Appendices: Language Education Reform Based on the New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development

Appendix 1
Primary School Language Education Based on the New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development

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Abstract On the foundation of the reflection of the current situation of primary school language education, this paper reconstructs the teaching theory and approach of primary school language subjects based on the new language curriculum standards and the New theory of Children’s Thinking Development. With more than 3 years practice in the “innovative experiment on an leapfrogging development approach in language education”, the specific strategies to incorporate the proposed teaching theory and approach in different types of primary school language lessons are also set out.

Keywords Language education · Accelerated development · New theory of children’s thinking development · Extended reading

1. Reflection of the Current Situation of Primary School Language Education
For years, the language education reform has enhanced the development of language education to some extent and has accumulated many precious experiences. Yet, without any breakthrough in teaching ideology and theory, and especially without recognizing the profound influence the advancement of time has brought to the way children study language, it resulted in various problems and even errors in the actual practice of primary school language education.

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1. Neglecting the Original Learning Basis of Children

All learners will incorporate their acquired knowledge, skills and attitude into a new learning process. In designing and conducting teaching, this is the prime point that should be considered, and this is also what we usually referred to as the starting point of learning. It is only in this way that our education will have a well-defined objective. However, in our researches and practices of primary school language education, the strong learning basis initially possessed by children has long been neglected both intentionally and unintentionally.

The New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development stated that [3], according to the researches by our country’s psychologists, pre-school children aged 5–6 possessed more that 3500 verbal vocabularies [1]. Professor Li Yu Ming’s research on children’s learning and mastery of the “interrogative sentence subsystem” also states clearly that after 4 years of age, children’s mastery of the various Chinese verbal sentence patterns has gradually become perfect and mature in our country. This proves that pre-school children have a very strong foundation of their native spoken language. Yet, the language teaching resources and language education in primary schools has failed to fully recognize this point for many years, for example, in pinyin teaching, focus is only put on how to pronoun, spell and write the pinyin. The learning basis originally possessed by students is not utilized together with the newly learned pinyin and phonetic notions to read some nursery rhymes, riddles or tongue twisters. This turns pinyin learning into a dull process, and wastes a lot of precious times; In character recognition teaching, excessive times are spent in explaining the pronunciations and meanings of the characters and phrases. A variety of activities are conducted to analyze the pronunciations and meanings of Chinese characters while the learning and writing of the “forms” of the characters are not emphasized; In teaching how to read the texts, many teachers fail to realize that only by reading the texts with the assistance of pinyin, students would be able to understanding the meanings of the texts through the context. They think that students know nothing and that students would understand the texts only by their repetitive lecturing, analyses and reading instructions. This wastes a huge amount of time.

2. Separating Pinyin, Character Recognition, Reading and Writing, Which are Originally Closely Connected

The Language Curriculum Standards (Trial Version) [2] clearly define the overall aims of language education in primary schools. However, for the actual ways and methods to conduct language education, it only emphasizes that the principle of independence, cooperation and investigation should be followed. Though this gives much freedom to the teachers, it also results in diverse understandings on how the new curriculum standards should be implemented. The conventional education idea of “character recognition first, then reading, and lastly writing” has created the strange phenomenon of teaching pinyin in isolation, character recognition in isolation, reading in isolation and writing in isolation for a long time. These four teaching sections, which are originally closely connected, are isolated and separated. Initially, the teaching efficiency of language in primary school should
be higher. Yet, with this separation, it becomes low in quantity, efficiency, quality and cost effectiveness, and this triggers discontent from society. This is mainly caused by a failure to recognize clearly the aims and patterns of children in learning language. In fact, the fundamental purpose of learning language is communication (that means exchanging thoughts and feelings), and communication is also the most effective way and method to learn a language. Children can only learn and master language swiftly in their interactions with others, i.e. in applying language. Pinyin, character recognition, reading and writing are necessary, and can also be fully incorporated in language application. In this way, students can learn in a relaxed atmosphere and a lot of teaching time can also be saved, which makes it possible to attain high-efficiency language teaching.

3. Neglecting the Cultivation of Students’ Thinking Ability
For many years, on the issue of children’s cognitive development, the teachers are greatly influenced by Piaget’s “stage theory of children’s cognitive development”. They believe that “children at the pre-operational stage (2–6 years old) only possess representation-based thinking, but do not have language concept-based logical thinking; children at the stage of concrete operations (7–11 years old) only have elementary logical thinking which based on concrete objects, but do not possess abstract logical thinking on hypothetical propositions” [3]. This influence of Piaget’s theory is manifested in the neglect of cultivating junior and middle grades primary students’ logical thinking ability. The language education of junior primary school grades only focuses on recognizing and writing characters, as well as explaining characters and phrases. Extended reading and writing training are not required, for there is a wrong belief that primary students at this stage are still unable to compose a complete discourse. Thinking trainings only involve representation-based imagery thinking while language concept-based logical thinking is neglected. Even in the senior primary school grades, language education still only touches on elementary logical thinking which based on concrete objects, but not abstract logical thinking on hypothetical propositions.

4. Abuse of Questions and Reading During Lessons
During lessons, many teachers like to inspire students’ thinking and aid students’ understanding on the texts through raising questions. If the questions are inspiring and able to give appropriate guidance to the students, then raising questions is really a better teaching method. However, some teachers fail to have an accurate analysis and understanding of the teaching goals, and are unable to question on the key points in the comprehension of the texts. Instead, they raise factual questions and assign many students to answer them. A lot of time is used, but the students gain nothing. This is the typical case of “leading students by the noses”. Apart from that, there are also many problems in the language teaching section on “reading and comprehending”. Reading is originally very beneficial to the cultivation of junior grades primary students’ logic and sense of language. Reading famous masterpieces aloud is especially beneficial to expanding students’ scope of knowledge, and more importantly, to cultivating students’ aesthetic tastes and nurturing their noble thoughts and feelings. However, the “reading and comprehending” sections
in junior primary school grades are abused by many teachers. No matter what the contents of teaching are, and no matter students have the relevant life experience or not, various types of reading would be used in an attempt to let students comprehend the texts. Even when some texts are memorized thoroughly by heart by the students after repetitive reading, students would still be asked to read them again. How can students “comprehend through reading” in such situation?

2. Striving Hard to Reform Primary School Language Education Based on the New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development

The root of the aforementioned misunderstandings and errors in implementation is the failures to have a correct recognition of the objective laws of children’s language and thinking developments, as well as a clear recognition of the relationship between language and thinking. In terms of the issue of children’s language development, these failures result in upholding the linear education idea of “character recognition first, then reading, and lastly writing”, as well as the isolation and separation of character recognition, reading and writing in teaching. In terms of the issue of children’s thinking development, these failures result in employing Piaget’s “stage theory of children’s cognitive development” as the major guiding ideology, and believing that primary students below 11 years old still do not possess abstract logical thinking on hypothetical propositions. In other words, children in this age group are normally unable to compose writing with a certain degree of abstractness and generality with their native language. (This is because composing writings involve language expression ability and various types of thinking abilities, and that the abstractness and generality of writings are determined by the authors’ abstract logical thinking ability.) By critically adapting Piaget’s stage theory of children’s cognitive development, and taking into consideration the new progress in brain science researches and the new characteristics of children’s thinking and language development in the information era, the New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development provides a new division of children’s thinking and language development, and gives an interpretation of the development processes of thinking and language that basically conform to the actual situation of modern children. This new theory has at least the following two implications on primary school language education.

1. The Teaching Idea of “Language Use-Centred” must be Upheld

The New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development points out that children learn language in the processes of communicating with others (exchanging thoughts and feelings), i.e. in applying language. Children’s learning processes of language must centre on language application. Children learn language because they would like to use it, and they must use it immediately once they learned it. They must also strive to use it within a certain context. Words and sentence patterns should never be memorized in isolation without the context. The education idea of “language analysis-centred” should never be adopted in teaching and learning language. This is because they violate the children’s law of language learning.

To implement the education idea of “language use-centred” effectively, character recognition, reading and writing should be integrated dynamically in
language education. They should not be isolated and separated as in conventional teaching. In the actual practice, the teacher-directed—student-centred combined language teaching approach should be used, and it should include three sections, **lecturing the texts** → **extended reading** → **written expression**. Both junior and senior primary school grades should start teaching with reading and writing rather than character recognition. So, do these new language education idea and teaching approach have a firm theoretical and factual base?

(1) **Pre-school children have a strong mother tongue foundation, making the implementation of the above concept and approach possible**

As mentioned, children above 4 years old in our country have a more perfect and mature mastery of the various verbal sentence patterns of Chinese. When they are around 6 years old (before entering school), they basically mastered 3500 verbal vocabularies. This shows that they had mastered the “pronunciations” and “meanings” of the 3500-odd vocabularies, but they are just unable to recognize and write the Chinese characters of these vocabularies [1]. This is a very important fact for language education in primary schools. With such strong foundation, there will be a big drop in the difficulties of teaching vocabularies and lecturing the texts. Teachers will be able to attain the requirements of the curriculum standards by using appropriate methods in teaching the structure and writing of Chinese characters, as well as providing necessary explanations to the key points and difficult points of the texts. In this way, the lesson time can be greatly reduced without affecting the effect of teaching, and valuable time is spared for extended reading and writing. Other than that, students have basic knowledge on the pronunciations and meanings of vocabularies, as well as mastery of pinyin. Thus, by marking hanyu pinyin in the extended reading materials, primary one students will be able to read without any difficulty the popular literature, such as nursery rhymes, tongue twisters, short fairy tales, idiom stories and easy-to-read ancient poetry and even the simplified version of classics.

(2) **Modern information technology provides the condition for extended reading and writing training**

Extended reading is a vital part for realizing accelerated development in primary school language. It is only through extensive extended reading that a large amount of vocabularies can be acquired, and that the humanity of students can be enhanced effectively. After students read the online extended materials, they should express themselves through writing. This will foster students’ high-level mental processing. They will have a more solid mastery of knowledge and deeper emotional experiences. Without any one of the two sections mentioned above (extended reading and written expression), the education idea of “language use-centred” cannot be realized. The multimedia and Internet-centred information technology provides the possibility to realize this education idea. On the one hand, there are rich and high-quality multimedia teaching resources with pictures, words and sounds (mainly refers to hanyu phonetics) on the Internet. They trigger students’ interest in learning and reduce students’ difficulties in reading comprehension. On the other hand, Internet message board is an ideal support tool.
By learning hanyu pinyin and learning to use the keyboard, students will be able to perform written expression with standardized pinyin input method. (It is impossible for primary one or two students to handwrite passages of a few hundreds or even a thousand odd characters. If this is forced to be done, it will bring a substantial increase in their homework burden.) Though the non-Internet-based Leapfrogging Development Experiment proves that without an Internet environment, extended reading and written expression can be carried out with printed materials and by handwriting, and it will also attain a better result than using normal teaching method. However, compared with reading online materials, reading printed materials has a slightly poorer result; For written expression, as handwriting places a higher demand on the stroke orders and strokes of the Chinese characters, it yields much higher difficulty than computer typewriting. Apart from that, as primary one and two students have a slower writing speed, the quality and quantity of the handwritten compositions are poorer than the typewritten compositions at the initial stage. Yet, by gradually acquiring more vocabularies, accumulating richer language and increasing the speed of writing, the differences between these two types of compositions reduced.

2. Cultivation of Language Ability must be Integrated with Training in Thinking Ability (Especially that of Creative Thinking Ability)

“Language is the material shell of thinking”. Language and thinking are naturally inseparable, and their developments are closely related. Language is the foundation of thinking development. Advanced development of abstract logical thinking would be impossible without language, while thinking ability also exerts great influence on the formation of language ability. If the two of them are integrated dynamically in teaching, they will complement and enhance each others. Separating them will be harmful to both of them, and thus cultivation of thinking ability should be incorporated in language education. The New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development believes that pre-school children possess proficient oral ability and have formed the elementary thinking quality. Although the reading and writing abilities of primary one students are yet to be developed, they possess basic representation-based imagery thinking and intuitive thinking, as well as basic language concept-based logical thinking. Thus, even in primary one and two’s language education, the cultivations of these three types of thinking should be strongly emphasized equally without solely emphasizing or neglecting any of them. This is because these three types of thinking are initially interdependent, mutually supportive and inseparable.

3. The Implementation Strategy of Pinyin Lessons

1. Exerting the Teachers’ Leading Role and the Advantages of Multimedia Courseware, Achieving the Requirements of the Curriculum Standards with High Efficiency

With the development of society and improvement of living standard, most of our country’s towns and rural villages in the more economically developed area have normally developed pre-school education. In pre-school education, pinyin is an important content of teaching. Thus, for children of the developed area, who
just entered primary school, the consonants, vowels and compound syllables of pinyin are not unfamiliar things, but something that they have a certain foundation. (Some students are even able to write the pinyin, and to recognize and read many Chinese characters.) If students are taught as if they know nothing, it will surely affect their interest in learning. Certainly there does have some students who had not learned pinyin before they entered primary school, and the needs of this type of students must be met in teaching. After having a serious analysis on the teaching tasks of hanyu pinyin teaching, we believe that teachers should focus their efforts on instructing the key points and difficult points when teaching pinyin. They should provide necessary coaching on the pronunciations of the pinyin which are easily confused, as well as on how to write pinyin. The other relatively easier teaching tasks should be left for students’ independent learning with the courseware. For example, when teaching \( b p m f \), the courseware which teaches pinyin in the archives would be used first. With this courseware, students would learn to read the pronunciations of these four consonants, as well as the spellings and pronunciations of these four consonants with a single vowel by themselves. After that, the teacher would provide necessary instructions on the pronunciations of \( b \) and \( p \), which are easily confused, and on how to write the four consonants. In this way, the learning enthusiasms of both students with or without pinyin knowledge would be fully triggered, and this would also enhance the efficiency and effect of teaching.

2. Using Extended Reading to Consolidate Hanyu Pinyin and Expand Vocabulary Acquisition

There are two aims to conducting extended reading at the hanyu pinyin teaching stage: (1) To consolidate hanyu pinyin; (2) To expand vocabulary acquisition. As students at this stage accumulate only a small number of the forms of Chinese characters, the reading materials must be carefully chosen so as to reduce students’ difficulty in independent reading as much as possible. Research proves that [4] phrases used in daily life, things that students are interested in, and rhythmic materials are more attractive to students at this stage. Thus, catchy tongue twisters, nursery rhymes or riddles that are closely related to students’ daily life are more appropriate extended reading materials for the pinyin teaching stage. For example, when teaching \( b p m f \), we provided four nursery rhymes and two riddles that are closely related to school life to students; When teaching \( ai ei ui \), we gave students 12 words related to daily necessities and 5 riddles. As children who just entered school have a weaker awareness of self-learning and students have varying levels of ability, we proposed that at the initial stage of pinyin teaching, extended reading should first be leaded by teachers, and then performed together with the whole class (or in a group), and at last transferred to the stage in which students read by themselves.

3. Setting up Various Language Practice Activities, Incorporating Cultivation of Thinking Ability in Pinyin Teaching

The new curriculum standards clearly stated that [2] pinyin is the tool for character recognition, reading and writing. Thus, the authors believe that using
pinyin to form phrases, construct sentences, read and write is the best method to consolidate pinyin teaching. Apart from extended reading, various language practice activities, such as forming phrases, constructing sentences, describing pictures verbally and creating nursery rhymes, should be carried out to allow students to speak and write with pinyin. For example, when teaching b p m f, we introduced the lesson with verbal descriptions of pictures and conducted various practice activities, including creating and answering riddles, composing nursery rhymes that aid the memory of pinyin, verbally describing pictures to consolidate pinyin and typewriting phrases; When teaching ai ei ui, activities such as forming phrases, answering riddles, reading tongue twisters and using vocabularies of daily necessities to form sentences were conducted. These practice activities do not only consolidate the pinyin learned in that particular lesson, but they also incorporate training in the elementary language concept-based logical thinking, and realized the dynamic integration of character recognition, reading and writing in pinyin teaching.

