

The Three Dimensions of Integrating “Historical Confidence” Education into the Teaching of the “Outline” Course

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Abstract

The conscious adherence to “historical confidence” is not innate but requires targeted educational practices. Integrating historical confidence education into the “Outline” course has thus become imperative, serving as a necessary pathway for the innovative development of the course. Investigations reveal that current integration efforts have explored valuable approaches, including emphasizing theoretical instruction, promoting interactive practices, recognizing educational significance, balancing teaching supply and demand, and prioritizing evaluation feedback. However, key challenges persist: the conceptual understanding of “integration” needs enhancement, theoretical foundations require deeper exploration, pedagogical regularities demand more precise comprehension, targeted effectiveness needs strengthening, and evaluation reliability and validity need improvement. To address these issues, this study proposes recommendations such as clarifying objectives and significance, intensifying theoretical research, grasping fundamental principles, innovating teaching methodologies, and establishing evaluation frameworks. These measures aim to enhance the efficacy of historical confidence education and advance the reform and innovation of the “Outline” course.

Keywords

Historical Confidence Education, “Outline” Course, Integration, Countermeasures

1. Introduction

President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to “better grasp and apply the Party’s century-long historical experience in struggle, carry forward the great founding spirit of the Party, strengthen historical confidence, enhance unity and solidarity,

and intensify the spirit of struggle, mobilizing the entire Party and people of all ethnic groups across the country to remain steadfast in conviction and march forward with courage and resolve, striving tirelessly to achieve the Second Centenary Goal” (Xi, 2022). As a pivotal curriculum for fostering moral integrity and cultivating new-generation talents capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation, ideological and political education in higher education institutions inherently aligns with the pedagogical objectives of the “Outline” course. In reality, college students’ conscious adherence to “historical confidence” is not innate. Therefore, it has become imperative to develop and strengthen historical confidence in education. The most direct channel and platform for such education among university students is the “Outline” course. This reflects both the course’s intrinsic responsibility in nurturing the new era’s talent and its inevitable role in driving pedagogical reform and innovation.

A network-based sampling questionnaire survey was conducted at four undergraduate institutions in Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, including Ningxia University, Xinhua College of Ningxia University, Ningxia Medical University, and North Minzu University. Valid questionnaires were collected from 2298 students across different majors and grade levels at these four universities, along with 92 valid questionnaires from faculty members teaching the “Outline of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History” course. Additionally, interviews were conducted with over ten instructors specializing in the teaching of the “Outline” course.

2. Current Status of Integrating “Historical Confidence” Education into the “Outline” Course

Research findings indicate that valuable experience has been accumulated in integrating “historical confidence” education into the “Outline” course, which requires systematic summarization and analysis to enhance the effectiveness and pertinence of the course teaching.

2.1. Emphasizing Theoretical Education

“From the Marxist perspective, theory is crucial, as vividly demonstrated by Lenin’s statement: ‘Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement’” (Selected Works of MAO Zedong (Volume I), Mao, 1991). The theoretical education approach serves as the fundamental teaching method for the “Outline” course classroom instruction and must never be abandoned. It also constitutes the basic approach for integrating “historical confidence” education into the course. In the teaching process, “Outline” course instructors impart to students the fundamental connotations, formative logic, and value significance of “historical confidence”. By mastering basic theories and scientific thinking methods, students strengthen their historical confidence through comparison, judgment, selection, and practice. They proactively assume responsibilities and demonstrate the spirit of contemporary university students in the new era. This

educational approach lays a solid foundation for realizing Marx's observation that "theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses" (*The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Marx Engels Lenin Stalin Works Translation Bureau, 2012*).

