

A Study on Enhancing MND Cadet's Cultural Literacy and Multiple Intelligences via Literature Reading

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This study focuses on promoting strong ESL support via reading Western cultural literacy in the frame of elective program, which expands not only engineering-major cadets' humanities global horizon, but also their English output attainment. By means of the acquaintance and contact with deeper discussion on Western civilization, reading the comparative Sino-Western cultural and philosophical issues, to share critical thinking habit, furthermore analyzing, criticizing and learning lifetime, in particular, they could build in both modernized leadership and management in camp based on brand-new angle, furthermore, to achieve military career and personal philosophy.

Based on Chao's MI-based Assessment (2000), our curricula of literature, either "Western Classics and Masters" or "Chinese and Western Cultures," present a specifically delicate design and its syllabus. The role model in the "Officer and Gentleman"(1983) represents our orientation formation of internationalization, to proceed well democracy and human rights, to respect for multiple culture, to esteem gender issues, social welfare system, sense of punctuality, conversation of heritage, both esthetic and human public construction, human medical care and ecological sustaining policy, international courtesy. All these qualities value the dignity of human existence, fine to instill them into our future officers, outstanding world citizen achieved the combination of Chinese and Western cultural advantages.

Learning a foreign language in Taiwan, starting from the grammar is a mainstream access, an eternal SOP, no matter how many years people still mark time. However it opens in fact lots of means to delve more interesting cultural wonders, once the educational policy turns learning English into a formal burden, which ends in giving it up halfway or

produces sheer antipathy. This study discloses the gleam on elective program which provides the calm and more room to inspire, to form and to influence cadets via literary reading, a program constructs Anglo-American background knowledge to develop cadets' multiple intelligences.

The college is both right occasion and right time for students to develop L2 integration capacity; instructors should cultivate them with both extensive reading and interdisciplinary reading for their own good to extend a full language training—reading, writing and oral expression. Promoting cultural literacy influences imperceptibly learners' L2 cognition towards their target language. Instructors can introduce and share interdisciplinary and intellectual exchange and interaction via masterpieces (fables, bible, masters' ideas, etc.), academic reading, film admiring, seminar inspiration, extra-curriculum activities. Teacher and student, both lifetime learners, pursuit a better process of learning from each other, admire and discuss together concerning topics.

Introduction and Background Concepts

Learning is a lifelong process. It does not end upon graduation when one receives a diploma, or when one gains employment. Our cadets, future 'Officers and Gentlemen', will have secure guarantee from their career and promotion, had better to enrich more during schooling in academy, and to explore the depth of thoughts, to speak properly and purposefully to communicate effectively in particular on behalf of our official organizations

abroad in our future officers' case.

Bacon expected the student to be a well-rounded person. "Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man... histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend." (Bacon)¹ Because the Renaissance man was to show ability in many areas, it was necessary for the student to be well versed in many subjects.

Besides, one of the major poets of the Song era, Dongpo Su (1037-1101) said: "Without the disadvantages of using them, offering inexhaustible resources... People who demand to them are all eligible, only books!> (vol. 36, Complete works of Sushi)

International Education Consensus

"Learning to play like learning languages, you must not only know many words, vocabulary, but also familiar with the life, history, psychology, philosophy, literature, etc. to well express and master words you know," said Yo-Yo Ma (1955-). The extensive reading, as a ground-breaking work, is already late for high school students, our people must recognize the consensus on such international education, even to absorb interdisciplinary

knowledge through multi-culture.

Extensive reading via multi-culture, as well Western masters and masterpieces, gains more literacy acquaintance beyond their learning satisfaction, and we hope sincerely they could impact and influence from cultural contact to implement in their own leadership and to contribute further more later during their military career, their auto-realization each, furthermore in their own aesthetics of life, which is poised for a complete success.

Many establishments subordinated to the ROC Ministry National Defense are mostly more than sixty years since the retreat of ROC government in Taiwan, run each with their own military features and tradition. Thus, it shows good opportunities for instructors in Academies, major in Literature or interdisciplinary studies, to introduce many subjects into a learning environment with fence, where the cadets in barrack accept usually simple logic and single value under command.