4. The Implementation Strategy of Character Recognition Lessons
1. Exerting the Teachers’ Leading Role and Employing the Innovative Character Recognition Method, Achieving the Requirements of the Curriculum Standards with High Efficiency

There are two major teaching tasks in character recognition lessons: (1) Teaching the new words in the texts and character recognition method; (2) Understanding of the contents of the texts. Usually, the new words in a text can be divided into two categories: (1) The “doubles”, which students are required to recognize and read; (2) The “quartets”, which students are required to recognize, read, write and use. According to the New theory of Children’s Thinking Development [3], children possessed strong mother tongue foundation before they entered school, and thus, it is not difficult for them to learn the pronunciations of the words in these two categories. Students are able to read most of the words with the aid of pinyin. In the teaching process, teachers do not need to attend to each and every aspect. They can attain the requirements of the curriculum standards by only providing necessary guidance on the correct pronunciations of the words which are difficult to read, and then letting students read them in the linguistic context. In other words, the forms of words, especially the strokes order, strokes and writing of the “quartets”, are the key and difficult points of character recognition teaching. During lessons, there are a lot of innovative methods which can aid students’ memory of the forms of the words, such as adding a stroke, reducing a stroke, changing the component, saying nursery rhymes, telling stories and answering riddles. The requirement to write the characters can be achieved by teaching students the stroke and stroke orders after they had memorized the forms of the characters. Most texts of the character recognition lessons are relatively easier. They are usually nursery rhymes, riddles, couplets and ancient poems. It involves little difficulty in instructing students to understand and read the texts, and less time is needed to finish teaching a text. Thus, a large amount of time can be saved for extended reading and written expression.
2. Consolidating and Transferring the Knowledge of New Words with Extended Reading

Expended reading in character recognition lessons centred mainly on character recognition and has two major aims: (1) Consolidating the new words learned from the text of the lesson with the linguistic context of new passages and gaining more understanding of the other Chinese characters. Thus, the extended reading materials in character recognition lessons should mainly be vocabulary stories, allusions of words, riddles about words, nursery rhymes and tongue twisters; (2) Transferring the character recognition method used in the lesson to other instants, so that similar methods can be used to acquire more Chinese characters. For example, when teaching *Vocabulary Acquisition 5* (learning words through riddles) in book 1 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we used the following two types of resources: (1) Six short passages written with the new words of this particular text and four short stories which included the new words of this particular text; (2) Fourteen riddles about the new words of this text or other objects and one story about three children answering a riddle. A further example is when we taught *Vocabulary Acquisition 1* (four character idioms about spring) in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, in order to aid the memory, revision and application of the new words, we provided students with seven riddles and six nursery rhymes (about the sceneries of spring) related to the theme of the text. After teaching the text, we gave students 12 nursery rhymes, ancient poems and short passages which describe spring. In this way, students’ understandings of spring can be deepened and they can also acquire more vocabularies. Extended reading should mainly be conducted independently by the students themselves since the initial stage of character recognition teaching.

3. Designing Various Composition Activities Related to Chinese Characters, Expanding Knowledge and Training Thinking Simultaneously

As mentioned, character recognition lessons have two major teaching tasks: (1) Teaching the new words in the texts and character recognition method; (2) Helping students to understand the contents of the texts. For the first task, we believe that both thinking training and typewriting expression during the lessons can be organized around the memorization of the forms of the characters and the application of vocabularies. In order to aid students’ memorization of the forms of the characters and application of vocabularies, teachers can let them answer and create riddles about words, and compose their own stories. Some teachers may say, “There’re numerous methods to memorize and apply vocabularies. Methods such as adding a stroke, reducing a stroke and changing the component can also attain the aims of consolidating and applying vocabularies.” However, after analyses and comparisons, we found answering and creating riddles about words, and composing stories place more emphasis on association, imagination and meaningful memorization of words. They are more interesting and generate more active participation from students, which resulted in better recognition and memorization of characters. For example, for the character “旦” [literally means “dawn”], the adding a stroke method will say “add a horizontal stroke to ‘日’
[literally means “sun”] is ‘旦’”, while a riddle will use “the sun rise from the horizon” to aid students’ memorization of this character. It is obvious that riddles about words give a more figurative, meaningful and easy memorization of a character. More importantly, answering and creating riddles about words, and composing stories are also training in thinking ability. If they are carried out over a long period of time, students’ thinking will become very active, which in turn enhance their character recognition ability. According to our experiences, students’ abilities to learn and memorize vocabularies are well-developed when they are in primary two. Except words with especially complex orders and numbers of strokes, students are able to memorize words without much effort. Thus, more time can be saved for extended reading and writing. Some teachers may think that it is difficult for primary one children to produce good riddles about words or stories. Yet, practice proves that with appropriate guidance from teachers, students are able to compose some surprising and interesting stories and riddles. For example, when teaching *A Tiny Little Boat* in book 1 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, our students composed riddles such as “A person sits inside his home to look at the beautiful sky” (Answer: 闪) and “Two children sit back to back on a mound to look at the stars. The stars are twinkling. It is really beautiful.” (Answer: 坐); When teaching the aforementioned *Vocabulary Acquisition 5* (learning words through riddles), our students created 85 riddles in the lesson and many of them continue to memorize words by composing riddles after lesson.

For the second teaching task, various activities, which help to deepen students’ understanding of the texts and train their thinking, can be designed according to the different characteristics of the texts. For example, when teaching aforementioned *Vocabulary Acquisition 5* (learning words through riddles), we let students compose their own riddles and answer the riddles of others; when teaching *Walk for Two, Three Miles in One Go* in book 1 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we designed a nursery rhymes composition activity; when teaching *Vocabulary Acquisition 4* (nursery rhymes of animals) in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we let students write something about their favourite animal; when teaching *Vocabulary Acquisition 1* (four character idioms about spring) in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we let students write about their feelings about spring after reading a lot of ancient poems and nursery rhymes related to spring.

5. The Implementation Strategy of Reading Lessons

Reading lesson is the most frequent and typical language lessons. Its major teaching tasks are reading instruction and text comprehension. In discussing the

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1. The Chinese character “闪” (literally means “flash”) composes of “门” (literally means “door”) and “人” (literally means “person”).
2. The Chinese character “坐” (literally means “sit”) composes of “人” (literally means “person”) and “土” (literally means “mud”).
implementation strategy of this type of lesson, the genre of the texts as well as the
cognitive level of students should be put into consideration. This is because even
for texts of the same genre, their key and difficult points in teaching would be dif-
ferent for students in different grades or students with different levels of cognitive
development in the same grade.

1. Exerting the Teachers’ Leading Role to Break Through the Key Points and
   Difficult Points in Teaching, Achieving the Requirements of the Curriculum
   Standards with High Efficiency

Most texts for primary one students are short and have simple logics. Thus, in
arranging the two lessons devoted to a text, the first lesson should focus on read-
ing through and gaining an overall feeling of the text, as well as on character rec-
ognition teaching; the remaining lesson should focus on reading instruction and
comprehension of the text. Materials of extended reading and the requirements of
typewriting should be determined in accordance with the teaching focus of a par-
ticular lesson. The teaching strategy of the first lesson is the same as the aforemen-
tioned one of character recognition lessons, and thus will not be repeated here.
For the second lesson, as reading instruction and text comprehension is closely
connected (reading the important sentences and reading expressively enhance
students’ understanding of the texts and the feelings of the authors; The under-
standing of a text in turn also influences the effect of reading.), teachers can use
methods and strategies, namely, commenting and analyzing important sentences,
reading demonstration and evaluation, asking inspiring questions and role play, to
attain the requirements of the curriculum standards. Starting from primary two,
texts become longer and richer in contents. Students also gained a huge number
of vocabularies after a year (especially through extensive extended reading for
1 year). Continuous enrichment and perfection of the teaching methods and strate-
gies for reading lessons are required. Thus, in primary two, apart from comment-
ing and analyzing important sentences, reading demonstration and evaluation,
asking inspiring questions and role play, methods and strategies, namely, inquiry,
discussion, thinking in another position, providing framework and encourag-
ing imagination, should be employed. For example, when teaching *We Success*,
we took into consideration that junior grade primary students may not be able to
understand the happiness and excitement people experienced after winning the
bid for the Olympics described in the text. Thus, after gaining an overall feeling
of the text, we gave students several passages which describe the difficult process
our country experienced when bidding for the Olympics, and the profound influ-
ence hosting the Olympics brought to the politics, economy, culture and sport of
a country. (This is equal to providing a “framework” to understand the text.) After
that, we also asked the students some inspiring questions and organized a discus-
sion so as to achieve the requirements of the curriculum standards.

2. Choosing the Extended Reading Materials Carefully to Consolidate,
   Deepen and Expand the Requirements of the Curriculum Standards

Extended reading is an important strategy to consolidate, deepen and expand the
requirements of the teaching aims. Based on the teaching tasks of the reading
lessons, and taking into consideration that the texts of primary two and three are longer and some texts are richer in contents, extended reading materials should be chosen from a variety of layers and angles. For example, the text *Where are you, Uncle Lei Feng* does not only require students to understand Lei Feng’s spirit of serving the people, but also demand them to interiorize it and turn it into actual actions. Thus, in the teaching process, we chose and edited extended reading materials of two categories, “Lei Feng and his deeds” and “Lei Feng around us”, and we let students express their thoughts by typewriting writing on “I need to learn from Uncle Lei Feng”. A further example is when we taught the text *The Balloon by the Window*, our years of teaching experiences told us that students were able to understand the central idea that classmates should love each others. However, the difficult point was how students can interiorize this feeling and attitude, and turn it into their actual actions. In the first lesson, when the teacher asked, “What does a person need most when he is ill?” Most students answered, “Medicines.” Though this answer is correct, it does not match the requirement of the central idea of the text. To guide students properly, we left them with a doubt after they answered the question, and let them read eight passages about the feelings and thoughts of patients. This allowed them to have a more proper and thorough understanding of theme of the text. When teaching the texts such as *The Three Sons* (the theme is filial piety) and “*Red Scarves” are Really Good* (the theme is loving the birds), the extended reading materials we chosen provided both the pros and cons of the issues. In this way, students could deepen their understandings of filial piety as well as harmony between men and nature from different angles and perspectives. Extended reading in reading lessons are usually carried out independently by students themselves. The genre of the texts and the needs of the teaching designs determine whether this extended reading would be conducted before teaching the text, together with the teaching of the text or after teaching the text.

3. Integrating Training of Thinking Ability with Reading Instruction

As stated, the integration of thinking ability training with character recognition teaching is realized mainly though methods such as creating riddles and using vocabularies to write stories. To integrate thinking ability training with reading instruction, flexible arrangement should be made in accordance with the genre of the texts. For example, for *texts which describe sceneries and seasons*, students can be asked to typewrite passages with topics like “Spring/ Summer/ Autumn/ Winter in My Eyes”, “My Hometown”, “Winter in Lingnan” and “Our School” after conducting extensive extended reading on well-written prose and poetries about the beautiful sceneries in the four seasons. For *narrative texts which are more informative*, students can be asked to compose reading reflections and imaginative writings after reading the extended reading materials about the relevant knowledge. For example, when teaching the text *Life in Space is Fun*, the topic for typewriting we designed for students was “One Day, I Went to the Space...”; when teaching *The Dream of De*, we let students dream about “A Day in 2050”; when teaching *Lan Lan Crosses the Bridge*, students were asked to design the “Bridge in the Future” in their imaginations; when
teaching *The Extinction of Dinosaurs*, we let students explore “The Mystery of the Disappearance of Dinosaurs” like scientists. For fairy tales which are informative and didactic, students can be asked to imitate, write an end or rewrite fairy tales after reading some stories with similar subject matter. For example, when teaching *The Paper Boat and the Kite*, we let students imagined themselves putting a paper boat into a small stream and then wrote an end to the text; when teaching *Little Gecko Borrows a Tail*, we encouraged students to create “A New Version of Little Gecko Borrows a Tail” through independent exploration. For affective texts, students are required to read the relevant materials from different angles and perspectives (including both pros and cons), and then write down their understandings, feelings and experiences after thinking seriously about their own thoughts, emotions and attitudes. For example, when teaching *The Three Sons*, students were asked to express their changes in feelings and attitudes after learning the text with the topics “To the Three Mothers” or “To the Three Sons”; when teaching “Red Scarves” are Really Good, we let students wrote about “Rescuing the Birds” to express their love and care for birds; when teaching *I am Proud of You*, students were asked to express their penitence for a wrong doing and their determination to reform by writing “A letter to...”.

6. Attentions in the Actual Practice

1. Using Information Technology Scientifically and Reasonably

Technology is a double-edged sword. While modern information technology provides the ideal environment for primary school language education and gives possibility to accelerated development in education, it may also bring certain negative impact. If it is not used appropriately, not only will it fail to achieve accelerated development, but it will bring an exactly opposite effect. To avoid such situation, attention should be placed in the following in the actual practice:

(1) **Using information technology properly**
Information technology should only be used in teaching sections which it has an advantage position (such as extended reading and typewriting exercise). Traditional media can be used in other sections.

(2) **Using information technology healthily**
If teaching is conducted in an Internet environment, non-radiative products such as LCD monitors should be used. When actively conducting extended reading and computer typewriting in an Internet environment, students’ eye exercises and extra-curriculum activities should not be neglected, but more attention should be placed to preserve them.

(3) **Emphasizing the cultivation of habit in an Internet environment**
Attention should be placed on this issue since the beginning, so that students can adapt to the mode of learning an Internet environment—forming the good habit of independent learning, collaborative learning and listening to others’ opinions patiently, as well as using the various facilities in the networked classroom correctly.
2. Concerning About the Balanced Development of Students
No matter it is conventional teaching or teaching in an Internet environment, imbalanced development is an objective fact. As there are differences between students, the idea of “advancing in the same pace” is unrealistic. Compared with conventional lessons, the primary school language lessons of Leapfrogging Development Experiment provide a lot of opportunities for students to carry out independent learning and collaborative learning. As there are differences in the knowledge foundations and learning abilities between students, this implies a larger space for diverse development. Students who have a relatively weaker foundation, self-learning awareness and ability may be unable to catch up with the development of those students with better foundation, self-learning awareness and ability. That means the problem of imbalanced development may be more prominent. We should work hard to avoid the situation in which individual student is left far behind. To do so, teachers should pay more attention to this type of student in the teaching process (especially in the independent learning section), so that all students can gain a certain levels of development.

3. Handling the Relationship between Conducting Basic Teaching Approaches and Realizing Innovations in Teaching
“Lecturing the texts→extended reading→written expression” are the major teaching sections required by the accelerated development teaching approach of primary school language education. There are methods to teaching. The aforementioned approach is the basic requirement and feature of accelerated development teaching. It must be upheld in the teaching process, or else the targets of accelerated development cannot be reached. Yet, there is no fixed method to teaching. As there are differences in the teaching targets, as well as the contents and themes of texts, the handling approaches and teaching methods should alter in accordance with the specific students and text. In other words, the specific methods and teaching strategies can be chosen flexibly according to the teaching targets, features of the text and the personal teaching style of the teacher. The extended reading and written expression sections can also be creatively conducted in accordance with the teaching goals of different texts and the specific teaching situation, which in turn realize innovations in teaching. This reveals that conducting basic teaching approaches and realizing innovations in teaching are not mutually exclusive, but are contrarily mutually complementary to each other.

4. Insisting on Routinizing Accelerated Development Teaching
Students’ development of language ability and cultivation of thinking ability cannot be completed in one or two lessons. Thus, it must be persistently done—the aforementioned language education ideas, approaches and methods should be routinized. The increase of vocabularies, accumulation of language knowledge, strengthening of language sense and improvement in reading comprehension and writing ability are all gradual accumulation processes. Teachers do not need to worry whether students are able to master all the words or passages of the extended reading materials. In other words, there is no need for teachers to raise questions about the contents of the extended reading materials every time, or
read the materials to students or check students’ understanding of the words and phrases. It will be alright if students gain an overall feeling of the extended reading materials.

Notes


Bibliography

Abstract With years of experiences in the “innovative experiment on an leapfrogging development approach in language teaching”, the authors point out that extended reading is significant to increasing acquisition of vocabularies, knowledge of nature and society, deepening the affective teaching goals and raising writing ability. It is the prerequisite to realize accelerated development in language education in terms of quality. Based on this, the authors also elaborate the requirements of choosing extended reading materials and the specific implementation strategies of extended reading in accordance with different types of primary school language lessons.

