

Diversified Teaching Strategies for Literacy and Handwriting in Lower Primary Schools

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Literacy and handwriting are the foundation of Chinese language learning and the main content of low-level teaching. Based on the physical and mental development characteristics of low-level students, teachers should adopt diverse teaching strategies such as comparative classification teaching, life scenario teaching, combination of demonstration and learning practice, and fun activities. They should also integrate multimedia resources to assist literacy and handwriting teaching, stimulate students' interest, and improve quality and efficiency.

Keywords: primary school lower stage, teaching literacy and handwriting, diversified strategies

The teaching of literacy and handwriting is the focus and main goal of the lower stage of Chinese language education. The literacy and handwriting skills of primary school students are closely related to their writing and expression abilities, which also affect their reading comprehension level. Therefore, cultivating students' interest in literacy and handwriting, teaching them the correct ways of literacy and handwriting, and improving their literacy and handwriting abilities are particularly important in the early stages of primary school, which can lay a solid foundation for students' future Chinese language learning.

Compare and Classify, Find the Patterns of Chinese Characters

The method of comparing categories and finding patterns can not only enable students to learn as many new words as possible in a short period of time through group by group learning, but also enhance their ability to integrate and process language information in the long run from the perspective of student growth.

Teachers can classify Chinese characters from the perspective of character formation structure, or from the radicals of characters, which helps students understand that some radicals of Chinese characters have semantic functions. Meanwhile, centralized literacy is also beneficial in reducing students' academic burden. For example, a teacher who teaches "Learning Chinese Characters Well" will combine the characters "gui" and "jian" with the related Chinese characters at the base and beside the "bei" character for centralized teaching. Underneath the word "expensive" is a shell, known as the "shell bottom". In ancient times, shells were a form of money, and if you needed a lot of shells to buy something, it meant that it was very "expensive". Something that is very cheap

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can also be represented by a character with the word “bei” next to it, which is the word “cheap”. When teaching the name “An Ding Bao”, the teacher asked the students to memorize it based on their common radical—Baogaitou. In “Animal Children’s Songs”, teachers can also use this comparative classification method. Firstly, students can observe the two groups of new characters “duck, chicken, goose” and “dog, cat, monkey”, guide them to discover the commonalities of the new characters through analysis and comparison, and then help them understand that different radicals represent different types of animals. Here, the systematic nature of Chinese characters is utilized to help students form a scientific understanding of Chinese characters, master literacy methods, and acquire the ability to read independently (Wang, 2002).

In addition, teachers can also classify teaching from the perspective of Chinese character writing structure and strokes, such as semi enclosed structure, left-right structure, upper middle lower structure, etc. This can help students learn writing efficiently and become familiar with the structure of Chinese characters. Teachers can use the Tian character grid to carry out teaching, effectively combining literacy and handwriting. For example, when teaching the characters “welcome” and “chase”, teachers can ask students to first observe the structure of the characters, identify commonalities, and guide them to discover that both characters are semi enclosed Chinese characters. By connecting these two characters and memorizing them, this teaching method can help students more accurately grasp the shape and composition of the characters. This not only saves teaching time, but also reduces students’ learning pressure (He, 2011).

Classifying teaching based on the grammatical functions of new words is also an effective teaching method. The cognitive ability of students in the lower grades of primary school is not strong enough, so teachers do not necessarily have to teach students what nouns and adverbs are. Such abstract terms are difficult for lower grade students. Therefore, in many cases, as long as this awareness is infiltrated and integrated into classroom teaching, it can mainly play a role in cultivating students’ Chinese language ability and core literacy. For example, when teaching “Animal Nursery Rhymes”, teachers can first demonstrate and read aloud, with the focus on making students pay attention to where the teacher pauses, so that they can discover who, where, and what the teacher pauses based on. This way, they can learn a set of words based on their grammatical functions unconsciously.

When teaching words, teachers can classify them according to the rules of word composition. For example, during the teaching of “Little Tadpole Looking for Mom”, some teachers conducted classification teaching of reduplication words. When teaching the word “mom”, they inspired students to discover that the following word is a light tone, and these two words overlap to form a reduplication word. Teachers can guide students to say similar reduplication words, such as “dad”, “grandma”, etc. Comparing and categorizing not only exercises students’ thinking, but also allows them to experience the joy of literacy while searching for patterns (Chi, 2019, p. 33).

