

Exploration of Primary School English Innovative Homework Design Strategies in the Context of “Double Reduction” From a Multi-Dimensional Perspective

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council have issued the *Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Students in Compulsory Education*, proposing ways to comprehensively reduce the excessive academic burden on students and make homework assignments more scientific and reasonable. Since the promulgation and implementation of the *Double Reduction* policy, schools and educators have been exploring new modes of homework management, so it is urgent and necessary to conduct related research. This study proposes strategies for optimizing the after-school English homework in the upper elementary grades in multiple subjects from multiple perspectives. Schools should strengthen guidance management training and clarify teachers' responsibilities; teachers should improve their homework management skills in three aspects: awareness, homework design forms, and homework evaluation; students should improve their homework self-management awareness and ability; and parents should do a good job at home of monitoring and motivating their children.

Keywords: *Double Reduction* policy, homework design, elementary school English.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued the policy *Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Off-Campus Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education*, referred to as the *Double Reduction* policy. In terms of homework, this policy clearly mentioned that the homework burden of students in compulsory education should be reduced, and a series of measures should be taken to solve the problems of excessive homework burden and low-quality homework design for these students.

In recent years, reducing this burden has become a hot topic, and the phrase “double reduction” also became one of the top ten catchphrases in Chinese education in 2021. Students in compulsory education had a series of problems, such as too much homework, too much pressure, low-quality homework, a single form of homework, etc.

The *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2011 edition) clearly mentioned

that English can improve students' thinking quality and language application, and homework is an important way to do this. English homework, as an important link to promoting students' English development, needs to strengthen its scientific arrangement and management.

Based on the above reasons, this paper aims to study and analyze the advantages and problems of the after-school homework design of primary school English worthy of reference and promotion under the *Double Reduction* policy, to propose optimization suggestions and methods in view of the shortcomings, to explore and innovate the English homework design strategy, and to provide reference for teaching practice. It will do so in order to give full play to the true value of homework in its real sense and to promote the healthy and all-round development of students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Domestic Studies on Assignment Design

Education originated early in China; its developmental history is long, and its educational theory

is rich. However, there is still a lack of research on homework after the *Double Reduction* policy. This paper mainly classifies and summarizes three aspects of the existing theoretical research: homework design, implementation, and evaluation.

The relevant literature shows that most domestic scholars hold the view on homework design that homework content should be rich, its quality should be improved, and its forms should be diversified.

Chen (2001) believed that students' interest should be stimulated through various forms of homework, so that students can really enjoy doing homework. This would change the concept of "asking me to do homework" into the concept of "I want to do homework."

Guo (2009) believed that teachers should select and edit exercises based on learning objectives and design flexible assignments to meet the different learning needs of different students when assigning assignments.

Xiao (2014) believed that against the background of "reducing the burden," teachers should refrain from "sea of questions tactics" in homework assignments and instead design typical homework to be more efficient after class. Teachers should design hierarchical assignments that can be adapted to individual differences among students and cultivate students' autonomous learning ability; interesting homework that uses students' interests and stimulates them to take the initiative to learn, to explore, and to practice; and open homework in the three dimensions of open answers, open forms, and open content to stimulate students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning.

Yang (2021) believed that homework design should control the quantity of homework, improve its quality, and increase choice to meet the needs of students' basic development and personality development.

The implementation of homework involves teachers, students, parents, and other factors, so the implementation has a certain degree of complexity and uncertainty. Implementing a workload reduction smoothly requires the joint efforts of multiple people.

Yang (2021) proposed improving the homework design in primary and secondary schools from three aspects: teachers, teaching and research groups, and schools. Teachers should improve the implementation of homework continuously through the closed loop of planning, implementation, and reflection; the teaching and research groups should also strengthen teaching and research; schools should improve the mechanism for teaching, strengthen the overall management of homework.

Luo and Meng (2021) believed that the optimization of homework burden must first keep pace with the times and requires updating assignment value concept. Secondly, a hierarchical homework design system should be constructed to provide the most suitable education for each student. Finally, it is necessary to establish a more comprehensive and balanced homework evaluation mechanism oriented around core literacy, give full play to the comprehensive function of operation evaluation, and give full play to the value of comprehensive education.

Ning and Yang (2022) believed that the reason for the small effect of the previous homework burden reduction policy was that it did not touch upon the competition for educational interests that lie behind the homework burden. Therefore, they proposed to start with the rational distribution of educational resources and benefits and to divide clearly the rights and responsibilities of schools, families, and society in the process of reducing the burden. Schools should not reduce the burden while, at the same time, families and society increase the burden by their own will.

The idea behind modern curriculum evaluation is to pay attention to developmental evaluation and incentive evaluation, which has been gradually accepted by most scholars and teachers in recent years.

Chen (2001) believed that, in homework evaluation, different evaluation methods should be implemented according to the academic abilities of different students. It is necessary to look at the problem of homework from the perspective of children and pay attention to academic abilities. When assigning targeted assignments, teachers should adopt an evaluation method that is suitable to the form of their assignments. Only in this way can evaluation and education be personalized.

Xing (2020) believed that, in teaching practice, homework design should consider the three-step path of "give → give less → give nothing," which is like holding a child's hand and teaching them to walk but being ready to let go at any time. Homework design should also consider practical, interesting, optional, and authentic elements to stimulate students' motivation to take the initiative to do homework, and return the right to study, think, and take initiative to students.

He and Liu (2021) believed that good evaluation and feedback can arouse students' interest and sense of gain and stimulate their expectations and enthusiasm for homework; thus, it can make students more actively and conscientiously devote themselves to the next assignment. In their feedback on homework, teachers can display all kinds of excellent homework and set rewards according to the actual situation. They should encourage students' progress in a timely manner, so that each child finds themselves capable and has a sense of gain.

Ning and Yang (2022) believed that if homework reduction cannot cope with the fierce academic competition system, it will only be a formality, and students and parents will tacitly follow the previous model. Therefore, the policy of reducing homework burden should be promoted synchronously with the current reform of educational evaluation, and they should jointly adhere to the educational concept of comprehensive education. Specifically, evaluation in compulsory education should further deemphasize its screening function, increase the weight given to morality, physical education, beauty, and labor, and fully implement formative evaluation and developmental evaluation.

2.2 Foreign Studies on Assignment Design

There are many differences between domestic and foreign teachers in the design of extracurricular assignments, and there are many lessons to be learned from the way other countries design their assignments. In Japan, homework for elementary and middle school students pays close attention to the reality of students' lives. For example, teachers assign homework to elementary school students to "design your own field trip," "play with three or more children," "listen to old people tell stories about the past," and so on (Zhou 2007). The extracurricular homework of American and Japanese secondary school students features inquiry, practice, fun, and integration more prominently.

One of the major trends in the development of education in the world today is social participation in education, and among the various forces of social participation, family participation has a great influence on primary and secondary school students. The Center for Family Studies at Johns Hopkins University has proposed a special form of homework—interactive homework, or TIPS (van Voorhis, 2004). Its purpose is to allow teachers to make homework a more positive experience for students and their families.

Improving students' achievement is the primary purpose of homework for many teachers. The second purpose of homework is to increase students' motivation and improve self-regulation (Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). It has also been suggested that this should be the primary purpose of homework assignments. Warton (2001), for example, argued that enhancing students' motivation and self-regulation is the primary reason why many teachers assign homework. Eunsook (2004), after investigating the motivations and preferences that influence students to complete assignments in terms of dimensions such as environment and learning styles, clearly indicated that student-centered and reasonable assignments can achieve the best results. In addition, the teacher's attitude towards the assignment affects the quality of the assignment and the effort students put into their work (Trautwein, 2007).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Questionnaire Method

This study used a questionnaire survey because it can objectively and efficiently clarify the common characteristics, and it is simple to administer. In order to ensure the objectivity of the survey, to eliminate any concerns potential subjects might have about participating in the study, and to maintain the authenticity and effectiveness of the questionnaire data, the questionnaire was conducted anonymously. Because of the age characteristics of the target student group, this questionnaire was designed with 25 single closed multiple-choice questions. This type of question is more suitable for primary school students to answer and could improve the efficiency of the data collection and reliability of the questionnaire.

3.2 Interview Method

An interview survey methodology was used to uncover the subjective feelings of different participants on homework design management, as their ideas could well reflect the real problems in homework design management. An interview method can obtain real and reliable information through in-depth one-to-one or one-to-many conversations. It can supplement the information obtained from a questionnaire survey, make up for the shortcomings in the questionnaire survey, and obtain in-depth first-hand information.

The interview survey method, however, also has its obvious disadvantages. Firstly, the interview survey method cannot control factors such as emotional pressure on the subjects. Therefore, in order to make the interviewees feel as relaxed and carefree during the interviews as possible, the interviews in this study were designed as one-to-one interviews and took place in a separate office. Secondly, the interview survey method also has the disadvantages of small sample size and consuming more manpower and material resources. Therefore, in this study, one representative from each of the three groups of parents, students, and teachers was selected to reflect the most widespread and common real situation.