Keywords Teaching resources · Extended reading · Instructional design · Accelerated development

The “New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development” points out that [1] preschool children have a very strong mother tongue foundation. (They master more than 3500 verbal vocabularies and are skilled in using the various Chinese sentence patterns.) Thus, in character recognition, which involves the teaching of the “pronunciations, forms and meanings”, teachers can focus on the recognition and writing of the forms of Chinese characters, and do not need to spend too much effort in the teaching of pronunciations and meanings. In this way, much time can be spared in each lesson for students to carry out extended reading, and this also guaranteed the implementation of extended reading, which is a vital part of the leapfrogging development approach in language teaching. Then, in the primary school language education, what kind of resource would be regarded as high-quality extended reading materials? How should the high-quality extended reading materials be selected and implemented?

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materials be used in the lessons to enhance the attainment of teaching goals and implementation of the new curriculum standards? These are two important questions we language teachers should seriously think about and explore.

1. Existing Problems in the Selection and Use of Extended Reading Materials

Extensive extended reading in every lesson is a vital prerequisite to accelerated development in language education. However, currently, as many teachers are unclear about the meanings and functions of extended reading, a lot of problems arise in the selection and use of extended reading resources. Sometimes, there are even situations in which the incidental is put in front of the fundamental.

1. Inaccurate analyses and mastery of teaching goals, breaking the contents of extended reading off from the themes of the texts

Extended reading aims at consolidating, deepening and expanding the requirements of the curriculum standards. In order to achieve this goal, the contents of the extended reading materials must be closely related to the themes of the texts. It is disappointing that many teachers are having an inaccurate and even wrong analyses and mastery of the teaching goals. Usually, they merely consider the genre or the form of the extended reading materials rather than the contents and themes when determining whether the materials are related to the texts. This problem is especially prominent in the selection of extended reading materials for texts about idiom stories, sceneries and texts which state one’s aspiration through objects. For example, for the text *The Four Suns* in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, the extended reading materials at present are all passages describing the sceneries of the four seasons. Their contents do not touch on the good wishes to benefit mankind and optimize the environment; for idiom story texts such as *Basking in Reflected Glory* and *A Frog in a Well*, though currently there are rich extended reading materials (nearly 20 passages), all of them are only idiom stories. Whether the themes of these stories are really related to that of *Basking in Reflected Glory* (or *A Frog in a Well*) is not considered in the selection process.

2. Over-emphasizing the relationship between the knowledge of the texts and that of the extended reading materials, neglecting the humanity

The rich humanities contents of language subjects have deep and widespread influence on the people’s spirits. This influence comes from the value orientation of the texts as well as from the artistic appeal of literatures. Thus, in the teaching process, other than teaching language knowledge (including understanding a character, phrase, sentence and passage, and trainings on reading ability and writing ability), cultivation of students’ aesthetic taste should also be focused. The major difference between language lessons and moral education lessons is that the former enlightens students the ways to behave and act through gradual influence and love. This fact is known by many teachers. Yet, with limited time and difficulty in finding ideal teaching resources, they merely use resources which are more related to the knowledge of the texts, and neglect the cultivation of students’ sentiment in their teachings. This turns many language lessons into environmental education
lessons and travelling knowledge lessons. For example, in a lesson on the text *The Clear Spring Water* which the authors visited, the teacher only provided students with a lot of passages about environmental protection (such as *How to Preserve Water Resources*, *Green Tips*, *Little Green Guardian* and *The Functions of Water*), but did not guide students to have an in-depth comprehension of the theme of this text. Another example is the lesson on the text *The Strange Rocks on Huang Mountain*, many teachers did not hold on to the word “strange” to inspire and train students’ imagination and thinking. Instead, they gave students a lot of informative resources about Huang Mountain and other tourist spots, and imitated the tour guide in introducing Huang Mountain. As primary one and two students have little interest in reading informative materials, the aims of extended reading to consolidate, deepen and expand the curriculum standards naturally fail.

3. Having partial understanding on extended reading, turning extended reading into optional embellishment

“Lecturing the texts→extended reading→written expression” is the basic teaching mode of accelerated development for lower primary school grades. However, while implementing this teaching mode, many teachers do not have a thorough understanding on the relationship between these three teaching sections, which resulted in mistakes in the actual practice. For example, some teachers think that extended reading aims solely on increasing the acquisition of vocabulary. Thus, they only consider how many additional words and phrases students will learn in determining what to read and how to read; Some other teachers think that as extended reading is for the deepening and expansion of the curriculum standards, it should be conducted after the standards are achieved. If the text is longer and more difficult, then more time should be devoted to the teaching of it and extended reading is not necessary. These two types of understandings reflected in teaching turned extended reading into a dispensable section—If there is spare time, it would be conducted, or else, cancelled. Though extended reading does increase the acquisition of vocabulary, increasing the number of acquired vocabularies is not its major or sole aim. Though attaining the curriculum standards is a must, extended reading and attainment of the curriculum standards should not be put in confrontation. Contrarily, a lot of practices proved that it is the extended reading sections which enable a higher level and more in-depth achievement of the curriculum standards. Thus, extended reading is never an optional embellishment, but a vital part to accomplish accelerated development.

Since we joined the Leapfrogging Development Experiment, we had also made some of the aforementioned mistakes. After some years of exploration, the authors believe that the root of the above problems is a lack of clear understanding on the meanings and functions of extended reading. It is only by having a real understanding on the important meanings and functions of extended reading that a conscious adherence and creative implementation of this section in teaching is possible.
2. The Importance and Practicability of Extended Reading

1. The Importance of Extended Reading

After years of research, American psychologists proved that there is a close relationship between children’s reading ability and their future learning achievements. The developed countries in the West regard mastery of reading ability as one of the core goals of basic education, for example, the Department of Education of America had once organized the America Reads Challenge (http://www.ed.gov/americareads/), and Britain, Japan and Finland had organized the national year of reading to build a good environment for reading education. As mentioned, extended reading can consolidate, deepen and expand the requirements of the curriculum standards, and to be more exact, it involves the following three aspects:

(1) **Increasing vocabulary acquisition**

The new curriculum standards points out that character recognition is the key point of junior primary school grades education. It can lay a firm foundation for reading and writing. Thus, how to enable students to acquire a pile of Chinese characters (including the pronunciations, forms and meanings) swiftly becomes a hot topic for researches on junior primary school grades language education. For many years, reforms in primary school language education has been centring on the issue of character recognition. (Such as the education reform experiments of “concentrated character recognition” and “phonetic character recognition, accelerated development in reading and writing”.) These experiments attempted to let students acquire more vocabularies either by the forms of the characters or by the pronunciations. They were constructive to a certain extent. Yet, as they did not link the learning of vocabularies with reading and writing, they turned vocabulary learning into a process of mechanical memorization which was detached from the linguistic context. This increased students’ cognitive burdens and the recurrent rate of vocabularies. Contrarily, extended reading enables understanding and consolidation of vocabularies in reading, as well as a further increase in vocabulary acquisition and mastery of more vocabularies and sentence patterns—Children naturally love listening to stories, and reading story books and picture books. Reading stories (extended reading) with immense interest allows children to unconsciously acquire more and enrich vocabularies. As these words and phrases are acquired in the reading process, i.e. the linguistic context, children are able to have a comprehensive mastery of the “pronunciations, forms and meanings”. There will not be confusion of characters with similar forms as in “concentrated character recognition” and confusion of characters with the same pronunciation as in “phonetic character recognition”.

(2) **Gaining more knowledge about nature and society, deepening the affective teaching goals**

It is common sense that any matter or logic in the real world is complex. To clearly grasp the true colours and natures of a matter, people need to explore it from different layers and perspectives. The aim of language education is to enable students to understand the objective world and comprehend the correct ways to behave and
act through the study of language, so that they can form a correct sentiment, attitude and values. Extensive extended reading creates a more favourable condition for the achievement of this aim.

For example, when teaching the text *Life in Space is Fun*, students did not have much feeling about space after learning the text, but only that it is newfangled. It was after reading a series of passages about knowledge about space, the physical and psychological trainings astronauts went through in preparation for the space journey, the various inconveniences of living in the spaceship and the feelings of the astronauts when they returned from space to the Earth that the students realized that: Life in space is hard and dangerous though seemingly “interesting”, which in turn generated sincere admiration for the astronauts from the students, and determination to learn from them.

Another example is the lesson on the text *Beijing*. This text mainly describes Tian An Men, asphalt road and an overpass, and gives little descriptions about the other scenic spots and historic sites. After teaching the text, we gave students a lot of extended reading materials about the other scenic spots and historic sites in Beijing, and about Beijing in the past and now with pictures. After reading them, the students spontaneously praised, “Beijing is really beautiful!”; Students’ adoration of Beijing spouted without the preaching of the teacher. Such in-depth understanding and feeling about Beijing are impossible by the short content of the text alone.

Still a further example is when teaching *Clapping* (a text that describes the psychological changes of a girl with polio before and after the two clapping her classmates), we provided students with a lot of textual information about the experiences of the disabled, the psychological world of the disabled and how the disabled become independent, as well as how normal people care for and respect the disabled. These information did not only assist students in understanding the text thoroughly, but also help to realize the affective goals of the text—Students learned to care for the disabled and knew that respect is the best care. The great achievements of the disabled even with their challenged bodies also deeply touched the students, and many of them said that they really admire such people. Students also learned that with such an unfortunate life, the disabled still strive for improvements ceaselessly, then as a health person, they should be more hardworking and promising so as to make the best out of their lives.

(3) Enhancing writing ability
Extended reading also enhances students’ writing ability in the following specific ways:

- Extended reading expands the number of vocabularies students learned and helps them to master more vocabularies and sentence patterns. It also enables students to have better understandings of linguistic phenomena and enriches their language knowledge. These lay the foundation for writing.
- Extended reading broadens students’ horizons and gives them wider and deeper understandings of matters. This further enriches the contents of students’ writings by enabling them to have substance and targets in their writings.
• Extended reading deepens students’ understandings about the themes of each text, which is beneficial to the formation of correct sentiments, attitudes and values. This guarantees the ideological and political contents of the writings.
• Extended reading provides a lot of excellent examples and references for students’ overall conception, organization of the writings and writing skills.

2. The Practicability of Extended Reading

The extended reading stresses in this paper refer to one of the sections in the basic teaching mode of the Leapfrogging Development Experiment (“Lecturing the texts → extended reading → written expression”). It is to be conducted in the normal language lessons through a change in the conventional teaching concepts and structures while attaining the requirements of the curriculum standards with high efficiency. It does not require additional lesson hours and thus, is different from the common extra-curriculum reading. Then, is such extended reading practicable? To answer this question, let us first analyze the learning foundation of preschool children and the requirements of the character recognition teaching goals.

(1) The strong mother tongue foundation of pre-school children creates the condition for high-efficiency attainment of the curriculum standards

The researches by our country’s psychologists in the 1980s proved that preschool children aged 5–6 mastered more than 3500 verbal vocabularies [4]. This reveals that primary one students indeed master the “pronunciations” and “meanings” of these 3500 odd vocabularies, but are only unable to recognize and write the relevant Chinese characters. This has already greatly reduced the difficulty of vocabulary teaching in language teaching. Teachers no longer need to spend too much time on the pronunciations and meanings of Chinese characters as in conventional vocabulary teaching, but only need to focus on the instruction of the forms and writing of the characters. They would be able to attain swifter the basic teaching goals of a text by letting students practise writing the characters, and giving necessary explanation to the key and difficult points of that text. This will save much time for students to conduct extended reading. (Extended reading and the written expression section that follows further consolidate, deepen and expand the requirements of the teaching goals of a text.) If this is done persistently in every lesson, there will be a large surge in students’ acquisition of vocabulary and their independent study ability will also improve swiftly. This further guarantees that there will be time for extended reading.

(2) Reading materials which are suitable for children and marked with pinyin eliminate the obstacle to extended reading

Children mastered the pronunciations and meanings of more than 3500 words before entering to schools. This reveals that once children are taught hanyu pinyin, and given pinyin-marked extended reading materials such as nursery rhymes, stories and fairy tales, which they are interested in, they will be able to read the materials by themselves and understand them through the context. Thus, extended reading materials for the first semester must be marked with pinyin. All characters in the extended reading materials for the pinyin teaching stage, in particular,
must be marked with pinyin. Starting from the second semester, the numbers of pinyin-marked characters and phrases can be greatly reduced. When it is the third semester, pinyin is needed only for difficult characters and phrases. Starting from the fourth semester, pinyin is no longer needed basically.

(3) The character recognition teaching goal of “more recognition, less writing” enables the implementation of extended reading
The new curriculum standards clearly points out that the requirements on character recognition and character writing should be different. More focus should be put on character recognition and less on writing the characters in primary 1–2. This greatly reduced the difficulty of character recognition teaching because the goal of “more recognition” can be achieved completely through extended reading. On the one hand, students can re-recognize the learned words in the linguistic contexts of extended reading, and the words are also strengthened and consolidated through repeated occurrences in the reading materials. On the other hand, students can also learn many other characters and phrases. This shows that the character recognition teaching goal of “more recognition, less writing” enables the implementation of extended reading, and extended reading also provides the easiest and most effective methods to attain the goal of “more recognition, less writing”.

3. The Selection of extended Reading Materials
To ensure that the extended reading section is effective, extended reading materials must be selected in accordance with the following conditions:

- The contents and themes of the extended reading materials must be closely related to that of the texts
- The genres of the extended reading materials must be the same as or similar to that of the texts
- The difficulty level of the extended reading materials must correspond to the cognitive development level of their student users
- The extended reading materials must be scientifically and politically correct, and be rather interesting, stimulating and informative

As texts have their own distinctive teaching goals, though all extended reading materials must be selected in accordance with the four conditions stated above, the selection of materials in different type of lessons still have some distinction. The following is a further discussion of this issue.

1. Selection of extended reading materials for pinyin lessons
Extended reading in pinyin lessons has two major aims: (1) Consolidating the recognition and reading of pinyin; (2) Using pinyin to learn new words. At the pinyin teaching stage, students accumulated only little Chinese characters and their ability to spell and read pinyin are still in formation. Thus, the selected extended reading materials must be short and catchy, and should mainly be nursery rhymes, doggerels, tongue twisters and well-known ancient poetry. Pinyin must be marked in all these materials, and reading demonstration is needed for some materials (such as poetry).
2. Selection of extended reading materials for character recognition lessons
There should be two types of extended reading materials for character recognition lessons: (1) Riddle about words, nursery rhymes, short passages and allusions of words (for example, the story of Wang Xi Zhi writing the character “鵝” [literally means “goose”]), which help students to memorize the forms of the Chinese characters in the texts. These materials aim at consolidating the words learned from the texts, as well as allowing students to re-recognize these words and understand their meanings in the actual language application context. The materials also enable students to realize that in different linguistic context, the words they learned have different pronunciations and functions. This helps students to accumulate materials and references for the writing exercise stage, when they need to use the words in a text to compose stories and nursery rhymes; (2) Materials which use a similar character recognition method as the text of that particular lesson. These materials enable students to have a better understanding and mastery of that specific character recognition method. This in turn laid a firmer foundation to the later typewriting composition, when students need to imitate the given models.

3. Selection of extended reading materials for reading lessons
Most language lessons in primary one focus on character recognition, and in primary two, there is a large urge in reading lessons. Compared with character recognition lessons, reading lessons have longer texts with richer linguistic context. When selecting extended reading materials for this type of lesson, we mainly take into consideration the background information of the texts, and would select textual materials which are closely related to the themes of contents of the text and have a similar genre to the texts. In other words, there are two types of extended reading materials for reading lessons: (1) Background information about the texts or materials which help to achieve the teaching goals (usually employed in the first lesson); (2) Materials which are closely related to the themes of the texts and share a similar genre with the texts (usually employed in the second lesson). For example, when teaching The Dream of De, materials of the first type included introductory information with pictures on the various technology products stated in the text, and materials of the second type included materials about the life and dreams of people in the technology era. A further example is when teaching “Red Scarves” are Really Good, materials of the first type included descriptions of birds and human living in harmony (such as Zebra Finch), which acted as the preparation for the formation of the feeling and attitude to love and care for birds in students. Materials of the second type included materials about the pros and cons of people’s attitudes towards birds, which enabled students to consciously form a correct view on how to love birds through analyses and comparisons.

