

Implementation Strategies of Unit Holistic Teaching Based on Deep Learning—Taking PEP Compulsory Study 1 Unit 3 as an Example

Xu Fan, Zhang Shaoyun

[**Abstract**] At present, there is fragmentation in high school English teaching. In view of the above problems, teachers urgently need to realize the conversion from “classroomism” to “unit theme”. This paper takes the teaching design of Unit 3 of the new English textbook as an example, and introduces the implementation strategies and methods of unit teaching based on deep learning from the aspects of establishing the unit theme goal, designing unit teaching activities, and realizing unit teaching evaluation.

[**Key words**] deep learning; unit teaching; high school English

[**About the author**] School of Foreign Languages, Anqing Normal University, Anqing Anhui 246000, China

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[**Website**] www.oacj.net

1 Introduction

National English Curriculum Standards for General High School (2022) advocates the view of English learning activities that points to the core literacy of the English discipline and clearly states: “Under the guidance of thematic meanings, through a series of English learning activities that embody the characteristics of comprehensiveness, relevance and practicability, such as learning and understanding, and applying and practicing, students can analyze and solve problems on the basis of their existing knowledge and relying on different types of discourse, and be promoted in terms of the learning of their own language knowledge and the use of learning strategies. Students can analyze and solve problems in the process of analyzing and solving problems based on their existing knowledge and relying on different types of discourse, so as to promote the learning of language knowledge, the development of language skills, the understanding of cultural connotations, the development of diversified thinking, the judgment of value orientations and the use of learning strategies”.

The new PEP English textbook for high school (edition in June, 2019) focuses on the exploration of thematic meaning and the design of language activities, and utilizes various sections within the unit to construct the thematic meaning of the unit in terms of thematic introduction, exploration and sublimation. The new English textbook for high school adopts a large unit, small boards, and a theme-centered writing model. Taking Compulsory Study 1 as an example, PEP version involves family and friendship, English learning, traveling and playing, natural disasters and heroes and great men. The topics of Man and Nature, Man and Self, and Man and Society are designed to arouse students’ interest. Through a series of comprehensive and coherent language learning and thinking exercise activities, we can refine students’ language comprehension and expression skills, and then guide them to explore various topics in depth, helping them to build a novel conceptual system. In addition, these activities also allow students to experience a variety of life, enrich their experience and way of thinking, guide them to form a correct outlook on world, life and values, and truly combine theory and practice to achieve the realm of knowledge and action.

2 Connotation and ideas of unit holistic teaching for high school English pointing to deep learning

2.1 Overall analysis to determine unit teaching objectives

Overall analysis is the primary part of teaching design, which requires a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the teaching content, so as to determine the teaching objectives of the unit. First of all, teachers need to clarify core points and logical relationships of the teaching content, which helps us to grasp the teaching focus; secondly, teachers should take into account the actual situation of students. On the basis of the needs of students, we can set targeted teaching objectives aimed at improving their knowledge, skills and abilities, and affective attitudes; lastly, the determination of the unit teaching objectives should be specific, clear and operable. It should cover multiple aspects such as knowledge comprehension, skill mastery, and emotional development in order to comprehensively promote students' development. At the same time, there should be hierarchy and progressivity among the objectives so that students can improve themselves in the gradual and deep learning. Through the overall analysis, we can provide strong support for the setting of teaching objectives.

2.2 Multi-level activities to enrich students' learning experience

Multi-level activities can not only stimulate students' interest in learning, but also enrich their learning experience and promote their all-round development. We know that learning activities within the classroom are the basis of student learning. Teachers design diversified teaching activities such as group discussions, role-playing, case studies, etc., so that students can master knowledge and enhance their abilities in interaction. These activities can cultivate students' spirits of cooperation and competition, as well as improve their communication, expression and problem-solving skills. In addition, extracurricular practical activities are also an important part of multi-level activities. Schools can organize various kinds of clubs, interest groups and practical activities, such as scientific experiments, cultural and artistic performances, volunteer services, etc., so that students can experience the fun of learning, expand their horizons and enhance their sense of social responsibility in practice. These activities can help students apply what they have learned to real life and develop their innovation spirit and practical ability.

