The Unit Holistic Teaching Design of High School English Based on Discourse Analysis

-- Take U5 Into the Wild as an Example

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Abstract

In the context of the reform of the national English curriculum standard, the necessity and effectiveness of the unit holistic design have become increasingly prominent. Teaching design is the beginning of teaching. A good teaching design can lead to good teaching results. At present, teaching design faces some problems. In this research, the corresponding improvement strategies are proposed based on discourse analysis.

Keywords

Discourse analysis; Holistic Teaching; Unit instruction Design; High school English.

1. Research Background and Significance

1.1. Research Background

The English curriculum standard is the beacon of English teaching. In recent years, the "General High School English Curriculum Standard (2017)" (herein after referred to as the "New Curriculum Standard") has put forward several teaching suggestions for teachers, including paying attention to the meaning of the theme and formulating guidelines for core competence in designing the holistic teaching goal of the unit; to study the text in-depth, grasp the core content of teaching; practice the concept of English learning activities, and promote the effective formation of core literacy. With the implementation of the new curriculum reform, many scholars are advocating the whole unit teaching, and many teachers are also practicing the concept of the whole unit teaching. However, due to the heavy teaching tasks and examination pressure, many teachers still use the teaching method of a single text model, and only focus on key knowledge, passing by the logic and emotional value behind the text, causing students to swallow the knowledge and learn scattered book knowledge, which will not extend and expand, and does not form an effective overall teaching effect.

Textbooks are the carrier of knowledge, the basis for students' learning, the basis for teachers to teach, and the bridge between teachers and students. For many years, English teaching has only paid attention to the form of language and the training of information extraction skills, ignoring the theme of the text and the cultural connotation it carries, which will inevitably make teaching stay at the training level of knowledge acquisition, surface understanding and strategic skills, ignoring the theme context and discourse meaning. The compiling concepts and features of the 2017 edition of new high school English textbooks of FLTRP provide a feasible basis for the unit holistic teaching design. The textbooks follow the principle of "understanding-development-practice" and take "theme" as the key link. The learning content with diverse themes, rich genres, and vivid and authentic language reflects the concept of English learning activities and emphasizes the cultivation of learning strategies in the learning process.
1.2. Research Significance

Based on Gestalt theory and constructivist learning theory, this research combines the overall teaching of the unit with core literacy. This article takes Into the Wild, the fifth unit of the 2017 edition of the new high school English textbook of FLTRP as an example, to illustrate the guiding significance and importance of discourse Analysis for teaching design, to help curriculum reform, to provide examples for the unit holistic teaching design, and to help teachers adapt to the new textbook. Therefore, this study combines theory with practice, which has certain theoretical value and practical significance.

2. Concept Definition

2.1. Discourse Analysis

Foreign scholars’ interpretation of discourse analysis in the field of linguistics mainly starts from three perspectives: teachers and texts, students and texts, and editors and texts. Domestic scholars Chang Wanli & Zhang Liqin (2018) hold similar views. They believe that discourse Analysis can capture the highlights of the text from the perspective of teachers, analyze difficulties from the perspective of students, and analyze the value of texts from the perspective of editors. Celce-Murcia.M.&Oishtain (2000) believe that discourse analysis involves five aspects: cohesion, coherence, information structure, turn-taking and critical discourse analysis. In the new curriculum standard, it is mentioned that studying discourse is an in-depth interpretation of the discourse theme, content, style structure, language characteristics, author’s point of view, etc. Teachers are suggested to answer three basic questions first. First, answer the "What" question, that is, what is the main content of the text, including time, place, characters, and plot elements, and solve the surface information; second, answer "Why" In-depth treatment of the problem, through the detailed description of the text to analyze the emotional attitude and value orientation of the characters, to lead students to pay more attention to the information mining hidden between the lines; the third solution to the "How" problem, that is, to lead students to analyze the genre and discourse structure of the article and rhetorical devices, as well as the author’s writing style, language characteristics, etc.

Discourse Analysis is the premise and foundation of accurately positioning teaching objectives, reasonably selecting teaching content, and carrying out effective teaching design. All-round and accurate discourse Analysis can not only effectively convey the editor’s intention, but also achieve the effect of deep learning.

To sum up, combining the suggestions of the above scholars, in the field of teaching, discourse analysis should be based on the meaning of the theme. Under the guidance of the meaning of the theme, teachers should read the text thoroughly at the beginning of teaching design, and analyze the key points and difficulties of this paper from the perspective of students. From the three perspectives of the main content of this article, what, why, and how to write, to achieve the best teaching effect and promote the development of students’ learning ability, cultural awareness, language ability, and thinking quality.

