Research on the Design and Practice of Senior High School History Situational Teaching Oriented by Key Competencies

Peng Rui

Chang Chun Experimental School，Changchun Jilin Province，130000;

Abstract: With the deepening of educational reform, key competencies have become an important goal of senior high school history teaching. Situational teaching, as an effective teaching method, can concretize abstract historical knowledge, stimulate students' learning interest, and cultivate their key competencies in history. This paper studies the design and practice of situational teaching in senior high school history under the guidance of key competencies. It elaborates on the importance of situational teaching, proposes specific design principles and practical strategies, evaluates and reflects on the teaching effectiveness, aiming to provide useful references for senior high school history teaching.

Keywords: Key Competencies; Senior High School History; Situational Teaching

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Under the background of educational reform, cultivating key competencies is the core task of education. The history discipline is crucial for the comprehensive development of students. Its key competencies encompass five aspects: Historical Materialism, Concepts of Time and Space, etc., emphasizing that students should not only master knowledge but also use historical thinking to solve problems and form correct values. Traditional senior high school history teaching tends to prioritize knowledge transmission while neglecting the cultivation of key competencies. Students are often passive recipients, lacking the ability to understand and apply knowledge. The situational teaching method, by creating relevant contexts, allows students to immerse themselves in and understand history, thereby enhancing learning motivation and promoting the development of key competencies. This research is significant: theoretically, it can enrich history teaching theories and advance the application of situational teaching theory within the history discipline; practically, it can provide guidance for front-line teachers, help improve teaching quality, and promote students' comprehensive development.

1.2 Current Research Status at Home and Abroad

Foreign research on situational teaching theory started early and is relatively mature. Dewey's theory of "learning by doing" emphasizes starting from students' experiences and activities, creating problematic situations to guide exploration, laying the foundation for situational teaching. Situated cognition theory posits that knowledge is contextual, and learning stems from interaction with situations. For example, simulating historical scenes or having students engage in role-playing can help them understand history. In practice, foreign applications are widespread, such as role-playing in American history classrooms and using VR technology to create realistic situations.

Domestic research in this field has yielded some results. Scholars have explored theoretical foundations, teaching strategies, and case studies. Theoretically, it has been clarified that situational teaching aligns with the characteristics of the history discipline and students' cognitive levels, meeting the requirements of curriculum reform and college entrance examinations. Strategically, various methods for creating situations have been proposed, including multimedia, problem-based scenarios, practical activities, and historical source analysis. However, domestic research has shortcomings,

such as insufficient depth in exploring theoretical foundations, and practical issues like disconnection between situations and teaching objectives, and low student participation.

1.3 Research Methods and Innovations

This paper employs multiple research methods to ensure quality:

Literature Research Method: Reviewing relevant domestic and international literature to synthesize findings and research trajectories, identify hotspots and frontiers, and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing research, providing a theoretical foundation and direction for this study.

Case Analysis Method: Selecting typical cases from different schools, collecting materials like teaching designs, and analyzing them from multiple perspectives to summarize experiences, analyze causes, and provide a basis for constructing effective strategies.

Survey Research Method: Designing questionnaires and interview outlines to understand teachers' perceptions of situational teaching, implementation status, and students' learning experiences. Statistical analysis of the data is used to summarize the current situation and problems.

There are three main innovations:

Research Perspective: Closely focused on key competencies, integrating its five dimensions with the design and practice of situational teaching, offering a novel perspective.

Research Content: Besides elaborating on theories, principles, and strategies, it emphasizes effectiveness evaluation and reflection, proposing improvement measures, making it more practical.

Research Methods: Employing a comprehensive and diverse set of methods that complement and verify each other, enhancing the credibility of the results.

2 Theoretical Overview of Key Competencies and Situational Teaching

2.1 Connotation and Composition of Key Competencies in Senior High School History

The key competencies in senior high school history refer to the crucial abilities, character traits, and perspectives that students develop through historical learning, characterized by the discipline. They consist of five interconnected aspects:

Historical Materialism: As a scientific historical outlook and methodology, it enables students to use principles like the relationship between productive forces and production relations to analyze historical phenomena and understand the developmental trends of human society.

