The Exploring of the Effects of Unit Integral Teaching on Junior High School English Homework Based on the Background of the “Double Reduction” Policy

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Abstract

The Unit Integral Teaching design is of significant importance for the comprehensive development of students' abilities and meeting the requirements of the New Curriculum Standards for Junior High School. This paper, based on the background of the "double reduction" policy, adopted purposive sampling to select two English teachers in China as research subjects. Using interview surveys, the study recorded teachers' understanding, application methods, application effects, and manifestations in homework of Unit Integral Teaching design. Additionally, this paper combined various literature studies and designed a template for combining unit integral teaching with English homework based on the design of the junior high school People's Education Press textbook. The aim is to explore the significance of unit integral teaching in current Chinese junior high school English classrooms and its impact on English homework. Through learning, investigation, and discussion, the final results showed that the unit integral teaching design approach achieved improvements in homework completion, student performance, student ability, and teacher-student relationships. Therefore, based on the research finding, we can infer that unit integral teaching to junior high school English homework can have an optimizing effect on homework, which has positive significance for classroom teaching and student development.

Keywords

Unit integral teaching, Junior high school teaching, Optimization design

1. Introduction

Unit integral teaching is a teaching model centered around a theme, rather than a fixed teaching method. It brings together related unit content to form a more complete and organic big concept. About teaching with big concept, the most widely circulated view is that of Professor Cui Yunhong (2019), he believes that "the unit referred to here is a learning unit, and a unit is a learning event, a complete learning story, so a unit is a micro-course. Or, a unit is a course cell that points to a competency, is relatively independent, and embodies a complete teaching process." The terms "learning unit," "learning event", and "course cell" mentioned here are very enlightening. He distinguishes large units from units in current textbooks and provides criteria for distinguishing them, For example, in a textbook, a unit usually consists of several articles on a theme. If these articles do not have a complete 'major task' to drive them, and cannot be organized into a 'complete' learning event around goals, content, implementation, and evaluation, then it is not the concept of a
unit that we are talking about. In addition, there are still many explanations for big concept. Unit integral teaching involves establishing several teaching themes for a semester based on the level of the curriculum's implementation objectives. Following the general rules of language learning, the teacher uses these themes as a guide to develop and restructure relevant learning content and carry out continuous unit teaching over multiple class periods (Meng Yiping, 2019). The teaching method of unit integral teaching is based on Unit Teaching, integrating multiple learning elements, using real problems to drive students to learn language, and highlighting the student's subjectivity (Zhao Hui, 2021). To sum up, unit integral teaching is a teaching organization form newly advocated by Chinese educators after the proposal of core literacy, aiming to promote students' deep learning (Cui Yunhong, 2019). The process of unit integral teaching is the process of enabling students to engage in deep learning, and it is a further development of unit teaching. The design and implementation of unit integral teaching are aimed at better meeting the requirements of curriculum standards for the implementation of secondary school teaching, and realizing the training objectives of promoting comprehensive development of individuals. Unit integral teaching promotes student-oriented teaching design, structurizes the knowledge that students need to learn, and contextualizes the teaching process in the classroom. The application of unit integral teaching design enables teachers to integrate subject knowledge at a higher level, meet the new requirements of the new curriculum for subject English teaching, and help students respond to the rapidly changing international situation and the country's requirements for new social talents. Unit integral teaching design is a concept that can be applied to various types of classrooms. For example, applying unit integral teaching to middle school reading instruction can improve students' listening and comprehension abilities, or it can be used in homework and classroom activities to inspire students' learning interests.

This teaching method first appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s and was mainly used in the field of English language teaching. Over time, unit integral teaching has also been applied to other subjects and education stages. Its basic concept is to improve students' learning efficiency and outcomes by concentrating related knowledge and skills together in a big unit.

The unit teaching method originated from the "New Education Movement" and "Progressive Education" movement that emerged in Europe and America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the development of unit integral teaching, the most prominent figure is the American educator John Dewey. He proposed a five-step teaching method, which divides teaching activities into five parts and emphasizes the central position of students in teaching activities (Tan Lin, 2008). Another important contributor is the American educator Crittenden Peckham, who in the early 20th century proposed a teaching model called "project learning", which connects subject knowledge with practical life and conducts interdisciplinary learning activities based on projects. This provides important references for the curriculum design and teaching practices of unit integral teaching.

In addition, the design teaching method proposed by Dewey's disciple Kilpatrick is the specific implementation method of unit teaching. The design teaching method advocates centering on children's life, designing cross-disciplinary units according to children's psychological characteristics. Teachers should focus on creating an environment and conditions to arouse children's interest, respect them, and give play to their initiative and enthusiasm, which is the core feature of this method. Many researchers such as Ralph W. Tyler, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Hilda Taba have also conducted a lot of research. Tyler is one of the advocates of unit integral teaching. He proposed the concept of objective-based curriculum design in his book Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, which was published in 1949, based on the book, he proposed the teaching design philosophy of "starting from the objectives" and designed systematic, coherent, and evaluable unit integral teaching plans based on teaching objectives. In 1956, Bloom proposed a teaching design model of "hierarchical objectives", dividing teaching objectives into cognitive objectives, affective objectives, and skill objectives, and developed a knowledge structure map based on this, realizing systematic and hierarchical teaching of knowledge. All these have played a role in promoting the development of unit integral teaching.

