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# Research on the Integration Path of Primary School Chinese Language Big Unit Teaching and Interdisciplinary Integration Towards 21st Century Skills

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**ABSTRACT:** With the development of society and educational progress, the cultivation of 21st-century skills is increasingly valued in primary education. This study aims to explore the pathways for integrating 21st-century skills into large unit teaching of primary Chinese language education and interdisciplinary integration. Through in-depth analysis of 21st-century skills and combining the concept of large unit education, this study has designed a teaching model for integrating 21st-century skills into large unit teaching of primary Chinese language education and interdisciplinary integration. Through in-depth investigation and analysis of practical cases, this study finds that this integration pathway can effectively enhance students critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, and communication skills. This study employs methods such as literature review, case studies, and action research, not only providing primary Chinese language teachers with a set of practical teaching strategies but also offering educational policymakers references for reforming primary Chinese language teaching, aiming to change their fear of large unit teaching, stimulate their enthusiasm for teaching research, encourage them to boldly explore and actively practice.

**KEYWORDS:** 21st century skills; primary school Chinese; large unit teaching; interdisciplinary integration

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## 1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In September 2018, President Xi Jinping attended the National Education Conference and delivered an important speech, profoundly elucidating the core position of education in the development of the country and the Party, clarifying the types of talents that education in the 21st century should cultivate, such as critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, communication, information literacy, and technical literacy. Primary education, as the cornerstone of the educational system, plays a crucial role in students learning journey. The integration of subject convergence with the integrated teaching of primary Chinese language not only meets the requirements of contemporary educational reform but also helps to enhance students overall quality and abilities, which is of great significance for cultivating compound talents adapted to the development of modern society.

### 1.1 The requirements of the era for the cultivation of core competencies have spawned the large unit teaching model

Currently, countries around the world are actively exploring how to effectively cultivate citizens who can flexibly adapt to the changing demands of future life and working environments, thus ushering in the era of "core competencies" in curriculum reform, making the cultivation of students core competencies a key goal for education in various countries. In recent years, China's curriculum reform has also been fundamentally oriented towards developing students core competencies. Specifically, in the compulsory education stage, in April 2022, the Ministry of Education issued the "Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)" (hereinafter referred to as the New Curriculum Standards), which clearly proposes the concepts of "competency-oriented" and "holistic education," with its reform design strongly reflecting a shift from knowledge-centered to competency-centered orientation. In line with this transformation, reforming traditional teaching models is imperative.

In this context, the large unit teaching model has emerged in recent years. The large unit teaching model aims to cultivate students core competencies as its fundamental goal, addressing the phenomenon of traditional teaching that fragments knowledge points based on individual subjects. It strives to construct a new type of instructional design approach and framework. This model, with an overall and coherent teaching philosophy, integrates the four dimensions of core competencies organically through large tasks and big ideas in instructional design, enabling students to acquire and enhance their core competencies through deep learning. This is not only an effective innovation over traditional fragmented teaching but also an important pathway for aligning with international educational trends and cultivating 21st-century talent.

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## 1.2 The promotion of educational reform has a certain demand for large unit teaching

With the deepening of the new curriculum reform, interdisciplinary integration has been emphasized as an effective teaching philosophy. It aims to break through the limitations of a single knowledge system in traditional teaching, promote the integration of multiple disciplines, thereby improving teaching quality and students learning enthusiasm. Interdisciplinary integration can broaden students thinking, cultivate their practical skills, observational abilities, and writing skills. This integration not only helps accomplish teaching tasks but also stimulates students interest in learning, assisting them in building a more complete and comprehensive knowledge system. As a foundational subject, primary school Chinese has significant practical value and educational significance in interdisciplinary integration teaching. It can be combined with subjects such as mathematics, music, and moral education, providing a broader learning experience and fostering students comprehensive qualities and interdisciplinary thinking skills. Large unit teaching design emphasizes integrating knowledge from different disciplines into Chinese language teaching, which enhances students comprehensive abilities and subject understanding. This teaching approach requires teachers to conduct in-depth research on goals, content, methods, etc., to promote changes in teaching content and methods. Through interdisciplinary integration, the goals of quality education can be better achieved, enabling students to improve their understanding and application abilities in the process of learning Chinese language knowledge, thus laying the foundation for their all-round development.

