

# Research on the Design Strategy of Junior High School English Homework under the Policy of “Double Reduction”

Ruirui Zeng

China West Normal University, Nanchong 637000, Sichuan, China

## Abstract

The “double reduction” policy calls for the standardization of off-campus training to effectively reduce the unnecessary burden of schoolwork for students, improve the efficiency of teaching and learning, shift the center of gravity of learning back to school, and improve the fairness of education. In this context, the design of junior high school English homework needs to be adjusted and optimized accordingly. Teachers should study the current situation, principles and optimization strategies of junior high school English homework design under the “double reduction” policy, adjust and change the junior high school English homework design to maximize the space for students to reduce the burden and increase the quality of students, and really put the requirements of reducing the burden and increasing the quality into practice, so that the nurturing value of the English homework can be brought into full play, and the quality of teaching and students' comprehensive quality of junior high school English can be improved. The quality of teaching and the comprehensive quality of students can be improved.

## Keywords

“Double Reduction”; Junior High School English; Homework Design.

## 1. Introduction

The educational concept of “homework” was included in Confucius' educational philosophy, and the earliest record of homework can be traced back to the Analects of Confucius. Confucius emphasized the importance of learning and reviewing, and believed that learning and reviewing were equally important. The word “practice” here means practicing and applying, not simply repeating. Confucius believed that through practice, students could internalize what they had learned into wisdom and make it coherent and consistent. Homework can be used as a kind of practice, and the “practice” advocated by Confucius can be understood as a form of homework. Homework is the practice and application of classroom knowledge. Through homework, students can apply what they have learned to practical situations, thus deepening their understanding and memorization. However, the role of homework for students is now more of a burden, and in addition to consolidating what has been learned, a large amount of heavy homework is detrimental to the healthy growth of students and to the academic development of students from compulsory education to senior secondary school.

The “double reduction” policy refers to the policy issued by the Ministry of Education on “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework for Compulsory Education Students and the Burden of Out-of-School Training”, which refers to reducing the burden of homework on compulsory education students and reducing the burden of out-of-school training on compulsory education students. The policy aims to reduce the burden on students and parents, promote the improvement of education quality and nurture more outstanding talents. The Compulsory Education Curriculum and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) (the “New Curriculum Standards”) advocates that teachers should design assignments that are conducive to students' ability to improve their creativity and hands-on skills, to satisfy creative learning,

and to minimize repetitive and mechanical assignments, which is one of the assignments designed by teachers that is conducive to students' ability to improve their creativity and hands-on skills. hands-on ability homework. The new curriculum standard clearly states that teachers should improve the effect of English homework correction, introduce multiple ways of correction, motivate, inspire and guide students, strengthen students' motivation and initiative, and help students generate knowledge and skills. The new curriculum standard clearly states that teachers should improve the effect of English homework correction, and the new curriculum standard clearly states that, under the impetus of the policy of "double reduction", the design of English homework at junior secondary school level in various places has seen positive changes. However, in the process of implementation, some new problems and challenges have emerged. On the one hand, some schools and teachers have deviated from the understanding and implementation of the double-reduced policy, resulting in no substantial reduction in the amount of homework, but rather a decline in the quality of homework. On the other hand, due to the emphasis on after-school services in the "double reduction" policy, some schools have begun to carry out a large number of extracurricular activities, leading to a decrease in the importance of English homework to students and parents. Therefore, teachers need to carry out effective junior high school English homework design, which is in line with the documented policy as well as designing English homework with a level of quality.

## **2. Problems in the Design of Middle School English Assignments**

### **2.1. Time-consuming and Ineffective**

Most schools rely mainly on the "quantity" of homework to improve students' learning level, and many teachers adopt the "sea of questions" tactic. Therefore, students have to complete a large amount of written homework every day, including copying words and memorizing texts that have already been completed in school, as well as verbal homework, such as listening, reading aloud, memorizing, etc., and homework, which is not only important for students to learn, but also important for them to learn. Students have to complete a large number of written assignments every day, and teachers allow students to master knowledge through a large number of repetitive exercises, but a large number of assignments increase the academic burden and pressure on students, and the repetitive brushing and repetitive memorization is of little value, which only cares about the quantity but neglects the quality, and cannot achieve the expected teaching effect, and even if the oral assignments are arranged, the essence of the assignments is only hidden homework, which is not of substantial help to the students to improve their listening and speaking skills. Even if oral homework is assigned, it is only implicit homework, which does not help students to improve their listening and speaking skills. The situation of unequal quality and quantity in the design and assignment of homework has existed for a long time.

