

Research on Teaching Strategies for Historical Materials in Senior High School History from the Perspective of Core Competencies

Dandan Wei, Shengrui Liu

Wuhan University of Technology, EVE Energy Co., Ltd, Wuhan, Hubei, 430000, China

ABSTRACT

Against the background of core competencies, teaching with historical materials is a key factor in implementing the educational goals of senior high school history. Based on the perspective of core competencies and combined with senior high school history teaching practices, this paper analyzes the value of historical material teaching in cultivating core competencies. It points out that current senior high school historical material teaching faces issues such as a lack of pertinence in selection, rigid methods of application, insufficient teaching ability, and lagging evaluation systems. Strategies are proposed from four dimensions: historical material screening, teaching implementation, teacher capability, and evaluation optimization, providing a reference for the implementation of senior high school history teaching and core competencies.

KEYWORDS

Core competencies; Senior high school history; Historical material teaching; Teaching strategies

1 Introduction

The *General Senior High School History Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)* classifies the core competencies of the discipline into five associated and unified dimensions: Historical Materialism, Space-time Conception, Historical Evidence, Historical Interpretation, and Family-Country Sentiment ^[1]. Among these, Historical Evidence is not only a key competency but also an important pathway for students to understand the essence of history. In current senior high school history teaching, although the use of historical materials has become popularized, it often remains at a shallow stage of auxiliary knowledge verification, failing to fully support the comprehensive cultivation of core competencies. How to optimize historical material teaching strategies and promote their deep integration with core competencies is an urgent problem to be solved in senior high school history teaching.

2 Value Positioning of Senior High School Historical Material Teaching

2.1 Implementing Historical Materialism and Deepening Historical Cognition

By presenting historical materials of different types and standpoints, students are guided to analyze historical phenomena using Historical Materialism. In the teaching of "Modern Chinese History," by displaying historical materials related to national salvation attempts by the feudal landlord class, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat, students are led to understand the implications of "productive forces determine production relations" and "the people are the creators of history." This transforms abstract historical materialism theories into concrete cognition, enabling students to understand and apply historical materialism to recognize the essence of history.

2.2 Strengthening Space-time Conception and Grasping the Pulse of Historical Development

Through the method of "spatial-temporal annotation of historical materials and inquiry into spatial-temporal associations," students are helped to construct a historical space-time system. In the teaching of the "Opening of New Routes" (Age of Discovery), route maps, trade records, and navigators' diaries are presented. Combined with the European background of the 15th-16th centuries, students analyze the temporal conditions and spatial impacts of the opening of new routes, understanding its driving role in the formation of the world market. At the same time, comparing similar historical materials from different times and spaces allows students to clearly grasp the phasic characteristics and internal connections of historical development, forming a complete lineage of historical cognition.

2.3 Cultivating Historical Evidence Capabilities and Enhancing Historical Thinking

In historical material teaching, by contacting primary sources, students can gain a deeper understanding of the truth and background of historical events, forming a direct perception of history and enhancing their historical thinking abilities ^[2]. Teachers should guide students to analyze the authenticity and credibility of historical materials, allowing them

to compare and analyze the value and limitations of different sources. For example, in the teaching of the "Xinhai Revolution" (1911 Revolution), original texts of Sun Yat-sen's speeches and research literature by later scholars can be selected. Students are guided to compare their perspectives and values, understanding the characteristics and limitations of different materials. On this basis, through argumentation activities of "proving viewpoints with historical materials," students are trained to use historical materials to support their historical viewpoints. For instance, combining documents related to the Xinhai Revolution to argue the viewpoint that "the Xinhai Revolution was the first great bourgeois democratic revolution in modern China," students can gradually master the abilities of collection, analysis, and application of historical materials, thereby cultivating rigorous and realistic historical thinking.

