

High School English Unit Assignment Design for Deep Learning

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Abstract: It is necessary to shorten the total time of students' homework in an all-round way, improve the quality and efficiency of homework design, and strengthen the supervision of homework quality. At present, there are many problems in the assignment of high school English homework, such as the arbitrariness of the assignment, the content of the homework is shallow, the form is single, and the repetitive mechanical exercises are the mainstay, which is not conducive to the exertion of students' learning initiative. This paper uses the literature research method to explore the principles that should be followed in homework design from the perspective of deep learning, aiming to integrate the concept of deep learning with the design of high school English homework, realize the internalization of classroom knowledge through homework, and promote the occurrence of deep learning. It is found that the design of high school English unit homework based on deep learning can integrate seemingly scattered assignments, realize the function of teaching and educating people in English subjects.

Keywords: Deep Learning; Assignment Design; High School English; Teaching of the Unit as a Whole; Teaching in English

1. Preface

It is clearly stated in the new curriculum (revised in 2022) that English teaching in high school should be based on the core qualities of the English discipline, with human education as the first priority. Most of the current high school English teaching focuses on the classroom, ignoring the key role of after-class homework activities in the internalisation of knowledge. Homework design, as the last step in the English teaching chain, is of great significance for students to eat through knowledge and apply knowledge. The author found through the internship lectures and

literature review that there are many problems in the design and implementation of homework in high school English teaching: the homework form is homogenised, the homework arrangement is arbitrary, and the homework exercises are mechanised and repetitive[1]. Homework design focuses only on the mechanical and repetitive drilling of fragmented language knowledge and discourse, and lacks the cultivation of students' critical thinking; homework design lacks hierarchy, and cannot be targeted according to each student's zone of nearest development, which, to a certain extent, ignores students' individual differences. The evaluation and feedback mechanism of homework is single, which cannot truly reflect the function of homework diagnosis, assessment and improvement. Deep learning emphasises the reorganisation and construction of English teaching content and the correlation of meanings, based on the meaning of the unit theme, and digging deep into the ideological and cultural connotations and correct values contained in the teaching materials. Embedding the thematic meaning of the unit into the design of assignments makes deep learning permeate the design of assignments in classroom teaching and realises the unity of humanistic and instrumental nature of English teaching in high school.

2. High School English Homework and Deep Learning

There are many types of homework, and they come in many forms. The homework in this study refers to the learning tasks designed by the teacher for the purpose of consolidating what has been learnt in the classroom and solving problems by applying what has been learnt in the classroom, which students need to complete independently or in small groups outside the classroom[2]. The importance of homework is self-evident. On the one hand, it can help students consolidate what they have learnt in class in time, check for gaps and give them appropriate feedback. On the other hand,

homework design can help students to construct and internalise the knowledge of high school English based on classroom teaching, so that they can find out the problems in life and apply the knowledge flexibly to solve the problems creatively.

Deep learning theory was firstly proposed by Swedish scholars Ference Marton and Roger Salchow in 1976 for the first time, who believed that deep learning should be aimed at cultivating students' higher-order thinking formation and using what they learnt to solve practical problems in life[3]. In recent years, the theory of deep learning has been tried and practiced in different disciplines in different subjects, and scholars have insights about deep learning that are suitable for their own disciplines based on the characteristics of their disciplines. In the English discipline, deep learning means to establish a substantive connection between what we learn and what we already know in our minds through meaningful learning, to solve problems creatively by using existing cognitive constructs, to look at problems critically, to analyse problems, to solve problems, to form correct values, and to realise the function of educating people in the English discipline by taking the English discipline's core qualities as an orientation.

3.Principles of English Homework Design in High School under Deep Learning

3.1 Systemic

Deep Learning focuses on the thoroughness of the excavation of teaching materials, analyses the hidden logical relationship between each discourse based on students' different learning situations, takes the unit meaning as the unifying leader, integrates the seemingly fragmented and unrelated discourses, extracts the big idea of the unit, and leads students to critically learn and think about the same big idea from different perspectives in different dimensions, ultimately realizes the migration and internalisation of knowledge, and helps students to set up the correct values, thus realising the complex goal of educating people[4]. Therefore, the design of assignments must not be spontaneous and mechanical, but meaningful exercises or practices based on the overall teaching objectives of the unit.

3.2 Stratification

Deep learning does not mean high-difficulty and high-intensity learning, and the difficulty of assignments based on deep learning should be designed in line with each student's zone of recent development[5]. According to the differences in students' own levels, different levels and forms of homework should be designed. However, regardless of the level of difficulty of the assignments, students should be led to understand the history, culture and ideology behind the knowledge, and be guided to experience and apply the knowledge from a critical perspective.

3.3 Practicality

Assignment design under the concept of deep learning should reflect learning to use. The design of homework reflects that students are the main body, and in the process of completing the homework, they can obtain rich emotional experience and promote the cultivation of higher-order thinking[6]. In the process of homework, students can stimulate their existing cognitive structure, establish a meaningful connection between the newly learned knowledge and the cognitive structure in their minds, let students find problems, think about them, and put forward solutions appropriately, so that they can experience the fun and significance of solving the problems, and thus achieve the internalisation of knowledge as well as the construction of knowledge.

