



Designing a Stratified English Homework in Primary Schools under the Concept of Double Reduction

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ABSTRACT

The design of homework for primary school English teaching is important, but it has not been given enough attention in actual primary school English teaching. Teachers focus more on teaching than on designing homework. They prioritize grammar over critical thinking. They focus on the whole class instead of on each student individually. The quality of primary school English homework should be improved by focusing on the purpose, applicability, and individuality of the homework.

Keywords: double reduction; stratified homework; primary school English

1. Analysis of the existing problems and causes

After the new curriculum reform, the overall teaching of primary school English units has improved, but English homework, which is the main way of learning outside of class, has not gotten enough attention, and the following major problems still exist:

(i) *More emphasis on teaching with lesser on homework design*

Some units' teaching designs are lacking in homework design, or the homework doesn't relate to the goals of the unit and doesn't work well with the unit's teaching. The lack of homework design in class hour planning makes it difficult to explain and comment.

(ii) *More focus on language than on thinking*

After-school exercises and mechanical transcription are still used in some senior English homework designs. It is difficult to develop students' core literacy and general capabilities from fragmented knowledge. This kind of mechanical and single training can make students have negative emotions about homework, which can affect their interest in English.

(iii) *More focus on the group as a whole and less focus on the individual students*

Most of the homework is still designed for all students as a whole, and teachers make unified corrections, which leads to differences in English proficiency among students.

2. Research methods and process

To determine how to improve the quality of homework design for English units in senior primary schools, solve the above problems, and truly achieve "burden reduction and efficiency increase" is worth exploring. Based on the literature, it is evident that the homework design of English units in senior primary schools should focus on the three principles of purpose, application and criticism, and form a long-term homework evaluation method guided by metrics and students as the main body. In practical teaching, the following aspects have been tried and studied:

2.1 Pay attention to the purpose of layered tasks, and change random and inefficient to high-quality and high efficiency

Homework design is an important part of unit teaching design. The purpose is to help students consolidate what they have learned in the classroom and achieve the learning goals of this unit. Teachers should stop assigning homework at random and start designing unit homework based on the unit's objectives and content. This will help students reach their learning goals more easily.

2.2 Determine the teaching objectives according to the unit objectives

Teaching objectives are the starting point and final destination of all teaching activities. The homework design should be in line with the teaching.

The new standard English of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing House (starting point of the third grade) Module 7 Unit 1 *He Can't See*, the first unit of the seventh module of the fifth grade (first volume), can be taken as an example with focus on the content of the class time, the analysis of the teaching materials and the learning objectives of the class time. Assignment goals are determined.

2.2.1 Teaching content

(i) Discourse one: *Listen and chant*.

The text of Module 7 Unit 1 *He Can't See* is rhythmic, fast-paced, and catchy, and describes the dog as smart, cute, practical, and capable in the sentence pattern "Dogs are..." supplemented by four pictures to help students deepen their expressions.

(ii) Discourse two: *Listen, read and act out*.

The text further talks about a TV show about "dogs" in the form of dialogue, featuring Amy, Lingling, Sam, Ms Smart and TV presenters. Based on Discourse one, dogs are useful again. For example, dogs can help the blind, the deaf and the firefighters. Finally, it talks about Hot dogs are not dogs with humorous dialogue.

2.2.2 Analysis of teaching materials

The theme context of the unit, *He Can't See* is "Man and Nature" besides "Man and the Environment, Man and Animals and Plants". The in-depth interpretation of the textbook can put forward the guiding ideology of "We should protect animals and live in harmony with animals" from the perspective of the essence of the subject and around the exploration of the meaning of the theme of *What can dogs do?*

Discourse One uses four pictures to clearly show the help of different types of dogs to humans in daily life; Discourse Two gives detailed examples of the help of guide dogs and fire dogs to deaf people and firefighters in real life, and sublimates the theme "*Dogs are friends of human beings, and human beings should be kind to small animals*". By reviewing the sentence patterns of the previous unit "*I can...*" and "*I can't...*" Introduce Discourse One: What can dogs do? Students think and summarize, Dogs are clever/cute/useful/cool; Discourse Two guides students to think through the study of several sets of dialogues: How many dog breeds do you know? What can they do?

