

# Research on Large Unit Teaching Design Based on the “UbD” Theory from the Perspective of Chinese Core Literacy

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## Abstract

The proposal of the UbD model has essential research significance. This paper combs the current situation of the UbD model, explores the profound connection between high school Chinese in China and the UbD theory, and explores the characteristics and theoretical sources of the UbD model. By analyzing the current situation of Chinese teaching design in high schools, this paper tries to find the combination of theory and practice.

**Keywords:** UbD, Chinese mother tongue teaching, high school Chinese, teaching design

## 1. Introduction

The Understanding by Design (UbD) model originated in the United States and is a new teaching design model that takes clear learning objectives as a starting point and emphasizes the priority of teaching evaluation design over curriculum design and teaching activities. The UbD model can meet students' needs for more meaningful learning, and has significant effects in developing contemporary students' core literacy, collaborative inquiry, knowledge transfer and other capabilities. With the continuous advancement of the new curriculum reform in China, the focus of teaching has gradually shifted to promoting students' in-depth learning, improving students' knowledge understanding and transfer ability, and cultivating students' core literacy. Hence, the UbD model is compatible with the new curriculum reform in China. Classroom teaching is a vital link to promote students' comprehensive development, and effective teaching design guarantees classroom teaching effects. As one of the best teacher-friendly teaching design models, the UbD model has been promoted and market-tested by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). It has been gradually introduced into some primary and secondary school classrooms in China in recent years.

At present, research on the implementation of the UbD model in Chinese mother tongue teaching is still rare. This paper intends to take the Chinese discipline of high school in China as the research object and elaborates the theoretical basis and related concepts of the UbD model based on a review and analysis of the literature and writings related to the UbD model at home and abroad. This paper combines the UbD model with Chinese classroom teaching in high school, and verifies the applicability of the teaching design based on the UbD model in high school Chinese teaching through teaching practice.

## 2. Continuous Development of Teaching Model

With the continuous development of curriculum reform and modern educational concepts, the teaching model presents the characteristics of the times and diversity. In order to achieve a better teaching effect, front-line teachers gradually change the existing single teaching model in the actual teaching process, and explore a more suitable teaching model for students' understanding and knowledge transfer. (Tyler, Ralph W., 1994)

The Understanding by Design (UbD) model was proposed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in 1998. The main purpose of UbD-based teaching design is to break the shortcomings of conventional teaching design in that teachers focus intensely on activities and indoctrination. Its teaching design concept of “beginning with the end

in mind” advocates the final result of acquisition as the beginning and adopts reverse thinking. The UbD model is one of the representative models in contemporary teaching design, which is widely welcomed by teachers. It is also one of the best models for teachers to make teaching designs after verifying of teaching practice. (Grant Wiggins, 2016) The UbD model has been tested and promoted in many schools in the United States, but the research and application scope of the UbD model in China is still limited. It is noteworthy that the development trend should not be underestimated, and front-line teachers should research and practice in their classroom teaching.

### 3. The Implementation of the New Curriculum Standards of High School Chinese

Chinese teachers in high schools must improve on the shortcomings of conventional teaching design, break the previous teaching methods that focus on teaching and indoctrination, adopt new educational and teaching concepts, reform the way of teaching evaluation, and guide students to find their own learning methods that suit themselves. In most conventional Chinese teaching designs, teachers mainly indoctrinate knowledge to students through the lecture method, so students are less motivated in the Chinese classroom. It is impossible to determine whether students have been thoroughly acquainted with knowledge points by only evaluating students’ teaching results. Guided by the new curriculum standards, the role of teachers is more akin to a designer, that is, one who helps students learn for understanding through meaningful teaching design. (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2018) For this reason, Chinese teachers guided by the changes in Chinese curriculum standards need to adjust their way of thinking in designing teaching to make up for the shortcomings of the current teaching design. (Xu Peng, 2021) As a new teaching model, the UbD mode (full name: Understanding by Design) can try to solve many problems in traditional Chinese teaching design. This teaching design model first specifies the expected learning results, then identifies the evaluation evidence, and finally designs relevant teaching activities. The research and application of the UbD model in high school Chinese teaching will motivate front-line high school Chinese teachers to improve the shortcomings of the conventional Chinese teaching design, design the Chinese teaching content more scientifically, and thus improve the efficiency of Chinese classroom teaching. Therefore, the introduction of the UbD model into high school language teaching not only has rich theoretical significance and practical value, but also is the way for future Chinese teaching to develop in-depth and breadth.

### 4. The Proposal of Students’ Chinese Core Literacy

In March 2014, the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China issued the *Opinions of Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform and Implementing Basic Task of High Moral Values Establishment and People Cultivation*, in which the concept of core literacy system was first introduced. (Cui Yunguo, 2019) The concept of disciplinary core literacy has been proposed in the light of the characteristics of different disciplines, and the core literacy of Chinese discipline has also emerged. The implementation of Chinese teaching guided by the core literacy of Chinese discipline is the focus of current front-line teachers. Thus, some domestic scholars proposed that the teaching methods of Chinese teachers should be gradually changed. The paths of teaching design that lead to the core literacy of the discipline include: first, follow the learning ideas and adopt reverse teaching design; second, have perspective on the triple implication of knowledge and practice in-depth teaching design; third, create problem situations and put teaching design into practice. The UbD model is a teaching design process and a standard set for course-specific teaching design. It requires considering how to evaluate students to prove that they have achieved learning for understanding and the expected learning objectives.

“Meaningful learning, understanding first” is the main purpose of school teaching and a key idea of the UbD model. Applying the UbD model in high school Chinese classroom teaching can help shift the focus of high school Chinese teaching from knowledge transfer to a focus on student learning, and also help teachers truly treat students as the main subjects in the high school Chinese classroom. By applying the UbD model to high school Chinese teaching, teachers can make more reasonable choices in curriculum content design and carry out teaching design with the three steps advocated by the UbD model. The first step is to clarify the expected learning results, the second step is to set appropriate evaluation methods, and the third step is to design the corresponding teaching process. The three learning objectives of mastering knowledge and skills, understanding the meaning of learning, and achieving knowledge transfer are interlinked and better aligned with the learning development needs of high school students. The UbD model is divided into six facets of understanding: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge, which greatly expands the understanding facets in Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives and also includes high-level cognitive, emotional, and metacognitive objectives. To sum up, the application of the UbD model can change the status quo of teachers’ teaching process, which is overly focused on knowledge and ability, and achieve the goal of understanding meaning and knowledge transfer, thus promoting students’ “meaningful learning, understanding first”.

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