Connect With Life, Create Scenarios, and Stimulate Interest

The new curriculum emphasizes teaching in real language use contexts. Situation and life are important for elementary school students who mainly rely on visual thinking. Linking life and creating situations are teaching methods that are in line with their psychological characteristics and cognitive laws. There are several ways to create situations, such as vocabulary learning, situational mapping, random word recognition, storytelling, and reading comprehension. The comprehensive use of multiple methods to create situations can help students learn and write more easily and effectively in experiential learning, while minimizing the separation of learning and application. The essence of a situation is to trigger emotional vibrations in students and fully unleash their subjective initiative (Guo, 2018).

In daily teaching activities, most teachers encourage students to learn words through word grouping. This not only expands students' vocabulary, but also deepens their understanding of the meanings and usage contexts of new words, making it easier for students to read and write later, and helping them construct meaning in word meaning blocks. Some teachers have gone beyond the level of word grouping and used sentence construction to help students master vocabulary. Jiao Lihui, the first "true Chinese language star" in the country, asked students to make sentences using the "already" they learned in class when teaching "Little Tadpole Looking for Mom". This is a literacy teaching aimed at language expression, no longer the traditional teaching of sound, form, and meaning. It not only allows students to recognize characters and words, but also allows them to make sentences and put words in their own words, turning isolated words into vivid language expressions. The teaching method of using learned vocabulary to make sentences can not only help students master correct and reasonable collocation methods, combine theoretical understanding with practical application, but also exercise students' expression ability. Teachers can test and grasp students' mastery and understanding of unfamiliar words in this process. At the same time, due to the use of sentence construction, students naturally speak for a longer period of time, which can also expose their own phonetic problems. This is also a good opportunity for teachers to help students recognize and correct their pronunciation. However, it should be noted that the teaching of some function words is not suitable for using word grouping, as it is easier for students to understand and master their usage and characteristics in specific contexts (Zhou, 2019).

Learn and apply language in the context of the text, master words and phrases in sentences, teach new words and phrases in the text, and integrate literacy, reading, and expression (Xu, 2016, p. 48). When teaching a text, teachers can ask students to first identify areas they do not understand, and other students and teachers can help the student solve them together. Teaching new words should be placed in specific contexts, rather than isolating them into rigid dictionary words. The way of reading, comprehending, and distinguishing the meanings of words is similar to that of random words. The cognitive ability of elementary school students is still relatively weak, and their understanding of word meanings is often limited to a single meaning in textbooks. Therefore, teachers need to set various scenarios to help students gain diverse emotional experiences, guide students to understand the meaning of the same new word in different contexts, and distinguish the meaning and usage of words. This is also an opportunity for teachers to improve their abilities. To use the method of random text recognition, teachers first need to deeply and thoroughly interpret the text, handle the teaching materials more cleverly, and explore teaching resources so that students can read aloud in context, recognize the shape of characters in context, and distinguish the meaning of characters in context. At the same time, this learning and using method is also beneficial for consolidating the achievements of literacy teaching in practice (Chen, 2001).

Teachers can also set up various scenarios and prompts for students to repeatedly read the key words and phrases they want to learn, for example, in the lesson of "Dragon Boat Festival Zongzi", "zao" is a key new word. A teacher sets up prompts to help students repeatedly consolidate their practice, such as "This is a jujube -", "Honey jujube -", "Jujube tree -". Students need to answer "jujube" multiple times. During this process, the teacher organized multiple voice training sessions to improve students' perception of flat tongue sounds through repetition. According to the Ebbinghaus curve, human memory undergoes a certain degree of forgetting during the process of retention. Therefore, it is necessary to use various methods to make new words repeatedly appear and guide students to consolidate them repeatedly (Gao, 2012, p. 23).

Sukhomlinsky (2002, p. 194) proposed that elementary school students use form, sound, color, and sensation to engage in thinking activities. Colorful and vivid situational diagrams are suitable for the visual thinking of

lower level elementary school students. Students can associate abstract Chinese characters with vivid and concrete meanings, which makes Chinese character teaching more lively. Teachers can combine students' real-life situations when explaining. This intuitive teaching method not only allows students to quickly master new vocabulary, but also enhances the fun of the classroom and attracts students' attention. No student enters the classroom with an empty head. Each student has more or less different life experiences and personal experiences. Therefore, situational diagrams should be connected to students' actual lives and mobilize their existing life experiences, which is more conducive to students' understanding and absorption.

