

Exploration of Innovative Teaching Paths in the Classroom of “The Outline of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History”

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Abstract: The purpose of “The Outline of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History” is to help college students grasp the entire process of historical development, summarize experiences correctly, understand the national history and conditions, deeply understand why history and the people made the “four choices,” and stimulate their patriotism, national pride and self-confidence. This article is based on the reform of multimedia teaching methods and carries out the construction of the “Outline” course from six dimensions: improving teaching methods, strengthening teaching material construction, improving online teaching, extracurricular training mode, strengthening teacher team construction and reforming the examination system. Efforts are made to build this course into a high-quality course, making it a course that college students truly love and benefit from.

Keywords: Outline of Chinese Modern and Contemporary History; Innovation; Teaching reform

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1. Introduction

The current “Outline of Modern Chinese History” (hereinafter referred to as the “Outline”) still has many problems, such as outdated teaching concepts, teaching methods and low student engagement rates, which have gradually affected its effectiveness. Guided by innovative classroom teaching concepts, promoting the implementation of the “Outline” course teaching and helping to improve the quality of course teaching has become an indispensable trend in today’s “Outline” course teaching.

2. Analysis of the problems in the current “Outline” course

According to frontline teaching observations, both teachers and students have various problems in the teaching of the “Outline” course. It is necessary to analyze the texture of the problems clearly in order to “prescribe the

right medicine”.

2.1. On the student side

“Outline” course is a compulsory course for ideological and political theory courses for college students. In order to better understand the learning status of students, investigate the problems in teaching and analyze the situation in teaching through a survey questionnaire. The sample size of this survey questionnaire is 818. The specific problems encountered during the teaching process are:

- (1) The “Outline” is a compulsory course for college students, with a particularly diverse source of students and vastly different knowledge structures and systems. Taking the 2022 academic year as an example, the subject and major situation of the teaching class shows that students who study the “Outline” have different knowledge reserves in each major, and there may also be situations of cross disciplinary classes. How to make students with humanities backgrounds understand it deeply and make students with science and engineering majors understand it is an urgent problem to be solved in ideological and political theory courses. Moreover, during the teaching process of the “Outline” course, there is no emphasis on methods and approaches, which can easily lead students to form the impression of “taking a stance first.”
- (2) The most prominent issue of the “Outline” course as an ideological and political theory course is that the course has a low rate of attention and some students have resistance or even rejection towards the course, which is manifested as believing that the “Outline” syllabus is far from life and has no practical significance and is boring. For students, the “Outline” belongs to the subject of “memorizing multiple points” with boring and difficult content. If they memorize it before the exam, they will get a high score. Students do not realize the importance of the curriculum and only aim to achieve high scores in their studies.
- (3) Teachers who teach courses also need to face new situations where their teaching methods are outdated, their language is not close to students and their content is not systematic, which can lead to the expression of students’ boredom. Most students expect teachers who are humorous and witty during the class.
- (4) Ideological and political theory classes often have nearly 100 students in the same classroom. Due to hardware reasons, students in the back row often cannot see the teacher’s PowerPoint and writing on the whiteboard. Due to the large number of students, many do not have the opportunity and platform to express themselves when asking questions. This gradually makes many students uninterested in ideological and political courses.
- (5) In terms of teaching content assessment, traditional “Outline” courses often fail to understand students’ ideological dynamics and address the thirst for knowledge among young students.

In summary, the “Outline” course has problems at the student level, such as differences in knowledge background, diverse and complex values, and the belief that the course content is boring and difficult to understand. At the teacher level, there are a series of problems such as the current political stance of teachers in teaching, inability to convince people with reason, language not being close enough to students and inability to respond to their practical concerns. At the school level, there are problems with too many students arranged in classrooms and inadequate hardware to adapt to information-based teaching fully. This has many similarities with previous research ^[1].

2.2. Regarding teachers

- (1) The teaching style of teachers is not favored by students, and the teaching content does not keep up with the forefront of theoretical knowledge research.

- (2) Teachers do not emphasize the deep integration of historical facts with real-life cases, resulting in students repeatedly achieving low attendance rates.
- (3) Teachers tend to reject new technologies for teaching and assigning homework, further widening the distance between teachers and students.

How to solve the problems in the teaching process mentioned above and carry out the “Outline” curriculum construction from six dimensions: improving teaching methods, strengthening teaching material construction, improving online teaching, extracurricular training mode, strengthening teacher team construction, and reforming examination system, has also become a consensus in teaching and curriculum design ^[2]. The “Outline” curriculum should guide students to fully understand the Chinese spirit demonstrated in modern and contemporary Chinese history ^[3].

3. Using innovative thinking to solve classroom problems

Reform and innovation are the basic connotations of the spirit of the Chinese nation’s era. As the saying goes, “be close to your teacher and believe in your path.” Only through continuous innovation can the ideological and political education of contemporary college students be further strengthened. Teachers must “understand the thoughts of students, avoid contradictions during lectures and focus on using historical facts to explain problems” ^[4]. “Outline” curriculum reform and innovation are not aimless, but adhere to the principle of “student-centered,” allowing students to establish correct historical concepts, persist in grasping the “two clues” and help students understand the “four choices” while implementing the concept of learning the “Four Histories.”

