



A Study of an Efficient Curriculum System for Junior High School History Education in China

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Abstract. In this scholarly paper, the author explores the pervasive issues in Chinese history education, including monotonous content, challenges in engaging students, and students' lack of understanding concerning the purpose and value of studying history. To address these concerns, the paper proposes a series of solutions, which are exemplified through two case lessons. Initially, the paper identifies widespread problems in Chinese history education. Content-wise, textbooks and pedagogical approaches excessively emphasize facts and dates, resulting in students perceiving history as dull and uninteresting. Additionally, the educational process neglects the subject's practical application, leading to students' confusion regarding the significance and objectives of learning history. To tackle these issues, the paper suggests several solutions. Firstly, educators must focus on refining teaching materials and methodologies by incorporating storytelling, engaging activities, and interactivity, to stimulate students' interest and facilitate their understanding. Secondly, it is crucial for instructors to emphasize the practical application of history, which will enable students to comprehend its importance for both individuals and society. Lastly, teachers should prioritize fostering critical thinking skills in their students, equipping them with the ability to draw lessons from history and apply them to future decision-making processes. In conclusion, this paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the challenges in Chinese history education and presents a set of effective solutions. By refining teaching materials and methodologies, emphasizing the practical application of history, and nurturing critical thinking skills, it is anticipated that students' interest in history will be kindled, enhancing the quality of history education.

Keywords: History Education, Course Design, Efficient Courses.

1 Introduction

In Beijing's junior high schools, students exhibit a disinterest in studying history, perceiving it as having no practical significance, and consequently focusing on other subjects during history classes. Although the subject's importance has been elevated due to its inclusion as a compulsory component in the Chinese language examination, the actual teaching process continues to face numerous challenges and issues. This paper explores the prevalent issue of disinterest in history education among junior high school

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students in Beijing. The study's primary objective is to unravel the underlying causes of students' dwindling interest in history. It delves into the students' lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the inherent significance and value of learning history. Then its analysis involves examining the rigid and unyielding nature of the current history curriculum, which appears to have a significant impact on student motivation. Based on these comprehensive analyses, the paper proceeds to offer insights that can guide educators and policymakers towards more effective strategies. These strategies are geared towards reforming teaching methods, fostering a more engaging and flexible curriculum, and highlighting the practical implications and benefits of studying history. The goal is to enhance the learning environment, stimulate active participation in history classes, and improve the overall quality of history education in junior high schools.

2 Problems

2.1 History Teachers Excessively Depend on Conventional Teaching Techniques

First, numerous history teachers excessively depend on conventional teaching techniques in their classes, which are often overly conservative and antiquated. Some teachers stick to traditional lecture styles, where they extensively discuss historical events while students passively listen and seldom engage in discussions or ask questions. This method makes it challenging for students to stay focused in class, leading to a decline in their interest in history ^[1]. The absence of effective participation and interaction might cause students to become disinterested and unmotivated, negatively impacting their comprehension and retention of historical information.

Moreover, an overreliance on textbook-based teaching can render lessons rigid and dull. In another school, a history teacher prioritized accurately representing textbook content, neglecting to connect this knowledge with real-life situations to facilitate understanding and memorization. Since textbooks often present historical events and figures in a dry and abstract manner, this teaching approach failed to capture students' attention ^[2]. The teacher provided detailed explanations of an event's background, process, and outcome but did not help students see how these events applied to their lives. Consequently, students struggled to relate to the material, hampering their understanding and recall of historical knowledge.

2.2 History Courses Have Little Connection to Students' Daily Lives

Moreover, in today's information-saturated society, students are exposed to numerous distractions and pressures from various sources. As a result, the significance of history courses in the minds of many students has dwindled compared to other fields such as science, technology, and economics. A common belief among these students is that history courses have little connection to their daily lives, which in turn leads to decreased interest and engagement in the subject ^[2].

For instance, the ubiquity of social media platforms often attracts students' attention to various online stimuli and information. A classic example occurs when a history

teacher is discussing the rise and fall of the ancient Roman Empire, and a student becomes preoccupied with the latest tech product release ^[3]. Consequently, the student's focus on the historical content taught in class diminishes, which affects their overall interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

In another example, during a class discussion about the French Revolution, a history teacher attempts to encourage students to delve deeper into issues such as poverty, social injustice, and political corruption. However, the students become captivated by an ongoing sports match and engage in conversations about the game's outcome. This situation illustrates the challenges students face in concentrating on history lessons amid numerous distractions, which results in decreased interest and attention towards the subject ^[1].

