
Idea Transformation and Practical Innovation in Middle School History Teaching Based on the Needs of the Strong Foundation Program Under the Background of Dual-New Reforms

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Abstract: Based on an analysis of the current predicaments in history teaching, this paper demonstrates the fundamental reconstruction of teaching concepts—shifting from knowledge-oriented to competency-based education and from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches. It systematically constructs several new forms of middle school history teaching that embody the spirit of the Dual-New Reforms (newly revised curriculum standards and new textbooks), namely: new concept, new objectives, new units, new methods, new contexts, and new evaluation. This framework aims to respond to the strategic needs of the national “Strong Foundation Program” for the early cultivation of top innovative talents, providing a practical path for implementing the fundamental task of “fostering virtue through education” and improving the quality of history education. The research deeply integrates classical theories of history education, curriculum standard concepts, and cutting-edge academic achievements.

Keywords: Strong Foundation Program; history teaching; idea transformation; practical innovation

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1. Introduction

A review of the current concepts and practices of middle school history teaching reveals a certain gap between them and national requirements. First, outdated concepts: some teachers cling to the “knowledge-oriented” mindset, neglecting the systematic cultivation of core competencies and the development of students’ subjectivity. Second, vague objectives: teaching goals still focus on memorizing historical facts, with unclear understanding of the hierarchical levels of core competencies and their achievement paths. Third, fragmented content: teaching is confined to the linear sequence of textbooks or the enumeration of historical facts, lacking structured integration guided by “big ideas,” and failing to fully explore the context, laws, and ideological connotations of historical development. Fourth, singular methods: over-reliance on lecture-based teaching, insufficient design of inquiry and practical learning activities, and failure to effectively utilize information technology and social resources. Fifth, limited contexts: teaching is mainly restricted to classrooms, with weak connections to social resources (such as museums, archives, and historical sites) and digital resources. Sixth, biased evaluation: the evaluation system is still dominated by summative paper-and-pencil tests, while formative and performance

evaluations remain superficial, failing to effectively diagnose competency development or promote improvements in teaching and learning.

2. Reconstruction of Middle School History Teaching Concepts Under the Background of Dual-New Reforms

The core of teaching reform under the Dual-New background lies in the fundamental reconstruction of teaching concepts, which is mainly reflected in two dimensions.

2.1. From Knowledge-Oriented to Competency-Based Education

The newly revised curriculum standards clearly establish the core competencies of the history discipline as the guiding principle. This means that the fundamental goal of history teaching “is no longer mere accumulation of knowledge, but rather, through the study of historical knowledge, cultivating students’ abilities to understand history and explain reality using the perspectives and methods of historical materialism, analyze history within specific temporal and spatial contexts, rigorously process and distinguish historical materials, rationally construct historical narratives, and develop a sense of identity and responsibility toward the nation and country.” As Bruner emphasized, “learning the structure (of a discipline) is more important than mastering specific information.”

2.2. From Teacher-Centered to Student-Centered

Constructivist learning theory profoundly reveals that “learning is a process in which learners actively construct meaning.” Under the Dual-New background, history teaching must abandon the model of one-way indoctrination by teachers and truly establish students’ status as the main body of learning. The focus of teaching should shift to “how students learn,” “what they have learned,” and “how their competencies develop.” Teachers should transform their role from “knowledge transmitters” to “guides,” “facilitators,” “collaborators,” and “resource providers.” This requires respecting students’ cognitive laws, individual differences, and learning interests, creating a democratic and equal classroom atmosphere, stimulating their initiative and creativity, and guiding them to deeply participate in inquiry and practice, so that they can “become active constructors of knowledge and active generators of meaning.”

3. Implementation Paths for Idea Transformation and Practical Innovation in Middle School History Teaching Under the Dual-New Background

3.1. New Concept: In-Depth Integration of Competency-Oriented and Student Subjectivity

Take the cultivation of core competencies in history as the starting point and ultimate goal of teaching design, with all teaching activities oriented toward competency development. At the same time, respect and give play to students’ subjectivity throughout the teaching process, making them the center of learning activities. Teachers need to thoroughly study the curriculum standards, accurately grasp the connotation, performance levels, and interrelationships of the five core competencies. When designing learning tasks, clearly align them with specific competencies. Create a safe and open learning environment, encourage students to ask questions, raise doubts, and express their views, and grant them the right to choose inquiry topics, learning paths, and ways of presenting results.

3.2. New Objectives: Hierarchical and Operational Core Competencies

Teaching objectives should clearly and specifically describe the hierarchical levels of core competencies that students should achieve after learning specific content. Objective setting should take into account differences between academic stages and students’ basic foundations, reflecting progression. Abandon vague expressions such as “understand” and “master,” and instead use observable and measurable action verbs to describe competency performance. In addition,

attention should be paid to referring to the academic quality requirements and teaching suggestions in the curriculum standards, and refining unit and lesson objectives in combination with specific teaching content. For potential talents in the Strong Foundation Program, objectives should appropriately enhance the depth of thinking and research requirements—for example, writing essays to evaluate multiple historical interpretations of a certain historical event.