Focusing on the theme meaning and text content of the unit, it can put forward the logical and hierarchical core questions, and use the question chain to run through the unit teaching design to help students fully appreciate the unit learning while developing a structured overall understanding and expression, value and meaning. In this unit, the question chain is as follows:

- a) *What's the TV show about?*
- b) *What's the man like?*
- c) *What's the girl like?*
- d) *What happened last week?*
- e) *Who helped the firefighters?*
- f) *Are "hot dogs" dogs?*
- g) *Are dogs useful?*

These seven themes focused and closely related core problem chains integrate the three levels of shallow understanding, in-depth analysis and evaluative analysis. They run through the unit learning process and can guide students to organically relate their cognition and life, from multiple perspectives, deeply and continuously explore the thematic meaning and value orientation of the text, etc., to achieve deep learning.

2.2.3 Learning objectives during class hours

- (i) Students can master the meaning and pronunciation of the following words in specific situations: *hear, hot dog, deaf, blind, TV show, TV presenter, firefighter, and fire.*
- (ii) Students are proficient in using the following sentence patterns to describe events in specific situations: "*He is... He can't... The dog helps...*"
- (iii) Stimulate students' awareness of protecting and caring for animals.
- (iv) Students can actively participate in various classroom activities.
- (v) Train students' ability to analyze and extract information in the activity of "*describing pictures*".
- (vi) Improve students' ability to listen, speak, read, write and work in groups to complete anagrams and mind-mapping activities.

2.2.4 The homework objectives are:

- (i) Under the guidance of the literacy-oriented homework goals, through a series of participation and experiential activities, students master the basic knowledge and basic methods of English subjects, experience the basic ideas of English subjects, construct knowledge structures, understand the learning content and process, and complete the "Fill in the blanks", "Fill in adjectives and recite prosody", and "Situation Q & A" three basic assignments.
- (ii) Be able to comprehensively use knowledge and methods to creatively solve anagrams and cooperate to complete mind maps, form positive intrinsic learning motivation, advanced social emotions and correct values, complete anagram assignments in extended assignments in layers, and cooperate to complete activities Mind map in homework.
- (iii) Perceive the various characteristics of puppies through picture book reading.

Design intent: The homework objectives are based on the unit objectives, and clear homework objectives can more effectively implement the unit objectives. In the specific homework design of the divided class hours, the above unit homework objectives can also be implemented one by one to improve the efficiency and quality of homework.

2.3 According to the content of the unit, planning the operation logic

Based on the formulation of the teaching objectives of this class, experiential teaching activities were designed to guide students to actively use mind maps to sort out the text content in the learning activities of thematic meaning inquiry and construct structures through observation, analysis, induction, and summarization.

A progressive and interlocking chain of homework activities and problem chains were also designed to guide students to think actively, explore independently, and construct knowledge structures. In the basic homework part, three questions were designed to help students solve the memorization and understanding of new words, and help students understand the text content in the form of "*situational fill-in-the-blank*" and "*question and answer*"; in the extended homework part, an anagram is designed to

further consolidate and optimize the content of the vocabulary part, and set up a good English situation. It is arranged for students in the form of homework that consolidates the foundation of students with learning difficulties, as well as establishes the self-confidence of middle school students. In the activity homework part, a mind map was designed with a focus on life-to-life cooperation, finding materials, expanding knowledge, completing the course knowledge, and the realization of deep learning. The design also included a selection of questions, extended reading for parents and children, and picture book elements that can enhance students' interest in English learning.

2.4 Enhancing the applicability of unit work and replacing the mechanical completion with the meaningful learning

A language is a tool, and the purpose of learning English is to do things in English. "Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) " also proposes to pay attention to the practicality and application of language learning. To improve the applicability of English homework, students should be encouraged to use what they've learned in the classroom in real life so that they can see the positive effect of learning.

2.4.1 Applying what you have learned and emphasize the communicative nature of language

The time in the classroom is limited, and the communication personnel and forms are limited, so more communication opportunities after class can be designed to guide senior students to understand others, express themselves, show culture, and help others in English. Taking this unit as an example, students' homework is communicative throughout.

I. Fill in the blanks

(1) He can't see.

He is _____.

The dog helps him.



(2) She can't hear.

She is _____.

The dog helps her.



(3) The _____ can't find people.

The dog helps them.



Reference answers: blind, deaf, firefighters

II. Can you write and chant?

Example:

My dog is black. It's clever. It's cute. It's cool. I love my dog.

My dog is _____. It's _____. It's _____. It's _____. It can help a lot.