4. Implementation Strategies of Extended Reading in Different Types of Lessons
A failure to use the rich and fine extended reading materials will greatly reduce their effect. As mentioned, extended reading is crucial to the attainment of curriculum standards, and the selection and use of its materials must centre on the teaching goals. Extended reading must be conducted in carefully designed lessons. It is
only in this way that the efficiency and effect of the lessons can really be enhanced and accelerated development can be achieved.

1. Extended reading strategies in Pinyin lessons

Traditional education concept believes that as character recognition teaching has not been conducted in the hanyu pinyin teaching stage, students know only little words, and thus are not suitable to carry out extended reading. However, reality proves that such concept and thought do not match the actual language and thinking development of children.

For example, when teaching the lesson one a o e of hanyu pinyin, after the students learned the forms and pronunciations of a o e, we let them accessed the website “Information City ” and read some nursery rhymes about a o e. At the beginning, the teacher leaded the students to read together, and then, students read together with their classmates. This triggered strong enthusiasm for learning from students. Not only could they find and read a o e quickly and accurately, but they were also able to read their favourite nursery rhymes several times. Many students even memorized 2–3 nursery rhymes. The test conducted after the lesson found that students were able to remember clearly the pronunciations and forms of a o e, and they also learned a lot of Chinese characters through reading the nursery rhymes. A student called Ming Ming remembered 11 characters in just one lesson.

This case proves that not only are children able to carry out extended reading in the pinyin learning stage, but they are also able to gain a more solid and effective mastery of pinyin through extended reading. It is even more delighted to find that the originally boring pinyin learning becomes relaxing and joyous through reading nursery rhymes, creating tongue twisters and doggerels, as well as forming phrases and composing sentences. These activities also effectively enhance character recognition learning, which enable students to feel and experience the success and happiness of learning pinyin. However, it should be noted that in order to clear the barriers children experience when they begin reading and to better cultivate their interest in reading, extended reading in pinyin teaching stage would better start with teachers leading the whole class to read, and then reading together with the neighbours, and at last transit to students reading by themselves after they gradually adapted to it.

2. Extended reading strategies in character recognition lessons

According to the curriculum standards, character recognition teaching follows pinyin teaching. Character recognition lessons usually consist of two periods. The first period focuses on recognizing and reading new words, gaining an overall feeling of the texts and learning to write the words. The second period emphasizes reading instruction and comprehension of the texts. The text Two, Three Miles in One Go would be used in the following as an illustration to how extended reading can be conducted in character recognition lessons. The first period included two steps. In the first step, we checked students’ pronunciations of the 12 words one by one. After that, students consolidated the pronunciations and forms of the words through reading and answering riddles, and then, composed their own riddles by imitating a model. In the second step, students read four nursery rhymes,
Let's Guess, Mother Hen, Counting the Stars and Crossing the Bridge, Guessing the Piers, by themselves after learning the 12 words. Reading nursery rhymes can effectively consolidate students’ memory of the pronunciations and forms of the words while increasing their acquisition of vocabulary. Extended reading in the second period was conducted after lecturing the text. It mainly enabled students to read a group of ancient poems, which are closely related to the themes of the text, on the website “Information City” by themselves. This extended reading had two aims: (1) Increasing the acquisition of vocabulary; (2) enabling students to experience the charm of words—even simple and boring numbers can also produce beautiful poetry.

Extended reading conducted in character recognition lessons should place attention on the following three points: (1) Emphasis should be on consolidating the pronunciations and in particular, the forms of the new words; (2) Attention should be placed on the different pronunciations and meanings of some words in different linguistic context; and (3) Master the correct time for carrying out extended reading. Extended reading should be flexibly arranged in the first period according to the need of teaching. In the second period, it should usually be conducted after lecturing the text, but may be carried out before lecturing sometimes (see the example below).

3. Extended reading strategies in reading lessons

The extended reading strategies used in reading lessons are basically the same as that of the character recognition lessons stated above. That means extended reading can be conducted before or after lecturing the texts and completely by the students themselves. As reading lessons take up a large proportion of primary school language education, how to implement extended reading in these lessons receive general attention from language teachers. Thus, a group of real teaching cases is presented in the following for our readers.

(1) Arranging extended reading before lecturing the text, laying a foundation for learning the text

[Case 1] Text: We Success

This text is not long, but the big gap between its content and the daily life of students make it difficult for students to understand the great joy and thrill it described. Reading instruction and attaining the affective teaching are the two different points of this lesson. How to prepare children for the learning of this text? We provided students with some articles from the website “Information City” and asked them some guiding questions. In this way, before lecturing the text, they already knew about the background and related knowledge of the text through extended reading:

① “Class, do you know what the Olympics is?” Most students answered, “The Olympics is an athletic meet.” This revealed that students did not understand the history and related knowledge of the Olympics. Thus, the teacher let them read the article The Origin and Meanings of the Olympics, and then named some of them to answer the following question: What do you get from the article? Students’ answer told us that they had already knew the origin of the Olympics and basically understand the significant meaning hosting the Olympics has to our country.

② “Class, to win the bid for the Olympics, all people in our country has put in great efforts. Let us now look at what they had done for bidding the Olympics.”—Guided students to read the article We Use Our Own Ways to Support the Bidding for the Olympics.
"People had done so much for bidding the Olympics, what would you do for bidding the Olympics then?" This question triggered a lot of responses from students. All of them raised their hands to express their ideas.

Li Jia said, “I’ll use colourful colour pencils to draw a picture of our country’s beautiful sceneries and send it to the Olympic Committee. They’ll think of China soon as they look at the picture.”

Chen Lei said, “I’ll work hard to make the environment better. So that, when the Olympic Committee and the athletes from all over the world come, they’ll like our country and let us host the Olympics.”

Zhou Qi said, “I’ll save my pocket money from now on and donate them to Beijing to build a big and beautiful house. So that, the athletes can live comfortably in it and let our country host the Olympics.”

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The children took themselves as one of the members who bid for the Olympics and were willing to do something for the bidding in their own ways.

It was time to let the students experience the spectacular moment themselves. The teacher played a video of the scene when our country won bid for the Olympics. “Class, our efforts have not been in vain, the moment of excitement has come! What would you say and do now?”

Xiao Ming said, “I’ll jump and shout ‘We success. We finally success!’”

Xiao Fang said, “I’ll faint with excitement! It’s really exciting!”

Li Li said, “We’ve done so much and we finally success. I must go to the main street and tell everyone about that!”

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Students’ enthusiasm had been triggered by the above. When they were asked to open the textbook and read the text then, they were able to involve themselves in the text and read expressively without the lecturing of the teacher, but only a little guidance. This revealed that they already had quite an in-depth understanding about the text. At this time, when students read the article I Work for a Better Olympics, their thoughts were brought to a new level. Their urges to express themselves also became stronger, and this enabled a natural flow to the next teaching section, “written expression”. With the above preparation, most students’ writings were concrete and expressive.

The aforementioned case reveals that for texts that are less related to the daily life of students, incorporating the related teaching resources into the extended reading section before lecturing the texts enables students to gain more background information and related knowledge of the texts. In this way, extended reading found the base for learning the texts and acts as an important enhancing agent to students’ thorough understandings and experiences of the themes of the texts, as well as their achievement of the teaching goals.

(2) Incorporating extended reading in the lecturing of the texts, breaking through the key points and difficult points of teaching

[Case 2] Text: Little Rain Drops

In the process of reading comprehension, one student asked this question, “Why can big rain drops make red flowers and green grass grow in places without flower and grass? Why can small rain drops make the flowers redder and grass greener?” This is a good question. Obviously, when I asked my class to try to answer it, no one raised his hand. After the students carried out a group discussion, I named two students to answer it again. However, their answers were not satisfactory. At that time, I remembered that there was an article Little Rain Drops have Great Power in
the website “Information City”. So, I thought of letting the students read it and solved the questions by themselves.

Just as expected, after the students read the article, the two questions raised above were solved.

Similar method was used in other lessons, such as in teaching It’s about to Rain.

[Case 3] Text: It’s about to Rain

This is an informative fairy tale. Extended reading materials related to its themes are usually related to idioms, such as “When the swallows’re flying low, tomorrow’ll be a rainy day. When the swallows’re flying high, the sun brightly shines.” To facilitate students’ understanding about these idioms, necessary explanations were added after each idiom. However, how should we use these materials, so that while helping students to understand the natural phenomena described in the text, we can also enable them to have certain ideology education?

We broke the text into several scenes. After teaching the scene about the conversation between the rabbit and the swallow, we gave such direction to the students, “The swallow can foresee the weather. Through observing the behaviours of them, people concluded many idioms. These idioms are very helpful. Let us now look at them.” Then, the students learned the idioms about swallows together with their neighbours. For the learning of the other scenes, we let students accessed the website “Information City” to read some idioms about animals and their explanations by themselves. This allowed students to know about the unusual behaviours of the animals before the weather changed and experienced the wisdom of people. Ideological education was performed imperceptibly: With careful observation and by being good at learning, one can learn a lot in daily life. In this way, the knowledge inside and outside the texts were integrated through extended reading. Students also gained a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the text, and the lesson became livelier as well.

The case above shows that conducting extended reading in the lessons enables teachers to use the related materials to solve the key points and difficult points of teaching. It also effectively cultivates students’ reading ability, comprehension ability and self-learning ability, and realizes a real independent learning method which involves investigation and cooperation.

(3) Arranging extended reading after lecturing the text, deepening the understanding of the text

[Case 4] Text: The Three Sons

This is an affective type of text with the theme “filial piety”. As primary two students lack the relevant life experience, no matter how teachers repeated their teaching, it is still difficult for students to really understand the meanings of the old man’s words in the text. In our teaching, we did not spend too much time on analyzing the old man’s words, but let students read three types of extended reading materials on the website “Information city” by themselves (The first type are stories about unfilial people. The second type is a group of critical articles, which criticize people who only boast about respecting their parents, but without real actions. The third type are stories about people who really love and respect their parents.) and then wrote a reflection on these readings. After this independent learning and writing, students had a deeper feeling and understanding about the old man’s words.

The lessons on the aforementioned texts, Beijing and Clapping, were also handled with similar methods. That means extended reading in these lessons was also conducted after lecturing the texts. This method enhances a deeper understanding on the texts. After gaining an overall feeling on the text, students further absorb the contents of the extended reading materials, and integrate the contents of the
extended reading materials with that of the text. In this way, not only can they deepen their understanding on the themes of the text (which is beneficial to the achievement of the affective teaching goals), but their horizons are also broaden and knowledge are enriched. This provides condition for the attainment of a dual-acceleration (not only achieve, but greatly surpass) of cognitive teaching goals and affective teaching goals.

All in all, extended reading is vital for realizing accelerated development in language education. The relationship between texts and extended reading materials is that of intensive reading and extensive reading. The application of extended reading should follow the principle of serving the teaching. The meticulous teaching designs of teachers and their necessary guidance to students are the important guarantees that extended reading will bring its functions into full play. Teachers should select and develop extended reading materials according to the need of teaching. The applications and implementation strategies of teaching resources should be made in accordance with the teaching designs and students’ reactions during lessons. It is only in this way that the functions of the teaching resources can be effectively utilized. In actual practice, attention should be put on avoiding the wrong method of centring teaching designs on teaching resources.

Notes

Bibliography
Appendix 3
Cultivation of Creative Thinking in the Leapfrogging Development Experiment on Primary School Language Education

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Abstract Cultivation of creative thinking is the core of cultivating innovative talents as well as the basic requirement of the Leapfrogging Development Experiment on primary school language education. This paper analyzes the cultivation of creative thinking in the junior and middle primary school grades’ language education. Integrating this analysis with the teaching tasks of pinyin lessons, character recognition lessons and reading lessons, this paper also sets out the specific teaching strategies and the supportive environment for the cultivation of creative thinking at this teaching stage.

Keywords Language education · Creative thinking · Teaching strategies

Cultivating innovative talents is the basic goal of the education reforms and development of countries all over the world. “Innovative talents” (also called “creative talents”) are people with consciousness to make innovations, creative thinking and ability to create innovations, and its core is creative thinking (also called “innovative thinking”) [1]. Then, how can the cultivation of creative thinking be realized in primary school language education? The authors have joined the innovative experiment on an leapfrogging development approach in language teaching (abbrev. Leapfrogging Development Experiment) since September, 2001. This experiment stresses that development of language ability and cultivation of thinking ability (especially that of creative thinking) should be dynamically integrated in language education since primary one. The following is our years of thoughts and exploration of how creative thinking can be cultivated in the language education of junior and middles primary school grades. We wish that our paper can trigger discussions about the issue and provides a useful reference to related researches and practices.
1. Thoughts bout Cultivating Creative Thinking in Language Education

Having a theoretical guidance guarantees the outcomes. Yet, if the theory itself is not scientific, then the expected outcomes will not be achieved, and it will even work just the opposite way. To realize the cultivation of creative thinking in language education, guidance from a scientific theory and a clear understanding about the relationship between language and thinking are needed.

1. About creative thinking

From the references that we had studied, we find that some theories only take into consideration the agility, flexibility and originality of thinking when discussing the cultivation of creative thinking. Some other scholars even simply believe that cultivating divergent thinking and imagery thinking is cultivating creative thinking. We think that the former viewpoint fails to grasp the nature of the matter while the latter is lopsided. These are caused by a lack of scientific understanding about the concept of creative thinking itself. Thinking is the brain’s generalisation and indirect reflection of the intrinsic properties of objective objects and the patterns of the internal relationship between objects [2]. According to the “Inside and Outside Circulation Model” (DC model) [1] derived from contemporary psychological and neuro-physiology researches, the structure of creative thinking should be formed by six elements, which are divergent thinking, imagery thinking, intuitive thinking, logical thinking, dialectical thinking, and horizontal and vertical thinking. These six elements are not unrelated and isolated, and they are not arranged in a parallel manner without priority. Instead, they are arranged according to specific division of work. They cooperate with each other while exerting their own individual effects. Amongst them, language concept-based logical thinking, property representation-based imagery thinking and relation representation-based intuitive thinking are the three basic forms of human thinking. They form the core or main body of creative thinking. Divergent thinking solves problems related to the direction of thinking. It leads the cognitive subjects’ thinking towards an opposite direction of conventional concepts, theories and methods. Dialectical thinking and horizontal and vertical thinking provide macro guiding philosophy and micro psychological processing strategies. In the process of cultivating creative thinking, the structure of creative thinking should be viewed systemically and comprehensively. Corresponding teaching strategies should be determined based on the specific psychological processing methods of different types of thinking. We believe that these viewpoints are more scientific and can be used as the theoretical foundation and guiding ideology of cultivating creative thinking in primary school language education.

2. About the relationship between language and thinking

Classics of Marxism and Leninism believe that “Language is the material shell of thoughts”. This reveals that language and thinking are naturally inseparable. Based on this viewpoint, the New theory of Children’s Thinking Development points out that [3], the development of language ability (listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities) and that of thinking ability are closely connected. Integrating the trainings of language ability and thinking ability (especially that of creative
thinking) in language education can create the ideal effect of mutually enhancing the developments of both with less efforts. The New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development further points out that [3], the relationship between language and thinking is that of element and system, which are of different levels and have different connotations. This proves that in language education, we should integrate the cultivation of language ability with the training of thinking ability rather than equalizing the two of them or even putting them in confrontation. The methods to cultivate thinking ability should not be used to substitute the cultivation of listening, speaking, reading and writing ability of language. The methods to cultivate these language abilities should also not be used to replace the cultivation of thinking ability (especially that of creative thinking), or else it would be harmful to both language education and the development of thinking ability.

