

An Analysis of the Differences in Content Organization and Method Guidance Framework of the Writing Unit in the New and Old Editions of the Unified Textbook for Grade 3, Volume 1, and Teaching Practice

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Abstract: This paper compares the composition units in the old and new editions of the third-grade primary Chinese textbook. It analyzes how the new edition adjusts teaching difficulty, sequence, and column design in alignment with the 2022 curriculum standards. The old version focused on basic skills, with fragmented methods and summative assessment, while the new version emphasizes "observation and expression" with gradient objectives, reading-writing integration, scaffolding methods, and process-oriented evaluation. The study also reflects on limitations of the old textbook and proposes teaching strategies such as backward design and task-driven learning to help students develop writing skills and interest, while offering insights for future textbook development.

Keywords: Unified Textbooks; Composition; Teaching-Learning-Assessment Integration

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

With the deepening of educational reform, primary school Chinese composition teaching has become crucial for cultivating students' writing and thinking abilities. As a key part of the Chinese curriculum, composition is vital to developing students' comprehensive literacy: it integrates learned knowledge with practice, hones their language expression and text organization skills, and enhances thinking logic and creativity. Continuous writing practice, reflection and revision help students express thoughts clearly, fostering independent thinking habits, confidence and self-expression abilities.

However, current composition teaching suffers from disjointed unit and class-hour objectives and neglects core competency development in real scenarios. This framework leads to students' weak writing foundations and poor ability to observe daily life elements. The Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) offers systematic guidance in its "Teaching Suggestions" section, emphasizing core competency orientation and the construction of a "teaching-learning-assessment integration" system via situational creation, task integration and process guidance, thus charting a course for composition teaching exploration.

1.2. Connotation of Framework Construction of the Old and New Versions of Textbooks

The composition teaching framework is a comprehensive system consisting of objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. It presents distinctly different connotations in the old and new versions of the Grade 3 primary school Chinese textbooks.

1.2.1. Objective Dimension

The composition objectives of the old version of the Grade 3 textbook focused more on basic requirements such as "coherent sentences and complete content." For example, students were required to roughly write clearly the cause, process, and result of an event, with relatively vague guidance on writing methods.

The Grade 3 unified textbook's composition objectives, closely aligned with the Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), focus on observation and expression core competencies and feature a clear gradient. Volume 1 emphasizes learning to observe and clearly write the main characteristics of things (e.g., describing a familiar person's appearance and traits). Volume 2 advances to writing observed or imagined content more specifically and vividly. These objectives also integrate core competency cultivation, emphasizing the development of students' language application, thinking abilities, and aesthetic taste.

1.2.2 Content Dimension

The composition content of the old version of the Grade 3 textbook had relatively single themes, mostly focusing on conventional topics such as "campus life" and "family anecdotes," with low correlation with reading texts. This easily led to students facing difficulties such as "lack of writing materials" or "uniform and monotonous writing."

The Grade 3 unified textbook's composition content integrates "life relevance" and "language characteristics". On one hand, themes like The Primary School Under the Big Green Tree and The Sounds of Nature align with students' life experiences and interests, ensuring they have material to write about. On the other hand, content is closely linked to unit reading texts, forming a "reading-writing integration" system. For instance, after-class exercises for The Rain in Autumn (Grade 3, Volume 1) encourage unrestricted imagination: "Imagine: To whom else will the autumn rain give colors? Write a similar paragraph." The unit's diary-writing task also allows students to draw on the text's "total-subordinate structure" and "sensory description" methods, making compositions both life-warm and linguistically grounded.

1.2.3. Method Dimension

The composition teaching methods of the old version of the Grade 3 textbook mainly focused on "teacher explanation + student imitation of model essays." The teaching of methods was relatively scattered and lacked systematic guidance, making it difficult for students to form stable writing strategies.

The Grade 3 unified textbook's composition teaching methods feature "scaffolding" and "practicality". Teachers use "Communication Platform" and "First Attempt" modules to build method scaffolds for students—for instance, the Such Imagination Is Really Interesting unit (Grade 3, Volume 2) teaches imagination expansion via "Communication Platform", followed by short writing practice in "First Attempt". It also emphasizes "process-oriented guidance", leading students through the "conception—drafting—revision—sharing" cycle. Take the Keeping a Diary unit (Grade 3, Volume 1): teachers guide students to master diary formats and record daily details, while organizing peer evaluation to integrate method learning into the writing process.

