

Reconstruction of the Teaching Path for Large Units

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Abstract: The Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan (2022 Edition) explicitly requires “exploring large unit teaching and promoting knowledge structuring”. However, at present, the construction of large unit teaching paths in China is still in the initial stage of theoretical research, with a hundred schools of thought vying but no consensus yet reached. This article analyzes the feasibility of reconstructing the teaching path of large units from three paths, and points out the teaching path of implementing core literacy curriculum reform by carrying out large unit teaching based on disciplinary concepts.

Keywords: Large unit teaching; Core competencies; Disciplinary concept; Curriculum reform

I. Development logic of large unit teaching path

1. Education has a nurturing nature

The latest curriculum standards for ordinary high schools indicate: “Further select subject content, attach importance to big concepts as the core, make course content structured, lead by themes, and make course content contextualized to promote the implementation of subject core competencies.” At the same time, the “Opinions on Deepening Education and Teaching Reform to comprehensively improve the quality of compulsory education” reiterates that education should “adhere to moral education and focus on cultivating new people who shoulder the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.” Looking at the world, since entering the 21st century, UNESCO has continuously reiterated the importance of humanistic education spirit. Its 2015 publication “Reflective Education: Transitioning to the Concept of” Global Common Interest “ clearly states that” the fundamental purpose of education in the 21st century is to strengthen ethical principles and values in the learning process, And in November of the same year, it was reiterated that the purpose of education is not only related to acquiring skills, but also to forming a complete personality, which is an important component of education.

From this, it can be seen that the development and expansion of the adaptability of large unit teaching paths need to be based on the educational pattern, in order to cultivate students’ complete and comprehensive personality and spiritual outlook.

2. Knowledge learning has integration

Objectively speaking, Bruner emphasized that “various knowledge and concepts are not disordered and detached in the disciplinary structure, but present a network like structure, which includes both intra disciplinary and inter disciplinary structures, also known as interdisciplinary structures”, emphasizing that the generation of core concepts needs to dilute the rigid boundaries between disciplinary knowledge. Hebert James pointed out, “If students can understand the connections between what they are learning and other known content, they can understand it well, and the greater the number and strength of these connections, the more thoroughly they understand. For students as the main body, the requirement of integrating the five educations determines a new form of teaching content organization that is more suitable for the integration of literacy cultivation. The integration of five aspects of education includes holistic thinking such as “organic correlation thinking”, “holistic integration thinking”, and “comprehensive infiltration thinking”, which requires adhering to the idea of commanding the overall situation to design various educational and teaching measures.

From a comprehensive perspective, under the premise of the integrated development of the five educations, the development of course content should be based on the complete knowledge itself, with interdisciplinary material understanding to enhance students’ knowledge transfer level.

3. The problem situation is complex and real

From the perspective of the relationship between situational creation and learning, Taylor proposed that “the main task of teachers is to present learning experiences through creating situations, and to create a variety of diverse situations in order to provide meaningful experiences for each student.” This is because “complex situational activities involve complex cognitive activities, mainly testing students’ ability to comprehensively apply knowledge and skills to deal with complex problems.” Only complex situations that are more in line with real life can involve a variety of subject knowledge and learning experiences in the exploration process. In terms of literacy testing, some scholars have pointed out that the biggest characteristic that distinguishes core literacy from exam oriented learning is authenticity. This determines that the performance of students’ core literacy needs to be measured by applying the knowledge they have learned in real situations and being able to complete certain tasks. Without real situations or tasks, it will be impossible to effectively evaluate the generation of students’ core literacy.

As Franco German put it, the concept of learning nowadays is shifting from “acquisition” to “participation”. Large unit teaching should also utilize the classroom teaching method of ‘learning by doing’, creating an activity bridge between the real world and curriculum tasks.

II. Further exploration of the teaching path of the “big” unit

1. Build a “big” unit for educating people

At the level of education, it is recommended that teachers take a broad perspective and enhance their thinking patterns. They can create a good curriculum construction foundation for students’ learning from both content and form aspects, so as to silently achieve the great education of unit teaching.

In terms of form, it revolves around two aspects: educational organizational form and teaching methods. In terms of educational organizational form, it coincides with the educational philosophy of “curriculum collaborative education” in “curriculum ideology and politics”, advocating the integration of theoretical knowledge, value concepts, and spiritual pursuits into various subject courses. This also indicates that subject courses cannot pursue theoretical knowledge like ideological and political courses, but should adopt modern teaching methods to allow students to experience the profoundness of learning. In terms of content, organize learning materials based on the three characteristics of moral education, and guide the spirit of educating people in various disciplines. Firstly, moral education has a national character. We should achieve creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional culture from the perspective of scientific analysis. Secondly, moral education is strategic. Every historical era needs to cultivate a new social figure of its own era, which requires teachers to guide students to become firm believers and exemplary practitioners of socialist core values. Thirdly, Marx once pointed out that ‘the essence of human beings is the sum of all social relations’. The selection of educational materials should be combined with the social environment and historical background, such as the revival of life education in the study of geography.

