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Research on Value-Oriented Guidance Paths of Dialogic Discourse Reading and Thinking Classes in Junior High English from the Perspective of Understanding by Design (UbD): A Case Study of Unit 2 Section A 2d, PEP Grade 8 Book 2

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Abstract: The 2022 curriculum standards emphasize that English teaching should be fundamentally based on discourse and actively implement moral education through the seamless integration of reading and thinking methodologies. However, the current reverse design research within China is predominantly focused on extensive, long-form reading materials, revealing a significant lack of research concerning the value guidance of 2d for specific discourse texts. Furthermore, Understanding by Design (UbD) studies conducted abroad frequently lack stratified value guidance practices that effectively combine local cultural elements with patriotism. Based on the foundational three-stage theory of UbD, this paper takes the specific text "Volunteer Service for the Elderly" found in Unit 2 Section A 2d of the People's Education Edition of Grade 8 as a primary case study. The objective is to construct a comprehensive, integrated teaching path consisting of expected educational goals, hierarchical assessment evidence, and stepwise reading and thinking activities. Consequently, the study builds a robust three-level value escalation chain progressing from text empathy to Chinese respect for the elderly and patriotism, and ultimately reaching a global consensus on a community with a shared future for mankind. Practical application demonstrates that this innovative model effectively breaks through the traditional predicament of emphasizing mere language training over profound value infiltration in dialogue classes. By utilizing pre-education evaluation and stratified reading and thinking tasks, this research provides a highly replicable and practical model for localized junior high school English education within the broader discourse subject.

Keywords: understanding by design; english education; dialogue discourse; reading and thinking; value guidance; moral education

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The new curriculum standards emphasize the development of core literacy in the English subject, with cultural awareness and moral education serving as foundational elements. These standards advocate for the integration of language, thinking, and values through discourse, aiming to create a holistic educational experience. Reverse design (UbD) operates on the principle of "beginning with the end in mind and evaluation first," focusing on the establishment of expected outcomes, the design of assessment evidence, and the planning of teaching activities. This approach facilitates the seamless integration of teaching, learning, and assessment, offering a structured framework for subject-based education that aligns with modern pedagogical goals [1].

Currently, domestic research predominantly concentrates on reading, writing, and large unit teaching, leaving a noticeable gap in the exploration of reverse design applied to discourse texts. Common issues in dialogue teaching include an overemphasis on surface-level language knowledge while neglecting deeper emotional and cultural exploration. Additionally, value guidance often remains overly didactic and disconnected from the text, limiting its effectiveness in fostering meaningful engagement. Although international research on UbD began earlier, there remains a scarcity of empirical lessons tailored to the unique requirements of ideological and political education within the curriculum, as well as the cultivation of stratified values that align with the educational context in China.

To address these gaps, this study focuses on the volunteer pair discourse found in Unit 2 Section A 2d of the People's Education Edition for Grade 8. This discourse inherently incorporates educational themes such as caring for the elderly and engaging in volunteer services, making it a suitable subject for analysis. By utilizing the three stages of reverse design as the central framework, this paper explores the implementation path for hierarchical values within reading and thinking classes. The objective is to bridge existing research gaps and effectively realize the educational goals of the discipline, ensuring that the integration of values, language, and thinking is both comprehensive and impactful [2].

1.2. Review of Studies at Home and Abroad

The reverse design theory emphasizes the principle of prioritizing understanding and evaluation in educational practices. International research has explored several aspects of this approach. One area of focus has been its impact on students' language abilities and motivation, with findings suggesting that this model can enhance oral communication and reduce barriers to language learning. Another area has examined the integration of formative assessment within classroom evaluation systems, highlighting the importance of fostering critical thinking and the ability to transfer knowledge across contexts. Additionally, research has delved into the interplay between discourse and critical thinking instruction, recognizing the significance of engaging students in deep analytical processes through dialogue-based texts [3, 4]. Despite these advancements, international studies exhibit certain limitations. Their educational objectives often align with Western civic literacy frameworks, which lack alignment with localized cultural values such as traditional Chinese heritage, patriotism, and the concept of a shared global community. Furthermore, the majority of these studies target high school or college-level learners, leaving a gap in specialized applications for junior high school contexts, particularly in the domain of short antithetical discourse. Moreover, the integration of value cultivation tends to be superficial, often confined to civic education without a robust connection to English discourse, and lacks a structured, progressive pathway for elevating values.