1.2.4. Evaluation Dimension

The composition evaluation of the old version of the Grade 3 textbook mainly relied on teachers' summative grading. The evaluation dimension was single, and feedback was delayed, which could hardly to improve students' writing ability. In the long run, students lacked multi-subject and multi-angle evaluation. As a result, feedback and evaluation failed to "properly handle the relationship between Chinese learning and personal growth, and could not fully tap students' individual potential, leading to students' inability to learn self-reflection and self-management" [1].

The composition evaluation of the unified version of the Grade 3 textbook constructs a diversified and process-oriented system. The evaluation subjects include teachers, students' self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. For example, in the unit "Guess Who He Is" (Grade 3, Volume 2), students first self-evaluate whether their composition describes the person's characteristics, then exchange and evaluate with peers, and finally the teacher gives a summative evaluation. The evaluation content has shifted from "focusing only on results" to "focusing on process and development." It not only pays attention to the sentence expression and content completeness of the composition but also values the observation ability, thinking creativity, and application of methods demonstrated by students in the writing process. Moreover, the evaluation results are promptly used for teaching adjustment and personalized guidance for students. For instance, if students have the problem of "insufficient detailed description," the training of the "five-sense observation method" is strengthened in subsequent teaching.

2. Related Research

2.1. Research Status of Domestic Composition Teaching Framework

Chinese researchers and frontline teachers have always paid close attention to writing teaching. Through the exploration of the fifth unit of the second volume of the unified Chinese textbook for Grade 3, it is understood that when designing composition teaching, teachers should return to the inside of the unit, take a holistic consideration of the relationship between each part of the unit and the unit composition, organically integrate intensive reading texts and model composition examples, and guide students to perceive, understand, transfer, and apply knowledge [2]. The incomplete composition teaching framework leads to problems such as ignoring the development of core competencies in real scenarios and weakening the promoting role of evaluation on students. To address the cruxes in primary school Chinese composition teaching, three practical principles are proposed: clarifying the orientation of unit teaching objectives, designing teaching content close to students' reality, and integrating the evaluation system throughout the entire teaching process [3].

2.2. Research on the Arrangement Characteristics of Composition Units in the Unified Textbook

The arrangement of composition units in the unified primary Chinese textbook for Grade 3 fully considers the cognitive level and composition ability development needs of Grade 3 students, showing characteristics that are highly suitable for students' learning conditions in many aspects.

Dual-line alignment arrangement logic: Arranged with "humanistic themes" and "Chinese language elements" as the two lines. The humanistic themes select content that is familiar and interesting to Grade 3 students, such as "This experience is really unforgettable", which can quickly arouse students' life memories and enthusiasm for expression. The Chinese language elements focus on the key competencies of Grade 3 composition, such as "writing clearly the observed things" and "learning to use accumulated sentences," allowing students to master basic writing methods in a targeted manner.

Module synergy content organization: The unit integrates modules such as intensive reading texts, model composition examples, communication platforms, and first attempts to form a synergistic effect. Intensive reading texts serve as high-quality models for writing. For example, the intensive reading text "The Cement Road Paved with Golden Palm-shaped Leaves" shows the beauty of the road covered with plane tree leaves through vivid descriptions, allowing students to learn how to write observed things vividly. Model composition examples provide sample essays of the same theme in different styles, further broadening students' writing ideas. The communication platform summarizes and sorts out the writing methods involved in the unit, such as "how to write clearly the appearance of things," helping students clarify the key points of methods. "First Attempt" designs short writing exercises, such as asking students to describe their favorite plant in a few sentences, enabling students to practice applying the learned methods before formal composition and laying a solid foundation for complete composition.

Gradient adaptation ability cultivation: From the perspective of the arrangement of composition units throughout the academic year of Grade 3, it shows the characteristic of gradient adaptation. The composition units in the first volume of Grade 3 focus on guiding students to transition from sentence writing (in lower grades) to complete composition. For example, "Keeping a Diary" guides students to learn to record the most impressive events or observed things of the day. On this basis, the second volume of Grade 3 further cultivates students' more detailed observation and more organized expression abilities. For example, the unit "Wonderful Imagination" encourages students to imagine boldly and write the imagined content clearly and vividly, gradually improving students' composition abilities. This is compatible with the cognitive law of Grade 3 students transitioning from concrete thinking to preliminary abstract thinking.