2. Build a learning unit

Using big concepts as the cohesive force to construct the curriculum knowledge of the learning unit, enhancing the depth of students’ understanding; By using interdisciplinary and structured material processing methods, the breadth of unit teaching content can be expanded, thereby achieving a high degree of student learning transfer and reflecting the greatness of learning in large-scale unit teaching.

Big concepts are the core of unit integration, occupying a central position and possessing hierarchical characteristics. They can be divided into intra disciplinary, inter disciplinary, and interdisciplinary big concepts . Teachers can concretize abstract core literacy goals into expected visible learning objectives, combining implicit concepts behind knowledge with visualized expected performance of literacy. The value of this explicit processing lies in helping students understand the process by which big concepts are constructed, what they can be used to do, and thus clarify the transfer value of big concepts and apply them to solve practical problems. Teachers not only need to have a certain teaching mindset and curriculum awareness for large unit teaching, but also need to consider the individual differences of students. This personalized unit learning can be developed through two methods: “interdisciplinary supplementation of missing content” and “structured transformation of existing materials” to further develop teaching content.

3. Build activity units

Create realistic and complex task scenarios, enhance students’ profound experience of knowledge learning, improve the transfer level of theory to practice, expand the temporal and spatial scope of large unit teaching with the vastness of activities and space, and make knowledge learning more extensible.

Professor Cui pointed out that emphasizing problem-solving activities in real-life situations and highlighting practical teaching of “doing things” is the development direction of activity-based teaching. At the same time, the new curriculum emphasizes “allowing students to fully demonstrate their creative and personalized learning outcomes in complex situations, multiple perspectives, and open spaces.” In large unit teaching, based on unit themes, a compatible and open education system should be developed, allowing students to learn in real situations and enter the big classroom of nature and society.

Specifically manifested as: horizontally, highlighting the comprehensiveness of objectives, combining the activity objectives of study tours with the teaching objectives of course content, considering the different cognitive levels of students in different stages, and conducting in-depth exploration of implicit educational materials for study tours; Vertically, create task scenarios that originate from life but are higher than life. Building a platform for students to understand and transform the world, provided that the task level meets operability requirements.

III. The Value Dimension of the New Form of Large Unit Teaching

1. Breaking through the dilemma of cultivating literacy and calling for innovative teaching concepts

The design of large unit teaching aimed at the core competencies of disciplines is the fundamental task of implementing “cultivating virtue and nurturing talents”, the inevitable requirement for developing quality education, and deepening curriculum reform. It is also a key step in promoting the implementation of core competencies of disciplines.

Firstly, in terms of teaching objectives, the paradigm of learning large units has achieved transcendence of teaching objectives. In the process of generating learning objectives, it is not a single discipline that fights alone, but rather a mutual command and transcendence among numerous disciplines, which is more global and profound than before. Secondly, in terms of teaching content, an integrated teaching content organization that focuses on big concepts can effectively connect the knowledge chain, link various content cores, and thus link dynamic and differently characterized subject knowledge with static and highly condensed core competencies. Thirdly, in teaching activities, the activity mode of teachers carrying out teaching design based on knowledge learning as the main timeline has been broken. The teaching design of the activity unit focuses more on students condensing big concepts in problem-solving, facilitating knowledge transfer and skill

application.

2. Described the educational blueprint of socialism with Chinese characteristics

On the one hand, it is conducive to cultivating teenagers' emotional identity, cultural confidence, and institutional beliefs, gradually forming a sense of belonging and identity for themselves. Digging into the philosophical spirit of the origin of science in knowledge transmission enables learning to cover the multidimensional educational benefits of social ethics, public spirit, and personal moral cultivation, making teaching a collection of multidimensional curriculum spirits that unify personal moral positions, technological ethical insights, and social emotional identification.

On the other hand, it is conducive to shaping a three-dimensional and full image of the two major educational subjects, allowing their individual strength to be exerted. Teachers will summarize a teaching path that integrates scientificity, narrative, and spirituality, shaping the image of a "great master" who teaches and educates students through words and deeds, and establishes learning with morality, becoming a guide for students' lives. In terms of students, it is important to shape the contemporary personal values of "seeking truth and goodness, applying what they have learned" and "public ethical qualities of individual reflection and meaning inquiry" in unit learning.

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