In China, research on reverse design in English teaching has seen significant growth in recent years. Applied studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in integrating teaching, learning, and assessment within junior high school English courses, including writing, large-unit reading, and read-write integration. However, these studies predominantly focus on extended reading and writing tasks, with limited exploration of short paired texts in specific sections. In the realm of discourse teaching, efforts have been made to analyze discourse and cultivate critical thinking, as well as to enhance listening and speaking interactions. Yet, traditional forward design methods remain prevalent, often overlooking the intrinsic educational value embedded within texts. Regarding value guidance, existing classroom practices face challenges such as fragmented and formalized integration of values. While interdisciplinary approaches have been explored, they have not been extended to dialogue-based reading and thinking classes at the junior high school level [5]. Common issues include a disconnect between value guidance and instructional design, as well as the absence of reverse design principles and comprehensive planning.

Overall, existing research reveals significant gaps. International studies lack a localized perspective that aligns with new curriculum standards emphasizing patriotism and global vision. Additionally, there is an absence of complete reverse design lesson plans tailored for junior high school short discourse reading and thinking classes. Furthermore, no framework has been developed to systematically guide value cultivation through a three-tiered pathway encompassing text empathy, Chinese virtues, and global consensus. To address these deficiencies, this study introduces an innovative localization of reverse design theory by embedding hierarchical value goals into the three-stage design process [6]. It aims to bridge the application gap by utilizing short paired discourse reading and thinking courses as a medium. Moreover, it proposes a structured and actionable three-tiered value guidance implementation pathway, supported by front-end multi-evaluation tools, to ensure observable and measurable outcomes.

1.3. Research Significance

This study integrates the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework with dialogue-based reading and thinking courses, alongside localized value guidance, to establish a comprehensive three-level framework encompassing "individual - family - country - global." By addressing existing gaps in research, this approach contributes to the enrichment of disciplinary education theories. Furthermore, it provides actionable lesson examples that include pre-evaluation mechanisms and structured, step-by-step tasks. These examples aim to mitigate the fragmentation often observed in value integration processes, offering practical paradigms that can be effectively utilized in front-line teaching environments [7].

2. Definition of Core Concepts and Theoretical Basis

2.1. Reverse Design (UbD) Three-Stage Theory

The reverse design model consists of three interconnected stages: identifying the desired outcomes, assessing the evidence, and structuring the learning experience. This approach ensures that instructional activities are purposefully aligned with the intended goals, thereby minimizing the risk of educational misalignment. By systematically evaluating pre-instructional conditions and implementing stepwise activities, the model promotes coherence in teaching practices [8]. To address the limitations observed in prior international research, this study incorporates stratified local value objectives into the expected outcomes. This adaptation aims to achieve a localized theoretical framework that integrates language development, cognitive processes, and value-oriented guidance, fostering a more holistic and contextually relevant teaching methodology.

2.2. Reading and Thinking Lessons on Discourse

The second dialogue in the junior high school English curriculum, as presented in the People's Education Edition, is categorized under the short dialogue section. This section is designed to serve both communicative and humanistic purposes, offering students opportunities to engage in meaningful language use while also exploring deeper cultural and emotional dimensions. The reading and thinking lessons associated with this dialogue follow a structured approach centered on the progression of "reading text - deep thinking - transfer expression." Unlike surface-level listening and speaking exercises, this method emphasizes a more profound engagement with the material [6]. Through close reading, students are encouraged to uncover emotional, cultural, and value-based insights. By employing question chains and collaborative inquiry, the lessons facilitate a transition from basic information extraction to more advanced speculative and reflective expression, thereby fostering critical thinking and value-oriented learning.

