovation or an act of deception. The teacher designed the project-based learning (PBL) activity called "Class Rules Designer". Students

analyze existing class rules and identify and evaluate potential loopholes, which might lead to bad behaviors. Finally, students organized a special discussion meeting and formed a final proposal on improving the class regulations.

The third adjustment is on the specific details of some steps. To begin with, the source of learning resources is diverse, including complete articles, supplementary post-lesson readings, and even some sentences. In the instruction of Tian Ji's Horse Racing, the teacher utilizes a variety of resources, such as textual and visual materials, including the content and battle chart. It is aimed to facilitate students' deeper comprehension of the text, personal cognitive of context.

Moreover, this study sets two sections, including the group inquiry and class inquiry, which have occurred in dialogue and collaborative inquiry. The group inquiry is a new section based on the number of students in Chinese language classes. The class size is controlled at around 45 students [8].

The group inquiry adheres to the following requirements to establish a learning environment fostering intellectual and emotional safety and cultivating students' capabilities. Teachers should organize students to build several groups at first, which helps establish small communities of inquiry [8]. Each group should conduct discussions in a circular formation and establish discussion rules prior to beginning the inquiry. These measures foster intellectual safety, which ensures all community members feel empowered to ask questions or express viewpoints, as long as they remain respectful of others in the group [5]. The second one is to carry out division of labor within the team [8]. Members are respectively assigned specific responsibilities such as recording and evaluation, and the groups are achieved through a rotation system in order to utilize diverse abilities. The most important thing is to enhance students' participation in both group and class inquiry. All group members should actively engage in these inquiry processes and be encouraged to share their viewpoints in response to the opinions of others, including individuals and other groups. Moreover, students should respect others' perspectives. To ensure the high effectiveness of classroom inquiry, the paper suggests that each group should collect members' opinions and select a representative to present the group's viewpoints.

The localization adjustment of the p4cHI program is highly aligned with the circumstances of local students, effectively promoting the construction of a school culture and atmosphere centered on intellectual safety, learner-centered inquiry, integration of experience, and a reputation to be proud of [9].

### 3.3. Providing diverse learning tools and materials

Diverse learning tools and materials serve as a critical support for implementing the overall process. The tools and materials can be provided by teachers or actively collected and made by student groups or individuals.

In the overall inquiry process, learning tools and materials should be utilized to foster Intellectual and emotional Safety. These include Community Ball, the Good Thinker's tool Kit, Magic Words. Using the Good Thinker's Tool Kit can help students think about questions in depth and articulate claims. In addition, each group completes a group exploration sheet, which serves as a structured tool for documenting key viewpoints, points of disagreement, and novel insights emerging during group discussions.

Furthermore, applying modern technology to teaching can broaden the sources of learning, deepen the exploration of problems, and promote the individualized development of students. Teachers can guide students in utilizing electronic devices for reading and accessing more



information and learning materials through online resources, such as the political systems of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods in the lesson on Tian Ji's Horse Racing [10].

### 3.4. Strengthening the evaluation within the process

Strengthening the evaluation within the process is crucial for understanding the development of students' cognitive and competencies.

First and foremost, it is essential to adjust the evaluation questions and criteria in a flexible and context-sensitive manner. The community of inquiry uses the assessment questions to evaluate the quality of the inquiry [7]. The design of the assessment questions focuses on two core dimensions: group and the inquiry process.

To better improve speculative reading teaching, assessment questions and criteria should be adjusted according to the context of the text, learning objectives, and other relevant factors. In the teaching of Tian Ji's Horse Racing, teachers and students collaboratively examine the rationale behind Sun Bin's strategic decisions, connected with mathematical reasoning and historical knowledge. Therefore, interdisciplinary ability can be added as an assessment criterion.

The second aspect involves the diversification of assessment methods. Evaluation methods may encompass self-assessment, peer assessment, instructor evaluation, and intergroup evaluation. The evaluation subjects are individuals and groups, who respectively assess the performance of group inquiry and class inquiry, etc. Teachers encourage students to create growth portfolios to document their progress over time.

Moreover, teachers should enhance the construction of a diversified speculative reading teaching evaluation subject [2]. Students can invite other teachers and parents participating in the process of assessment. It can realize the integration of learning, teaching and evaluation.

In addition, enhancing the reflective evaluation within group inquiry enables students to develop a comprehensive understanding of their capabilities, recognize the developmental progress of both individuals and the group as a whole, and further strengthen their appreciation for p4cHI.

### 3.5. Analysis of the practical application of strategies

This study is based on related theories to examine the practical applications and inherent limitations of the strategy. Although this strategy takes Tian Ji's Horse Racing as an example, it has a strong degree of transferability. The strategy is based on the text type, text content, and requirements of the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition). However, this strategy has certain limitations. First, this strategy places higher demands on teachers' professional qualities. The second issue is that during the initial stage of inquiry, it is difficult to establish a high-quality interactive inquiry. Meanwhile, the learning objectives of speculative reading teaching are mainly focused on the acquisition of thinking methods and the improvement of thinking ability, which requires long-term monitoring and feedback.

## 4. Conclusion

This study aims to strengthen speculative reading instruction in Chinese language education for upper primary grades through integration with p4cHI. It first analyzes the feasibility of this integration across three key dimensions: learning resources, learning objectives, and learning progression. It further presents three integration strategies: facilitating context-sensitive adaptations of the core p4cHI procedures, providing diverse learning tools and materials, and enhancing

evaluation within the process. To illustrate the application of these strategies, the text Tian Ji's Horse Racing from the fifth-grade volume 2 textbook published by the Ministry of Education is selected as a case example. This study offers valuable reference significance for related research and strategic support for improving speculative reading teaching. It also increases research on philosophy for children in Hawaii in the context of primary education.

The limitations of this study mainly lie in its focus on theoretical feasibility analysis and strategy exploration, while lacking the practical support. Therefore, it can verify the actual effect of the strategy through the real teaching practice in the future. Moreover, the genres of primary school Chinese language textbooks are diverse, encompassing classical Chinese and narrative texts. This study selects the historical text Tian Ji's Horse Racing as a case study, thereby enabling future research to concentrate on analyzing the implementation pathways for integrating p4CHI into teaching practices within inquiry materials of various genres.

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