3. The cultivation of creative thinking in primary school language education

As stated, imagery thinking, intuitive thinking and logical thinking are the three basic forms of human thinking and they are the main body of creative thinking. According to Piaget’s stage theory of children’s cognitive development, children below 6 years old only possess representation-based imagery thinking. It is until they are 11 or 12 that they have abstract logical thinking on hypothetical propositions. Traditional language education has been strongly influenced by this view. In the junior and middle primary grades (primary 1–4), usually only visualized teaching is used while cultivation and training in logical thinking are neglected. In senior primary grades (primary 5–6), although the cultivation of logical thinking in language education is put into consideration, it remains within the confines of basic concrete object-based logical thinking and does not dare to touch on advanced abstract logical thinking involving hypothetical propositions, and intuitive thinking is even generally neglected [3]. Contrarily to this, the New Theory of Children’s Thinking Development believes that primary one students possess proficient verbal language ability and their basic thinking quality have been formed. Not only do they have basic representation-based imagery thinking, but they also have basic language concept-based logical thinking. This shows that even in primary one, the cultivation of creative thinking in language education should also take into consideration all the aforementioned six elements of the structure of creative thinking. In particular, the cultivation of imagery thinking and intuitive thinking should not be neglected. For “horizontal and vertical thinking”, which is one of the six elements, its major function is to provide psychological processing strategies to solve very complex problems. (That is, to foster inspirations or insights.) It is more directly related to significant art creations and scientific discoveries, and it would be more comprehensible only with the support of the theory of “thinking complexity”. Thus, this element can be left out for the time being when discussing the cultivation of creative thinking in normal primary and secondary schools students. To conclude, in the language education of junior and middle primary school grades, the cultivation of creative thinking should focus on cultivating imagery thinking, intuitive thinking, logical thinking, divergent thinking and dialectical thinking.
2. Teaching Strategies for the Cultivation of Creative Thinking in Primary School Language Education

1. Strategies for cultivating imagery thinking

Imagery thinking is a kind of psychological processing ability based on the property representations of objects. It uses property representations for numerous psychological processing methods, including decomposition, assembly, abstraction, generalisation, association and imagination (including reconstructed imagination and creative imagination). The DC Model of the Theory of Creative Thinking [1] shows that both association, reconstructed imagination and creative imagination can realize the goal of creation, but there is only difference in the depth of their mental processing. Association and reconstructed imagination are the important parts of random creative thinking, while creative imagination, which satisfies the “reaction activities” of human thinking, is the crucial part of non-random creative thinking (which is usually referred to as “creative thinking”).

The foundation of imagery thinking is observation, association and imagination (including reconstructed imagination and creative imagination). This is because the basic processing materials (property representations) of imagery thinking are gained through perception, which relies on observation and accumulation. The more and more comprehensive the representations gained through observation and accumulation are, the rich and deeper association and imagination become. Association includes 

- **similarity association** (performing association on the representations of objects which have similar natures, functions, structures or appearances),
- **opposite association** (also called “contrastive association”, which refers to performing association on the representations of objects which have sharply distinct natures, functions, structures or appearances) and
- **relativity association** (performing association on the representations of objects which have distinct natures, functions, structures or appearances, but are related logically or semantically in some way).

This reveals that the cultivation of imagery thinking can be realized through cultivating observation, association and imagination. As the teaching tasks of pinyin lessons, character recognition lessons and reading lessons are different, there is also a greater distinction in their specific teaching strategies for training imagery thinking.

The tasks of pinyin teaching are to enable students to master pinyin and writing (of the forms of the pinyin), as well as to use pinyin in character recognition, reading and computer typewriting. The training of thinking ability should be closely linked with these language teaching tasks. Thus, in the pinyin teaching stage, teaching strategies, including composing nursery rhymes with the hanyu pinyin taught in that particular lesson, describing pictures verbally and creating stories based on pictures, can be used. (The contents of the verbal descriptions and stories should also be related to the hanyu pinyin learned in that lesson or in the previous lessons.) For example, when teaching the text $g k h$, with the use of this strategy, some students were able to express the illustrations of the text with the nursery
rhymes “The tadpoles swim near to the waterweeds, k k k.” My brother sits on a chair and drinks some water, h h h. The doves fly happily in the sky, g g g.” Some other students typewrote sentences such as “I see some beautiful doves. They are flying happily in the sky. I also see some lovely tadpoles. They are swimming merrily in the water.” Obviously, these writing activities are beneficial to the cultivation of basic observational skills and imagination.

The tasks of character recognition teaching include recognition (forms), reading (pronunciations), writing (forms) and usage (meanings) of the words of the texts, as well as comprehension of the texts, reading instruction and transfer of character recognition methods. For the teaching tasks about character recognition (including the forms, pronunciation and meanings), we usually use riddle composition to enhance the learning of the forms, pronunciations and meanings of words, and infiltrate the cultivations of observation and imagination into it. Other than that, to train students’ imagination, we also created the activity of using new words to compose stories. For the teaching tasks about the comprehension and reading of the texts, we design activities to train students’ thinking in accordance with the characteristics of the texts. These activities include composing riddles, imitating the texts to write passages, writing an end to a story and composing a new version of a story. For example, in the lessons on the text Vocabulary Acquisition 4 in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, students used their imagination to compose the following passage, The Interesting Episodes of Animals in Summer, by imitating the text.

**The Interesting Episodes of Animals in Summer**

Summer has come. Let me share some interesting episodes of the animals in summer with you!

The cicada is shouting continuously on the trees, as if he is saying, “I’m roasting! I’m roasting!”

The spider says, “It’s going to rain. It’s going to rain. Bros, quickly weave our webs!”

The dragonfly said, “Great! I can come back to the pond for small insects again.”

The bird also needs to learn to fly and searches for food by himself.

The butterflies crawl out from the cocoons and spread their wings, flying in pairs in the flowers.

The fish says, “Great! I can swim more freely.”

Why all the tadpoles have lost their tails? Oh! They have all become little frogs. They are not only busy catching bugs, but are also jumping around while shouting loudly “Wa! Wa! Wa!”

At night, the little gecko is busy eating flying insects on the walls and under the eaves.

The seven-spot ladybird is busy helping the crops to catch the villain aphid!

In summer, many of the animals’ children leave their safe homes and nests, and start making a living away from homes.

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3The hanyu pinyin of “tadpole” is ke dou, thus the students repeated the consonant k at the end of this sentence.

4Same as the above, the hanyu pinyin of “drink” is he.

5Same as the above, the hanyu pinyin of “dove” is ge zi.
This classwork shows us that students have very rich imagination.

The teaching tasks of reading lesson include character recognition, reading instruction and reading comprehension. For the character recognition section of reading lessons, its strategies of cultivating creative thinking is the same as that of the character recognition lessons, and thus will not be repeated here. The strategies of cultivating creative thinking abilities which are related to the processes of reading comprehension should be derived in accordance with the characteristics of the texts. For example, when teaching the text *The Flower Clock* in book 5 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we let students observed a particular natural phenomenon carefully first, and then asked them to design an object (triggering students’ creative imagination) with the scientific knowledge behind that phenomenon; when teaching *Little Rain Drops* in book 1 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we let students carried out association similar to the text (that is, associations about the positive effects of rain such as beneficial to drought and deserts) and opposite to the text (that is, associations about the negative effects of rain, namely, floods) first, and then let them compose the writing *If I am a drop of rain…* based on their imaginations; when teaching *Lan Lan Crosses the Bridge* in book 2, students were asked to design the “Bridge in the Future” in their imaginations; when teaching *The Strange Rocks on Huang Mountain* in book 3, we gave our students some pictures of strange stones, green pines and interesting peaks. Students used their bold imaginations to give poetic names such as “Angel’s Guide” to the sceneries in the pictures. This effectively trained their observational skills, association and imagination. Fairy tales take up a large proportion of the texts in the junior and middle primary school grades. For this type of texts, strategies such as writing a sequel, imitating the writing of the texts and rewriting the fairy tales can be used to cultivate students’ association and imagination. In the lesson on the text *Little Rain Drops*, the strategy of “rewriting” was employed. The following is a student’s rewriting of the text with his bold association and imagination.

If I am a big rain drop, I will go to the lonesome deserts, so that beautiful flowers and grass can also grow there, and it will become an oasis. I want to go to Africa, which is droughty, so that the people, animals, plants and crops there can have enough drinking water, and do not need to search for water everywhere ever again. I also want to go to Beijing, which has a very dry weather, to cleanse the houses, trees and roads there, so that Tian An Men, the Imperial Palace, the Great Wall and the Summer Palace will look more gorgeous. I do not want to go to places where there are floods because if too many of us go, people and seedlings of cereal crops there will be drowned.

2. Strategies for cultivating intuitive thinking

Intuitive thinking is a kind of psychological thinking ability based on relation representations. It is an important component of creative thinking. It should be noted that though intuitive thinking makes swift judgments within a moment, these judgments are not unfounded subjective assumptions. Instead, they are based on rich practical experiences and knowledge, and are judgments about the patterns of internal relationships between objects, which are made through psychological
processing methods such as intuitive perspective, spatial integration and pattern matching. Famous American creativity specialist Parness had once pointed out that human’s creativity is developed in the processes of using knowledge to solve problem, and that there is no creativity without the processes of problem solving. This is most obvious in intuitive thinking. Thus, to cultivate intuitive thinking, we attempt to use the following strategy: First, we give a problem to students and encourage them to think of solutions to it and to estimate the ultimate results. Then, we let students prove their solutions with logical reasoning. For example, when teaching the text Sima Guang in book 2 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we asked our students to think of their own ways to save the child who fell into the water. We also asked them to take into consideration the actual situation at that time, and analyzed whether their methods can save the child safely. Some students proposed “putting a wooden stick on the water vat so that the child can grasp it”. Some other students proposed putting a string down so that the child can grasp it and climb up. There were still some other students who thought that Sima Guang’s method was the most reasonable one because the situation at that time was very urgent and the best way to prevent the child from drowned was to break the vast and let the water out. (This is because if we want to use a stick to save the child, then we must first be able to find a stick of a certain length nearby. If we want to use a string, then we must first be able to get a string of a certain length nearby first. However, if we want to break the vat to let the water out, we can use brick or stone, which can be found everywhere.) This analysis from the students shows us that they are able to grasp the implicit relationship between a brick or a stone and the child being saved (such implicit relationship is the internal relationships of objects which are hard for normal people to discover), and find the best method to solve the problem. This is a type of intuitive thinking ability. (Whereas the relationships between a wooden stick or a string and the child being saved are explicit relationships which normally people are able to find, and thus, intuitive thinking is not needed. Though using these explicit relationships can also solve the problem, the aforementioned prerequisites are required. Yet, given the situation at that time, these prerequisite are normally not fulfilled.) The scenario of the problem the teacher set in this lesson is obviously beneficial to the cultivation of such intuitive thinking ability.

A further example is when teaching A Successful Experiment in book 5 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, we set up an escape experiment for our students first (gave them a scenario and some usable objects); when teaching Edison Saves his Mother, we also employed similar method. Before lecturing the text, we set up some scenarios related to the principle of light reflection, and let students thought of solutions to them; when teaching A Frightened Bird in Book 6, we provided students with a lot of inference situations similar to that of the text and asked them to estimate the results with intuitive thinking. After that, we asked them to perform logical analyses and inferences on the situation, and compared the results of the inferences with that of intuitive thinking.
3. Strategies for cultivating logical thinking

Logical thinking is a kind of psychological processing ability based on language concepts. Its processing methods include using language concepts to perform analyses, integrations, abstractions, generalisations, judgments and inferences. The DC Model based on the Theory of Creative Thinking shows that inspirations or insights are formed through divergent thinking, associations, imaginations or intuitive perspectives. Unlike imagery thinking and intuitive thinking, logical thinking does not form inspirations or insights directly. However, that does not mean that logical thinking can be ignored in the cultivation of creative thinking. This is because both imagery thinking and intuitive thinking need the guidance and control of logical thinking to ultimately reach their goals of creation.

As mentioned, the cultivation of creative thinking can be realized mainly through cultivating observation, association and imagination. Apparently, logical thinking seems to have little relevance to the cultivation of these three abilities. Yet, they indeed depend on the guidance and regulation of logical thinking. For example, in pinyin teaching, to ensure that activities, namely, composing nursery rhymes and writing sentences or stories based on a picture, are effective, teachers will stress that students should hold on to the major characteristics of the pronunciations and forms of the pinyin to compose their writings. When observing a picture, teachers will ask students to focus on the key and major characteristics of the people and scenes in the pictures. They will also remind students to pay attention to the order of observation. In character recognition teaching, the major characteristics of the pronunciations, forms and meanings of the new words should also be grasped when composing stories and riddles with them. The riddles composed for the riddle answering activities must meet a certain requirements while the nursery rhymes should rhyme as much as possible. Logical thinking is indeed involved in grasping the key points and major characteristics, selecting the appropriate materials, arranging the writings and refining the wording in the aforementioned activities, namely, writing sentences based on a picture, using new words to compose stories and imitating or re-writing a fairy tale.

For intuitive thinking, rich practical experience and accumulation of knowledge are needed for it to make swift intuitive judgments, and the accumulation of knowledge is obviously a product of logical thinking. Apart from that, to avoid intuitive judgments from remaining in the level of subjective assumptions, careful logical analyses and inferences are needed for the process of intuitive thinking. It is only in this way that the scientificty and validity of the results of intuitive thinking can be correctly judged or tested.

For activities such as writing reflections and comments which depend mainly on analysis, comparison, judgment and inference, they are already typical processes of logical thinking themselves.

The discussion above shows that training on students’ logical thinking should be conducted throughout the cultivation of creative thinking. The specific methods for this include teachers’ inspiration and question, coaching and guidance on key issues, providing background information for students to perform analyses.
and inferences, appreciations and analyses of the model essays and well-written sentences, using extended reading materials to enrich students’ knowledge and experience, and encouraging students to reflect their results of thinking as much as possible through writings.

4. Strategies for cultivating divergent thinking

The importance of divergent thinking to creative thinking is self-evident. To be able to innovate, divergent thinking must be emphasized. Without divergent thinking (also called difference thinking, reverse thinking and multi-directional thinking in Chinese), creativity will not sprout and blossom. It can even be said that all creation originates from divergent thinking. In the DC Model of the Theory of Creative Thinking [1], divergent thinking is a vital part for both random creation and non-random creation. The strategy to cultivate divergent thinking is very simple. There is only three points to remember: spotting out the differences, reversing the thinking direction and multi-directional radiation. By following these points in the cultivation of divergent thinking, effects can be quickly seen. For example, when teaching the text *The Rain in Autumn* in Book 5 of the textbook by the People’s Education Press, as the autumn described in the text was an optimistic one, to enable students to express their own unique feelings, we let them read different articles about autumn (such as ancient poetry and prose). We encouraged them to experience autumn themselves and try hard to use difference, reverse and multi-directional thinking to compose their writings on “Autumn in My Eyes” from a new angle and perspective. The writings that students produced show that they had different views about autumn. Some students described the sounds, colours and weather of autumn while some wrote about the feelings that autumn gives. Some other students even thought of the different personalities of people from the four seasons. These are obviously the effects of divergent thinking. A further example is when teaching the text “Red Scarves” are *Really Good*, we designed this flow of teaching, “knowledge about birds→Love for birds→Protecting the birds”. In the section about protecting the birds, the extended reading materials we chosen provided both the pros and cons of the issues, so that students could look at it from different angles.

Another effective strategy to cultivate divergent thinking is to encourage students to boldly express their unique thinking, reveal their own style and show their fruits of learning in their own personal ways. For example, in one of the primary three language activity lessons, the teacher asked students to record some of their favourite sounds a week before in a group and use these sounds to create a story. Then, students could search for appropriate pictures and illustrations from the Internet and express their stories in some way. As a result, in the report lesson, there were a variety of presentation methods, like, a group told *The Story of a Orchestra* with both singing and speaking, one group used the script in the textbook to perform *The Athletic Meet of the Forest*, another group read the poem *Listen, the Insects of Autumn are Twittering* with background music, and another group was even more creative, they had a live performance of a sonata *The Pots and Pans in the Kitchen*. 