### **2.2. Single Format and Homogenization of Difficulty**

The form of junior high school English homework is now monotonous and boring, the content is repetitive and boring, the basic homework is too much, the developmental homework is less, and there is a lack of innovation. With the textbook articulation is not close, easy to disconnect, the knowledge is not arranged in a logical order, the same unit of different classroom assignments between the lack of reasonable links and progressive relationship, the emergence of a lot of still copying type of homework, so that it is easy to make the students bored with the mood of English learning, reduce the interest in English learning, a single form of homework is not conducive to the students for the development of the English listening, reading, writing and looking at the five basic skills, such a Such a form of homework is helpful to students' English learning to a certain extent. A large amount of input without output is unfavorable to the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability, teamwork spirit, language output ability,

creativity, and cultural awareness. The difficulty of homework design and arrangement is homogenized. The traditional homework design adopts the same difficulty level for all students, without taking into account the individual differences of students, and students with different learning abilities do the homework with uniform difficulty level, which, over time, will not satisfy the needs of the advanced students, but also make the disadvantaged students lose the desire to learn, and will not enable the students to develop their English proficiency effectively.

### **2.3. Neglect of Practical Applications**

The key to language learning is learning to use. Many teachers tend to pay no attention to the cultivation of practical value of language and neglect the practice of language application when designing English homework, thus paying more attention to the consolidation and practice of language knowledge with the aim of improving their written grades. The content of homework is mostly unitized, detached from real life, lacking real corpus, and there are fewer assignments of language expression and presentation, traditional sentence practice, vocabulary memorization, grammar practice, reading comprehension, etc. Students lack positive emotional experience in the process of completing homework. Students can't get real language practice from the process of completing the assignments, and they only stay in writing, disconnecting language learning from practical application, learning to read and write but not being able to perform in life, which hinders the development of students' language application ability, is not conducive to the development of students' cross-cultural communication ability and practical ability, the cultivation of students' core qualities in English, and the comprehensive development of students' language learning, and even more detrimental to the overall development of students' language learning. development, and even more unfavorable to students' language learning So, students have a lot of problems in language learning.

## **3. Design Principles of Middle School English Homework in the Context of “Double Reduction”**

### **3.1. Life-oriented**

Lifelike means combining junior high school English homework design with students' life experiences and real-life situations. By choosing topics, materials and tasks related to students' lives and bringing them into an authentic language environment, we can enhance the practicality and operability of language learning. For example, we can design tasks such as business English, online class learning, shopping conversations, visiting friends and relatives, travel plans, eating habits, etc. with the background of daily life, so that students can apply what they have learned in English to real life and solve real problems, so that they can strengthen their language skills, use them freely when they are out of the books, and take the initiative to connect with real life and what they have learned in the classroom. Such a design can make students excited and energized in learning, and the learning effect will rise as a result.

### **3.2. Hierarchical Design**

Stratification refers to the stratification of students and the setting of homework tasks of different levels of difficulty and complexity to stimulate students' intrinsic potential according to their differences in English proficiency and ability. By giving students tasks appropriate to their level, it meets the learning needs of different students and enhances their self-confidence and learning motivation. Assignments can be divided into different levels, such as basic practice assignments, extended inquiry assignments, application practice assignments and challenging assignments, so that students' English proficiency can be gradually improved. Such a layered design can better promote individualized development, so that each student can grow in the learning area that suits him/her, meet the needs of students at different stages and levels, and promote students' development as a whole.

### 3.3. Fun

Mechanical and uniform assignments are boring, while interesting assignment design can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, help them understand and deepen what they have learned, and improve their ability to apply knowledge. By using information technology as a means and tool, combining games, competitions, role-playing and other interesting elements, and using online platforms to realize digital management and instant feedback of homework, homework can be made more expressive, attractive and interactive. For example, designing English puzzle games, making creative videos or composing English songs, etc. Students are encouraged to communicate in English as much as possible during the activities in order to improve their oral expression skills, so that they can learn and have fun in a relaxing and pleasant atmosphere. Such fun-oriented design can stimulate students' inquiry ability, creative thinking, innovative consciousness, and cultivate the spirit of cooperation, as well as improve their participation and effectiveness in English learning.

### 3.4. Openness

Open assignment design emphasizes the cultivation of students' autonomy and creativity, unlike the traditional one-size-fits-all form. When designing open assignments, teachers give the initiative to students, cultivate students' open-mindedness and sense of innovation, and give students a certain amount of choice and room for creativity, so that they can complete the tasks according to their own interests and abilities. For example, when designing open assignments, teachers design open-ended reading and writing tasks according to students' interests and abilities, so that students can express themselves in writing after reading articles according to their own preferences and experiences. At the same time, students are able to reflect individualization and differentiation in completing the tasks. Teachers can use a variety of assignment forms, such as oral exercises, research interviews, mind maps, data collection, English stage plays, performance activities, etc., to bring out the uniqueness of each type of assignment and improve the effectiveness of the assignment. Teachers should also pay attention to the fact that open-ended assignments should be designed on the basis of students' understanding of the textbook, and should not be detached from the content taught and supplemented with extracurricular content accordingly.