2.3 Continuous evaluation to enhance students' learning ability

Continuous evaluation is one of the most important means of enhancing students' learning. It is not only a simple test of students' learning outcomes, but also a comprehensive, systematic and dynamic feedback mechanism targeted at improving problems and deficiencies. Continuous evaluation helps to keep abreast of students' learning. Through regular testing and evaluation, teachers can accurately know the learning progress of students and gain a keen insight into their confusion in knowledge comprehension, deficiencies in skill mastery and problems in learning attitudes, so as to provide targeted guidance and assistance. In this way, teachers will be able to adjust their teaching strategies according to the actual situation and help students master knowledge better. Continuous evaluation has a significant effect on stimulating students' learning motivation. Students can see their own progress and achievements in the evaluation process, thus enhancing their self-confidence and interest in learning, and students can also express their views and suggestions to teachers through evaluation, thus promoting mutual learning and teaching.

3 Practical measures of unit holistic teaching for high school English pointing to deep learning

3.1 Study teaching materials in depth and set teaching objectives for the unit

On the one hand, in-depth study of texts can determine the blueprint for human development. PEP

Compulsory Study 1 Unit 3 “Sports and Fitness” has a variety of text types, mainly including descriptive, argumentative and narrative. These texts are designed to explore the topic of sports and fitness comprehensively and deeply through different ways and perspectives. From the perspective of lateral transfer, the text of this unit can span several fields, such as biology, psychology and sociology. Texts in the biology dimension may focus on the effects of exercise on physical health, such as muscle toning, cardiorespiratory fitness enhancement, etc.; texts in the psychology dimension may explore the promotion of exercise on mental health, such as stress reduction, self-confidence enhancement, etc.; and texts in the sociology dimension may deal with the roles of exercise in society and culture, as well as the customs and concepts of exercise in different cultural contexts. From the perspective of vertical profile, the text of this unit can be analyzed in depth at several levels. Firstly, it is at the basic level, including the use of language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar and sentence patterns; secondly, it is at the comprehension level, focusing on the understanding of concepts, principles and phenomena related to sports and fitness; and lastly, it is at the application level, which requires students to be able to apply what they have learned to analyze and solve problems related to sports and fitness. To sum up, by studying and analyzing these texts, students can not only improve their English language skills, but also enhance their knowledge and understanding of sports and fitness and develop a healthy lifestyle.

On the other hand, combine the text with the learning situation and formulate teaching objectives. Unit holistic teaching should be led by the theme of the unit to set the teaching objectives of the unit, and based on the teaching objectives of the unit to achieve effective articulation between courses. The thematic context of the unit is sub-themes of “Healthy Lifestyle, Positive Attitude towards Life” under People and Self, and “Sports Life, Major Sports Events, Sports and Health, Sportsmanship” under People and Society. After initially analyzing the themes of this unit, teachers should pay close attention to the core teaching objectives of this unit during the teaching process, that is, to guide students to master the basic knowledge of sports and basic information about athletes, to explore in-depth the outstanding sportsmanship displayed by athletes, and to try to discover their outstanding qualities, so as to help them understand and experience the charm of sports in a more comprehensive way. The specific objectives are divided into four aspects: (1) Listening and Speaking + Listening and Talking + Project Board Listening Training, aiming at enabling students to acquire a certain amount of words for the names of sports programs through the recordings, cultivating their ability to predict and extract key words as well as comprehend the listening content before listening, and being able to carry on a simple conversation accurately; (2) Reading and Thinking is designed to let students learn the vocabulary and sentence patterns of the theme after reading the text “The Living Legends of Sports” and apply them, and to think about the power brought to us by the spirit of the sports legends; (3) Discovering Useful Structures is designed to reasonably express approval or disapproval of daily conversations, and gradually realize the spirit of sports; (4) Reading for Writing consolidates the training of listening, speaking, reading and so on through the skill of writing, and aims to let students summarize the content of the course and reflect on their own state of life.

