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A Four-Stage Path of Instructional Design Based on "Textual Interpretation": Taking "The Use of Currency and the Formation of the World Monetary System" in Selective Compulsory Course 1 as a Case Study

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Abstract: Against the background of the new curriculum reform, the scientific and practical effectiveness of instructional design depends to a great extent on teachers' in-depth interpretation of the curriculum standards and the textbook text. This paper proposes a four-stage design path—"determining the teaching boundary according to the content requirements, determining the teaching depth according to the academic quality levels, establishing the teaching theme through close reading of the textbook, and improving teaching effectiveness with the help of the textbook columns"—so that, through refined textual interpretation, macroscopic curriculum objectives can be genuinely transformed into specific and operable teaching behaviors, and the cultivation of core competencies can be truly implemented.

Keywords: Textual interpretation; Academic quality; Content requirements; Textbook columns

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1. Introduction

In current senior high school history teaching, the tendency to "value the form of activities while neglecting the substance of the text" is widespread. When preparing lessons, some teachers rely excessively on supplementary teaching materials and neglect in-depth excavation of the original curriculum standards and the main text of the textbook, which leads to vague teaching themes and over-generalized teaching objectives. In fact, the textbook text and the curriculum standard text are the "fundamental law" of teaching. This paper attempts to construct a path of transformation from "curriculum standard text" to "textbook text"

and then to "instructional design": taking the "content requirements" as the starting point and the "academic quality levels" as the endpoint, opening up the logic through "word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence interpretation," and finally maximizing teaching effectiveness by means of the "textbook columns."

2. Determining the teaching boundary according to the "content requirements" of the curriculum standards

The "content requirements" of the curriculum standards define the boundary and the emphasis of "what to teach." The content requirements for currency and taxation in this unit are: "To understand the issuance and use of currency in Chinese and foreign history, as well as the formation of the modern world monetary system; to understand the evolution of the taxation system in ancient China; to understand the emergence of the tariff and personal income tax systems and their implementation in China" [1]. Faced with such requirements, teachers need to clarify three key questions:

First, why, in the arrangement of senior high school history textbooks, is "Currency and the Tax System" placed in Selective Compulsory Course 1 (political issues) rather than in Selective Compulsory Course 2 (economic issues)? The curriculum standards clearly point out that "public finance is an important component of the state system" [1]. This unit discusses state governance from the perspective of state finance, with the currency and tax systems as its carriers. The right to issue currency is a symbol of national sovereignty, and tax collection is the embodiment of the state's coercive power; together they constitute the core institutional tool through which the state extracts social resources and achieves political rule. The fiscal situation directly affects the political order; therefore, this unit should be developed from the perspective of state governance in the first place rather than being treated merely as an analysis of economic phenomena.

Second, how should the deep connotations of the three "understand" requirements be interpreted? The requirement to "understand" first of all delimits the teaching boundary: teaching is not required to systematically examine the history of currency or the history of taxation, nor to memorize scattered knowledge points mechanically; its real intention is to enable students, with important historical facts as the fulcrum, to grasp naturally the core concept that "the state governs through fiscal institutions." Historical facts are only the carrier of knowledge, and the fundamental purpose of teaching is to cultivate students' thinking ability.

Third, what are the internal connections among the three content requirements? This unit systematically narrates currency issuance and tax collection from the perspective of state finance, both of which are important functions of the state. Currency is the basic tool for the operation of state finance; taxation is the most common and most direct means by which the state obtains fiscal revenue; and modern taxation is a reasonable extension of the ancient tax system. Therefore, around the proposition that "public finance is the core hub of state governance," the three form a rigorous chain of logic that advances level by level and connects. More importantly, since ancient times, the state's methods of tax collection have mostly taken the three forms of payment in kind, labor service, and money; therefore, the teaching content of Lesson 15, "Currency," naturally lays a solid foundation for the study of Lesson 16, "Taxation."

3. Determining the teaching depth according to the "academic quality levels" of the curriculum standards

Since the "content requirements" resolve the boundary of "what to teach," the question of "to what degree to teach" can naturally be answered by the "academic quality levels," and the two complement each other.