3. Comparison of Composition Unit Frameworks in the Old and New Versions of Grade 3, Volume 1 Textbooks

3.1. Comparison of Curriculum Unit Theme Guidance

Grade 3 Volume 1's first unit, the textbook's inaugural composition unit, has the theme Guess Who He Is. Designed to emphasize observation, the task—"Choose a classmate and write about him in a few sentences or a paragraph"—is framed as a game, requiring students to observe carefully to build vivid

character images.

Both old and new textbook versions assign Guess Who He Is as the first-unit composition, guiding students to observe classmates engagingly; the second-unit task is Keeping a Diary, aimed at fostering habits of careful observation and daily recording. With such prior practice, students should theoretically handle this unit's writing task easily. However, surveys show the actual outcome is far from ideal. Students' key difficulties are: 1) Lack of observation subjects and confusion about defining and describing "scenes"; 2) Failure to observe as meticulously as model essay authors; 3) Frequent grammatical errors; 4) Inability to produce content as specific as model essays. Teaching practice further identifies core issues: 1) Insufficient writing materials; 2) Unclear logical links between elements in scene descriptions; 3) Overreliance on visual observation to the exclusion of other senses; 4) Lack of detailed descriptions, leading to shallow content.

Students are the core of classroom teaching. Composition instruction's "teaching-learning-assessment integration" follows the "backward design" principle: starting from expected results and identifying verification evidence [4]. The new textbook places "Continuing a Story" before "Creating a Fairy Tale by Myself" (the reverse of the old version), a deliberate pedagogical adjustment. The third-unit micro-writing task requires students to infer character lines and plots from pictures and dialogues, progressing from easy to difficult to build logical thinking and expression skills. Mastery here significantly boosts expressive abilities and thinking development. The subsequent "Creating a Fairy Tale by Myself" unit demands unconstrained imagination—its micro-writing task challenges students to distill long dialogues concisely with fragmented information, made achievable by the prior unit's foundation. This step-by-step, stair-climbing approach enables students to master fairy tale creation, imparting writing knowledge, stimulating curiosity and exploration, and fostering analytical and logical reasoning capabilities. It also allows independent grouping and integration of material points, helping students learn article structuring via project-based learning and enhance thinking organization and systematicness [5].

By contrast, the old textbook arranges "Creating a Fairy Tale by Myself" before "Continuing a Story". Though seemingly similar in writing requirements, this order violates students' cognitive development laws. It not only hinders teaching (leaving teachers unsure how to start) but also burdens students with writing pressure and fear, failing to effectively improve their abilities.

3.2. Comparison of Content Organization Frameworks

Stylistic composition training in primary Chinese textbooks has six categories: character, object, event, scenery, practical and imaginative writing. Event-recording composition, introduced in Grade 3, appears in all textbooks except Grade 5 Volume 1, forming a "spiral progression" framework. Unified primary Chinese textbooks cover reading, composition, oral communication, Chinese garden and comprehensive learning sections. Composition knowledge is mainly in composition sections, with implicit training in unit introductions, selected texts, and communication platforms of the reading sections [6].

Both old and new textbooks set The Colorful World in Our Eyes as the fifth-unit theme but reverse the order of model essay appreciation and writing—the old places models first, the new does the opposite. This adjustment avoids two issues: teaching models as regular texts (weakening their role and causing resistance) and rigid thinking from over-reliance (restricting independent observation). Writing freely first to expose weaknesses, students then study models for targeted imitation. This maximizes models' value, boosts innovation and diverse expressions, and embodies education's essence by fostering unfettered imagination.

The old textbook's teaching follows a linear "model essay imitation" structure. Take its third unit Creating a Fairy Tale by Myself: teaching opens with a review of four unit texts (The Book from Last Year, That Would Be Great, A Journey Inside the Cow's Stomach, A Piece of Cheese), pre-setting a fixed fairy tale definition for students: "magical characters, bizarre plots, unique settings, inspiring messages". However, fairy tales are essentially "children's literature crafted with vivid imagination, fantasy and exaggeration". Opening with famous works pressures students, undermining their enthusiasm and restricting imagination—the core of fairy tale creation. After all, this skill requires gradual practice rather than being mastered overnight.

