

Application of Museum Curriculum Resources in the Cultivation of Historical Materialism Literacy in Middle Schools: Based on the Promulgation of China's New Curriculum Standards

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Abstract: Historical materialism literacy is one of the five core literacy in Chinese middle school history courses' curriculum objectives. To cultivate students' historical materialism, studying how to apply museum curriculum resources to historical materialism has become essential. This study aims to discuss the meaning, significance, and strategies for using museum curriculum resources to achieve historical materialism. Regarding the connotation, the application of museum curriculum resources in middle school to cultivate historical materialism refers to utilizing museum resources related to the curriculum to help students develop scientific historical perspectives and methodologies. In terms of value, the implementation of museum curriculum resources in middle school to foster historical materialism can advance the professional development of teachers and enhance students' knowledge and critical thinking skills. Concerning strategy, promoting the use of museum curriculum resources in historical materialism requires focusing on four aspects: curriculum objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation.

Keywords: middle school history, museum curriculum resources, historical materialism literacy, new curriculum standards

1. Introduction

After the 2017 edition of *China History Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High Schools* emphasized the core literacy of senior high school history, the 2022 *History Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* again highlights the core literacy of junior high school history. The core literacy of middle school history includes five aspects: historical materialism, the concept of time and space, historical evidence, historical interpretation, and family and national feeling[1]. At this point, the core literacy of history has covered the entire middle school stage. The core literacy of middle school history embodies the educational value of the history curriculum. It is the correct values, necessary character, and critical ability that students gradually develop through course learning.

The practical implementation of core historical literacy and the authentic development of students' core competencies have become prominent topics in the Chinese education landscape since its proposal. According to the Notice of The State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage, education departments should incorporate excellent cultural heritage and cultural heritage

protection knowledge into the teaching plan, include it in textbooks, organize museum visits and learning activities, stimulate young people's enthusiasm to love the excellent traditional culture of the motherland, and cultivate the habit of visiting museums [2]. Museums have abundant curriculum resources that can be utilized in school teaching activities. Museum curriculum resources encompass all resources that can be applied to the teaching activities of schools. With its vast collection of resources, museums provide ample historical materials for history courses and serve as a suitable medium for developing students' core literacy. The application of historical core literacy requires an appropriate medium, and museum curriculum resources are an ideal medium. Therefore, how to effectively employ museum curriculum resources to develop middle school history core literacy has become a popular research topic. Previous research shows that the use of museum resources can enhance family and national feeling and promote the understanding of Chinese traditional culture. Additionally, student competitions can also improve historical interpretation literacy [3]. The utilization of online museum resources can stimulate self-exploration and learning initiative, overcome temporal and spatial constraints, expand the audience, and cultivate core historical literacy among students [4]. However, few articles address the practical applications of historical materialism literacy.

As the theoretical guide of historical learning, historical materialism was rarely mentioned in the past due to its abstract and academic nature. Historical materialism is a scientific historical view and methodology that reveals the objective basis and development laws of human social history. Human understanding of history gradually deepens from the outside to the inside. To comprehend the essence of history through the complicated appearances of history, a scientific historical view and methodology are necessary. Historical materialism introduces a scientific approach to the study of history. The standpoint, viewpoint, and method of historical materialism allow for a comprehensive and objective understanding of history. Among many history learning materials, museum curriculum resources are particularly objective [5]. Historical relics and materials provide us with a means to understand and interpret history. Therefore, the curriculum resources of museums are highly valuable to the historical materialism core literacy of middle school history.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of museum curriculum resources in developing historical materialism literacy among middle school students. The study will evaluate the value, definition, and strategy of these resources in cultivating historical materialism. The significance of this research lies in addressing the inadequacies of previous studies that failed to focus on the application of museum curriculum resources to historical materialism literacy. This study intends to introduce museum curriculum resources into middle school history classrooms and emphasize the strategies for cultivating historical materialism literacy using these resources.

2. Connotation

The application of museum curriculum resources in the cultivation of historical materialism in middle school first needs to elaborate on the definition of historical materialism and museum curriculum resources. Historical materialism is one of the five core literacy of history course in middle school. It is the guiding ideology and basic history view of history curriculum standards, history textbook compilation, and middle school history teaching. Marx and Engels also believe historical materialism in *The German Ideology* that historical materialism is a kind of historical view, which is to follow and explains history under the principles of materialism [6]. Lan Xu believes that historical materialism is the scientific historical view and methodology to reveal the objective basis and development law of human social history [5]. Hui Chen explained the basic thoughts and methods of historical materialism. There are eight basic historical views, including practical view, production view, dialectical view, overall view, mass view, class view, value view, and historical view. Historical

materialism is a scientific historical view with a relatively complete and open theoretical system that constantly develops and improves in practice [7].

