

# *The optimization strategy of primary school Chinese homework design under the background of 'double reduction'*

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**Abstract:** Homework is an important part of teaching tasks and a key factor in curriculum reform. The "double reduction" policy is an important measure proposed by the country to reduce the homework burden on students. In this context, how to achieve the "reduction in quantity and improvement in quality" of primary school Chinese homework has become an urgent problem that needs to be solved. This requires teachers to reflect on their past homework situation and conduct in-depth research on optimization methods. Homework design plays an indispensable role in education. It is not only a form of completing tasks for students, but also has important value in guiding students to learn and cultivating subject literacy. At present, there are common problems in the design of primary school Chinese homework, such as lack of innovation and single form. In response to these problems, this article attempts to propose optimization strategies for primary school Chinese homework design, in order to achieve "reducing burden and improving quality" and increase the efficiency of primary school Chinese learning.

## 1. Introduction

The "2019 National Compulsory Education Quality Monitoring - Chinese Language Learning Quality Monitoring Results Report" released by the China Basic Education Quality Monitoring Collaborative Innovation Center in August 2020 showed that more than 40% of students exceeded the time limit for completing all homework assigned by school teachers, and 20% of four-year level students exceeded the total time limit for homework assigned by school teachers alone. <sup>[1]</sup> In 2021, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Extracurricular Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education" (hereinafter referred to as the "Opinions"), further emphasizing the "comprehensive reduction of the total amount and duration of homework, and the reduction of students' heavy homework burden". <sup>[2]</sup> The issuance of these documents demonstrates the determination of the country to address the problem of excessive homework burden on students, but the reality is still not optimistic. Homework not only helps to improve students' academic level, but also has the function of cultivating their core competencies.

In order to better comply with the new requirements of the "double reduction" policy for reducing quantity and improving quality of student homework, we need to rethink the essence of homework and optimize it.

As a basic education, primary school should focus on improving students' language literacy. Homework is an important organic component in the entire process of Chinese language teaching. However, due to the mindset of exam oriented education, many assignments have fallen into the trap of mechanical repetition, which is seriously disconnected from students' daily learning situation and affects their enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, based on the background of curriculum reform, the reform of homework design has become an urgent issue. Starting from cultivating students' core Chinese literacy, it is necessary to scientifically design practical Chinese homework. Traditional teaching methods are often subject based, with each subject teaching content relatively independent and independent, and there is relatively little communication between interdisciplinary and cross lesson preparation groups. The "double reduction" policy has put forward new requirements for cultivating students' interdisciplinary thinking, placing greater emphasis on the comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, and adhering to the teaching philosophy of promoting five educations simultaneously to guide students. In terms of innovative educational models, the current advocacy is to promote the comprehensive growth of students through the combination of education and entertainment. Therefore, the homework assignment for primary school Chinese language should move towards a comprehensive improvement of students' Chinese language literacy.

## **2. The Value of Designing Primary School Chinese Homework under the Background of "Double Reduction"**

Under the background of the "double reduction" policy, the value of designing primary school Chinese homework is particularly important. The "double reduction" policy emphasizes reducing the heavy academic burden on students and focuses on cultivating their comprehensive literacy and practical abilities. In this context, the design of primary school Chinese homework should pay more attention to the cultivation of subject literacy, guidance for students to learn independently, and the cultivation of practical application abilities, in order to better adapt to the needs of education in the new era.

### **2.1. Guide students to learn independently**

The "double reduction" policy emphasizes reducing the excessive homework burden on students and encouraging them to engage in more self-directed learning. The design of primary school Chinese homework can cultivate students' self-learning ability by encouraging them to actively explore, raise questions, and solve problems independently. Homework design can guide students to gain more autonomy and initiative in learning by searching for information, engaging in discussions, and engaging in thinking.