Reference answers: white/yellow, useful, big, small

Design intent: The first question activates the students' existing relevant knowledge by filling in the blanks, helps students better understand the text content, can detect the students' learning effect, and deepen the understanding and memory of knowledge. The second question comes from the rhythm of the first part of the 38th side of the textbook. Students have mastered various adjectives describing "dog" during their studies. The method of "write first and then read", creates opportunities for students to review the past and learn from others. At the same time, it also allows students to perceive the beauty of rhythm again.

2.4.2 Discipline integration, highlighting the instrumentality of language

In unit assignment design, teachers can guide students to make full use of the resources and knowledge of each subject to solve problems. The integration between language as a tool and other subjects ultimately points to problem-solving, which can fully exercise students' comprehensive application ability and core English literacy.

III. Show time



- (3) Are "hot dogs" dogs?
(4) What are "hot dogs"?

- (1) Can Sam and Amy have a dog?
(2) What do they have for dinner?

Reference answers:

- (1) No, they can't.
(2) Hot dogs
(3) No, they aren't.
(4) They are sausages and bread.

Design intent: The third question is a question-and-answer question created at the end of the second part of the textbook, allowing students to review and consolidate the new words hot dog and sausage in this lesson in the context, and guide students to understand and feel in a real situation close to

life. And use language, carry out effective knowledge transfer, and improve students' comprehensive language useability in all aspects.

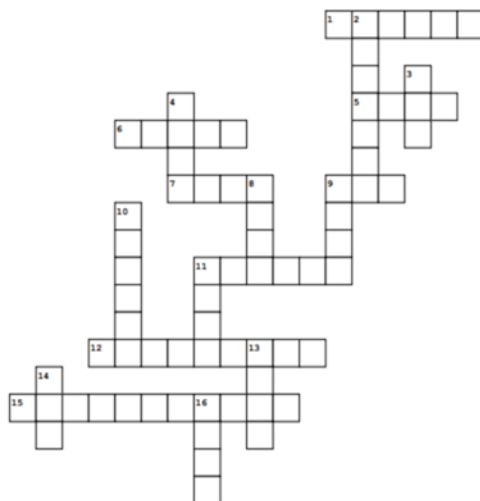
2.4.3 Enhance the individuality of unit operations and turn filling defects into development advantages

(i) Plan hierarchical assignments with English proficiency

Zone of Proximal Development theory believes that teaching should focus on students' zone of proximal development and provide students with challenging assignments. However, in actual teaching, it can be found that each student's English level is different, and the zone of proximal development is also different. It is difficult to design assignments for each student that conform to their zone of proximal development. Therefore, the author draws on the buffet-style unit homework. The buffet provides staple food, that is, must-do homework, mainly based on basic consolidation exercises; it also provides side dishes, that is, homework that students can choose to do according to their abilities and interests, to expand and apply.

IV. Word puzzles

Module7



Reference answers:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Across: | Down: |
| 1.useful | 2.sausage |
| 5.TV show | 3.dog |
| 6.blind | 4.kind |
| 7.deaf | 8.fire |
| 9.her | 9.hear |
| 11.clever | 10.dinner |
| 12.presenter | 11.cute |
| 15.firefighter | 13.them |
| | 14.him |
| | 16.help |



Across

- 1. The adjective of "use"
- 5. A program on TV or radio
- 6. Can't see
- 7. Can't hear
- 9. The objective of "she"
- 11. Very smart
- 12. Someone who hosts in a TV
- 15. Someone who helps you in a fire

Down

- 2. Something long in a hot dog
- 3. Man's best friend
- 4. Very nice
- 8. Something burning
- 9. Connects with your ear
- 10. The main meal of the day served in the ev at midday
- 11. Very lovely
- 13. The objective of "they"
- 14. The objective of "he"
- 16. To support

Design intent: The fourth question is the "guessing anagram" question. The content is the new words in this module, which are divided into "horizontal columns" and "vertical columns". Questions 6, 7, and 11 in the "column" and questions 3, 4, and 11 in the "column" are sufficient; middle school students complete questions 1, 5, and 9 in the "horizontal column" and 10 in the "vertical column" on this basis, 13, 14 questions; honour students complete all questions. It is interesting and novel, and students are very interested, in how effectively solve the problems of fragmentation, shallowness, and mechanization in the design of traditional homework activities.

