

Three-Stage Classroom: An Exploration of the Practice of Three Lesson Types in Whole-Book Reading in Primary School Chinese

Yinting Zhao, Rongfei Ma, Qiumei Yu*

Kunming University, Kunming, Yunnan, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: The *Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* incorporates whole-book reading into the extended learning task group. However, in actual classroom practice, problems still exist, such as blurred boundaries between lesson types, formalistic teaching, and students' superficial reading. In response to these difficulties, this paper, grounded in the laws of primary school students' reading cognitive development, actively constructs a three-lesson-type model of whole-book reading instruction integrating "guided reading lesson–advancement lesson–exchange lesson" into a three-stage whole. From the three levels of foundation-laying before reading, deep cultivation during reading, and sublimation after reading, it clarifies the functional positioning of the three lesson types and proposes practical strategies such as stimulating interest and teaching methods, progress management and in-depth study, and differentiated speculative exchange. It is hoped that this will streamline the teaching process of whole-book reading, alleviate students' fear of difficulty in lengthy reading, provide a reference for the classroom implementation of whole-book reading in primary school Chinese, and facilitate the coordinated development of students' reading ability and Chinese core competencies.

Keywords: Whole-book reading; Guided reading lesson; Advancement lesson; Exchange lesson

Online publication: September 30, 2026

1. Introduction

The *Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* explicitly advocates "reading more, reading good books, and reading whole books," lists whole-book reading as an independent extended learning task group, formulates tiered reading goals according to the cognitive levels of each primary school stage, and formally establishes the rigid-demand status of whole-book reading in the primary school Chinese curriculum system ^[1]. The "Happy Reading Bar" column set up in conjunction with the unified compiled textbooks precisely matches the recommended books for each stage's learning conditions, incorporates

basic reading methods, breaks down the barriers between in-class and out-of-class reading, and transforms whole-book reading from students' autonomous extracurricular reading into a regular teaching content in the Chinese classroom.

Primary school students' reading ability develops in a stepwise manner: the lower stages focus mainly on picture books, nursery rhymes, and short stories, with the core of teaching being the cultivation of reading interest and basic habits; the middle and upper stages feature longer reading materials, complex plots, and diverse characters, placing higher demands on students' abilities in text organization, interpretation and appreciation, and logical speculation. Whole-book reading emphasizes integrity, systematicity, and coherence, pointing not only to the increase in the "quantity" of Chinese reading but also to the elevation of the "quality" of Chinese reading ^[2]. It is essentially different from the fragmented intensive reading model of single texts and cannot directly copy traditional teaching methods. In contrast, current classroom practice reveals two typical misunderstandings in whole-book reading instruction: first, guided reading becomes formalistic, merely stimulating interest in the book and introducing its content, lacking whole-process follow-up and method guidance, so students read casually and superficially; second, the text is excessively finely dismantled, analyzed paragraph by paragraph and interpreted sentence by sentence, squeezing students' independent reading space. The above problems may lead to prominent fear of difficulty in lengthy reading among students, the widespread phenomena of shallow reading, fragmented reading, and passive reading, uneven quality of extracurricular reading, and difficulty for teachers to precisely control students' reading progress and true gains. At present, the academic community and frontline teaching have generally recognized the key role of lesson-type reconstruction in the implementation of whole-book reading, and have initially formed a lesson-type framework of guided reading, advancement, and exchange. However, in real classrooms, problems still exist, such as blurred boundaries between lesson types, confused functions, and disconnected transitions, and a systematic, implementable teaching system has not yet been formed.

Whole-book reading is a progressive, complete, in-depth learning process. It is necessary to conform to students' reading cognitive laws and construct a classroom system that connects layer by layer before reading, during reading, and after reading. Accordingly, this paper establishes the core teaching functions of the three lesson types—"guided reading for foundation-laying, advancement for deep cultivation, and exchange for sublimation"—clarifies the teaching objectives, core tasks, and practical strategies of each lesson type, provides a reference for frontline primary school Chinese whole-book reading instruction, effectively solves practical teaching difficulties, helps students internalize reading methods, improve reading ability, and achieve the sustainable development of Chinese core competencies.

