

The Whole Teaching Design of Junior Middle School English Unit under the Big Idea

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Abstract

"Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 edition)" (referred to as "senior high school curriculum standards") for the first time uses the term "big concept" (this paper adopts "big concept"), emphasizing that "the subject concept as the core, make the course content structured, theme-based guidance, make the course content contextualized". In the "Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 edition)" (referred to as the new curriculum standards in this paper), it is again emphasized that under the leadership of the big idea, under the background of the theme context, and relying on the discourse to cultivate the core quality of English subjects, that is, language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. Nowadays, the big concept of discipline has set off a research upsurge in the educational field, and how to integrate the whole thinking of big concept into various disciplines or even interdisciplinary integration has become the current research focus. Through studying and sorting out the articles about the major ideas of English subjects in recent years, combined with my own thinking, this paper takes the teaching of "Unit9 I like music that I can dance to" in the eighth grade of junior high School English in the Humanistic Version of Go for it as an example. In order to provide some ideas for the further implementation of big ideas in English teaching, this paper probes into the whole unit teaching method based on big ideas of English subjects.

Keywords

Large Concept; Unit Overall Design; Junior Middle School English Teaching.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the big idea of discipline has set off a research upsurge in China's education circle. The application of big idea in various disciplines and the integration of big idea between disciplines are the most important research issues. In traditional classroom teaching, knowledge is scattered and unsystematic. Grammar class only focuses on grammar, which cannot achieve the goal of cultivating students' core quality of English. The big idea represents the whole and systematic thinking. Guided by the big idea of subject, on the one hand, English classroom teaching process and teaching content can be connected to form a whole knowledge chain; On the other hand, it can connect English with other subjects and cultivate students' comprehensive thinking. Teaching is by no means isolated, and the use of big concepts is the key to break this kind of isolated and scattered teaching.

2. Related Concepts

2.1. Big Ideas

Foreign research on Big ideas can be traced back to the early 19th century. With the continuous development of learning theory, more and more foreign scholars have realized the connection between curriculum logic and disciplines. Clark equates "concept" with "big idea", which is a cognitive framework that connects many small concepts and helps build students'

understanding. Whiteley also believes that big ideas are the foundation of understanding, meaningful patterns that can be used to connect fragmented knowledge. Erickson and Lanning further explored the connotation of big ideas. They believed that big ideas could integrate the content and process of unit knowledge learning, and promote students to a deep and transferable core conceptual understanding of the subject, with great abstractness and generality [1].

The study of the big idea in China is relatively late, but in recent years, the domestic education has set off the big idea research upsurge, and there are many scholars have profound views on the big idea.

The term "big concept" is used for the first time in the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 edition) (this paper adopts "big concept"), emphasizing that the curriculum content should be structured and contextualized by taking the big concept of the subject as the core [2]. However, here the new curriculum standard does not give a clear definition of the big idea.

Sheng Huixiao believes that a big idea is a superior comprehensive concept, which can be interdisciplinary, or a big idea of a discipline or a discipline unit [3]. Li Gang and Lv Lijie believe that the concept of discipline is "a deep and transferable core concept that points to the basic structure of the discipline and abstracts from the basis of facts" [4]. Li Weidong understands big concepts from the perspective of Chinese discipline. He believes that Chinese is a process-driven discipline, and "big concepts should be extracted from the perspective of Chinese ontology knowledge" [5].

Wang Qiang et al. reviewed the research on the connotation, classification and value of big ideas from different disciplines in China, and concluded that the construction and generation of big ideas should start from the dual perspectives of disciplines and disciplines, and the use of big ideas is of great significance to English teaching [6]. In English subject teaching, the rational use of big ideas can not only solve the problems of knowledge fragmentation, superficial thinking and surface teaching, but also promote the transformation and transfer of knowledge to ability and ability to accomplishment through integrated and conceptualized teaching, and finally realize the goal of cultivating students' core accomplishment.

