

## Original Research Article

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# Research on the Implementation Path of Interdisciplinary Thematic Learning Activities in Junior High School History

Bo-Ru Zou \*

Chongqing Nanyu Secondary School, Chongqing, 400015, China

\*Correspondence to: Bo-Ru Zou, Chongqing Nanyu Secondary School, Chongqing, 400015, China, E-mail: [1150455797@qq.com](mailto:1150455797@qq.com)

**Abstract:** Interdisciplinary thematic learning in junior high school history is of great significance under the trend of knowledge integration and competency-oriented education. At present, there are issues such as limited cognitive integration of disciplines, where teachers merely intersperse scattered knowledge points; a lack of systematic teaching practice, with arbitrary activity design and disorderly implementation; and insufficient resource integration, including a lack of classification guidance in school libraries and under-explored online resources. In response to these issues, this paper proposes an implementation path based on four aspects: theme selection, resource integration, teaching method application, and evaluation system construction, aiming to promote the effective development of interdisciplinary thematic learning in junior high school history teaching and enhance students' overall competencies.

**Keywords:** Junior high school history; Interdisciplinary thematic learning; Implementation path

## Introduction

In today's education field, knowledge integration and competency-oriented education have become mainstream trends, and junior high school history teaching must follow this trend. Interdisciplinary thematic learning, as an innovative teaching model, injects new vitality into junior high school history teaching. It breaks down subject barriers, allowing students to interpret historical events from multiple perspectives, construct a comprehensive knowledge system, and cultivate students' overall abilities, including the development of proper emotional attitudes and values. Currently, interdisciplinary

thematic learning in junior high school history faces multiple challenges, including teachers' cognition, teaching practice, and resource integration. There is an urgent need to explore effective implementation paths to improve teaching quality and promote the holistic development of students.

## 1. The Importance of Interdisciplinary Thematic Learning Activities in Junior High School History

Interdisciplinary thematic learning activities in junior high school history hold significant importance that cannot be overlooked. Firstly, from the "Action Plan for Deepening the Reform of Curriculum and Teaching



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in Basic Education," the "Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era," to the publication of the "Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan and Curriculum Standards," there is a strong emphasis on "further developing students' core competencies and strengthening their ability to apply multidisciplinary knowledge and skills for comprehensive inquiry"<sup>[1]</sup>. The government has introduced new requirements in terms of curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation systems, encouraging schools to break subject boundaries in their teaching and promote interdisciplinary collaborative learning. From a knowledge perspective, history itself is an interdisciplinary subject that involves politics, economics, culture, and many other aspects. Interdisciplinary thematic learning helps break down subject barriers, enabling students to interpret historical events from different disciplinary perspectives. For example, when studying the development of ancient agriculture, students can combine knowledge from geography to analyze how terrain and climate affect agricultural distribution, use mathematical methods to calculate crop yield changes, and apply biology to understand crop variety improvements. This approach allows students to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of historical knowledge and build a complete knowledge system. In terms of skill development, interdisciplinary thematic learning can enhance students' overall capabilities. It requires students to apply knowledge from multiple disciplines to solve real-world problems, fostering skills such as information collection, analysis, integration, critical thinking, and innovation. In a theme exploring the relationship between history and modern technology, for instance, students need to use historical knowledge to trace the development of technology, employ information technology to gather data, and apply logical thinking to analyze how technology has driven societal progress. This process boosts students' comprehensive competencies. From the perspective of emotional attitudes and value cultivation, interdisciplinary thematic learning allows students to experience the charm of historical culture from a richer viewpoint, enhancing national pride and cultural identity. Moreover, through the integration of multiple disciplines, students develop a spirit of inclusivity and a broader international perspective, enabling

them to view history and reality with a more open and rational attitude, ultimately forming a correct set of values and life outlook. Therefore, interdisciplinary thematic learning activities in junior high school history are an effective means of cultivating students' overall competencies and adapting to the demands of contemporary development. They are of great significance for the development of junior high school history education and the holistic growth of students.

## **2. Current Status of Interdisciplinary Thematic Learning in Junior High School History**

### **2.1 Limited Understanding of Interdisciplinary Integration**

In current junior high school history teaching scenarios, many teachers have a limited understanding of the integration of history with other disciplines in interdisciplinary thematic learning. Some teachers merely understand interdisciplinary learning as occasionally introducing scattered knowledge points from other subjects into history lessons, without establishing deep connections between the knowledge systems of various disciplines. For example, in teaching ancient economic history, when it comes to the measurement concepts in mathematics, teachers may only briefly mention the concept of weights and measures. They fail to delve into the evolution of measurement methods across different historical periods as mathematics developed, or how mathematical thinking can be used to analyze economic data to uncover the historical patterns hidden behind them. This shallow understanding makes it difficult for interdisciplinary thematic learning to fully demonstrate its powerful ability to enhance students' overall competencies in practical teaching. As a result, students are unable to access systematic and in-depth interdisciplinary knowledge, making it difficult for them to build a comprehensive and coherent understanding of knowledge. They also lack a profound sense of the collaborative and symbiotic relationship between history and other disciplines. Over time, this will impact students' ability to master historical knowledge comprehensively and will hinder the development of their integrative thinking and innovation abilities, thus obstructing the effective advancement of interdisciplinary thematic learning in

junior high school history teaching<sup>[2]</sup>.