4. Sampling

4.1 Introduction

In order to understand the implementation of English homework in primary schools under the *Double Reduction* policy, this study selected teachers, students, and parents of the primary school Shenzhen Huangpu School to participate in a questionnaire survey and interview. The study analyzed the content, strategies, and evaluation of English homework from multiple perspectives and proposed improvement strategies based on its analysis to provide a reference and supplement for teaching practice.

4.2 Subjects

In order to understand the implementation of English homework in first-line primary schools after the *Double Reduction* policy and obtain first-hand information, this study took the Primary School Department of Shenzhen Huangpu School as its object of investigation.

Huangpu Primary School is in Futian District in the center of Shenzhen. Compared to all the country's schools, schools in Shenzhen have abundant teachers, many famous teachers, and advanced teaching practices and reform concepts, and their teaching practices and reform practices are worthy references for other cities in the country.

Huangpu School is a nine-year public school that is representative of most public schools in China. Its operation strategy can be used as a reference for public primary schools nationwide. Huangpu School has had a history of 20 years since it was founded in 2003. The philosophy on which it is run and its model are relatively mature, so the research data are reliable.

The questionnaire in this research asked about Grade 4 and Grade 5 students from the Primary school of Huangpu School. The author chose the grade range of these students based on the following considerations.

Firstly, English is not a main course in the first and second grades of primary school, and a final examination is not conducted for English subjects in these grades. Policy also stipulates that no written homework will be given to freshmen and sophomores. Therefore, first and second graders were not included in the survey.

Since the third grade, English is included in the three major subjects. However, considering the young age of third-grade students and their weak cognition and ability to understand, they might not be able to understand parts of the questions and options in the questionnaire, so third-grade students were not included in the main scope of this survey.

Secondly, the sixth grade was about to undergo the examination that leads from primary school to junior high school, so it was facing a certain amount of pressure of admission. Therefore, in order to improve examination results, the amount and difficulty of homework after class might have been increased, and the amount of written homework might also have been increased, which would have a certain impact on the data.

Based on the above considerations, sixth grade students were not included in this survey. Therefore, the author selected students in grade 4 and 5 as the targets of the questionnaire survey. Students in these grades have

been exposed to compulsory English courses for a while, have a certain understanding of the mode of English homework, and have a mature attitude toward and habit for completion of English homework. Secondly, the cognitive ability and level of understanding of the students in this period have developed to some extent, and they can understand and fill in a questionnaire well. This ensured the reliability of the questionnaire data.

The subjects of the interviews were a fourth-grade English teacher, a student, and a parent from Primary School of Huangpu School. The interviews sought to gain information on the actual situation and strategies used during the implementation of homework design management from multiple subjects and aspects. Among them, an English teacher who had been working for three years was selected as an interview participant. He had practical teaching experience but not long teaching experience. He was at a stage of constantly exploring and actively responding to national policies to innovate with new teaching methods, and he had a teaching and research spirit of breaking through conventional teaching concepts. We selected a student whose grades were at the middle level in the class taught by that teacher, as well as that student's parent, to participate in interviews. This student and this parent reflected the situation of most students and parents and were representative to a certain extent.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Question Type Distribution in Questionnaire Survey

This questionnaire consisted of 25 single closed multiple-choice questions. The first question asked for basic information about gender. Questions 2 to 4 were about understanding homework assignments, questions 5 to 7 were about the form of homework assignments, questions 8 to 10 were about the content of the assignments, questions 11 to 13 were about the quantity of assignments, questions 14 to 15 were about the difficulty of the assignments, and questions 16 to 19 were about the specific implementation of the assignments and results of completed assignments. Questions 20 to 25 were about homework evaluation.

5.2 Data Collection

The researcher distributed questionnaires to two grade four classes and one grade five class in the Primary School of Huangpu School in Shenzhen on February 13, 2023 and conducted a formal questionnaire survey.

Two of the classes took advantage of time during their information technology class and used a computer and the questionnaire star applet to complete the questionnaire. In the other class, because there was no information technology class that day, the head teacher sent the questionnaire to the parent group, and the parents supervised the students in finishing it after class. A total of 132 questionnaires were collected,

among which 69 were from male students, accounting for 52.3% of the total, and 63 were from female students, accounting for 47.7% of the total. The gender distribution of the survey group was relatively uniform. The questionnaire content was real and reliable, so it could provide favorable data support for this study.

Three interviewees were interviewed on February 22, 2023 based on the designed interview outline. The interviews took advantage of a parents'

meeting when they visited the school, and one-on-one face-to-face interviews were conducted with students, parents, and teachers then. The interview process and content were recorded by means of audio recording and then transcribed into text form and presented in this article.

5.3 Data Analysis

5.3.1 Understanding of English Homework

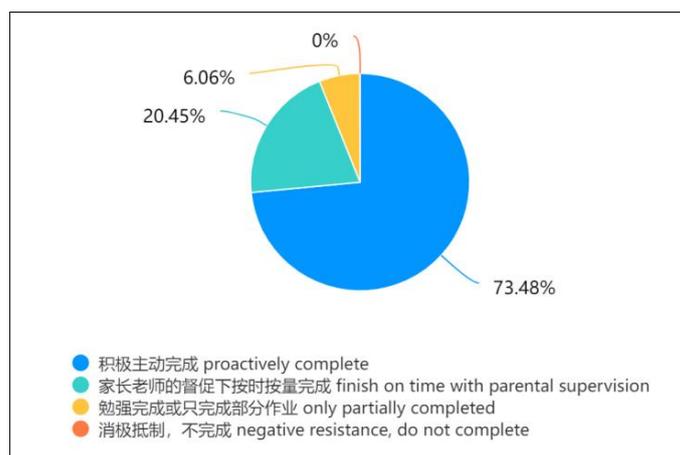


Figure 1

As can be seen from figure 1 in answer to the question about “attitude toward homework,” 97 students said they could take the initiative to complete homework, accounting for 73.48% of the total number. Twenty-seven students said that they could complete the work on time under the supervision of parents and teachers, accounting for 20.45% of the total number of students. There were eight students who could only barely complete or partially complete the homework, accounting for 6.06% of the total. No one expressed passive resistance to homework or lack of completion.

Therefore, we can see that nearly three-quarters of the students could take the initiative to complete the homework and had a good attitude toward it. About a quarter of the students lacked self-control and had to be

prodded by teachers and parents to complete or only partially complete their homework. No student thought it was appropriate to passively resist homework or not to complete it.

Therefore, most students had a good attitude toward homework and completed their homework with an active attitude. However, more than a quarter of students still passively accepted their homework assignments and had poor self-control in completing their homework. They did not give full play to their main role in completing their homework, did not give full play to their subjective initiative, and did not have a full and comprehensive understanding of completing their homework.

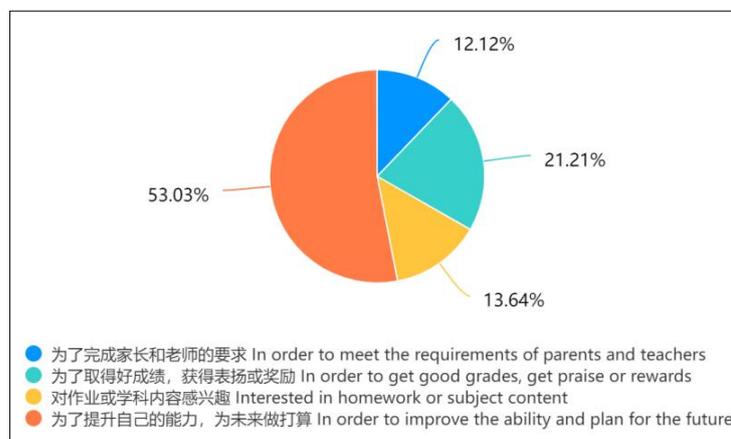


Figure 2

As can be seen from figure 2, in response to the question about “the reason for completing homework,” 70 students thought that completing homework was meant to improve their ability accounting for 53.03% of the total number. Twenty-eight people thought that completing homework was to be done to get good grades, praise, or rewards; that external motivation might affect these students’ internal motivation for learning. Only 18

people said that they finished the homework because they were interested in the homework or the subject content, accounting for 13.64% of the total number. There were 16 people who said that they finished homework to fulfill the requirements of their parents and teachers or to cope with teachers and parents; this group of students did not correctly understand the purpose of completing homework.