2. The first stage: Guided reading lesson — the foundation-laying segment before reading

The guided reading lesson is the initial lesson of whole-book reading. It is based on students' reading starting point and focuses on completing the foundation-laying work before reading. Pre-reading is the beginning of "whole-book reading." Only when the beginning is well laid can it serve reading during and after reading ^[3]. This lesson type does not make a complete analysis of the plot of the entire book, nor does it seek to solve deep-seated problems in the text. Instead, through the three core teaching tasks of stimulating interest, teaching methods, and planning, it builds a bridge between students and books and prepares them for sustained reading.

2.1. Stimulating interest at different levels to awaken reading expectations

The core of the guided reading lesson lies in stimulating students' reading interest and building reading expectations. It does not seek to finish or fully understand the entire book, but rather aims to open the door to whole-book reading for students. The key is to dissolve students' psychological barriers to reading and awaken their intrinsic reading interest ^[1]. In light of the differences in learning conditions across primary school stages, differentiated interest-stimulating strategies are adopted to suit the cognitive characteristics of students of different age groups.

Lower-and middle-stage students have prominent concrete thinking and high sensitivity to visual, audio, and situational content, so situational introduction can be adopted. Relying on multimedia resources, immersive reading atmospheres can be created through animated clips, real-scene videos, AI scene restoration, background music, and other means, reducing the dryness of the text. At the same time, students can be guided to establish multiple connections between the virtual world in the text and people, events, and objects in real life, thereby achieving cultural understanding, life growth, and language development ^[4]. For example, in the guided reading lesson of Ancient Chinese Myths, through the display of mythological imagery and the restoration of classic scenes, students can intuitively feel the magnificence and fantasy of myths, stimulating their desire for exploration. Middle- and upper-stage students possess a certain degree of text comprehension ability, so a suspense-based introduction can be adopted. Relying on book covers, illustrations, chapter titles, and exciting excerpts, activities such as guessing while reading and suspenseful questioning can be carried out. Climactic excerpts from the text can be read aloud with background music, deliberately preserving plot foreshadowing to arouse students' curiosity to explore the truth. For example, in the guided reading lesson of Romance of the Three Kingdoms, illustrations of classic battles and character confrontations are displayed, guiding students to guess the plot direction and characters' fates, fully mobilizing their imagination and prompting them to actively enter the text for reading.

2.2. Precisely incorporating teaching methods to consolidate the reading foundation

Stimulating reading interest is only the first step of the guided reading lesson. With interest alone but without methods, students' autonomous reading can easily fall into a state of aimless browsing, making it difficult for them to truly enter the text. Therefore, the guided reading lesson needs to precisely incorporate adaptive reading methods according to the learning conditions of the stage and the genre of the text, providing students with practical handles for autonomous extracurricular reading.

For the lower primary school stage, the focus is on establishing basic reading awareness and initially cultivating reading habits. Teachers can use physical books to guide students in recognizing basic elements such as the cover, title page, table of contents, and page numbers, learning to guess and read from pictures, understanding textual content with the help of illustrations, and initially developing the habit of browsing independently and reading quietly, so as to adapt to the whole-book reading format. In the middle primary school stage, attention is paid to cultivating students' thinking ability. Students can be guided to learn basic methods such as keyword annotation, circling and marking annotations, recording questions, and predicting through the table of contents, guiding them to develop the reading habit of "thinking while reading and combining reading with thinking." In the upper stage, to adapt to the reading requirements of lengthy classics, teachers can guide students to learn in-depth reading methods such as combining intensive reading with skimming, categorizing characters, sorting out clues, and exploring themes, helping primary school students adapt to the reading rhythm of complex texts.

