

# Value Implications of Unit Introduction Pages in the Unified Primary Chinese Textbooks

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## ABSTRACT

The “unit introduction pages” of the unified primary Chinese textbooks convey deep cultural, aesthetic, and teaching implications, guiding the teaching and learning of the whole unit. The cultural implications consist in the humanistic theme highlighting the culture of harmonious symbiosis and the special units highlighting the unique curriculum culture. The aesthetic implications consist in the beauty of the words interpreted by thematic annotations and the beauty of the artistic conception created by the poetic images. The teaching implications consist in the fact that Chinese elements and writing requirements contain deep learning implications and rich instructing implications. Based on explaining the cultural and aesthetic implications of “unit introduction pages”, the paper analyzes its teaching meanings to comprehensively understand and rationally use “unit introduction pages”.

**Keywords:** Unified primary Chinese textbooks, Unit introduction pages, Value implications.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The unified primary Chinese textbooks adopt the dual line of “humanistic themes” and “Chinese elements”, organizing the content of the curriculum according to units. Beginning with the first term of the third grade, there is a “unit introduction page” at the beginning of each unit. The “unit introduction pages” consist of thematic annotations, poetic images, Chinese elements, writing requirements, unit number, and other elements. The humanistic themes and special units in the “unit introduction pages” are rich in cultural implications, the thematic annotations and poetic images are rich in aesthetic implications, and Chinese elements and writing requirements are rich in teaching implications. The paper fully explores the value implications of the “unit introduction pages”, releases the maximum value, helps the teaching and learning of primary Chinese, helps teachers’ professional development, and promotes the overall development of students.

## 2. THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE “UNIT INTRODUCTION PAGES”

The unified primary Chinese textbooks for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 consist of 8 books with 62 units: 38 humanities thematic units, 8 literary form units, 4 comprehensive learning units, 4 reading teaching strategies units, and 8 writing units. Each unit carries the glorious mission of nurturing people with culture and fostering integrity and promoting the rounded development of people, and the introduction page of each unit highlights the strong cultural implications and demonstrates that “Chinese subject has irreplaceable cultural values and cultural functions”. [1]

### 2.1 Humanistic Themes Highlight Harmonious Symbiotic Culture

As the foundation of elementary education, the education of symbiosis between nature and humanity [2] is fully reflected in the “unit introduction pages”. The humanistic themes are divided into three aspects, namely, “human and nature”, “human and society” and “human and self”, highlighting the culture of harmonious symbiosis:

the harmonious symbiosis between human and nature, human and society, human and self; the symbiotic culture takes the responsibility and mission of cultural inculcation, cultural infection, and cultural inheritance.

Human and nature live in harmony. Human live with nature, and there is a symbiotic relationship between human and nature.[3] As a product of nature, human beings are dependent on nature, subject to nature, and have to live in solidarity with nature, because human beings and nature are interconnected and interact with each other as a “community”.[4] Humanities thematic units such as inquiry and exploration, unveiling and transformation involving the natural environment, the ecological environment, harmony between human and nature, and the maintenance of ecological balance are categorized as “human and nature”. The significance of the “human and nature” theme unit introduction page is to guide students to respect nature and protect it; to feel the essence of the traditional Chinese culture of “unity of heaven and human”, where human and nature are interdependent and coexist harmoniously; to promote green, low-carbon and recycling practices in daily life; to promote harmonious coexistence between human and nature; and to strive to build a life community.

Human and society live in harmony. Humanistic thematic units involving the introduction of heroes, accounts of ordinary deeds, descriptions of daily life, expressions of true feelings, and comments on profound thoughts about communities, groups, families, nations, and countries are categorized as “human and society”. The significance of the introduction page of the theme unit “human and society” is to guide students to understand the intricate relationship between human and society, which is interdependent and mutually constraining; to establish a correct view of the world, life, values, history, the country, and the nation; to abide by the social norms, correctly deal with the social problems, and reasonably utilize the social resources, so as to jointly push forward the progress of the society.

Human and self live in harmony. Humanities theme units involving emotional experience, quality shaping, art appreciation, wisdom collision, and enlightenment of human beings, life, personality, human nature, and life are categorized as “human and self”. The significance of the introductory page of the thematic unit on “human and self” is that it guides students to recognize, hone, treat, improve

and transcend themselves; to realize the pulsation of life, the beauty of life, and the true meaning of life; to understand the course of human development, to appreciate the complexity and diversity of human beings, to deconstruct the significance of human existence, and to call for a global community of shared future.