2.4 Guiding Objective Historical Interpretation and Forming Rational Cognition

Historical Interpretation requires students to make comprehensive and objective interpretations of historical events and figures based on historical materials and historical cognition, avoiding one-sided or absolute historical perceptions. Historical material teaching breaks the limitation of a "single historical narrative" by presenting diverse historical materials, guiding students to analyze history from different perspectives. For example, in the teaching of the "Opium War," teachers can present not only records of the Opium War in Chinese historical materials but also introduce debates in the British Parliament regarding the war of aggression and research materials from Western scholars. This allows students to understand the cognitive differences regarding the Opium War from different standpoints. Combined with historical materialism to objectively analyze the causes, nature, and impact of the Opium War, students form a comprehensive and rational historical interpretation. During the inquiry process, students must learn to respect historical facts, not arbitrarily distort or exaggerate history, and cultivate objectivity and rigor in historical cognition.

2.5 Inspiring Family-Country Sentiment and Establishing Correct Values

Family-Country Sentiment is the value destination of history learning. Historical material teaching can inspire students' patriotism and sense of responsibility by excavating the spiritual connotations within historical materials. For example, in the teaching of the "War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression," by presenting family letters of anti-Japanese heroes, historical records of battles, and records of common people supporting the resistance, students intuitively feel the firm will and patriotic spirit of the Chinese people in resisting foreign aggression, understanding the connotation that "everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the country." In the teaching of "New China Construction," by presenting construction records from the early days of the founding of New China and the struggles of scientific and technological workers, students appreciate the hardships and achievements of New China's development, enhancing their identification with and pride in the country and nation, and establishing the ideal and belief of contributing strength to national development.

3 Dilemmas in Senior High School Historical Material Teaching

3.1 Lack of Pertinence in Selection of Historical Materials

Some teachers face issues of "prioritizing quantity over quality" and "prioritizing form over suitability" when selecting historical materials. The selection is disconnected from core competency goals, aiming only to "verify knowledge points." They select simple, singular historical materials, failing to design a historical material system combined with the cultivation requirements of the five core competencies. The difficulty of the materials does not match the students' cognitive level; some teachers blindly use raw historical materials or highly academic materials, ignoring the historical foundation and reading comprehension abilities of high school students. This leads to students struggling to analyze the connotation of the materials and being unable to participate in inquiry activities. The types of historical materials are monotonous, predominantly text-based, with less use of images, physical objects, audio, and video, making it difficult to meet the learning needs of students with different cognitive styles and reducing the attractiveness of historical material teaching.

3.2 Superficiality in the Application of Historical Materials

The phenomenon of rigid teaching processes is prominent. Teachers often adopt the model of "presenting materials, guiding via questions, and reaching conclusions," where students are in a state of passive acceptance. They lack opportunities to independently collect and analyze historical materials and can hardly truly participate in the inquiry process, resulting in no effective improvement in their historical evidence capabilities. The analysis of historical materials often stays on the surface; teachers typically only guide students to extract key information points from the materials,

failing to provide deep guidance on analyzing the source, credibility, and limitations of the materials. Consequently, students struggle to form rigorous historical evidence-based thinking. The connection between historical material teaching and competency goals is blurred; teachers often fail to clarify which core competency dimension corresponds to the inquiry, leaving students unclear about why they are exploring the materials and what abilities the inquiry aims to improve, causing the cultivation of core competencies to easily become a mere formality.

3.3 Insufficient Teaching Ability of Teachers

Some teachers still prioritize exam-oriented education, making the educational value of historical materials difficult to highlight^[3]. There are obvious shortcomings in capabilities: First, insufficient reserves of historical materials; limited channels for collecting historical materials of different types and themes make it difficult to screen out high-quality materials adapted to teaching needs, leading to reliance on ready-made materials in textbooks and a lack of awareness for independent expansion. Second, a lack of ability to analyze and apply historical materials; unable to accurately judge the value and limitations of materials, making it difficult to guide students in deep analysis during teaching. Third, insufficient instructional design ability; unable to design reasonable inquiry activities that combine core competency goals with the characteristics of the historical materials, making it difficult to achieve an organic integration of historical material teaching, knowledge instruction, and competency cultivation.