### **2.2. Strengthening the cultivation of disciplinary literacy**

The "double reduction" policy is not a requirement to lower the level of disciplines, but rather to adjust educational methods by reducing excessive homework burden. In the design of primary school Chinese homework, emphasis should be placed on the cultivation of Chinese literacy, including abilities in reading comprehension, writing expression, language use, and other aspects. Teachers guide students to understand and apply Chinese language knowledge through reasonably designed homework, and improve their subject literacy, rather than relying solely on mechanical

memory.

### **2.3. Beneficial for achieving the goal of reducing burden and increasing efficiency**

The diversified design of Chinese homework has a promoting effect on cultivating students' interest and motivation in course learning. Teachers designing Chinese homework based on diversified content, structure, and form can attract students' attention, promote their comprehensive learning ability in novel and unique homework content, and lay a solid foundation for carrying out high-level and high-quality classroom learning activities. Based on the learning characteristics of primary school students in Chinese language courses, teachers cultivate their ideological awareness and behavioral abilities in the specific teaching process, enabling them to gradually construct a rigorous framework of Chinese language knowledge thinking.

### **2.4. Developing practical application skills**

The design of primary school Chinese homework can focus more on cultivating practical application abilities. Teachers guide students to apply Chinese language knowledge to practical situations and cultivate their ability to solve practical problems by designing tasks related to real-life situations. This helps to break the traditional practice of simple application of subject knowledge in homework, and encourages students to better understand and apply Chinese language.

## **3. The problems in the design of primary school Chinese homework**

### **3.1. Lack of innovation, large quantity and low efficiency**

Under the "New Curriculum Standards" policy, students are required to have innovative and practical abilities. However, the current classroom assignments in primary school Chinese are still in the most primitive stage, and there is little use of media that conform to the characteristics of the times to enrich the classroom and enrich classroom assignments. For school teachers, designing classroom assignments that keep up with the times also requires more development of available resources and the cultivation of innovative awareness. Some teachers still rely on quantity to consolidate classroom knowledge when assigning homework. Many parents, in order to avoid their children falling behind the starting line, purchase various teaching aids and papers to increase the amount of homework, which makes students physically and mentally exhausted, loses interest in doing homework, and leads to low homework efficiency.

### **3.2. The single form of homework is not conducive to promoting the comprehensive development of students**

The homework assigned by teachers often has strong homogeneity and a single presentation form. This mainly refers to the fact that teachers generally assign written homework and require all students to complete the same homework, without designing homework specifically based on their learning ability differences, which leads to insufficient completion and low efficiency. Students with strong learning abilities may not be able to eat enough, students with weaker learning abilities may not be able to eat enough, and students with moderate learning abilities may not be able to eat well. The problem of a single homework form is mainly attributed to two points: firstly, teachers lack the prerequisite concept of homework design and are not aware of the importance of homework design; Secondly, teachers did not design homework specifically based on the differences in students' learning abilities. A study investigated the homework design of teachers,

with 71.64% of teachers focusing on after-school exercises, 68.81% of teachers mainly relying on teaching aids, and less than 20% of teachers adapting questions or designing original assignments.  
[3]

### **3.3. The homework content is detached from the actual life of students**

This is actually a common problem among many elementary school educators. When students encounter problems, teachers do not consider the generation gap between teachers and students, but instead choose to repeatedly explain, which obviously cannot effectively solve student problems. When implementing homework design, there may also be a phenomenon where it is difficult to break through the generation gap. Many teachers disregard the specific understanding of knowledge by students, regardless of whether they can accept the amount of homework and the difficulty of completing it. When designing homework, they always require all students in the class to have the same amount of homework. Therefore, students have very little development in the homework, allowing them to do a lot of useless work.

