

# Exploring the Teaching Path of Geography Unit from the Perspective of Core Literacy

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**Abstract:** In the context of the development of education in the new era, the cultivation of core competencies is the goal orientation and value pursuit of curriculum reform. The purpose of this article is to explore the specific path of geography unit teaching, comprehensive use of methods such as questionnaire surveys and on-site interviews. It was found that the current middle school geography curriculum focuses on classroom teaching habits, with scattered teaching content and an incomplete knowledge structure system for students, making it difficult to cultivate and train subject innovation ability and thinking. With the further development of the new curriculum reform, it has become a hot topic in the education sector for geography teachers to promote the cultivation of students' core competencies in geography by conducting geography teaching based on geographical units. Optimizing and integrating geography teaching content centered around large units is beneficial for students to better understand the essence of geography curriculum. The overall teaching of large units guided by core geographical literacy can effectively enhance students' ability to summarize and apply knowledge, help them establish a good learning system, form a more scientific and systematic thinking framework, and enable students to actively explore the connections between geographical problems and master solutions in the learning process, fully demonstrating their subject status. This study can provide suggestions and references for exploring the teaching path of geography in junior and senior high schools.

**Keywords:** Core Competencies; Geographic Unit; Teaching Path; Geography Teaching in Junior and Senior High Schools

## 1. Introduction

In the current educational context of cultivating students' moral character, emphasizing the cultivation of their core competencies has become an important goal of curriculum reform in various subjects. In 2014, the Ministry of Education of China issued the "Opinions on Deepening Curriculum Reform for All and Implementing the Fundamental Task of Moral Education", which clearly stated the need to "study and formulate a core competency system for student development and academic quality standards". The proposal of core literacy is driving the transformation of middle school geography teaching mode in reverse, and the teaching mode also needs to gradually shift from designing a single lesson to designing comprehensive and systematic unit teaching with learning themes [1]. The core literacy of geography is the main basis for evaluating the quality of geography classroom teaching and the effectiveness of reform, and it is also an important means to achieve the teaching goals of geography. Compared to traditional geography courses, traditional teaching often only focuses on the micro level knowledge connections within each section, while neglecting the macro level knowledge connections between sections, resulting in students' knowledge being fragmented. In the process of carrying out teaching activities, geography unit teaching is not limited to a specific section in the textbook, nor is it limited to the unit where this section is located, or even the entire geography textbook [2]. Instead, the teaching focus is on all elements related to this content. In view of this, this article attempts to explore the teaching path of geography unit teaching from the perspective of core literacy, in order to enrich and improve geography teaching in junior and senior high schools.

## 2. Review of Domestic and Foreign

## Research

As the fundamental task of education, cultivating students' moral character and nurturing their core competencies should focus on developing quality education, fostering students' subject literacy, and further promoting educational equity. From then on, core competencies have been deeply promoted in the teaching of geography in China, and the connotation and definition of core competencies in geography have become clearer. Zhong [3] believe that unit design should be an important part of curriculum development based on core competencies; Cui [4] explained the significance of large units from the perspective of teachers; In recent years, the process of education and teaching reform has gradually accelerated. In response to this, China's attention to students' core competencies and overall abilities has been continuously increasing. Emphasis is placed on the infiltration of geographical core competencies, cultivating students' geographical subject literacy and comprehensive qualities, and promoting the comprehensive realization of the educational value of geography science and education. This has become an important issue that middle school geography teachers need to face at present.

## 3. Definition of Related Concepts

### 3.1 Geographical Core Literacy

Geographical core literacy refers to the geographical skills, knowledge, methods, and thinking gradually mastered by students in the process of geography learning. It can also be said that students observe geographical things and phenomena in real life from a geographical perspective, and use the acquired geographical knowledge and skills to solve various practical problems.

### 3.2 Large Unit Teaching

Large unit teaching is a new type of teaching innovation method that mainly combines the overall writing characteristics of textbooks, considers from a higher perspective, and focuses on breaking through traditional teaching in the reconstruction of the teaching system, avoiding the redundancy and repetition of classroom content [5]. By utilizing the characteristics of wide scale, deep

level, and important nature of large unit teaching, innovation in teaching ideas and methods is promoted, shifting from single section or chapter classroom teaching to large unit classroom teaching, highlighting the distinctive role of large unit teaching.

## 4. Implementation Path of Geography Unit Teaching from the Perspective of Three Core Competencies

At present, the bridges of geography unit teaching under core literacy mainly include three types: "big task", "big context", and "big concept". Based on questionnaire interviews, participatory evaluations, and literature review, this article gradually explores three forms of unit teaching paths: big tasks, big concepts, and big situations. Specifically, it includes the following steps: developing learning themes based on curriculum standards; Constructing a cognitive structure diagram of core concepts; Develop teaching plans based on problem scenarios; Design unit assignments.

### 4.1 Develop Learning Themes Based on Curriculum Standards

Curriculum standards are not only a concrete reflection of the national will in the field of education, but also the theoretical basis for teachers to carry out educational and teaching work. Therefore, when designing large unit teaching, teachers should first clarify the position of this lesson in the textbook, refer to the teaching prompts in the curriculum standards, start from the actual learning situation of students, and combine with the textbooks to be taught in a certain period of time or semester, comprehensively clarify the logical structure system of the learned knowledge content, highlight the comprehensiveness and practicality of the geography course, and thus determine the theme of large unit teaching.