2.2. Interactive Practice Emphasis

Through questionnaire surveys, interviews with over a dozen teachers of the "Outline" course, and daily work exchanges with my colleagues, it has been learned that "Outline" course teachers have fully leveraged the positive role of information technology in classroom teaching. For example, teachers utilize the "Rain Classroom" platform to conduct teaching activities or embed its features into courseware, incorporating functions such as "polls", "true/false questions", "fill-in-the-blanks", "single-choice questions", and "multiple-choice questions" to encourage active real-time student participation. This approach enhances students' understanding and retention of the material. Additionally, students can instantly post questions or share their insights via "bullet comments" or the chat section, to which teachers promptly respond. This method not only improves teaching effectiveness but also significantly boosts student engagement in class. Some teachers also organize "Most Beautiful Class Notes" competitions to encourage students to take notes, stimulating their interest in learning and helping them deepen their understanding and memory through writing. Additionally, some teachers mobilize students to actively participate in activities such as college students lecturing on ideological and political courses, "Three Down to the Countryside" social practices, college student theoretical propaganda teams, and volunteer services, guiding students to apply theory to practice and deepen their comprehension and appreciation of what they have learned.

2.3. Educational Significance Recognition

Some teachers of the "Outline" course have shown a certain level of concern about the significance of "historical confidence" education. They recognize the importance of "historical confidence" education for the innovation and reform of the "Outline" course, as well as for cultivating the knowledge, skills, and emotional values of socialist builders and successors. They also understand the long-term significance of "historical confidence" education for building a modern socialist country and achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Qi, 2022). Some students realize that "historical confidence" education is of great importance and actively pay attention to and learn relevant content in their "Outline" course, hoping to deeply understand it and externalize it into concrete actions.

2.4. Teaching Supply-Demand Balance

Some teachers of the "Outline" course pay attention to "historical confidence" education in their daily teaching. They consciously or unconsciously integrate relevant content of "historical confidence" into their classroom lectures, especially

focusing on micro or detailed aspects using materials such as “the significant achievements of the Party’s century-long struggle and the spirit of this struggle”. They flexibly apply “historical confidence” education to the teaching of the “Outline” course. In class, they can present content and language that touches students and addresses their inner “pain points,” which to some extent meets students’ ideological needs and course expectations, enhancing both the teacher’s sense of fulfillment in teaching and the students’ sense of gain in learning.

2.5. Evaluation of Feedback Importance

The survey found that some teachers attach great importance to the integration of “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course, including the extent of integration, organization of activities, method innovation, effectiveness of methods, and improvement outcomes. They can understand the integration effects through questionnaires, post-class exercises, individual exchanges, and other means. Some students are willing to provide objective and truthful evaluations of the classroom effectiveness of teachers’ “historical confidence” education. The authenticity of these evaluation responses directly affects teachers’ understanding of the “integration” effects, thereby impacting the practicality of teachers’ efforts to improve through evaluation and the effectiveness of fully implementing the fundamental task of moral education.

3. Existing Problems in Integration

The questionnaire survey and analysis revealed discrepancies between some teachers and some students regarding the integration of “historical confidence” education into the “Outline” course—particularly in terms of depth of incorporation, activity organization, methodological innovation, effectiveness of approaches, and outcomes for improvement. These differences indicate that there are issues in the teaching of “historical confidence” education. Based on the summary of the current situation of integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of “Outline”, this study analyzes that there are deficiencies in the integration of “historical confidence” education into the teaching of “Outline” in terms of ideological understanding, theoretical support, law grasp, integration effectiveness and evaluation mechanism.

3.1. The Ideological Understanding of “Integration” Needs to Be Improved

Some teachers need to enhance their understanding of the importance of integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course. They have yet to recognize the significance of “historical confidence” education in driving the reform and innovation of the “Outline” course itself, as well as its crucial role in equipping socialist builders and successors with essential knowledge, skills, and values. Moreover, they remain unaware of the long-term implications of “historical confidence” education for advancing Chinese modernization and

realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. They have yet to recognize the contemporary, political, practical, and developmental value of incorporating “historical confidence” education into this course. In the teaching process, they fail to integrate “historical confidence” education in a timely, precise, comprehensive, and thorough manner, lacking a broad perspective in guiding the content supply for integration. The inadequacy in ideological awareness is a fundamental prerequisite that affects both the process and outcome of integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course.

3.2. The Theoretical Support for “Integration” Needs to Be Deepened

Some teachers lack a systematic understanding of the theoretical research related to “historical confidence” education. They need to improve their basic theoretical framework and academic support for integrating “historical confidence” education into the curriculum of the “Outline.” They have not fully grasped the scientific connotations, intrinsic essence, theoretical origins, academic support, and fundamental logic of “historical confidence” education. In other words, they have not thoroughly addressed a series of questions such as whether “historical confidence” can be taught, what should be taught, why it is taught, what value it holds, and on what basis it is taught. Therefore, it is difficult to thoroughly resolve issues concerning the connotation, characteristics, content, goals, values, and academic support of “historical confidence” education in the teaching process.