3.2 Develop incremental teaching activities and help students think in depth

According to Fu Yongqing, Liu Li, and Liu Mengran (2023), deep learning means that learners, on the basis of understanding, accept new ideas and knowledge with a critical eye, skillfully integrate them into their own cognitive structure, and allow various ideas to intertwine and collide in their minds to form a close connection. Learners also need to have the ability to flexibly apply existing knowledge to new situations in order to cope with various role changes and problem solving.

Students in the first year of high school are usually energetic, love sports events, and have a certain concern

and understanding of domestic and international sports events. Most of them are involved in oral expression, listening training and vocabulary sentence use in junior high school. Therefore, learning activities of this unit can be designed as follows:

Initially, creating a real situation to stimulate students' interest in exploring. In the specific context of "My Favorite Athlete" set by the teacher, group exchange and discussion are carried out. Through group activities, students can invite their friends to join in the small club, attract group members to join in the form of posters and texts, have an initial understanding of athletes, perceive the diversity of sports and activate the existing knowledge. Specifically as follows: The teacher gives students a situation "my favorite athlete" around the unit theme "sport and fitness", so that students orally form a certain sense of the meaning of the theme: "My favorite athlete is... because", "I'm interested in...", to express opinions and reasons about favorite athletes, activate students' existing knowledge and increase their knowledge reserve.

Additionally, topic question serves as the guide to promote students' deep processing of learning content. Kicking off our lesson by watching micro-videos of Lang Ping and Jordan, together we will analyze the composition of these highlights and lead students to think deeply with a series of questions: Why do Lang Ping and Jordan become legends in the world of sports? We will then discuss in small groups, sharing the legends in each person's mind and exploring the positive forces and exemplary spirit that emanate from these legends. Through such activities, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the theme and feel the power of those who inspire people, thus enhancing the perception of the meaning of the theme.

What is more, transferring innovation to solve real-life problems. Yang Jiao (2023) encourages teachers to place the exploration of thematic meaning in a broader context when implementing the overall teaching of the unit, which helps them to analyze deeply from multiple angles and levels, and then establish the organic connection between different parts of speech. Through the construction of integrative, relevant and developmental parenting goals, we promote the depth of thinking and stimulate the transfer of creative abilities. Teachers give students time to make club posters and equip them with relevant sports equipment. In the final course, student representatives are invited to present on the stage and name representative legends in club sports in English, and the rest of the students can vote for the sports they would like to participate in.

3.3 Evaluate in multiple ways and cultivate independent learning ability

Deep learning emphasizes that students are the main body, but the teacher's role should not be ignored. The teaching evaluation of the reading block focuses on students' proficiency in understanding the structure and vocabulary of this text; the listening block focuses on whether students have mastered the listening strategy, and post-listening questions to make the listening process explicit; the grammar block focuses on whether students can carry out a shift in the syntax and eventually lay the foundation for language use; in the evaluation process of all the blocks, the teacher can carry out real-time peer evaluation to mobilize the atmosphere of the course, and can also understand the evaluation criteria after students start self-assessment activities for further self-reflection.

All in all, in the evaluation of unit holistic teaching, teachers should pay attention to whether students can form a self-concept of the theme of language, form structured knowledge through the context created by the teacher, integrate new and old knowledge to further build self-awareness, and engage in dialogues with their peers to form a correct concept of health.

4 Conclusion

In view of the fragmentation that prevails in high school English teaching, teachers should actively promote the

change from “classroomism” to “unit theme” teaching. Specifically, teachers need to comprehensively organize the content of the textbook and build a logical and coherent teaching framework with the unit theme as the core. This can ensure the systematic and complete nature of knowledge and avoid fragmentation and disconnection between knowledge points. Diversification of teaching methods is also crucial. Through the introduction of group discussion, role-playing and other interactive methods, teachers can effectively stimulate students’ interest and enthusiasm in learning, so that they can master knowledge in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Also, consolidation and expansion after class should not be neglected.

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