

# A Study on Large-Unit Teaching of Secondary School Art Based on Core Literacy--An Example of the Humanistic Version of the Curriculum

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**Abstract:** With the advancement of education reform and the evolution of quality education, today's art education is constantly improving students' artistic literacy and aesthetic ability, pushing teachers to conform to the development of the times, change their teaching concepts, adjust their teaching methods, and optimise the overall teaching effect. The paper launches a study on large-unit teaching of secondary school art under the artistic core literacy, taking unit learning activities as the carrier and activity evaluation as the guarantee, and seeks to explore complete teaching strategies, with a view to promoting the cultivation of students' core literacy through such teaching methods.

**Keywords:** core literacy, large unit teaching, secondary art

## 1. Introduction

The (2022) edition of the Arts Curriculum Standards states that the core literacies of the Arts Curriculum Standards are based on students' development and are presented in four dimensions: aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice and cultural understanding. In the context of core literacy, the problems that students need to solve are more complex, wider in scope, and contain more heterogeneous relationships, and a single-lesson curriculum is not enough to cope with solving these problems. It is in this context that the unit curriculum has gained a new life, and it is for this reason that the significance and value of the 'large unit' is also reflected. The teaching of art units focuses on wholeness and coherence, and through the extension and expansion of the theme, students can gradually gain a deeper understanding of the theme in different units, and gradually improve their aesthetic ability and artistic literacy.

## 2. Connotation of large-unit teaching in the context of core literacy

The 'unit approach' was proposed by American educator Morrison in the 1930s. The 'unit teaching method' is a form of teaching that is developed and designed as a whole with a certain theme or unit content as a unit, and the teaching content, focus and exercises of each lesson are reasonably distributed, so that there are connections between the lessons and each lesson has its own characteristics, so that students can master their knowledge in a more systematic and in-depth way, and cultivate their awareness and ability to research, think, create and solve problems, and give full play to the overall advantages of teaching [1]. It also cultivates students' awareness and ability to research, think, create and solve problems, and gives full play to the overall advantages of teaching [1]. 'Large-unit teaching' is a mode of teaching organised on a unit basis. Large unit teaching and unit teaching research share the same roots and origins. Large unit teaching evolves from unit teaching through practical application within the discipline. Unlike the original natural units of textbooks, large unit teaching breaks the boundaries of textbook units, rearranging the original unit's learning content and methods to develop new learning units. This method focuses on the status of the student body, emphasizes teacher-student interaction, and highlights the connection between teaching and real-life situations, enabling students to face real situations and solve problems. Based on this understanding, the 'large' in large unit teaching does not refer to the difficulty, cross-field nature, or knowledge coverage of the teaching content. Instead, it is reflected in two main aspects: First, large unit teaching focuses on 'big ideas,' pointing to in-depth student learning with high-level teaching design. Second, it embodies a broad approach, cultivating students' ability to adapt to new environments under 'big scenarios,' 'big tasks,' and 'big evaluations.' The second is that large-unit teaching has a big pattern, cultivating students' comprehensive literacy for future real-life under "big scenario", "big task" and "big evaluation". The

'big' is to stand in the overall perspective of the discipline, around the discipline of the big concepts and issues, to develop a big task, which can achieve the core literacy of the discipline to the ground [2].

### **3. Second, the value and embodiment of large-unit teaching in secondary art**

#### ***3.1 Favouring the development of students' comprehensive literacy skills***

(1) To achieve 'learning for use', in terms of learning orientation, large-unit teaching breaks down subject barriers, incorporates students' indirect experience, and includes topics familiar to students, such as life and society, with inquiry, summary and reflection becoming the main modes of learning. It combines practical activities outside the classroom with what is learnt in the classroom, providing students with learning materials in more areas. It focuses on cultivating students' ability to use what they have learnt to solve real social problems.

(2) Create 'real scenarios', in the learning atmosphere, the traditional classroom 'textbook scenarios' focus more on the transmission of knowledge, while the large-unit teaching pays more attention to the correlation between the content of the study and the real scenarios, in order to promote the formation of the cognitive structure of the students.