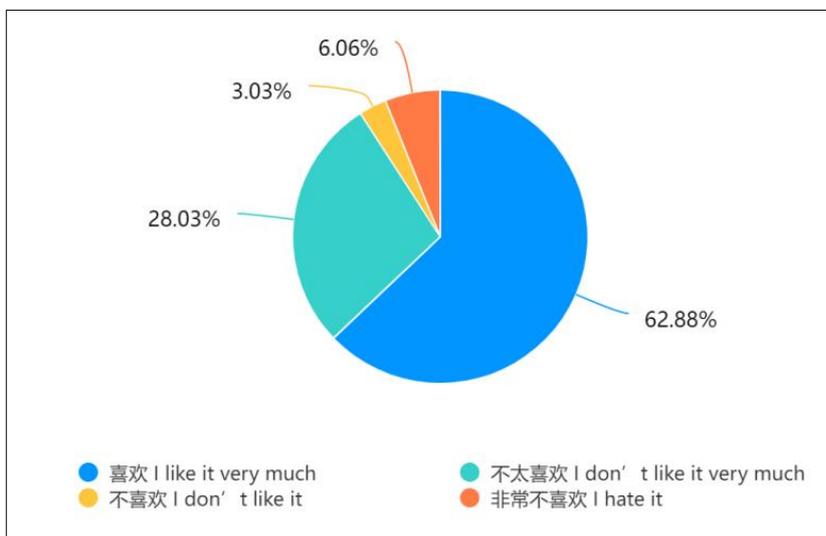


Figure 3

As can be seen from figure 3, 83 people said they liked homework, accounting for 62.88% of the total number. Thirty-seven people said they did not like it, accounting for 28.03% of the total; four people expressed dislike, accounting for 3.03% of the total; and eight people expressed strong dislike, accounting for 6.06% of the total.

The researcher asked the teacher in the interviews, “What do you think is the main purpose of English homework?” The teacher said, “When I assign homework generally the main purpose is to consolidate

the knowledge learned in the classroom, to exercise the students’ ability to use knowledge, mainly in order to get good grades in the exam, because the primary school stage is still very important, so the main purpose of homework, I think, or for their future learning, is to lay a good foundation of knowledge.” It can be seen that the teacher could not fully understand the function and purpose of homework, ignoring the function of homework to educate people and emphasizing only the effect of homework on knowledge and skills.

5.3.2 The Form of Homework

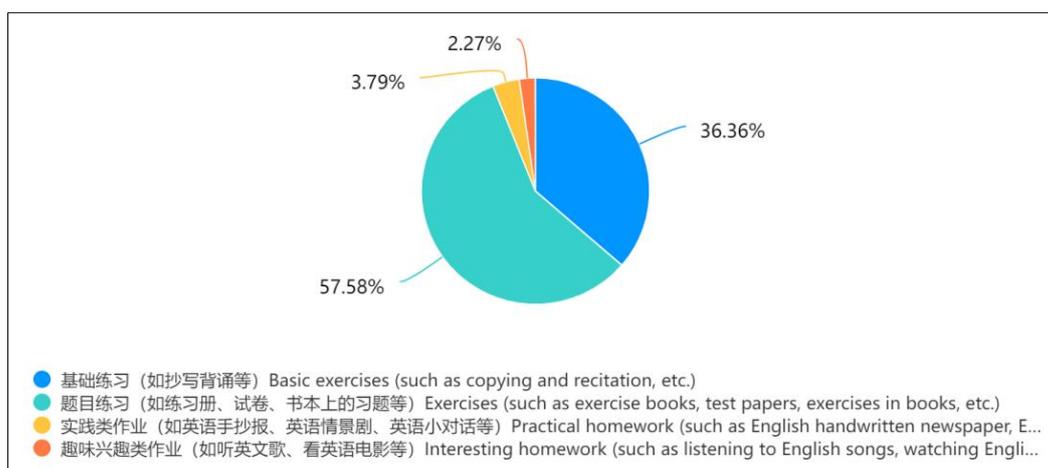


Figure 4

As can be seen from figure 4, in answer to the question about “the form of homework usually assigned by teachers,” 76 people chose the topic to practice, accounting for 57.58% of the total number. Forty-eight people chose basic exercises, accounting for 36.36

percent of the total. Only five people chose practical homework, and three people chose fun homework, accounting for 3.79% and 2 percent of the total number respectively.

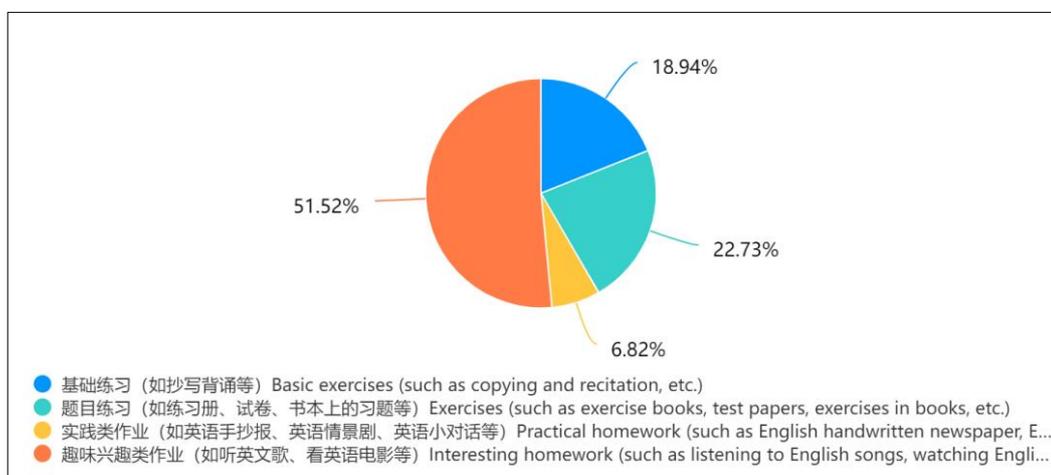


Figure 5

As can be seen from figure 5, in answer to the question, “What kind of homework do you like?”, 68 people chose interest-based homework, more than half of the total number. Twenty-five people chose basic exercises, and 30 people chose topic exercises, accounting for 18.94% and 22.73% of the total number of people respectively. Only nine students chose practical assignments, accounting for 6.82% of the total.

assignment given as English homework to the students in this study were topic exercises and basic exercises. The teacher still regarded traditional consolidation homework as the main form of assignment, although it is too simple and mechanical and lacks interest and inquiry. The most popular form of homework favored by students was interest-based homework. However, in actual practice, only three people thought that this kind of homework was the main form of homework assigned by teachers. This shows that the current form of homework cannot meet students’ interest in English learning.

It can be seen from the distribution of answers to the above two questions that the main forms of

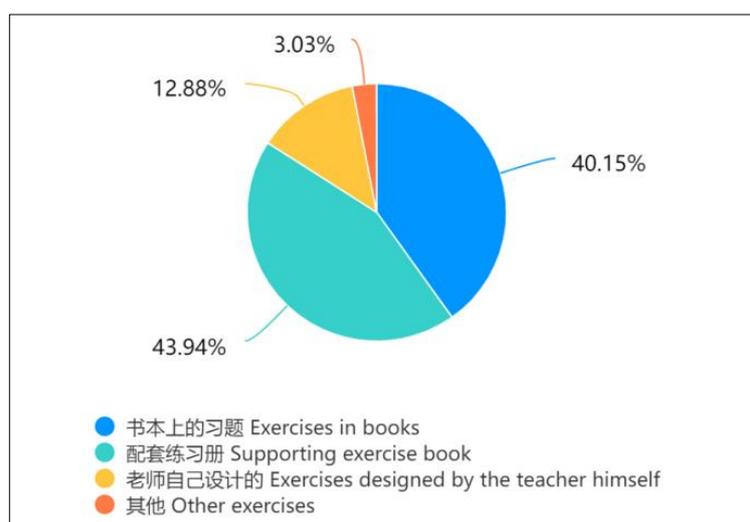


Figure 6

As can be seen from figure 6, in answer to the question about “the source of homework,” 40.15% and 43.94% of students chose the matching exercise book and exercises in the exercise book, which shows that the teacher was making good use of the existing teaching

materials and exercise resources. 12.88% and 3.03% of the students chose exercises designed by the teacher or other exercises. The source of homework was single and narrow, and the teacher did not prepare and design suitable homework according to the actual situation of

the students. Teachers cannot simply copy and use the existing textbooks and problem sets, but should enrich the sources and forms of homework.

To get a better idea of how students felt about the type of homework they were given, the researchers asked the questions “Do you like your English homework? Why?” and “What kind of homework do you like? Why?” These two questions were asked in the student interview. The student said, “The homework assigned by the teacher is usually copied, is recited, or is exercises. I think English homework is OK, because

copying and reciting are not a waste of time, nor do they require too much thinking. But I prefer active or hands-on homework because it’s more fun and less boring.” This shows that English homework is monotonous and boring. Students like it simply because it is easy, does not waste time, and does not require thinking. In the long run, this form of homework will kill children’s creativity, is not conducive to the cultivation of children’s thinking, and will develop children’s lazy thinking habits.

