Analysis of American Primary School English Assignments Based on Theories of English Teaching Materials

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Abstract

English assignments in American schools prioritize students' language productive ability. Teachers are encouraged to motivate student participation through group discussions, aiming to enhance understanding and language skills. The assignments are designed to be interesting, fostering joyful learning experiences. In contrast, tasks in Asian countries have often been perceived as a heavy burden in education, prompting concerns from education ministries. This contrasting phenomenon gives rise to the research questions addressed in this study. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the underlying teaching philosophy behind tasks in a specific school through text analysis, case analysis approaches and a qualitative approach by in-depth interview, employing theoretical frameworks of constructivism, humanism, and homework evaluation. Furthermore, the study explores the interactive relationship between English tasks and teaching philosophy. The implications of American English tasks for designing English assignments in China are discussed. Lastly, the author provides constructive suggestions to promote the reform of primary school English assignments in pedagogical practice.

Keywords: America English Assignments, Theories of Teaching Material Analysis.

Introduction

As the most developed country in the world, the United States has made remarkable achievements in the field of education, especially in the area of English teaching. The language teaching in America focuses on the language productive ability of the students. Teachers are encouraged to motivate students' participation by using group discussion and work to strengthen the understanding and language skills. English assignments are interesting so that students' learning is much more joyful. It does not mean that the quantity of assignments is relatively few. According to a study by Prof. Huntsenger of the University of Chicago's School of Education, 62% of students feel that they should do a certain amount of assignments. Additionally, another National Public Opinion survey results also showed the same views: about two-thirds of parents consider that their children can accept a number of assignments (Liu, 2008). Contrary to popular belief, the abundance of extracurricular homework in the American education system does not necessarily lead to student stress. In fact, there are

those who argue that English assignments in American schools can be an engaging and enjoyable experience, akin to a captivating game. The underlying factor behind this perspective is that these assignments have the ability to bring happiness to children, making them feel invigorated rather than fatigued. It is due to this intriguing notion that the author, prompted by curiosity, embarked on researching English assignments in American primary schools (Liu, 2008).

In today's education research area, there is an abundance of English teaching materials available, including popular options like *Oxford Discover*, *Cambridge's Guess What*, and Longman's *Welcome to English (Gold)*. Consequently, selecting the appropriate textbook can be a daunting task. Educational institutions and teachers, when making their choices, should not merely consider the price aspect but, more importantly, contemplate the desired impact the textbook will have on the learners' overall learning experience and ultimate proficiency level. It is crucial to acknowledge that once learners become accustomed to the learning methods presented in a specific textbook, it becomes challenging to shift their approach. Discovering later that the chosen method is misguided can lead to significant consequences. Therefore, the assessment of teaching materials holds significant importance for both teaching and learning endeavors. Firstly, it allows teaching institutions and educators to discern the merits and drawbacks of a textbook, aiding them in their selection process. Secondly, it proves highly advantageous for teacher development as it fosters a deeper understanding of the nature of teaching materials, their structural components, and the advocated instructional methods. Naturally, a comprehensive evaluation of a textbook also facilitates the author's recognition of any shortcomings, thereby informing future revisions and improvements.

Literature Review
Related Studies of English Tasks
Septiyana (2019) describes the steps of designing English speaking materials using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for Islamic Economics Students of IAIN Metro 2) determine the students' responses toward English Speaking Materials using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Chen et. al (2020) investigate at-risk ESL learner' task performance and attitudes towards a 3D approach of improving their English spoken and written communication skills in Second Life (SL). The purpose of Siregar et. al (2020) is to develop task-based supplementary English reading materials focusing on descriptive texts for Seventh Grade junior high school students. Designing probing tasks for lesser-resourced languages is tricky, because these often lack large-scale annotated data or (high-quality) dependency parsers as a prerequisite of probing task design in English. To investigate how to probe sentence embeddings in such cases Eger et. al (2020) investigate sensitivity of probing task results to structural design choices, conducting the first such large scale study. PurposeThis paper aims to provide evidence that online well-designed educational tasks can provide more relevant and richer active learning environment for business English learners (Vo, 2021). Yundayani et. al (2021) focus on the students' need analysis of the EWAP materials, including confirming the quality of the task-based material design that enhances the students' skills of the EWAP. The objective of Citra et. al (2021) was tenth grade students of social science at SMAN 1 Kec. (Guo, 2022) aim to improve the quality of English teaching in contemporary colleges and universities, so as to cultivate more English translation talents. Ning (2022) present an in-depth study on the new mode of intelligent multi-distance teaching of English with the help of virtual scenes of the Internet of Things.

Evaluation of English Teaching Materials

English Materials encompass tasks, homework assignments, English videos, newspapers, pictures, dictionaries, workbooks, discussion questions, exercise books, activity books, story books, copy materials, newspapers, magazines, PowerPoint presentations, films, photos, flashcards, and various other teaching aids (Tomlinson, 2011). These diverse resources collectively contribute to the realization of the materials' value within the language learning context. The most influential theories of evaluation of English textbook in foreign countries are mainly theoretical frameworks such as, Neville Grant, Cuningsworth, Mcdonough & Shaw, and Tomlinson. The evaluation of English materials in China has been carried out relatively late, and it has not formed its own unique evaluation theory and evaluation system. Although the significance of material evaluation is widely acknowledged, the evaluation of English materials, particularly in practical applications, has often been lacking. The evaluation methods that have gained international recognition for English materials include Cunningsworth's (2002) evaluation approach, Neville Grant's checklist (1987), and McDonough & Shaw's (1993) evaluation principles. These approaches rely on a series of checklists designed to assess the appropriateness of a textbook within a specific teaching context. These evaluation frameworks provide valuable guidance in determining the suitability of English materials for effective instructional use.