2.2. The Unit Holistic Teaching Design

Jiang Zhiyong(2010) believes that the unit holistic teaching design is a new form of lesson preparation and teaching, which can not only conform to the development of students’ cognitive laws but also improve teachers’ ability to reconstruct text design teaching.

Shen Wenqing (2017) believes that the unit holistic teaching design of a unit can be defined as: teachers combine the English teaching objectives and requirements of the English Curriculum Standards, based on the analysis of textbooks and learners’ learning needs, with the theme as the core and the unit as the basis for lesson preparation. The unit is the process of presetting
the teaching unit of the textbook as a whole around the four aspects of the teaching goal, teaching content, teaching process, and teaching evaluation.

Liu Yanping and Zhang Wei (2021) believe that the holistic teaching of the unit is a unit as a unit, which organizes the teaching content as a whole, designs the learning plan, and forms the teaching form of evaluation. Compared with the traditional model of "one lesson, one gain", it is not only a formal integration, What is more important is to closely connect the unit learning content and deeply reflect the core literacy of the discipline.

Wang Yanping (2021) believes that holistic teaching means that after systematically sorting out and analyzing teaching content, teachers plan to teach sections and strengthen the relevance of learning activities, and achieve in-depth teaching through structured and serialized teaching. The overall teaching of the unit based on the theme meaning selects learning materials and organizes learning thematically around the theme meaning, and reflects the integrity and progression of the unit theme through the hierarchical decomposition of sub-themes.

Above all, this paper defines the unit holistic teaching design as the idea that teachers combine the "English Curriculum Standard" and the new teaching material, take the unit as the basic unit, fully analyze the content of the teaching material and the needs of learners, define the unit based on the theme meaning of the unit, and clarify specific goals. It's a form of lesson preparation that reasonably arranges teaching activities.

3. Theoretical Basis

3.1. Gestalt Theory

Gestalt Theory was originally a school of Gestalt psychology, a school of psychology that emerged in Germany in the early 20th century, also known as Gestalt psychology. Its founders were Wertheimer, Kolfka and Kohler. Gestalt theory advocates the study of direct experience (that is, consciousness) and behavior, emphasizes the integrity of experience and behavior, believes that the whole is not equal to and greater than the sum of the parts, and advocates the study of psychological phenomena with the view of the dynamic structure of the whole. Gestalt theory provides a theoretical basis for the overall teaching of the unit. This theory emphasizes the integrity and coherence of the unit. The result of the addition of each part of the unit cannot form a whole, perception is not the comprehensive result of the addition of feelings, and thinking is not a single connection of ideas. Learning is not through the association of many scattered ideas, but a sudden understanding of the overall organizational structure. Therefore, in the teaching process, students need to actively explore relevant content and gain deep perception in the process. It is necessary to give full play to the overall role of unit synthesis and to form a modular interpretation based on highlighting the theme, which is not only conducive to the formation of a diversified and comprehensive cognitive system for students but also conducive to the development of students' logical thinking.

3.2. Discourse Analysis Theory

Discourse analysis theory studies sentence arrangement and cohesion and coherence in texts. Discourse analysis research was gradually developed from abroad in the 1960s. The term discourse analysis was first proposed by Zellig Hamis (1952), who considered discourse as coherent and attempted to analyze the connections between sentences and paragraphs within a discourse. He talked about two methods of discourse analysis in the article, one is to go beyond the level of sentences and analyze the discourse at the level of the whole text, and the other is to analyze the relationship between language and culture. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), a text is a semantic unit, "a unit on the plane of meaning". Cohesion is a semantic relationship, a semantic relationship that interprets the meaning between language components. The research on discourse analysis in my country began in the 1980s, compared
with foreign countries, the research started later. Scholars such as Huang Guowen and Hu Zhuanglin have actively explored the connection. Huang Guowen (1988) believes that cohesion is an important content of discourse, the embodiment of semantic concepts and the surface structure of discourse, and a tangible network of discourse. Coherence is also a semantic concept, it exists at the bottom of the text, expressing the semantic connection through logical reasoning, it is the invisible network of the text.

Discourse analysis teaching emphasizes that input and output are carriers of meaning with discourse characteristics. Discourse analysis is of great significance to English teaching, for example, reading teaching patterns organically combining thematic information analysis, textual structure analysis, cohesion analysis of discourse, and scenario analysis, which provides important enlightenment for English reading teaching.