5.3.3 Content of Homework

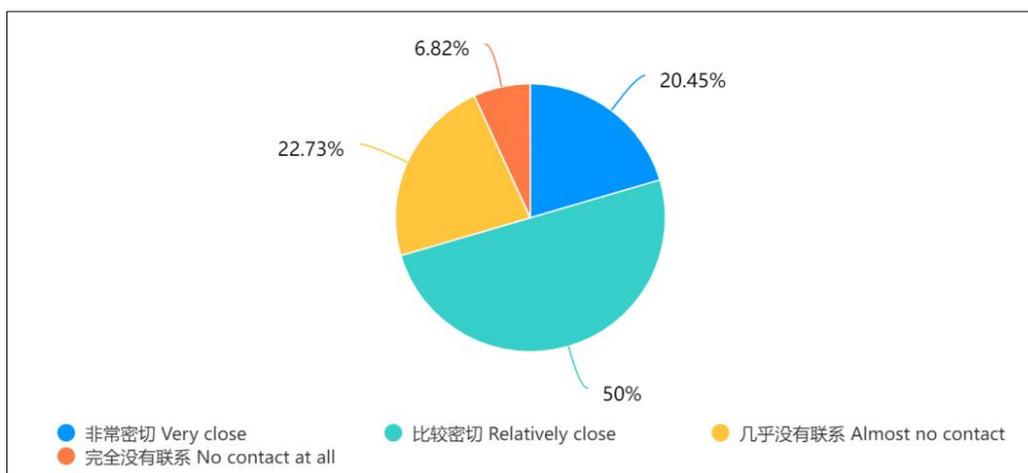


Figure 7

As can be seen from figure 7, in answer to the question about “the connection between homework content and real life,” half of the students thought the connection was close. Only 27 people, accounting for 20.45% of the total, thought that the homework content

was very close to daily life. Thirty people, 22.73% of the total, thought that the homework content had little to do with daily life. There were even nine people, 6.82% of the total, who thought the homework content had nothing to do with daily life.

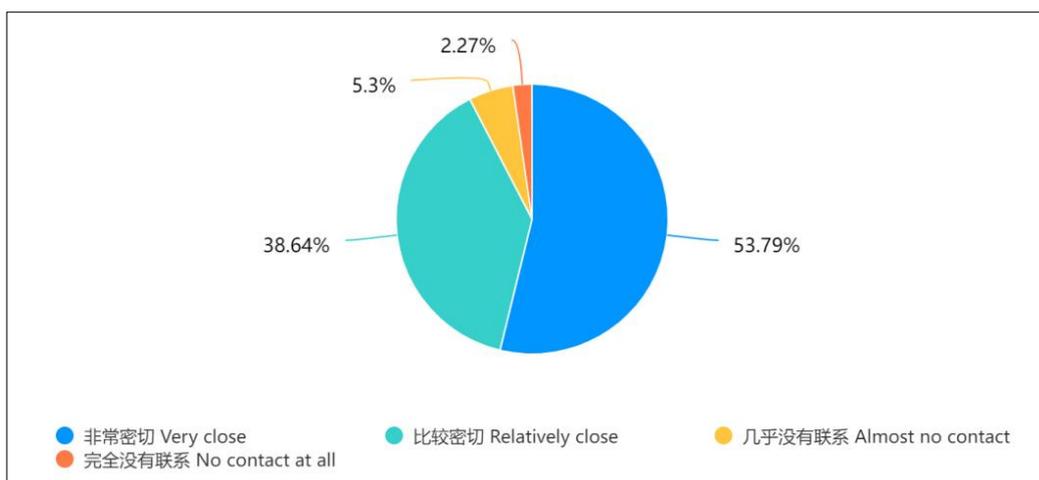


Figure 8

As can be seen from figure 8, in answer to the question about “the connection between homework content and classroom learning content,” 71 people thought the connection was very close, accounting for 53.79% of the total number of people, and 51 people,

accounting for 38.64% of the total number, who believed that the relationship was close. Seven, or 5.3 percent, said there was little or no connection, and three people, or 2.27 percent of the total, said there was no connection at all.

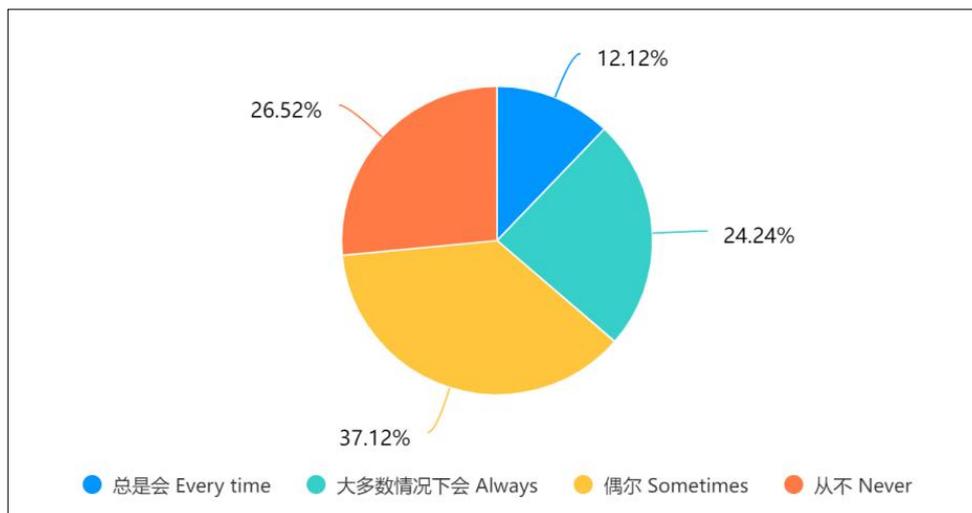


Figure 9

As can be seen from figure 9, in answer to the question “Does the teacher assign homework according to students’ interests?”, 16 people chose *always yes* accounting for 12.12% of the total number. Thirty-two people chose *yes in most cases*, accounting for 24.24% of the total; 49 people, making up 37.12 percent of the total, chose *occasionally*; and 35 people chose *never*, accounting for 26.52% of the total.

As can be seen from the distribution of the answers to the above three questions, the teacher did not design the homework based on students’ practical interests and real lives and did not make the homework student-oriented. However, in terms of the connection between homework content and classroom content, most students thought that the connection was close and that the teachers did well on this point.

5.3.4 The Amount of Homework

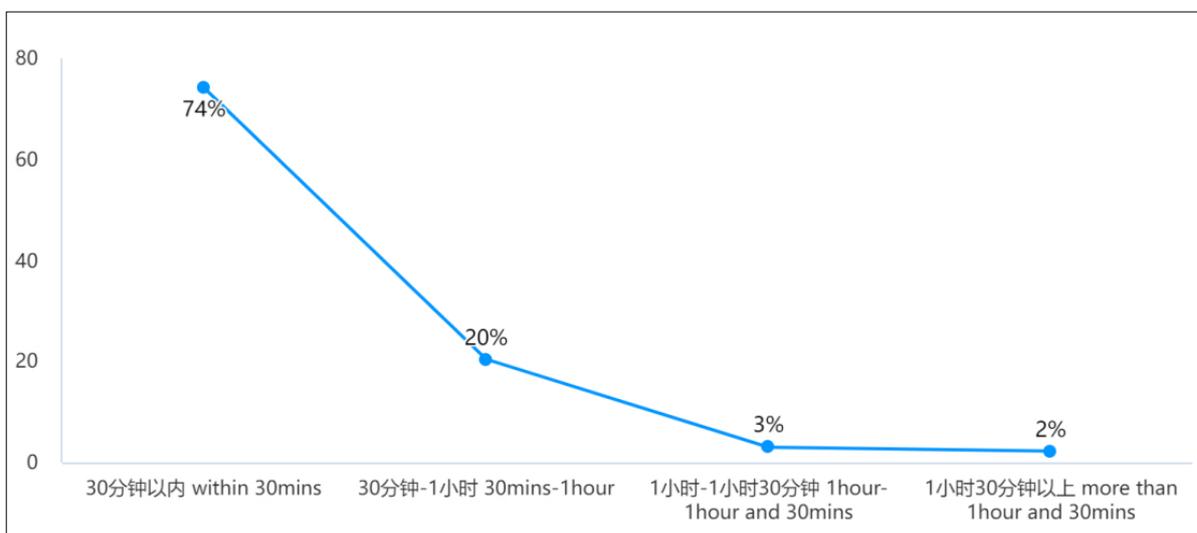


Figure 10

In answer to the question about “time to finish homework,” 74% of the students thought that the homework could be completed in 30 minutes, 20% of the

students thought that the homework could be completed in 30 minutes to an hour, and only 5% of the students thought that the homework needed more than an hour.