2.3. Value Guidance in the English Classroom

English subject value guidance involves the systematic cultivation of students' appropriate values through thematic discourse. This instructional approach is structured into three progressive levels. The initial level focuses on fostering empathy through textual analysis, allowing students to experience the emotional challenges faced by the

elderly and appreciate the altruism inherent in volunteer service. The second level connects these themes to traditional Chinese cultural values, particularly the importance of respecting and caring for the elderly, thereby reinforcing a sense of familial and national responsibility [9]. The final level broadens the perspective to a global context, emphasizing the universal importance of respecting the elderly and fostering an awareness of a shared future for humanity. This integrated approach combines language acquisition, cultural understanding, and moral development into a cohesive educational framework.

3. A Reverse Design of the Overall Framework for the Value Guidance of the Discourse Reading and Thinking Class

This study employs the three stages of Understanding by Design (UbD) as a foundational framework, integrating it with the discourse on respecting the elderly to construct a "three-stage five-layer" value guidance framework. The first stage focuses on establishing hierarchical educational goals, resulting in a unified goal system that encompasses four dimensions [10]. The second stage involves the pre-design of diverse assessment evidence, which includes the creation of three distinct types of evaluation scales tailored to measure progress effectively. The third stage emphasizes the implementation of a structured reading and thinking activity, which progresses through five interconnected steps to gradually advance the value dimension. Additionally, this framework incorporates stratified assignments and a systematic in-class review process, creating a closed-loop mechanism that bridges in-class and out-of-class learning. This integrated approach ensures a comprehensive cultivation of values, fostering deeper engagement and understanding among learners.

4. Reverse Design the Implementation of the Value-Driven Reading and Thinking Lesson in Unit2 Section a 2D under Three Stages

4.1. Phase 1: Anchor Expected Outcomes and Set Value Guidance Goals at Different Levels

A comprehensive four-dimensional goal system is established, aligning with curriculum standards, discourse, and learning conditions. From the perspective of language proficiency, learners are guided to acquire essential phrases and expressions related to voluntary behavior. In terms of thinking quality, emphasis is placed on constructing a logical progression that connects facts, emotions, cultural understanding, and global perspectives. Regarding learning ability, strategies are implemented to enhance cooperative thinking and writing skills. Central to this approach is the establishment of value-oriented goals at varying levels. At the foundational level, the focus is on fostering empathy through text analysis and recognizing the significance of volunteer service. At an intermediate level, the aim is to deepen learners' sense of cultural identity by internalizing traditional virtues, such as respect for elders. At the advanced level, the objective is to cultivate a global perspective, encouraging learners to embrace the concept of a shared future for humanity. By structuring these goals progressively, the integration of language acquisition with value-based education is achieved, ensuring a holistic and meaningful learning experience.

4.2. Phase 2: Pre-Assessment Evidence, Design Value-Oriented Evaluation Criteria

Reverse design adheres to the principle of prioritizing evaluation and establishes observable assessment evidence in advance for the three-tier value goals. This approach ensures that students' understanding of values is tracked throughout the educational process. Initially, basic process evaluations are conducted within the shallow empathy dimension. These evaluations focus on assessing students' ability to extract information from texts and engage in emotional empathy. This is achieved through activities such as organizing voluntary behaviors and responding to oral questions. At the intermediate level, which emphasizes family and national sentiment, expressive writing evaluations are implemented. These evaluations are based on tasks such as creating warm-hearted cards that highlight respect for the elderly. The goal is to examine students' ability to

interpret traditional virtues and cultural connections, particularly the principle of "respecting one's own elders and those of others." At the advanced level, which focuses on fostering a global perspective, speculative presentations are evaluated. This involves group discussions and the creation of declarations that emphasize care on a global scale. These activities test students' understanding and articulation of respect for the elderly in a manner that transcends geographical boundaries, while also exploring the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity. Finally, long-term evaluations, including after-class stratified assignments and practice records, are employed to ensure the sustained impact of the educational initiatives.

4.3. Phase 3: Plan Step-By-Step Reading and Thinking Activities to Promote the Implementation of Value Guidance at Different Levels

An 8-step progressive reading and thinking class is designed based on pre-set goals and assessment evidence. This class adheres to a structured value elevation logic, transitioning sequentially from text analysis to individual reflection, then extending to considerations of home country, and finally broadening to a global perspective. Each activity is meticulously aligned with the three levels of value goals, ensuring comprehensive engagement and intellectual development [11]. The total duration of the class is 45 minutes, allowing sufficient time for meaningful exploration and the gradual implementation of value guidance at different levels.