The development of students' historical core literacy skills benefits greatly from the utilization of curriculum resources provided by museums. According to the findings of the Chinese researchers, the museum curriculum resources should align with the school curriculum, and either directly become the course content of material, or should support the course aims to meet various circumstances.[8]. Its resources include collections, electronic materials, places, environment, and human resources etc. Jun Li's definition of museum curriculum resources has been recognized by a large number of academics.

Based on the definition of historical materialism and museum curriculum resources, this study believes that the application of museum curriculum resources in cultivating historical materialism literacy in middle school refers to the strategy of using resources connected with the museum to help students form a scientific historical view and methodology. The researchers argue that using museum curriculum resources can help students develop a deeper understanding of historical materialism. By connecting students with resources available in the museum, educators can offer a more immersive and engaging learning experience that promotes critical thinking and analysis. This approach can help students gain a scientific understanding of history and develop the skills necessary to think critically about historical events. Overall, the use of museum curriculum resources can play a significant role in cultivating historical materialism literacy among middle school students.

3. Value

3.1. Promoting Teacher Professional Development

The term “teacher professional development” refers to the ongoing process of educators enhancing and developing the internal professional structure they have developed over the course of their careers as educators. The improvement of their professional knowledge, professional abilities, and professional beliefs are all included in this process [9].

Firstly, applying museum curriculum resources to cultivate historical materialism in middle schools is beneficial in promoting teachers' professional knowledge. Teacher professional knowledge is a crucial aspect of teacher professional development, comprising subject knowledge, teaching knowledge, explicit and implicit knowledge, wisdom character, and moral character [10]. When teachers bring cultural relics from museums to the classroom during the process of cultivating historical materialism, students can observe them directly, making them more intuitive than just looking at pictures. As a result, teachers can offer more vivid explanations, improving their professional knowledge. Secondly, applying museum curriculum resources to cultivate historical materialism in middle schools can enhance teachers' professional competence. The term “professional competence” refers to the psychological characteristics of teachers in completing teaching tasks [11]. During the process of organizing museum visits, teachers need to participate in the preparation, organization, and evaluation of activity courses. These activities can have a positive impact on promoting the overall improvement of teachers' professional competence. Thirdly, applying museum curriculum resources to cultivate historical materialism in middle schools can also enhance teachers' professional beliefs. Teachers' professional beliefs refer to their specific theories, viewpoints, and opinions about teaching and learning phenomena in education, which impact educational practice and students' physical and mental development [12]. Teachers believe that using museum curriculum resources in middle school classrooms can help cultivate students' historical materialism. Compared to subject curriculum and activity-based curriculum, teachers have a stronger belief in the value of museum curriculum resources for fostering students' historical materialism during the teaching process.

3.2. Promoting the Development of Students' Knowledge and Thinking

Using museum curriculum resources to cultivate historical materialism in middle schools can enhance students' understanding of the knowledge content and promote the development of critical thinking.

Firstly, the application of museum curriculum resources can help students grasp the knowledge related to historical materialism in real historical contexts. Historical materialism is a vast theoretical system that maintains that human development follows a regular pattern, human societies evolve from low to high levels, human history progresses from segregation to integration, social existence determines social consciousness, and people are the creators of history [5]. Students may achieve a deeper comprehension of historical materialism by using the resources that are provided by museums. For instance, a teacher can direct students to observe various social forms during a trip to a museum, such as primitive society, slavery society, feudal society, capitalist society, and communist society, and help them understand the distinguishing qualities of each era and collection. Students can learn that the progression of production tools follows a precise order by evaluating the characteristics of these social formations and discovering that stone, metal, and iron were used in that order. Students can obtain a better comprehension of the thesis that "human development is regular, and human social forms develop from low to advanced" in historical materialism by gaining an understanding of the history of production tools.

In addition, increasing students' capacity for critical historical thinking can be accomplished through using museum curricular tools to foster historical materialism in middle schools. The cognitive ability of pupils to apply historical materialism as a theoretical foundation, think independently, and assess considerable historical knowledge and opinions in order to arrive at the proper conclusion is referred to as critical historical thinking [13]. The historical materialism and the critical thinking approaches to learning history are both scientific principles and scientific approaches to the study of history. It is highly congruent with critical thinking in spirit because historical materialism is a product of criticism and does not regard itself to be the ultimate truth or orthodoxy [14]. Students' capacities for critical thinking can be improved if they are taught historical materialism in the middle school years. Teachers can introduce museum curriculum resources to their students and guide them through the process of finding information, combining physical and document historical materials to verify history, encouraging questioning, hypothesizing, evidence collection, analysis, summary, reflection, and evaluation, and other activities that are consistent with the spirit of historical critical thinking [13]. We are of the opinion that improving students' historical critical thinking can be accomplished by applying museum curricular materials to the cultivation of historical materialism in middle schools.