Concepts of Time and Space: Refers to the awareness and mode of thinking for observing and analyzing things within their temporal and spatial connections. Students need to grasp the relationship between historical events and specific times and places, utilizing tools like timelines and historical maps to understand the periodicity and continuity of history.

Evidence-Based Approach to Historical Sources: Requires students to critically evaluate historical sources and reconstruct history based on credible evidence. By collecting, organizing, and using sources as evidence to support arguments, students form accurate historical understandings.

Historical Interpretation: Based on historical sources and understanding, involves the rational analysis and objective judgment of historical subjects. Students should be able to use historical thinking to interpret and evaluate history and express their views appropriately.

Patriotic Sentiment and National Identity: Embodies emotions towards national prosperity and people's well-being, as well as identification with, belonging to, and responsibility for the nation. Through learning, students understand national culture and spirit, enhance pride, and establish a correct view of the nation.

These five form an organic system: Historical Materialism is the theoretical foundation; Concepts of Time and Space are the essential characteristics; Evidence-Based Approach to Historical Sources is the fundamental method; Historical Interpretation is the key ability; Patriotic Sentiment and National Identity is the value pursuit. Together, they support the educational function of the history discipline.

2.2 Concept, Characteristics, and Theoretical Foundations of Situational Teaching

Situational teaching is a method where teachers intentionally introduce or create vivid, emotionally charged, image-based scenarios to evoke students' attitudinal experiences, aiding their understanding of the material and development of psychological functions. In senior high school history teaching, it involves creating contexts related to historical events or figures, allowing students to immerse themselves in historical processes, deepen their understanding and memory of knowledge, and cultivate key competencies. Its characteristics are significant:

Contextualization: Integrates abstract knowledge with vivid situations, stimulating learning interest.

Student-Centeredness: Emphasizes student participation, facilitating independent inquiry and ability development.

Practicality: Combines theory and practice through activities like role-playing.

Inspiration: Uses problem-based situations to guide thinking and cultivate cognitive skills.

Theoretical foundations include:

Constructivist Learning Theory: Posits that knowledge is constructed by learners within contexts with assistance. Situational teaching creates historical contexts accordingly.

Cognitive Psychology Theory: Emphasizes learning as an active cognitive process. Situational teaching provides stimulating information, aiding information processing and deeper understanding.

Affective Education Theory: Notes that emotion influences learning. Situational teaching stimulates positive emotions, helping students form correct values and achieve educational goals.

2.3 The Intrinsic Connection Between Key Competencies and Situational Teaching

Key competencies and situational teaching are closely linked. Situational teaching is a vital pathway for cultivating key competencies, providing a conducive environment: Creating authentic or simulated historical situations enables students to apply Historical Materialism to analyze problems, understand historical contexts, enhance evidence-based skills, form reasonable historical interpretations, and inspire patriotic sentiment. Key competencies provide direction for situational teaching, requiring its design and implementation to focus on the student's central role. Situations should align with students' cognitive levels and interests, encouraging active participation. The five dimensions of key competencies are interrelated; situational teaching needs to integrate them organically, cultivating them comprehensively through single or a series of situations. For example, when creating a situation, consider temporal-spatial background, use of historical sources, etc., to promote holistic student development.

3 Design Principles for Senior High School History Situational Teaching

3.1 Goal-Oriented Principle

This is the primary principle of situational teaching design, requiring that the cultivation of students' historical key competencies be the objective, closely aligned with curriculum standards and teaching goals. Teachers must clarify the specific goals the situational teaching aims to achieve—whether cultivating a single competency or multiple dimensions. For instance, when studying the "Opium War," using the situation of "Lin Zexu's Destruction of Opium at Humen," guide students to analyze the event's background, causes, and impacts to cultivate Historical Materialism and Concepts of Time and Space; present historical sources for students to explore the fundamental purpose of Britain launching the war, enhancing Evidence-Based Approach to Historical Sources; organize discussions on the war's impact on Chinese society to exercise Historical Interpretation; simultaneously, use the deeds of patriots like Lin Zexu to inspire Patriotic Sentiment and National Identity.