After the design teaching method was introduced into China, Chen Heqin and others conducted experiments in early childhood education and summarized four implementation steps of "experimental reference release review". The application of unit teaching in China began in the 1930s, with "Guowen Bai Ba Ke" edited by Xia Gaizun and Ye Shaojun being the initial form of unit teaching, which provided a basis for teachers to carry out unit teaching. After the establishment of New China, unit teaching mainly relied on textbook units and has undergone a series of explorations and practices in unit goals, content integration, teaching implementation, and evaluation, laying the ideological and practical foundation for the development of large unit teaching in recent years (Song Weidong, 2021).

In the 1990s, Chinese education researchers and many frontline teachers designed various forms of unit teaching models and raised issues about principles and techniques of unit integral teaching. After the turn of the 21st century, with the continuous deepening of the eighth round of curriculum reform, more and more experts and teachers began to pay attention to unit integral teaching. Many experts and scholars have also expressed their own views on unit integral
teaching, such as Zhong Qiquan (2015), Lv Shihu (2016), and Cui Yunhong (2019), etc.

After the emergence of the concept of "core literacy" in China, especially the clarification of subject-specific core literacy, experts and teachers in China have paid more attention to the design of unit integral teaching aimed at core literacy. This has further promoted the innovation and development of the form of unit integral teaching. Through the research and experiments of many scholars, it has been found that the design of unit integral teaching has a promoting effect on both the classroom and the students. Unit integral teaching can greatly help students' overall thinking and organized logical abilities, and can solve the problems of fragmentation and disorganization in traditional English teaching in China. In recent years, large unit teaching has also been gradually applied to various forms of English teaching in various classrooms. Some scholars have already proposed suggestions for the design of high school English homework under the large unit teaching model, combined with local campus culture, and have conducted in-depth research on the application of English large unit teaching in various teaching designs.

However, there are still many problems in the design of unit integral teaching in China. Firstly, some teachers have a vague understanding of the concept of unit integral teaching and simply copy foreign ideas and concepts without adapting them to the local context, leading to unsatisfactory practical results. Secondly, some teachers ignore the nature of the subject and overly emphasize the design of big concepts based on themes, neglecting the learning of language content and focusing too much on activity design. Thirdly, most scholars and teachers focus on classroom teaching design, neglecting the important role of homework in consolidating students' knowledge.

Therefore, based on the research gap mentioned above, this study primarily employs the method of interview surveys to collect and analyze data on the application of big concept instruction in English homework. We hope to integrate unit integral teaching method with homework from the perspective of post-class assignments, clarify the concept of unit integral teaching, grasp the subject nature, value the language content itself, explore the role of big concept design combined with homework for students, gain an understanding of the current implementation of unit integral teaching in middle school English education and its integration with English homework. To this end, we pose two questions: (1) Whether unit integral teaching design has an optimization effect on middle school English teaching, and (2) how to effectively apply unit integral teaching design to English homework to achieve optimization. In order to better discuss these two questions, this paper interviews two frontline middle school English teachers to explore their understanding of macro-unit instructional design knowledge, application methods, and specific effects. The aim is to investigate the effect of macro-unit instructional design on middle school English instruction and homework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The emergence and development of unit integral teaching method.

The research on unit teaching in foreign countries started earlier, and its research results have played an important guiding role in the development and practice of unit teaching in China. The concept of "unit" was first proposed by Herbart and was called the four-stage theory. He believed that the cognitive learning process of students towards new things mainly includes four stages: "understanding, association, system, and method" (Tanling, 2008). Herbart's four-stage theory essentially refers to the systematic process in which teachers present new learning content to students, enable students to appreciate the presented content, and integrate the new content with existing knowledge. The so-called "unit" refers to the content presented during the teaching process. Subsequently, representatives of the Herbart school, such as Quiller and Rhein, further improved on Herbart's theory and attempted to construct a staged teaching program, advocating the five-stage teaching method, dividing teaching activities into five stages: "analysis, synthesis, association, system, and method". At this time, the unit referred to was not based on subject matter as a unit, but rather based on teaching through a certain method, with a module of teaching materials processed in this teaching process as the unit, which is called a methodological unit (Zhong Qiquan, 2017).

Later on, the methodological unit landed in the United States and developed further. Belgian educator Decroly first proposed breaking down the boundaries between subjects in teaching activities, emphasizing that teaching should focus on the development of students' interests, breaking down the boundaries between subjects, integrating knowledge content, and forming units for "integrated teaching". This method believes that the basic steps of teaching can be divided into three stages: observation, association, and expression (Liyan, 2020). Based on the methodological unit, Dewey proposed the five-step teaching method. This teaching method places students at the center of teaching activities and aims to stimulate students' thinking and creativity. Traditional educational methods may emphasize memory and understanding, but may limit students' abilities and initiative. Dewey advocated acquiring knowledge from direct experience. Teachers should create a scenario or interesting activity based on experience for students, incorporate problems to stimulate thinking and propose solutions, infer which hypotheses can solve the problem, and ultimately verify students'
hypotheses (Tanlin, 2008). In Dewey's five-step teaching method, students' active participation and application of knowledge are very important. The order and content of the five parts can be flexibly organized and adjusted according to specific teaching needs. Although Dewey did not explicitly propose the concept of unit teaching, the idea of unit teaching can be felt in his five-step teaching method. Teachers can cleverly apply the five-step teaching method according to their own teaching environment and actual situation, thereby better promoting students' learning and development.