Learners today benefit greatly from learning as much as possible in many subjects, able to converse on diverse topics, MND cadets should be no exception. This will help each one not only to be a qualified officer, in particular the international armed force such as Air Force and Navy, but also to be a well-rounded person. Therefore, we find always the possibility to spread diverse Humanities courses, knowledge no fence and beyond the barrack, to balance their military and engineering studies, furthermore, such thinking training is crucial for future scientists. In particular we have seen too

many cases like Frankenstein since modern era, and as soldier, the only one who can use legally weapon, needs seemingly reasonable judgment to restrict its abuse. Via proper curriculum-design to arouse cadets' interest in Literature, instructors wish they could be familiar with great literature worldwide. It provides the approaches to learners to connect wisdom and philosophy from reading master and masterpieces, across both time and space, and to share and discuss their point of view, at the same time the instructor provides similar extensive thoughts.

Through such reading process, we design seminar-like topic during semester, and invite cadets to participate or get involved, which is a valuable or meaningful process to guide and shape their characteristics, personal philosophy, sense of both moral and value, positive thinking facing daily difficulties and life adversity, as well self-upgrading gradual liberal contact. Through some inspiration little by little from reading various inspiration, stories and different life journey from Western master and masterpiece supplementary with assisted [audio-visual] materials, both allow to reflect the answer or solution to personal deep inside, and figure out the hint about their certain exit and future direction, in order to foster their cultural literacy and international courtesy of our international officers, potential attaché, to achieve successively career goals and auto-realization with wisdom, magnanimity and sophistication.

Major in sciences, and aged between 20 and 22 years old for regular class (20-21 years old

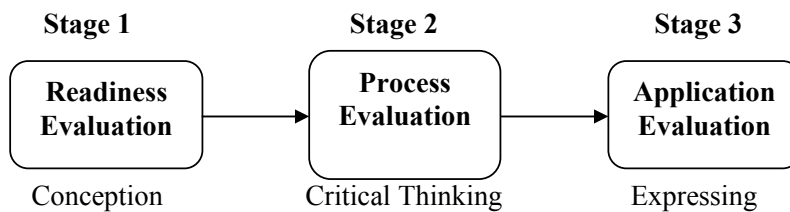
for sergeant (junior-college) class), the learners are beginners' levels in literature. The platform is our two elective courses above. The group's L2 proficiency levels in reading were generally basic intermediate to high intermediate (the sergeant class is relatively low). Scheduling for the elective is on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons in our establishment, however, afternoon is known as a time when learners are tired or often distracted. They need more encouraging than L2 requirements to participation or contribute their energy in elective course.

It is always an instructors' responsibility to do the utmost to motive diverse learners, and nurture within their charges a greater interest and thirst for knowledge. This is especially true in a second language course. Learners must become involved in class activities, and be encouraged to participate openly, instead of just diagnosing or judging others. Learners anticipate, within an ESL context,

becoming better able to discover new things, explore communications tools, explore and expand cultural knowledge, become able to raise questions, complete assignments, and even simply chat or participate openly in discussions where oftentimes new point of view can be shared or challenged. In the case of this pilot course, instructors and administrators look very forward to observing language acquisition and personal growth on the part of test group participants. The simple look of recognition on the face of a learner—the light goes on—who has just read and understood a second language text is in itself extremely rewarding to an educator.

Methodology and Content

Based on an efficient input to output learning, our training goal is not only through learning, but also at the same time by way of multiple intelligences (MI, Multiple Intelligences). In fact, the assessment is not a separate job.



The Three-Stages of the MI-based Assessment Model

Chao, Tzu-chia (趙子嘉), 2000

Stage 1: the instructor adopts mainly the reading, with the help of stories in films and other supplementary materials to observe and ask (MI Checklists, Chao, 1999, Christison 1996, Armstrong, 1994).

Stage 2: the assessment goes into a comprehensive and specific performance, we wish each stage produces qualitative and quantitative thinking.

Stage 3: after the thinking-debating approach, we expect an incorporated expression to achieve the full-language presentation.