## 4. Design Strategies for Middle School English Homework in the Context of "Double Reduction"

### 4.1. Designing the Overall Assignment for the Module

Unit overall homework design refers to the design of a series of related assignments for each teaching unit, according to the unit as a unit of integration of the content of the textbook, the unit of multiple knowledge points, skills in a task integration, requiring students to learn the knowledge and skills of the comprehensive application of the completion. Teachers should comprehensively organize the teaching objectives and knowledge points of each unit to ensure that the content of the assignments is closely related to the content of classroom teaching. Each unit of each classroom assignment is interrelated, forming a complete chain of assignments, which helps students gradually master the knowledge they have learned. The overall homework design of the unit is hierarchical, that is, the levels of homework design, which can address the actual situation of students and individual differences, and differentiate the design of different levels of homework for different learning abilities of students, so as to meet the different learning needs of all students.

Take Unit10 If you go to the party, you'll have a great time! as an example, under the theme of "People and Society", it centers on the topics of making choices, talking about the results of things, and worries in life. In the process of discussing parties, talking about troubles and

making suggestions, the students learn to communicate with others, face difficulties and find solutions to problems according to the predicted results of their choices. On this basis, the final theme of the unit is "Growing Pains". From "Growing Pains" to "No Growing Pains", we help young people to recognize the social attributes of their own selves, and to improve themselves through "Planning for Pies" and "Speaking Out, Refusing Depression". Speak out your worries and refuse to be depressed" and "Give the right medicine to relieve others' worries" to help them realize their own social attributes and to develop a positive attitude towards life. The overall structure of the unit includes the standard topic, unit topic, unit learning theme, theme meaning, sub-theme, discourse logic, student activities and homework design. In the teaching design, the learning objectives of the unit are divided into four lessons (Growing in choice, Release in telling, Communication is the best medicine, Solving growing pains) to carry out teaching activities, and the corresponding assignments for each lesson are designed separately. The assignments are designed in a hierarchical manner, including basic assignments, expanding assignments and challenging assignments.

The overall teaching design of the unit under the orientation of core literacy requires teachers to choose teaching contents and contextual materials that are conducive to the cultivation of core literacy in the English discipline based on the curriculum standards and teaching materials in terms of formulating learning objectives, selecting subject contents, designing learning activities, carrying out classroom teaching and carrying out learning assessment, etc., and to establish a good relationship between the core literacy in the English discipline and the core contents of the discipline in a circular manner. The core literacy of the discipline can be crystallized, cultivated, intervened and evaluated. This unit is centered on the theme of "Growing pains", and based on in-depth reading and analysis of the texts in the unit, it focuses on real problems and forms sub-themes that are interrelated and progressive. Through the study of this unit, students can realize the social attributes of the self more clearly, and can also form a positive attitude towards life, learn to solve the troubles and problems of adolescence, and gradually establish the correct educational value of the English subject. In addition, the overall assignment design of the unit also needs to always keep in line with the unit's major theme, with authentic scenarios, diverse types, strong comprehensiveness, strong relevance and increased difficulty, adhering to the student-centered approach, and carrying out the concept of English learning activities to the end.

#### **4.2. Designing Hierarchical Assignments**

Designing hierarchical assignments involves setting assignment tasks of different levels of difficulty and complexity according to the differences in students' English levels and abilities. By giving students tasks appropriate to their levels, the learning needs of different students can be met and their motivation and self-confidence can be improved. For example, for students with low English proficiency, basic exercises and vocabulary consolidation tasks can be designed; for students with intermediate proficiency, comprehensive assignments combining basic and enhancement can be designed; for students with higher English proficiency, extension inquiry and creative challenge tasks can be designed. The difficulty of the tiered assignments is appropriate and no longer difficult for students at different levels, which is undoubtedly a stimulus for students to get down to earth and master knowledge and skills while feeling relaxed and happy, which also achieves the fun of completing the assignments. Such a tiered design promotes individualization and allows each student the opportunity to grow in the area that is appropriate for his or her learning.

This requires that when we teachers design English assignments, we cannot ask all students to complete the same tasks. For example, students are divided into three levels, A, B and C, according to their comprehensive English ability. When teaching the seventh grade book "Do you like bananas?", we need to design three different levels of recitation assignments. Among

them, the homework for C students (struggling students): follow the recording of the content of the text. Each student should familiarize himself/herself with the pronunciation of vocabulary and the pauses in the sentences. After reading, they try to recite the text on their own, paying attention to the standard pronunciation of the vocabulary and the intonation of the sentences. At the end, learners are required to try to find the words they can't pronounce during the recitation process. Assignment for Category B students (intermediate students): Firstly, they will recite the content of the text emotionally and master the specific content of the text. Then the teacher will complete the pre-designed questions and answers (listen to the recording of the text content and then answer). These questions are centered on which (what), which (how), which (why) and other questions to help students understand the central idea of the text. class A students (superior students) are required to recite the text fluently and practice imitation writing based on the text. The design of hierarchical homework is conducive to the completion of students at all levels, thus mobilizing students' interest in doing homework and mastering the corresponding knowledge points.