Storytelling with string words is an important way of learning new vocabulary, and lower level students especially enjoy listening to telling stories. Simply explaining the pronunciation, shape, and meaning of words can be somewhat tedious, while storytelling with string words can help students combine the key new words and theme words learned in class with the content of the text, and also unleash their imagination and expressive power. For example, when teaching "The Little Tadpole Finds Its Mother", teachers can show keywords such as "black and gray", "mother", and "happy" on the blackboard, allowing students to start from retelling a paragraph to retelling the entire story of the little tadpole finding its mother. This way, students not only clarify the writing structure and familiarize themselves with the main content of the text, but also practice in the process. Repeatedly using newly learned words in the classroom can enhance memory, and learning new words in specific contexts can increase efficiency. Using stories as a framework, continuously deepens students' understanding of the sound, form, and meaning of new words (Zheng, 2013, p. 25).

Teacher Demonstration, Learn, and Practice at Once

Teachers can first demonstrate, such as having students read their own blackboard topics or other unfamiliar words. While watching the teacher's demonstration, students can raise their right index finger high to write on the blank or use their fingers to write on the table, while speaking out the stroke names of each stroke and understanding the stroke order. For some key strokes, teachers need to explain them in detail, including the position, amplitude, and stretching degree of strokes, strokes, spacing between strokes, and positional relationships. They can use Tian Zige to introduce stroke positions for students to understand and grasp. Teachers should pay attention to the connection between new and old knowledge, for example, they can extract strokes of characters that students already know and integrate them into new character teaching. Some strokes that are easy to mix up and make mistakes should be highlighted by the teacher separately, such as distinguishing the parts of "yan" and "jian" clearly. After the demonstration, teachers can use teaching strategies such as mnemonics and rhymes to encourage students to read multiple times and deepen their impression.

Learning and practicing while the iron is hot is essential. Teachers can ask students to draw the new words they have just learned in the red box on their notebooks, and then write them again, combining imitation with their own attempts. Some teachers will ask students to mark the pinyin on the new words they have written, and combine writing with proper pronunciation. Teachers need to check students' handwriting situation and provide camera guidance during their handwriting practice. After the students have completed the exercises, display their notebooks on a large screen, and the teacher will immediately point out the problems with the students' handwriting and shelf structure. Other students in the class can also try to evaluate them. Some teachers will directly invite students to write on the blackboard and provide suggestions for the Chinese characters they write, such as stretching strokes, pausing strokes, and making a certain stroke longer. After teaching students the shapes and sounds of new words, some teachers will also ask them to try to form words.

Set up Activities to Stimulate Interest and Literacy

Elementary school students in the lower grades have strong curiosity, are lively and active, enjoy playing games, and have difficulty concentrating for long periods of time. Rich and diverse activities can stimulate primary school students' various senses, stimulate their life experiences, conform to their learning and acceptance psychology, stimulate their interest in learning, and provide opportunities for them to exert their subjective initiative.