Cuningsworth is an English material evaluation expert. His views on this area have a great impact in the world. The points are: the materials should meet the needs of learners and be consistent with the objectives of the syllabus; reflect the learners' application of the language they are learning; take into account the needs of learners and be conducive to their learning rather than a rigid method imposed on them; play the role of learning supporters and act like teachers as the media between target language and learners (Wang & Zhao, 2006). The materials evaluation type outline is as follows in Figure 2.1.
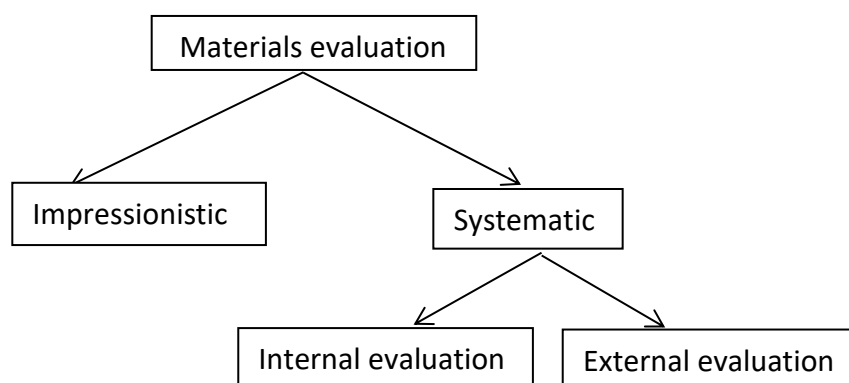

Figure 2.1: Materials Evaluation Type Outline

Impressionistic Materials Evaluation

Impressionistic materials evaluation is that educators judge materials form a general impression of a course book quickly, just by looking through it and getting overview of its possibilities and strengths and weakness, nothing significant features which stand out. They can see that the features of the textbook such as the quality of the visuals, how attractive and clear the layout is (Cuningsworth, 2015). In the practice of foreign language teaching, some experienced teachers rely on their intuition and teaching experience to conduct assessment, which is a kind of random and impressionistic evaluations of the materials. One disadvantage of the impressionistic evaluation is that it is not comprehensive and systematic, and many evaluations are not specific. Therefore, this method is rarely used.

Systematic Materials Evaluation
1) Systematic Internal Materials Evaluation
Tomlinson (2011) applies a systematic internal materials evaluation. He states that great materials should have impact to learners, strengthen learners' confidence, provide learner self-investment, offer learners with authentic language materials, be student-centered, focus on learners differ in learning style etc. The principles and methods involve the analysis and evaluation of materials. Another problem in the evaluation of materials is that most of the studies are concerned with the predictive use on textbooks (Tomlison, 2011). It is time-consuming to evaluate teachers. In recent years, research methods have been developed as pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation and post-use evaluation. We agree that studying the value of improving educational materials from different views is just like studying the effects of different types of materials from different views. The further qualitative and quantitative analysis of the textbook evaluation will be a groundbreaking attempt in the field of textbook evaluation.

2) Systematic External Materials Evaluation
The external evaluation makes a simple overall judgment of the textbook from the outside such as covers, briefs, catalogs, etc. of the textbook, followed by more detailed and specific internal evaluation (Zhao & Zheng, 2006). The external evaluation is the evaluation of related materials, binding, convenience and continuity, and internal evaluation, the purpose, principle, sequence, and theme of the textbook (Tomlinson, 2011). Activities, status, student roles and teacher roles are evaluated. Cheng & Wang also believe that systematic evaluation should be divided into internal evaluation and external evaluation, internal evaluation, that is, the scientific nature, rationality and effectiveness of the textbook; external evaluation, that is, whether the textbook is applicable to a specific target group. A set of comparison tables compiled according to Neville Grant is also given to facilitate the evaluation by the educators. The book involves qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods (Cheng & Sun, 2011). The basic model of external materials evaluation is as follows:

Table 2.2
The Basic Model of External Materials Evaluation

Materials		Syllabus, Student, and Teacher
Instructional ideology		Course objectives and goals
Teaching goal		Course content
teaching object		Course requirements
teaching method	←— COMPARE —→	Students' objective need
teaching content		Students' learning need
activity design form,		Students' learning style
Layout		Teachers' teaching rationale
Teaching aids		Teachers' teaching methods

Note: Adapt according to Xiaotang (2011).
The author implies the theories of Cuningsworth (2015); Grant (1987); Cheng (2011) on the analysis of English materials as the theoretical basis of this thesis. The reasons as follows: Cuningsworth is an evaluation expert in material evaluation, and his theory has been developed in practice and keeps pace with the times. Neville Grant is the latest master in the analysis of English materials in the 20st century. His theories are relatively helpful and can be

achieved. As its essence meets the needs of modern English materials. Cheng Xiaotong is China's most influential master in the analysis of English materials. Its related theories are relatively practical and innovative, which combines domestic and foreign relevant theories and proposes its own materials analysis theory. Therefore, Induct and summarize the existing relative research, we found several excellent textbook analysis theories to facilitate English teaching.

