

Research on Attention of Students in Junior High School Art Classroom Based on Flow Theory

Mengyao Zhai¹ Zhaohui Yuan²

^{1,2} Huanggang Normal University, Huanggang, Hubei, China

²Corresponding author.

ABSTRACT

In junior high school art classes, students' attention level directly affects the teaching quality of teachers. However, due to the physical and psychological development characteristics of junior high school students, they often find it difficult to maintain high levels of concentration for a long time. Therefore, how to increase students' attention to classroom tasks and effectively improve teaching effectiveness is an important issue in current junior high school art education. The proposal of flow theory provides a new perspective and solution to this problem. This article elaborates on the necessity and positive role of flow experience in junior high school art teaching from three aspects: the connection between flow theory and student attention in art classrooms, attention challenges in junior high school art classrooms, and teaching strategies based on flow theory.

Keywords: Junior high school art, Attention, Flow theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

The "Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards" (2022 edition) proposes in the curriculum concept to pay attention to students' artistic experience, "emphasizing students' artistic perception and emotional experience in the learning process, and stimulating students' interest and enthusiasm for participating in artistic activities".[1] From this, it can be seen that enhancing students' learning experience is very necessary in art classrooms. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi proposed the concept of "flow". He found that some talented and creative painters, when they fully devote themselves to something, forget about hunger, fatigue, and discomfort, showing a strong interest and perseverance. In teaching activities, flow experience can effectively improve students' learning efficiency in the classroom.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLOW THEORY AND STUDENT ATTENTION IN ART CLASSROOM

Csikszentmihalyi believes that flow is widely present in artistic practices such as music, dance, and art. As a form of artistic practice, art activities

generate flow experiences such as enjoyment and happiness when the subject fully engages in the painting practice.[2] Art teaching activities are both a learning activity and an art activity, with both practical and operational characteristics. In these activities, middle school students must truly participate in practice. Therefore, in the art classroom, by arranging appropriate art skills training, students can focus on art teaching tasks, form flow in practical activities, and be more willing to engage in the next art learning, thereby achieving sustained learning effects and improving students' learning experience and teaching effectiveness.

2.1 The Effect of Flow State on Improving Attention Quality

Novak believes that obtaining flow experiences is highly likely to improve students' learning performance.[3] Taking junior high school art practice classes as an example, when students can smoothly enter a state of flow during the process of artistic creation such as painting or handicrafts, they will show a pursuit of details and a fine grasp of the overall layout. In this state, students can not only more sensitively capture the color changes and light and shadow effects of the surrounding

environment, but also quickly construct creative and artistic composition plans in their minds. Their attention is no longer distracted by external interference, but fully focused on the paintbrush in their hands and the canvas in front of them.

The creative process in this state of flow not only greatly improves students' attention quality, allowing them to better engage in current tasks and challenges, but also helps them create more exquisite and creative art works. It can also inspire students' intrinsic interest in learning and provide them with joy and a sense of success in the process of art learning.[4] Therefore, in the process of junior high school art teaching, teachers should actively guide students to discover and experience the state of "flow", create a suitable creative environment for them, provide them with rich creative materials, and give timely feedback and guidance to help students reach higher levels in artistic creation.

2.2 The Role of Attention Regulation Mechanism in Flow State

In the field of psychology, flow state is regarded as a highly focused and immersive psychological experience, which not only greatly enhances an individual's cognitive efficiency and creativity, but also brings profound inner satisfaction and pleasure. It is worth noting that individuals can significantly promote the generation and maintenance of flow states by actively adjusting their own attention levels. This mechanism is reflected in many fields, and junior high school art practice provides a particularly vivid and specific example.

Specifically, individuals can optimize their attention allocation through a series of strategies when participating in middle school art practice activities, making it easier to enter a flow state. By adjusting their attention levels, individuals can significantly promote the generation and maintenance of flow states. In junior high school art practice, this mechanism has been vividly demonstrated and validated. Therefore, teachers should fully recognize the importance of attention regulation and actively explore more effective methods and strategies to help students better experience the joy and achievement brought by flow state in art creation.

3. ATTENTION CHALLENGE IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ART CLASSROOM

3.1 Vague and Unclear Teaching Objectives in Art Classroom

In the teaching practice of junior high school art courses, the setting of teaching objectives often presents a vague and insufficiently clear state. This ambiguity lies in the failure to clearly define that the objectives of this lesson are not intended to impart specific knowledge points or skills to students (such as the basic principles of color matching, spatial perspective painting techniques, etc.), but rather to cultivate an open and creative thinking approach in teaching, where students are expected to explore and create independently, rather than learning based on established knowledge frameworks. In junior high school art classes, when students are faced with an overly broad creative task and lack clear learning goals and guidance strategies, they often find it difficult to achieve this efficient and focused learning state.