Appendix 3: Cultivation of Creative Thinking in the Leapfrogging …
5. Strategies for cultivating dialectical thinking

As dialectical thinking provides guiding ideology to problem solving in creative thinking from a philosophical angle, it has an unignorable important effect on the whole creative thinking process. Dialectical thinking is a guarantee to the comprehensiveness, profundity and perspicacity of human cognition. Thus, the cultivation of it should be conducted throughout the processes of cultivating creative thinking. To better cultivate students’ dialectical thinking, the following methods can be used:

(1) Cultivating students’ scientific attitude of respecting the objective facts and valuing practices and researches

For example, when teaching the text *The Bees*, the teacher let students fill in the hypothesis, preparation, processes, results and estimations of Fabre’s experiment first, so that students could experienced and learned to accurately record the data completely like scientists and the serious working attitude of scientists. After that, the teacher led students into the insects’ world and guided them in going into their daily life to observe and discover. The teacher also asked students to raise a hypothesis of their own new experiment by modelling on the text, and to try and test their hypotheses into a group with scientific attitude. Many students read a large amount of extra-curriculum books during the process (including *The Marvels of the Insect World* written respectively by Li Sheng Yuan of China and Fabre of France), and they produced more rigorous experimental study programs and short science essays.

(2) Encouraging students to look at problem from the angle of dialectic

When teaching the text *The Pottery Pot and the Iron Tin* in Book 5, the students asked, “Why would the iron tin disappear with time?” and “Was the disappearance of the iron tin related to his arrogance?” To these questions, the teacher did not haste to answer immediately. Instead, an investigative teaching approach was adopted (students learn mainly through independent investigation and discussion) and students were also encouraged to look at the problem from the angle of dialectic. At the same time, the teacher also provided introductory information about the science knowledge of pottery and iron, as well as articles related to the implications of the text to students through extended reading. As a result, not only did the teacher attained the requirements of the curriculum standards within two periods with high efficiency, but he also enabled students to answer the aforementioned questions satisfactory by themselves—“The iron tin oxidized because it was old. The author grasped the characteristics of the properties of pottery pots and iron tins, gave them the corresponding personalities with personification and composed this fable with humanistic education value.” The students did not understanding the implication of the text superficially, but analyzed the issue from the angle of dialectic, which enabled a better integration of scientificity and humanity.

(3) Helping students to analysis the reasonable and unreasonable factors in divergent thinking

To encourage students to have divergent thinking, many teachers agree with all ideas of the students no matter what. We think that there is nothing wrong in
encouraging students to have divergent thinking. Yet, the teachers need to give appropriate guidance to students’ divergent thinking and help them to spot out the reasonable and unreasonable factors in it. For example, in the lesson of the aforementioned text *Sima Guang*, some students proposed using a wooden stick or a string to save the child. The teacher needed to inspire students that these two methods may work in other situation, but not at that particular moment of the text. This is because to do so, they must be able to get these tools first, and the child who fell into the water must be able to grasp these tools. If a string was to be used, then the one who pull the string must be stronger than the child who fell into the water, and yet, these conditions were unavailable in the scenario of the text.

**4. Using extended reading to enable students to understand the multiplexity and complexity of a matter**

For example, when teaching the text *Clapping* in primary three, in connection with the experience of Ying Zi, who is a disabled person, the teacher asked questions such as “What is the care and love that the disabled need? Do they merely want material support? Or do they need spiritual respect and encouragement—Even as mere as a friendly smile or a handshake with an AIDS victim?” The teacher did not require students to answer them immediately, but let them read a group of articles which covered four aspects, “the psychological world of the disabled”, “the experience of the disabled” (mainly cases of discriminations and abuses), “care and love for the disabled” and “the independent disabled”, so that students could view the issue from different angles. In the latter visit to a welfare house, when the students met a group of mentally challenged children face to face, they did not dodge or discriminate against the children as they were before. Instead, they took the dirty hands of the children at ease and listened to the babbles and gestures of the children with smiles on their faces. After the visit, many students wrote touching passages such as *There is Love on Earth*.

3. **Supporting Teaching Environments for the Cultivation of Creative Thinking in Language Education**

To ensure that the cultivation of creative thinking can be conducted effectively in language education, an appropriate teaching environment is needed. This environment involves the following three aspects:

1. **Extended Reading provides rich knowledge and experience, and accumulation of representations for students**

Parness believes that accumulation of knowledge is needed for cultivating students’ creativity, or else the cultivation will fail. There will be no foundation without accumulation. If students have a narrow horizon, the agility and extend of their thinking will be affected. Thus, the support of extended reading materials is needed for: (1) the accumulation of representation needed by imagery thinking; (2) the accumulation of practical experiences and relationship modes needed in the formation of intuitive judgments and (3) the background information and multidimensional information of both sides of a matter required in the cultivation of logical thinking and dialectical thinking. For writing, which is the actual
manifestation of language ability and thinking ability, a large amount of extended reading is needed. Extended reading provides the foundation for writing and acts as the demonstrations of writing skills on aspects including conception, material selection, layout, overall structure and even phrase selection, sentence formation. (For details, see the cases of extended reading in the lessons on the aforementioned texts such as “Red Scarves” are Really Good, Clapping and The Pottery Pot and the Iron Tin.)

2. The new teacher-directed—student-centred teaching structure provides favourable psychological condition for the cultivation of creative thinking

The famous special-grade teacher Xu Gu once said, “It’s only in soft soil that wisdom sprout.” The famous American psychologist Rogers also pointed out that, “Psychological safety and freedom are the general conditions that foster creative activities.” These reveal that it is only in a free and relaxed psychological condition that creative thinking will sprout and bloom. The new “teacher-directed—student-centred teaching structure”, which fully exerts the leading role of teacher and the principal position of students, provides a firm promise to such condition. This is because it is especially supportive to teaching and learning approaches which foster the creation of the aforementioned favourable psychological condition. These teaching and learning approaches mainly manifest in the following aspects:

① Encouraging students to ask questions and raise doubts, rather than treating textbooks and teachers as all powerful. Encouraging students to thinking differently, in reverse direction and in multi-direction

② Employing developmental evaluation methods, and focusing on encouragement, so that students’ consciousness to make innovations would be triggered and persisted

③ Employing an independent, investigative and collaborative learning approach. This allows students to gain a multi-level and multi-dimensional in-depth understanding of a complex matter quickly through exposing them to a variety of viewpoints in independent learning and collaborative investigations, which is beneficial to the cultivation of divergent thinking and dialectical thinking.

④ Vigorously enhancing students’ independent learning while also emphasizing the exertion of teachers’ leading role. Teachers’ inspirations, guidance and coaching, as well as their behaviours and personal charm are good demonstration for students’ cultivation of logical thinking and dialectical thinking, and they also exert great influence on students’ sentiments, attitudes and values unobtrusively.

3. Modern information technology provides strong technical support to the cultivation of creative thinking

The importance of modern information technology on the cultivation of creative thinking can be seen in the following aspects:
① The Internet provides a large quantity of extended reading materials, which are beneficial to the cultivation of imagery thinking, intuitive thinking, logical thinking and dialectical thinking.

② Independent learning and collaborative learning which rely on Internet resources and software are favourable to the cultivation of divergent thinking and dialectical thinking.

③ Multimedia courseware provide multimedia information such as pictures, videos and sounds, which greatly enrich the accumulation of property representation required by imagery thinking. They also provide a lot of excellent examples related to different types of associations and imagination (especially creative imaginations), which are beneficial to the cultivation of imagery thinking.

④ Multimedia courseware create problem scenarios which are favourable to the cultivation of divergent thinking and intuitive thinking.

To conclude, the firm double-bases training in primary school language education is the soil for innovation. Teachers should continue to exert the reasonable and positive factors in the tradition while abandoning the self-contained and conservative factors. It is only in this way that a firm foundation can be established together with the realization of bold innovation.

Notes

Bibliography
Appendix 4
Samples of Instructional Designs of the Leapfrogging Development Experiment in Primary School

[Sample 1] Instructional Design for Leapfrogging Development Pinyin Lessons
Instruction Design for Teaching Hanyu Pinyin b p m f

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Third lesson of hanyu pinyin on b p m f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
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1. Concepts of Design

Hanyu pinyin is an important tool that assists students in recognising and reading Chinese characters, as well as learning Mandarin. Yet, in the conventional hanyu pinyin teaching stage, it is inevitable that students find the lessons boring and dull, which in turn generates reluctance to learn.

According to The Theory of Language Perception by Professor He Ke Kang, the most sensitive critical period of children’s language perception is before the age of nine. During this critical period, language environment and language perception experiences are required for the semantic perception. If such environment and experience are lacking during this critical period, although the nerve centre of the brain inherently possesses a latent semantic perception function, it will not develop. Thus, we must make the effort of creating a language environment beginning from the hanyu pinyin teaching stage in primary one, and closely follow the idea of language-use centre.

The Language Curriculum Standards states that, in language education, emphasises should be placed on highlighting the principal position of students, changing their learning methods and changing the teacher-centred teaching approach. Thus, classroom instruction should be regarded as the major channel for the cultivation of students’ innovation and practical ability. Each student should be the master of his or her own learning.
Appendix 4: Samples of Instructional Designs of the Leapfrogging …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Analysis of the Characteristics of the Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Some students have learned hanyu pinyin before attending primary school, and thus have a certain knowledge about pinyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students have entered school only for three weeks. They are still unfamiliar with using courseware to conduct independent learning and need the teachers’ guidance in carrying out extended reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students have just started learning the consonants of pinyin, and thus are still unable to perform typewriting exercises. Oral training is the current focus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. The Targets of Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Knowledge and Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mastering the consonants ( b \ p \ m \ f ), and be able to pronounce, recognise and write them correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning three words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gaining knowledge about syllable, and mastering the “Two Syllable Method”, i.e. to correctly pronounce the syllables formed by ( b \ p \ m \ f ) and a vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Learning to pronounce pinyin with tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reading 3 – 5 nursery rhymes related to the text under the guidance of the teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>II. Processes and Methods</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Starting to learn to identify and distinguish objects by comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expanding the accumulation of vocabularies and consolidating the mastery of the consonants ( b \ p \ m \ f ) and the words acquired in the lesson in actual linguistic context through extended reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning to apply the acquired pinyin or phrases and sentences by making verbal descriptions of pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>III. Sentiments, Attitude</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the relevance of learning pinyin to the learning of Mandarin and cultivating initiative and interest to learn and use Mandarin</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Strategies of Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning and applying pinyin by observing pictures and oral training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrating the recognition and reading of pinyin with extended reading dynamically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Teaching Environment and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Environment and resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. This lesson is conducted in a multimedia Internet classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Volume one of the primary one language textbook (published by the People’s Education Press) is used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Making multimedia courseware for this lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Alphabet flash cards are used</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 6. Processes of Learning (The First Period)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Actions</th>
<th>Students’ Learning Activities</th>
<th>Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1) Creating the Scenario, Stimulating Students’ Interest in the Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction: We’ll continue to meet new friends from the Consonant Family, do you want to know who are they?</td>
<td>Students observe the Flash animation and read the nursery rhymes after it</td>
<td>Using the courseware to stimulate students’ interest in learning, and cultivating their observational ability. Allowing students to gain a basic knowledge of the consonants which they are required to learn in this lesson and conducting extended reading by letting them read the nursery rhymes after the animation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Playing Flash courseware</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Naming students to answer: Who are the four friends that we’re going to meet to day?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **(2) Giving Verbal Descriptions to Pictures, Having Total Task Presentation** | | |
| 1. Using slides to show the four pictures of the teaching materials | Students select their favourite picture and give verbal descriptions of it | Training students’ observational ability and language expression ability, as well as embracing the idea of use-centred language. Guiding students to pay attention to daily life knowledge and to the fact that the pronunciation of many characters involves the four consonants learned in this lesson. These activities also act as preparation for students’ memorization of pronunciations and forms, as well as nursery rhyme composition later. |
| 2. Showing b p m f respectively in accordance with the students’ answers | | |

| **(3) Independent Learning, Recognising the Pronunciations and Forms Clearly** | | |
| Instructing students in the use of courseware to perform independent learning, and to recognise and memorize the pronunciations and forms of b p m f | Students launch Pinyin Paradise and use this courseware to perform independent learning | Letting students conduct independent learning with courseware and instructing them on how to conduct independent learning. |
## Appendix 4: Samples of Instructional Designs of the Leapfrogging …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(4) Creating and Reading Nursery Rhymes, Giving Feedbacks for Consolidation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feedbacks: Checking students’ mastery of the pronunciations of <em>b p m f</em> (giving instruction to the important points in pronouncing the consonants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Giving demonstration of composing nursery rhymes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Instructing students in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paying attention to distinguish between <em>b</em> and <em>p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Students read one by one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students memorize the four consonants by composing nursery rhymes by imitating the model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students have exercises on writing the consonants they learned in this lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using movements to further aid the memory of the consonants <em>b</em> and <em>p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Correcting students’ pronunciations in feedbacks and teaching them the correct ways to pronounce the consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultivating students’ creative thinking through teacher’s demonstration of composing nursery rhymes with the pronunciations, forms and uses of consonants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(5) Spelling and Reading Happily, Conducting Extended Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>b p m f</em> want to play hide-and-seek with the children. They quietly hide inside the nursery rhymes. Can you find them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students launch the courseware to conduct extended reading with nursery rhymes and click on the consonants <em>b p m f</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the one hand, this consolidates the pronunciations and forms of the pinyin learned in this lesson. On the other hand, it conducts extended reading again</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(6) Describing Pictures, Practising in Actual Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing some pictures and letting students describe them verbally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students compose nursery rhymes or say something based on the pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating students’ ability to use the acquired pinyin</td>
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</table>

### 7. Assessment and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form 1 (In-class)</th>
<th>Evaluation Items</th>
<th>Evaluation methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to pronounce the phonetic alphabet and syllables learned in this lesson correctly</td>
<td>Self evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to learn independently</td>
<td>Evaluation from groupmates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willing to express opinion</td>
<td>Evaluation from teacher</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form 2 (Outside class)</th>
<th>Evaluation Items</th>
<th>Evaluation methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Searches for characters of these pronunciations in daily life</td>
<td>Self evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses the characters that are found to form a phrase or compose a sentence</td>
<td>Evaluation from groupmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation from teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 8. Flowchart of Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courseware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courseware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising and Reading the consonants individually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing and Reading Nursery Rhymes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courseware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courseware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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**[Sample 2] Instructional Design for Leapfrogging Development Character Recognition Lessons**

**Instructional Design (The Second Period) for Vocabulary Acquisition 7 in Volume 1 of Primary Two Language Textbook (Published by the People’s Education Press)**

**Designer: Liu Hui Yi Guangzhou Dongfeng Road Primary School**

**Analysis of the Teaching Contents**

This lesson is the second period of *Vocabulary Acquisition 7* in Volume 1 of the primary two language textbook published by the People’s Education Press. *Vocabulary Acquisition 7* uses a “clapping song” to describe the free life of animals in nature and to reveal the principle that “human and animals are friends, and protecting the animals is an important task”. This text is lively, vigorous and delightful. It has a strong rhythm, and thus is very suitable for reading. Its form as a “clapping song” is also beneficial to the organization of classroom activities.
The clapping song of this text has ten rhyming and rhythmic stanzas with the same number of characters. With the inspiration and guidance of the teacher, the students will surely be able to gain some insights by clapping and singing the “clapping song”, e.g. that the Earth is the common home of both humans and animals, and that animals and humans are interdependent.

**Design Rationale**

This lesson adopts a 3-in-1 teaching approach, which integrates character recognition, reading and writing, in an Internet environment. The rich Internet resources are used to create the scenario for students. A touching story will be used to guide students into deeper exploration of the theme of the text, to trigger their real feelings and emotions, as well as to provoke their desire to create.

**Teaching Objectives**

1. Able to recognize the following ten characters, “护, 牢, 孔, 雀, 锦, 鹰, 丛, 鹦, 灵, 嬉”6 and to write the following eight characters “丛, 牢, 拍, 护, 保, 鸡, 物, 猫”7
2. Able to read the clapping song fluently and rhythmically and memorize their favourite sentences
3. Able to understand the text correctly and develop the will to love and protect the animals. Form the habit to learn by themselves and willingness to collaborate with others, which will foster the accumulation of language

**Analysis of the Characteristics of the Learners**

Primary two students are not unfamiliar with clapping songs and they may even have similar experiences and knowledge of it outside class. These experiences should be fully utilized in the lessons by integrating them with the contents of teaching and using the teaching resources. Students should be led to take the initiative to learn and accumulate vocabularies as well as to comprehend the themes of the text through language teaching activities, including: Let’s Read, Let’s Think, Let’s Compete and Let’s Speak. These activities should also enable students to start realizing their social responsibility and give guidance to them on correct values, which in turn will trigger their wish to love and protect the animals.