Theoretical Basis
Evaluation Theory of English Materials
The systematic evaluation material is divided into two sections: internal and external evaluation, which includes: the teaching guiding ideology of evaluating materials; the teaching methods adopted for evaluating materials; the selection and arrangement of evaluation materials; the evaluation of authenticity of the language material in the materials; evaluation of materials design (Cheng, 2011).

Most importantly, a number of researchers are willing to apply checklist in the process of evaluation. Such as Cuningsworth, Neville Grant, and Cheng Xiaotang. The analysis of materials involves many aspects, and the actual needs of the curriculum, teachers and students are also very complicated. As a result, material evaluation researchers have developed a variety of material evaluation forms. Evaluation of materials should apply these evaluation forms to design checklists that meet their own needs (Cheng, 2011; Grant, 1987). The checklists of Cheng & Grant are divided into three aspects: on students' need, on teachers' need, and on the need of curriculum standards. They are both simple and practical, and easy to practise. Their checklists are score-oriented, 2 points for every YES answer, 1 point for every UNCLEAR, 0 for every NO answer. Therefore, this study is based on the checklists of Cheng Xiaotang's and Nevill Grant's to make new checklists that meet the needs of the study. As part of Cheng (2011); Grant's (1987) checklist are as follow, see appendix.

The Theoretical Basis Behind Syllabuses
Theoretical basis of the study is that the design of materials is usually based on the syllabus. Different syllabuses reflect different education rationale. The theoretical basis behind the syllabus is usually divided into three aspects: language views, language learning views, and language teaching views. Language views is people's perspective and understanding of the nature of language; language learning views is people's perspective and understanding of the problem of how language is learned; language teaching views is people's opinion and understanding of language content and teaching methods (Cheng & Sun, 2011).
The classification of it

Philosophy of Language: 1) Structural language view: Structural language view often starts from the language form, centering on the composition of the language itself, and focus on the learning of grammar items and vocabulary. 2）Functional language view: Functional language view is arranged by language function and language behavior, and list the required language items in detail. 3) the interactive view of language: The theory sees language as a tool for achieving human relationships and personal communication between individuals. According to this language view, the organization of the content of language teaching can be conducted through the mode of communication and interaction.

Philosophy of Language learning: 1) Synthesis and analysis. The synthesis approach emphasizes that language learners should learn individual language items firstly and then use them synthetically. The approach of analysis emphasizes that language learners should learn

a relatively complete language firstly, learners should learn the individual functions of language behavior first, and then learn vocabulary and grammar. 2) Behaviorism and Cognitivism in Language Learning: Behavioral language learning emphasizes that language is a habit. Therefore, the process of language learning is the process of developing habits. The Cognitivism language learning view emphasizes that language is a knowledge system and the process of language learning is a cognitive process. 3) Learning and acquisition: Learning emphasizes that the process of language learning is a conscious process, while acquisition then emphasizes that the language learning process is a subconscious process, an informal process of language learning (Cheng & Sun, 2011).

Philosophy of Language teaching: 1) Process-oriented and results-oriented: The process teaching view focus on the learning process and the teaching process itself. The results-oriented teaching view focuses on the outcome of language teaching itself. 2) Instrument-oriented and humanity-oriented: Instrument-oriented language teaching theory emphasizes language education to help language learners use language as a communication tool to do things. The humanity-oriented language teaching theory stresses that language education is to promote the comprehensive development of people. 3) Transfer knowledge and develop skills: Knowledge-based language teaching emphasizes that language teaching should be based on the teaching of language as the main teaching content. The outline of theoretical basis of the Education rationale is as follows:

Table 2.3
The Outline of Theoretical Basis of the Education Rational

Theoretical basis	Language Philosophy	Language learning Philosophy	Language teaching Philosophy
Definition	People's perspective and understanding of the nature of language.	People's perspective and understanding of the problem of how language can be learned.	People's perspective and understand language teaching content and teaching methods.
Classification	1）Structural language view 2）Functional language view 3）Interactive language view	1）Synthesis VS. Analysis 2）Behaviorism VS. Cognitivism 3）Learning VS. Acquisition	1）Process VS. results 2）Instrument VS. Humanity 3）Transfer knowledge VS. Develop skills

Research Method
The study applies text analysis, case analysis, and survey research methods, which is suitable for the study, as detail is as follows.

Research Questions
The study selects a school in Boston, Massachusetts, USA as the case school. The author uses the text analysis, case analysis approach, and survey research method to analyze the following two questions:
(1) What are the educational philosophy of English teaching behind English assignments in the American elementary school?

(2) How do English assignments in the case school reflect these educational philosophy?

Research Participants
1) English assignments of grade 5: This study examined a total of 280 English assignments from fifth-grade students at a public School in Boston, Massachusetts. The assignments were gathered from both classroom activities and extracurricular tasks, encompassing various types of exercises. These included assignments on English vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, as well as assignments that involved a blend of English and mathematics.
2) 5 experienced English teachers from the fifth grade at a public School in Boston, Massachusetts, was chosen as the interviewees. The decision to select an experienced teacher was made to ensure a well-established English teaching philosophy, as novice teachers may not have developed a fully matured approach to teaching the subject.