3.2 Monotonous Overall Atmosphere of the Art Classroom

In the in-depth exploration of middle school art teaching practice, the overall atmosphere of art classrooms presents a relatively monotonous situation, overly relying on teachers' oral lectures, and lacking inspiring background situations. Such situations should be able to guide students to delve into the creative background and emotional world of art works, and promote their deeper understanding and perception of art works. In addition, auditory elements such as background music that can stimulate students' emotional resonance have not been fully utilized. They were originally effective means of creating an artistic atmosphere and enhancing teaching appeal. This singular teaching model not only greatly limits students' sensory experience in multiple dimensions such as visual and auditory senses, hindering their comprehensive perception and deep understanding of artistic works, but also fails to fully construct a classroom atmosphere that closely corresponds to the teaching content and can fully stimulate students' creativity and imagination. In such an environment, students' artistic interest and creative potential are difficult to effectively stimulate, which in turn affects the overall effectiveness of art teaching and students' artistic growth.

3.3 Lack of Hands-on Practice

The current traditional art classroom teaching model often overly relies on one-sided teaching by teachers. This "cramming" teaching method not only fails to effectively stimulate students' interest in learning, but also struggles to maintain their concentration for a long time. If junior high school art courses only focus on teachers' theoretical explanations and work exhibitions, and neglect the process of allowing students to participate in the creation themselves, it will lead to students being unable to deepen their understanding of art knowledge in practice, and it will be even more difficult for them to experience the joy and sense of achievement brought by art creation through personal practice. Lack of practical operation makes it difficult for students to transform abstract aesthetic theories into concrete artistic expressions, thus making it difficult to form profound learning impressions and lasting memory connections. In addition, this teaching model may also lead to a sense of learning fatigue among students, as they are unable to identify and solve problems in practice, thus missing opportunities to promote personal growth through challenges and exploration.

Therefore, in order to promote the effectiveness of junior high school art education and the comprehensive development of students, it is necessary to reform the traditional teaching mode, increase students' hands-on practice, guide students to learn in practice and grow in creation through diversified teaching methods, in order to achieve a flow state and truly stimulate students' artistic potential and creativity. Traditional art classrooms often focus on teacher lectures, which makes it difficult to stimulate students' interest and attention in learning.

4. STUDENT ATTENTION CONCENTRATION STRATEGY BASED ON FLOW THEORY

4.1 Clarifying the Teaching Objectives and Tasks of This Lesson to Improve Students' Attention Stability

In order to promote the stability of students' attention and guide them to reach a state of flow in art classes, teachers must carefully design the teaching process to ensure that each link is closely centered around the teaching objectives, while being attractive and interactive.

Teachers should refine macro teaching objectives into a series of specific and actionable small tasks that are interrelated and progressive, serving together to achieve the overall teaching objectives. In terms of the purpose of goal setting, students should be guided to shift their focus from expressive goals to self-improvement goals, that is, to focus on the growth of their own abilities, thereby improving their autonomy in learning.[5] Through this approach, students can have a more intuitive understanding of the learning path, clarify the specific goals they need to achieve at each stage, and effectively improve their concentration and persistence of attention. Through meticulous task decomposition and gradual teaching arrangements, not only can students' attention stability be effectively improved, enabling them to reach a state of deep flow in art learning, but it can also promote students' systematic mastery and profound understanding of art knowledge and skills, ultimately achieving a dual improvement in teaching quality and learning effectiveness.

4.2 Creating Challenging Hands-on Tasks to Keep Students Focused in Class

Teachers should create challenging and practical hands-on tasks to promote students' learning engagement and creative development. These tasks aim to stimulate students' intrinsic motivation, making their attention highly focused on the classroom, and thereby inducing them to enter a highly focused and enjoyable state of "flow". Teachers need to adhere to the principle of "teaching students according to their aptitude" when designing these challenging learning tasks, ensuring that the difficulty of the tasks matches students' existing art skills and cognitive abilities. This requires teachers to have a deep understanding of each student's artistic interests, skill strengths, and development potential, in order to develop task frameworks that can stimulate students' potential without causing them to feel overly frustrated. By setting a moderate difficulty gradient, tasks can continuously stimulate students' enthusiasm for thinking, prompting them to constantly explore, try, and innovate in the process of solving problems.