## ***2.2 Special Units Highlight Unique Curriculum Culture***

Culture is “nurturing people with culture”, to enlighten oneself, to enlighten others, and to enlighten the people of the world. Culture does not necessarily manifest itself as curriculum, but the depths of curriculum implementation must be cultural. The special unit introduction pages highlight the curriculum culture of diversity, integration, and systematic.

The curriculum culture is diversified. The elements of each “unit introduction page” are diversified in terms of numbers, language, images, requirements and objectives. The unit introduction pages are diversified with humanities theme units, genre units, integrated learning units, reading teaching strategies units, and assignment units. The unit writing style is a two-line structure of humanistic themes and Chinese elements, showing diversity.

The curriculum culture is integrated. The unified primary Chinese textbooks attach great importance to the close integration of the excellent traditional Chinese culture with the curriculum, to the close integration of the “key points of reading teaching” and the “writing requirements”, and to the close integration of humanistic themes and Chinese elements.

The curriculum culture is systematic. The reading instructional strategy units of “prediction, questioning, increasing reading speed, and purposeful reading” are gradually organized in a systematic. “Observation, imagination, writing a thing clearly, according to the order of excursions to write the scene, introduce things, the method of describing the characters, around the center of the meaning of the writing, writing a true feeling” of these writing units are designed to cultivate students’ writing abilities as the core, and are systematically presented layer by layer. These literary form units of “fairy tales, fables, myths, Chinese and foreign classic fairy tales, folktales, Chinese classics, Chinese and foreign novels, and foreign literary masterpieces” are organized in a

systematic way by focusing on the different learning objectives of different school years and in an upward spiral. The comprehensive learning units of “traditional Chinese culture, modern poetry, traveling in the kingdom of Chinese characters, and unforgettable life of primary school students” are organized in a systematic way from the surface to the inside.

### **3. THE AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNIT INTRODUCTION PAGES IN THE UNIFIED PRIMARY CHINESE TEXTBOOKS**

Each unit introduction pages has a quote that explains the unit theme, and a beautiful illustration that fits the unit theme. Theme annotations and poetic images not only interpret the themes, but also highlight the themes; they bring both visual impact and emotional feasts; they are both an experience of beauty and a journey of beauty.

#### ***3.1 Theme Annotations Render the Beauty of Words***

Theme annotations are located in the upper left of the unit introduction pages, explaining the connotation of the unit theme, and its language is characterized by the beauty of simplicity, rhetoric, and imagination.

Theme annotations present the beauty of simplicity. The theme annotations are mostly short sentences, with symmetrical structure, harmonious phonology, a strong sense of rhythm, and musical beauty. They are catchy and powerful and are easy to have a lingering sound.

Thematic annotations present rhetorical beauty. The theme annotation directly quotes the famous sayings of ancient and modern Chinese and foreign celebrities, which is persuasive and enlightening, and shows the beauty of literary grace and culture. At least one rhetorical device is used in each paragraph of the theme annotation including metaphor, parallelism, personification, hyperbole, antithesis, metonymy and repetition. For example, “horizontal, vertical, left-falling and right-falling stroke, these strokes make up Chinese characters, which in turn make up wonderful writings”(Grade5 Term2 Unit3), which utilizes hyperbole and metonymy.

Theme annotations present the beauty of imagination. First, the use of ellipses creates unlimited space for imagination. For example,

“Look, the flowers are blooming quietly. Listen, the bees are whispering...Nature is so marvelous that if you pay attention, you will discover something new” (Grade3 Term2 Unit4). Second, the blank space is exactly where the reader’s thinking extends. For example, “Fable is a mirror of life”(Grade3 Term2 Unit2), reflecting the sweets and bitters of life and the colors of life, and mapping the truth, virtue and beauty of human and the false, evil and ugly. Readers need to open their minds so that they can savor the wordless realm in the blank space.

#### ***3.2 The Poetic Images Create the Beauty of Artistic Conception***

The background paintings in the unit introduction pages, just like the poems, words and fugues, quietly exude the beauty of the mood, giving readers the beauty of inculcation.

Imagery is chosen sparingly and precisely. The background painting of each unit introduction page centers on the theme, selects imagery accurately, and silently conveys beauty. For example, in a background painting of “fairy tale world” theme(Grade3 Term1 Unit3), there are dancing flowers, singing stars and talking books. These three scenes are organized in an orderly manner, singing a song about imagination and fairy tales. In a background painting of “aspirations and wishes” theme (Grade6 Term2 Unit4), there are pine and bamboo that do not wither in winter, as well as plum blossoms that bloom in winter. Three Friends of Winter symbolize the tenacity of life, and more importantly, the noble character of traditional Chinese culture.