Research Methods
The study applies text analysis, case analysis, and survey research methods, which is suitable for the study, as detail is as follows.

Text Analysis
This dissertation analyzes the *Standards for the English Language Art* and the *2017 English Language Arts and Literacy Framework of Massachusetts (the newest one)* by a textual analysis approach. These standards represent the national level, the English association level, and the state level, and have superior and subordinate relations and complement each other. The three categories are classified according to a unified standard, which is divided into three aspects: language views, language learning views, and language teaching views. Through code classification, subject analysis, keyword retrieval, and conceptual analysis, the study grasps the principles of English language teaching and learning rationale.

Case Analysis
This thesis selects a case of the fifth grade of the case School in Massachusetts, USA. The reasons are as follows. First, Massachusetts is the earliest place for European immigrants to come. Its education is with high standard, and it has the features and culture of the United States. The selected school is located in Massachusetts. The school has distinctive characteristics, excellent teaching quality, and gives students and teachers full autonomy. Secondly, the study selects English assignments for the fifth-grade students of the Massachusetts case School. The reason is that primary school English assignments are more diversified and have its own characteristics. Most assignments are in the form of paper-writing, which is of significance for referring and researching. The fifth-grade is chosen because students are representative, unlike the junior students. The cognitive developments of students are mature and the assignments are not representative. The fifth grade students are in the transition from primary to junior high school, and the transition of junior high school students' training methods will be slowly involved. Due to the heavy workload of text analysis, the number of samples must be limited to ensure statistical significance. Therefore, the samples of the assignments should be subject and at least 280, taking into consideration the representativeness of the sample and the status of the grade.

Survey Research

This study intends to conduct three interviews with three experienced English teachers in N.H.W. Innovation School Boston, Massachusetts. The study interviewed 5 experienced English teachers: Susan, who has 14 years of English teaching; Cathy, who has 10 years of English teaching; Vicky, who has 9 years of English teaching; Rick, who has 12 years English teaching and Debbie (pseudonym name), who has 13 years of English teaching. The interview outline is in appendix I. Each interview duration is about 30 minutes.

Research Instruments

There are 280 samples of English assignments for the fifth grade of the American primary school, including classroom exercises and extracurricular activities. Most importantly, a number of researchers applied checklists in the process of evaluation, such as (Cuningsworth, 2015; Grant, 1987; Cheng, 2011). Tharefore, the study applies Cheng's and Grant's Checklists, which are divided into three aspects: concepts of language, concepts of teaching and concepts of learning. Their checklists are both simple and practical, and easy to practice. Their checklists are score-oriented, 2 points for every YES answer, 1 point for every UNCLEAR, 0 for every NO answer. Therefore, this study is based on the checklists of Cheng (2011)'s and Grant(1987)'s to make additional checklists that meet the needs of the study. As part of Cheng (2011) and Nevill Grant's (1987) checklists are as follows, see Table 3.1 .

Table 3.1
Part of Grant (1987)'s checklist

Part 2: Dose the book suit the teacher?			
(1) Is your overall impression of the contents and layout of the course favorable?	Yes	Unclear	No
......	Yes	Unclear	No
(10)Is the course appropriate for, and likes by colleagues?	Yes	Unclear	No
Score: 2 points for every YES answer; 1 point for every UNCLEAR answer; 0 points for every NOT answer.			

Results

The Philosophy of Language

The orientation of language is the dominant role of the English teacher in grasping the teaching direction, and it is the teacher's overall knowledge of the English course. A clear understanding is premise for teachers to master the process of English teaching, but also affect the extension of teaching effects. On the whole, English teachers in N.H.W. primary school have a similar understanding on English course.

1) Findings from interview
The question 1 in interview is —What do you think of the function of English language? Is it a tool for communication or knowledge? and important parts of the recordings are as follows:

> Susan: …*Language is a tool for learning and communication… let students read, keep writing reading log in writing notebook, and I give them prompt …give them questions that they need to answer my questions. … So they get to practice reading.*
> Cathy: *Language is a tool to express yourself to the world…allowing students to speak up or write their own opinions.*

Debbie: *Language is a tool for communication… connecting people and the world.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer of concepts of language can be analyzed. Susan believes that "Language is a tool for learning and communication" She strongly recommends the application of language. The teacher emphasizes function of language, such as reading texts, writing log. Cathy agrees that —Language is a tool to express yourself‖ She thinks that students should learn to speak and write with fluent English. Debbie believes that —Language is a tool to express yourself to the world", which is a kind of interactive concepts of language.

Q2 of the interview: What characteristics do you think of the English course? and part of the recordings is as following

Susan: *…it is a kind of language education…English is used widely*

Cathy: *English is a language and it is used by us every day. …helps students communicate and understand the world. The teaching of English should not only focus on teaching the language, but also focus on learning other things.*

Rick: *English is the most widely used language in the world…it is useful, students should learn it well.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer of concepts of language can be analyzed. Susan believes that "English is a kind of language education", which means that English is seen as knowledge. Cathy and Debbie believe that —helps students communicate and understand the world., it is useful, which means that English is seen as a means of communication.