## 1.3 The role transformation and adaptation of teachers in the integration of subjects

The author is the person in charge of primary education major in a normal university in China. Through in-depth research on the front line schools, it is found that although the concept of large unit teaching has gradually penetrated into the front line teaching, its application in Chinese language teaching practice is not satisfactory.

From the perspective of students, ideally speaking, in the process of big unit teaching, students are no longer passively receiving knowledge but need to actively participate in the learning activities of big units, through inquiry, cooperation, practice, and other methods to deeply understand and master knowledge. However, students expose the following issues in the process of big unit teaching: First, adaptability issues, students are accustomed to traditional teaching methods focused on knowledge points and need time to adapt to big unit teaching that involves completing major tasks through cooperative inquiry; Second, psychological burden issues, the starting point of big unit teaching design is to stimulate students enthusiasm for learning, but when faced with more cooperative and project-based learning, students find it difficult to cope, which increases their psychological burden; Third, assessment issues, in big unit teaching, students learning outcomes are no longer evaluated through traditional paper-and-pencil tests but place greater emphasis on process evaluation and performance evaluation, which poses a challenge for some students who are more accustomed to demonstrating their learning outcomes through exam-oriented methods.

From the perspective of teachers, in an ideal sense, in large unit teaching, teachers need to make changes in teaching objectives, teaching design, and teaching methods. Specifically, teaching objectives need to shift from traditional three-dimensional goals to the cultivation of core competencies; teaching design needs to evolve from isolated knowledge point explanations to holistic large unit designs; teaching methods need to transform from one-way knowledge transmission to creating contexts and assigning tasks to promote student autonomous learning. However, this transformation faces multiple challenges in practical teaching. Some experienced teachers, accustomed to existing teaching models, believe these are sufficient to meet examination requirements and thus exhibit resistance to reform, known as "unwilling to change." Another group of teachers, when confronted with the new concept of "large unit teaching," are concerned about the potential increase in workload and thus adopt an avoidance attitude, known as "unwilling to change." A few teachers, despite their willingness to try, lack a deep understanding of the core concepts of large unit teaching and merely pile up similar texts, leading to lengthy and repetitive teaching units that fail to achieve the true intent of large unit teaching, known as "random changes."

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION DIFFICULTIES

### 2.1 The ambiguity of the goal of subject integration

The ambiguity of subject integration goals manifests in various specific ways during the process of instructional design and implementation: unclear goal statements, for example: goals are merely stated as "improving students comprehensive abilities" without specifying which abilities or how to measure improvement. Goals are overly broad, for example: goals involve multiple subjects but do not clearly identify key knowledge points or skills. Goals are disconnected from actual teaching content, for example: set goals do not align with actual teaching activities, leading to ineffective support for achieving the goals. Goals lack operability, for example: although goals are clearly stated, they lack specific implementation steps or methods. Goals lack coordination, for example: goals from different subjects are not effectively integrated, leading to conflicts or redundancies in teaching activities. Goals are inconsistent with evaluation criteria, for example: teaching goals do not match final evaluation standards, making it difficult to accurately assess students learning outcomes.

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## 2.2 Adaptability of teaching methods

Big unit teaching is a teaching model that centers on themes or questions, transcending the boundaries of a single subject and integrating knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines. In this teaching model, the adaptability of teaching methods is crucial as it directly impacts teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Large unit teaching requires teachers to adopt a variety of teaching methods to adapt to the characteristics of different subjects and students learning styles. For example, they can combine lectures, discussions, experiments, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and other methods. Teachers need to flexibly adjust teaching methods according to the content of the lessons and students responses to ensure that teaching activities effectively support the achievement of learning objectives. Additionally, teaching methods should facilitate the integration of knowledge across different subjects and help students establish connections between pieces of knowledge.