## 2.2 Lack of Systematic Approach in Teaching Practices

(1) In designing interdisciplinary thematic activities, many schools are arbitrary, failing to follow history curriculum standards or consider students' cognitive characteristics. For instance, when studying the "Renaissance," some schools only integrate art, ignoring its connections with literature, philosophy, and other disciplines. Without this integration, students cannot fully grasp the Renaissance's multifaceted impact, and activity design needs improvement.

(2) In implementation, there is a lack of effective communication and coordination among teachers of different subjects. History teachers often proceed with their own plans and schedules, rarely collaborating with teachers of other disciplines. This lack of coordination leads to disorder in interdisciplinary activities.

(3) Due to poor activity design and disorganized implementation, teaching outcomes fall short of expectations. Students fail to build a coherent knowledge framework and do not improve their interdisciplinary thinking and overall competencies. As a result, the goals of interdisciplinary thematic learning are not achieved, limiting its effectiveness in junior high school history teaching<sup>[3]</sup>.

## 2.3 Insufficient Integration and Utilization of Resources

Interdisciplinary thematic learning in junior high school history faces several challenges in terms of resource integration and utilization. Although the school library holds a large number of history and related subject books, there is a lack of effective categorization and guidance for interdisciplinary learning resources. As a result, students often waste a lot of time searching for the necessary materials, reducing efficiency. While online resources, such as historical databases and virtual museums, are abundant, the school has not fully tapped into their potential value. There is no proper selection or integration of these resources, limiting students' access to interdisciplinary learning materials. At the teacher level, there is a lack of regular communication and interaction platforms between teachers of different disciplines, making it difficult to share teaching experiences and resources. History teachers possess a wealth of historical data,

while science teachers have specialized experimental resources. However, due to the absence of an effective communication and collaboration mechanism, these resources cannot be organically integrated into interdisciplinary teaching. The insufficient integration and utilization of resources limits the richness and depth of interdisciplinary thematic learning activities, hindering students from conducting efficient cross-disciplinary learning in a broader resource environment and obstructing the comprehensive development of their overall competencies.

## 3. Implementation Path of Interdisciplinary Thematic Learning in Junior High School History

### 3.1 Topic Selection

(1) Aligning with the textbook is a key foundation for selecting interdisciplinary themes in junior high school history. The history curriculum is rich in content, covering many historical periods and events from both ancient and modern times. This provides abundant material for interdisciplinary themes. For example, the theme of "The Rise and Fall of the Silk Road" is closely linked to the content on ancient cross-cultural exchanges in the textbook. Teachers can delve into historical facts about trade and cultural exchange along the Silk Road, integrating geographical knowledge to guide students in exploring how terrain, climate, and geography influenced trade routes and commercial activities. Additionally, language arts knowledge can be incorporated to help students understand the cultural significance of the Silk Road through ancient poetry and travel writings, thereby broadening students' understanding of this historical phenomenon.

(2) Focusing on students' real life and social issues is a vital source of vitality for selecting themes. Given the rapid development of technology, a theme like "The Transformation of Life Through Technological Change—A Historical Perspective" is likely to captivate students' interest. This theme not only allows students to revisit periods of significant technological breakthroughs in history, such as how the Industrial Revolution changed production and lifestyles, linking it to history knowledge, but it also enables students to analyze current technologies like the Internet and artificial intelligence. They can approach these from multiple disciplines, such as physics and information

technology, to explore their principles and impacts, bridging history with the present and enhancing students' ability to perceive and apply knowledge.

(3) Local history and school-based resources serve as new sources for selecting interdisciplinary themes. For instance, themes could focus on Chongqing's wartime history or the integration of Chongqing Nankai Secondary School with modern Chinese history. These themes can incorporate interdisciplinary activities like geographic field trips and oral history interviews, drawing upon both local and historical resources.

(4) The selected theme must have comprehensiveness and openness. For example, the theme "The Planning and Development of Ancient Cities" integrates history, geography, architecture, and sociology. Students can examine the historical evolution of cities, analyze the rationale behind city locations using geographic knowledge, and explore the architectural features of ancient cities. This all-encompassing approach helps students develop multifaceted thinking while understanding the charm of ancient cities.