2) Findings from Standards

The design of English assignment is usually based on the some concepts of English teaching. So the study analyzes 2017 English Language Arts and Literacy Standards of Massachusetts. The philosophy of language here are a mixture of concepts of structural language and functional language. It both emphasizes the composition of the language, such as symbols, sounds, and structures and the function of language, such as communication, and expression. According to that —Language is a readily tool and a means of communication and the phrase —language can express our thought, define feature of culture, and mark personal identity, it can be found that the —language here is regarded as a means of communication, which emphasize the function of language. And English should be a useful communicative tool in life. Therefore, the concepts of language behind English assignments are concepts of functional language, concepts of interactive language, and concepts of structural language.

Language Learning Philosophy

1) Findings from interview

Q6 in interview: Who do you think is the host of English learning? and part of the recordings is as following:

Susan: *I encourage students to take the initiative to participate in, willing to explore, diligent in the hands, and advocate that teachers focus on developing students' independence and autonomy. ... Students are the masters of learning,... flexibility to organize and master their own learning... to train students to become independent learners.*

Cathy: *Students should be the center of English learning because they need to learn more about English and the world.*

Debbie: *The students are the host of English learning… they should learn to be independent learner.*

From the part of the recording above, the answer of concepts of student can be analyzed. Susan believes that "Students are the masters of learning." and students should organize and master their own learning; teachers should train students to become independent learners. Cathy agrees that Students should be the center of English learning. Debbie believes that student are the host of English learning", they should learn to be independent learner. The teachers emphasize cognition and acquisition of learning; they focus the importance of some strategies in language learning, such as monitoring, critical thinking, organizing. So it can be found that the concepts of student are that student is the center and master of learning.

Q7 of interview is: What kind of development students should achieve in English course?and part of the recordings is as following

> Susan: *…critical thinking… language abilities…*
> Cathy: *…achieve good English proficiency…learn words and grammar and how to communicate with others in English, either in writing or in speaking.*
> Debbie: *Not only should students learn the knowledge, but also they should learn how to cooperate with the students.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer of concepts of student can be analyzed. Susan believes that student should learn "critical thinking and language abilities". Cathy agrees that student should achieve good English proficiency, she emphasizes that student should have good English abilities, such as speaking and writing. Debbie believes that student should not only learn knowledge, but also they should learn how to cooperate with other students". And teacher should offer student with authentic situation. So it can be found that the concepts of student are that they are knowledge learner and constructor

Q8 of interview: In your opinion, what are the most important factors that can motivate students to learn English well? and part of the recordings is as following:

Susan: *…Interest and needs…*
> Rick: *I think teachers' teaching style and the activities are the most important. If the activities*
> *are well designed, students will have interest to participate in the activities and that is what motivates students.*
> Debbie: *The interest is the best teacher, so we should attract the interest of students.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer of concepts of student can be analyzed. Susan believes that "Interest and needs" of student can motivate their English learning. So teacher's teaching should be based on students' interest and needs. Cathy agrees that teaching style and the activities play an important role in students' learning. So teacher should design more interest activities for student and make feel at ease in class. Debbie believes that interest is the best teacher", so teacher should attract the interest of students. And teacher should guide student to construct new knowledge. So it can be found that the concepts of student are that students are center of knowledge learning, the design of tasks and activities should base on their interests and needs.

Language Teaching Philosophy
1) Findings from Interview
The question 10 in interview is —What are your focus of the teaching, knowledge memory, or the application of knowledge and the development of comprehensive capabilities? and part of the recordings is as following:

> Susan: ...*The basic skills of language are very important. Students need to... some words and grammar rules. ...Never let students mechanically copy them. ... Interpreting ability and critical thinking ability is very important. ... Goal of learning English is to use English in life. ... think independently.*
> Cathy: *…memorization is an important part of English learning. …memorization isn't everything…students are expected to apply the knowledge into practice and then fully develop their capacities.*
> Debbie: *My focus is to stress the interest of students which can make them learning happily. I also pay attention to the learning effect of the students.*

From the part of the recording above, the answer of concepts of teaching can be analyzed. Susan believes that "The basic skills of language are very important", moreover, teacher should teach student to think independently, which means that teacher emphasize the development of thinking and ability in their teaching. Cathy believes that the focus of English teaching is "apply the knowledge into practice", as teacher should give student some help and guidance in their learning. Debbie agrees that English the point of teaching is to develop "the interest of students "and make
students "learning happily". So it can be found that the concepts of English teaching are constructive teaching and humanist teaching, which means that students not only need to learn basic language knowledge, but also learn how to learn, and learn to think critically.
Q11 of interview: How to teach spelling, how to design spelling assignments for your students? and part of the recordings is as following:

> Susan: *…go over in class, make sure they understand the meaning of all the words, make paraphrase, then interpret it ...practice it over and over again for assignments. …call for a volunteer to say it out aloud in the class. ...And shier one would be able to write it in a notebook. ... I do not ever force anyone to do something.*
> Cathy: *Word search is my most frequently used assignment for students.*
> Debbie: *Firstly, I will teach spelling assignments in various activities, for example, the songs, the role-play which can attract the interest of students.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer to concepts of teaching can be analyzed. Susan believes that the best way to teach spelling is that let student "make paraphrase, then interpret it". She cares students' comprehensive development. In addition, she stresses the importance of basic language skills. Cathy agrees that Word search is the best way to teach spelling. Debbie believes that the good way of teaching spelling is to teach in various activities", which can motivate student's interest in spelling. So it can be found that the concepts of teaching are meaningful teaching, playful teaching, and developing student's critical thinking ability.
Q12 of interview: In your English teaching, what kinds of method are you preferred? and part of the recordings is as following:

> Susan:…*situational language teaching*…and communicative language teaching…

> Cathy: *I like teaching students to read picture books. I'd also like to have students cooperate in learning activities.*
> Debbie: …situational teaching approach… *teach in games… playful teaching…*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer to concepts of teaching can be analyzed. Susan believes that the good methods for English teaching are *"situational language teaching* and communicative language teaching*".* She emphases on the significance of student learning activities in the context of questions and in the process of accomplishing tasks. Cathy agrees that teacher should let *students cooperate in learning activities*. She emphasizes that the construction of knowledge is achieved through interaction and cooperation. Debbie believes that the good way of teaching is situational teaching approach and teacher may teach in games. So it can be found that the methods of teaching are situational teaching, playful teaching, and communicative teaching.

Q14 of the interview: Usually, through your own teaching, what do you want your students to learn most? and part of the recordings is as following:

> Susan: *Learn how to use language, problem solving…*
> Cathy: *I hope that my students can cultivate independent learning skills and enjoy learning English.* student is the center of learning.
> Debbie: *I want to my students to use English freely and learn the culture of different countries which can open their eyes and widen the horizon.*

From the part of the recordings above, the answer to concepts of teaching can be analyzed. Susan believes that the application of *"language" and "problem-solving" ability is very important for students.* She emphases that teaching should happen in the context of questions. Cathy agrees that teacher should develop student's *independent learning skill*. She emphasizes that student is the center of learning Debbie believes that it is significant for student to —*use English freely and learn the culture of different countries*. So it can be found that the philosophy of teaching are constructivism teaching and humanism teaching.

2) Findings from English Standards of MA
The philosophy of language teaching are the views and understanding of language teaching content and teaching methods. The teaching concepts in *2017 English Language Arts and Literacy standard* of Massachusetts are as follows: *"Educator should help students develop a love of reading",* which means that teacher is the guide of student and student is the constructor of knowledge. *Educator should help student to select reading materials*, which means that teacher is the guide and assistant of student. So it can be found that English teacher is helper, instructor, and guide of students, and student is the center of English learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teaching concepts in case school are as follows: philosophy of language: concepts of structural language, concepts of functional language, and concepts of interactive language. Student is knowledge learner and constructor, and the center and master of learning. Teacher is the friend, partner, helper, instructor, prompter, and guide of students. Philosophy of teaching: constructivism teaching and humanism teaching, such as situational teaching, communicative teaching, student-centered teaching, critical thinking oriented teaching and playful teaching.

3) Findings from English assignments

The study intends to analyze English assignments in the case school through checklist. Concepts of language, concepts of teacher, concepts of student and concepts of teaching can be found from the analysis. In addition, the study analyzes the teaching aids in case school, such as teaching pictures, classroom posters and so on. The study applies a series of checklists for this study in the analysis theory of English materials. This method is used to detect the representativity and quality of these samples of assignments. According to the checklist of evaluation of English assignments in Neville Grant' book (Grant, 1987). And the scoring method is the case that: 2 points for every YES answer; 1 point for every UNCLEAR answer; 0 points for every NOT answer. From the table 1, the results can be analyzed as follows

Table 4.1
The Results of the Checklist

questions / sections	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Section 1	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	2	2	2
Section 2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Section 3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2

The total score of the checklists is 60, the result of the checklists in this study is 49, which means that the samples of assignments in case school are representative and have high quality. And the specific analyses of assignments are as follows:
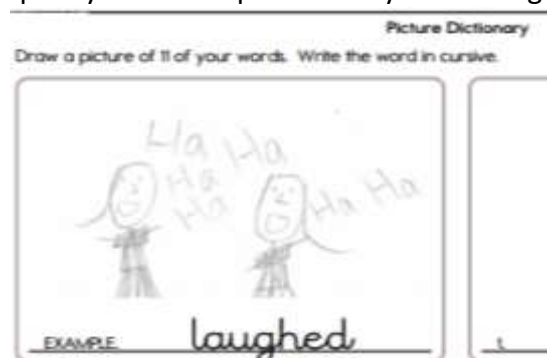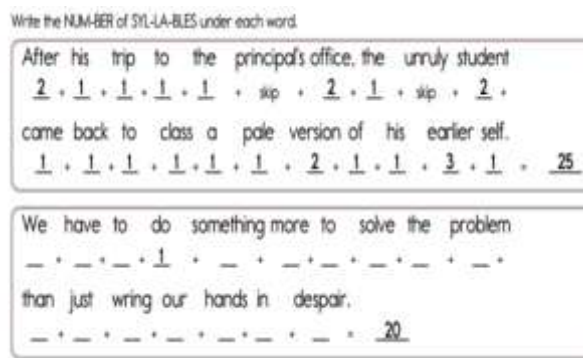
Figure 4.1: *The Sample of Assignment*   Figure 4. 2: *The Sample of Syllable Assignment*