2.2. Core Literacy

"English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 edition)" points out that "core quality is the concentrated embodiment of curriculum and human values, and the correct values, essential qualities and key abilities that students gradually form through curriculum learning to meet the needs of personal lifelong development and social development" [7]. Based on the three major contents of "key ability, essential character and value concept", the new curriculum standard has formulated the teaching objectives to be achieved in English curriculum, namely, language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability designed in the new curriculum standard.

Among them, language ability refers to students' ability to understand and express language when they use language, non-language knowledge and strategic knowledge to participate in relevant thematic activities in specific situations. Cultural awareness refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign culture and appreciation of excellent culture, which is the cross-cultural cognition, attitude and behavior choice of students in the new era. The quality of thinking refers to the individual characteristics of people's thinking, reflecting the level and level of students' understanding, analysis, comparison, criticism, evaluation and creation. Learning ability refers to the awareness and ability to actively use and debug English learning strategies, expand English learning channels, and strive to improve the efficiency of English learning. In terms of the nature of core literacy, the new curriculum standard states: The four aspects of core literacy are "mutual penetration, integration and interaction, and collaborative

development", so that primary and secondary school students can understand different cultures and ways of thinking in the world through the learning of English courses in the basic stage, learn to look at the world more objectively and rationally, and gradually form a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values. It lays a solid foundation for students' lifelong learning and adaptation to future social development.

2.3. Big Ideas and Core Qualities

Since the promulgation of the new law, education in China has gradually focused on educating people, and the English discipline should develop students' core quality of English, that is, language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. The teaching under the command of big ideas is conducive to the cultivation and development of these four abilities. In traditional English teaching, English knowledge is scattered, thinking activities are superficial, grammar learning only grammar, reading articles only translation, such an unsystematic and scattered teaching is not conducive to the development of students' thinking and quality. The concept of big concept requires teachers to sort out each teaching unit, the theme of the unit is "big", and the learning theme of each section in the unit is "small", thus forming an overall teaching plan guided by the meaning of the theme and the connection between big idea and small idea, guiding students to learn from the point to the surface and develop their thinking from simple to deep. At the same time, the concept also allows teachers to integrate interdisciplinary teaching, integrate other disciplines into English teaching, promote the horizontal development of students' learning ability, improve their divergent thinking, so as to achieve the teaching goal of educating people and cultivating the core quality of English.

2.4. Big Concept and Unit Overall Teaching

For a long time, English teaching has been focusing on single discourse teaching, paying too much attention to vocabulary and grammar knowledge, or focusing on language skills and skills training. Such single teaching on the one hand is not conducive to establishing organic correlation between unit contents, failing to carry out superior integration of various aspects of the unit theme, and on the other hand, failing to carry out continuous evaluation from the perspective of the unit as a whole. Therefore, it is difficult to promote the occurrence of deep learning, which affects the full play of English teaching effect. "New curriculum Standard" clearly points out that it is necessary to design the unit's overall teaching objectives pointing to the development of core literacy, and tap the unit's overall education function. Only through the relatively long process cycle of complete unit learning, can we achieve the complex education goal of cultivating students' core literacy.

3. The Approach to the Overall Teaching Design of English Units under the General Concept

The new curriculum standard puts forward that the core quality of students is the concentrated embodiment of the value of educating people in the curriculum, and the overall goal also emphasizes the development of students' language ability, cultivation of students' cultural awareness, improvement of students' thinking quality, and improvement of students' learning ability. The integrated unit teaching based on the concept of English subject provides a new way to effectively solve the fragmentation of learning content, process modeling and superficial evaluation [8].

The author believes that the great idea of English subject is the integration of the great idea of language, which points to the subject ontology, and the great idea of subject, which has the characteristics of interdisciplinary. Integrated unit teaching based on the concept of English subject can help teachers integrate and sort out the teaching content, guide students out of the

misunderstanding of "learning for the sake of learning", learn to use language in life, learn language in practice, improve comprehensive language application ability, and form a learning closed loop from practice to practice.