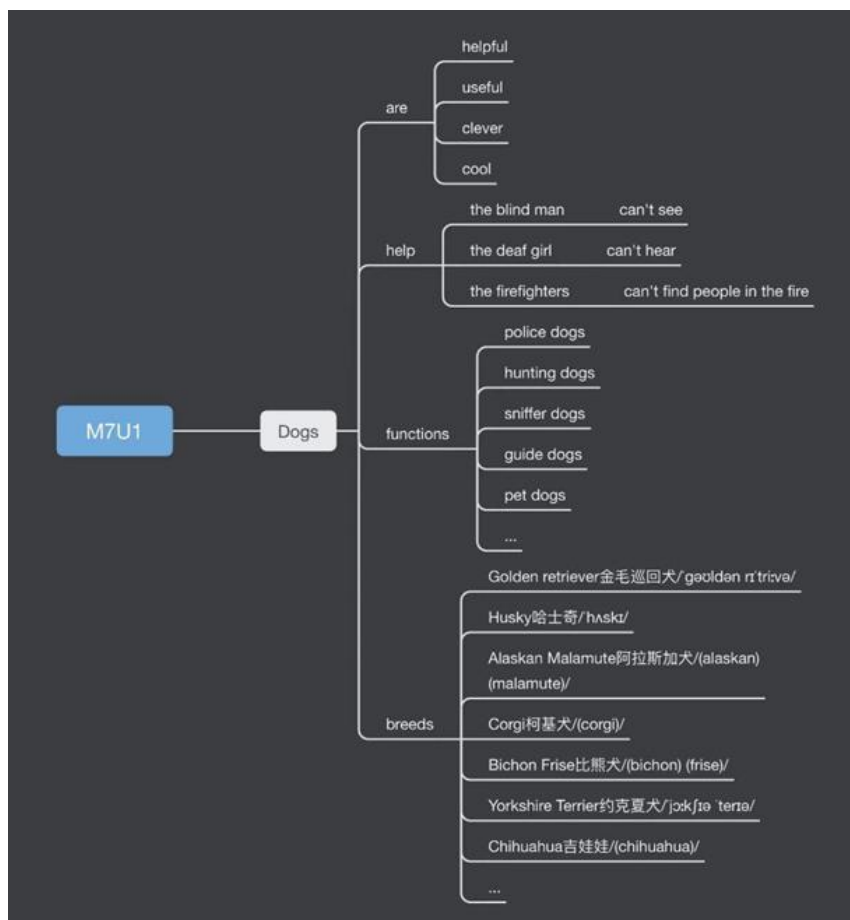
To motivate students to fully display their talents, a "star display list" was prepared, which designs different star stars for each homework item, limits the minimum number of stars to be obtained, and classmates who have obtained full stars can get the opportunity to display in the class. This form of homework avoids the drawbacks of unified homework so that students with different English abilities can gain in the process of completing homework, and at the same time, the opportunity to choose independently also makes students feel that they are masters of learning.

(ii) Planning multi-modal operations with multiple intelligences

The theory of multiple intelligences believes that human intelligence includes eight bits of intelligence, including language intelligence, logic and mathematics intelligence, music intelligence, interpersonal communication intelligence, body movement intelligence, spatial perception intelligence, introspective intelligence, and natural observation intelligence. There are differences in the intelligence structure of each person. In the past, the homework design was mainly based on the training of language intelligence, and it was difficult to give full play to the advantages of each student. In the unit homework design, on the premise of ensuring the completion of the same homework goals, it is tried to let students choose the form they are good at. Rich forms create opportunities for students to give full play to their strengths and also stimulate students' creativity and enthusiasm for creativity.

V. Draw a mind map

Example:



Design intent: The fifth question is an activity question. A "mind map" question was designed that

requires group cooperation. On the left is the example of a mind map given by me. Students were provided with a lot of opportunities by the teacher in the classroom to talk in English. "The practical help that different kinds of dogs can bring us", through mind mapping, students can discuss and evaluate after class in a group cooperation way, which can solve the problem of limited knowledge capacity in textbooks, and can learn more about "dog functions" and "dog breeds" knowledge, realizing deep learning.

VI. Extensive readings (Parent-child reading - optional)

- (1) Howling at the Moon
- (2) Digging for Dinos
- (3) Dixie Series
- (4) The Dog and the Fiddle
- (5) My Dog



Design intent: The sixth question is a selected question. The picture book reading recommended by the teacher, which is closely related to the theme of the text, can enhance the parent-child relationship, supplement the content of the textbook, and stimulate students' interest in reading.