In a lecture about the Reformation, a history teacher excessively emphasized the alterations in religious doctrine and dogma while neglecting the Reformation's social, cultural, and political impacts on the society of that era. This approach left students puzzled, as they struggled to comprehend the true essence of the Reformation through the lens of these abstract doctrinal changes. Considering a student whose family background has sparked a keen interest in social injustice, in the Reformation lesson, he is unable to link these abstract doctrinal shifts to real-life social inequalities. This disconnect further erodes his interest and appreciation for the history course.

Simultaneously, some history teachers may overly concentrate on facts and minutiae when explaining historical events, disregarding the development of students' historical thinking abilities ^[3]. In one class, a teacher spent considerable time presenting information on specific dates, locations, and outcomes of different wars. While this information assisted students in understanding history, its trivial and extensive nature made it difficult for them to discern the key points ^[4]. This teaching method not only fatigued students during memorization but also potentially fostered aversion to history, further weakening their understanding and retention of historical knowledge.

Some history teachers exhibit an excessively solemn attitude towards historical knowledge, resulting in a stifling classroom environment. These teachers tend to overstate the significance and strictness of history, causing them to concentrate on facts and minutiae while neglecting the importance of sparking students' curiosity and interest. This excessively formal teaching style makes the classroom dull and uninteresting, hindering students from engaging with the course material and fostering aversion towards the subject of history.

Moreover, this overly stringent teaching approach can lead to students developing misunderstandings about history. When history is reduced to a set of static facts and viewpoints, students might overlook the intricacies and variety inherent in historical events, preventing them from deeply appreciating and understanding its allure ^[2]. Consequently, students' comprehension of history remains superficial, and they are unable to delve into the underlying reasons, motivations, and implications of historical events or develop their own unique historical perspectives.

The repressive atmosphere in the classroom can also make students reluctant to ask questions or participate in discussions, further constraining their exploration of and contemplation on historical knowledge ^[5]. This type of learning environment not only suppresses students' enthusiasm but may also lead them to adopt a similarly pessimistic

attitude when approaching other subjects. In this context, students might develop negative perceptions of the entire learning process, which could impact their future academic and professional growth.

In summary, an excessively serious teaching style employed by history teachers not only creates a stifling classroom environment but also hinders students' interest and exploration of historical knowledge. By placing too much emphasis on the importance and rigor of history while disregarding the value of stimulating students' curiosity and interest, this approach not only makes learning tedious for students but may also have detrimental effects on their overall academic development.

2.3 Teachers Do Not Effectively Utilize Modern Educational Technologies and Multimedia Resources

Many history teachers do not effectively utilize modern educational technologies and multimedia resources to enhance classroom appeal. In the contemporary information-driven society, students are accustomed to interacting with various digital content forms and visuals. Consequently, traditional teaching methods may struggle to meet their expectations. In one rural school, a history teacher persisted in using a traditional blackboard and chalk despite access to electronic whiteboards and online teaching resources. This approach made the classroom content appear monotonous, diminishing students' interest and focus on historical knowledge, and further impairing their comprehension and ability to absorb historical information.

Effective history education requires a revamp of traditional teaching methods to make history more accessible and engaging to students. The dry and unengaging nature of traditional teaching methods such as lectures and textbook readings pose a significant challenge to student engagement and appreciation of the significance of historical events^[3]. To tackle this issue, teachers can adopt more interactive and dynamic teaching methods such as multimedia teaching, role-playing, and case study.

Multimedia resources such as images, audio, and video can be utilized to create a vivid and compelling representation of historical events, allowing students to better understand and retain information^[6]. Incorporating multimedia resources not only enhances students' learning experience but also fosters their interest in the subject matter, making it more likely that they will continue to engage with history in the future.

Role-playing is another effective method that enables students to develop empathy and critical thinking skills. Through putting themselves in the shoes of historical figures, students can gain a deeper understanding of the context and complexity of historical events^[7]. This approach encourages students to consider different perspectives and evaluate the decisions made by historical figures, helping them develop a more nuanced understanding of the past.

This approach helps students understand the complexity of historical events and enables them to develop critical thinking and analytical skills valuable in many areas of life.