### **3.4. Insufficient reflection of disciplinary characteristics in homework design**

The charm of the Chinese language subject lies in its strong humanistic atmosphere, which can effectively connect with real life and has obvious universal value. When students need to calm down and apply their personal abilities to complete Chinese homework, these advantages have not been demonstrated. Such as mechanically copying homework repeatedly, teachers designing homework, allowing students to spend a lot of time copying their already mastered knowledge, focusing on simple words, sentences, and paragraphs, and doing a lot of homework without improving their Chinese literacy. This not only wastes time, but also imprisons students' divergent thinking, greatly reducing their interest in learning Chinese.

## **4. Optimization strategies for primary school Chinese homework design under the background of "double reduction"**

### **4.1. The Principles of Designing Primary School Chinese Homework under the Background of "Double Reduction"**

#### **4.1.1. Homework design should be scientific**

In the traditional teaching stage, the most commonly used method for teachers is to use a sea of questions tactic. Repeatedly encouraging students to consolidate their knowledge, in most cases, the homework assigned by teachers is relatively single and numerous. However, this approach is very detrimental to the development of students' core competencies, and it also takes up a lot of their spare time, causing them to feel double the pressure. This can easily cause students to develop a resistance mentality and also have some negative effects on their physical and mental development. Over time, it will inevitably cause primary school students to lose interest in the subject of Chinese language and fail to develop good reading habits. In the context of cultivating students' core literacy, teachers should plan homework time and quantity reasonably based on the physical and mental characteristics of primary school students, and boldly innovate homework content and methods to stimulate students' enthusiasm for exploration.

#### **4.1.2. Homework design should be done step by step**

When conducting Chinese homework, Chinese language teachers should start from the actual

situation of students and design some simple homework based on their personal characteristics. Teachers should gradually increase the difficulty of homework, organically integrate new and old knowledge, and gradually improve students' knowledge level and ability. Homework is one of the important ways to help students digest and absorb new knowledge. Homework is one of the important ways to help students digest and absorb new knowledge. If the Chinese homework assigned by the teacher is too complex, it will violate the cognitive development laws of students, not only fail to reflect the actual value of the homework, but also affect the enthusiasm of students to complete the homework. Therefore, teachers should develop homework forms that meet the actual needs of students of different grades and stages based on their psychological state and mastery of the knowledge points they have learned, in order to promote their physical and mental health growth.

#### **4.1.3. Homework design should have openness**

Primary school Chinese is a fundamental subject, and its strong openness is a prominent feature of the Chinese language subject. The design of Chinese homework should not only be based on the content of the materials, but also closely related to society. In addition, teachers should fully understand the individual differences of students, design different Chinese homework for students to choose from based on their different levels, so that Chinese homework is not only flexible and open, but also rich in content.

#### **4.1.4. Homework design should be interesting**

At present, primary school students are in a stage of heavy playfulness, coupled with rigid homework forms and boring content, which greatly reduces their interest in learning Chinese. Therefore, when designing Chinese homework, teachers should follow the psychological needs of students and add some fun to the homework design. For example, in the lesson "Bamboo Man" in textbook 6, the author portrays the joy of childhood games by reminiscing about their childhood experiences with bamboo man toys. This unit aims to learn how to read purposefully, and to let students know that they need to choose different reading content and methods based on different purposes when reading. After studying, you can design corresponding homework: according to the production process described in the text, use a brush rod, plastic straws, jump rope joints, colored paper, etc. to make bamboo figures. Students will play the role of a character from "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" and, under the control of the students, dub the character and perform a textbook drama. Enable students to experience the joy brought by homework through hands-on practice. This can greatly enhance students' interest in learning Chinese. This can greatly enhance students' interest in learning Chinese.