3. Research findings

3.1 Update the evaluation mechanism of unit operations and change result orientation to process orientation

For a long time, the evaluation of assignments has been in the hands of teachers, who mark assignments and give grade evaluations. This method of evaluation considers homework to be a test of learning results and judges whether students have reached learning goals through homework. In unit teaching design, homework is not a test, but one of the links to help students better accomplish their learning goals. The evaluation mechanism of unit homework should be changed to a process in which students actively learn and give play to the initiative of evaluation and self-evaluation under the guidance of teachers and gauges. The following is the homework analysis, taking this lesson as an example:

(i) Student completion

The students' completion was good, and from the perspective of homework duration control and completion quality, it was in line with the expected results. Students were most interested in the "anagram game" in the extended homework and the "cooperative completion of the mind map" in the activity homework, and the "picture book reading" recommended by the teacher was also well received.

(ii) Design highlights

Homework is relevant, progressive and holistic. It correctly states the learning objectives and

positions the homework functions. The homework objectives and learning objectives are arranged as a whole, and the homework is used for the achievement of learning objectives and teaching.

Teaching evaluation is important for cultivating the development of students' core literacy through teaching. Given the sustainable and transferable ideas, the focus of homework evaluation is not on whether students remember what they learned or how well they understand it, but on whether they have formed structured knowledge and can use it to solve new problems. Therefore, teachers need to design evaluation activities that can test whether teaching goals are implemented and show students learning performance. The value of curriculum education was emphasized and the structured and integrated design of viable homework activities effectively solved the problems of fragmentation, shallowness, and mechanization in the design of traditional homework activities. This also injected new life into classroom teaching optimization and innovation. It can help students learn along clear and clear structural clues and then realize the original purpose of students' core literacy. Based on the situation, through questioning, demonstration, feedback, etc., observe whether students can use the language they have learned integrally, whether they can explain their cognition of the theme of the text, obtain the big ideas behind the text, and whether they can be organized, logical, and even able to express personal opinions critically and creatively, and form correct value judgments and behavioural orientations. To better adjust learning strategies and lay the foundation for longer-term English learning in the future, an evaluation form was designed to guide students to actively evaluate their learning performance.

3.2 Students as the main body

Senior students have been able to think more logically and critically. Under the guidance of teachers, students can try out homework evaluation forms such as self-revision and peer evaluation. Self-modification can improve students' metacognitive ability in English learning. For example, peer evaluation can improve students' critical thinking ability, and student interaction can also be motivating. While students' main work is important, parents can also play a role in English learning by helping to supervise and motivate students. Teachers can encourage parents to look at things like learning attitudes and behavioural habits to see how their children are doing. Based on this, the following homework evaluation form for student homework was designed:

Evaluation content

- a) I can correctly use adjectives to describe puppies, such as Dogs are useful /clever/helpful...
- b) I can use sentence patterns in situations He/She is blind/deaf. He/She can't... The dog helps him/her. Describe events.
- c) I can talk about text content with the help of blackboard illustrations and keywords.
- d) I can read and understand text content aloud, and complete basic assignments and extended assignments.
- e) I can work with group members to complete mind maps.
- f) I can actively seek help in the learning process.

3.3 Pay attention to long-term evaluation

Unit teaching has changed the way students learn, and they can do it for a longer period of time. Therefore, homework should be redesigned and evaluated in a way that focuses more on long-term formative evaluation. Teachers can help students establish English learning archives in each unit, collect class assignments to form unit portfolios, motivate students to continue learning, and form a

sense of lifelong learning.

4. Summary and results

Hierarchical homework is the continuation of classroom teaching. Students have the opportunity to consolidate English learning content after class with high-quality English unit homework. Students can also enjoy learning English and see the value of using English to complete their homework. During the teaching process, it has been found that most students' attitudes towards English homework have changed a lot. From being bored with English homework to expecting and looking forward to English homework, students' attitudes have changed a lot. Students who don't feel confident in English can also do assignments that they can do or are interested in. However, there are still problems such as "how to balance the amount of basic homework and expressive homework", and "how to provide measures and make evaluations for various forms of homework when class hours are limited and teachers' energy is limited", which are worthy of further exploration.

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