The color collocation of the background painting is very ingenious. The color choice of each unit introduction page background painting maps the editor’s ingenuity. The unit introductory page background picture of the third and fourth grade, more use of green, blue, red, yellows, and other main colors. These color combinations are harmonious and create a sense of joy, brightness and vitality. The background paintings of the unit introduction pages in grades fifth and sixth are mostly in pure hue, with a single but not monotonous color that can reflect the unit theme, rich in meaning without losing depth. In the first term of sixth grade, light gray is used to highlight the theme of “revolutionary years”(Grade6 Term1 Unit2); Lu Xun’s avatar in dark gray is used to highlight the theme of “getting close to Lu Xun”(Grade6 Term1 Unit8); and dark yellow,

emerald green, azure, and other pure tones are used to highlight different themes.

The artistic conception of the background painting is beautiful and rich. The background painting of each unit introduction page has different themes and artistic conceptions. Few and exquisite combinations of imagery, ingenious and wonderful colors perfectly match, these build beautiful pictures, to create fresh and bright, tranquil and leisurely, elegant and faraway, implicit, rough and bold, compassionate, and culturally rich. This kind of aesthetic teaching that moistens things in silence is imperceptible, refreshing, and timeless.

#### **4. THE TEACHING IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNIT INTRODUCTION PAGES IN THE UNIFIED PRIMARY CHINESE TEXTBOOKS**

Tao Xingzhi once said, “A good teacher does not teach, does not teach students, but teaches students to learn.” The “unit introduction pages” in the unified primary Chinese textbooks are the “good teachers” which contain the implications of students’ learning and teachers’ teaching, teaching students to learn and teachers to teach.

##### ***4.1 Chinese Elements and Writing Requirements Contain Deep Learning Implications***

Chinese elements and writing requirements in the unit introduction pages contain the learning implications of self-directed learning, problem-oriented and thinking development.

The implications of self-directed learning are strong. First, the content of self-directed learning is precise. Chinese elements in the unit introduction pages focus on reading knowledge about “words, sentences, paragraphs and articles”, as well as the reading ability requirements of “Hearing, articulating, perusing, and composing”. Writing requirements point to writing content about “people, events, scenes, feelings and objects”. The specific and focused learning content ensures the demands of students’ effective self-directed learning. Second, the methods of self-directed are accurate. Chinese elements in the unit introduction pages clarify the methods of reading about “tasting, understanding, thinking, discerning and appreciating”. Writing requirements clarify the methods of writing learning about “observation, imagination, creation and expression”. Third, the target of self-directed

learning is clear. The teaching objective is “the expected teaching effect”, [5] which is a regulation of the teaching tasks that need to be completed within a specific time. Chinese elements and writing requirements in the unit introduction pages implicit students’ target of self-directed learning: improving the ability to learn Chinese independently, developing a sense of Chinese learning method, and enhancing Chinese literacy.

The implications of problem-oriented are profound. Problem-solving is one of the core competencies for student development in China, which is characterized by being good at discovering problems, being diligent in asking questions, and being interested and enthusiastic in solving problems. The implications of problem-oriented in the unit introduction pages are manifested in three dimensions: discovering problems, facing problems, and solving problems, which point to the cultivation of students’ problem-solving competence. Chinese elements in some unit introduction pages directly and clearly “ask questions”, and cultivate students’ ability to read deeply, think deeply, and discover problems keenly. Words such as “how”, “which aspects” and “how to” are frequently used in the Chinese elements in some unit introductions, which directly express the problems, guiding students to carry out in-depth reading experiences with the key questions, and soberly face up to the problems. Some Chinese elements directly encourage students to play subjective initiative, with the help of tools, consciously solve the problem. For example, “be able to ask questions that you do not understand and try to solve them in reading” (Grade4 Term2 Unit2).

The thinking development has profound implications. Thinking is valuable in learning. As the most beautiful flower on earth, thinking is the basis of all human activities, and is the greatest subjective power source for human to understand and transform the world. Chinese elements and writing requirements in unit introduction pages cultivate students “curiosity, desiring for knowledge, respecting for true knowledge, the courage to explore and innovation, and developing the habit of acting thinking” [6]. Based on developing students’ image thinking, highly cultivate their abstract thinking such as rational thinking, inductive generalization, logical reasoning, and partial argumentation. While paying attention to the development of students’ convergent thinking, focus on their multi-angle thinking and multi-thinking to solve problems. While paying

attention to the development of students' conventional thinking, pay more attention to the development of their creative thinking.