4.3.1. Step1 Situational Introduction: Laying the Groundwork for the Value Starting Point of Empathy

Short videos featuring both Chinese and foreign volunteers demonstrating respect and care for the elderly can be shown to students [5]. These videos serve as a visual introduction to the concept that "caring for the elderly is a universal behavior." Following the viewing, stratified questions can be posed to encourage students to reflect on and discuss the core message of the videos. Key terms such as "volunteer" and "care for the old" can be written on the blackboard to facilitate initial engagement and value recognition. Assessment can focus on whether students actively capture and articulate the central themes presented in the videos, fostering an early understanding of empathy and social responsibility.

4.3.2. Step2: Vocabulary Preparation Before Reading: Clear Language Barriers

To facilitate text empathy reading, it is essential to read the core phrase and preview the reading task titled "Finding Tom's Volunteer Story." This approach helps in identifying potential language barriers and provides necessary linguistic support, ensuring readers can engage with the material effectively and comprehensively.

4.3.3. Step3 Initial Reading Extract Information: Achieve the First Level of Value Empathy

Play the recording. Students silently read and identify Tom's volunteer service location and three specific actions he performed, then orally report the factual details from the text. This activity is designed to encourage students to organize textual information systematically, ensuring they comprehend the narrative and establish a foundational framework for understanding the emotional challenges faced by the elderly, such as loneliness. By engaging with the material in this structured manner, students can begin to empathize with the experiences described, fostering a deeper connection to the subject matter.

4.3.4. Step4 Read Carefully and Savor the Emotion: Deepen the Value of Text Empathy

Underline the core emotional sentence, "A lot of old people are lonely... We are all going to be old one day," and engage students in a structured exploration of its meaning. This can be achieved through three layers of progressive questioning and group discussions that delve into the causes of loneliness among the elderly and the broader implications of the statement. The objective is to foster empathy by encouraging students to connect deeply with the experiences of older individuals. Through close reading and

reflective dialogue, students achieve an initial level of emotional understanding, while teachers document their insights and expressions as part of the evaluative process. This approach not only enhances comprehension but also cultivates a sense of social responsibility.

4.3.5. Step5 After-Reading Activity 1: Writing Respect Cards to Foster a Sense of Home and Country

Returning to the main sentence, this activity introduces the cultural value of respecting the elderly in Chinese society, encapsulated in the saying, "Respect your own elders and those of others." Students are tasked with writing heartfelt sentences that reflect this virtue. Once completed, their works are displayed on the "Chinese Respect for the Elderly Wall," and selected pieces are read aloud to the class. This approach employs reverse design logic, aligning the activity with middle-level assessment criteria for patriotism. By engaging in this writing task, students not only demonstrate their understanding of the virtue of respecting the elderly but also deepen their connection to cultural values, fostering a transition from personal empathy to a broader sense of cultural identity.

4.3.6. Step6 Reading Activity 2: Global Speculative Signature, Elevating Global Consensus

By examining and comparing the values associated with respect for the elderly across different cultural contexts, students are guided through three levels of critical thinking questions. These questions encourage them to reflect on the universal significance of respecting the elderly and its implications for fostering global understanding [12]. To further emphasize this concept, a symbolic ceremony is proposed, referred to as the Global Care signature activity, where participants collectively engage in reading a text titled "Care Beyond Boundaries." This activity aims to deepen their comprehension of the idea of a community with a shared future for humanity. The culmination of this process involves achieving advanced value-based learning objectives, which are demonstrated through classroom presentations and group discussions, serving as evidence for higher-level assessments of understanding and application.

4.3.7. Step7 Class Review: Sort Out the Complete Chain of Value Thinking

In this step, teachers and students collaboratively revisit the primary themes and logical progression of the class. The sequence begins with Tom's volunteer actions, which highlight the importance of addressing the emotional needs of the elderly, particularly their experiences of loneliness. This discussion transitions into an exploration of the traditional Chinese virtue of respecting the elderly, which is then connected to the broader, globally recognized value of showing respect and care for older generations [13]. This comprehensive review reinforces the educational objectives by creating a cohesive framework that integrates individual actions, cultural values, and universal principles, thereby solidifying a multi-layered understanding of the topic.