3.3. The Law of “Integration” Needs to Be Accurately Grasped

Some teachers have yet to fully grasp the influencing factors, basic principles, and specific methods of integrating “historical confidence” education into the curriculum. In other words, they have not fully understood a series of issues such as what “historical confidence” education should be integrated into, why it needs to be integrated into teaching, what influencing factors exist, and what basic principles and methods are involved. Therefore, there is a problem in the teaching process where the fundamental principles of “historical confidence” education are not thoroughly implemented, and the basic rules are not accurately grasped.

3.4. The Pertinence and Effectiveness of “Integration” Need to Be Strengthened

Some teachers have yet to fully grasp the curriculum system, content system, teaching system, and discourse system of integrating “historical confidence” education into the “Outline” course. In other words, they have not fully understood a series of issues such as the current state of integrating “historical confidence” education into the “Outline” course, how to integrate it into teaching, what problems exist, what needs to be changed, why changes are needed, and how to make these changes. Therefore, the practical teaching work lacks sufficient relevance, guidance, and effectiveness, resulting in less noticeable teaching outcomes.

3.5. The Reliability and Validity of the Evaluation of “Integration” Need to Be Enhanced

Some teachers have yet to fully grasp the evaluation system and long-term mechanism for integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course. They have not fully understood a series of issues regarding how effective this integration is, why it should be evaluated, who will evaluate it, what will be evaluated, how it will be evaluated, how effective is the evaluation system, what about its reliability and validity, and what kind of long-term integration mechanism should be established. As a result, the guidance and relevance of actual teaching work are insufficient, leading to suboptimal teaching outcomes.

4. Suggestions on Integrating “Historical Confidence” Education into the Teaching of “Outline”

President Xi Jinping’s series of important speeches on ideological and political theory courses provide fundamental guidance for the reform and innovation of “Outline” courses. They serve as a crucial methodological guideline and practical guide for integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of “Outline” courses (Zhao, 2024). Educators implementing “historical confidence” instruction within the “Outline” curriculum should investigate its epistemological underpinnings, design context-appropriate pedagogical frameworks, employ digitally-enabled teaching innovations, implement robust assessment protocols, cultivate students’ critical engagement with historical consciousness. The research adheres to a problem-oriented approach, addressing the main issues in integrating “historical confidence” education into “Outline” course instruction by proposing targeted solutions.

4.1. Defining the Purpose of the Goal

The teachers of the “Outline” course must clearly understand their fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent, and remember the glorious mission of educating people for the Party and the country. First, they should adhere to goal orientation. They must fully recognize that integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course aims to promote innovation and reform in the teaching and education of the “Outline” course, enhancing its quality and efficiency; it also aims to fully implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent, fostering new generations capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation. Second, they should adhere to problem-consciousness perspective. Continuous pedagogical innovation should address critical challenges in incorporating “historical confidence” education into collegiate “Outline” instruction, particularly regarding conceptual awareness, academic substantiation, regularity comprehension, instructional techniques, and assessment mechanisms. Third, they should grasp the value implications. They must fully recognize the significance of integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course. It is clear that this integration has distinct contemporary, political, practical, and developmental values.

4.2. Strengthening Theoretical Research

Theory is the forerunner of practice; only when theory is clear can action be conscious. First, teachers of the “Outline” course must have a solid theoretical foundation. They need to master Marxism, this “core skill”, thoroughly studying and explaining it; second, they should put effort into researching the textbook. Carefully explore the content that embodies firm “historical confidence” in the textbook, and transform and reflect this research into educational goals aimed at strengthening students’ “historical confidence”. Based on the teaching content of “historical confidence”, and in conjunction with the actual content of the “Outline” course, re-examine and update the syllabus to highlight the nature, characteristics, and focus of the “Outline” course, forming a systematic and complete curriculum system for “historical confidence” education; third, improve the collective lesson preparation system. According to the teaching tasks of the “Outline” course, clarify the aspects of integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching process, including the content, structure, and teaching focus, to promote innovation and reform in the teaching of the “Outline” course.