4. The Implementation Path of Deep Learning in the Design of English Unit Assignments in High Schools

4.1 Based on the Teaching Objectives of the Unit, Implement the Systematic Nature of Homework Design

The teaching objectives of a unit are orientated, leading and general, and the design of assignments under deep learning must be directed to the teaching objectives of the unit. Teachers should first study the textbook in depth, explore the cultural qualities and spiritual connotations behind the basic knowledge, highlight its ideological characteristics, analyse the significance of the theme of the unit from different dimensions, so that students can receive excellent culture and correct values on the basis of language

knowledge, and design the unit assignments[7]. At the same time, according to the overall teaching objectives of the unit teaching to further refine the unit class time objectives, the design of class time assignments pointing to in-depth learning and teaching objectives, to achieve the organic unity of the teaching objectives, in-depth learning and unit assignment design. The following is an example of the design of unit assignments and class assignments for the external research version (2019) of the compulsory revision of unit 6 At one with nature.

The thematic context of at one with nature is "man and nature". The module is closely

related to the theme of "Harmony with Nature", leading students to understand and explore the relationship between human beings and nature from the discourse and context, which is conducive to enhancing students' awareness of nature, getting close to nature, respecting nature and protecting nature. The unit contains five sections and seven different themes (Table 1). Based on the significance of the themes of the unit, the lesson objectives and unit objectives of the unit are designed from the perspective of students' deep learning (Table 2).

Table1. At One with Nature Unit Specific Discourse Analysis

continental plate		Type of discourse (lesson type)	part of speech (grammar)	thematic
Starting out		video	Venice Floods	The natural environment affects human life
		photograph	A cabin in a Russian university, a lakeside park in the UK, a kiln in China, a dangling footstep in Myanmar	
Understansing ideas: Longji Rice terraces		Expository texts (reading classes)	Introduction of Longji Terraces	Human activities affect and transform nature
Using language	Attributive clause	grammar course	Extracting pigments from nature	capitalise on nature (idiom); to take advantage of the situation
	Geographical featur	reading course	Introduction to a wide range of geographical features	Getting to know nature
	Life in different climate zones	audiology	Food, clothing and shelter for the Inuit	Harmony between man and nature
Developing ideas		reading course	English Garden	Love of nature; harmony between man and nature
Presenting ideas		oral lesson	Choose where you want to live	Adaptation to nature; harmony between man and nature

Table2. At One with Nature Unit Work and Class Work

text (esp. in grammar)	Lesson objectives	Module Teaching Objectives
Starting out Understanding ideas. Longji Rice terraces	1. Read the article, understand the main idea and analyse the author's intention of writing. 2. Sorting out the structure of the text and grasping the stylistic features of the expository text. 3. Understand the background of the construction and operation of the Longji Terraces, and appropriately apply what they have learnt to introduce the Longji Terraces. 4. To learn about the behaviour of local people in recognising and adapting to nature and to deepen their understanding of the significance of the unit's theme.	1. To be able to understand the content related to the theme of the unit (Man and Nature in Harmony), and to listen to and talk briefly about topics related to it using the newly learnt language. 2. To learn about and use appropriately the

Using language: Attributive clause	1. Discover the ideological function of a determiner clause guided by a preposition + a relative pronoun. 2. Understand people's use of natural dyes and be able to use definite clauses in new contexts. 3. To introduce other productive activities in life that utilise natural plant and animal resources and to transfer knowledge and competence through the appropriate use of determinative clauses with prepositions + relative pronouns.	- prepositions + relative pronouns in determinative clauses studied in this unit. 3. Understand the stylistic features and content elements of summary writing, and apply what they have learnt to summary writing.
Using language: Geographical features; life in different climate zones	1. Understand and use vocabulary about landforms and use the vocabulary they have learnt to briefly describe landform features they know. 2. Listen to and summarise the pros and cons of Inuit villages, accessing key words about expressing pros and cons. 3. Use the language you have learnt to express the way of life in different regions and talk about their strengths and weaknesses.	4. To understand how people in China and abroad live in harmony with nature, to correctly understand the relationship between human life and the natural environment, and to enhance the awareness of knowing nature, respecting nature and living in harmony with nature.
Developing ideas	1. Learn about the idea of being close to and enjoying nature that lies behind the British love of gardening. 2. Understanding the theme of the article	
Presenting ideas	Students are guided to pay attention to the plants on campus and to love nature from their surroundings.	

Therefore, based on the overall teaching objectives of the unit, teachers can set the following systematic unit assignments:

They will sort out the development of the whole unit and make a mind map, clarify the logical relationship between the seemingly fragmented parts of speech, explore the thematic meaning behind the text, and summarise the vocabulary and phrases related to "human beings and nature" in this unit[8].

Assuming that you are a journalist who has travelled all over your country, write an expository essay using "preposition + relative pronoun", recommending your favourite natural geography and explaining your reasons clearly.