## 2.3 Adaptability of students learning habits

Big Unit Teaching, as an integrative and interdisciplinary teaching model, imposes new requirements on students learning habits. These learning habits include: autonomous learning ability, students need to be able to explore and learn independently or within a group rather than relying entirely on the teachers guidance. Information processing ability, students need to have the ability to screen, analyze, and synthesize interdisciplinary information. Cooperation and communication ability, students need to effectively collaborate with peers to share ideas and knowledge. Time management ability, students need to be able to plan their time reasonably to handle more complex and time-consuming tasks in Big Unit Teaching. Critical thinking ability, students need to develop critical thinking skills to deeply analyze and evaluate different viewpoints and information. Innovation ability, students need to dare to try new methods and creatively solve problems.

During the implementation of big unit teaching, students may be accustomed to the traditional teacher-dominated teaching model and feel unaccustomed to autonomous learning. They may also be accustomed to a single-discipline way of thinking and struggle with interdisciplinary leaps of thought. Additionally, they may lack effective collaboration skills, leading to poor group learning outcomes. Or they may not be good at managing their time, resulting in falling behind in big unit learning.

## 2.4 Parent and social recognition

As a relatively new teaching model, the recognition of large unit teaching by parents and society is crucial for the promotion and success of educational reform. Parents and society may be accustomed to traditional subject-based teaching and may be skeptical about the concepts and effectiveness of large unit teaching. They may also have limited understanding of large unit teaching and lack sufficient information to evaluate its value. From a practical perspective, parents and society may focus more on short-term outcomes, while the effectiveness of large unit teaching often takes a longer time to manifest. With limited resources, parents and society may be concerned about the additional resource support required for large unit teaching. Some parents may worry about whether their children can adapt to the new teaching model and whether it will affect their academic performance.

## 3. INTEGRATION PATH

### 3.1 Analyze resources and perceive the whole

In the teaching design of large unit of primary school Chinese, the overall perception of Chinese elements can be carried out from the following aspects:

#### 3.1.1. Determination of teaching objectives

For example, when designing a major unit on "Nature and Humanity," the language elements can include: reading comprehension, where students are able to understand and analyze articles describing natural phenomena and the relationship between humans and nature; language expression, where students are able to use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures to describe natural phenomena and express their feelings about nature; critical thinking, where students are able to extract information from texts and think critically about and discuss the relationship between humans and nature.

#### 3.1.2. The expansion of teaching content

Taking the large unit themed on "Traditional Culture" as an example, the Chinese language elements may include: literary works, selecting literary works containing elements of traditional culture such as poetry, stories, and myths for learning. Chinese language knowledge: teaching vocabulary, idioms, rhetorical devices, etc., related to traditional culture. Cultural understanding: through learning, enabling students to understand and respect Chinas traditional culture.

#### 3.1.3 The choice of teaching methods

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Taking the "Fairy Tale" unit as an example, the Chinese language elements can be embodied as follows: Reading Skills, guiding students on how to read and understand fairy tales, such as character analysis, plot development, etc. Writing Skills, encouraging students to create their own fairy tales, fostering imagination and creative writing abilities. Expression and Communication, organizing role-playing or story sharing sessions to enhance students oral expression and communication skills.

### **3.1.4 Use of evaluation methods**

In the "Science Popularization Articles" unit, the Chinese language elements and evaluation methods can be combined as follows: Understanding Evaluation, assessing students comprehension of science popularization knowledge through question-and-answer sessions and quizzes. Application Ability Evaluation, having students write brief science popularization articles or reports to evaluate their ability to integrate and express information. Thinking Quality Evaluation, assessing students critical thinking and analytical skills through group discussions or debates.

### **3.2 Create context and drive teaching**

In the teaching process, it is very important to create specific and vivid situations to stimulate students interest in learning and initiative. Through carefully designed situations, we can guide students to better integrate into the learning content and deepen their understanding of the teaching materials.

#### **3.2.1 Create a context for reading the text —— Take the unit of "Ancient Chinese Fables" as an example**

Context creation: fable story town

Unit teaching process:

##### **(1) INTRODUCTION:**

The teacher tells an interesting fable story such as "The Fox and the Grapes" to stimulate students interest. Introduce the concept of "Fable Story Town" and tell students that they will explore different fable stories in this town.