3.2 Authenticity Principle

Emphasizes that created situations must be close to historical facts, possessing authenticity and reliability. History is the objective past. Teachers should build scenes based on historical materials, using authentic historical pictures, documents, videos, etc. For example, when learning about the "1911 Revolution," display authentic photos of the Wuchang Uprising, proclamations from the rebel army, and play documentaries like "1911," allowing students to feel the real atmosphere and intuitively understand the event's process and context. Authentic situations enhance students' trust in history, boost learning interest, and aid in cultivating evidence-based awareness and historical thinking skills.

3.3 Inspirational Principle

Requires that situational teaching stimulate student thinking and guide active inquiry. Teachers need to set inspiring questions or tasks within the situation, prompting students to discover, pose, and solve problems. For example, when studying the "Industrial Revolution," show production scenes from British workshops in the mid-18th century and factories after the revolution, asking questions like "What changes occurred in production methods? What impact did they have on British society?" to guide students in exploring the causes, processes, and effects of the Industrial Revolution, fostering historical thinking and inquiry skills. Simultaneously, encourage students to question boldly and express opinions, cultivating critical thinking and innovative spirit.

3.4 Interest Principle

Aims to stimulate students' interest in learning history through lively and engaging situational designs, allowing them to learn in a relaxed atmosphere. Teachers need to combine student interests and cognitive characteristics, employing diverse teaching methods. For instance, when learning "Ancient China's Scientific and Technological Achievements," tell interesting stories like Zhang Heng inventing the seismoscope and Zu Chongzhi calculating pi; use multimedia to display pictures, animations, or videos of inventions; organize history quizzes or role-playing activities. This allows students to experience the fun of history through participation, improving learning enthusiasm and initiative.

3.5 Interactivity Principle

Focuses on interaction and communication between teachers and students, and among students. History learning involves both individual cognition and social interaction; interaction promotes sharing perspectives and mutual inspiration. Teachers need to create more opportunities for interaction, such as organizing group discussions, debates, and cooperative inquiry. For example, when studying the "Hundred Schools of Thought," create a "Debate of the Hundred Schools" situation where students role-play representatives of different schools debating "the way to govern a state." Through articulating their views and refuting others, students deepen their understanding of various schools of thought and enhance expression, thinking, and cooperation skills. Teachers must play a guiding role, providing timely evaluation and feedback to ensure effective interaction.

4 Practical Strategies for Senior High School History Situational Teaching

4.1 Situational Creation Based on Key Competency Dimensions

Design targeted situations for each of the five key competencies:

Cultivating Historical Materialism: In teaching "Ancient Chinese Land Systems," create a "Living Conditions of Farmers in Different Periods" situation to guide students in thinking about the relationship between life changes and land system reforms, understanding the dialectical relationship between productive forces and production relations.

Cultivating Concepts of Time and Space: In "The Age of Exploration" teaching, use an "Explorer's Voyage" situation where students role-play navigators using route maps to clarify the temporal-spatial distribution and connections of events.

Cultivating Evidence-Based Approach to Historical Sources: In "Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895" teaching, hold a "Historical Source Analysis Session" presenting diverse sources for students to evaluate credibility and argue reasons for defeat.

Cultivating Historical Interpretation: In "Self-Strengthening Movement" teaching, organize a "Merits and Demerits Debate" prompting students to view history from multiple perspectives.

Cultivating Patriotic Sentiment and National Identity: In "War of Resistance Against Japan" teaching, conduct a "Sharing Session on Deeds of Anti-Japanese Heroes" to inspire patriotic feelings and a sense of responsibility.

4.2 Application of Diverse Situational Teaching Methods

Employ multiple teaching methods to enhance effectiveness:Multimedia Teaching: Using images, videos, etc. (e.g., playing documentaries and showing pictures for "Ancient Egyptian Civilization").Role-Playing: Having students reenact history (e.g., simulating an Athenian Assembly for "Athenian Democracy").Problem-Based Situations: Guiding inquiry

through chains of questions (e.g., relevant questions for "American Revolutionary War").Field Trips: Organizing visits to historical sites (e.g., visiting the Terracotta Army or the Forbidden City for "Ancient Chinese Capitals"). These methods can be flexibly chosen to aid in cultivating students' key competencies.