3 Two Lesson Plans

3.1 World War II History Lesson

This article uses a World War II history lesson as an example. The lesson on European warfare in World War II aims to provide students with a more vivid and comprehensive understanding of this historical period by combining multimedia tools, 3D maps, and simulation games. The course will delve deeper into the topic, incorporating extensive detail and logical arguments through various sessions.

In the introductory phase, students will learn about the background, major countries, and political systems of World War II to gain a general understanding of the scenario. Multimedia materials, such as animations and short videos, are used to stimulate students' interest by illustrating the tense pre-war situation^[1]. Additionally, the course will analyze political systems, economic conditions, nationalism, and military expansion before the war to help students comprehend the war's causes and background.

The 3D map explanation segment will use detailed 3D maps to introduce Europe's geography during the war, allowing students to grasp battlefield topography, battle line changes, and specific battle processes. By comparing the strengths, resources, and strategies of both warring parties, students will understand the key factors influencing victory and defeat^[4]. Comparative analysis will reveal the geographical advantages and disadvantages of different countries in the war, enabling students to appreciate the complexity of warfare.

During the actual battle case analysis stage, several representative battles, such as the British Air War, the Battle of Stalingrad, and the Normandy Landing, will be analyzed in-depth using multimedia materials and 3D maps. Students will learn about the background, process, tactics, strategy, and impact of these battles^[7]. This detailed examination of specific battles will help students better understand the war's overall context and each battle's significance in the war's progression.

The war simulation session offers a practical opportunity for students to apply their knowledge. Students will be divided into two groups, representing the Allies and Nazi Germany, and will use war simulation software for real-time confrontations. Before the simulation, the instructor can provide tactical guidance to help students engage more effectively in the game^[2]. Through firsthand exercises, students will develop a deeper understanding of strategy, tactics, and decision-making in high-pressure battlefield environments. This interactive learning style also fosters teamwork, strategic thinking, and coping skills.

The reflection and discussion session allows students to share their experiences, lessons learned, and how they applied their knowledge to analyze the key factors determining victory or defeat in war^[8]. Students will be guided to contemplate the brutality of war and the value of peace, cultivating a sense of responsibility for peace and the common destiny of humanity. This session helps students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of war and history.

Subsequent sessions will explore the cultural impact and humanitarian aspects of World War II, the development of military technology during the war, and the international political and economic order after the war. The course aims to foster students'

humanistic concerns, international perspectives, and a sense of responsibility for peace and development ^[7].

In summary, this World War II European warfare history course utilizes multimedia tools, 3D maps, and simulation games to provide students with an engaging, interactive understanding of the historical period. The course is designed with a focus on detail and logical arguments to help students gain a thorough understanding of the war while developing critical thinking, strategic thinking, and practical skills. Additionally, the course emphasizes the value of peace and the common destiny of humanity, encouraging students to care for others and take responsibility for peace and development while exploring history.

3.2 Modern Chinese History

Modern teaching methods that incorporate multimedia, role-playing, and case studies provide a more engaging and interactive learning environment that fosters students' interest and critical thinking skills. By utilizing these modern teaching methods, teachers can create a more effective history education that helps students appreciate the complexity of the past and its relevance to our lives today. It is important to note that these modern teaching methods require more preparation and resources, but the benefits for students' learning experience are invaluable ^[8]. Therefore, investing in history education should be a priority for educators and policymakers alike.

To enhance students' learning outcomes in history, teachers must focus on creating an engaging and immersive learning experience. The key is to spark students' curiosity and encourage them to actively participate in the historical exploration process. One effective way to achieve this goal is by using storytelling, which can make the content more accessible and memorable. Storytelling helps students to learn interesting facts and experiences from history in an enjoyable and informative way ^[2].

This article will provide a section on modern Chinese history as an example to explain. This comprehensive course seeks to provide students with an in-depth understanding of modern Chinese revolutionary history by examining the historical context of the late Qing dynasty. The course aims to analyze the debates among different social classes and groups regarding the future of the country and its political system. This will enable students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that led to the development of three key political ideologies: constitutional monarchy, presidential parliamentary system, and communism.