3.3. Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism believes that knowledge is not acquired by teachers, but is a process in which learners realize meaning construction with the help of others in a certain situation, that is, social and cultural background, that is, through interpersonal collaborative communication activities, emphasizing students' initiative. Teachers are the assistants of learning and are responsible for providing students with good learning conditions. Students are the main body of learning, and learning is the process of students' active inquiry. In the process of learning, they independently discover knowledge, learn skills, and acquire morality. Constructivism unit teaching is mainly aimed at students' learning and consists of six elements: situation, collaboration, scaffolding, task, display, and reflection. There is a staged connection between these six elements. The situation includes three parts: goal, topic and evaluation. The goal is formulated according to the requirements of the course, and the topic is determined based on the unit theme, which aims to stimulate students' interest in learning, and the evaluation is the evaluation of students' learning ability. Collaboration is the cooperative exploration between groups, and it is necessary to coordinate the learning level of the people in the group to ensure that each student can get a certain development. Scaffolding is the role of the teacher, guiding students to connect what they have learned, connecting the entire classroom and the entire unit content. Tasks are questions that teachers ask in the classroom for students to think and explore. A Demonstration is a way for students to share their unit learning results, and it is also a test of students' learning effects. Reflection means that students consolidate what they have learned after class and strengthen their learning effect.

4. Problems in Teaching Design

4.1. A Single Teaching Objective

Knowledge-based teaching objectives are prominent. Some teachers weaken the function of discourse and ignore the integrity of discourse. The design of teaching objectives are mainly to explain language knowledge, and they do not take into account the overall training of language skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reading, let alone cultural literacy, learning ability and the cultivation of thinking quality.

4.2. Missing Text Analysis

Before the teaching design, the analysis of the text is not enough, the design of several factual questions and the extraction of language knowledge, lack of the mainline running through the whole design, and the teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching strategies and the theme meaning are not related, so students The reading learning of students is fragmented, the understanding of the text is superficial, the overall grasp of the teaching materials is lacking, the leading role of the unit theme is not played, the true feelings of the students cannot be touched, and the in-depth learning cannot be realized.
In the actual teaching design, some teachers are accustomed to referring to the teaching plans of their predecessors or using various teaching reference materials to subjectively judge the main content and value of the text without in-depth study of the unit text, and design it in the teaching. Or, without thinking, the teaching content in the teaching reference book is subjectively listed and directly passed to the students, ignoring the value of teachers and the teaching materials themselves, so that the teaching design is the same. Some teachers will add their own teaching habits and personal preferences to the teaching design, ignoring the requirements of teaching objectives, the psychological development of students and the actual situation of the classroom, and the teaching design has not been thought deeply and carefully.

4.3. Templating of Teaching Activities

In the real classroom, the teaching activities have the following problems: First, under the pressure of the college entrance examination, English classrooms are often "one-word classrooms". The teaching activities mainly focus on teaching grammar knowledge points, mostly grammar exercises, and students only stay in knowledge at the learning level, without deep thinking, it is difficult to improve cultural awareness and thinking quality. Second, some teachers do not study the text in-depth and pursue a variety of activities. The content of the activities deviates from the theme. The activity design has nothing to do with the theme of the lesson, and most activities only focus on the acquisition of superficial and detailed information in the article, ignoring the understanding of words and meanings based on discourse, is not conducive to cultivating students' good reading habits, and will make students bring the habit of not thinking deeply into the usual reading process. Third, the teaching activities lack the real context, the content of the activities is not real, and the students' sense of role substitution is not strong, which not only wastes the classroom time but also weakens the students' interest in reading.

5. Example of the Unit Holistic Teaching Design

In order to move the curriculum content from segmentation to integration, the new curriculum standard proposes an English curriculum content consisting of six elements, including topic context, discourse type, language knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills, and learning strategies. The analysis of teaching content, the design of teaching objectives and the design of teaching activities are the three important pillars in teaching design, and the three are closely linked.

5.1. Grasp the Theme of the Unit and Analyze the Overall Content of the Unit

In the new curriculum standard, it is suggested that teachers should carefully analyze the teaching content of the unit, sort out and summarize the language knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills and learning strategies related to the theme. In this study, the fifth unit of the 2017 new edition of high school English by FLTRP, Into the Wild, is taken as an example. The theme of the unit is to establish the correct values of respecting animals, caring for animals, protecting animals, and friendly coexistence between humans and animals. The content of the unit includes British people keeping pets, the migration of monarch butterfly, the Chinese panda’s visit to the Netherlands, animal-related proverbs, a debate about animal captivity, a thrilling filming manager, basic information on red-crowned cranes, etc. Unit integrity, relevance and laddering can divide the theme of the unit into three sub-themes, the first is to understand the habits of animals, the second is to understand the meaning and role of animals in human life, and the third is to know how to live in harmony with animals, such as As shown in the figure:
5.2. Interpret Text According to Subtopics