In addition, reading methods also differ by genre, breaking through the limitations of general methods. Different genres, such as chapter-based novels, mythological stories, popular science readings, and coming-of-age novels, have their own exclusive reading techniques. For example, in the whole-book reading teaching of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in the second semester of Grade Five, teachers focus on explaining the stylistic features of the chapter-based novel, guiding students to predict chapter content with the help of chapter titles and to sort out the framework of the entire book, so as to achieve method transfer. This method is also suitable for reading similar classics such as *Dream of the Red Chamber*. It is worth noting that teachers' guidance on students' reading methods should abandon empty preaching and adhere to timely guidance along with the text and teaching methods through reading. Teachers can select classic excerpts from the text and let students read them in class, which can not only allow students to feel the charm of the book in advance and build reading interest, but also enable students to master and apply reading methods in real reading scenarios. Whole-book reading focuses on "reading," returning the classroom to students and letting them enjoy the pleasure of reading.

2.3. Guidance on reading planning

Whole-book reading is large in volume, and most of it needs to be completed relying on extracurricular time. If students lack clear and reasonable reading planning, situations such as procrastination, task accumulation, or burnout are likely to occur. At the end of the guided reading lesson, guidance on reading planning should be well provided. Combining the characteristics of the stage and the stratification of students' abilities, personalized and flexible reading plans should be formulated to make arrangements for sustained reading.

For the lower stage, there is no need to excessively pursue reading speed and total volume; the focus is on cultivating good reading habits. For example, students can be guided to fix a reading duration of ten to fifteen minutes each day, relying on parent-child co-reading and independent reading to form a stable reading rhythm. The middle and upper stages focus on the systematicity of reading. Teachers can lead students to use the table of contents to divide the content of the entire book, divide the daily and weekly reading content, clarify phased reading tasks, and establish an overall reading cognition. In addition, reading planning should also be flexible and stratified, taking into account the uneven reading levels within the class. Because each student's preferences, experiences, and abilities are different, the reading forms and methods they choose are naturally different ^[5]. For students with spare capacity, reading content can be appropriately expanded; for students with a weak reading foundation, reading requirements can be simplified to avoid psychological pressure caused by excessive tasks and the loss of the meaning of reading. In actual teaching, reading plans can be flexibly fine-tuned according to one's own actual situation. The key is to awaken students' awareness of self-management, carry good reading habits and self-reflection into extracurricular reading, and continue reading persistently.

3. The second stage: Advancement lesson — the deep cultivation segment during reading

The advancement lesson is the middle link of whole-book reading. It inherits the pre-reading foundation laid by the guided reading lesson and focuses on the process of students' autonomous reading. Its core functions lie in process management, problem solving, in-depth study, and motivation empowerment. In response to problems students encounter during the reading process, such as "being unable to finish reading, being unable

to read deeply, being unable to understand, and not wanting to read,” the advancement lesson continues to follow up on progress, maintains students’ reading interest, guides students to engage in deep thinking, and promotes students’ transformation from “meeting standards” to “improving quality,” thereby achieving deep cultivation of the reading process.

3.1. Methods for reading progress management and burnout resolution

Students’ autonomous reading is highly self-directed and weakly supervised, making problems such as chaotic progress, perfunctory reading, and midway burnout likely to occur. The establishment of the advancement lesson can seek student feedback through teacher supervision, precisely control reading progress, and continuously activate students’ reading motivation.

Understanding students’ reading progress can adopt the model of “segmented verification, dynamic tracking, and stratified incentives,” setting reading verification nodes on a weekly basis and comprehensively grasping the overall class situation and individual student reading situations through diverse methods such as group reports, reading check-ins, log inspections, and classroom spot checks. Students who complete tasks on time should be given positive incentives to strengthen their sense of reading achievement; for students who lag behind in progress, reasons should be analyzed in light of academic pressure and reading difficulties, and ways such as breaking down lightweight tasks and flexibly adjusting plans should be used to help them catch up, preventing reading abandonment caused by task accumulation. At the same time, 4–6-person mutual-aid groups should be established to achieve intra-group supervision and progress communication, creating an atmosphere of sustained reading for all. On the basis of understanding students’ reading situations, teachers can carry out advancement lesson teaching at key nodes according to students’ reading progress and their own course arrangements. In response to the aesthetic fatigue and burnout emotions arising from students’ long-term reading, the advancement lesson can focus on interesting guidance and breakthroughs in reading difficulties. On the one hand, phased interesting inquiry tasks can be set up, using interactive activities such as plot relay, character exploration, and excerpt appreciation to break the dullness of mechanical reading; on the other hand, exclusive Q&A periods can be reserved to centrally sort out and explain common problems in students’ extracurricular reading, such as difficult sentences, complex character relationships, and obscure plots, clearing reading obstacles, reducing reading difficulty, and continuously maintaining students’ intrinsic motivation for deep reading.