This paper takes the teaching of "Unit9 I like music that I can dance to" in Grade 8 of Go for it Junior high School as an example to explore the whole teaching method of unit based on the concept of English subject.

3.1. According to the Curriculum Standards, Analyze the Unit Content and Extract the Thematic Meaning of Each Discourse

The integrated teaching design of English unit based on the concept of English subject requires teachers to study the content of the unit deeply from the macro, middle and micro levels, dig out the content of each theme, and extract the thematic significance of each sub-theme.

The theme of this unit is "Music and movies", which belongs to the theme group of "Literature, art and sports" under the category of "People and society", and the sub-theme is "Cultural value and appreciation of works in Chinese and foreign film, drama, music, dance, painting, architecture and other art forms".

At the macro level, this Unit focuses on the language function of "expressing preference", which is similar to "Unit 5 Do you want to watch a game show?) and the eighth grade second volume "Unit 8 Have you read Treasure Island?" It is closely related to form the supplement, expansion and synthesis of content learning. At the micro level, under this theme, the textbook content of this unit consists of seven discourses, among which there are three dialogues related to "music", one music review and one web diagram. The content is the introduction and interpretation of the characteristics, cultural values of different music works and the thoughts of musicians. The main purpose is to arouse students to think about their own music preferences and explain the relevant reasons. Appreciation and perception of the cultural value of excellent folk music and the introduction and interpretation of musicians' thoughts, the main purpose of which is to provoke students to think about their own musical preferences and explain relevant reasons, appreciation and perception of the cultural value of excellent folk music, and enhance students' national pride and cultural confidence.

There are two dialogues related to "movies". One is an exposit, which discusses the cultural value of different films and the audiences they cater to. Its thematic significance lies in guiding students to perceive the characteristics of different types of films, perceive the impact of films on audiences, and think about their preferences and reasons for films.

In the process of refining the big ideas, the teacher found that the existing texts in this unit still have some shortcomings in helping students form big ideas. This requires teachers to reorganize the unit content according to the development needs of students and form a learning logic that matches the development of students.

After an in-depth analysis of the text of this unit, the teacher found that although the theme of this unit is "Music and movies", the existing texts in the unit focus on "music". Therefore, in the overall design of the unit, the teacher added four movie-related texts.

3.2. Construct the Unit Concept based on the Thematic Meaning of Each Discourse

3.2.1. Sort Out the Ideas and Cultural Knowledge Behind the Discourse, and Refine the Theme Concept of the Unit

The theme concept carries the value of educating people and is the most important concept to develop students' core quality through English curriculum. On the basis of comprehensive analysis of the theme and discourse content of this unit, teachers need to split and integrate each discourse within the unit, so as to extract the major and minor concepts of the theme of this unit.

First, through three passages related to "music", students are guided to focus on the question "What kind of music do you like?" This question explores the characteristics of music and considers personal preferences. Then, through four expository texts related to "movies," the teacher guides the students around the question "What do you know about movies?" This question gives insight into movies, especially the emotional connections between different genres. On this basis, the teacher extracted theme concept 1, that is, "Understanding the genre characteristics and audio-visual feelings of music/film".

Secondly, after fully laying the groundwork for the above basic information related to "music/film", teachers can guide students to appreciate and analyze a certain art work in order to test the learning effect of students and improve their practical ability. Therefore, with the help of the music review "Sad but beautiful", teachers guide students to focus on "Why is the music sad but beautiful?" This question deeply analyzes the beauty of "Erquan Yingyue" and realizes Abing's tough character of unyielding to the wheel of fate. From this, the teacher extracted theme concept 2, namely "Appreciating the beauty of music".