3.4 Single and Lagging Teaching Evaluation

Senior high school historical material teaching evaluation still focuses mainly on "result evaluation," concentrating on the degree of students' mastery of historical material knowledge points. The evaluation method is dominated by singular evaluation by the teacher, lacking student self-evaluation and peer evaluation, which fails to comprehensively reflect the development level of students' historical evidence capabilities and core competencies. The evaluation standards lack pertinence and are not formulated with specific indicators combined with different core competency dimensions, resulting in evaluation failing to provide effective feedback for the optimization of historical material teaching and the improvement of student competencies.

4 Optimization Strategies for Senior High School Historical Material Teaching

4.1 Precisely Screening Historical Materials to Construct a Competency-Oriented System

4.1.1 Align with Core Competency Goals and Select Materials in Layers

Select historical materials specifically according to the cultivation needs of the five major core competencies. When cultivating "Historical Evidence" competency, select comparative materials between primary and secondary sources, and objective and subjective sources, guiding students to analyze the value of the materials. When cultivating "Historical Interpretation," select materials with diverse perspectives to break single historical narratives. Combined with teaching priorities and difficulties, clarify the focus of competency cultivation corresponding to the materials to avoid blindness in selection. For example, in the teaching of the "Hundred Schools of Thought Contention," core ideological materials of Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism can be selected, supplemented by materials on the social background that generated the thoughts of different schools. This guides students to interpret the ideological connotations within the context of the background and objectively analyze the value of each school's thoughts.

4.1.2 Match Student Cognitive Levels and Control Difficulty

Select historical materials based on the historical foundation and reading comprehension abilities of high school students. For lower-grade students, focus on simplified original materials and intuitive visual materials. For higher-grade students, appropriately increase the proportion of complete original materials and academic materials to gradually improve their interpretation skills. For difficult materials, teachers should reduce the difficulty of interpretation by highlighting keywords and adding background annotations to ensure students can participate in the inquiry. For example, in the teaching of "Political Systems of Ancient China," for original materials from the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*, keywords like "Feudal System" and "Patriarchal Clan System" can be annotated, and the background of the material's creation can be supplemented to help students understand the connotation.

4.1.3 Enrich Material Types to Achieve Diverse Complementarity

Cultivate students' independent research and analytical abilities by learning from different types of historical materials

^[4]. Break the limitations of textual materials by integrating diverse materials such as images, physical objects, audio, and video. Utilize the advantages of different types of materials to enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of teaching. For example, in the "Industrial Revolution" teaching, combine textual materials, image materials, and video materials to let students feel the impact of the Industrial Revolution from different dimensions, strengthening Space-time Conception and Historical Evidence capabilities.

4.2 Innovating Implementation Paths to Deepen the Competency Cultivation Process

4.2.1 Highlight Student Agency and Promote Cooperative Inquiry Models

Break the traditional teacher-led model and let students become the subjects of historical material inquiry. Teachers organize students to carry out cooperative discussion activities, guiding them to independently collect materials and analyze their value. Through group cooperation and discussion, students comprehensively interpret historical knowledge, excavate its essence, and cultivate historical interpretation capabilities ^[5]. For example, in the teaching of "The Historical Significance of the Xinhai Revolution," the teacher proposes an inquiry task: Analyze the progressiveness and limitations of the Xinhai Revolution based on historical materials. Students are assigned to groups to collect relevant materials, analyze them within the group, discuss viewpoints, and finally present the inquiry results. The teacher provides comments and summaries. During the inquiry process, students' Historical Evidence and Historical Interpretation capabilities are cultivated.

4.2.2 Focus on Material Analysis and Cultivate Rigorous Evidence-Based Thinking

Make the analysis of historical materials a core link in teaching, guiding students to analyze materials from dimensions such as source, author's stance, and content authenticity. First, distinguish types of materials and clarify the differences between primary and secondary sources. Second, analyze the author's stance, guiding students to judge whether subjective bias exists based on the author's identity and historical background. Third, verify the authenticity of materials by comparing different sources to judge whether the content conforms to historical facts, avoiding being misled by false materials.