### **4.2. The Optimization Path of Primary School Chinese Homework Design under the Background of "Double Reduction"**

#### **4.2.1. Whole group care, design unit assignments**

The unified Chinese language textbooks focus on organizing unit content with humanistic themes and language elements. Whether it is sections such as chapters, illustrations, after-school exercises, communication platforms, or word and sentence application, we can deeply feel the overall sense of the unit. Unit integration is an effective way to implement Chinese language elements and promote students to explore the significance of unit themes. So, in actual teaching, not only does the teaching content need to be integrated, but the homework design also needs to reflect the idea of whole group care. By grouping homework into units, it promotes the overall teaching

activities of units, effectively implements the elements of unit language, and develops students' key abilities. In previous homework designs, many teachers were accustomed to using class hours as a unit, and the content and form of homework between classes lacked close connection, resulting in weak consolidation of unit knowledge and inadequate implementation of language elements. In order to further improve the consolidation and diagnostic function of homework, teachers should have the ability to organize the concept of "big units" and design unit homework that matches unit teaching in the process of homework design.

Unit homework refers to the design of homework that takes a complete unit as the overall unit, targeting the knowledge points and ability training points of the entire unit, combined with the learning situation and learning needs. The homework objectives are consistent with the teaching objectives, and the homework content is consistent and complementary to classroom teaching. The homework design highlights scientific, differential, and diverse aspects, and the homework has a certain degree of examination and diagnosis. Unit homework design can avoid the fragmentation between homework assignments during class hours and also avoid the repeated occurrence of low-level and mechanized homework content in different class hours. It is an effective way to reduce homework burden and improve homework efficiency. For example, the fifth unit of the fifth grade textbook, with "responsibility" as the theme and "expressing the inner thoughts of characters through the description of their actions, language, and demeanor" as the language element, has arranged "Three Ancient Poems", "Loyal Bones Buried Everywhere in the Green Mountains", "Military God", and skim reading class "Poverty Alleviation". In the homework design of this unit, the author extracted the concept of "paying tribute to revolutionary martyrs", focused on the theme of the unit, created the homework context, and designed a whole set of homework with the main line of "initial understanding (pre homework) - recalling (in class homework) - pursuing (in class homework) - looking up (after class homework) - paying tribute (extended homework)". In the homework design for the first section "Introduction", the author designed a pre class assignment, providing students with a self-learning framework through pre class guidance sheets, encouraging them to read the entire unit content and understand new words through dictionaries, contextual connections, and other methods. When reading the unit text for the first time, the author guides students to pay attention to the unit chapters and understand the learning focus of the unit. Through the design of pre assignments, the author guides students to read through the unit content, pay attention to the unit theme and language elements, clarify what to learn in this unit, and cultivate students' overall awareness of the unit. In the design of the "Salute" migration and expansion section, the author created a "Character Postcard" to guide students to focus on describing character actions, language, expressions, and other aspects, feel character psychology, leverage students' strategic application of revolutionary culture theme units, and promote students' structured understanding of unit knowledge. <sup>[4]</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Layered homework design helps students achieve personalized growth**

Under the "double reduction" policy, stratified homework is an effective measure to optimize primary school Chinese homework. Teachers need to group students based on their ability level, such as dividing them into three different levels of groups (Group A, Group B, and Group C), and then designing homework with different levels of difficulty and requirements for each group, so that students can complete the homework at an appropriate level, neither too simple nor too difficult. During the process of completing homework, teachers should provide students with necessary support and Guidance can help students understand the requirements and methods of homework by providing examples, guiding students to engage in discussions, and so on. Taking the layered homework design of Unit 7 "Beauty of the Four Seasons" in the fifth grade Chinese textbook of the Ministry's edition as an example, the task requirements can include the following elements: ①