Since establishing the focal point of the thematic exercise for the courses either “Western Classics and Masters” and “Chinese and Western Cultures” for new school year, we attempted to build the product approaches (ends) and the process approaches (means), in conjunction with material agreed to represent literary masterpieces and the expostulations of master philosophers. The supporting theories and knowledge referenced were and consciously weighted and balanced between the teacher-oriented learning (handout, lecture-oriented) and student-oriented (assisted learning materials, group oriented) groups (Richards, 2005). Our attempts were made to balance the course between teacher-oriented learning and student-oriented learning (assisted materials, group oriented). The preliminary section is lecture-oriented, meaning that handouts were disseminated and instructions given prior to undertaking assigned work. A group review of lesson materials takes place at that time, with individual reading and/or group analysis of tasks being assigned. During the subsequent week/class, questions and short assignments were proposed to learners, including three quizzes. This portion of the teaching methodology was teacher-oriented, and focused more on learners’ reading abilities than subsequent events, which consisted, primarily, of group activities, activities including instruction, organizational thinking tasks, and written work aimed at further establishing and supporting comprehension and critical thinking skills.

The forward given provides, in the most

unfettered fashion possible, an indication of the objectives of the course—to train learners’ contemplation, observation, criticism and speculation through literature. A variety of previously published studies exist on the teaching of literature, yet this study refers to the use of literary study of literature within an ESL context. This paper also seeks to bring forward for discussion an analysis of what causes participants to feel more inspired from the cultural and literary frame they have covered as reading materials. An added hoped-for benefit of the course is to arouse greater learner interest in literature and to assist in guiding them towards a better understanding and acquaintance with diverse cultures, concepts, events, challenges, and philosophical points of view (Coulby, 2001) than previously existed for them. Furthermore, it is hoped that this new-found insight would challenge them to re-evaluate pre-existing attitudes and behavior, and consider alternatives within expanded socio-philosophical boundaries.

In order to better mirror a free-talk atmosphere or even formally a seminar-like curriculum in classrooms, learners are encouraged to join in and participate freely in discussions that followed initial teacher-centered introductions of study material. As well, learners are often encouraged to relate to their teacher less formally, or more casually, than they are used to in traditional Asian classroom situations, particularly within the experiences of learners at a military college. Given that this was an ESL class, part of the objective was for students to learn about Western culture and cross-cultural issues, as well

as language, and this included a Western classroom experience: learners are boosted to speak out and not drift further into silence as the two hours of class-time passed. However they differed. This prodding was reflected in quizzes, where “standard answers” were not applicable—that oral tests were experiences in oral expression, and not of providing a pre-determined “correct response.” This approach facilitates learner exchange in a more relaxed and free-form environment, resulting in learners raising more questions than ordinarily done, and having learners provoke additional thought and consideration for passages under review. Possibly, brain-storming, which develops easily later as an off-shoot of peer-pressure and self-direction through question-interaction and analysis, is good for fostering processes of critical writing. Such class activities combined on a continuing basis with lecture-oriented and group-oriented approaches are helpful for students in reaching conclusions that they might not otherwise have considered.

Going with a series of inspiring, trendy and practical themes, the courses are designed for learners to learn from the material being studied. Literature, as a collection of studies based on human nature and interpreted by others, allows for flexibility and critical analysis, which was encouraged wherever possible. Teachers have a professional responsibility to, “make the texts as attractive as possible, end encourage students to engage in it (the task), invest effort and succeed.”(Girard, 1977) Once we acknowledged that literature is not so narrow in scope as we might

have thought, the individual is encouraged to apply theories such as the “Hierarchy of Needs” by Maslow in the case of absorbing knowledge to consider and reexamine our difficulties, our planet, the nature, different lives, as a reflection of themselves. While these values could not be fully imparted to the learners in such a brief span of course duration, the basic premise is introduced, and with ongoing affirmation and encouragement from the input of the instructor and the materials taught through this methodology, the gradual or cumulative effect of this would be to create in them a greater and sustainable belief in their own potential, and to further hone their critical writing skills at the same time.

Admittedly, instructors do try to constantly make their classes more interesting and inspiring, which means that each moment in a learning environment or classroom is unique, regardless if the same texts, methods, and course materials are being taught in different classes at the same time—education does not take place in a vacuum. We are told that, “teaching should be flexible and innovative and not simply dogmatic. What works for some doesn’t work for others—teachers and students alike.” (Denton, 2003) Furthermore, instructors develop their means by observing and reacting to what learners echo, so that the latter rewards the first with their group involvement: discussions, inspiration, question and exchange of information and viewpoints. In that light, the experience is symphonic for instructors and learners alike.