##### **(2) SITUATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Students are divided into groups and each group chooses a fable story for in-depth study, such as "Waiting for the Rabbit" and "The Crow Drinking Water". Each group of students presents the selected fable story through role-playing, making story comic strips, writing scripts and other forms.

##### **(3) IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION**

In the context of "Fable Story Town", each group of students plays the role in the story, discuss the plot, character characteristics and implications of the story. The teacher guides the students to discuss the moral education significance of the fable story, how to apply the wisdom in the story to daily life.

##### **(4) SITUATIONAL APPLICATION**

Students set up a "Fable Clinic" in the "Fable Story Town" where other students can come for consultation and use the wisdom from fable stories to solve practical problems. For example, if a student encounters difficulties and is unwilling to try, other students can use the story of "Waiting for a Rabbit by Guarding a Tree stump" to inspire him.

##### **(5) SUMMARY AND REFLECTION**

Teachers and students summarize their learning experience in the "Fable Story Town" together and share the gains of each group. Students write learning diaries to record their feelings and what they have learned in situational teaching.

##### **(6) DISPLAY EVALUATION**

Each group presents their learning results, which can be a performance, comic strip exhibition or story explanation. Teachers and other students evaluate the content and performance of the presentation and give feedback and suggestions.

#### **3.2.2 The design activity skillfully uses —— as an example of "Urban greening and ecological environment improvement"**

(1) **Project start:** As a member of the "Urban Ecological Improvement Squad", the students received a letter from the mayor,

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which explained the current situation of urban ecological environment and entrusted the squad members to put forward specific greening improvement plans.

(2) **Research Investigation:** Students need to simulate professional teams to conduct on-site investigations into the distribution of green spaces, air quality, and noise pollution in different urban areas. The scenario can be: students carrying professional equipment such as air quality detectors and noise meters, delve into communities, parks, schools, and other places to collect data.

(3) **Scheme design:** After collecting a large amount of data, students need to design a set of urban greening schemes. The context can be that students need to propose comprehensive schemes including afforestation, rooftop greening, urban park renovation, etc., within a limited time and budget.

(4) **Simulation Proposal:** Student groups need to create their design proposals in the form of a PPT or presentation board and present them to the "city leaders" and other stakeholders at a simulated municipal meeting. The scenario can be: students acting as urban planners, presenting their proposals to the jury and answering questions from the jury.

(5) **Implementation and Evaluation:** After the project is approved students need to simulate the implementation of their greening project and evaluate its effectiveness. The scenario can be: students implementing a small-scale greening project on a corner of their school or community documenting the changes before and after the project and writing an evaluation report.

### 3.2.3 Introduce resources and stimulate resonance —— Take the "Revolutionary years" unit as an example

#### (1) Introduction of red film and television resources

**Table I Recommended Red Film and Television Resources Table**

Title of film	The Producers	source
The Five Heroes of Langya Mountain	Shi Wenzhi	August 1st Film Studio
《founding ceremony》	Li Qiankuan and Xiao Guiyun	Changchun Film Studio
Military Documentary	Wei Jikui	CCTV National Defense and Military Channel

#### (2) Introduction of red book resources

**Table II Recommended Red Book Resources Table**

the title of a book	author	explain
Appreciation of Mao Zedongs poetry	Zang Kejia	Enjoy the great leader Chairman Maos broad mind and noble sentiment
Heroic Figures Picture Book	Li Hongchao, Zhang Hongxia	It records the heroic deeds of Qiu Shaoyun, Huang Jiguang, Dong Cunxue, Liu Hulan and the five brave soldiers of Langyashan
《Hong-am》	Luo Guangbin, Yang Yiyuan	Under the situation of the PLAs advance into the southwest, the Nationalist authorities in Chongqing brutally suppressed the underground revolutionary struggle led by the Communist Party

#### (3) Introduction of interdisciplinary cooperation

Example: Chinese + calligraphy

Look at the shape, and after recognizing the shape, please write the following four words correctly and standardly in the grid.