4.3.8. Step8 Stratified Assignment: Connecting In-Class and Out-Of-Class Value Cultivation

At the foundational level, students are encouraged to recite dialogues to reinforce their language skills, ensuring a solid grasp of basic communication. For advanced learners, the focus shifts to refining and crafting heartwarming sentences, particularly aimed at fostering meaningful interactions with the elderly. As an extension activity, learners are tasked with engaging in offline practices that emphasize respect for the elderly, thereby bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-life application. This stratified approach not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also instills core values, promoting a holistic educational experience.

5. An Optimized Path for Value Guidance in Junior High School English Dialogue Reading and Thinking Classes from the Perspective of Reverse Design

This study, grounded in lesson practice and the principles of reverse design, outlines three optimized pathways for enhancing discourse reading and thinking classes in junior high school English education. Firstly, during the goal-setting phase, it is essential to refine stratified value objectives and construct a differentiated framework rooted in the native language. By incorporating stratified design concepts, educators can establish gradient requirements tailored to diverse contexts. This approach should proactively integrate Chinese virtues and globally relevant sentence patterns, addressing gaps in local cultural language support while ensuring effective language output for all students. Secondly, in the evaluation design phase, the focus should be on diversifying process evaluation methods to accommodate varying student needs, including those who are less vocal in class. Introducing low-pressure evaluation techniques, such as peer assessments and opportunities for independent reflection, can foster a more inclusive environment. Additionally, simple classroom observation tools should be implemented to systematically record student performance across different proficiency levels, thereby enhancing the practicality of evaluating large classes [8]. Lastly, during the teaching activity phase, it is crucial to establish connections between classroom learning and external environments. This can be achieved by optimizing stratified extension assignments, incorporating detailed practice records, and showcasing unit achievements. Such measures extend the value guidance of individual lessons to encompass entire units, ultimately fostering a cohesive and integrated long-term educational system that bridges classroom, family, and societal contexts.

6. Research Conclusions and Teaching Implications

6.1. Research Conclusions

Although the UbD framework developed in international contexts presents a relatively coherent logical structure, it does not yet provide a sufficiently localized and stratified value-education system that fully matches the needs of China's compulsory education stage. At the same time, existing domestic exploration has not formed a complete and operational model for integrating UbD with a three-tier value framework in classroom practice. Using the eighth-grade unit on dialogues with older adults as a representative case, this study verified the practical effectiveness of a localized backward design framework. Through a progressive activity chain moving from text-based empathy to civic responsibility and then to broader shared human understanding, together with multidimensional pre-assessment and aligned evaluation tasks, the teaching design promoted the coordinated development of language competence, higher-order thinking, and value formation. In this way, it effectively addressed the common problem of fragmented value guidance in discourse teaching. Compared with more conventional teaching approaches and less systematically adapted local models, this framework better responds to the moral-education orientation emphasized in the new curriculum standards and offers a clearer, more transferable model for comparable discourse-based instruction.

6.2. Teaching Implications

Junior high school English dialogue reading and thinking classes should move beyond the narrow transmission of language knowledge and instead adopt an evaluation-oriented instructional logic that clarifies expected learning outcomes in advance. On this basis, teachers should refine layered value objectives according to local educational contexts, student developmental characteristics, and the specific features of dialogue texts, so that classroom practice can be guided by clear and operable assessment criteria rather than by vague expectations. Such value guidance should follow a gradual and text-based progression, enabling students to advance from emotional understanding to cultural awareness and then to broader forms of shared human understanding, while avoiding superficial or formulaic moral instruction. Although dialogue texts are often brief, they contain considerable educational potential. Abstract values can therefore be translated into concrete, observable, and actionable learning experiences through expressive tasks such as card writing, reflective responses, role-based interaction, and topic-based

signature activities. At the same time, the integration of teaching, learning, and assessment should be maintained throughout the instructional process. Value cognition should be embedded in routine classroom evaluation, and effective channels linking in-class participation with out-of-class extension should be established, so that subject-based moral cultivation can become continuous, authentic, and developmentally meaningful.

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