The course is divided into two main sections: group debates and lectures. In the group debate section, students are encouraged to prepare and present their viewpoints in advance, enabling them to focus on the specific details of historical events and the practical impacts of various political ideologies. This process helps to develop students' critical thinking and logical reasoning abilities while also improving their oral expression and communication skills. The lecture section of the course focuses on the success of communism in China. Specifically, it examines the policies that were aimed at peasants and the working class, land reform, strategic advantages in the resistance against the Japanese invasion, and the Chinese Civil War. These lectures provide students with a detailed understanding of the factors that led to the success of communism in China.

The homework assignment for the course requires students to draft an essay on the competition of political ideologies in modern Chinese revolutionary history. This assignment is designed to improve students' writing and critical thinking skills, enabling them to effectively analyze and compare the various political ideologies that have influenced China's development.

Overall, this course provides a comprehensive analysis of modern Chinese revolutionary history, enabling students to gain a deep understanding of the historical context, debates among different social classes and groups, and the practical impacts of various political ideologies ^[9]. Through group debates, lectures, and essay assignments, students will develop critical thinking, logical reasoning, oral expression, communication, and writing skills, which are essential for success in a wide range of fields.

In addition to the study of modern Chinese revolutionary history, students are encouraged to delve deeper by reading classic works and research articles. This will enable them to engage with the subject matter more comprehensively and cultivate their humanistic literacy. By expanding their reading beyond the core materials, students will gain a broader understanding of the historical context and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of the subject matter ^[5]. This will help them develop a more nuanced perspective on the role of political ideologies and systems in shaping a country's development and the lives of its people.

The course is designed to help students develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills, which are essential for their personal and professional growth ^[9]. These skills will enable them to analyze complex historical events and identify the underlying social, economic, and political factors that contributed to them. Through this process, students will also learn how to communicate their ideas effectively and persuasively.

The comprehensive understanding of mainstream political ideologies in modern Chinese revolutionary history will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to reflect on the choice of political ideologies and systems in different historical contexts ^[4]. This will enable them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different political systems and make informed decisions about their own political beliefs.

This course also lays a solid foundation for further studies in history and related fields. It prepares students to be future leaders and scholars in their respective fields, equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to engage with complex historical events and contribute to the development of their societies ^[10]. By deepening their understanding of modern Chinese revolutionary history, students will gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by nations undergoing significant political and social change.

3.3 Other Teaching Methods

Another technique is puzzle-solving, which stimulates students' curiosity while simultaneously helping them to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. Teachers can design a series of questions related to historical events that students can solve to master new knowledge.

Additionally, organizing extracurricular activities such as visits to history museums, monuments, and sites can provide students with a firsthand experience of the charm of history [2]. This experience can help students to develop a deeper appreciation of the significance of historical events and their impact on our lives today.

Moreover, incorporating interactive technologies and visual aids such as videos, simulations, and images can also enhance students' learning experience and increase their motivation to learn. These technologies create a more immersive learning environment and make history more accessible and engaging [4].

To ensure the success of these techniques, teachers must pay attention to their students' needs and interests. Teachers must also design activities that are age-appropriate and align with the learning objectives. By adopting these techniques and methods, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning experience for students, leading to better learning outcomes and a deeper appreciation for the significance of historical events.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, educators are instrumental in optimizing students' learning outcomes in history. Utilizing diverse strategies, such as storytelling, problem-solving, and experiential learning, can result in a more captivating and efficient educational experience. This approach fosters students' curiosity in history and promotes a profound understanding of historical events' significance. Consequently, students can achieve superior learning outcomes and a more holistic comprehension of their surroundings.

Interdisciplinary teaching is a crucial approach to address challenges in history education. Integrating history with other disciplines allows students to comprehend the real-life applicability and significance of history. For instance, amalgamating history with geography, politics, culture, and other subjects facilitates a multifaceted understanding of history. Geography elucidates the context and environment of historical events, while political knowledge offers insights into historical figures' motivations and decisions. Integrating cultural studies, on the other hand, enables students to grasp the values and beliefs of various historical contexts. This method also enables students to appreciate the interdependence of different disciplines and their collaborative role in elucidating complex issues.

In summary, interdisciplinary teaching is an invaluable asset in addressing history education challenges. By merging history with other disciplines, students can obtain a profound understanding of history's value and application while simultaneously developing transferable critical thinking and analytical skills. Therefore, it is essential for educators to adopt interdisciplinary teaching to enhance the quality and impact of history education.

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