Thirdly, with the help of other discourses related to music/movie criticism and recommendation, the teacher focuses on "How can you recommend your favorite music/movie to your friends?" This key issue is taught to guide students to share their favorite works with those around them. This is the theme of this unit, concept 3, "Share your favorite music/movies". Finally, by refining the above three thematic ideas layer by layer, the main theme concept of this unit should come out, that is, "appreciation and sharing of the beauty of works in the context of discussing the preferences of music/film, and promoting the beauty of culture". In order to make this result appear, teachers are required to explore together with students in the previous exploration of theme ideas. Only in this way, the final analysis of results will not be abrupt, so as to achieve the expected teaching effect.

3.2.2. Explore the Linguistic Expression and Stylistic Features of the Discourse, and Refine the Major Linguistic Concepts of the Unit

At the level of language expression, the text of this unit not only involves the words and expressions that describe the characteristics of music/film, such as electronic, smooth, noisy, serious, funny, etc., but also the words and expressions that describe the feelings of characters. Such as down, moved, sad, excited, relaxed and so on. At the grammatical level, students need to identify and understand the attributive clause that, which, who leads, and be able to use the grammar simply. Therefore, the language concept 1 in this unit can be distilled to "integrated learning of vocabulary and expressions used to describe favorite music/movies around semantics".

3.2.3. Construct the Unit Concept based on the Theme Concept and Language Concept

Teachers need to generalize the relationship between the theme concept and the language concept, and finally form the upper unit concept, that is, "understand the type characteristics of music and movies, appreciate the beauty of music, feel and share the emotional experience brought by different types of music and movies, and improve cultural literacy". Thus, the education blueprint of the unit "I like music that I can dance to" is completed.

At the level of textual stylistic features, the four texts under theme Concept 2 of this unit mainly involve appreciation, criticism and recommendation of music/film works. In terms of discourse structure, students need to appreciate and recommend their favorite music/movies from the three aspects of "describing features - listing facts - explaining reasons". On the way of description, students need to learn to use topic sentences and certain cohesive words in the text, and be able to flexibly use sentence patterns to explain reasons. Therefore, the language concept 2 in this unit can be distilled as "appreciation and recommendation of music/film works and reasons for recommendation".

3.2.4. Based on the Concept of Large and Small Units

English teachers have formulated three overall teaching objectives in the learning of this unit:

- 1) Be able to sort out the characteristics of various music forms and movie types and people's audio-visual feelings and preferences when listening to or reading the discourse related to music and movies;
- 2) Able to use different reading strategies to sort out the structure of the text, summarize the main idea and locate the key details of the text when reading and analyzing such texts;
- 3) Can recommend your favorite music or movie in writing, describe its type, characteristics, and state the reasons for recommendation.

However, the overall teaching goal of the unit can not adapt to the development of each student. In order to take care of the particularity of each student, we should refine the teaching content on the basis of the overall teaching goal of the unit and formulate targeted goals for the four periods. For example, the goal of the first lesson set by the teacher is:

- ① can obtain and record details related to music and movie preferences in listening activities, and complete the report according to the recorded information;
- ② Can identify the attributive clauses that, which and who guide in the dialogue, and simply imitate them in the report.

In addition, in order to ensure the integrity of teaching and the coordinated development of English subject concepts, teachers should consciously take into account the theme and language concepts to realize the integrated development of the two.

4. Conclusion

In short, in the overall teaching of junior middle school units based on the big ideas of English subjects, it is necessary to integrate the exploration and generation of the big ideas of the theme throughout the whole English learning process, make good use of the mediating role of the big ideas, promote the whole from the shallow to the deep from induction, generalization to transfer, connect the scattered knowledge content, and effectively avoid the fragmentation of knowledge. In addition, it provides students with the design and implementation path template of the operable unit overall teaching, which can help students generate new cognition after completing the learning task, provide students with new ideas, new methods and new values to solve problems, and finally realize the connection between classroom teaching and the development of English discipline literacy, and effectively improve the learning effect of students.

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