Firstly, through scenario interpretation, connecting with daily life, and coordinating with body movements, students can learn to summarize and extract new words on their own, and understand their meanings. This display game is particularly popular among children (Guo, 2018). In the classroom teaching of "Little Tadpole Looking for Mom", teachers need to help students understand the meanings of "welcome up" and "catch up". Teachers can interact with students to perform situational interpretations and help them understand the meaning of words through actions, such as "welcome up". Teachers can invite students to perform the scene with themselves and guide them to summarize the meaning of the word in their own words through actions—walking up quickly face-to-face is "welcome up". The method of "catching up" also applies, and lower level elementary school students are more interested in this scenario-based teaching approach. Presenting the meaning of words in a visual way, and finally summarizing it with language, forms a complete closed loop of word teaching. Secondly, connect with one's own situation and real-life situations to learn vocabulary. In the lesson "Learning Chinese Characters Well", the teacher can encourage students to guess how Chairman Mao introduced their names to the two Little Eight Roads, and then extend this activity to encourage students to introduce their names. Students should also be required to use word grouping when introducing their names, as word grouping can help others quickly understand and remember their names. Thirdly, by using the "Send Characters Home" mini game and driving a small train, students can recognize and read Chinese characters on the blackboard or on the teacher made character cards, which is beneficial for students to consolidate what they have learned. In this process, teachers can understand students' mastery through their performance and adjust their teaching accordingly. Fourth, find friends, that is, search for synonyms of words, and help students clarify the relationships between words. In the lesson "Learning Chinese Characters Well", a teacher asked students to find "good" friends through this method, which aroused their interest and matched their psychological characteristics. Students enthusiastically searched in their own minds and answered several words such as "careful", "serious", "hardworking", and "hard work". Fifthly, hands-on spelling of Chinese characters can help students understand the components and structure of Chinese characters, gain a clearer understanding of their form and pronunciation, and develop a sense of categorization. A teacher used this activity method to teach the key new words "dragonfly", "dragonfly", "spider", "spider", "ma", and "ant" in the lesson of "Animal Children's Songs". The teacher reports the characters and gives the students a small card with the word "worm" next to it and a small card with several other Chinese character components. The teacher collaborates with two desk mates and gives the students an envelope to take turns spelling or working together (one holding the word "worm" and the other holding the other component). The teacher also asks a child to come up to the podium to spell, making it easier for the students to check if their spelling is correct. The teacher accelerates the pace while enrolling, gradually increasing the difficulty of learning and allowing students to concentrate. Finally, having students clap their hands in celebration enhances their sense of achievement, fulfillment, and confidence. As Montessori once said, "The work of children is to play games, to stimulate their potential and showcase their talents." Children can explore the world of language and develop an interest in learning language and writing during joyful playtime.

Use Multimedia to Explore New Ways of Literacy

Teachers can use multimedia teaching resources to help students understand the meaning, form construction, strokes, and writing order of new words, and to expand their extracurricular knowledge appropriately. Teachers can first demonstrate to students on the blackboard through blackboard writing, or use Chinese character writing animations in multimedia to assist their teaching, allowing students to clarify the key points and stroke order of each stroke. Primary school students generally have a relatively short amount of attention span. Using animation in teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning, prolong their focus time, and fully utilize their unintentional attention. In addition, multimedia teaching resources can also help students understand the meaning of new words and the relationship between their forms and components, and solve their difficult problems in a pleasant and relaxed learning process. For example, a teacher told students during the teaching process of "Animal Children's Songs" that the radical of a word is closely related to its meaning, and in general, the word next to the word "insect" represents an insect. Next, the teacher asked the students to express their views on this viewpoint. Some students expressed that they had learned from popular science literature that although spiders are associated with the word "insect", they do not belong to insects. The teacher affirmed the students' questioning spirit and encouraged them to bravely express their ideas. Then the teacher borrowed a Chinese character encyclopedia video to let students learn about some examples next to the word "insect", solving their question that earthworms, tadpoles, and spiders do not belong to insects. Afterwards, the teacher further explained with the help of a Chinese character encyclopedia video, because Chinese characters have undergone a long-term evolution process, so there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the radicals and meanings of Chinese characters. In ancient times, all animals were called insects, tigers were called big insects, and snakes were called long insects. With the development of biology, the classification has become more and more detailed, and now insects specifically refer to insects. Therefore, the title of this article is "Animal Children's Song" instead of "Insect Children's Song". Picking fruits "is also a major way of multimedia assisted teaching." Encouraging students to pick their favorite fruits through reading aloud, word composition, and sentence construction can stimulate their enthusiasm. Students often compare who has picked the most fruits to promote learning (Jia, 2014). Character pronunciation teaching is also an important component of literacy teaching. For students in dialect areas, multimedia teaching resources play a crucial role. Teachers can use the audio in multimedia resources to help students correct their pronunciation, and can repeatedly play and correct it multiple times. For students in certain dialect areas, pronouncing certain pronunciations can be difficult, so teachers can combine video teaching with demonstrations to help students identify their pronunciation parts (Yang, 2012).

Epilogue

Learning new vocabulary is a significant challenge for students in the lower grades of elementary school, as they are prone to developing a fear of difficulty. What teachers need to do is to use diverse literacy and handwriting teaching strategies to turn the learning of new words into a fun process, so that students can accept them psychologically, love them emotionally, and improve their thinking, helping them lay a solid foundation for Chinese language learning.

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