The features of cadets include firstly the vocation of obedience and team spirit, solid physical, self-

control and high anti-pressure, military ethics and courtesy in a military boarding lifestyle. Relatively, a confined environment could dominate their formulated logic, and result in sense of value and behavior pattern, such as an ambience in high esteem of hierarchy (full of imperative sentences from upper ranks); secondly, lack of training for invention and critical thinking, even reform, under the obedience, thirdly, active time management with autonomy; fourthly, consider on harmony of genre in barrack. The four main angels mentioned above are the major subjects different from civilian colleges and established since a long time, therefore, it depends on patience, guidance and inspiration of academy's instructors.

FL teaching policy back to right path: FL cognition via classics

Cultural Literacy in Literature could widen not only future officers' cultural vision, but also offer to cadets some optional ways while proceeding humanized management and fixing problems in barracks. It upgrades the quality of leadership, and moderates in time some policy-making short of large picture, as well flexibility. Multiple thinking deriving from reading literature encourages personal views which could reinforce their confidence and communicative ability while expressing, and allows them to observe and analyze wisely and wittily in leadership and policy-making, and to take responsibility after a reshuffle, or even a reform in unit. On the other hand, regular well-known information keeps learners from victims of

credulity. All we hope the harmony of development and balance in accompany of their gregariousness and independence, upper indication and self-management, obedience and originality, engineering and humanities studies, once they get an overall picture.

There is a great (high) interest in multi-sensory input **from Cognitive to Affective objectives**, from reading, listening, speaking and writing. Quite unexpectedly, as the class developed, our final test came not from the texts, but from the films the students followed. The films we suggested were not exciting—in that way that contemporary popular culture may define “action films” as being exciting—but they were up-tempo and drew students into discussions where comprehension/analysis/synthesis were benefactors. We ended in with one more film as assisted materials. Through a student-oriented learning approach, we adapted multimedia teaching as an impression-enhancing tool in accordance with those circumstances necessary to apply the acquisitive theory of learning. Teachers guided students to follow their own directions, within the main subject, and control the classroom management aspects of learning—such as time management, while at the same time encouraging learners' input, inviting them to look for inspiration with their associations, and to set increased critical thinking as a concluding goal.

Innovation: from curriculum-design to teaching method

Based on Chao's MI-based Assessment, our

curricula of literature, either “Western Classics and Masters” or “Chinese and Western Cultures,” present a specifically delicate design and its syllabus. The units of each program focus principally on Genre issues, Auto-realization, Life education and Eco-literature are main four topics in our recent program, an all around proficiency training for Chinese and Western cultures. In order to help learners to integrate from linguistic knowledge into multi-knowledge, from pure L2 reading to reflect everyday issues, we do our best to introduce and guide. (Appendix IV)

Reading thoroughly and reading through are exercises that can be closely associated with improved writing, speaking, and listening abilities and skills. Keeping learners’ train of thoughts on life education, Female Consciousness, Eco-literature (for conservation) as focus first, we lead them to express their personal opinions, which urge them to collect, to consult and to summarize all the documents they got. This is what they need to proceed in college, **extending reading and extensive reading** before presenting clearly or firm position a personal view or stand. Understanding texts is often a preliminary step on the way to further learning—a stepping stone. Given an understanding of these texts, learners were given the opportunity to further develop personal observation, enhance experience within a learning context, improve critical thinking, logical organization from listening into summary, writing skills and broaden the scope and the depth of diverse circumstances. The final report records their own stand and critical perspective, a process

emphasizing reading, independent thinking which develops the efficiency from information/issue input, and learning conversion into performance output.

“Learning without thinking is in vain; thinking without learning is perilous.” Confucius has pointed out the essential of an efficient learning approach with depth, from thinking to debating. It fits perfectly as well to his other universal flaw while learning— “No request, no enlightenment.” Focusing on introducing an interactive atmosphere and feedback in class, this teaching research motivates an active habit of independent and critical thinking in learning, this research focuses on our goal to reform learners passive attitude into independent and critical thinking, high involvement and motivated creativity. Once learner became only receiver of knowledge, no feedback, or paying weak attention in class, or even the worse, waiting for ‘correct answers,’ instructor should break through and turning such regression, determined. It will be better have a small pop quiz after each film, if the time is all right. (Perfetti, Charles, Landi, Nicole, Oakhill, Jane, 2005)