4. Strategy

The use of museum curriculum resources in the teaching of historical materialism is essentially a curriculum. In Ralph W. Tyler's book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, he proposed the first theoretical paradigm in the curriculum field marked by four classic questions involving "objective, content, method and evaluation"[15]. This study will explore the application strategies of museum curriculum resources in historical materialism based on four components.

4.1. Formulating School-based Curriculum Objectives

The phrase "curriculum objective" refers to the particular goals and purposes that the curriculum is designed to accomplish. It lays out the degree to which it is anticipated that students at a particular stage of their education can grow their moral character, intelligence, physicality, and other qualities after finishing the curriculum. It is the basis upon which the curriculum content, teaching objectives, and teaching methods are formulated [16]. China's newly revised *History Curriculum Standards for*

Regular High Schools in 2020 emphasizes core literacy as the primary content of the curriculum objectives. One of the core literacies, historical materialism, has specific requirements, which include taking historical materialism as the guiding ideology for understanding and solving practical problems by learning the fundamental principles and methods of historical materialism [17]. Museum curriculum resources are an integral part of historical materials and are highly compatible with our curriculum objectives. Therefore, it is necessary to use museum curriculum resources to cultivate historical materialism in students to meet the requirements of middle school history curriculum objectives.

The incorporation of museum materials as a carrier into the educational goals of the school-based curriculum helps schools foster a historical materialist mindset. The first thing that needs to be done is to determine the path that the objectives of the school-based curriculum will take by implementing situational learning based on the requirements of the national curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to understand the historical context of the curriculum through the use of this method. The second thing that the history teaching research group can do is establish research activities to explore the goals of the school-based curriculum and then discuss those goals. In order to accomplish what has to be done, the group can choose the appropriate museum curriculum materials for the teaching material that is being covered at each grade level. The best way for educators to accomplish this objective is for them to select museum curriculum resources that are suitable for the particular grade level of each of their classes. The next step is for history teachers to select appropriate teaching methods by basing their decisions on the objectives of the school-based curriculum. Specifically, once students have a firm grasp on the knowledge of historical materialism, teachers can use situational teaching methods to guide them in exploring relevant objects of historical materialism from different periods in the museum. These objects can be found in the museum's collection. Students can effectively nurture their historical materialism during the middle school years if they practice what is described above.

4.2. Choosing and Organize the Curriculum Content

Curriculum content refers to the knowledge and experience systems selected from the human experience system according to the curriculum objectives and organized according to a particular logical order of subjects and children's psychological development needs [18]. Curriculum content is the primary carrier of school teaching, and schools can cultivate students' historical materialism by designing school-based curriculum content. The design of school-based curriculum content includes two aspects: the selection and organization of school-based curriculum content. Firstly, schools should choose the school-based curriculum content according to their curriculum and the characteristics of students' development. Then the school integrates the museum curriculum resources with the history curriculum content to cultivate the students' historical materialism. Specifically, museum curriculum resources include digital and physical resources, and teachers can rationally integrate online and offline museum curriculum resources according to different teaching contents. For example, to help students understand the contents of gunpowder, one of the country's four great inventions in China, teachers can show the development of gunpowder in online museums in class. Teachers guide students to realize that people need money to get gunpowder to help students understand the theory that "economic foundation determines the superstructure" in historical materialism [19]. In addition to online museums, teachers can lead students to visit the physical objects of gunpowder offline so that they can further deepen their understanding of historical materialism theory in practice. Secondly, with respect to organizing content, the school achieves its goal of fostering students' understanding of historical materialism through effective curriculum design. The organization of a school-based curriculum includes continuity, sequence, and integration, consistent with the core view of historical materialism [15]. Specifically, teachers can reasonably

organize the museum curriculum resources by leading students to visit their collections and their organizational forms. For example, teachers can guide students to visit the British Museum or the Metropolitan Museum of Art digital collection and integrate the diversified curriculum resources of the museum to guide the students to realize that the development of human beings is regular; human history from primitive, isolated, and separated people gradually developed into a close connection to the whole process; this is one of the main points of historical materialism.