**Selection of Strategies**

Based on the aforementioned targets and characteristics of students, this lesson selects and adopts the following strategies:

**Extend:** That is, to conduct extensive extended reading which closely centre on the teaching materials. Character recognition is carried out in the process of extensive reading, and it is also by knowing a large number of words that reading is possible. Character recognition, reading and writing are 3-in-1.

**Typing:** That is, to carry out typing training earlier and to focus on both typing and writing. Students must be able to write the characters that the curriculum

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6These characters literally mean “protect, prison, hole, bird, brocade, eagle, cluster, oriole, spirit, play” respectively.

7These characters literally mean “cluster, prison, beat, protect, keep, chicken, thing, cat” respectively.
standards require them to learn to write. For characters which the curriculum standards require students to recognize, students only need to be able to type and recognize them. These characters are not to be typed mechanically and in isolation. Instead, they are to be used in writing. That means, typing in a linguistic context.

**Leave:** Encouraging students to leave posts on the message board, so as to train their writing skills. Students should be encouraged to express themselves and be allowed to write voluntarily and willingly. To encourage students to express their own feelings, teachers should try to stimulate and induce them rather than sticking to a single method. Even if students have only composed a fragment, or one or two sentences, teachers should give them timely encouragement if the compositions display the typical characteristics of children’s interests and are innovative. This will give students a sense of achievement.

**Passages:** During the lessons, except for some difficult characters and phrases, too much time should not normally be spent on giving a careful examination of characters and phrases. Focus should be placed on the passages of the articles, and emphasize an overall perception of language and understanding of the linguistic context as a whole. Teachers should encourage students to guess and perceive the meanings of the words in an article, particularly when reading the extended reading materials.

**Think:** While cultivating students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, efforts should also be made to cultivate their thinking abilities, in particular, that of creative thinking. Thus, when teaching, the teacher should guide students to carry out divergent thinking and in-depth thinking. Association, imagination and diversity of thinking should be encouraged.

**Preparation of Resources**

1. PowerPoint: Related characters and phrases, pictures and videos
2. Internet resources: Extended reading materials and BBS.

**Teaching Procedure**

**Section 1: Revision and Consolidation (3 min)**

1. PowerPoint is used to display the following phrases one by one in order to deepen students’ knowledge and understanding of them (保护, 牢记, 孔雀, 麻雀, 锦鸡, 雄鹰, 鸟群, 百灵, 嬉戏, 球拍, 植物, 熊猫, 爱护, 猫头鹰, 机灵, 嬉笑, 野生动物, 环境保护)

2. Introductory words of the teacher: In the last lesson, we’ve learned the words in *Vocabulary Acquisition 7* and read this interesting clapping song. Do you still remember these words? (Students read the words one by one) (Fig. A.1)

Revises the key phrases and deepen students’ knowledge and understanding of the phrases through reading the text

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These phrases literally mean “protect, firmly remember, peacock, sparrow, golden pheasant, eagle, bush, oriole, lark, playing, racket, plant, panda, cherish, owl, clever, laughing and playing, wild animals, environmental protection” respectively.
Section 2: Understanding the Text (15 min)

1. Students should understand the text while reading it, and pay attention to the rhythm.
   Introductory words of the teacher: You read really well. Let’s read the text once. When you read, remember the phrases or sentences that you don’t understand so that you can ask me or your classmates afterwards.

2. Guiding students to raise doubts: Do you experience any difficulty when reading the text?

   Reads the sentence first before asking questions. Triggering students to think actively and deepening their understandings of the text

3. Discussion in groups of four: Asks students to read the sentences first and ask their classmates things that they do not understand.

   Collaborative learning in groups. Students interact with each other, learn from each other, investigate together and help each other

4. Presentations by students: What have you learned after discussion and exchange? The teacher displays appropriate pictures to aid students’ understanding of the key points and difficult points (Figs. A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6 and A.7)
Fig. A.2  Peacocks

Fig. A.3  Eagle

Fig. A.4  Wild geese
The Teacher exerts his leading role by displaying the relevant pictures and videos and answering students’ questions.

Section 3: Break (2 min)
Neck exercise.

Section 4: Extended Reading (10 min)
1. Introductory words of the teacher: I like the ninth sentence of the clapping song. Who will read with me? (Stand up and read)

\[
\text{Write on the blackboard:} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{Friends} \\
\text{Human} \quad \text{--- Animals}
\end{array}
\]

Brings in the main point of the text and explains the relationship between human and animals.

2. However, I met a little student recently and he told me that humans and animals are not friends. Do you want to know why? Let’s read the article, *The Crying Little Fish*, by this student.

The teacher reads the extended reading material, *The Crying Little Fish*, affectionately and triggers students to think.

3. Introductory words of the teacher: According to the observation of the scientists, the animal species on Earth are now decreasing and even disappearing at an alarming rate. The speed of species extinction is ten million times quicker than that of species formation.

Extinct species never reappear. With a large decrease in animal species, humans are losing their most precious biological resource and the biosphere that they rely on. The situation is so bad that it is threatening the survival of humans and the development of society.

Let’s imagine in future, when a child asks, “Mommy, what is an owl?” The mother can only show him a picture. When a child asks, “Teacher, what is a pangolin?” The teacher can only give him a specimen. They will never be able to see some animals that are now in existence, just as we can never see a dinosaur.

The teacher raises a hypothetical question to let students be aware of the seriousness of the problem and to trigger their thirst for knowledge.
4. There are several stories about animals and the natural environment in “Classroom Forum”. Would you like to take a look at them? After reading them, you can express your opinions by replying in your post.

Students study the other extended reading materials by themselves. They are encouraged to post their reflections on the message board

Section 5: Typewriting Exercise (9 min)
After reading the stories, do you have any reflection? Today’s typewriting exercise is posted in “You Say, I Say” in the Classroom Forum.

1. Do you know any interesting story about humans and animals? Please write a short story by modelling it on The Crying Little Fish.
2. Can you find any example of destroying the ecological environment or hurting the animals around you? How do you feel about it? What do you think we primary school students should do?

Students select one from the two topics above for the typewriting exercise

Section 6: Conclusion (1 min)
The Earth is the common home for humans and animals. We can live joyfully and happily in our home only if all of us care for the animals, protect the environment and make friends with animals. Let us read the text and clap our hands once again with our love for the animals.

Attached are the extended reading materials for this lesson:

The Crying Little Fish
One day, when I was walking along a river near my home, I heard someone sobbing. “Who’s crying so sadly?” I asked curiously.

“It’s me, the fish!” A lovely little fish surfaced, wiping his tears and looking very sad.

I asked curiously, “You live merrily everyday. What are you crying for?”

The little fish cried and sighed, “People’s lives become better these years, but they don’t pay attention to preserve the water resources. They pour their rubbish here and throw plastic bags into this river…It’s stinking here. When summer comes, groups of flies gather here and it’s very dirty. The river water’s seriously polluted and my friends have died in groups one after the other. In the good old days, the water here was as green as a flawless jade. I swam freely in the water with a carefree mind. But, now…” The little fish choked with sobs. Seeing this, I sighed and became heavy-hearted.

When I was home, I quickly got a wooden board and wrote nine big words, “The little fish is crying. Can’t you hear him?” Then, I put it by the riverside.
I hope that in the coming spring, I will not hear the cry of the little fish, but his happy laughter.

**The Monkey Saves People’s Lives**

One day, when a highlander was gathering herbs in the forest, there was suddenly a bang. A black ball fell from the tree. The highlander was scared to death and was about to run away. Suddenly, the black thing stretched out a hand and pulled his leg. The highlander looked down. Oh, a Francois’ leaf monkey, about 2 years old, was looking at him sadly and giving a mournful wail. Its left hand was bleeding.

Without a second thought, the highlander held the leaf monkey in his arms and hurried back home. He helped the monkey to clean its wound and dressed the wound with herbs. The leaf monkey did not shout or move. After dressing its wound, the highlander tied a string on the monkey and let it move and rest in the house.

After a week, the monkey was healed. The highlander untied the string, but the monkey was unwilling to leave. It hung around the house every day, and even helped the highlander to work.

In the morning, the leaf monkey went to the farm of the highlander. If the wild boars, rhesus monkeys or hedgehogs came to steal the crops, then the monkey would dash forward and shout to scare them off. If they did not respond to its shout, then the monkey would shake the branches violently. Under normal circumstances, this trick is very effective. Only the rhesus monkeys were not afraid of this and would continue to steal the corns. In this case, the monkey would rush to them angrily, aimed its long black tail at the backs of the rhesus monkeys and hit forcefully until they ran away.

In this way, the monkey lived in the highlander’s home for a month, and then one morning, it left quietly.

One day, at three o’ clock in the morning, all the villagers in the highlander’s village were sleeping. Suddenly, a fierce knock at the door and a horrifying shout woke the highlander. The leaf monkey was back! When the highlander was about to hug it, the monkey departed from its normal behaviour. It shouted anxiously and pointed at the mountain ridge behind. The highlander turned and looked. Oh, no, the big mountain was collapsing. The giant rocks on the mountain were rolling down. The leaf monkey stretched his long arm and forcefully pulled the highlander to run with it.

The highlander finally understood. He ran quickly back home to wake his family members and all of them ran outside. They knocked at all the other villagers’ doors. Just as the five households, amounting to more than twenty members, of the village had run outside their houses, the huge rocks rolled down directly toward their village.

Many villagers cried. What a narrow escape! If it is not for the leaf monkey, we would all be dead.
A Story about Water
Eleven years ago, I was a soldier in the Gobi Desert and the events recounted in the following story about water occurred.

It was a place with a serious lack of water. For some months every year, the drinking water for humans and domestic animals had to be transported by watercarts from far away places. Everyone could only get two and a half litres of water each day (the amount of a large bottle of Coca Cola). Many locals tried to stop the watercarts midways, but even if they succeeded, they could only get half a small basin of water. As time passed, even the domestic animals would stop the watercarts. When there was more water, the soldier who drove the watercart would give it a small basin of water.

One day, when I was on duty and was on the way back after getting water, an old cow blocked my way. I honked the horn repeatedly, but the cow just did not move. So, I could only get off the watercart to drive it away. However, the old cow just stared at the watercart and did not move. At that time, water was in short supply and there was a regulation that we must first guarantee that humans had water. I became anxious and hit the cow forcefully with a belt. The old cow remained unshaken. It let the belt hit its body and did not move. After a while, I suddenly found that the old cow was crying! My hands froze, and finally, I gave in. I went back to the watercart and got a basin of water, “Okay, I let you drink it!” Yet, when I put the water in front of the old cow, it only sniffed it once. Then, it cried into the air. Hearing the cry, a calf ran out from the side of the road and drank the water happily. The old cow watched contentedly by the side and sometimes licked the calf. The calf finished the water very quickly. After that, the old cow left the road slowly and ran away with the calf.

Now, no matter whether it is the roaring river water, or the ticking rain drops, or the rushing tap water, it will make me think of the old cow in the Gobi Desert. I hate those people who do not turn off the tap when brushing their teeth. Nature seems to favour us who live in the wet zones. I always want to tell them: water is a precious gift from Mother Earth. It is a not good that you brought for some dollars a ton.

The Subtropical Rainforest of Xishuangbanna
The subtropical rainforest of Xishuangbanna is the habitat of a lot of wild animals, and many of them are rare or even endangered species of the world. It is a real “Kingdom of animals”. In the forest, there are 20 species of first class national protected animals, including, red slender lorises, Assam macaques, pig-tailed macaques, Phayre's leaf monkeys, northern white-cheeked gibbons, bearcats, clouded leopards, snow leopards, tigers, Asian elephants, lesser mouse-deer, gaurs, black storks, Sarus cranes, peacock-pheasants, green peafowl, Hume’s pheasants, monitor lizards and pythons, and 109 species of second class national protected animals. It has so many precious and rare animals not only because of its climate, but also mainly because the Dai people who live here love the forest and the water sources. They pay attention to protect the animals and have been living with harmony with the animals for generations.
The Dai people realize from their daily life experiences that human cannot do without animals and that human also depend on the protection of animals. For example, if there is no centipede to bite snakes, there will be too many snakes and human will be harmed. And, chickens eat centipedes. If there is no chicken, there will be too many centipedes and human will also be harmed. And then, snakes also eat chickens and eggs. If any of these three animals extinct, the balance and mutually restriction will be lost and human will be harmed. Thus, the Dai people pay much attention to protecting the animals and have learned to handle the relationship between human and animals properly.

Elephants are human’s friend. Yet, sometimes, wild elephants will go into the stockaded villages and destroy the crops; and leopards and tigers will also go into the villages to hurt human and domestic animals from time to time. Thus, the Dai people plant fields of banana trees and bamboos on the slope near their villages. The wild elephants often come to eat the bananas and bamboos. The leopards and tigers are afraid of the elephants, so they dare not to come near to the villages. As the wild elephants are such a clever and human-friendly giant with enormous strength, the Dai people had learned to domesticate them a long time ago. The tamed elephants are used as transportation, as well as for opening up wastelands and pulling timbers.

The Miserable Black Bears

Once I visited a bear farming field in another place.

Bear is one of the second class national protected animals. Initially, I thought that bear farming fields should be built in spacious fields or small hills, and were surrounded by wire nettings or stonewalls or something like that to separate the fields from the outside. Though the bears’ sphere of activities would not be very large, but at least they could move at their will in a certain area. Yet, the field manager brought us to a row of short houses.

After we entered, I saw that each bear was held inside a square cage made from wires that were as thick as a thumb. The cages were not big and were hanging half a metre from the ground. The cages were only big enough for the bear to turn their bodies inside.

Looking at the 20-odd black bear cages spread horizontally, I asked, “Why do you keep bears?” The field manager replied, “For their gallbladders! Do you know how useful bears’ gallbladders are? They are good for the heart and eyes, and can relieve internal heat. They can also prevent and heal cancers, especially cancer of the esophagus and carcinoma of the rectum.” However, the gallbladders are inside the bears’ abdominal cavities. How can they get the gallbladders? They kill the bears?

The field managers pointed at a device that the workers installed on the bears’ bellies and said, “We use a tube to suck the bile out and collected them at a particular time.”

What? Inserting a tube through the belly into the abdominal cavity and into the gallbladder, and the bears were still alive? I did not only break out in a sweat, but was also covering my belly unconsciously. It seemed that even my heart was aching.
If we inserted a tube in a human’s gallbladder to let the greenish blue bile flowed out continuously, and still asked that man to live as usual, I bet that was definitely impossible!

I still could not calm down after leaving the bear farming field for a long time. If one day, an animal which has higher intelligence than human suddenly appeared on Earth or on the other planet, and they treated us in the same way, how would we feel? If only we human were left on the Earth, wouldn’t we feel lonely?

**[Sample 3] Instructional Design for Leapfrogging Development Reading Lessons for Junior Primary School Grades**

**Instructional Design for *The Story of Trains* (The Second Period)**
Guangzhou Liwan Lu Di Xi Primary School Qu Qian Yan

**Analysis of the Teaching Contents**
This text is chapter thirty three of Book 2 of the primary school language textbook published by the People’s Education Press. It is a text that gives students some common knowledge about different types of trains, including steam locomotives, diesel locomotives, electric locomotives and maglev trains. It also talks about the achievements of our country in railway construction, such as increasing the speed of trains and constructing the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. It reveals the speedy advancement of our country’s railway construction, which aims at triggering students’ love and interest in learning science. However, the descriptions offer by the text is relatively simple and cannot satisfy students’ demand to have a deeper investigation. Thus, Internet extended reading resources are needed to enhance students’ in-depth understanding of the text and the extension of knowledge.