In fact, in similar curriculum, we are not eager nor ways to assess its effectiveness at the end of each semester, but the immediate moment they train of thoughts just following after our direction, it had better that they can reason and think twice each time while they encounter some issues, then have their own opinions or alternative way to solve the similar situation in their lives. Because it always takes time to foster the character of each person. The instructor provides all he has and he can, textbooks,

supplementary audio-visual materials, patience and best wishes, to guide, to inspire, and then luckily enjoy their concentration and involvement at the moment, which is already the biggest teaching feedback in literary program. This is a process like physical changes, which are always different on each person, a ripple as the reflection on the themes in real life, or even a revolution from within, a process to help each to deepen the depth of life. The instructor just inserts the literary input into learners' lifelong applied output, they could be the beneficiaries after all around literary sharing.

Educational Potential: Integration Ability

We implement the pattern in the elective the heuristic thinking method to apply “positive interpretation of thinking outside the box” teaching strategies. Trying to arouse learners' curiosity to notice more social and cultural issues and to help the individual to explore deeper their interested adopted issues, we discover within collective participation the originality and the potential each via independent thinking, group discussion as essential presentation at class, and examine their paper works at the end of semester to complete the entire evaluation of learning.

The literature program emphasized developing critical thinking skills, as stated in our objective. The materials we used were a means of reaching an end. The test survey shows the general benefits (higher levels of group and individual achievement) from the teaching methodology, and provides some insights into ways in which the course can

be improved (<learners indicated they preferred shorter articles, and a preference for just released films (Appendix III)>). Generally, the learners indicated an appreciation for the materials utilized, and did not hesitate in expressing their views on the answer sheets provided (Appendix II), as well as on the page of school semester questionnaire. Clearly, the learners were required to have an underlying understanding of the language of the test survey in order to so fully and freely comment as asked to do. That further underlines the benefits of this program in helping to build the foundations of cultural and textual understanding, in addition to the literal understanding of the language written.

Regular small modifications according to learners' suggestions and survey on teaching method or materials are constantly executed semester by semester. Recently, in the elective “Chinese and Western Cultures” of near school year, we try to promote the teaching pattern of master, and believe that they are formable, full of potential, to do as well as the graduates in civilian college. The real importance of exercises in barracks is the trainees' experiences from lots of drills, similar to our practices in different units concerning personal immediate problems, going with reasoning and philosophizing activities. According to general assessment held by establishment, we did reach our established effectiveness to activate traditional literary teaching and lead to the reflection of the life to find out access and hope as solution. This time in the new school year program, we plan to direct

each individual different subject, and assess them with oral report for mi-term and paper report for final exam, expecting an excellent exchange between instructor and learner. (Appendix IV, 1-6 vs. 7)

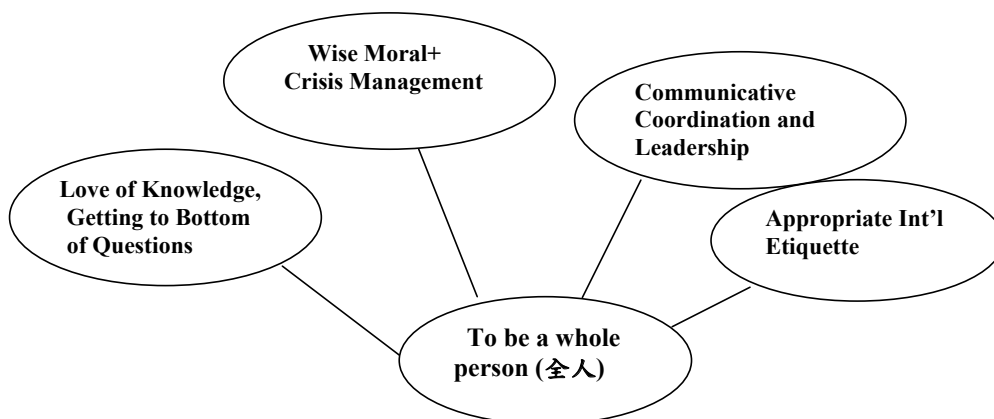
Reading, input infrastructure of all knowledge

Learning from others' stories and experiences by means of written or non-written way, rather than sticking to boring grammar materials which content no life nor soul, our class, bringing a clear stream of learning, forms its own characteristics in campus, internationally informative, cross-cultural and thoughtful. From observing other life and philosophy our program provides certain sensitivity and intellectual depth as humanistic education, and encourages our learners to know more and explore themselves to develop a mature personality with our gradually subtle input. Based on the scope of a whole

person: "intellectuals first, then professionals," we wish our learners to care for their communities and the world, to tolerance the multi-culture, to deal at ease crisis management, to do a rational judgment with wise moral.