### 3.2 Resource Integration

In terms of textbook resources, teachers need to have a keen insight to deeply explore the interdisciplinary elements within history textbooks and creatively integrate them with textbooks from other subjects. When studying the chapter on the Renaissance in modern world history, the history textbook presents the background, key figures, and works of the Renaissance. This content can be linked with classic literary works from the Renaissance period found in the language arts textbook, such as Shakespeare's plays and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. By studying these literary works, students can better understand the social movements of the time, the awakening of human nature, and gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social impacts of the Renaissance.

The full utilization of extracurricular resources can greatly expand students' learning horizons. The school library holds a vast collection of books on history, science, literature, and other subjects. Teachers can guide students to explore materials related to interdisciplinary themes. For example, in a unit on the development of ancient medicine, students can consult medical history books to learn about the evolution of ancient medical theories and refer to popular science books to understand the principles of ancient

medical technologies. Museums are also treasure troves of historical knowledge. Organizing field trips to museums allows students to interact with ancient artifacts and historical reconstructions, transforming their understanding of history from abstract text into direct, sensory experiences. Furthermore, internet resources are abundant and convenient. Online historical databases provide a wealth of primary sources, and virtual museums break through spatial and temporal limitations, enabling students to experience historical and cultural heritage from around the world, continuously supplying materials to support interdisciplinary learning and enriching the learning experience<sup>[4]</sup>.

### 3.3 Application of Teaching Methods

(1) Situational teaching method can create a vivid historical context in junior high school interdisciplinary thematic learning, allowing students to immerse themselves in historical events. For example, in a theme on "Ancient Warfare," teachers can use multimedia tools to show carefully edited documentary clips, display images of ancient weapons and battle scene reconstructions, and simulate sound effects of war. Students, placed in such a scenario, can directly feel the brutality of warfare while analyzing the geographical factors and strategic tactics behind historical wars, enhancing their understanding of the impact of wars on the course of history. This method also stimulates emotional resonance and deeper reflection.

(2) Group cooperative learning method is highly effective for themes like "World Cultural Heritage Protection." Students are divided into groups, each responsible for different tasks. By leveraging the strengths of various disciplines such as history, geography, and art, students collaborate to organize the historical context, analyze influences, assess value, and devise protection strategies. This approach cultivates collaboration and communication skills, fosters collective brainstorming, and effectively addresses interdisciplinary challenges.

(3) Inquiry-based learning method encourages students to explore the mysteries of history independently. In a study on "The Spread of Ancient Technological Inventions," teachers guide students to independently consult academic literature and historical archives, analyze records of technological exchanges in different regions, and create maps of the spread of these

inventions. In this process, students apply historical research methods and combine geographical spatial thinking to independently reflect on the political, economic, and cultural factors behind the dissemination of technologies. This method enhances their research abilities and critical thinking skills, allowing them to take ownership of their learning.

### 3.4 Construction of an Evaluation System

A scientifically sound evaluation system is crucial to ensuring the quality of interdisciplinary thematic learning in junior high school history. It is essential to establish a diversified evaluation approach. Teachers should evaluate students' performance based on their mastery and application of both historical and interdisciplinary knowledge, focusing on accuracy and depth. For example, in the "Development of Ancient Transportation" thematic learning project, teachers can assess whether students have clearly outlined the evolution of transportation methods in history and whether they have correctly analyzed the principles of transportation tools from a physics perspective. Self-assessment and peer evaluations are also indispensable. Students should reflect on their own participation, the improvement in their ability to apply knowledge, and exchange feedback with peers from aspects such as team collaboration and innovative thinking. Parents can evaluate students' ability to transfer knowledge acquired in interdisciplinary learning to real-life situations, such as whether they can apply history and geography knowledge when visiting historical sites. A diverse evaluation approach offers a comprehensive assessment of student learning. Classroom performance evaluations focus on the students' participation level in class, such as the quality of their contributions in group discussions and their responses to teacher-guided questions. Homework evaluation assesses students' ability to consolidate and expand their knowledge. For instance, assigning an interdisciplinary mini-research paper could evaluate their ability to collect data, build logical arguments, and integrate multiple subjects. Project outcome evaluation measures the quality of students' work based on its completeness, depth, and innovation. Process evaluations emphasize feedback, such as addressing issues in group collaboration and communication, fostering continuous improvement in

interdisciplinary learning<sup>[5]</sup>.

## Conclusion

Junior high school history interdisciplinary thematic learning is an essential approach to cultivating students' comprehensive competencies and meeting the demands of the times. By selecting themes closely linked to the textbook, focusing on real-life situations and social issues, integrating resources from textbooks, extracurricular materials, and the internet, and employing teaching methods such as situational teaching, group cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning, a diversified evaluation system with multiple evaluators and methods can effectively address the existing issues in interdisciplinary thematic learning. In future teaching, teachers should innovate and adopt flexible strategies, leveraging the advantages of interdisciplinary learning to promote students' knowledge integration, skill enhancement, and the cultivation of innovative talents for the new era.

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