4.3. Using Flipped Classroom and Problem-based Learning (PBL)

Curriculum method refers to the process in which the education implementer puts the prepared curriculum plan into practice, which is the means to realize the expected curriculum ideal, achieve the expected curriculum purpose, and realize the expected educational results. The main body of school curriculum methods is teachers. To better achieve the purpose of method, teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods to ensure the learning effect of middle school students. Specifically, teachers can use the teaching methods of the flipped classroom and PBL. Firstly, the flipped classroom refers to the participants in the flipped classroom who watched video lessons outside of class and engaged in classwork problems during class [20]. Teachers use the flipped classroom to put the process of students watching the teacher explain the museum curriculum resources video before the class to improve face-to-face efficiency. Specifically, teachers can pre-record the teaching videos of the museum curriculum resources, ask questions about historical materialism literacy, and send them to students to watch one week in advance. In class, students can discuss the answers written by themselves in groups. Teachers can guide the discussion and send group representatives to speak and communicate at the end. Next, PBL is a teaching method in which complex real-world problems promote student learning of concepts and principles instead of directly presenting facts and ideas [21]. Teachers can ask open questions after students visit the museum curriculum resources, and students can determine the solution to the problem in the history group. This method needs to use knowledge of historical materialism, and students need to test whether the strategy is feasible after the procedure is determined. Teachers mainly guide the direction during this period rather than provide new knowledge.

4.4. Adopting the Context, Input, Process, and Product Evaluation Model

American educator Ralph W. Taylor first introduced the concept of curriculum evaluation in the *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. He believed that the curriculum evaluation process is a process of determining whether the curriculum and teaching plan actually reach the educational objectives and degree [15]. Evaluating students 'historical materialism is not to prove students' learning results but to improve teachers' teaching strategies. Therefore, teachers can introduce the CIPP evaluation model through the museum curriculum resources in the school curriculum evaluation. The CIPP evaluation model emphasizes "learning by doing" to identify corrections for problematic project features [22]. It is a long-term process to cultivate students' historical material literacy. The purpose of an evaluation is to serve the teacher better, so learning by doing highly fits the requirements of this project. CIPP, which stands for context, input, process, and product, an evaluation model, is one of the most widely applied curriculum evaluation models in education [23]. Firstly, context evaluation helps to evaluate the needs and opportunities in a specific context or environment. The school can evaluate the school environment, the museum environment, the activity safety, the curriculum objectives of the activity, etc., to determine whether schools can have the conditions to introduce museum resources or hold museum curriculum resource activities to cultivate historical materialism literacy. Secondly, input evaluation focuses on issues related to evaluating the economy, resource, and faculty. For students to visit the museum, it is necessary to assess whether or

not the school has enough transportation funds, a curriculum plan to cultivate students' historical materialism, and teachers trained in historical materialism. Thirdly, the process needs to be constantly revised and improved through real-time feedback on the implementation of the scheme [24]. In cultivating students' historical materialism based on museum curriculum resources, teachers need to continually enhance and improve the teaching content, curriculum design, and teaching methods to help students effectively enhance the quality of historical materialism. At the same time, the school can carry out the supervision mechanism, appoint the history teaching research group to discuss a certain period of time, and determine the direction and method of modification. Finally, the product is the evaluation of the results, effectiveness, and impact of the program method to determine whether the goal is to continue, modify, or improve [25]. To evaluate the application of student museum curriculum resources in historical materialism, schools can adopt various evaluation methods, including questionnaire surveys, interviews with students, observation of students' behavior, etc. Through the school's evaluation results, it can decide whether the project will continue, be modified, or be improved.

5. Conclusion

Under the background of the Chinese history curriculum standard, this paper studies the method of museum curriculum resources to cultivate students' historical materialism literacy. The connotation has been defined, the value has been elaborated, and the strategy has provided the method. We can find that this study is helpful for both teachers and students. The strategy section is of practical significance. Educators can use the museum curriculum resources to cultivate students' historical materialism from four aspects: objectives, content, method, and evaluation.

The finding of this study has to be seen in light of some limitations. Firstly, this study focuses primarily on the curriculum standards of Chinese history courses. Therefore, the findings may not be wholly applicable to other cultural or historical contexts. The development of historical materialism literacy, while important in China, may not be a universally recognized goal across different educational systems. Secondly, the research heavily relies on the utilization of museum curriculum resources, which may limit its applicability in settings where such resources are not readily available or financially feasible. It presupposes a level of access to both physical museum visits and digital museum resources that may not be present in all educational contexts. Lastly, while the study provides a four-fold approach to cultivating historical materialism – objectives, content, method, and evaluation – this model may not take into account the individual differences of students, their learning styles, and the diversity of their socio-cultural backgrounds. It may also not fully account for the variations in teaching styles and the resources available to different educators. In light of these limitations, future research would benefit from a more globally inclusive examination of history curriculum standards and a broader exploration of resources beyond museums. It would also be beneficial to adapt the model to cater to individual student needs and various teaching environments.

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