3.2. Classroom implementation of in-depth study

Students’ autonomous reading mostly remains at the shallow level of knowing the plot, making it difficult for them to independently explore aspects such as the character value, ideological connotations, and writing techniques of the text. The advancement lesson should abandon all-encompassing whole-class explanation and adhere to the principle of “grasping the key points, breaking through the difficult points, and digging into the deep meaning,” focusing on key content for study. It aims to promote students’ formation of the character and ability for deep reading through complex task situations. This process plays a connecting role between “guided reading” and “evaluative reading,” serving as a link between the preceding and the following ^[6].

First, focus on the study of core characters. Characters are the core carriers of narrative texts. Students should be guided to sort out characters’ words and deeds, growth trajectories, personality changes, and destiny directions, compare the trait differences among different characters, and analyze the textual value

of character portrayal. Through character interpretation, students are helped to comprehend the growth philosophy, spiritual qualities, and value concepts conveyed by the text.

Second, focus on the study of key plots. By selecting turning points, climaxes, and classic plots that drive the story forward, highlight character traits, and carry the core theme, students explore the ingenuity of plot design and clarify the internal connections between plot, characters, and theme through methods such as intensive reading and careful appreciation, contextual analysis, and logical sorting. Students are encouraged to interpret the text in a personalized way, break free from the constraints of standard answers, and cultivate text appreciation and speculative abilities.

Third, focus on the study of themes and writing features. On the basis of students' mastery of the overall content of the text, students are guided to step beyond the surface of the plot and extract the emotional themes and real-life implications of the text. At the same time, integrated reading and writing teaching is carried out in combination with the text's narrative structure, descriptive techniques, and language style. The lower stage focuses on language accumulation and basic appreciation, while the upper stage focuses on structure sorting, technique appreciation, and theme exploration, adapting to stratified learning conditions and achieving understanding and gains from reading.

3.3. Design of supporting visualized thinking scaffold tools

Primary school students have prominent characteristics of concrete and fragmented thinking, and their ability to independently sort out textual threads and integrate textual information is relatively weak. Therefore, when preparing advancement lessons, teachers can design highly adaptive thinking scaffolds to transform abstract textual logic and complex content systems into intuitive graphics or mind maps, reducing the difficulty of understanding in deep reading and helping students systematically internalize reading outcomes.

For sorting out textual threads, tools such as story timelines, plot flow charts, and whole-book framework diagrams can be used to help students clarify the beginning, development, climax, and ending of stories, sort out multiple parallel narrative threads, and solve problems of fragmented plot memory and chaotic threads. For texts with many characters, students can be helped to design character profile cards, character relationship maps, and growth comparison tables, clearly presenting character traits, classic deeds, growth changes, and character connections, and accurately grasping the character images in the text. For exploring the deeper meaning of the text, mind maps, question lists, and comparative analysis tables can be used to integrate textual highlights, difficult questions, core themes, and writing features, achieving systematic sorting of reading information. When providing thinking scaffolds, teachers should follow the principle of "proceeding step by step and being concise and practical." The lower stage should mainly use fill-in-the-blank and picture-based minimalist scaffolds, focusing on cultivating awareness of sorting. The middle and upper stages should add open-ended and inquiry-based scaffolds, encouraging students to summarize independently and explore in depth. In the process of completing the scaffolds, students gradually construct a complete textual cognitive system, effectively exercise logical thinking and integrative summarizing abilities, and build a solid thinking foundation for the sublimation of post-reading exchange.