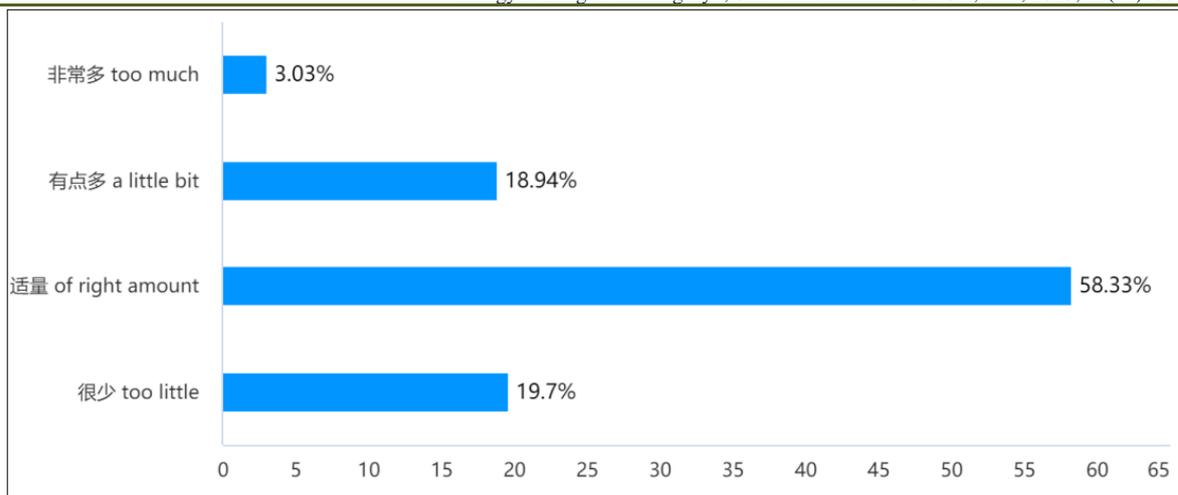


Figure 11

When asked about the number of homework assignments, only four people thought the number of assignments was very high. There were 25 people who thought the amount of homework was a little too much, accounting for 18.94% of the total. Seventy-seven people

thought that the amount of work was appropriate, accounting for 58.33% of the total number of people. Another 26 people, or 19.7 percent of the total, thought there was little homework.

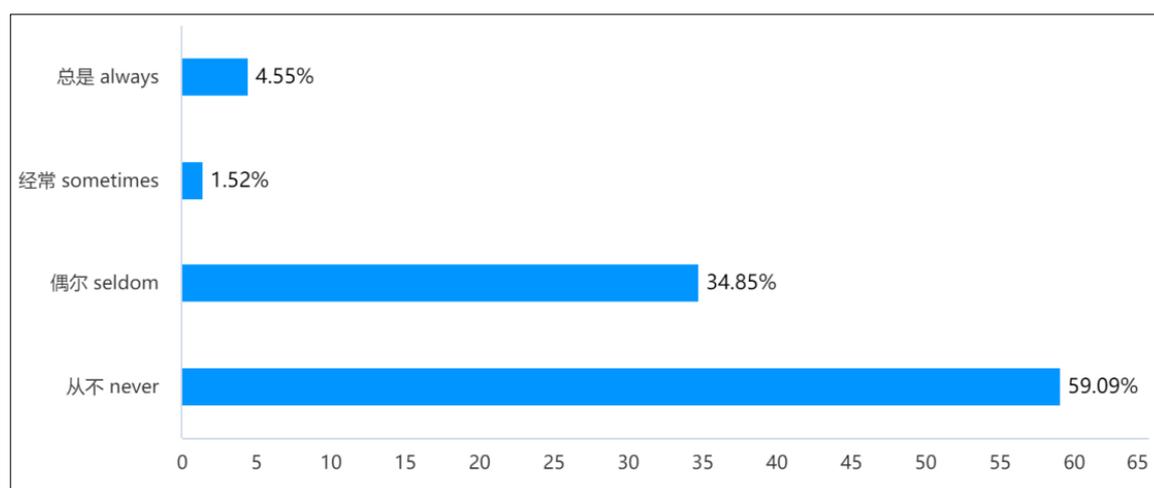


Figure 12

When asked if they had not gotten enough sleep because of homework, 59.09 percent of students said never, 34.85 percent said occasionally, and only 1.52 percent and 4.55 percent said often and always.

The parent who was interviewed was asked about the amount of homework. The parent said that the amount of homework was relatively small and that their student could finish it at most in an hour at home. The child said that most of the homework could be finished during the after-school service time at the school. They said that only when it came to the end of the semester was the amount of review occasionally large, so then

there were slightly more homework assignments, but this did not affect the child's rest and sleep.

It can be seen from the answers to the above questionnaire and interview questions that 94% of the students said that their homework could be completed within one hour, which meets the requirement of the *Double Reduction* policy that the average homework for grades 3–6 should not exceed 60 minutes, which is a considerable amount of homework. Most students felt that the amount of work was appropriate and had little or no impact on their sleep. The teachers had implemented the requirements of the *Double Reduction* policy in terms of homework quantity, effectively reducing the homework burden for students.

5.3.5 Difficulty of Homework

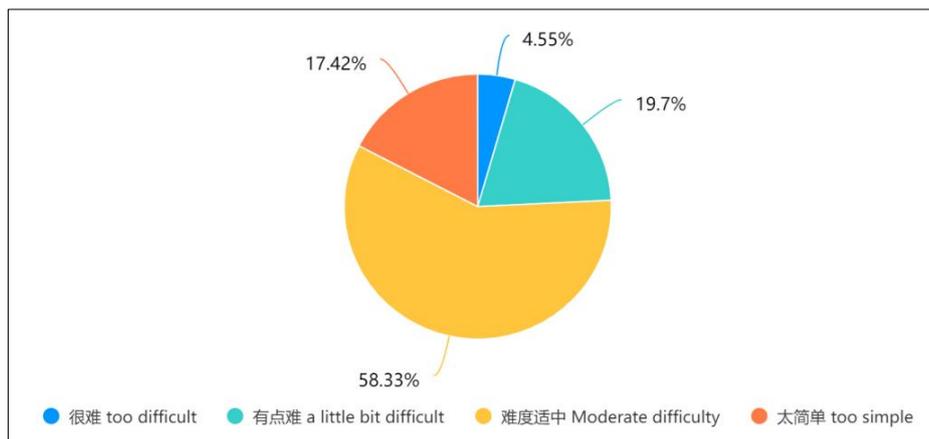


Figure 13

As can be seen from figure 13, 58.33% of the students said the difficulty of the homework was moderate; 17.42 percent said it was too easy; 19.7

percent said it was a little difficult; and 4.55 percent said it was difficult.



Figure 14

As can be seen from figure 14, in answer to the question, “Do teachers assign different homework according to different levels of students?”, 67% students said *never*, 22% students said *occasionally*, and only 6% and 5% students said *often* and *always*.

The researcher asked the teacher who was interviewed, “Do you assign different levels of homework to different classes or to students with different abilities according to their specific situations?” The teacher said, “I assign the same homework to the two classes I teach. But occasionally, when it comes to the end of the semester, according to the different situations of different students, I will give the students with good grades independent tutoring and assign some improved questions. Because there is no time and energy to design

different assignments and different layers of assignments, and correcting is more troublesome.”

As can be seen from the answers of the above questionnaires and interviews, the difficulty of the English homework was generally moderate. Only a few students said it was too difficult or too easy, so the difficulty of the homework met the level of most students. However, when it came to assigning homework according to students’ actual level, most students thought that teachers did not assign hierarchical homework according to the students’ specific level. Therefore, the teachers did not consider the individual differences among different students, did not implement the *Double Reduction* policy’s requirements of assigning hierarchical, flexible, and personalized homework, and did not teach students in accordance with their aptitude.