**Teaching Objectives**

I. **Knowledge and Skills**
1. Able to read the text fluently and correctly
2. Gaining a better understanding of the trains described in the text and their characteristics from information on the Internet
3. Able to understand the extended reading materials in the website “Information City”
4. Able to model on the model essays in the “Information City” to finish simple sentence construction exercise on the Internet

II. **Processes and Methods**
1. Cultivating students’ reading ability
2. Cultivating students’ ability to carry out independent investigation with Internet resources
3. Cultivating students’ abilities to use and type with computers
4. Cultivating students’ imagination
III. Sentiments and Attitudes

1. Triggering students’ interest in learning more about trains
2. Triggering students’ love and interest in learning science
3. Allowing students to realize the swift advancement of our country’s technology and gain a sense of pride
4. Cultivating students’ willingness to compose online

Key Points of Teaching

1. Using Internet resources to aid students’ understanding of the text
2. Triggering students’ love of science

Difficult Points of Teaching

1. Understanding the characteristics of the four types of trains
2. Conducting online composition exercise

Analysis of the Characteristics of the Learners

Our class is a web-based experimental class. Students are familiar with the basic operations of computers and are able to surf the net. Most students have basically formed a habit to learn by themselves through the Internet and are willing to carry out online writing exercises. Many of the students are active and like to express themselves. Their thinking are relatively active and they like to learn through investigation. However, they are not very good at expressing themselves with Mandarin. They speak with broken sentences and have poor coherence.

Selection of Strategies

1. Using Flash games to revise words and trigger students’ interest in learning, and then train their ability to form phrases by asking them to form phrases verbally
2. Using extended reading materials to let students explore on the Internet freely, which allows them to have an intuitive and personal understanding of the text
3. Using a game “Train Guessing” to make learning interesting and concentrate students’ attention
4. Conducting written expression in an Internet environment, which integrates the training in writing with the training in creative thinking. This fosters students’ accelerated development in both language ability and thinking ability

Organization of Teaching

Mainly adopting an independent investigation method with appropriate group games.

Preparation of Resources

Creating extended reading materials which embrace the teaching concepts of the “accelerated development” and present them in the form of web pages. This serves to fulfill the needs of independent investigative learning and the requirements to deepen and broaden the teaching targets.
Teaching Procedure

I. Stimulating Students’ Interest in the Introduction, Revising the Words

1. Yesterday, we’ve made friend with the new words of chapter 33. They’re now arriving on the train, let’s greet them! (Playing the courseware) The words are: 弄, 速, 断, 创, 修, 名

2. Forming phrases: Using “修” and “名” to form phrases respectively (Naming students to form phrases first, and then let students form phrases with their neighbours)

II. Creating the Scenarios, First Reading of the Text

1. Introductory words: Apart from the new words, we’ve also learned the first and second paragraphs of the text. Xiao Ming asked his father, “What does the train rely on to move?”

2. Does Xiao Ming’s father give him the answer right away? Let’s us look at the books and find the answer ourselves like Xiao Ming! (Displaying the courseware) Guides students to think of the following questions while reading the third paragraph:
   (1) What does to trains rely on to move?
   (2) What type of train does this paragraph describe?

3. Presentations by the students. (Writing their answers on the blackboard)

III. Using the Internet Resources, Independent Investigation

1. Students read the third paragraph of the text first and then browse the Internet resources. Asking students to introduce their favourite train after reading the text and browsing the web pages

2. Students carry out independent online learning with the teacher’s supervision

IV. Interacting through Game, Exchanging through Presentations

1. Giving introductory words.

2. Introducing the game “Train Guessing”.

Presentations and exchange: Naming students to answer which train it is and combining the information in the text and on the Internet to introduce different types of trains and conclude their characteristics together with the students.

(Playing the courseware) Writing on the blackboard.

   (1) Electric locomotives.
   (2) Steam locomotives.

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These characters literally mean “make, speed, broken, create, repair, name” respectively.
(3) Diesel locomotives.
(4) Maglev trains.

3. Instructing students to read the third paragraph.
4. A brief summary: In future, we can consult Dr. Computer for more questions and collect more information from the Internet.

V. **Studying the Text, Comprehending while Reading**

1. Introductory words: How are our country’s trains developing now?
2. Students study the fourth and fifth paragraphs by themselves on the Internet with the questions.
3. Presentations by students:
   (1) Our country’s trains become quicker.
   *Understanding of the phrase “夕发朝至” [literally means “starting a journey in the evening and arriving in the morning”]*
   (2) Our country had constructed the world’s highest attitude railway, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway.
   *Understanding of the phrase “创举” [literally means “pioneering undertaking”]*
4. Instructing students to read the fourth and fifth paragraphs
5. Giving guidance to students about reading the sixth paragraph: What does Xiao Ming dream of tonight?
6. Reading the sixth paragraph together with the students.

VI. **Reading Online, Broadening and Extending**

1. Introductory words: Do you want to know what Xiao Ming’s new train looks like? Let’s look at it in “Information City”!
2. Students read the online extended reading materials freely by themselves
3. Commenting a particular model essay in the extended reading materials.
   A brief summary: Describing the new train from its name and characteristics.
   (Writing on the blackboard)

VII. **Online Composition, Practical Training**

1. Class, can you describe your own imagined new train like the model essay? What is the name of your train? What characteristic does it have?
2. Naming students to answer the questions.
3. Triggering students’ interest in writing and let them describe their imagined new trains in writings.
4. Students compose their writings with computers with the teacher’s supervision.
5. Commenting a particular online writing exercise (Comments from students and comments from teacher).

*Assessment points: The fluency of the sentences and the characteristics of the train.*
VIII. Giving a Conclusion, Deepening the Theme

You write really well and you’ve good imagination! If you learn to learn, pay attention to observe things around you and think seriously, you’d surely become a scientist in future! From today onwards, let us explore, discover and create science together!

[Sample 4] Instructional Design for Leapfrogging Development Reading Lessons for Middle and Senior Primary School Grades

Instructional Design for That Green Patch of Boston Ivy
Guangzhou Dongshan Experimental School Huang Wen

Analysis of the Teaching Materials
This text is an intensive reading text of Book 7 of the primary school language textbook published by the People’s Education Press. It is an article written by Xiao Fu Xing in 1992 in memory of Mr. Ye Sheng Tao. It recollects the growth experience in which Mr. Ye Sheng Tao corrected the writing for “me” in 1963 and invited “me” to his home, which “I” benefited much from this experience. This text reveals that Mr. Ye Sheng Tao is meticulous towards “writings”, and amiable and frank towards “people”. He is a model of both writing quality and moral quality.

Teaching Objectives

1. Able to recognize the 13 new words of this text and write seven of them. Able to recognize and read “推荐, 眼帘, 删掉, 规范, 燥热, 融洽, 黄昏, 客厅”\(^{10}\) correctly and to learn the three difficult characters “荐, 翻, 昏”\(^{11}\) with the character recognition methods that they like.
2. Able to read the text correctly, fluently and with emotion and to memorize their own favourite paragraphs or sentences.
3. Able to comment on the key phrases, sentences and paragraphs of the text, and learning the methods to correct writings. Cultivating students’ habit to correct writings seriously and enabling them to realize that one must learn to behave properly before learning to write.
4. Able to understanding the phrases and sentences which have deep meanings in the text by reading the relevant paragraphs or the linguistic context. Able to realize the writing method of “expressing emotions through sceneries”.
5. Able to compare this intensive reading text That Green Patch of Boston Ivy with the text Each has his Merits and Demerits in this teaching unit and the extended reading materials for this text. Able to realize that in one’s growing process, there are a lot of good teachers and friends who give helps and inspirations to one in different ways.

\(^{10}\)These phrases literally mean “recommend, eyelid, delete, specification, dry and hot, harmonious, dusk, living room” respectively.

\(^{11}\)These characters literally mean “to recommend, to turn over, dusk” respectively.
6. Conducting written expression in the online message board. Students should be able to closely integrate the knowledge they gained from the text and reading with their daily life experiences. They should express their feelings and experiences in the form of a letter and with the method of “expressing emotions through sceneries”.

**Key Points and difficult Points of Teaching**

1. Enabling students to understand the phrases and sentences with deep meanings in the text and to learn the writing method of “expressing emotions through sceneries”. (That means expressing one’s emotions through describing the sceneries.)

2. Enabling students to learn the methods to correct writings from the way Mr. Ye corrected the writing *A Portrait*.

3. Enabling students to using the method of comparative reading to realize the helps and inspirations that good teachers and friends give to one in the growing process.

**Teaching Rationale**

1. Through teaching students the method to learn, this lesson guides students to conduct independent investigation. Aided by the modern information technology, the teacher provides students with rich extended reading materials which are relevant to the themes of the text. This enables students to think seriously and have in-depth experiences when studying the text and reading extended reading materials, as well as to conduct written expression. Students’ integrated language ability is improved in the processes of learning and applying language.

2. Selecting *Each has his Merits and Demerits*, which is a text that students are only required to skim through and that is closely related to the content of this text, makes the different sections in the lesson coherent and turns the teaching contents of the teaching unit into an organic whole.

**Analysis of the Characteristics of the Learners**

1. Students in our class possess a certain abilities to acquire vocabularies by themselves and to grasp the key phrases and sentences when commenting on a text. They are currently learning to write and correct writings. They had read other works by Mr. Ye Sheng Tao, such as *The Feet of the Boston Ivy* and *The Scarecrow*, and greatly admire this great author. This is quite useful to their learning of the new words and understanding of the text.

2. Students are able to use the courseware to learn by themselves, read the online reading materials and use the online message board correctly.

3. Students are very interest in carrying out language activities, namely, reading and writing, in an Internet environment.

4. Students have quite some experiences in life, reading and writing. They have relatively strong ability to express themselves.
Preparation of Resources
Vocabulary flash cards, online extended reading materials which are closely relevant to the text, reading report forms.

Arrangement in Different Periods
First Period Giving the introduction with questions and reading the text for the first time; Learning the new words, reading over the text and concluding the major contents; Conducting extended reading on biographies and learning to “correct writing”.

Second Period Further studying the text with collaborative exploration in groups. Commenting on the key phrases and sentences and gaining a basic understanding of the writing method of “expressing emotions through sceneries”. Gaining inspirations of growth through combining the text with the skim-through text and extended reading materials.

Third Period Gaining a detailed understanding of the writing method of “expressing emotions through sceneries” by having extended reading on various articles that use this method, and trying to use this method to compose a letter when conducting the type-writing exercise. The topic of the exercise is: Write a letter to your best friend. Telling him/her the helps and inspirations that you have got in your growing process.

The Teaching Processes of the Second Period
I. Introduction by Means of Revision
Introductory words of the teacher: In the previous lesson, we’ve studied That Green Patch of Boston Ivy, understood its major contents and studied the part when Mr. Ye Sheng Tao corrected the writing for “me”. Can anyone share with us what did you gain from that?

Guiding students to give presentations on two aspects, the methods to correct writings and Mr. Ye Sheng Tao’s “meticulous” working attitude. (Green leaf bookmarks, which have the methods to correct writing written on them, are rewarded to students who have good performance.)

Helping students to recollect the content of the first section (the meticulous working attitude of Mr. Ye Sheng Tao and methods to correct writings) with revision, which is beneficial to the following teaching activities

II. Investigative Learning, Commenting on the Text
i. Recollecting the learning methods in the first section (reading, defining, discussing and commenting)

ii. Collaborative investigation, learning the part on “inviting to be the guest”
1. Showing the outline of independent learning:
   How does the part on “inviting to be the guest” reflect Mr. Ye Sheng Tao’s amiable personality? How did “I” feel? Please study together with the method of “reading, defining, discussing and commenting”.

2. Students start investigation learning in coloration.

3. Presenting and exchanging, commenting on the key phrases and sentences.
   * Which sentences in the text reveal Mr. Ye Sheng Tao’s amiable personality?
   Giving comments on the following sentences according to students’ presentations:
   “I was surprised. A great writer like Mr. Ye Sheng Tao would meet a junior secondary student!”
   “When old Mr. Ye saw me, he shook hand with me just as meeting an adult. I suddenly felt that our distances become much shorter.”
   “We talked harmoniously. It seemed that I was no longer a child, but an adult, an old friend of his. There was seriousness in his friendliness, and expectations in his modesty. My tiny little heart was melted and became unnoticed of the arrival of dusk.”

   Offering guidance to students
   What does “melt” originally refer to?
   (The process in which a solid is heated and become liquid.)
   What does it mean in the text?
   (The author’s psychological change from feeling nervous to relaxed.)
   Have you realized his feeling when reading the text?

Commenting on the key phrases and sentences, so that students can have a good taste of the text, and have a deeper understanding of the text and the feelings of the author.

* The feelings of “me”?
   Showing the two sentences that describe the Boston ivy in the second section in accordance with students’ presentations. Guiding students to read with emotions, and to experience the author’s excitement and happiness.

Gaining an initial experience of using sceneries to express emotions in the commenting and reading processes, which prepares for the breakthrough of the difficult points

iii. Studying the last paragraph
   The incident has passed for many years, but the author still has a vivid memory of the events in that year.
1. Naming students to read the last paragraph.
2. Commenting on the following key phrases and sentences.
   “His words made me feel that I seemed to understand or know vaguely: 
   A writer should be like this and a writer’s works should be composed in 
   this way. The summer when I was fifteen had extraordinary significance.”

* Why does the author say “seemed to understand or know vaguely”?

* Key phrases that students should understand: 堪称楷模 12 (guiding students 
   to understand it through the linguistic context) and 意义非凡 13 (guiding stu-
   dents to understand it through combining it with the introduction of the per-
   sons). (Green leaf bookmarks, which have encouraging words written on 
   them, are rewarded to students who have a correct understanding.)

3. Students read the last paragraph of the text with emotion by themselves.

Deepening understanding of the text through collaborative investigation, 
reading and commenting on phrases as well as reading instruction

III. Returning to the Whole, Giving a Brief Summary of the Writing Methods

1. Do you still have any questions now? (Asking the students, “Why does the 
text use “That Green Patch of Boston Ivy” as its title?”)
2. Showing students the sentences that describe the Boston ivy in the text and 
letting them discuss the questions which are raised in groups of four.
3. Presenting and exchanging with the integration of reading instruction (deep-
ening students’ understandings with reading) .A brief summary: Though That 
Green Patch of Boston Ivy, the author expresses his emotions and gives us a 
deep impression. Students who have got my green leaf bookmarks please 
stand up and read the words that I wrote on it. Let us think: Am I really 
rewarding merely a green leaf bookmark to you today? (Learning the methods 
to correct writings, Mr. Ye Sheng Tao’s sincerity and modesty, as well as his 
meticulous attitude towards learning)

Gaining a further experience of the writing method of “expressing emo-
tions through sceneries” through exchanging ideas, discussions and reading.

Using the green leaf bookmarks to gain a deeper understanding of the text and its 
expression techniques

12This phrase literally means “exemplary”.
13This phrase literally means “extraordinary significance”.
IV. Comparative Analyses

1. It seems that Mr. Ye Sheng Tao’s behaviours and words have given us an unforgettable impression. In the text *Each has his Merits and Demerits*, the great writer Ke Yan helped a primary student Zhang Guo Qiang to solve his confusions in the growing process with letters. Read that text silently and see what we can learn from the replies of the writer. (Analyzing the relevant sentences in the text)

2. Students conduct independent learning first, and then exchange their ideas in groups

V. Extended Reading (Experiencing the inspirations different people gave us in our growing processes) (Fig. A.8)

1. Grouping students into groups of two. Students select the articles that they would like to read and fill in the following form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Sentences that touched me</th>
<th>Inspirations to my growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Visiting Old Jun Qing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Little Reader Again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorky and the Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II A String of Grapes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rain Drops of Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Unforgettable Criticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III A Touching Short Drama</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inspiration of Fishing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Exchanging and presenting

Gaining a deeper understanding and experience on the inspirations of growth through having a comparative analysis with the skim-through text and conducting extended reading

VI. Assignment
In our paths of growth, each of us will meet some good teachers and friends. Let us use the correction methods that we have just learned to correct a piece of our old writings carefully, and send it as a gift to them to express our thanks.

Extra-curriculum extension. This aims at deepening the cognitive goals and affective goals.

Writing on the Blackboard:

26. That Green Patch of Boston Ivy
Correcting writings Meticulous Works Exemplary
Inviting to be the guest Amiable Personality

Notes