### **4.3. Designing Practical and Applied Assignments**

Designing practical and applied assignments is a task that allows students to apply the English knowledge and skills they have learned to real life situations. Such assignments are designed to enhance students' motivation, interest, practicality and operability in learning. Practical English homework is an effective way to improve students' ability to practically apply English. Through different types of practical activities such as project-based, research-based and community service, students are able to deepen their understanding of English and cultivate comprehensive quality in practice. The biggest difference between it and traditional forms of assignments is that it emphasizes practical application rather than mere memorization of knowledge. This form of homework is designed to help students improve their intercultural communication skills and integrate what they have learned with real life.

For example, for the age group of middle school students, students like to show their talents. When teaching the seventh unit of the seventh grade book How much are these socks, students can be assigned to design an advertisement about clothing and shoot a promotional video. The advertisement requires the use of learned language and the design of a variety of clothing, using either hand-drawn or information technology, so that students can publicize their clothing stores in class. Students work in small groups to learn cooperatively, enriching their knowledge of extracurricular life while actively participating in the design of clothing advertisements, and using multimedia for presentation while developing their creative thinking skills and information technology skills. When teaching How do you make banana milk shake? in the first book of Grade 8, the teacher first presents a video of the steps of milk shake making in the classroom, brings some making materials to the classroom, then introduces the steps of making milk shake and teaches the key phrases and sentence patterns. After the teacher demonstrates, encourage students to practice making milk shakes and taste them with each other. While making milkshakes, students express the steps of making milkshakes in English, and assign students to make milkshakes at home for homework, take videos of the process and feedback from their families, preferably with corresponding English notes, to experience the fun and success of doing it, and at the same time consolidate the knowledge they have learned in this unit.

### **4.4. Designing Diversified Homework Evaluation**

Designing diversified homework evaluation refers to the use of multiple forms and ways to evaluate students' work. Traditional written evaluation can be combined with oral evaluation, display evaluation, student self-assessment, peer evaluation, etc. to comprehensively evaluate students' learning outcomes from multiple perspectives. Teachers should pay attention to the diversity of homework correction, give priority to the use of motivational, oriented and

inspirational homework correction, guide students to reflect on their own shortcomings and problems based on their homework, guide students to reflect and summarize in depth around the shortcomings of their homework, optimize their teaching strategies and learning ideas in time, and gradually cultivate the ability to adapt to the thinking and knowledge of English, and guide students to gradually carry out self-reflection and summarization, guiding students to promote the efficient generation of English knowledge in homework criticism in order to enhance students' comprehensive application of English. In addition to the traditional written assessment, oral expression, role-playing, group discussion and other methods can also be used for assessment. These methods can better assess students' oral expression skills, communication skills, and teamwork skills. For example, students can be designed to conduct group presentations, oral dialog exercises or evaluate each other's work. Such mutual assessment of students can stimulate students' enthusiasm and creativity, and provide more comprehensive and accurate feedback on students' comprehensive development.

Multivariate evaluation requires the development of evaluation scales, evaluation grades and evaluation rules for different evaluation subjects. For example, when designing the evaluation scale for classroom assignments, it can be divided into four grades ABCD, which are excellent, good, pass, and continue to work hard. The main body of evaluation includes three aspects: students' self-assessment, students' mutual assessment, and teachers' comments. Through feedback, teachers can adjust the teaching program, analyze the learning situation, and develop programs for different students' weak points in order to achieve effective evaluation. And students can also analyze their own learning and that of their classmates through evaluation, inspire students to learn from each other, help each other, and cultivate students' motivation to learn and strive for progress.

## 5. Conclusion

Generally speaking, the design of English homework in junior high school has ushered in opportunities and challenges under the "double reduction" policy. Reducing the burden on students is the most basic thing. The design of English homework in junior middle school should reflect the basic concept of subject cultivation and emphasize the students as the main body. When designing homework, teachers should not only aim at the basic goal of all students, but also have a deeper understanding of the students and respect individual differences, so that the homework has a certain degree of selectivity, so as to facilitate the corresponding improvement of the English ability of different students. Teachers should grasp the overall teaching objectives and content of the unit, design diversified, hierarchical, interesting and life-oriented assignments, so that students' English learning ability can be improved and the assignments can give play to their own value of nurturing, thus achieving a better teaching effect, being able to cultivate the learning interests of students at different levels and meeting their individual learning needs. Thus, the purpose of cultivating students' core competence is achieved in the English subject.

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