5.3.6 Specific Implementation and Completion Effect of Homework

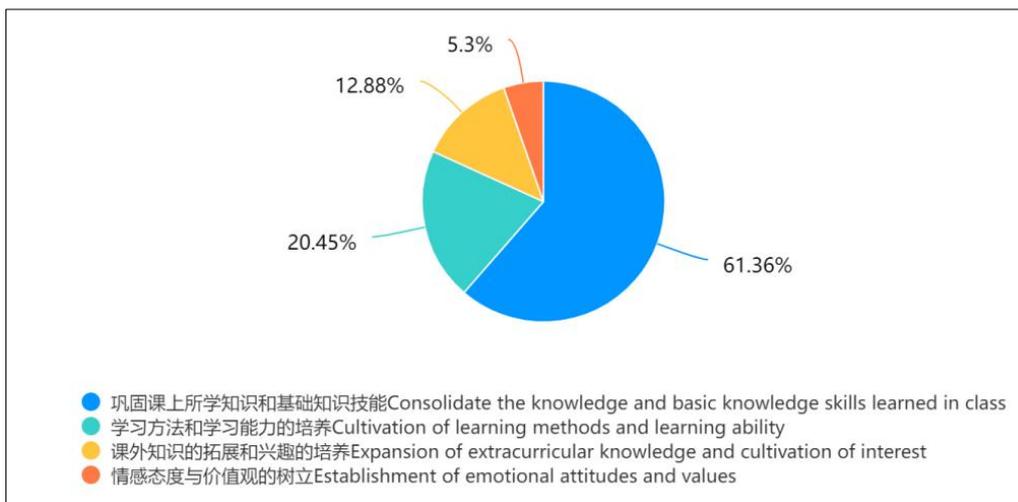


Figure 15

As can be seen from figure 15, in answer to the question, “Which aspect of homework assigned by the teacher has the greatest impact on you?”, 61% of students thought it was the consolidation of knowledge and basic knowledge and skills learned in class, 20% thought it was the cultivation of learning methods and learning ability, 13% thought it was the expansion of extracurricular knowledge and the cultivation of interest, and 5% of the students thought it was the establishment of emotional attitudes and values.

More than half of the students believed that the main role of homework was to consolidate the knowledge learned in class and basic knowledge and skills, while the role of homework in learning methods, emotional attitudes and values, and extracurricular knowledge was not obvious. Teachers should promote the all-round development of students, pay attention to the unity of teaching and educating people, and prevent the tendency toward teaching theoretical rather than practical knowledge.

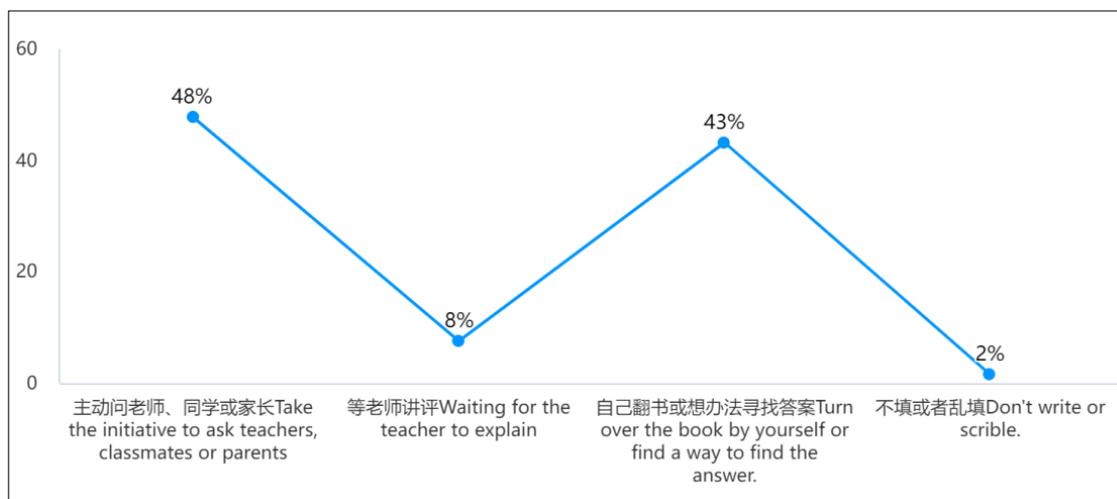


Figure 16

As can be seen from figure 16, in answer to the question about “the method you usually choose when facing a difficult problem,” 48% of the students said they would take the initiative to ask the teacher, classmates, or parents for help, 43% said they would flip through the book or try to find the answer, 8% said they would wait for the teacher’s comment, and 2% said they would not

fill in an answer or they would fill out the information carelessly.

Most students took the initiative to use resources to find answers, but there was still 10% of students with passive attitudes towards difficult problems and a lack of independent learning ability.

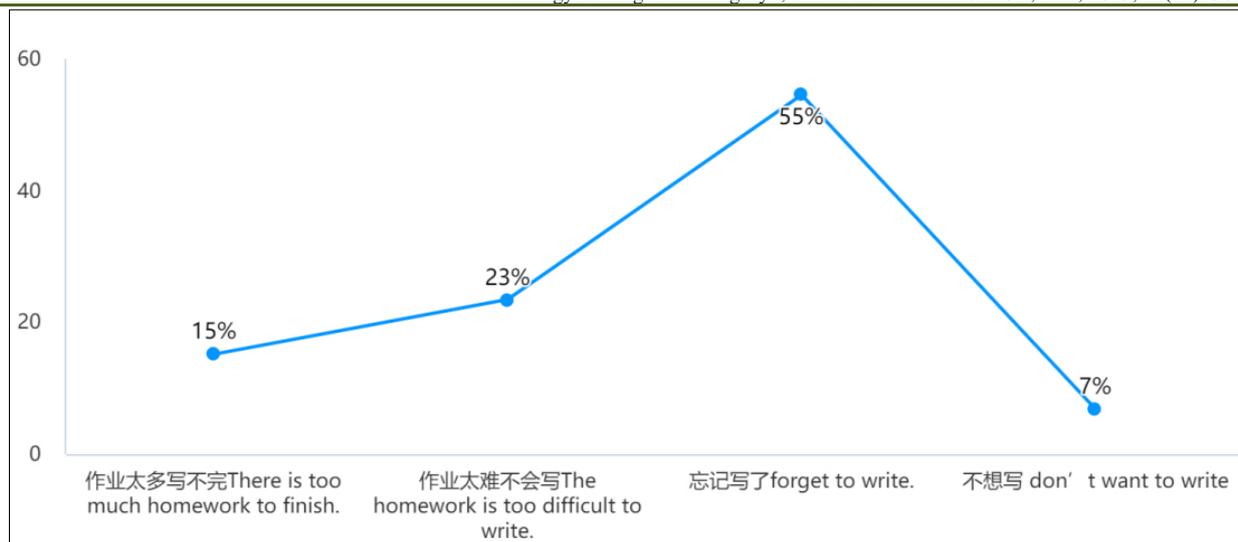


Figure 17

As can be seen from figure 17, in answer to the question about “the reason for not finishing the homework,” 55% of the students said it was because they forgot to complete it, 23 students said it was because the

homework was too difficult to complete, 15% said it was because there was too much homework to finish, and 7% said it was because they did not want to complete it.

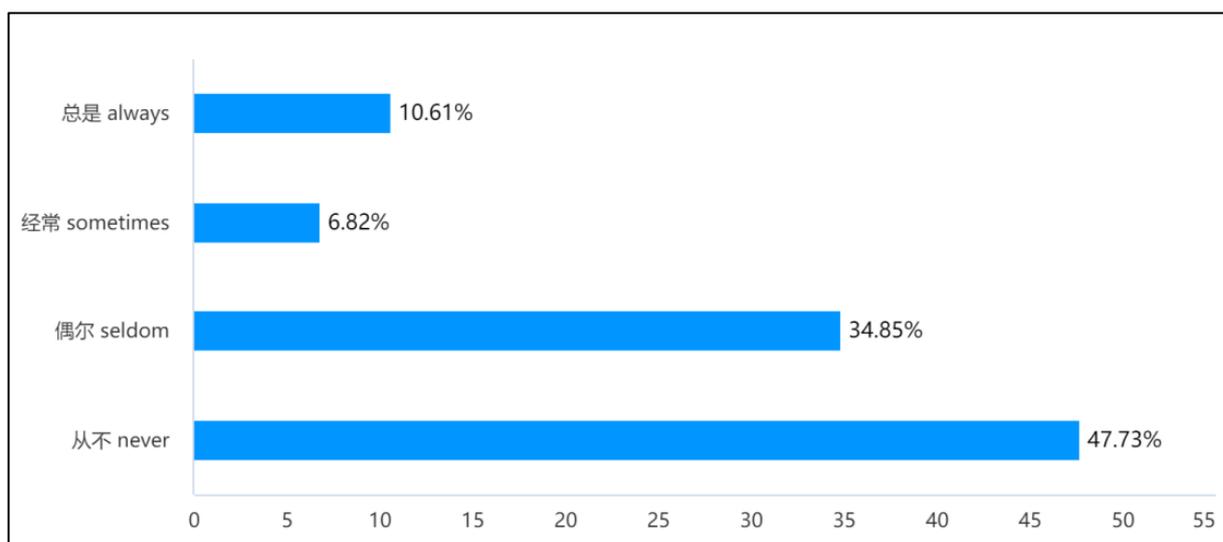


Figure 18

As can be seen from figure 18, in answer to the question about “the frequency of not finishing homework on time,” 63 people said they never failed to complete their homework, accounting for 47.73% of the total number of people; nearly half of the total number of people, 34.85% of the students, said that they couldn’t finish their homework on time occasionally; and only 17% of the students said that they could not finish their homework on time always or often.