3.3. New Units: Teaching Reconstruction Through Thematic Integration of Big Ideas

Teaching should go beyond the linear arrangement of textbook chapters, and reorganize teaching content around “big ideas” that reflect the essential laws of historical development, key disciplinary thinking, and major contemporary themes, so as to construct “structured and meaningful learning units.” Conduct in-depth analysis of new textbooks to extract core big ideas for each unit. Design overall unit teaching plans to break down the barriers between lessons. Around big ideas, select typical historical materials, key events, and core figures as “anchoring points” for understanding concepts. Guide students to use tools such as mind maps, comparison tables, and multi-dimensional timelines to construct knowledge networks and understand the context and connections of history.

3.4. New Methods: Diversified Learning Approaches Led by Inquiry and Practice

Abandon singular lecture-based teaching, advocate inquiry and practical learning as the main approaches, and integrate heuristic, interactive, and cooperative methods. Enable students to master methods, develop thinking, and cultivate emotions in the process of “doing history.” Carefully design historical material research tasks: the “Historical Material Reading” section in new textbooks has been further enhanced, and “evidential reasoning is the fundamental way to achieve core competencies in history”—students need to be guided to use evidential reasoning methods such as source criticism and cross-verification. Create real or simulated problem scenarios, guide students to explore historical issues “like historians,” and organize them to experience the complete inquiry process “like historians.” For innovative talents in the Strong Foundation Program, design micro-research projects, such as intensive reading and evaluation of chapters in classic historical works, or researching micro-historical issues using local archives.

3.5. New Contexts: In-Depth Integration of Information Technology and Social Resources

Break through the physical limitations of classrooms, make full use of modern information technology (such as digital resources, online platforms, and virtual simulations) and rich social resources (such as museums, archives, memorial halls, and historical sites), and construct “open, immersive learning contexts that integrate virtual and real environments and connect inside and outside the school.” Integrate digital resources: use the National Smart Education Platform for Primary and Secondary Schools, professional databases, academic websites, high-quality documentaries, etc., to provide students with massive and multi-type historical materials and learning resources. Establish cooperative relationships with museums, archives, memorial halls, and historical sites to carry out field visits, expert lectures, warehouse research, and volunteer interpretation activities. Explore cooperation with university history departments, inviting scholars to give lectures or guide students with strong learning abilities. Use interactive whiteboards, online collaboration tools, and history-themed virtual simulation scenarios to support personalized, interactive, and immersive learning experiences, and construct smart learning spaces.

3.6. New Evaluation: Competency Assessment with Process-Oriented Development and Multiple Subjects

Establish an evaluation system that is “competency-oriented, centered on promoting learning and development, runs through the entire teaching process, involves multiple evaluation subjects, and adopts diverse evaluation methods.” For students in the Strong Foundation Program, evaluation should focus on the depth of historical thinking and research potential.

Strengthen formative evaluation: regularly use classroom observation records to monitor students’ performance in

questioning, discussion, and cooperation; adopt learning logs, reflection diaries, inquiry process record sheets, historical material analysis assignments, and periodic reports. Enrich performance assessment: design and use clear evaluation rubrics to assess historical drama performances, debate performances, research reports, project results, exhibition plans, and oral defenses. Optimize summative evaluation: reduce the mechanical assessment of isolated historical facts in paper-and-pencil tests, and increase open-ended questions (such as analysis, comparison, interpretation, and argumentation based on historical materials) to assess core competency levels. Implement multi-subject evaluation: guide students to conduct self-reflection and self-evaluation, and organize effective peer evaluation; explore inviting parents or community members to participate in the evaluation of project results. Emphasize evaluation feedback and improvement: provide timely and specific feedback of evaluation data to students, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses and offering improvement suggestions; teachers use evaluation results to diagnose teaching problems and adjust teaching strategies; establish student growth portfolios to record the trajectory of competency development. For top students, introduce evaluations such as research plan assessment, essay review, and academic defense.

4. Conclusion

The “Six New” forms of middle school history teaching under the Dual-New background constitute a systematic practical plan to address the challenges of the times and implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. With the cultivation of core competencies in history as its soul and the development of students’ subjectivity as its foundation, it reconstructs teaching content through big-idea themes, activates the learning process through inquiry and practice, expands the scope of learning by integrating information technology and social resources, and ensures the realization of competencies through process-oriented and developmental evaluation. The construction and implementation of this framework require history teachers to deeply understand the spirit of the newly revised curriculum standards, accurately set hierarchical competency objectives, courageously break through traditional constraints, and continuously improve their professional literacy. At the same time, schools and educational management departments need to provide strong support in resource development, teaching research support, and evaluation mechanism reform. Only in this way can we truly cultivate new-era talents with patriotic feelings, historical literacy, critical thinking, and innovative abilities—educating talents for the Party and the country, and serving the long-term strategic needs of the national Strong Foundation Program for top innovative talents in basic disciplines.

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