Figure 4.1 is a typical assignment that connects drawing with vocabulary, which is close to students' life and experience, and also, students can use English to express themselves to the world. It emphasizes learning in problem situations, emphasizing the meaningful construction of knowledge and leaning with students' existing experience. According to humanism teaching theory, the student is an emotional person. The homework design must consider the students' interests and needs, make meaningful learning, and learn by doing. Figure 4.2 is a typical phonetics assignment that the assignment is focused on syllable study, as it can be concluded that the assignment is connects English with math, which is a practical learning task. It needs student to get the answer by learned English knowledge. And also, there is no distinct boundary among subjects.
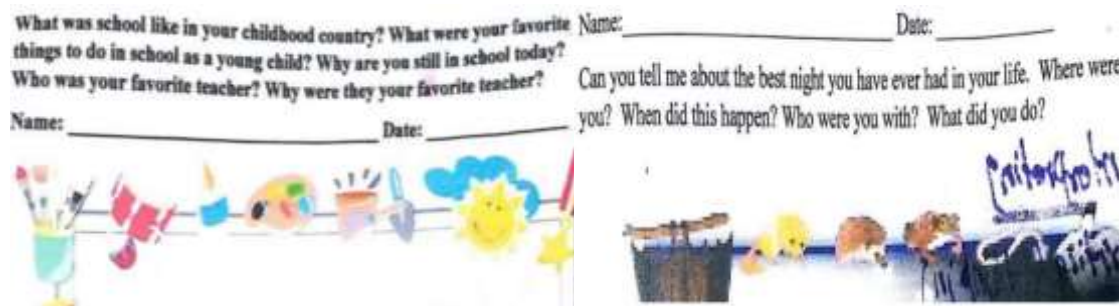
Figure 4. 3: *The Sample of Writing Assignment*   Figure 4. 4: *The Sample of Writing Assignment*

Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 are typical writing assignments in the case school. It is a meaningful learning task, the writing theme and students' lives are closely linked. It also reflects the student-centered teaching concept. Through a series of questions, students can develop critical thinking abilities. Students and teachers can interact by these questions in assignments.
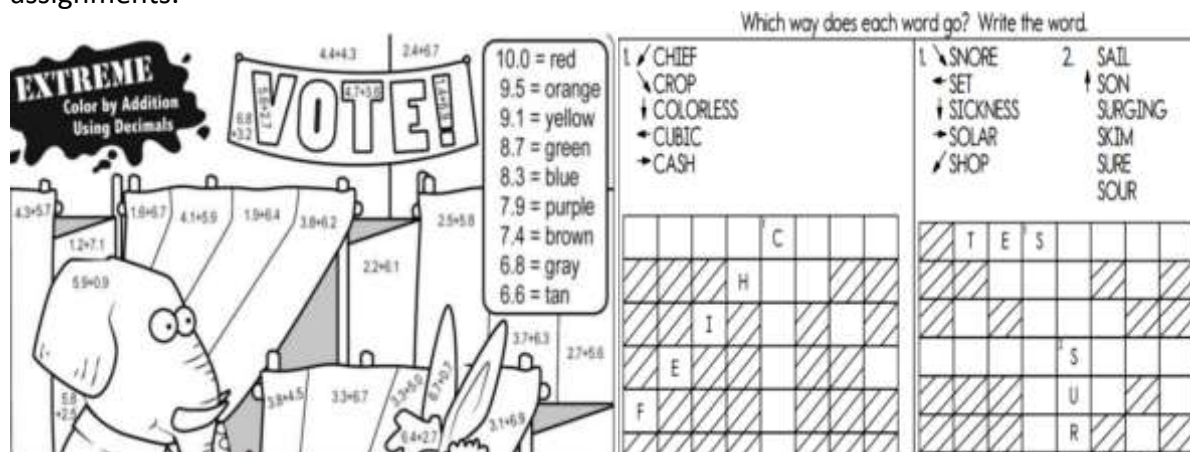

Figure 4. 5: *The Sample of Spelling Assignment*   Figure 4. 6: *The Sample of Spelling Assignment*

Figure 4.5 is an integrated task, which needs student to add up decimals and according to answer of decimals then color the picture. Firstly, students need to know the vocabulary of the following ten colors, and then add the decimals up. It is a student-centered teaching, which connects students' interest with vocabulary, math and drawing, which makes learning playful. Figure 4.6 is a typical American cross puzzle task; the author has concluded that the assignments emphasize self-learning. Students are required to induce and monitor the logical relationship between the words in Figure 6, interpret and reason the meaning of each word in Figure 4.6, memorize the words and each letter of words in Figure 4.6. The tasks also focus on meaningful learning. The assignments reflect constructivism leaning concepts, as students learn by doing.
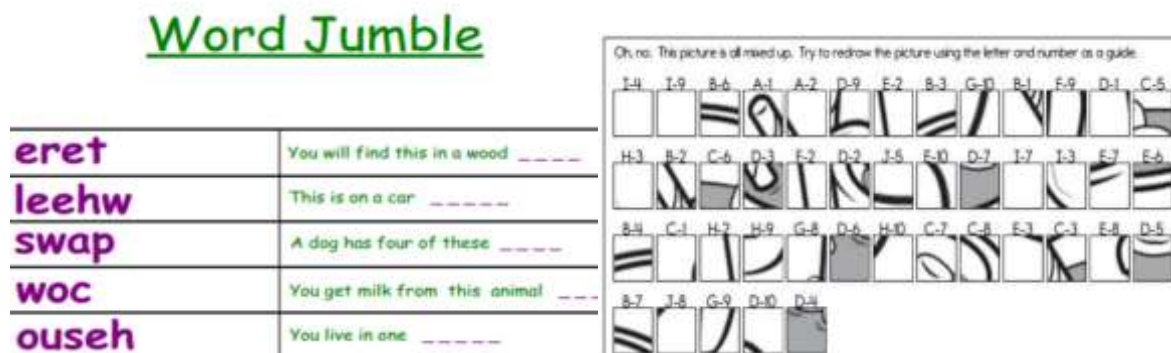
Figure 4.7:*The Sample of Spelling Assignment*   Figure 4. 8:*The Sample of Spelling Assignment*