4. The third stage: Exchange lesson — the sublimation segment after reading

The exchange lesson is the sublimation link of the three-lesson-type teaching of whole-book reading. It inherits the complete reading process of foundation-laying before reading and deep cultivation during

reading, with the core goals of integrating reading outcomes, colliding reading thinking, and sublimating reading cognition. The exchange lesson focuses on “output, integration, speculation, and sublimation.” Through stratified exchange, diverse presentation, and in-depth speculation, it realizes students’ transformation from “input-based reading” to “output-based expression.” Sharing reading gains and experiences with others can not only improve students’ language expression ability but also broaden students’ reading horizons and knowledge scope^[7], breaking the limitations of individual reading thinking, deepening textual understanding, and achieving long-term improvement of reading literacy.

4.1. Design of stratified and progressive classroom exchange activities

Students differ significantly in reading ability, level of understanding, and expression proficiency, so in exchange and sharing, as many students as possible should be involved. When organizing exchange lessons, teachers can build a three-level progressive exchange platform—basic, improvement, and extension—to achieve teaching according to aptitude and full coverage, allowing students at different levels to participate in presentations and achieve growth.

The basic level is oriented toward all students, with emphasis on adapting to students with a weak foundation and relatively weak expression ability, taking “sorting and reviewing, consolidating cognition” as the core. Through low-difficulty activities such as content retelling, plot review, character introduction, and basic Q&A, students’ overall reading of the entire book is checked. Reading outcomes can be presented in various forms such as reading notes, drawings, and simple mind maps, helping students sort out their overall reading cognition, consolidate basic outcomes, and build confidence in expression.

The improvement level is oriented toward students with middle-level learning conditions and above, taking “in-depth interpretation and experiencing connotations” as the core. Inquiry topics and activities are designed around dimensions such as character appreciation, reenactment of classic plots, emotional experience of the text, and perception of writing features. Reading outcomes can be presented in various forms such as textbook drama performances, script writing, higher-order mind maps, and debates, guiding students to form personalized insights based on the text, ensuring that they are well-reasoned and substantive in speech.

The extension level is mainly oriented toward third-stage students or higher-order reading students, taking “speculative inquiry and transferable sublimation” as the core. Open-ended and critical inquiry topics are designed to guide students to carry out deep thinking in combination with real life, similar texts, and social cognition, to distinguish and analyze characters’ behavior, explore thematic values, and express unique views, breaking fixed thinking and cultivating knowledge transfer and critical speculative abilities. For example, debate competitions with social value and speculative value, multi-text thematic reading discussions, and other activities can be carried out. These three levels of exchange are connected layer by layer and progress in a gradient, taking into account both basic bottom-line guarantee and in-depth improvement.

4.2. Implementation paths for diverse reading outcome presentation

To better suit the learning characteristics of primary school students, a fun, diverse, and three-dimensional outcome presentation system can be built, breaking the fixed output model of a single reading reflection or oral report, allowing students to present reading gains in ways they are good at, and strengthening their

sense of reading achievement and motivation for sustained reading. The exchange and sharing of reading outcomes can be presented in multiple forms. First, fun and concrete outcomes, suitable for all students, especially fitting the learning conditions of the lower and middle stages, include reading journals, hand-drawn mind maps, character portraits, story comic strips, book posters, plot bookmarks, and so on. Through forms such as drawing, excerpting, layout design, and annotation, students concretely present textual threads and reading insights, deepening textual memory and integrating reading content in the process of creation. Second, language expression outcomes focus on oral expression and text interpretation abilities, including story speeches, recitations of classic excerpts, character dubbing, textbook drama performances, reading sharing, and so on. Through immersive language output, students restore textual scenes, interpret characters' emotions, express reading insights, and deepen emotional experience of the text. Third, written creation outcomes, suitable for middle and upper stage students, cover reading reflections, excerpt appreciation, story continuation, short character reviews, reading essays, and so on. Students are guided to transform reading insights, text interpretation, and life associations into standardized written language, achieving reading-promoted writing and the symbiosis of reading and writing. Fourth, speculative inquiry outcomes, oriented toward higher-order students, including debates on reading topics, thematic inquiry reports, cross-text comparative analysis, and so on, guide students to carry out in-depth inquiry and form systematic reading outcomes. Through class performances, display board exhibitions, group mutual evaluation, excellent work selection, and other methods, a presentation platform is built to fully affirm students' reading outcomes and continuously stimulate reading enthusiasm.