In the 1920s, Kilpatrick proposed the Project Method, in which "design" refers to designing a learning situation that suits the student (Liyan, 2020). In Kilpatrick's Project Method, students engage in purposeful learning activities, discover problems in the situation, design planned activities through their own efforts, and implement them using existing conditions to solve problems and draw conclusions. The Project Method emphasizes students' activity and is no longer limited by textbooks, using a unit teaching form, also known as Unit Method. As a student of Dewey, Kilpatrick continues Dewey's ideas in his educational philosophy, showing importance on students and flexibility of activities. In the 1930s, American educator Morrison first elaborated on the basic concept of educational units, providing important theoretical basis for the subsequent theory of unit teaching (Yi Hongjun, 2013). In the 1960s, Bloom mastered the theory of learning and teaching and proposed it (Li Yongting, Xu Wenbin, 2017). In the second half of the 20th century, educator Babbitt proposed the theory of optimizing the teaching process, which included the idea of unit teaching (Zhang Tingting, 2009). In the 1990s, Marianne Borrebach proposed a teaching design model for integrated teaching in complex learning environments, known as the four-component instructional design model (Zhu Xiangdong, 2019). Nowadays, Japanese scholar Manabu Sato summarizes "unit design" into two unit development modes: the "planned curriculum unit" based on the subject knowledge system, formed in the "goal-attainment-evaluation" approach; and the "activity-based curriculum unit" based on students' existing experiences, formed in the "theme-exploration-expression" approach (Zuo Tengxue & Zhong Qiuan, 2011).

After the May Fourth Movement, the concept of unit teaching began to develop in China. In 1920, John Dewey visited China, which led to the widespread dissemination and vigorous development of his pragmatic educational ideas in the country (Lishuang, 2019), bringing the first ray of sunshine to the emergence and application of unit integral teaching in China. In 1922, Liang Qichao conducted a more in-depth study of "group comparison" by drawing on the experience of the development of unit integral teaching in the United States, and made a detailed introduction to it. In his view, teaching should classify the articles in the textbook according to their characteristics and themes, repeatedly compare each group of articles, and systematically present them to students instead of teaching knowledge one by one. By 1923, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China formulated the New Curriculum Standards Outline, which provided policy guarantees for the compilation of unit textbooks and began to attempt to write textbooks in unit form.

In the 1930s, unit teaching began to be applied in China. The birth of Guowen Baibake, edited by Xiagai Zun and Ye Shaojun, provided a foundation for teachers to carry out unit teaching. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, unit teaching was mainly based on textbook units, and a series of explorations and practices were carried out in unit goals, content integration, teaching implementation, evaluation, and other aspects, laying the ideological and practical foundation for the development of unit integral teaching in recent years (Song Weidong, 2021). Since then, until the 1990s, Chinese educators have increasingly discussed the unit integral teaching model, designed various forms of unit teaching models, and proposed many teaching principles and techniques.

In the 21st century, more and more experts and teachers have begun to pay attention to unit integral teaching with the continuous deepening of the eighth round of curriculum reform. Lv Shihui believes that there are two types of units, one refers to the units already in the textbook, and the other refers to the "big unit" formed by the interconnection between content structures which means "integral unit" (Lv Shihui, 2016). Professor Zhong Qiuan believes that a unit is not simply a pile-up of knowledge content, but an organic, modular combination of knowledge, and he divides units into textbook units based on systematic subjects and experience units based on learners' experiences (Zhong Qiuan, 2015). In addition, more scholars have joined the research on the meaning of units integral and their integration with actual subjects (Zhao Hui, 2021; Wang Ming, 2022; Qv Jingxi, 2022), etc.

It can be seen that the design of units integral in teaching has a history of a hundred years, and scholars and professors in various countries have conducted a lot of research, providing us with many ideas based on zero. A series of explorations and practices in unit objectives, content integration, teaching implementation, evaluation, etc. have also given us a preliminary understanding and design basis for units integral teaching. However, compared with foreign countries, the spread of unit integral teaching in China is relatively recent, and its research is also relatively immature. It was not until the 21st century that unit integral teaching began to receive more and more attention from domestic educators. In particular, the exploration of how to apply unit integral teaching to disciplines is even rarer, so relevant literature is even more precious. In addition, the definition of macro unit teaching design has not yet yielded a specific result, and scho-
lars are still exploring how to summarize it in the most concise language. Therefore, the discussion on the development and application of unit integral teaching design needs to continue, and we still need to make continuous efforts to apply its effectiveness to teaching design.