When designing the theme of a large unit, attention should be paid to the coherence and systematicity between the teaching design themes of the unit, in order to establish an overall connection between the new and old themes, and to systematize the content and structure. At the same time, teachers can also design mind maps for the teaching themes of each major unit based on actual course teaching arrangements, in order to establish a relatively systematic and easy for students to

understand and master knowledge system, so as to reasonably grasp the depth and breadth of the themes [6]. At the same time, teachers can flexibly adjust the system structure between major units according to students' actual learning situation and abilities. The design of large unit themes is not fixed and unchanging, but requires teachers to constantly summarize experience in teaching practice activities for adjustment and improvement, in order to achieve the characteristics of good flexibility and strong applicability that traditional teaching design does not possess. Secondly, refer to the new geography curriculum standards to make reasonable plans for the textbook knowledge and teaching design related to the theme, ensuring that the large unit teaching design created can be successfully completed in a very planned and effective manner within the designated class hours set by the school.

#### **4.2 Form a Cognitive Structure Diagram of Core Concepts**

Under the educational background of the new curriculum reform, the ultimate goal of students' learning is to be able to use the knowledge they have learned as a tool. Therefore, teachers need to sort out and integrate multiple content standards, extract core theories of the subject, analyze the connotation and extension of core concepts, construct a cognitive structure diagram of core concepts, and form a systematic unit knowledge framework. Extracting the major concepts of unit teaching is of utmost importance in unit teaching. By focusing on these concepts in unit teaching, key knowledge points are integrated together to establish a conceptual logical framework suitable for students' cognition [7].

#### **4.3 Designing Teaching Activities Based on Problem Scenarios**

Geography is a discipline characterized by its humanistic and natural features, with strong practicality and practicality. This determines that teachers should use more vivid situations to carry out teaching activities, allowing students to learn in person and achieve a deep understanding and effective mastery of geographical knowledge. The core competencies of geography, as the starting point and foothold of large unit teaching, are

necessary qualities and important abilities exhibited by students in dealing with complex and unstable environments. However, these qualities and abilities are difficult to effectively convey to students in the classroom teaching process, but are formed in the process of solving real problems [8]. Teachers can fully utilize students' role as learning subjects through teaching methods such as self-directed learning, collaborative exploration, and extracurricular assessments, allowing students to experience the process of thinking, analyzing, and solving problems, and mastering the necessary knowledge, methods, and skills for problem-solving during this process.

In large unit teaching, a single teaching method is difficult to meet the needs of different class hours. Therefore, as a geography teacher, it is even more necessary to create rich geographical contexts or real-life scenarios through different methods, cultivate students' ability to think and solve problems in different contexts, and achieve the transfer and transformation of students' acquired knowledge and abilities, so as to truly implement the cultivation of core geographical literacy [9]. In view of this, teachers can create rich geographical or real-life scenarios through various forms such as role-playing and artistic expression to meet the practical needs of teaching.

Based on the core literacy of the subject, geography classroom should grasp the core of geography curriculum, create real and vivid classroom teaching scenarios, introduce the geographical problems that students will explore, stimulate students' curiosity and thirst for knowledge, drive their internal driving force, enable students to actively and enthusiastically think and explore geographical phenomena and problems, stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning knowledge, and make geography classroom lively. Such classroom teaching is the most efficient and effective way to achieve twice the result with half the effort [10].

#### **4.4 Conduct Unit Homework Design**

The lesson plan for large unit teaching generally consists of several class hours, and it is difficult to form a systematic homework for each class hour, and homework for different class hours is prone to repetition. Only by

designing from the perspective of a large unit and enhancing the pertinence of assignments can the functions of assignments be truly realized and learning goals be achieved.

During the design process, various forms of unit assignments can be designed based on the learning situation, teaching content, and teaching schedule. When designing large unit assignments, one can independently develop assignments based on various teaching contexts or using graphic and textual materials. The difficulty level of homework should be clearly defined, from easy to difficult, from a solid foundation to a higher level of geographical core literacy. This can not only improve students' enthusiasm for completing homework, but also suit their thinking development process.

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

With the deepening of the reform of middle school geography teaching, teachers should also continuously improve their teaching level. In this regard, teachers should actively explore the implementation of large unit teaching, in order to effectively cultivate students' core subject literacy, establish effective subject knowledge systems, and carry out effective subject practice activities. In the specific preparation of large unit teaching, teachers need to take the textbook as the starting point, based on the requirements of the curriculum standard for the knowledge points taught, reasonably reorganize and plan the content of the textbook, formulate feasible teaching objectives for large units according to students' knowledge level and learning ability, construct interesting teaching situations, deeply promote large unit teaching, and design systematic unit assignments, so as to effectively carry out middle school geography large unit teaching and effectively achieve the requirements of the new curriculum reform.

How to improve students' core geographical literacy in the process of geography classroom teaching is a problem that needs further research. The design of large unit teaching requires a global awareness. This article preliminarily explores the implementation path of large unit teaching from the perspective of geographical core literacy, striving to fully leverage the advantages of large unit teaching. In the future, further exploration is needed in the process of teaching practice on how to

guide students to achieve adaptive guidance and integration through large unit course teaching, improve students' learning efficiency, how to enable students to systematically understand and master in large unit teaching design, and how to reasonably arrange the number of knowledge points, so that students can comprehensively understand knowledge and development abilities, and how to reasonably improve subject core literacy and teaching quality. Accumulating more teaching cases of geography courses and innovatively summarizing more vivid and effective teaching and learning methods of geography courses is the focus of this research in the future.

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