(3) The implementation of the 'immersion experience' in the learning method of large-unit teaching involves using big idea-oriented or thematic units. This approach provides students with a richer form of artistic expression and a deeper understanding of the objective world. Through practical activities, students gain an in-depth understanding of knowledge and skills, enhancing their aesthetic and comprehensive abilities. Large-unit teaching and learning has a wider breadth and deeper depth, which is more conducive to the occurrence of deep and authentic learning.

#### ***3.2 Favouring the professional development of teachers***

'To develop a country, we must first strengthen teachers', and it is urgent to deepen the reform of the teaching force and strengthen the construction of a high-level education system for the teaching force. As a teaching method focusing on cutting-edge ideals, systematic and efficient, highly operable, and with outstanding research value, large-unit teaching can help teachers to improve their ability of teaching research and educational practice from multiple dimensions. Large-unit teaching covers educational concepts such as deep learning, interdisciplinary learning, and project-based learning, and therefore requires teachers to dig deeper and understand more deeply. At the same time, large-unit teaching focuses on expressive evaluation, value-added evaluation, multi-subject evaluation, and assessment for learning, which brings new opportunities and challenges for teachers to know, understand, and cultivate students in an all-round, all-encompassing and all-encompassing way, and also provides the motivation for upward development. To sum up, large-unit teaching can help teachers learn to learn, timely feedback, learn to practice, and become the 'scaffolding' for teachers' professional development. Art teachers in the new era should not only master solid and profound subject knowledge and skills, but also have the vision and technology of large-unit teaching.

#### ***3.3 Favourable to the cultivation of core literacy***

Core literacy itself cannot be an independent teaching content, but needs to be reasonably transformed to be internalised as part of students' own literacy, and large-unit teaching can precisely promote such transformation. According to the Compulsory Education Art Class Standard (2022 Edition), the core arts literacy includes aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, cultural understanding and other core literacy. Through the reasonable organisation of large-unit teaching, teachers can focus on the big idea, optimise teaching methods, adopt reasonable teaching means, reconstruct teaching content to carry out situational teaching, and allow the penetration of art core literacy so that knowledge can be transformed into experience.

### **4. Large-unit Teaching Strategies for Secondary School Art Based on Core Literacy**

#### ***4.1 Teacher-led to student-led teaching mode***

The traditional form of teaching organisation is dominated by the teacher, which belongs to the teaching mode of explanation and acceptance, and can also be called receptive learning.

Teacher-student relationship is unidirectional, teacher dominance, ignoring the student body, easy to appear 'injection' teaching. In such a single, mechanised teaching relationship, the cultivation of students' core literacy is more difficult to achieve, and the differences between students will be widened, which is not conducive to improving the overall quality of teaching.

Under the background of core literacy, teachers should carefully organise the teaching plan and teaching process, pay attention to student participation, innovate in the teaching process, and guide students to use the knowledge and skills to solve practical problems, so as to cultivate students' comprehensive literacy for future life. Compared with the traditional receptive teaching mode, students are allowed to learn in the form of group work to improve their teamwork ability, solve problems in cooperation, take the initiative to find problems and solve them, and cultivate students' good communication skills. This requires teachers to actively participate in the process of students' group cooperative learning, provide timely feedback, correctly guide students to explore and analyse problems, think deeply based on correct values, and then actively participate in social activities. By shifting the focus from merely paying attention to the degree of student participation to guiding students towards effective participation in teaching for in-depth learning, correct values can be formed. This approach aims to cultivate students' core qualities and optimize the teaching format to achieve a good educational effect. Teaching is organised according to the principle of 'teacher-led, student-led', so that students can discover, raise, analyse and solve problems in the process of perceptual cognition, rational thinking, practical exploration and sublimation, and maintain the progression of each teaching link to complete the cultivation of multiple objectives.

#### ***4.2 Improve the teaching content to promote knowledge transfer***

For a long time, the art discipline is mostly based on the unit of lesson time, using the method of one lesson and one practice to carry out the teaching content, which leads to a certain extent to the isolation of the teaching objectives, fragmentation of the teaching content, and the effect of the discipline nurturing and curriculum nurturing is not satisfactory. Education is constantly developing and progressing. In the context of core literacy, students face more and increasingly complex problems that require broader solutions. The shortcomings of traditional single-class teaching are becoming more apparent because it is nearly impossible to achieve in-depth learning and significant literacy improvement within the constraints of a few minutes of short-time teaching. This shows that the effective combination of multi-unit large-unit curriculum teaching is the key to achieving the teaching effect.