Group A selects a season and writes an article of no less than 600 words, introducing the characteristics, scenery, and activities of that season, with clear structure, fluent language, and rich content; ②Group B chooses a season and writes an article of no less than 400 words, introducing the characteristics and beautiful scenery of the season, with clear structure, fluent language, and accurate content; ③Group C selection Choose a season and write a paragraph of no less than 200 words introducing the characteristics of the season, which can be accompanied by a picture or a simple illustration. Then, guide students to conduct self-evaluation of homework through the following dimensions: ①whether the structure is clear, the language is fluent, and the content is accurate and rich; ②Whether there are obvious problems and errors in the homework, such as grammar errors, improper vocabulary, etc.;③Does the homework reflect one's creativity and imagination; ④Does the homework reflect one's personality traits. To enable students at each level to make the greatest effort to complete their homework, teachers can provide layered teaching to students from different groups, providing different guidance and support, such as providing reference materials and examples of different difficulty levels. Through such a layered homework design, students of different levels can complete homework at an appropriate level, which can reflect individual differences among students and improve their learning outcomes. <sup>[5]</sup>

#### **4.2.3. Innovate the form and content of homework, pay attention to thinking inspiration**

Teachers should innovate homework forms, design different contents, and stimulate students' interest in learning. For example, teachers can have students recite classics, take reading notes, write circular diaries, write handwritten newspapers, give keynote speeches, and write short stories. One is to use the "Poetry with Pictures" activity in lower grades and independently search on the Internet to stimulate students' interest in learning and accumulating ancient poetry, enabling them to recite ancient poetry, copy neatly, draw illustrations, promote understanding, and appreciate the meaning of poetry. Secondly, through the "Reading Notes" activity for middle and high grades, students are encouraged to read extensively and write down good words, sentences, and touching words in their notebooks, accompanied by illustrations. This not only enables students to accumulate a large amount of materials and master more knowledge, but also improves their accumulation and application abilities. The third is to promote the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Through essay and speech competitions, teachers can cultivate students with a good family tradition and guide them to start from themselves; Select excellent essay works, learn good family traditions and teachings, and showcase the charm of a civilized family. The fourth is to organize "classic recitation" activities to cultivate students' good habits of loving reading, reading classics, and reading poetry, enrich their extracurricular life, and improve their reading and writing abilities. The fifth is to greatly improve students' ability to observe life through the "circular diary" activity in each grade, enabling them to enter into life and write true feelings. <sup>[6]</sup>

#### **4.2.4. Introducing modern remote information technology to assess students' homework performance**

When assigning homework, teachers should consider both the content and whether it meets the learning ability of students, and take serving students as the starting point for assigning homework. The continuous development of modern educational technology provides new ideas and channels for innovative design of homework and exercises, and teachers can apply some information technology to the homework design process. On the one hand, students can be organized to learn Chinese language knowledge that they are interested in by watching teaching videos, and guided to explore diverse learning methods from them. On the basis of enriching their reading experience, writing skills, and knowledge reserves, their learning ability can be further improved. On the other

hand, students can be organized to upload photos of their homework and exercises to the multimedia interactive platform, which facilitates teachers to timely understand the speed and quality of student homework completion, and better provide targeted guidance and assistance to students, thereby effectively improving the quality of Chinese language teaching. Taking the second volume of the fifth grade Chinese language textbook in the Ministry's edition as an example, "The Moon is the Brightness of Hometown". When designing homework and exercises, teachers can introduce students to some high-quality educational platform resources and guide them to choose to watch teaching videos based on their classroom learning situation, in order to further improve their reading experience and enrich their understanding of the content of the text; Organize students to engage in personalized creation around the theme of "Moon is the Brightness of Hometown". After freely creating about 300 words of "Little Practice Brush", take photos and upload them to a multimedia interactive platform for teachers to review. This approach is beneficial for teachers to carry out targeted guidance teaching, thereby improving students' emotional expression ability and language construction level.

## 5. Conclusions

Homework is an important extension of classroom teaching and an important content of the "double reduction" policy. Only high-quality homework meets the requirements of the "double reduction" policy. Therefore, teachers should put effort into optimizing homework design, making Chinese homework design layered according to unit forms, constantly innovating homework content and form, and effectively reducing the burden on students, improving teaching effectiveness, and promoting the effective implementation of the "double reduction" policy by borrowing modern remote information technology.

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