It can be seen from the above two questions that most students could complete the homework well. The main reason why students failed to complete their homework was that they had weak awareness of how to manage homework and a poor sense of self-discipline, so it is necessary to cultivate students’ awareness of self-management.

5.3.7 Homework Evaluation

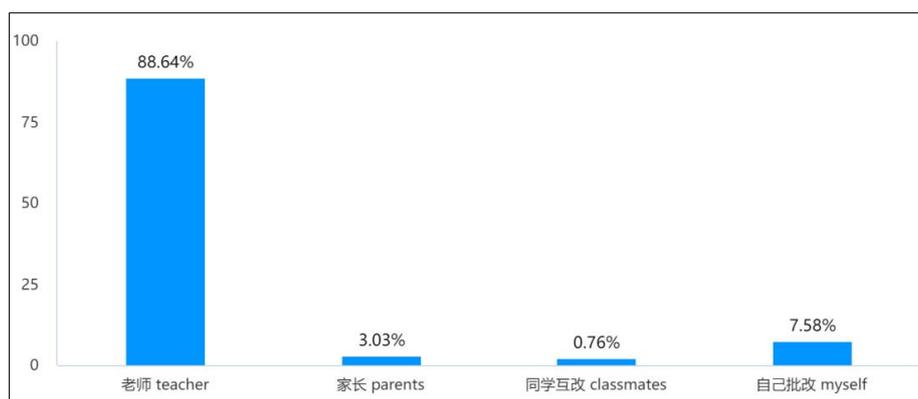


Figure 19

As can be seen from the above figure 19, in answer to the question “Who corrects your homework generally?”, 88.64% of students said homework was corrected by teachers, 7.58% said homework was corrected by themselves, and less than 4% of students

said homework was corrected by parents or classmates. This is in line with the *Double Reduction* policy, which strictly prohibits requiring parents to correct homework. The subject of homework correction, however, is relatively simple.

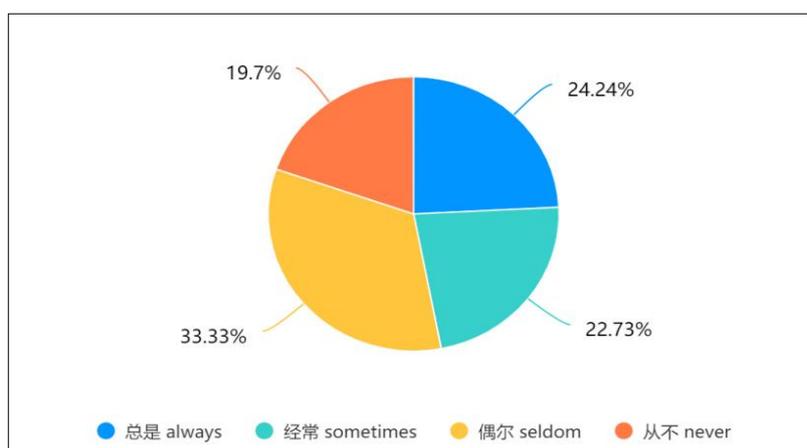


Figure 20

As can be seen from figure 20, in answer to the question “How often teachers leave comments or feedback after correcting homework?”, 24% of students

said *always*, 23% said *often*, 33% said *occasionally*, and 20% said *never*.

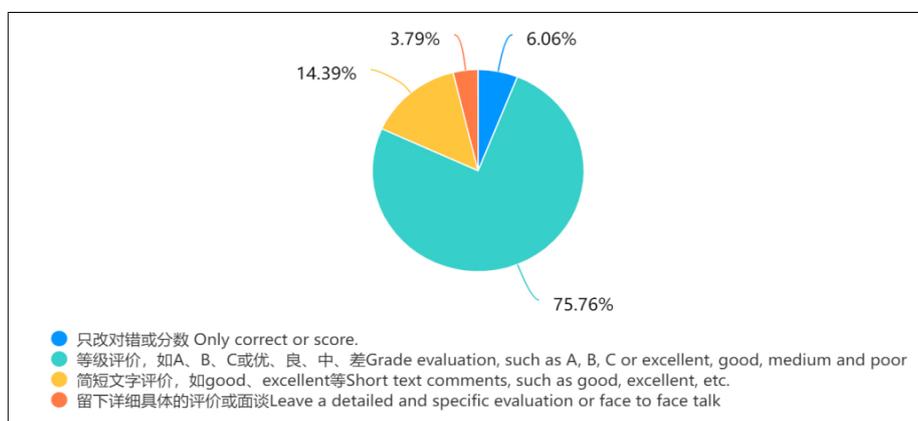


Figure 21

As can be seen from figure 21, 75.76% of students said that the evaluation method their teachers used for homework was to give it a grade, while 14.39% said their teachers used short written comments to

evaluate homework, 6.06% said their teachers only indicated correct scores, and 3.79% said their teachers gave them feedback through detailed evaluation or an interview.

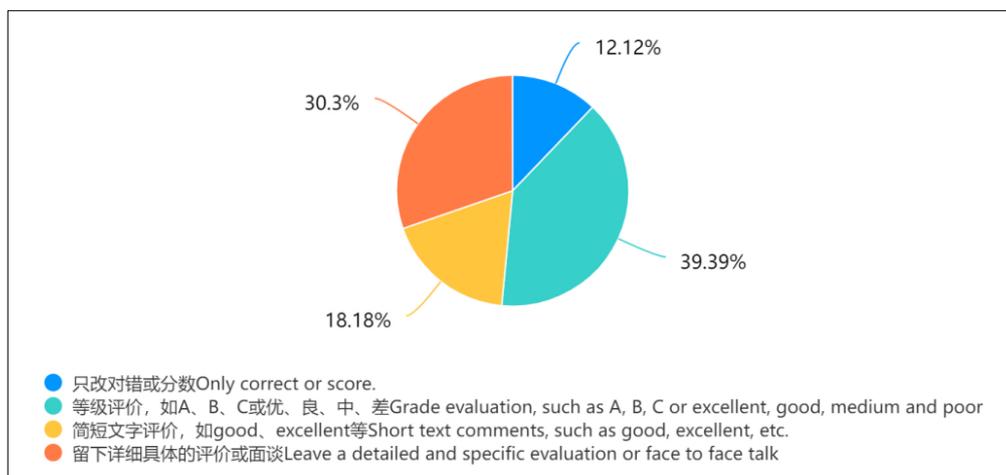


Figure 22

As can be seen from figure 22, in answer to the question about “the way you want teachers to evaluate your homework,” 39.39% of students said they preferred to be evaluated through grades, 30.3% said they preferred to receive detailed evaluations or feedback in

interviews, 18% said they preferred to be evaluated with short written comments, and 12% preferred for their teachers to correct right or wrong answers or give them grades only.

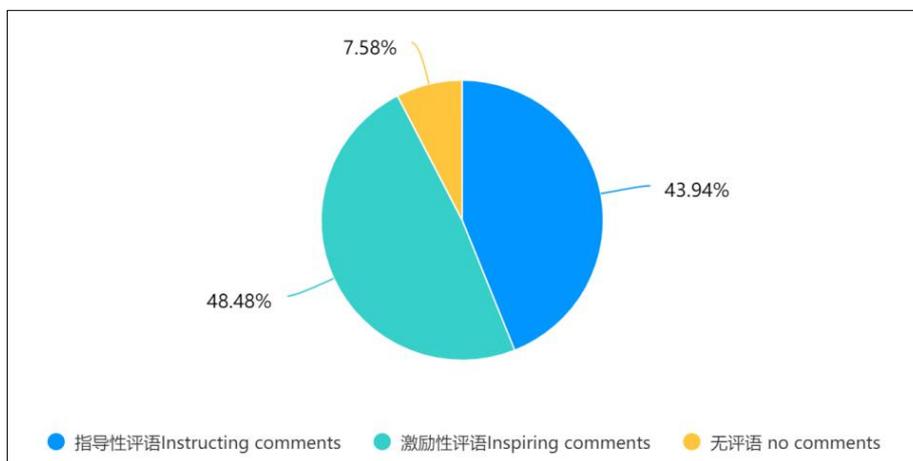


Figure 23

As can be seen from figure 23, in answer to the question about “comments you want the teacher to leave,” 48.48% of the students said that they wanted the teacher to leave encouraging comments, 43.94% of the students said they wanted the teacher to leave guiding comments, and only 7.58% of students said they wanted teachers to leave no comments.

very important, so generally when correcting the homework, we will mark right or wrong; if an answer is wrong, we will circle it. We usually give evaluations through grades, mark the date of the correction, and occasionally give short written comments. However, since there are many students and the amount of homework correction is large, we don’t have time to give detailed comments.”