##### ***4.2.1 Setting learning themes for large-unit teaching***

Teachers should establish teaching objectives around the development needs of students' core qualities, and start teaching from image literacy, art expression, aesthetic judgement, creative practice and cultural understanding. The first thing you need to know is what a learning theme is. Students can structure their learning under a certain theme, and that theme can become a learning theme. There are many types of learning themes: core knowledge, scenario tasks, learning resources, questions and answers, synthesis and refinement, etc. Learning themes should be set for different learning contents. The first step is to design the unit structure from the students' perspective. The design of unit teaching requires research based on students' existing knowledge and skills, age characteristics, and life experience.

Secondly, designing large-unit learning themes by unit framing. Teachers need to integrate the unit content and refine the large unit learning theme. In the first unit of the Renminjiao version of 8 art, the performance of modelling, the infectious power of colour, the role of composition and several aspects of the knowledge content together present the visual arts contain several major features. Therefore, the learning theme can be matched with the unit theme, combined with the technical characteristics of the content or the inner spirit of the curriculum to refine the theme words, and comprehensively refine the large unit learning theme of 'diversified visual arts'. Secondly, the content of knowledge is sorted out by the theme of the large unit, and it is clear what students need to do, know and understand in the large unit. Finally, the content of knowledge is used to design the theme of learning time. After determining the content of learning at different stages of learning time, the structure of knowledge content is used to set up the theme of learning time.

##### ***4.2.2 Promoting the transfer of knowledge in large units of study***

Knowledge transfer is the impact of one kind of learning on another kind of learning, is carried out in the learning process, any learning is based on the learner's existing knowledge and experience, skills,

attitudes and so on. And the new learning will have an impact on the original knowledge, skills, attitudes. For the art discipline, it is very important to be able to understand and learn new knowledge quickly based on the knowledge, skills, and emotions that have already been mastered, and to apply them to real life, solve real problems, and promote the cultivation of comprehensive literacy. To achieve the transfer of knowledge, one is to transfer it in real situations. 'Teaching a man to fish is not as good as teaching him to fish', and the acquisition of the skill of fishing needs to be based on the background of real life, placing students in real life and connecting them to reality, so that they can understand how to achieve the effectiveness of the transfer. Secondly, migration in similar materials. Factors such as the similarity and commonality of learning materials affect the transfer of learning. For example, studying the porcelain or clothing of specific dynasties can be connected to art and historical knowledge, facilitating learning transfer and maximizing its impact. Thirdly, the ability to grow in a step-by-step manner to promote migration. Teachers should be based on the age of the learner, physical and mental development and other factors, appropriate and reasonable arrangement of teaching content, in a subtle influence on the students, guiding them to optimise their own knowledge structure, and thus promote the migration of knowledge.

#### ***4.3 Establishment of a scientific evaluation mechanism for the whole process***

Evaluation, as an indispensable part of teaching, is always present in the process of teaching activities, and teachers should establish the concept of teaching-learning-evaluation consistency. In order to achieve the consistency of teaching-learning-evaluation, the first focus on the teaching objectives. Teaching objectives are the guidance of teaching activities. Teachers should study the new curriculum in depth, and through horizontal and vertical analysis, understand the different objectives of each academic level, the second focus on the learning process. Classroom teaching should not only teach students knowledge, but also teach students methods, habits, attitudes and abilities. The classroom should be shifted from knowledge transfer to core literacy cultivation, and the classroom can focus on diversified evaluation by creating authentic scenarios. The third diversified classroom involves timely evaluation through methods such as student self-assessment, group peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. By integrating 'assessment' throughout the teaching process, it promotes students' achievement of learning objectives. Teaching' points to the cultivation of core literacy, "learning" is for the development of core literacy, "assessment" is to promote "teaching" and "learning". Evaluation' is to promote the synergy between "teaching" and "learning", and the three parties work together to promote the formation of students' literacy and the occurrence of authentic learning.