In addition, the design of tasks should also focus on guiding students to allocate classroom attention reasonably, ensuring that they can fully and deeply participate in every aspect of art learning. This includes multiple dimensions such as discussion of creative ideas, selection and application of materials, practice and improvement

of techniques, and display and evaluation of the final work. Through group collaboration or individual guidance, teachers can further promote communication and cooperation among students, encourage them to learn from each other and make progress together, thereby deepening their understanding and application of art knowledge and skills through interaction.

4.3 Providing Immediate Feedback and Encouragement to Boost Students' Confidence and Encourage Them to Continue Completing Classroom Tasks

In the practical stage of junior high school art education, teachers should provide immediate and as specific feedback and encouragement as possible to students. This process aims to effectively assist students in quickly and accurately identifying their strengths and achievements in art creation through positive reinforcement strategies, while also clearly pointing out existing shortcomings and potential areas for improvement. In the learning system, the information of learning activity results is fed back, that is, the learning results are provided to the learners.[6] This approach not only stimulates students' intrinsic learning motivation, but also encourages them to develop the ability of self-reflection and self-evaluation, thereby making timely and beneficial adjustments in learning strategies.

The famous educator Dewey once said, "Knowledge alone without emotions to inspire it is not enough. Therefore, emotions are also needed to arouse his desires, make him love to do, and make him have to do so. There is a kind of sympathy and sincerity towards society." [7] Instant and specific encouragement helps students efficiently and effectively shift their attention to established learning goals, guiding them to focus their energy on key areas of skill improvement, such as color application, composition design, or line expression. This targeted attention allocation can not only accelerate the rise of the learning curve, but also promote students to reach a flow state when performing tasks. The realization of flow state signifies that students have reached the ideal state of deep immersion and efficient output in art learning, which has profound significance for the comprehensive development of their artistic literacy and the cultivation of creativity.

4.4 Creating a Focused Learning Atmosphere So That Students' Attention Does Not Shift Beyond the Classroom

Objectively speaking, the teaching environment that affects the flow experience includes both hardware teaching environment and humanistic teaching environment. The hardware teaching environment mainly refers to the spatial layout and teaching facilities of the classroom. [8]

Teachers need to carefully plan and implement teaching strategies to effectively focus students' attention span, thereby promoting their flow state in art courses. In the practical operation of art classrooms, teachers should play the dual roles of "environmental creators" and "learning guides". Firstly, at the environmental level, teachers should try to minimize all unnecessary interruptions and sources of interference, including but not limited to arranging classroom seating layout reasonably to reduce visual and auditory distractions, controlling noise levels inside and outside the classroom, and managing communication and interaction between students in a timely manner to ensure that these factors do not interfere with students' deep thinking and creative processes. In addition, soft lighting, appropriate temperature, and a classroom environment rich in artistic atmosphere can be utilized to further stimulate students' artistic inspiration and concentration.

By comprehensively utilizing methods such as environment optimization, teaching strategy adjustment, and guided learning, a focused and efficient atmosphere for junior high school art learning can be effectively created, enabling students to reach a state of flow in art creation, thereby realizing the dual value of art and education.

5. CONCLUSION

As a discipline that emphasizes both visual art and emotional expression, the teaching process of art not only requires students to possess basic observational and hands-on abilities, but also emphasizes the cultivation of innovative thinking and aesthetic perception. The effective development of these abilities is based on students' highly concentrated attention. The flow theory provides strong theoretical support for understanding and optimizing student attention in art classrooms.

For junior high school students, if the art classroom can successfully help them enter a state of flow, it can not only significantly improve their learning efficiency, such as observing objects more carefully and creatively conceptualizing works, but also effectively stimulate their intrinsic learning motivation, cultivate lasting learning interest and self-driven learning habits. Therefore, teachers are required not only to be proficient in art knowledge and skills, but also to have a deep understanding of flow theory and its triggering mechanisms, carefully design teaching activities, and stimulate students' participation enthusiasm and creative potential in a multidimensional and multi-level way. In addition, flow experiences help enhance students' self-efficacy, promote their emotional and psychological health development, and lay a solid foundation for building a positive learning and life attitude. In the future, continuous exploration and practice of art teaching strategies that promote students to enter a state of flow will be the key to deepening the reform of art education and cultivating future talents with innovative spirit and humanistic literacy.

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