In order to further understand the method and content of homework evaluation, the researchers asked the interviewed teacher the question, “How do you usually correct and evaluate students’ homework?” The teacher said, “Because in the basic stage of primary school, writing and the percentage of correct answers are

It can be seen from the distribution of answers in the above questionnaire and the interview that the main method of homework evaluation is evaluation through grades, but many students want to have written evaluations or detailed evaluations and interviews. This

shows that the homework evaluation in this study could not meet the needs of students. The method of homework evaluation was too simple, and diverse evaluation methods were not used much. Therefore, diversified evaluation was not achieved for homework in this study. In homework evaluation, teachers can give students more incentive to do well and guide them through specific evaluation, or they can call students to interviews. These methods would enhance the emotional communication between teachers and students, enhance students' self-confidence, and stimulate students' interest in completing homework and learning.

6. Strategies for Designing English Assignments in Elementary School

6.1 School

6.1.1 Strengthen Guidance and Management Training

As schools are the main agent of after-school homework management, they should strengthen after-school homework management and improve the after-school homework management mechanism.

First, schools should clearly control the quantity of homework and improve the quality of homework to ensure that homework can effectively promote the development of students while not causing a greater burden on them or affecting their sleep.

Secondly, schools should also make corresponding regulations on the goal, form, and content of homework. Based on theories of children's physical and mental development and students' actual lives, homework content should be in line with students' different characteristics, and the forms of homework should be rich and varied. Only in this way can the comprehensive and personalized development of students be better promoted by avoiding too much mechanization, conformism, and monotonous and repetitive work.

Schools should also provide guidance and training in homework design management. After the introduction of the *Double Reduction* policy, frontline teachers have felt they are "crossing the river by feeling for the stones," which is the preliminary stage of exploration. Schools should actively provide teaching and research meetings and exchange meetings and organize lectures and other activities to provide a platform for teachers to exchange knowledge and share their experiences. Schools should also organize teaching ability training and invite the guidance of expert to effectively improve teachers' teaching ability and help them adapt to the requirements of the new policy.

Finally, schools should establish and improve the after-school homework assessment and supervision mechanism and include the assessment and evaluation of after-school homework into the regular management of

schools and teachers' evaluation. The assessment of homework should not only examine the quantity of homework but also pay attention to the quality of homework, such as whether the forms of homework are diversified and whether homework evaluation is timely and effective.

6.1.2 Reduce Teachers' Non-Teaching Tasks

In order to understand the reason teachers use simple, single-format homework assignments and evaluation, I asked about this problem in the teacher interview. The English teacher said, "Because the English teaching team has arranged various activities, such as an English feature week, drama performance, speech contest, etc., and the teaching tasks are relatively large, an English teacher must take charge of English teaching for at least two classes, and many English teachers are class teachers. In addition to the teaching tasks, there are many other tasks including listening to lectures, learning to evaluate lessons, and filling in and collecting forms. So, it takes a lot of time and energy, and teachers have none left to think about having a variety of assignments."

Front-line teachers in schools have a heavy workload and a heavy burden, so that they do not have enough time and energy to design a variety of types of homework and homework evaluation. Therefore, schools should clarify the responsibilities of teachers and reduce their non-teaching workload to ensure that teachers have enough time and energy to devote to their teaching work and to explore and practice more diverse and high-quality types of after-school homework and homework evaluation methods.

6.2 Teachers

6.2.1 Change Cognition, Establish Teaching and Education, Comprehensive Development of the Homework View

Teachers' work is to teach and educate people, and homework is also an essential part of teaching. The *Double Reduction* policy emphasizes the educational function of homework: It stipulates that homework design management should proceed from the reality of students' lives, take students as its foundation, and promote the overall development and personality development of students. Teachers should avoid the tendency toward "knowledge-based theory" and avoid one-sided attention to enrollment rates and achievement. Teachers should not only pay attention to the development of students' knowledge and skills but also to the development of students' processes and methods, emotional attitudes, and values.

6.2.2 Enrich the Content and Form of Homework to Arouse Students' Enthusiasm

According to the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2022 edition), teachers should organize various extracurricular activities to promote students' English learning. At present, after-school English homework mainly takes the form of traditional, single-format basic homework and exercise homework, which will make students feel bored with after-school English homework and cause them to lose interest in homework and learning. Interest, however, is the inexhaustible motivation for students to learn. The key to homework reform is to arouse students' interest in study and homework. Therefore, teachers should implement student-centered homework design, fully consider students' interests and individual differences, and creatively arrange the homework in line with the principles of children's development.

For example, based on the specific figurative thinking of primary school students, you can set up pictures and lines of text and ask students to fill in letter pairings and carry out other operations. Considering that primary school students cannot concentrate for a long time, we can take advantage of children's unintentional attention and design homework such as listening to short stories and guessing the end of the stories or listening to songs and filling in the missing words. Note that the short stories and songs chosen should be appropriate to the students' current development level and should not be too difficult. The selected content should be familiar to students; it should be short and concise and have typical significance. In the process of listening, it can be appropriate to repeat the content many times in order to deepen the students' memory and help students understand. The above forms of homework can arouse students' interest and their thirst for knowledge and ignite students' enthusiasm for learning.

If primary school students are surrounded by boring homework whenever they have contact with English subjects, this will lead to a lack of interest in and even aversion to English subjects. When the principle of fun is applied to the design of English homework in primary school, it is not difficult for students to memorize and learn English knowledge. Interesting and efficient homework will also lay a good foundation for future English learning.

6.2.3 Stimulate Students' Interest in Learning from the Aspect of Homework Evaluation

The evaluation and feedback process for homework is the key to motivating children to actively participate in further homework. Quality and effective feedback can help students gain satisfaction and build self-confidence and stimulate their expectations and enthusiasm for the work. Teachers' comments should reflect humanistic care, not simply coping. Teachers' evaluation of each student should be unique and varied, rather than uniform. According to the theory of multiple intelligences, each student has their own characteristics

and strengths, which should not all be measured with the same ruler. In homework evaluation, teachers should teach students according to their aptitude, give care, make full use of positive factors to overcome negative factors.

Secondly, homework evaluation should be diversified. Teachers' evaluation can be the main method of homework evaluation, but it can be supplemented by students' self-evaluation and peer evaluation. The use of students' self-assessment can make students have a clear understanding of their homework and allow students to reflect on the shortcomings in their homework from the perspective of evaluators in order to better set learning objectives. Students' peer evaluation can also help students understand the gap between them and their classmates, understand their own level in the class, set an example for their peers, and actively study as excellent students, which is conducive to the establishment of a good class atmosphere.

6.3 Students

6.3.1 Improve the Awareness and Ability in Self-Management

Students are the main stakeholders of learning. If students just blindly do homework in order to complete the task, passively accept learning tasks, and do not actively seek solutions when they encounter difficulties, the function and value of the homework will be greatly reduced. The cultivation of good study habits is an important topic of study in primary school and an important guarantee to help dreams soar in the future. Students should be clear about their central position in study and homework management, and then they should complete, revise, and reflect upon their homework in order to establish a correct view of homework, develop good learning habits, and effectively restrain their own behavior. Furthermore, parents and teachers should also do a good job of correct guidance and supervision to teach children the correct method of homework management and improve children's consciousness of and initiative in homework management.

6.4 Parents

6.4.11 Do a Good Job of Supervision and Mobilize the Enthusiasm of Children

Although the *Double Reduction* policy explicitly prohibits parents from checking and correcting homework, this does not mean that parents should have nothing to do with the management of their children's homework. Parents, as the primary guardians of their children, have the responsibility and obligation to care about their children's studies. Teachers' management of children's homework needs parents' supervision and cooperation to form educational synergy and jointly promote children's growth. Parents know their children better than teachers and can better supervise and manage their children's homework. Parents can provide better

guidance based on their own children's characteristics and know what kind of evaluation will motivate their children. In homework, parents should be encouraged to meet the children's desire to show their learning and foster their confidence, so that the children more positive attitudes and treat every homework assignment seriously.

In answer to the researcher's question to the interviewed parent about "whether their children can finish their homework independently," the parent said, "Children at home find it difficult to finish their homework independently. They mainly rely on parents to stare at them, to constantly encourage them, to urge them to write their homework. When writing homework requires parents to supply guidance, the students' self-control is relatively poor." In answer to the interview question about "difficulties in homework help," the parent said, "In fact, the homework in primary school is not very difficult. We can help, but the main problem is that sometimes the child does not listen to us. He does not listen to us; he is not willing to do what we say. When doing his homework, he just doesn't pay attention and is always lazy, so sometimes it is quite troubling."

Therefore, to deal with this problem, schools and teachers can give parents some guidance. We can also make use of the convenience of network resources to actively explore some open classes on the internet, guide parents to communicate with their children, and teach parents how to care about students in daily life.

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