Focus on the first article of this unit, Understanding ideas, Monarch Butterfly in the United States. The theme is to let students understand animals and become familiar with popular science articles. The key is to understand the general idea of the article and judge the source of the article through skimming; to find out the detailed information of monarch butterfly through intensive reading; to perceive the attributive clauses guided by relational adverbs. The difficulty is to clarify the causal relationship in the text, deepen the understanding of the subject and connect it with reality, and explain how to protect animals. This article can be interpreted from three perspectives:

What? This lesson relies on a popular science exposition focusing on the migration of the monarch butterfly in the United States. First, recognize the basic information of monarch butterfly migration, including time, place, method, migration distance, and current situation. Further use the causal relationship to elicit the reason for the sharp decline in the number of monarch butterflies. Finally, the author calls on the public to protect the monarch butterfly.

Why? This article stimulates students’ curiosity about animals and their interest in exploring nature by introducing the natural science knowledge related to monarch butterfly. From the sharp decline in the number of monarch butterflies, students can be guided to explore the relationship between human activities, nature, and animals, highlighting the theme of harmonious development between man and nature, and it has educational significance for cultivating students’ correct values of cherishing and protecting animals.

How? This article is divided into 5 paragraphs, focusing on the topic of animal migration, leading out that the migration of the monarch butterfly is one of the most spectacular animal migrations in the world. The second paragraph introduces the appearance, migration time, The distance of the migration is far, and then he asks questions about his migration method. The author asks and answers himself, and uses the research results of Eli Shlizerman to illustrate the peculiarity of his migration method. The fourth paragraph uses a comparative writing method to draw out that the number of such insects is declining sharply and analyze the reasons for the decline. Finally, it proposes protection measures and calls on everyone to protect animals.

This article includes subject words that describe basic information about animals: migrate, migration, in search of, manage to do, find one’s way to, allow somebody to do, crash, caterpillar, awareness, the more..., the greater, keep its place.

5.3. Determine the Goal of The Class According to The Content of The Class

The revised high school English curriculum goal has shifted from "comprehensive language ability” to the core literacy of English subjects. The core literacy of the English subject transcends the limitations of comprehensive language application ability, organically integrates
language, culture and thinking, and builds specific and feasible subject goals for the realization of moral cultivation and subject education. The teaching goals are achieved by the subject goals. To lay the foundation, it is suggested in the new curriculum standard that the design of each class hour goal should serve to achieve the overall goal of the unit. As the first lesson in reading class, the main task of this course is to familiarize yourself with the type, content and structure of discourse, and to train reading skills. The specific teaching objectives are designed as follows:

Table 1. Teaching Objectives

| Language ability | (1) Summary information through viewing  
|                 | (2) Share and evaluate your own experiences along with animals  
|                 | (3) Skim to get the main idea and judge the type of the text  
|                 | (4) Scan some details to find out the cause-effect relationship |

| Thinking ability | (1) Deduct the background, purpose and way of the migration of monarch butterfly and the influence on it brought by human people and what should we do to protect animals |
| Culture awareness | Form right views of harmonious relationship between animals and humans and caring for animals and protecting ecology |
| Learning ability | (1) Use read strategies: scan and skim  
|                 | (2) Use transition device in reading, like mind-up |

5.4. **Design Teaching Activities to Complete Teaching Objectives**

The concept of learning activities that integrates six elements under the guidance of the new curriculum standard is the point of convergence between curriculum content and curriculum objectives. Teaching activities are the specific implementation of teaching objectives, the basic form of English learning, and the main way for learners to learn and try to use language to understand and express meaning, cultivate cultural awareness, develop multiple thinking, and form learning ability. Activities include three categories of learning and understanding, application practice and transfer innovation. Learning and comprehension activities mainly include discourse-based learning activities such as perception and attention, acquisition and sorting, generalization and integration; application practice activities mainly include in-depth discourse learning activities such as description and interpretation, analysis and judgment, internalization and application, etc.; Transfer and innovation activities mainly include learning activities beyond discourse, such as reasoning and argumentation, criticism and evaluation, imagination and creation. The curriculum standard requires that the teaching activities can integrate the six elements of the curriculum content into the learning activities, and seek the mutual promotion and synchronous development of language, culture and thinking in text reading. Based on the interpretation of this article, the six elements are integrated into the teaching activities, and the specific teaching activities are designed as follows:

**Activity 1 Lead-in**

(1) Show photos of different kinds of butterflies  
(2) Play the video to break the cocoon into a butterfly  
(3) Look at the picture and guess the word migration

**Activity Category: Perception and Understanding**

Design Intent: The purpose is to attract students’ attention, stimulate interest, activate background knowledge related to the topic, elicit the topic, and prepare for the next step in teaching reading.