The content teaching of the new version of the textbook adopts a project-based content structure with "task-driven" as the clue. For example, the fourth unit "Creating a Fairy Tale by Myself" conducts teaching by constructing a task chain of "creation—sharing—revision." Teachers provide three

categories of words: the first category is characters, the second is time, and the third is settings. Students first carry out unconstrained imagination based on the words provided by teachers.

3.3. Comparison of Method Guidance Frameworks

The old textbook emphasized "teacher explanation" to impart writing methods, but this approach proved ineffective in practice. Students might grasp some ideas right after instruction, yet without model essays or teacher guidance, they would draw a blank and fail to produce substantive writing.

The 2022 Edition Curriculum Standards emphasize that teachers should establish a "teaching-learning-assessment integration" mindset, scientifically select evaluation methods, rationally use evaluation tools, properly employ evaluation language, focus on encouraging students, and stimulate learning enthusiasm [7]. Ye Shengtao noted: "Articles always need revision. A first draft inevitably has flaws; if the original idea is unclear or the writing fails to convey the intended meaning, revision is necessary" [8]. Evidently, composition evaluation and revision are not only an integral part of "teaching-learning-assessment integration" but also a key factor directly influencing the development of students' core competencies.

4. Exploration of Teaching Practice under the Frameworks of the Old and New Versions of Textbooks

4.1. Reflection on Teaching Limitations Based on the Old Version Framework

Under the old textbook's matching curriculum standards, teachers often separated hour-specific objectives of reading, composition and Chinese garden sections from unit goals. This caused fragmented text teaching, which failed to help students build structured understanding, implement Chinese core competencies, or integrate teaching, learning and effective evaluation. Most teachers used a rigid traditional model: announcing topics, analyzing model essays, having students write via mechanical imitation, then correcting drafts and giving revision suggestions. Students remained passive throughout class, gained no writing joy, and merely aimed to complete tasks [9].

4.2. Innovation of Teaching Strategies Based on the New Version Framework

Each unit of the unified textbook is arranged with "humanistic themes" and "Chinese language elements" as the two lines. On the basis of fully considering students' cognitive structure, the unit content is arranged in a structured manner. Various factors reflecting the core competencies of the subject are taken as the "points" of training and implemented in each unit from easy to difficult. Each section in the unit undertakes its own training tasks, making each unit form an organic whole and jointly serving the realization of unit objectives [10].

As the organization and presentation form of the compulsory education Chinese curriculum content, learning task groups are based on the development of students' core competencies. They focus on guiding students to connect closely with life experience, create real scenarios for Chinese learning, help students accumulate Chinese learning experience, and further improve students' ability to solve problems in Chinese practical activities [11]. They build a bridge between the composition big unit and the real classroom. From the perspective of big units, the construction of learning task group scaffolds should always focus on the two main lines of "unit theme" and "Chinese language elements," and clarify teaching key points and directions in combination with specific students' learning conditions.

In the context of project-based learning for primary school Chinese composition teaching, teachers should deeply explore the textbook to determine the project theme. Based on a certain unit theme or text characteristics, integrate the key knowledge in the textbook with project-based teaching tasks to make the project more operable. Project-based learning emphasizes cultivating students' comprehensive literacy such as analyzing problems, organizing materials, and building composition frameworks, which is conducive to developing the logic of students' thinking [12].

5. Teaching Effects and Reflection

To sum up, third-grade students are in the initial stage of composition learning and the transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Their low cognitive level and various negative psychological states

pose challenges for composition teachers. As composition learning is a comprehensive and complex process, improving teaching effectiveness cannot be achieved overnight—teachers need sufficient patience and scientific methods. Based on a comparison of composition tasks in the old and new textbook versions, this paper identifies the old version's shortcomings and the new version's strengths, providing guidance for subsequent textbook compilation and teaching practice, including guiding students to organize words into coherent texts, teaching writing skills, implementing teaching-learning-assessment integration, and enhancing after-class composition guidance. Teaching outcomes have confirmed that these measures effectively improve students' writing abilities.

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