3.1. Adhere to integrity and innovation and make good use of whiteboard writing to summarize knowledge

Teachers are easily bound by PPT, but PPT is not the only form of teaching. The importance of whiteboard writing during teaching is masked. The “Outline” course is a highly logical course, and the knowledge points can be outlined in a logical system using a whiteboard. So, teachers should not lose their traditional teaching skills by using the whiteboard. They should be used in conjunction with PPT to achieve more effectiveness.

3.2. Large classrooms with over a hundred students attending classes, utilizing rain classrooms to provide equal educational opportunities for each student

The teaching of the “Outline” often involves hundreds or close to hundreds of students, with a large number of teachers. Many multimedia facilities cannot effectively meet the teaching needs of students and many students in the back row cannot see the PPT and whiteboard writing. Since the use of the application “Rain Classroom” for teaching, students can see the teacher’s PPT and electronic board from any position in the classroom, effectively improving the efficiency of teaching and allowing every student to enjoy equal educational opportunities. In addition, “Rain Classroom” also has bullet comments and submission functions. Students can increase their interaction with the teacher and even use the “Rain” platform to ask questions to the teaching teacher after class. Many researchers have found that online classroom carriers have become a good solution to the teaching problems of the “Outline” course ^[5].

3.3. Avoid knowledge fragmentation and build a knowledge palace

The “Outline,” a public course aimed at all college students, has an uneven knowledge foundation. However, regardless of the foundation, the knowledge system of students is still not logical enough. The “Outline” course

aims to integrate knowledge points and use software such as “Xmind” to help students build a knowledge database for the students. In addition, teachers should base themselves on textbook knowledge and have clear classroom instructions, allowing students to distinguish between difficult and easy parts to grasp during the listening process, achieving relaxation and ease. A researcher has pointed out that “combining the textbook system to construct problem chain thematic teaching”^[6].

3.4. Interdisciplinary integration, making the “Outline” a foundational course for the entire discipline

Returning to the historical scene has always been a difficult point in teaching the outline course, but using free online map resources to create a practical teaching scene for students, giving full play to their subjectivity and ensuring the effectiveness of classroom teaching through targeted guidance from teachers has effectively helped teachers solve this issue^[7].

Immersive history teaching experience has always been the focus of our teaching efforts^[8]. For example, when explaining “China and the World Before the Opium War,” the free Panoramic Palace Museum technology developed by the Palace Museum is used to lead students to immerse themselves in real-life scenes of the Palace Museum. History teaching should grasp the dialectical relationship between big perspectives and small incisions^[9]. Through such “cloud tourism”, students can realize that China has an excellent traditional culture that needs to be inherited by young students. At the same time, due to the strengthening of authoritarian systems, only through revolution can they be eliminated and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the Chinese Dream, be achieved.

3.5. Refuse to be innovative and use flipped classrooms with caution, truly achieving a comprehensive and diverse evaluation of students throughout the entire process

In large classes teaching with a large number of students, teachers should be cautious in using the flipped classroom approach. Unlike small-class teaching, the effect of flipped classrooms is not satisfactory in large classes and group assignments often become the responsibility of one group member. Through interaction with students, teachers should also actively update their teaching language in accordance with the principles of “political centeredness, identity switching, activation of communication and closeness to students” and use student language to explain course theory and logic well^[10].

For student assignments, it is different from traditional paper assignments in the past. Teachers should encourage students to use new media to innovate their assignments and publish them on social media, expanding student assignments’ influence and spreading positive energy^[11]. In order to help students better understand the trend of historical development, a targeted “time travel” assignment was designed, asking them to think about how to save China and complete the task of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism between 1840 and 1919. Besides, teachers can also guide students to reflect on the shortcomings of their plan through various ideas after their “time travel” and think about why their plan did not complete the task of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, highlighting the historical logic of the “four choices.” This also belongs to the specific application of generative teaching. Generative teaching enables students to develop in various aspects during the learning process, enabling students to achieve comprehensive growth and promoting the generation of self-worth^[12].

In addition, the teaching team also encourages students to return to the “historical scene,” allowing them to shoot Vlogs or edit historical film and television videos related to their hometown history and obtain their consent to publish the videos on video websites. Just as some articles think that online and offline hybrid teaching through MOOC, WeChat official account platform, WeChat video teaching and other ways is the way

to optimize curriculum teaching^[13]. The new ideas in the students' works fell out. In the process of making the short video, the students not only strengthened the value orientation of patriotism but also learned more about the local revolutionary history. At the same time, this can deepen their understanding of the Chinese people's choice of the socialist road and that the CPC is the inevitable result of China's historical development. This also helps to promote the organic integration of local red cultural resources with the "Outline of Chinese Modern and Contemporary History" course to play the educational function of ideological and political classrooms^[14].

4. Epilogue

The problem that cannot be avoided in the teaching of ideological and political courses has always been that as a public compulsory course for college students, teaching in classrooms with hundreds of students is the norm. The original intention and mission of innovative teaching reform is to improve teaching efficiency and achieve the fundamental goal of ideological and political courses to educate talents for the country and cultivate morality. Teaching innovation cannot be achieved without improving content. One cannot only strive for innovation without valuing a solid foundation. In teaching innovation, every student must enjoy equal and high-quality education, and students must become excellent builders of socialist China. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized the integration of the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture. The current "Outline" course has made very little progress in this regard, which is the direction educators will strive for in the future^[15].

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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