2.2 The practice of unit integral teaching on English classroom

Gao Yuanyuan (2021) applied the content of unit integral teaching to reading instruction, effectively integrating the main textbook of "English" from the Yilin Edition, through extracurricular reading of English readers and topics, as well as series reading of classic English literature works. She found that unit integral teaching has a positive effect on students' reading abilities, to some extent improving their language application abilities and thinking development levels, as well as effectively promoting middle school students' aesthetic appreciation and interpersonal communication skills. Unit teaching can help students deepen their understanding of reading materials, improve their reading comprehension abilities and reading strategy application abilities, language input, and language sensitivity, which is beneficial to the teaching efficiency of reading classes and also greatly helps students' overall language abilities.

In addition, Ran Hongli (2022) also analyzed the current situation of reading instruction in middle school English, identifying problems such as fragmented reading, standardized reading, and lack of moving in reading. Using the Oxford Shenzhen Edition middle school "English" eighth grade (volume 1) Unit 1 Encyclopedias as an example, she explored the application of theme context and discourse type analysis in the integration of reading instruction in middle school English teaching units. She found that by unit integral teaching design with reading instruction to guide students to fully experience and learn in English, it not only enhances their reading literacy, but also comprehensively develops their listening and speaking abilities, thinking development, cultural awareness, and learning abilities, filling in many gaps of traditional reading instruction models. This is a teaching and learning model that is worth continuous practice and optimization.

Song Di (2022) discussed the teaching design of integrated in-class and extracurricular reading within teaching units under the framework of unit integral teaching, including unit logic organization, extracurricular reading selection, and reading activity design, using the Oxford middle school English textbook as an example. After analysis and exploration, it was found that the unit integral teaching design of unit teaching can make students feel a more authentic and natural language environment while reading, attracting their interest and improving their learning motivation.

Although the time for the development of the big ideas framework is short and exploration in the English subject area is still limited, this teaching philosophy is bound to be the trend. Teachers should keep up with the times, deeply understand the unit topic, integrate and expand from different perspectives, develop students' core competencies, and form a big ideas framework for the English subject.

2.3 The practice of unit integral teaching on English homework

In 2022, Wu Xin explored the definition and homework of unit integral teaching design in teaching, which has broken away from the traditional approach of rote learning. Unit integral teaching can divide knowledge into different topics and combine various requirements such as language, tasks, and skills to achieve a "1+1>2" effect. In some sense, the English unit integral teaching model has significantly improved language proficiency, but the consolidation and summarization of knowledge must be achieved through English homework. The goals and characteristics of English big unit teaching must also be reflected in English homework, and applying unit integral teaching design to English homework is beneficial for students' knowledge consolidation and classroom promotion.

Luo Manrong (2022) attempted to find a balance between the double reduction policy and homework through research and investigation. They believe that there are some shortcomings in the content, form, and feedback of homework, such as fixed homework types, insufficient interest, fluctuating difficulty, and a single teacher evaluation feedback form. He proposes offering different forms and difficulty levels of homework based on different students' interests and abilities. They also emphasize that homework can use the unit integral teaching to increase interest, transfer, and create authenticity, promoting students' interest in homework. Based on goals, consideration of differences, and scientific design, students can internalize what they have learned, exercise their thinking, and develop their abilities through completing homework.

Wang Yanting (2022) believes that homework, as an extension of teaching activities, plays a crucial role in students' learning and teachers' teaching. They also attempt to use holistic thinking to design unit homework, cultivating students' English proficiency and literacy. They conclude that through reasonable homework design and feedback, not only can students' development be promoted, but teachers can also improve their own educational teaching accurately. Teachers need to use unit integral teaching thinking to, stay in a higher level to design unit homework that combines basic, extension, and exploratory practicality to help students consolidate knowledge, improve thinking abilities, and construct and
apply holistic thinking, realizing the value of subject education. In addition, many scholars have tried to deepen and expand homework through unit forms, attempting to make homework the sum of its parts greater than the whole, achieving better consolidation and feedback effects, and using the big concept teaching to improve the quality and efficiency of homework.

Overall, unit integral teaching design has an optimization effect on English homework. Whether it is post-class homework for various English skills such as vocabulary, reading, and listening, unit integral design can take a more comprehensive perspective by creating authentic situations, building a more logical system, and offering more coherent and interesting homework content and forms to attract students' interest, enhance their learning motivation, help connect new knowledge with existing knowledge and life experience, promote the absorption of English knowledge, construct the system, and improve learning abilities.

However, in most cases, scholars and frontline teachers tend to apply the design of unit integral teaching to classroom activities, focusing on designing activities for listening, speaking, reading, or writing. However, little attention has been paid to how to integrate the concept of unit integral design with meaningful post-class assignments that help students consolidate their learning. Furthermore, in my literature review, I found that although unit integral teaching was originally developed for language learning, it is now widely applied in science subjects such as physics, chemistry, and biology. However, there are few examples or templates of connect unit integral teaching with English language post-class homework. Therefore, this article aims to identify two English teachers who are familiar with macro-unit teaching through purposive sampling and interview them to explore the impact of integrating unit integral teaching with English post-class assignments on students. Based on their suggestions and theoretical discussions in existing literature, this article attempts to design a model that combine unit integral teaching with post-class assignments using the People's Education Press (PEP) Grade 7 English textbook as an example.