First, interpret the levels and clarify the basis for evaluation. According to the History Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, 2025 Revision), the graded academic proficiency examination is designed on the basis of Academic Quality Level 4, whose key requirement is "to be able to consciously apply the framework of time and space, choose appropriate temporal and spatial scales, and conduct independent analysis, comparison, synthesis, and exploration of historical and contemporary issues" [1]. This means that the evaluation of teaching in this lesson cannot stop at "whether students know the facts about currency evolution," but should focus on "whether students can use the framework of time and space to independently analyze the relationship between currency evolution and state governance and the world order."

Second, "teaching" is determined by "learning": bridging from the students' starting point to the endpoint of evaluation. The formulation of evaluation criteria should be based on the students' existing foundations. The students in this lesson are second-year senior high school students who have already learned, in the Outline of Chinese and World History, about the Qin dynasty's unification of currency, the centralization of coinage rights in the Western Han dynasty, the jiaozi of the Northern Song dynasty, the issuance of paper money in the Yuan dynasty, the massive inflow of silver in the late Ming dynasty, the hyperinflation during the Nationalist government period, and the International Monetary Fund. However, this knowledge is fragmented and superficial, lacking systematic organization and a grasp of the underlying logic. On this basis, teaching at the selective compulsory stage must achieve a leap from "knowing historical facts" to "understanding the development and changes of history from multiple perspectives." The teaching of this lesson can therefore be defined as follows: taking the emergence and evolution of currency as the explicit line and the development of the social, political, and economic life as the implicit line, guiding students to consciously apply the framework of time and space to independently analyze, compare, synthesize, and explore the issue of currency evolution, and to grasp the core theme that "currency is an important tool of state governance and is interrelated with economic development and the world order."

4. Establishing the teaching theme through close reading of the textbook

The first two steps mainly addressed the "curriculum standard text," while this step enters the in-depth study of the "textbook text." So-called "close reading of the textbook" is not the formalism of nitpicking over wording; rather, it means that teachers, with a rigorous academic attitude, conduct in-depth analysis of the textbook's introduction, main text, "Learning Focus," "History in Perspective," and other columns, so as to restructure the content under the theme of the lesson—grasping the major while carrying the minor along, and proceeding from the actual situation of the textbook. The lesson "The Use of Currency and the Formation of the World Monetary System" is divided into two sub-sections: "The Evolution of Chinese Currency" and "The Formation of the World Monetary System."

A careful reading of the textbook easily reveals that "change" is the theme of this lesson's content. The issuance and use of currency in Chinese and foreign history have gone through a complex process of change, and the modern and contemporary world monetary system has also continuously developed and changed along with world economic development and changes in the world political landscape. Going from

nonexistence to existence is change; moving from commodity money to representative money and then to credit money is change; and the world monetary system's shift from being centered on the pound sterling to the dominance of the U. S. dollar is also change. The key to teaching lies not in having students memorize the specific nodes of these changes, but in guiding them to probe deeply into the "root of change"; every transformation of currency form or system is the inevitable result of the development of the commodity economy, the strengthening of state power, or the restructuring of the international order. The interpretation of "change" both deepens and extends the "understand" requirement in the curriculum standards and naturally connects with the overall teaching theme of this unit: fiscal institutions have always been changing constantly, responding to the new problems and challenges facing state governance.

5. Improving teaching effectiveness by building on the textbook's existing columns

After establishing the core viewpoint of this lesson, "the evolution of currency is linked to state governance and the world order," we must ultimately return to the textbook itself and examine and efficiently utilize the column resources that the textbook provides. Textbook columns are important carriers carefully designed by curriculum experts to connect the requirements of the curriculum standards with the students' cognition; efficiently activating these column resources can both reduce teachers' burden of collecting extracurricular materials and ensure the scientificity and authority of the teaching content. In light of the three-stage teaching practice of this lesson, the details are as follows:

5.1. Looking back: The evolution of Chinese currency

First, guide students to read the first sub-section of the textbook, sort out a timeline of currency development, and, in conjunction with the "History in Perspective" column, summarize the trend of currency evolution, making clear that the evolution of currency form was, in essence, confirmed in the form of state law and thus formed a country's official monetary system—which also prepares the ground for the later discussion of the relationship between currency and state governance. Second, tap materials such as the textbook introduction and the "Thinking Points" to design a chain of questions. For example, through the record in "Meng" from the Book of Songs cited in the introduction and the description of the spade coins of the State of Jin, explore the reasons for the emergence of currency. Through the Song dynasty historical materials supplemented in "Paper Money Issuance from the Northern Song to the Ming Dynasty" in the Teacher's Teaching Reference Book for Selective Compulsory Course 1 [2] and the Ming dynasty historical materials in Lesson 7, "The Initial Establishment of Global Connections and the Evolution of the World Order," of the Outline of Chinese and World History (Volume II) [3], guide students to explore: Why did metallic currency evolve into paper money in the Song dynasty? Why did silver become the main currency in the Ming and Qing dynasties? What are the common causes of the two evolutions? Finally, through the historical background of the late Yuan dynasty implied in the main text of the textbook, combined with the supplementary late-Yuan sanqu "Zui Taiping · Tangtang Da Yuan" [4], discuss the relationship between the fall of the Yuan dynasty and its improper monetary policy. This leads to the conclusion that the monetary system is an important means of state economic governance, and that monetary policy and governance capacity bear on socio-economic development as well as on state power and social stability.

5.2. Gaining insight: The formation of the world monetary system

First, use the main text of the textbook and "History in Perspective" to learn about the history of Western currency and to recognize the differences among national currencies and capitalism's need for a unified monetary system. Next, in conjunction with the main text of the second sub-section, prepare a brief table of capitalist economic development in order to understand that the evolution of the world monetary system is closely related to world economic development and changes in the international political landscape, and that the shift from pound sterling dominance to U.S. dollar dominance essentially reflects the transfer of the world's economic center. Finally, through the "Window of Learning and Thinking" column, analyze the Bretton Woods system and recognize its objective role as well as the manifestation of U.S. economic hegemony, and also the fact that, after the collapse of this system, a pluralistic international monetary system featuring diversified international reserves and floating exchange rates actually took shape, in which the U.S. dollar still holds a central position while the influence of the euro, the yen, and the renminbi keeps rising.

5.3. Looking ahead: The internationalization of the renminbi

First, relying on the main text of the textbook, "History in Perspective" and "Reading of Historical Sources," learn the basic historical facts about the renminbi as China's legal tender. By comparing "economic issuance" with "fiscal issuance," emphasize the importance of a stable currency value to national economic security, thereby echoing the lesson of the Yuan dynasty. Next, based on the content on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in "Inquiry and Extension" and in light of the background of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, analyze the AIIB's role in promoting the internationalization of the renminbi, emphasize that national strength is the fundamental support, and guide students to set up the aspiration to serve the country. Finally, present the students' self-made chart of the evolution of Chinese currency and a brief table of capitalist world economic development, review the evolution of Chinese currency and the changes of the world monetary system, and thereby draw out the idea that currency is an extremely important piece of material evidence of human civilization, and that the formation of monetary systems and monetary orders is directly related to the political, economic, and cultural factors at home and abroad at the time; every currency reform is in essence a profound social reform, and what supports it is the state system and the social governance system.

Throughout the lesson, by digging deeply into the textbook columns, students are helped to realize that the deep driving force behind the evolution of the monetary system and of the world monetary system comes mainly from the improvement of the level of productive forces, which is closely related to socio-economic development, and from domestic and international politics. In this way, students are guided to use historical materialism to understand the deep causal relationships behind the surface of history.

6. Conclusion

The ability of textual interpretation is an extremely important professional competence for teachers. Therefore, in backward design oriented toward the "academic quality levels," one should first clarify the categorical boundary of the "content requirements," then conduct a systematic study of the textbook text, and make reasonable use of the various column resources in the textbook; the four naturally constitute a complete and clear closed loop of instructional design. In this way, teachers are no longer passive executors of the curriculum standards or simple transmitters of textbook content, but truly become interpreters of

textual connotation and constructors of textual value. Only by grounding in solid textual interpretation and fully activating the column resources of the textbook can instructional design avoid the trap of formalism and return to the essence of education, and can it achieve both knowledge teaching and value guidance, effectively cultivating students' core competencies and letting core competencies truly and fully take root in classroom teaching.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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