**Activity 2 Skimming**

Read the passage and find out
What’s the main idea of the passage?
Where is it from?
How many parts it can be divided into?
What mystery the scientists have solved?

Activity category: acquisition and sorting
Design intent: Read the text quickly, familiarize yourself with the general content and paragraphs of the text, clarify the structure of the text, select the possible sources of the text according to the text’s text and style, and train students to skim.

Activity 3 Second reading
(1) Fill in blanks. Reading for some detailed information from Paragraph 1 to 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to migrate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Activity 3**

Activity category: acquisition and sorting
Design purpose: The text consists of 5 paragraphs, divided into 2 parts. The first part is from paragraphs 1 to 3. The main content is the basic information about monarch butterfly. Use tables to visualize the basic information and understand what the popular science text contains.

(2) Complete the “cause-effect” flow charts from Paragraph 3 to 4.

a. The monarch butterfly is able to tell the time of day _____.
b. Using these two pieces of information, the monarch butterfly determines the way to go
c. The monarch butterfly measures the position of the sun with its eyes.
d. The monarch butterfly reaches the places where it will spend the winter

**Figure 3. Flow chart using in paragraph 3 to 4**

Activity category: acquisition and sorting; Analysis and Judgment
Design purpose: The main information, using the flow chart to help students clarify the logic, familiarize themselves with the flight principle of Monarch Butterfly, help students to
understand Monarch Butterfly more comprehensively and accurately, and also train students' ability to read.

(3) Complete the “cause-effect” flow charts from Paragraph 4 to 5

- Humans cut down trees.
- The natural environment of many places where monarchs can be found is destroyed.
- Humans use chemicals that kill the plants that monarch caterpillars eat.
- The monarch butterfly’s population has crashed in the last few years. (by as much as 90 per cent)

**Figure 4.** Flow chart in paragraph 4-5

Activity Category: Analysis and Judgment
Design intent: The second part of the text is from paragraphs 4 to 5. Using the flow chart, clearly summarize the reasons for the sharp decrease in the number of monarch butterflies, clarify the causal relationship of the article, and enable students to understand the impact of improper human activities on the problem. The living environment of the monarch butterfly has been greatly damaged. Therefore, the theme is deepened, and the conclusion is drawn that humans and animals should live in harmony. At the same time, it also exercises students' thinking and logical ability and improves reading strategies.

Activity 3 After reading
(1) Retell the text through the two charts

Activity Category: Description and Interpretation
Design intent: Review the content based on key information, review the knowledge learned, build a bridge for direct communication between students and authors, convert input into output, learn how to use flowcharts, exercise learning strategies, and train students based on context thinking ability and language ability.

(2) Work in group and discussion: What can people do to help protect the monarch butterfly

Activity Category: Imagination and Creation
Design intent: Connect with reality, discuss in groups and present the results of the discussion, express one’s own emotional attitude, enhance the value of harmonious coexistence between humans and animals, cultural awareness is conducive to improving students' ability to use language in practice, and inspires on the relationship between humans and animals student thinking.

Homework:
(1) Watch the monarch butterfly migration video and complete the after-school self-assessment KWL form;
(2) Investigate an endangered animal, the cause of extinction and rescue measures, and complete a popular science essay, referring to the expressions learned in this lesson.

Hints:
What kind of endangered animals do you know about?
What kind of problems are they facing?
What can be done to help those animals?
Activity Category: Criticism and Evaluation
Design intent: Complete the post-class self-assessment, help students internalize and absorb the basic information of this course, expand their extra-curricular knowledge, independently explore and deeply think about the causes of extinction, learn to use tables and flowcharts to write popular science articles, realize transfer learning, and realize self-understanding. Improve students' comprehensive ability and promote the development of core literacy.

6. Conclusion

With the reform of national English curriculum standards and the adaptation of new textbooks, teaching design as an important part of teaching should also change accordingly. Under the guidance of the thematic meaning of the unit, the unit holistic teaching design based on discourse Analysis can more objectively grasp the mainline of the course content; analyze the discourse structure in an overall manner, fully explore language knowledge and skills, improve thinking quality and learning ability, and enhance cultural awareness. Effectively adding up the teaching results of each class hour is greater than the effect of scattered teaching, and successfully transforming from a single language professor to a comprehensive subject education, which is conducive to cultivating core literacy and achieving the goal of morality and education. Therefore, the design of teaching objectives and teaching activities should be based on the analysis of teaching content so as to improve the effect and efficiency of teaching and learning.

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