3. Interview process

3.1 Questionnaire design description

To prevent potential interviewees from being unfamiliar, unaware, or even resistant to the concept of Big Unit Teaching, a preliminary questionnaire was designed in this study to screen and gain a basic understanding of the interviewees. The questionnaire aims to assess their level of familiarity and knowledge about Big Unit Teaching, as well as their attitudes towards this teaching approach. By administering this questionnaire before the interviews, the researchers can ensure that they are speaking with individuals who are informed and receptive to discussing Big Unit Teaching, thereby improving the quality and relevance of the interviews. After studying Professor Wen Qiufang's book *Applied Linguistics: Research Methods and Thesis Writing*, we understood the basis for designing the questionnaire items and made modifications to the questionnaire based on the book's questionnaire. We then conducted reliability and validity tests and finally confirmed the questionnaire items for this study.

When the respondents are determined, the design of the questionnaire is very important, because it can have a great impact on the follow-up interview process. This teacher questionnaire survey consists of three parts, including the survey of the basic situation of teachers, the survey of the current situation of teaching design of large units and the survey of teachers' understanding of the combination of teaching design and homework of large units. A total of 11 questions are all single choice questions.

Among them, the first four topics are the basic information of teachers, including gender, age, working years and province and city. The information is only for reference, not the main basis for selecting interviewees. The next four topics mainly investigate the impact of the double reduction policy on teachers' teaching and the understanding and application of large unit teaching. This part of the content can provide some background information for the interviewers to make the interview process more smooth.

The last three topics examine whether teachers understand and expect the way of combining the teaching design of large units with the students' homework. This part of the content is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' teaching practice experience and their cognition and attitude towards the teaching of large units. A total of 10 copies of this questionnaire will be distributed. Finally, two qualified teachers will be selected according to the answers of the questionnaire to conduct interviews in order to deeply understand the application and impact of large unit teaching in English class.

3.2 Interview and Discussion

3.2.1 Research object

After screening through questionnaires, two teachers have been selected for the interview.
The first teacher is an English teacher for Grade 7 in a key middle school in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, with three years of teaching experience. This teacher has a great passion for education and has a deep understanding of the design of big unit teaching. She can combine big unit teaching with different types of lessons, connect knowledge points, and help students understand and master English knowledge. In teaching, she often tries various teaching methods and forms, constantly innovating teaching content to help students improve their English proficiency in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. At the same time, she also attaches great importance to the design and assignment of homework, hoping to deepen students' understanding and memory through homework.

The second teacher is an English teacher for Grade 9 in a middle school in Shandong Province, with five years of teaching experience. She has studied abroad and received a relatively systematic English education, and has had early contact and a deep understanding of the philosophy and practice of big unit teaching. After returning to China, she applied the knowledge and experience to her own teaching, helping students better understand English knowledge and improve their comprehensive abilities through big unit teaching design and other innovative teaching methods. She is good at starting from the perspective of students, understanding their needs and difficulties, and helping them overcome obstacles and improve learning effectiveness. At the same time, she also attaches great importance to communication with parents, actively cooperates with parents, and jointly promotes students' learning and growth.

In summary, these two teachers have a clear understanding and in-depth thinking about the importance of big unit teaching, and constantly try and improve in teaching practice. They believe that big unit teaching design can better meet students' learning needs, enhance their interest and enthusiasm for learning, and better stimulate their learning potential. In the actual teaching process, they use various teaching methods and strategies to better adapt to students' learning needs and personalized development requirements.

At the same time, they also pay great attention to the design and implementation of homework, believing that homework is an important way for students to consolidate and expand their learning achievements, and also an important way for teachers to understand students' learning situations. Therefore, they focus on the design and correction of homework, and integrate relevant content of big unit teaching into homework to help students better understand and apply what they have learned. Therefore, this article will interview them to try to answer two questions: (1) Whether unit integral teaching design has an optimization effect on middle school English teaching, and (2) how to effectively apply unit integral teaching design to English homework to achieve optimization.

### 3.2.2 Interview Results and Discussion

Here are the specific questions and answers as well as discussion:

1. **How do you understand the concept of unit integral teaching? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of big unit teaching?**

Both teachers are familiar with and have applied the design of unit integral teaching. For Teacher A, big unit teaching is a process of breaking down and reorganizing systematic knowledge, leading students from a holistic or global perspective, and driving teaching at the unit or even age level. In terms of unit integral teaching, there is a significant improvement in the overallaity of students and teachers, which can help students and teachers integrate knowledge, but it places high demands on teachers' abilities, especially in combining new and old knowledge and restructuring them.

Teacher B also emphasizes the comprehensiveness and overallity of unit integral teaching, believing that it is beneficial to link students' new and old knowledge and life experiences, and can help improve students' comprehensive abilities. It is helpful for the continuity of students' knowledge and the connection between knowledge points, and can stimulate students' interest and improve classroom efficiency. However, it requires a lot of preparation time and investment of energy for teachers.