Figure 4.7 is a word jumble task that student needs to make all that mass letters into a correct word, such as make into a correct word according to hint above. This is on a car, so the answer is wheel. The author finds that the assignments emphasize the acquisition way of language learning. Students need some comprehensive input in their language learning process, as Figure 4.7 are all comprehensive input, which is close to students and it will be attractive to students. Figure 4.8 is a unique jigsaw letter task that students' need to make the mixed card into a picture using the letter and number as a guide. In this way, students can know the sequence of 26 English letters, which reflects a typical concept of humanism learning, as student —learning by doing. It can stimulate students' interests of English learning. If students want to finish this mixed picture, he must need to think over and over, try to solve the problem, as it is also a kind of self-learning.

Figure 4.9: *The Sample of Spelling Game in the Case School*

Note: The sample of assignment is from *EDHELPER Magazine* for Grade 5
Figure 4.9 is SNAKES AND LADDERS SPELLING game in which players throw a dice, which decides on the number of steps, and it supports two people playing and also supports four players playing together. Teacher let students do the spelling games by themselves. And there are some phrases in each chart, such as write the word in a sentence, take a card and spell, crazy writing, and color code. The author finds that the assignment emphasizes the meaningful learning. It is also a student-centered task, which focus on students' interests and cognitive development. The humanistic learning believes that the most effective way to learn meaning is to —learn by doing‖ and advocate that students engage in research, inquiry, and practical learning. As it can be found that the task reflects humanism learning philosophy.
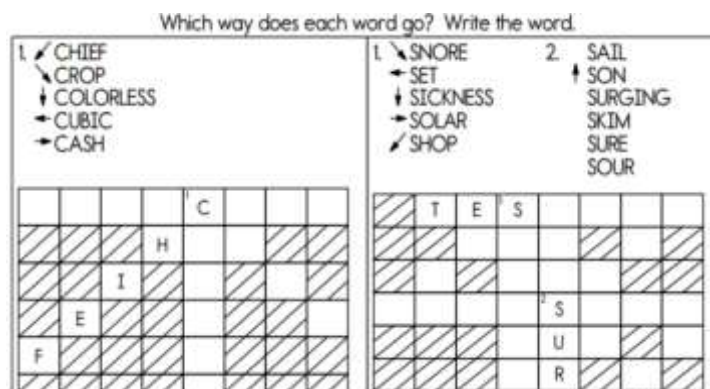
Figure 4.10: *The Sample of Spelling Assignment in the Case School*

Figure 4.10 is also a spelling task that students need to finish it according to hint of directions, which is a kind of inquiry assignment. Students can acquire these words easily by doing the task. As it reflects the concepts of humanism learning and constructivism learning that student is the center of learning and teacher is guide and prompter of teaching.

Conclusion and Implication

In conclusion, based on the constructivism and humanism teaching theories, this study analyzes the philosophy of language, Language learning Philosophy, and Language teaching Philosophy behind assignments in the case school. Therefore, it can be concluded it can be concluded that the teaching concepts in case school are as follows: Philosophy of language: concepts of structural language, concepts of functional language, and concepts of interactive language. Language learning Philosophy: student is knowledge learner and constructor, and the center and master of learning. teacher is a friend, partner, helper, instructor, prompter, and guide of students. Philosophy of teaching: constructivism teaching and humanism teaching, such as situational teaching, communicative teaching, student-centered teaching, critical thinking – oriented teaching and playful teaching. The study analyzes English assignments in the case school through checklist. In addition, the study analyzes the teaching aids, such as teaching pictures, classroom posters and so on. The study conclusions are in line with (Zhao & Zheng, 2006). According to the assignments, teaching aids, the study found how the case school reflects these philosophy.

It is well known that the original significance of the assignment is to work and practice. It is not only the work that with paper and pencil, but also the work from books to practical things and from classroom to outdoor. The students in the case School take the woodwork as the most important. Therefore, with the change in the teaching methods, the scientific understanding of the assignment and the intention of returning to the assignments should be the trend of the time. The innovation, openness, humanity, and comprehensiveness embodied in the U.S. primary school English assignments are worth thinking about our primary school language assignments design. From the analysis of American primary school English assignments design, the following implication can be drawn: 1) Strengthen the choice of assignments design, stop mechanical exercises such as copying, and focus on cultivating their problem-solving skills and self-discovery abilities. 2: Establish a scientific teaching and learning views, such as student-entered teaching views and a scientific assignment view, which means that educators should design assignments according to students' needs and interests.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Part of Cheng Xiaotang's checklist
Figure2: Part of Neville Grant's checklist in P.121-127 from *Making the most of your textbook*