#### **4.2 Chinese Elements and Writing Requirements have Rich Teaching Implications**

The teaching implications of Chinese elements and writing requirements in unit introduction pages mainly focus on three aspects: teaching objectives, teaching important points, and teaching methods.

Objectives for teaching design with a long-term perspective. Long-range design of teaching objectives refers to the scientific and reasonable design of teaching objectives in the face of the different cognitive levels and thinking styles of students of different school years, as well as the phasing and consistency of teaching objectives, dealing with the relationship between local and overall knowledge of Chinese, and dealing with the relationship between students' stage development and long-term development. First, Objectives for teaching design with a long-term perspective. The reading strategy units based on the characteristics of reading psychology, hierarchically develop students' reading literacy. The three humanities themes of "human and nature", "human and society" and "human and self" are arranged orderly and staggered in each grade. The literary genre units pay attention to the teaching objectives of literary genres at each key stage and inculcate and infect students with the help of excellent cultural works. Second, long-range design the writing teaching objectives. The third grade emphasizes observation and the joy of writing; the fourth grade emphasizes organization and the true expression of self-feelings; the fifth grade emphasizes method and the use of appropriate language to highlight the main points; and the sixth grade emphasizes thinking and self-expression and communication with others.

Accurately determine teaching important points. The clear determination of teaching important points is an important prerequisite for Chinese teachers to carry out "low-cost, great-effective" teaching. The breakthrough of teaching important points is the teaching goal that a unit, a text, and a Chinese class must achieve, which is the important content of teaching design. Chinese elements and writing requirements in unit introduction pages explicitly imply the teaching important point of each unit, implicitly imply the teaching important point of each text, and each writing. First, clear the

unit reading and writing teaching important points. Take the theme of "Animism" (Grade5 Term1 Unit1) as an example. Chinese element in this unit introduction page is "preliminary understanding how the text expresses feelings with the help of specific things", the writing requirement is "writing a thing to express one's feelings". The teaching important point of this unit of reading and teaching texts, as well as self-reading texts, and writing "*My favorite things*" is to express unique feelings through specific things. Second, clear teaching focus of each text. The teaching important points of reading and writing in this unit focus on different things, different features, and different emotions, but feelings are determined by objectives, contents are changed by feelings, the teaching important point of each text has the same goal, all pointing to "different objectives, different feelings".

Scientifically use teaching methods. The teaching method of combining reading and writing highlights the unity of instrumental and humanistic in Chinese teaching. Chinese elements and writing requirements in unit introduction pages imply a combination of reading and writing teaching methods, which not only show the instrumental of language learning, communication, and application, but also highlight the humanity of excellent culture at all times to promote students' spiritual growth and cultural cultivation. The teaching important point of the "animism" unit reading and writing mentioned above focuses on "specific objectives (characteristics) — different feelings", with a clear center, a focus on key points, and consistent reading and writing, reading promotes writing, writing promotes reading, they promote each other. Reading is absorption, writing is output. The dual thinking practice of forward and reverse thinking makes reading and writing to form a huge synergy, in the expanding and deepening reading strengthen the use of language, in strengthening language using expand and deepen the reading, and constantly improve students' Chinese literacy. In addition, the well-proportioned and multiple teaching methods make it clear that Chinese is a tools for communication and thinking; show that Chinese itself is culture, carries culture, and inherits culture. At the reading strategy level, teachers guide students to learn and use various practical reading methods such as fast reading, browsing, skipping, guessing, group reading, as well as discontinuous text reading, and retrieval reading. When it comes to teaching reading., teachers guide students to "understand difficult words", "summarize the main idea of paragraphs", "retell stories", "feel distinct

character images”, and “experience thoughts and feelings”. When it comes to teaching writing, teachers guide students to “write down the observed things clearly”, “write down the characteristics of liking animals”, and “use actions, language, and expressions to describe the inner feelings of characters”. At the teaching level of holistic education., teachers guide students to “collect information about traditional festivals, communicate customs and habits of festivals, and write about the process of celebrating festivals”.

## 5. CONCLUSION

There are no set rules for teaching, but it has its own strategy. The key to successful teaching is to use the right techniques. Primary school Chinese teachers deeply understand the cultural implications of the “unit introduction pages”, deeply appreciate the aesthetic implications of the “unit introduction”, and deeply comprehend the teaching implications of the “unit introduction pages”, so as to cultivate students’ Chinese core literacy of cultural confidence, language use, thinking ability, and aesthetic creativity.

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