2. **In the process of combining unit integral teaching with your English classroom, what kind of gains did you and your students achieve?**

For Teacher A, this is a test and an improvement for the teacher's ability. For example, in the process of teaching tenses, various tenses need to be combined, which requires the teacher to have strong generalization ability. For students, they can integrate the fragmented knowledge points they have learned before into a learning framework at a higher level.

Teacher B believes that the gains from unit integral teaching are greater for the teacher than for the students. As a teacher, big unit teaching can provide a clearer understanding of students' comprehensive levels and their adaptability to comprehensive classroom designs. This helps to understand students' situations more clearly. Meanwhile, the establishment of a hierarchical connection of knowledge points optimizes students' mastery of knowledge, and makes teaching feel smoother. Also, students have more learning motivation for this fresh teaching format, which greatly improves teaching efficiency. Moreover, framework teaching can also help students develop their connection abilities.

3. **What's your opinion on the “double reduction” policy? What are its impacts on teachers and students?**

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Teacher A’s school has been affected by the policy, as homework assignments need to be reduced, and teachers need higher ability to quickly summarize and present the content from units and textbooks to students. For students, their interest in learning is greatly influenced by the materials that teachers redesign. If the materials are concise and efficient, students will be willing to accept them, but otherwise, it will become a burden.

Teacher B believes that the "double reduction" policy has a significant impact on both teachers and students. Despite the reduction in class hours, the course requirements have not changed, which demands teachers to use various methods to improve teaching efficiency, so that teaching can be more precise rather than extensive.

(4) How do you combine the design of a big concept of teaching with homework to reinforce student learning, and do you think this approach is effective?

Teacher A has combined the two by having students create their own knowledge framework and mind maps to reinforce what they have learned. When it comes to designing, Teacher A emphasizes the need to design lesson plans based on teaching objectives and teaching themes, taking into account whether students can handle such homework, and including various forms of evaluation. Teacher A believes that carefully preparing and reflecting on the combination of the two can improve student learning outcomes.

Teacher B has also tried to combine unit integral teaching and homework and shared their specific design process. Because the homework covers a lot of content and a wide range of knowledge points, Teacher B chose to divide the workload, with small daily tasks and more difficult assignments. The goal of the homework was to connect various knowledge points to form an overall understanding of the subject and develop students' learning methods. Rather than assigning traditional homework chapter by chapter, Teacher B chose to design assignments with strong integration. Based on feedback, some students struggled with the difficulty level of the assignments, so Teacher B adjusted and provided simpler learning materials for those who had weaker foundations. She believes that this is an advantage of large unit teaching as it allows students to be separated into different levels.

(5) How do you think the model of big unit teaching and homework after class can promote students' ability development?

Teacher A gave an example using mind maps, believing that this approach breaks away from the traditional method of writing, practicing, and solving problems, and enhances students' learning interest. Furthermore, when students present their mind maps in class, either individually or in groups, they can help themselves and their classmates review the knowledge points.

Teacher B believes that unit integral teaching can promote students' development, especially for higher-level students, who can use it as a method to improve their learning efficiency. Additionally, Teacher B increased the classroom atmosphere by using techniques like motivating student participation, establishing reward and punishment systems, and making the learning process enjoyable for students.

(6) What challenges do you think will be encountered in combining the teaching model of unit integral teaching and homework assignments?

Teacher A believes that combining unit integral teaching and homework assignments has the same challenges as combining unit integral teaching and classroom teaching. It requires higher ability from teachers, consumes a lot of time for teachers, and also requires good ability from students. For students without a solid foundation, it may be difficult to review and organize knowledge points. In addition, students' abilities vary, so it can be difficult to have them all engage in the same homework activities.

Teacher B believes that the combination of the two poses greater challenges for teachers, and it requires a high level of ability from teachers. Additionally, some students may not be suitable for this teaching method, and may not be able to accept it. Furthermore, students' grades may improve slowly, which can make them feel negative and create negative emotions towards the design.

I also learned a lot from the interview, and inspired by two teachers, I produced some ideas for the design of unit integral teaching, which are shown as follows.

4. Case Study Design

4.1 Design idea of unit integral teaching homework

The role of homework can be varied, such as stimulating students' learning interest and motivation, cultivating students' creative thinking and critical thinking ability, strengthening the connection and cooperation between students and parents and teachers, and so on. Different emphasis may be placed on different teaching objectives and educational concepts. But generally speaking, the main role of homework is to consolidate and deepen the knowledge and skills that students have learned in the classroom, cultivate students' autonomous learning ability and problem-solving ability, and...
help students better understand the course content and improve their academic performance. Therefore, when doing homework for big concept design, teachers should not blindly pursue form and interest and forget the original purpose of designing homework.

In order to improve the interest of homework, but also to avoid students paying attention to homework activities and ignoring the actual content of homework, there will be a situation of empty mind after homework. The homework is based on the background of breakthrough and upgrading, and the entry threshold is basic knowledge. Divide the work into three levels, and design several work forms or activities to improve and expand each level. Each student needs to obtain a ticket to break through the barrier after completing the basic content to carry out the following activities, so as to ensure that students master the most basic knowledge. Then the students enter the more difficult and diverse assignments and choose the type of challenge they are interested in.