### **5. Large Unit Teaching Design Case Study-Human Education Edition Art Grade 9 Book**

The industrious and intelligent Chinese people have created diverse and colourful folk art. The theme of this unit is 'Aroma and Interest - Able Craftsmen', and the academic period is from Grade 7 to Grade 9. The diversity of folk art gives strong support to Chinese culture, and the basic questions are: What are the forms of folk art? The basic questions are: What are the forms of folk art? How are they reflected and passed on in modern society?

#### ***5.1 Unit Learning Objectives***

① To understand the traditional aesthetic characteristics and their cultural connotations ② through the classroom learning, with an interest in the craftsmanship to complete a piece of work ③ to be able to perceive the charm of folk art, in the humanities and history of the emotion to dig its fine art language.

#### ***5.2 Unit evaluation programme***

The main focus is on the expressive tasks of the unit. For example, in this unit, the task is to complete a handicraft using familiar craftsmanship. The corresponding assessment points are: to be able to find out the 'folk art' in modern life and share and exchange; to be able to use art language to depict their favourite folk crafts and choose alternative tools to display them effectively; to understand the folk art, and to broaden their horizons and improve themselves in the process of experiencing, co-operating, exchanging and making. They will learn to accept the opinions of others and develop group cohesion and creativity.

### 5.3 Unit structure design

The unit structure is designed with five main stages:

In the first stage of paper-cutting, the learning task is to master the basic techniques through the practical activity of making paper-cutting. The problem that may be encountered is how to do the work lines carved neatly. The learning activity is to communicate about the characteristics of our traditional paper-cutting art and cut a pair of paper-cutting works.

The second stage of the art of knotting, the learning task is to talk about your favourite knotting art works, learn the basic knotting methods. Possible problems to be encountered are how to distinguish between practical knots and decorative knots. The learning activity is to create a Chinese knot for someone you want to bless.

Stage 3: Wire modelling. The learning task is to master the types of materials that can be used for wire modelling. Problems may be encountered in distinguishing the properties of different materials. The learning activity is to create a wire modelling craft using natural plant crafts such as corn husks and strips of cloth.

In the fourth stage, batik and tie-dye, the learning task is to master both techniques effectively. Problems that may be encountered are differentiating between batik and tie-dye and their characteristics, as well as the aesthetics of the two techniques. The learning activity is to design and produce a piece of artwork using one of the techniques and to appreciate the characteristics of the craft.

Stage 5 - Colourful Sculpture: The learning task is to explore the meaning of 'three parts sculpture, seven parts colour', which is the key to colourful sculpture. Problems that may be encountered are how to express the theme effectively. Learning activities include learning how to make coloured sculptures and designing a piece of coloured sculpture.

From an overall analysis of the secondary school art textbook from the Human Education version, it is evident that the art subject shares common ground with other subjects. Students often draw on art elements in other subjects due to the visual, operable, and interactive characteristics of art. Activities such as costume design for stage plays and VR involve interdisciplinary teaching, addressing contemporary topics of interest to students. This approach serves as a starting point for achieving deeper and more effective teaching. In this way, we can better realise the deeper level of teaching. Of course, when students learn or create art knowledge, they will also be involved in other subjects, for example, in the study of the large unit of the 'rich interest of skilled craftsmen', it will be involved in a number of regional folk cultures: Shaanxi paper-cutting, batik and tie-dye of the non-heritage culture of the Miao people and so on, which is a combination of knowledge of the subject of geography. Another example is the art of weaving which can be traced back to the Qin and Han Dynasties. When learning art, students should be guided to learn to appreciate, to understand its origin and culture, as well as the story behind it, so that the students can expand their thinking and form a complete chain of knowledge, in order to better cultivate students' comprehensive literacy.

## 6. Conclusion

With the continuous promotion of curriculum reform, the art classroom in the new era of education has shown a new pattern. Large-unit teaching can help students closely link what they have learnt with life practice, combine direct and indirect experiences, and then form a complete chain of knowledge, constantly pointing to in-depth learning. Under the large-unit teaching mode, the perfect evaluation mechanism and rich teaching content promote the improvement of students' art literacy and ability, which in turn promotes the formation of core literacy.

## References

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