Lesson work is part of the unit work, but it is by no means a simple split of the unit work. The design of the coursework also follows the principle of being orientated to the overall teaching objectives of the unit, reflecting the systematic nature. The small themes and ideas contained in the lesson should be explored in depth, and the core content behind the text that points to the meaning of the theme should be explored[9]. Taking Understanding ideas: Longji Rice terraces as an example, the following lesson assignment can be designed: "Use the mind map to depict the operation principle of Longji Rice terraces, and let the students as the publicity ambassadors write a report about Longji Rice terraces to promote

and introduce Longji Rice terraces to the people of the world, and call on the people to love and care for the nature, to rationalise the nature correctly, and to achieve the goal of man and nature. correct and reasonable nature, and to realise the harmonious coexistence of man and nature."

4.2 In-Depth Understanding of Students' Learning Situation, Reflecting the Hierarchical Nature of Homework Design

The hierarchical nature of homework design contains multiple meanings. First of all, homework design should be based on the actual situation of students, according to the students' different conditions, to meet the diversified needs of students. For students with good foundation and strong motivation, assignments should be designed to stimulate students' potential and promote the generation of higher-order thinking based on the exploration of the meaning of the theme; for students with average foundation and low interest in learning, relatively closed assignments should be designed. At the same time, teachers should give timely and proper feedback to stimulate students' motivation, so that students can feel the joy of English learning from the assignments[10]. At the same time, flexible assignments can also be designed. Teachers should design assignments at different levels in advance, reflecting

different cognitive abilities, and students should choose their own assignments according to their own conditions, so as to satisfy the diversified needs of different students with different learning conditions. For example, using language: life indifferent climate zones as an example, the following optional assignments can be designed:

levelA: Use a mind map to summarise the living conditions of the Inuit (think in terms of several aspects such as food, clothing, shelter and transport)

LevelB: Go online to find out where you want to live and use a mind map to sort out the reasons why you want to live there (think in terms of climate, topography, food, clothing, transport, etc.)

LevelB: Suppose you are a referral officer and a client wants to approach you for advice on a suitable place to live for him, give your reasons for the recommendation in relation to the client's needs.

Secondly, from the perspective of deep learning into the design of homework not only to consolidate students' basic knowledge as the goal, but also should reflect the macro, meso and micro three levels of teaching objectives, from easy to difficult, simple to complex, and gradually in-depth excavation of the text of the history and culture behind the ideological point of view, to give play to the function of homework education.

4.3 Docking to Real Life, Reflecting the Practicality and Openness of Assignments

It is the highest state of English learning for students to be able to transfer and innovate with the knowledge learnt in class. Homework is precisely the most direct way to realise the transfer of classroom knowledge, and it is also an attempt for classroom teaching to go from entering into the discourse to going deeper into the discourse and finally transcending the discourse. The design of unit work must provide students with real situations, relying on the meaning of the theme of the unit, digging out the problems and challenges revealed behind the discourse, guiding students to perceive the problems, understand them deeply and try to solve them. Therefore, the design of unit work should reflect the principle of openness. In addition to individual assignments, teachers can organise group work to design realistic and challenging assignments

for the thematic meaning of the unit, so that students can apply their knowledge in real situations, propose new solutions and solve new problems in student-student cooperation, so that students can feel the relevance of English learning. Taking developing ideas: A love of gardening as an example, teachers can design the following practical assignments: 1. Suppose you are going to England to apply for a job as a gardener, what do you need to do to prepare for it? Work in groups to explore the questions you may be asked when applying for a job and summarise your answers. 2. Role play, with groups of two playing the roles of interviewer and recruiter respectively, for the recruitment of gardeners. In this way, it promotes the extension and expansion of students' creative thinking, the growth of competence in activity design, and the realisation of migration and innovation.

5. Conclusion

Under the new curriculum reform, teachers are required to get rid of the "duckling classroom", and based on the real situation and the meaning of the theme, they should dig out the important information behind the discourse, and present a wonderful classroom that points to the core literacy of the discipline. As the last part of teaching activities, homework design is the extension and important supplement of classroom teaching, so homework design must reflect the embedding of subject core literacy and the integration of thematic context. This paper takes deep learning as a perspective, explores the connotation of deep learning, and designs assignments reflecting systematic, hierarchical, and practicality based on the unit teaching objectives, so as to provide broader ideas for the assignment design of frontline teachers. However, the research on how to grasp the relationship between parts of speech in a more logical and systematic way, and how to formulate more personalised assignments according to the individual differences of students is not deep enough. For example, the theme of this unit is "Harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature", developing ideas and using language in this unit in the two plates of the discourse although also involved in the relationship between human beings and nature, but slightly jumped off, how to be more fluent articulation between the discourse and excessive, but also need to be further

explored. Further investigation is needed. In addition, the samples of high school English unit design based on the perspective of deep learning are not rich enough, and more researchers are needed to analyse and explore based on more parts of speech and from different perspectives in the future, so that more data can be provided to support the scientificity and reasonableness of the design of high school English assignments.

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