In the first stage: the foundation stage, the homework format is mainly in written form. For example, designing some simple multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and error correction questions, or consolidating and testing the knowledge required for the unit theme through small quizzes. If students achieve a passing score, they can be given tickets to challenge higher difficulty homework tasks. In order to better stimulate students' learning motivation, we can have teachers design competition tickets and create a more atmospheric challenge environment, simulating a game. This can attract students' interest and make them more actively involved in the homework. In the first stage, our goal is to lay a foundation, set suspense for the homework tasks that will be improved and expanded later, and let students experience more different forms of homework tasks, and choose the types they are interested in to challenge while completing the basic content.

In the second stage: the improvement stage, in the homework tasks at the improvement level, teachers can visualize knowledge points as checkpoints guarded by different bosses. These learning tasks can be posted in the form of posters in various corners of the classroom, and students can choose appropriate difficulty bosses to challenge based on their own interests. In this stage, teachers can design different knowledge points, difficulty levels, and types of homework tasks, such as designing posters, drawing mind maps, writing, and oral presentations, which are very helpful for improving students' language abilities. In this stage, students can freely choose the types they are interested in to challenge. In addition, students can earn points rewards after passing checkpoints, which can help them easily pass future checkpoints. After going through the improvement level, students have basically mastered the knowledge objectives that the unit theme homework hopes to achieve. And teachers can encourage students to participate in multiple homework tasks to win more points and exchange prizes.

In the third stage: the expansion stage, we can design homework that is more comprehensive and open, and more practical and applicable, such as text case analysis, classroom presentations and group discussions, and dialogues and exchanges with teachers. These homework tasks can help students more deeply understand the unit knowledge and cultivate their problem-solving and cooperation abilities. In this stage, students need more autonomy and innovation to better realize the expansion and application of knowledge.

To meet the needs of high-level students, teachers can incorporate an advanced test where the teacher acts as a boss to assess students' learning outcomes. Passing the test earns students more abundant points, which can be linked to their evaluation and used to expand and enrich the evaluation types and forms. A more comprehensive evaluation of students' language knowledge and learning abilities can be conducted in higher dimensions and in a more integrated manner, rather than the traditional approach of relying solely on scores.

4.2 The case of unit integral teaching homework:

4.2.1 Flowchart of Unit Homework Design Process

Wang Yuefen (2021) proposed the concept of visualizing homework design strategies, which means transforming internal thinking processes into external, understandable, and operable forms, including thoughts, viewpoints, processes, problem chains, methods, tools, etc. In order to guide teachers on how to design homework based on the characteristics of the junior high school English subject and the learning situation of grade one students, this article modified and designed the flowchart of junior high school English unit homework design process (see Table 1). The flowchart aims to help teachers plan the unit homework more comprehensively and specifically, combining the homework objectives, design, and effectiveness under the theme of the large unit, in order to achieve the effect of optimizing homework, reducing workload and improving quality. Taking the People's Education Press edition of junior high school grade one, semester two as an example, this article uses the flowchart to design a case that combines large unit teaching with English homework after class.
Table 1. Flowchart for Designing Homework in Junior High School English Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Objectives</th>
<th>Curriculum Standards</th>
<th>Have the curriculum standards been considered comprehensively?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Objectives</td>
<td>Are the homework objectives aligned with the teaching objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Situation</td>
<td>Have the expected teaching objectives been achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layered design</td>
<td>Is there targeted design for students at different levels?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Topic Learning Analysis</th>
<th>Theme Design</th>
<th>Are the different parts of the theme related?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Differences</td>
<td>Does it match the student's level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>Is the selected material situational?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of Questions</td>
<td>Are there a variety of question types?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>Have students at different levels been considered and is the proportion reasonable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Is the completion time appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selectivity</td>
<td>Is there stratification and is it optional?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Literacy</td>
<td>Does it reflect the requirements of core literacy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Design</th>
<th>Selection of Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback on Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation Criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Evaluation</th>
<th>Are students actively and willingly completing their homework?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is the completion rate and quality of students' homework?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there multiple and comprehensive evaluation methods?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the evaluation criteria reasonable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After sorting out the content of the People's Education Press 7th grade textbook, the main themes of each unit and major grammar points are listed in Table 2 [Table of Contents for 7th Grade Textbook (Lower Secondary)]

Table 2. Summary of Knowledge Points in Grade 7 English Textbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key Grammar Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Can you pay the guitar?</td>
<td>Present simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>What time do you go to school?</td>
<td>There be sentence pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>How do you get to school?</td>
<td>Adjective usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Don't eat in class.</td>
<td>Infinitive usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Why do you like pandas?</td>
<td>Present continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>I'm watching TV</td>
<td>Daily weather expressions and present continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>It’s raining!</td>
<td>Have as a verb, describing appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Is there a post office near here?</td>
<td>Countable and uncountable nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>What does he look like?</td>
<td>Past simple usage (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>I'd like some noodles</td>
<td>Past simple usage (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 11</td>
<td>How was your school trip?</td>
<td>Indefinite pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 12</td>
<td>What did you do last weekend?</td>
<td>Imperative sentences and modal verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To facilitate the learning of seventh-grade students, teachers can use unit integral teaching that integrates related grammar knowledge from different units into a comprehensive theme. This article selects the five units of Unit 1, Unit 5, Unit 6, Unit 9, and Unit 10 in seventh grade, along with the future tense, to form a more systematic way of learning grammar knowledge, including the present simple tense, present continuous tense, past simple tense, and future simple tense. The homework is designed progressively according to the learning progress.
4.3 Design of English homework for junior high school based on unit integral teaching