4.3. Grasping the Basic Laws

It is essential to precisely comprehend the guiding principles and inherent logic of incorporating “historical confidence” education into pedagogy, thereby advancing it to a higher plane of theoretical cognition and practical mastery. It is essential to fully recognize that as a practical educational activity, “historical confidence” education follows certain rules. First, “historical confidence” education must align with the teaching and learning principles of the “Outline” course. The teaching and learning principles of the “Outline” course emphasize consistently addressing who we are cultivating, what kind of people we are cultivating, and how we are cultivating them. “Historical confidence” education aims to nurture new generations capable of shouldering the great task of national rejuvenation. Second, “historical confidence” education must adhere to the basic principles of ideological and political education reform and innovation, known as the “eight unities”. Upholding these “eight unities” is not only a fundamental principle for the reform and innovation of ideological and political education but also a scientific methodology and the fundamental guideline for “historical confidence” education. Third, “historical confidence” education must conform to the basic logic of the “Outline” course’s teaching. The basic logic of the “Outline” course lies in cognition being the foundation, recognition being the key, internalization being the core, and externalization being the goal. The process of advancing “historical confidence” education is essentially one of constructing scientific cognition, fostering high levels of recognition, internalizing value systems, and externalizing conscious actions.

4.4. Innovative Teaching Forms

First, innovate practical teaching methods. Teachers can adopt case-based, seminar-style, and experiential teaching approaches, leveraging modern information

technology to create smart classrooms; they can guide students in participating in activities such as delivering ideological and political courses, “three rural services”, and theoretical propaganda teams, encouraging students to apply theory to practice and deepen their understanding of theory through practice. Second, transform teaching language expression. Teachers should explore how to integrate textbook language with teaching language, combine theoretical discourse with everyday speech, and shift from didactic to guiding expressions, organically integrating internet slang, colloquialisms, and formal written language into classroom instruction. Third, make good use of modern information technology. Encourage teachers to utilize social media platform resources for “historical confidence” education. And leverage platforms like “Rain Classroom” and “Learning Hub” to create interactive and vibrant classrooms.

4.5. Establishing an Evaluation System

The “Historical Confidence” education evaluation system is an indicator for grasping the actual situation of “historical confidence” through the process of “input - internalization - externalization - feedback - re-input.” First, it is essential to clarify the evaluation criteria. The focus should be on whether students have mastered a scientific historical perspective, with emphasis on evaluating their ability to apply this perspective methodologically to analyze and solve problems. Second, the evaluators must be clearly defined. The main evaluators include students, teaching supervisors, and educational administrators, with the weight distribution as follows: student evaluations account for 60%, teaching supervisor evaluations for 30%, and administrative evaluations for 10%. Undoubtedly, the primary evaluators are the students. Third, the evaluation methods must be specified. This includes establishing three evaluation mechanisms: self-assessment by students, peer assessment among students, and teacher evaluation. The self-assessment mechanism primarily examines whether students have enhanced their confidence in the “Five Histories” and can vigilantly oppose historical nihilism. The peer assessment mechanism assesses the level of internalization and externalization of learned content among students. The teacher evaluation mechanism involves teachers assessing students’ course mastery through questionnaires, knowledge contests, group discussions, and practical tests. Fourth, effective feedback on evaluations is crucial. Feedback should evaluate the applicability of teachers’ “Four-Sphere Confidence” educational approaches across different disciplines, assess educational effectiveness, and identify deficiencies in “historical confidence” education. Targeted improvements should then be implemented to address these shortcomings and enhance practical outcomes.

5. Summary

Currently, teachers of the “Outline” course have carried out a series of active explorations in integrating “historical confidence” education into the teaching of the “Outline” course. These efforts have made beneficial attempts at the methodolog-

ical level for the reform and innovation of “Outline” course teaching, which is of great significance. However, there are still some problems and shortcomings. By adhering to a problem-oriented approach and proposing targeted countermeasures, we aim to enhance the effectiveness of “historical confidence” education and make due efforts and contributions to improving the quality and efficiency of the reform and innovation of “Outline” course teaching.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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