5 Effectiveness Evaluation and Reflection on History Situational Teaching

5.1 Indicators and Methods for Teaching Effectiveness Evaluation

Teaching effectiveness evaluation should focus on the development of students' historical key competencies, primarily covering four areas:Degree of Knowledge Mastery: Assessing students' grasp of basic historical facts (time, place, people, causes, process, results).Level of Ability Development: Evaluating the development of core abilities like historical thinking, evidence-based skills, and historical interpretation skills.Emotional Attitudes and Values: Focusing on the formation of patriotic sentiment, national pride, historical responsibility, etc.Learning Interest and Participation: Understanding students' interest in history learning and their level of participation in situational teaching.

Three main evaluation methods exist:

Formative Assessment: During the teaching process, using classroom observation, questioning, group discussions, assignments, etc., to monitor student progress and provide timely feedback and guidance. For example, in situational teaching, teachers observe participation and verbal contributions to gauge understanding, and identify issues through marking assignments for timely correction.

Summative Assessment: After a unit or semester, using exams, essays, project reports, etc., to comprehensively evaluate learning outcomes. For instance, after studying "Modern Chinese History," an exam tests knowledge of key events and figures, while an essay assesses historical thinking and expression.

Student Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment: Students evaluate their own and peers' learning, fostering self-reflection and cooperation. For example, after a history role-play, students self-assess strengths/weaknesses and offer each other suggestions.

5.2 Problems and Reflections in Teaching Practice

Several problems exist in practice:

Disconnection between Situation Creation and Teaching Objectives: Some teachers overly focus on the interest and form of the situation, neglecting its link to teaching goals, rendering the situational teaching ineffective for achieving objectives.

Uneven Student Participation: Some students participate actively while others remain passive, affecting overall effectiveness.

Insufficient Teaching Resources: Situational teaching requires rich resources (multimedia, historical sources, access to sites). Some schools face resource constraints hindering effective implementation.

Need for Improvement in Teacher Professional Competence: Situational teaching demands high levels of teacher historical knowledge, situation design, and organizational skills. Some teachers struggle to design and implement effective situational teaching due to competence gaps.

To address these, corresponding improvement measures are needed:

Strengthen the Connection: Ensure situation design consistently revolves around teaching objectives. Choose suitable materials and creation methods based on clear goals.

Increase Student Participation: Pay attention to individual differences. Employ diverse methods, form balanced groups for tasks, and provide more encouragement and guidance to less engaged students to help them integrate.

Enrich Teaching Resources: Schools should increase investment in multimedia, libraries, etc. Teachers should actively develop resources using the internet and local history.

Enhance Teacher Professional Competence: Schools should organize specialized training and teaching research activities. Teachers should engage in continuous learning, reflection, and experience accumulation to improve their capabilities.

6 Conclusion and Outlook

The research conclusions indicate that key competency-oriented situational teaching in senior high school history is highly significant. It concretizes knowledge, stimulates interest, and cultivates key competencies. Its design must follow principles like goal-orientation and authenticity. Practical strategies include targeted situation creation and diverse teaching methods. Effectiveness evaluation should employ multiple methods centered on key competency development. Problems like disconnection between situations and objectives need addressing. Looking ahead, with educational reform and technological advancement, possibilities include exploring the integration of information technology with teaching, strengthening pedagogical research across different school stages, and investigating the long-term impact on students' key competencies. In summary, this teaching method is effective. Teachers need to continuously explore, innovate, and enhance teaching quality to cultivate the youth of the new era.

References

[1] Xi, J. F. (2018). Research on the Creation of Situations in High School History Teaching from the Perspective of Subject Core Literacy [Master's thesis, Fujian Normal University].

[2] Zou, N. Y., & Meng, H. B. (2024). Application Practice of Post-Situational Teaching Paradigm under the Guidance of Core Literacy. Guangxi Education, (7). DOI:10.3969/j.issn.0450-9889.2024.07.023.

[3] Jin, C. C. (2025). Research on the Application of Situational Teaching in High School History from the Perspective of Core Literacy [Master's thesis, Liaoning Normal University]. [Accessed 2025-08-12].