4.3.1 Determining Unit Homework Objectives
   1) Knowledge objectives.
      (1) To review and master the meaning of verb, past tense, present progressive tense, and future tense.
      (2) To consolidate students' understanding of the specific meanings of simple present tense, present progressive tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense in grammar.
      (3) To help students distinguish and understand the simple present tense, present progressive tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense in listening.
      (4) To be able to read the simple present tense, present progressive tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense with standard pronunciation and correct intonation.
   2) Skill objectives.
      (1) To be able to use simple present tense, present progressive tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense to express things that happen regularly, now, in the past, and in the future.
      (2) To be proficient in using verb infinitives, present progressive tense, past tense, and future tense to develop topics for conversation and questions.
      (3) To be able to describe the past, present, and everyday life in written language with the help of pictures and keywords.
   3) Affective objectives.
      Through the study of tenses, guide students to learn to describe changes in people and things. Help students understand the passage of time and change, make students understand the value of time, and cherish the importance of time.

4.3.2 Determine the main theme of the unit
   The main content of this unit is the present simple, present continuous, and past simple tenses, so the main theme of the unit is "Present, Past, and Future".

4.3.3 Student analysis
   The students are 7th graders from a key middle school in Xiamen, Fujian province. They have a certain foundation in English learning and some understanding of the present simple, present continuous, and past simple tenses, but they have partially forgotten them due to time. Most of the students in the class have average grades, are active in learning, and are willing to participate in classroom activities, cooperating with the teacher to improve their learning.

4.3.4 Homework design
   The homework design is divided into three levels: the foundation stage, the improvement stage, and the expansion stage. Finally, a comprehensive test can be added to test the students' learning outcomes.

   Phase 1: The foundation stage:
   a. Complete the specialized exercises provided, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, error correction, and other question types.
   b. Write a short essay about your past, present, and future learning life based on given keywords.
   c. (Optional) Read an article and identify the general present tense, present continuous tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense used in the article.
   This stage is focused on building a foundation and testing students' grasp of language knowledge. By completing basic grammar exercises, students can develop their abilities.

   Phase 2: The improvement stage.
   a. Create a mind map about changes in your past life, your current life status, and your aspirations for the future, and share it with your group members using the mind map as a guide.
   b. Create a poster that tells us what your ideal future life looks like.
   This stage embodies a more advanced level of language learning, helping students better understand the connotations of tenses. Through mind maps, poster creation, and verbal sharing, language proficiency can be improved and tested.

   Phase 3: The expansion stage
   a. In groups, simulate introducing yourself and your changes and aspirations for the future to foreign friends.
   b. As a group, create a short story about what the future world will be like, and select a representative to share it with the class.
   c. As a group, perform a play on stage that showcases your life status as a child, present, and elderly person in the future.
   In addition, a test paper that includes questions on the present tense, present continuous tense, simple past tense, and
simple future tense will be provided to test students’ grasp of the material.

4.3.5 Evaluation and feedback

In relation to the unit, teachers should adopt a systematic approach to unit assignment evaluation, including star ratings, scaling, comments, and other forms of evaluation, while also emphasizing the diversification of evaluation subjects, including self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation, to assist teachers in monitoring student assignment performance in real-time (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Evaluation Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrior Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher’s comments:

5. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the effects of integrating unit integral teaching with English homework on student development, and how to apply the unit integral teaching design concept to English homework to optimize its effectiveness. Through interviewing two frontline teachers and analyzing the results, the following findings were obtained: Firstly, unit integral teaching has a significant promotion effect on English classroom performance, whether it is in terms of students’ language abilities or classroom atmosphere, after undergoing a long process of development and application. At the same time, existing literature clearly reflects the optimization effect of unit integral teaching on homework.

At the same time, unit integral teaching also has certain limitations. On the one hand, teachers need to invest more time and energy to complete large unit teaching and homework design, and also need to have higher teaching ability and design ability. On the other hand, for students, large unit teaching requires certain learning ability and independent learning ability, and requires more time and energy to complete homework and in-depth study outside the classroom. And this is not a teaching method that all teachers and students can adapt to.

Therefore, we need to pay attention to these problems when implementing the combination of unit integral teaching and homework, and gradually improve and improve the effect of this teaching mode through continuous exploration and practice. It is necessary to start from the education concept, teaching method and homework design, and also need to make continuous improvement and adjustment based on the actual situation, so that the combination of large unit teaching and homework can better play its advantages and improve the quality and effect of education and teaching.

References


Lv, S., Yang, T., & Wu, Z. (2016). The connotation, characteristics, and basic operation steps of mathematics unit teaching design. Contemporary Education and Culture, 8(4), 41-46.