4.2.3 Strengthen the Link between Materials and Competencies to Clarify Cultivation Goals

In instructional design, clarify the core competency dimension corresponding to each piece of historical material and each inquiry activity, giving direction to the teacher's teaching and goals to the students' learning. For example, in the teaching of the "Opium War," when presenting historical materials of the British Parliament's debate on the invasion of China, explicitly align this with "Historical Evidence" and "Historical Interpretation" competencies, guiding students to objectively interpret the nature of the Opium War by analyzing Britain's purpose for the invasion. When presenting materials on the Chinese people's resistance against aggression, explicitly align this with "Family-Country Sentiment" to inspire students' patriotism.

4.3 Enhancing Teacher Professional Capabilities to Solidify the Foundation of Historical Material Teaching

4.3.1 Strengthen Theoretical Study and Training to Enrich Reserves

Schools should regularly organize teachers to participate in theoretical training related to core competencies and historical material teaching, inviting experts to give lectures to help teachers update teaching concepts and master methods. Teachers should independently collect historical materials through academic databases, official museum websites, and other channels to establish a personal resource library, categorizing and organizing materials of different themes and types to provide sufficient resources for teaching.

4.3.2 Carry out Teaching Research Activities and Exchanges to Improve Practical Ability

Carry out historical material teaching research activities based in teaching research groups. Through collective lesson preparation, open classes, and case studies, share experiences and solve problems existing in teaching. Organize cross-school exchanges for teachers to learn the methods of excellent teachers, optimizing teaching strategies based on their own teaching reality. Encourage teachers to participate in subject research related to historical material teaching to improve practical ability.

4.3.3 Strengthen Instructional Design Ability to Achieve Deep Integration

Guide teachers to design complete historical material teaching processes based on core competency goals, material characteristics, and student reality. Focus on the organic integration of materials, knowledge points, inquiry activities, and competency cultivation, avoiding the disconnection of material application from teaching content. For example, in instructional design, clarify the logical chain of "Material Presentation→Inquiry Task→Competency Cultivation" to ensure that every link unfolds around the cultivation of core competencies.

4.4 Optimizing the Teaching Evaluation System to Guarantee Cultivation Effects

4.4.1 Balance Results and Processes for Comprehensive Student Evaluation

Test students' mastery of historical knowledge and ability to use materials through written tests designed to focus on core competencies. Design "Material Analysis Questions" and "Viewpoint Argumentation Questions" to test students' Historical Evidence and Historical Interpretation capabilities. Pay attention to the students' inquiry process; through classroom observation and evaluation of inquiry results, record students' performance in collection, analysis, and discussion. Evaluate whether students can independently collect suitable materials, accurately analyze the value of materials, and clearly express historical viewpoints.

4.4.2 Adopt Multiple Evaluation Subjects to Ensure Objective and Comprehensive Evaluation

Break the limitation of single evaluation by teachers and introduce student self-evaluation and peer evaluation. Let students reflect on their own learning deficiencies during self-evaluation and learn from others' strengths during peer evaluation. For example, after a group inquiry activity, students first self-evaluate their performance in the process, then conduct peer evaluation within the group. Finally, the teacher gives a comprehensive evaluation based on the self and peer evaluation results, improving the objectivity of the evaluation.

4.4.3 Formulate Specific Evaluation Indicators to Clarify Standards

Combined with the five core competency dimensions, formulate specific evaluation indicators for historical material teaching. For example, evaluation indicators for "Historical Evidence" competency include "Ability to accurately distinguish material types," "Ability to analyze material credibility," and "Ability to use materials to argue viewpoints." Each indicator is divided into different levels, making evaluation evidence-based and operable, providing a clear direction for teaching optimization and student competency improvement.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, historical material teaching is not only a medium for transmitting historical knowledge but also a key path for cultivating the core competencies of the history discipline. Senior high school historical material teaching needs to return to instructional design based on competencies. By jointly advancing the precise selection of historical materials, the dynamic construction of the teaching process, the continuous development of teachers' professional capabilities, and the systematic optimization of the evaluation system, the true integration of historical material teaching and educational goals can be realized.

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