Conclusion

"Read a good book and speak to many noble people," Goethe (1749-1832) briefly summarizes the essence of reading. Reading, much more open-minded, powerful and inspiring than supremacy of grammar-learning or grade-oriented learning, has great benefit to officers' leadership for having already a big/global picture in mind. Personal all around comprehension, with the help of English full-language proficiency, presents vividly his holistic wisdom on professional performance and the reality with a harmonious philosophy of life.



Knowledge Map of World Cultural Literacy

Adèle Y.D. Sun (孫毓德製, 2006)

According to professor Li, “students who have habit to read usually and diligently English classics, newspapers could absorb the essence and literary talent, and such process of ‘Internationalization,’ effectively be used in spoken English expression and writing.” (Li, Zhen-Ching, 2006. <Reading...>) Furthermore, “extensive reading can develop a wide range of interests, to change the outlook on life, and to make people become more optimistic and progressing. Once shapes college students’ reading habit, it promotes a certain reading wave in the entire society. A problem shown already in 2005 College Evaluation Report: Taiwanese college students’ English level is in depression. It is due to the overall social impact.” (Li, Zhen-Ching, 2006. <Ways...>) Professor Li has points out the key point of ESL teaching in Taiwan, such Bimodal phenomenon of English Proficiency similar to Matthew Theory, reflects the weak efficiency of English Teaching in Taiwan for a long time, not only demonstrated in the data since the recent decade. From 2002 to 2007 the annual performance on our people’s English proficiency did not follow the economic and technological development, in the contrary, it stepped significant backward. The worse, the performance of English Proficiency in the rank of the Asia 2007-2009, Taiwan sits tight the bottom. (Liangfen Wang, 2005. Pinpoint Forum, 2009) It is already time to examine thoroughly and honestly the pedagogy of ESL teaching: the motivation and the core achievement that we insist, since more than a century of Americanization, or internationalization.

Once ROC army wants to reserve elites, like attaches, they have implement the only way, correct FL teaching policy back to right path: FL cognition via classics as quick as possible, instead of getting learners stuck in grammar problem, in particular enforcing ECL listening test regarded as panacea for everything about English teaching. The more the Navy respects and trusts experts’ teaching, the more it progresses. The scale of ROC navy’s horizons, famous for “join the Navy to see the world,” represents its near achievement. Our courses play a leading role in campus, and direct a correct orientation heading to the internationalization, in which civilian colleges have mostly brilliantly fruitful. While we are as educators truly touched when we note moments of learner concentration and involvement, the question or challenge remains for us to be able to seize upon these precious moments and to make of them catalysts, utilizing the best possible methodology, resulting in the greater enhancing learning for our learners.

We could facilitate learners to upgrade their established level of reading in a greater capacity, to write further reports, thesis and dissertations, and to think more expansively. In conclusion, by means of this study of expending cadets’ vision from literary reading, which increases first their own inner world which extends eventually an outer one under the guidance of world masters. Due to the current limit on FL teaching in campus, we try to keep our literary course as a pure land, a fountain on beauty, hope and freedom to our confined cadets, or in the near future

match luckily the ultimate goal, “read the first-class book, be the first-class people and establish the first-class society.” It is no any excuses that Taiwan is absent in the wave of the internationalization to return kindly the compliments of The World is Flat:

The ideal country in a flat world is the one with no natural resources, because countries with no natural resources tend to dig inside themselves. They try to tap the energy, entrepreneurship, creativity, and intelligence of their own people-men and women-rather than drill an oil well. Taiwan is a barren rock in a typhoon-laden sea, with virtually no natural resources—nothing but the energy, ambition, and talent of its own people— and today it has the third-largest financial reserves in the world. (Friedman, 2005. 262-263) 🇺🇸

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