4.3. Techniques for optimizing the organization of speculative classrooms

The core value of the exchange lesson lies in the collision of thinking and the sublimation of cognition. It is necessary to step beyond the shallow model of one-way sharing, create an open and inquiry-based speculative classroom, and promote the progressive growth of students' reading thinking. This exchange lesson strategy is mainly oriented toward middle and upper stage students' classrooms. First, teachers can precisely design gradient speculative topics. Closely adhering to the core of the text, the characteristics of the learning conditions, and the key and difficult points of teaching, and abandoning shallow question-and-answer topics, layered speculative topics are designed: basic topics focus on textual details to solve shallow cognitive problems; core topics focus on textual connotations to trigger deep thinking; extension topics focus on transfer and application to achieve thinking extension. At the same time, students are encouraged to independently explore reading doubts and controversial points, respecting students' status as the subject of reading. Second, a closed-loop interactive speculative model is constructed. The process of "group discussion-independent speech-questioning and debate-teacher guidance" is adopted: first, through group discussion, all students are guaranteed expression; then, through whole-class exchange, viewpoint collision and complementary questioning are achieved; finally, the teacher provides precise guidance and integrated sublimation, correcting students' fragmented and one-sided cognition and deepening textual understanding. Finally, an inclusive evaluation orientation is adhered to. Respect the limitations of primary school students' reading cognition, tolerate personalized and immature interpretations, and do not apply a single standard answer to restrict students' thinking. Timely affirmation is given to unique and reasonable interpretations; for one-sided or biased views, students are helped to revise independently through guided questioning and peer mutual assistance, protecting students' speculative enthusiasm and innovative thinking, and making the exchange lesson a core battlefield for students' thinking growth.

5. Conclusion

Based on the requirements of the new curriculum standards and the real difficulties in primary school Chinese whole-book reading instruction, this study constructs a three-stage integrated closed-loop teaching system of “guided reading lesson–advancement lesson–exchange lesson,” clarifies the functional positioning, teaching boundaries, and core tasks of the three lesson types, and forms a progressive teaching paradigm of stimulating interest and laying the foundation before reading, deep cultivation and quality improvement during reading, and sublimation and empowerment after reading. Practice shows that the three-stage classroom effectively solves the core problems in current whole-book reading, such as confusion of lesson types, fragmented process, shallow guidance, and unsound implementation. Through the three-dimensional path of stimulating interest, teaching methods, and planning, the guided reading lesson dissolves students’ fear of difficulty in reading and builds a bridge connecting in-class and out-of-class reading; through progress management, in-depth study, and thinking empowerment, the advancement lesson achieves deep cultivation throughout the entire reading process, eliminating shallow reading and giving up halfway; through stratified exchange, diverse presentation, and speculative inquiry, the exchange lesson completes the integration of reading cognition and the sublimation of thinking. The three lesson types progress layer by layer and complement each other functionally, forming an implementable teaching paradigm adapted to primary school students’ cognitive laws, effectively promoting the transformation of Chinese teaching from “teaching texts” to “teaching reading,” and helping students develop long-term reading habits and cultivate core reading literacy.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2022, Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press.
- [2] Z,Z.Q.(2022). On Different Artistic Forms of Wholebook Reading and Its Teaching Approaches. Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method, 42(12): 103–109.
- [3] O,Y.C.F.(2021). Construction of Basic Teaching Types for “Wholebook Reading” Instruction. Journal of Fujian Institute of Education, 22(03): 25–26.
- [4] Y, T.(2024). Teaching Interpretation and Practical Strategies of the “Wholebook Reading” Learning Task Group. Chinese Language Construction, 2024(14): 31–35.
- [5] Y,X.W.(2024). How to Break the “Uniform Teaching Mode” in Wholebook Reading. People’s Education, 2024(Z2): 117–119.
- [6] L,L., &L, F.(2021). Core Issues in Wholebook Reading Teaching and Its Curriculumoriented Construction. Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Elementary Education Edition), 22(04): 61–66.
- [7] W, J.,& L, L.H. (2024). Educational Value and Practical Strategies of Wholebook Reading. Chinese Language Construction, 2024(08): 71–73.

Publisher’s note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.