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### Lawyers Cliff Ferry



#### Example: Chinese + Art

When learning the lesson "The Five Heroes of Langya Mountain," students can be encouraged to draw the scene of the Five Heroes bravely jumping off the cliff, deepening their understanding of the text through drawing. At the same time, students can also be encouraged to create portraits of revolutionary heroes, such as Mao Zedong and Qiu Shaoyun. This not only cultivates students drawing skills but also allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the deeds and spirit of revolutionary heroes. Additionally, some art works related to the text can be displayed for students to appreciate and learn from their artistic characteristics and expressive techniques.

#### Example: Literature + music

When teaching the lesson on "Light", songs such as "Red Star Guides Me to Fight" can be played to allow students to feel the musical atmosphere of the revolutionary period and enhance their emotional experience of the text content. At the same time, students can be encouraged to create red songs based on the text content or historical background and perform them. This not only exercises students creative and performance skills but also deepens their understanding and appreciation of the text content.

#### (4) The introduction of local red resources

In the teaching of "Revolutionary Years" unit, we cleverly combine the units humanistic theme with the Kunlun Pass Campaign Museum and Cheng Siyuans former residence, bringing a vivid and profound historical learning experience to students.

##### Kunlun Pass Battle Museum

As a classic scenic spot of red tourism and a base for patriotism education, Kunlun Pass Battle Museum is located at the junction of Silong Town, Binyang County and Kunlun Town, Xingning District, Nanning City.

By organizing students to visit the Kunlun Pass Campaign Museum for on-site learning, the rich historical artifacts and vivid pictures inside the museum make students feel as if they have been transported back to the turbulent war years. They gaze at the guns used by revolutionary martyrs and the photos they left behind, feeling the firm revolutionary beliefs and fearless spirit. Detailed explanations further convey the weight of history to each student, allowing them to deeply appreciate the greatness and difficulty of revolutionary martyrs. This visit has strongly impacted the students hearts, deepening their understanding of the revolutionary spirit.

##### Example: Cheng Siyuans former residence

Cheng Siyuans former residence has been listed as a cultural relic protection unit in Binyang County and has become a base for patriotism education. The residence is located in Liangtan Village, Dacheng Village Committee, Dajiao Town, Binyang County.

In the former residence, students witnessed Mr.Cheng Siyuans life relics and precious historical photographs firsthand, as if they were transported back to that era of history. The vivid explanations from the tour guides enabled the students to gain a deeper understanding of Mr.Cheng Siyuans life story, historical contributions, and noble character. After the visit, the students expressed their feelings and insights, stating that through visiting Mr.Cheng Siyuans former residence, they not only deepened their understanding of patriotism but also gained a deeper appreciation and knowledge of their hometowns history and culture. At the same time, Mr.Cheng Siyuans spirit inspired them to study hard and contribute their strength to the development of their hometown and country.

## EPILOGUE

With the conclusion of this study, the author has gained a deeper understanding and recognition of the strategies for designing large unit teaching in primary school Chinese language under the perspective of interdisciplinary integration. Through an in-depth analysis of teaching philosophies, meticulous construction of design strategies, and detailed analysis of practical cases, it not only reveals the significant value of interdisciplinary integrated teaching in promoting students all-round development and improving teaching quality, but also provides an innovative path for the development of primary school Chinese language teaching. Reflecting on the research process, the author recognizes that interdisciplinary integration is not achieved overnight; it requires continuous learning, exploration, and reflection from teachers. In future teaching practices, it is hoped that frontline teachers will

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continue to adhere to student-centeredness, task-driven approaches, and competency-oriented guidance, deepen the research on large unit teaching design, continuously improve teaching strategies, and effectively stimulate students interest in learning through interdisciplinary integrated large unit teaching design, fostering their innovative thinking and comprehensive abilities, laying a solid foundation for childrens lifelong learning and all-round development.

Finally, the author looks forward to more educational researchers and practitioners joining in the research and practice of interdisciplinary teaching to jointly explore new models of primary school Chinese language education and contribute to the development of our countrys basic education. Let us move forward hand in hand, continuously opening up new chapters in primary school Chinese language education in the vast realm of interdisciplinary integration, striving tirelessly to cultivate the successors of the new era.

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