

A Practical Study on the Design of Junior Middle School History Unit Assignments Based on Evaluation — Taking "The Great Depression and World War II" as an Example

Guilan Chen

Xi'an Aerospace Elite School, Xi'an 710100, Shaanxi, China

Abstract: History teaching evaluation is based on curriculum objectives, course content, academic requirements, and academic quality, with the cultivation of students' core historical literacy as its starting point and end point. It comprehensively utilizes evaluation's guiding, identification, diagnosis, motivation, regulation, and improvement functions to accurately determine the extent to which students' core historical literacy has been developed. Unit-based assignment design is an important component of the teaching process, and fully leveraging the results of unit assignment design evaluation rubrics to identify and motivate students, diagnose teaching and learning, and improve teaching and learning has important pedagogical significance.

Keywords: evaluation, junior high school history, unit assignment, design practice

1. Introduction

Evaluation of history courses primarily assesses students' core competencies demonstrated over time. The results are used to improve teaching practices and student learning methods, enabling teaching and evaluation to mutually reinforce each other and serve the development of students' core competencies.[1] There are many different evaluation methods, and homework evaluation is an important one. Homework evaluation primarily assesses student learning performance through the completion of various homework tasks[2] Unit assignments have guiding, identifying, diagnostic, motivating, and improvement functions. Designing unit assignments based on evaluation and fully leveraging the improvement function of evaluation in promoting teaching and learning is a crucial aspect of education and teaching, and a significant issue that cannot be underestimated.

2. Design Ideas for Unit Assignments Based on OBE Educational Concepts

The OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept[3] is a learning outcomes-oriented educational philosophy proposed by Australian and American scholars in the context of basic education reform. Its core content is how to cultivate talent. OBE teaching theory emphasizes promoting students' core competencies, setting reasonable teaching objectives, and pursuing personalized teaching evaluation based on learning outcomes. The core of the OBE educational concept emphasizes student-centeredness and implementing the teaching process backward from the results, that is, designing teaching backward from learning objectives. This is conducive to fulfilling the talent development needs led by the cultivation of core competencies in the history subject and implementing the fundamental task of cultivating morality and educating people. Based on this teaching philosophy, learning objectives are determined based on curriculum standards.

3. Determination of Unit Assignment Objectives Based on Curriculum Standards

In April 2022, the Ministry of Education issued the "Compulsory History Curriculum Standards" (2022 edition), which proposed new educational goals and implementation paths for the new era. Among these paths, consistency in "teaching-learning-evaluation" is one of them. One scholar has proposed: "Before considering how to carry out teaching and learning activities, teachers should first diligently consider the exact purpose of such learning and what evidence can demonstrate that learning has achieved that purpose." [4] This statement captures the essence of consistency in "teaching-learning-evaluation." So, what does consistency refer to, or what is the core of consistency? The core here should be learning objectives. What is the basis for establishing learning objectives? Curriculum standards are the guiding documents of the national curriculum. Compulsory curriculum sets out educational objectives, educational content, and basic teaching requirements, embodying the national will and playing a key role in cultivating morality and educating people.[5] The overall curriculum objective of the "Compulsory History Curriculum Standards" is to implement core competencies in the history discipline—the correct values, essential qualities, and key abilities that students gradually develop through course learning. This is a concentrated

reflection of the curriculum's educational value. Through the cultivation of core literacy, the fundamental task of establishing morality and cultivating people is implemented.[6] The overall curriculum objectives are concretized into stage objectives through the curriculum settings of different stages, and then the stage objectives are further decomposed and refined through the curriculum content in the curriculum standards, first refined into unit objectives. One of the paths to achieve unit objectives is to achieve the objectives of unit assignments. Therefore, determining reasonable unit assignment objectives is a prerequisite for evaluation-based unit assignment design.

The curriculum requirements for Unit 4 of the second semester of Grade 9, "The Great Depression and World War II," are as follows: Through understanding the Great Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal, students will gain a preliminary understanding of the impact of state intervention policies on the Western economy. By understanding Japan's invasion of China, the expansion of Italian fascism, and Nazi Germany, students will recognize that the German and Japanese aggression groups were the primary culprits in launching World War II. Students will also learn about the main course and battlefields of World War II, the Declaration of the United Nations, and important international conferences such as the Cairo Conference, the Yalta Conference, and the Potsdam Conference, and understand how the people of the world reflected on the arduousness of the fascist war and the reasons for its victory.[7] Based on these curriculum requirements and tailored to the specific learning conditions and proximal development zones of junior high school students, the assignment objectives for this unit are as follows: Based on an understanding of the historical facts of "The Great Depression and World War II," students will organize the unit's knowledge, grasp the basic context and characteristics of world historical development from 1929 to 1945, explore the significance of Roosevelt's New Deal and the World Anti-Fascist War, and recognize their important position in the development of world history.

4. Development of a Unit Assignment Assessment Rubric Oriented towards Unit Assignment Objectives

A rubric is an authentic assessment tool, a set of standards for evaluating or grading student work, achievements, growth records, or performance. It is also a teaching tool, a crucial bridge between teaching and assessment.[8] The unit assignment rubric incorporates assessment throughout the entire process of unit assignment design, implementation, and "teaching and learning" improvement, providing feedback on learning performance and making learning outcomes "measurable and scalable." Based on the above understanding, the assignment rubric for this unit is specified as shown in Table 1.

5. Designing Unit Assignments Based on Evaluation Rubrics

Evaluation-based unit design essentially means teaching what is evaluated, and learning what is taught. Therefore, unit design activities are centered around the unit assessment rubric. Based on the learning objectives and the unit assessment rubric, with the theme of crisis and response, and centered around the economic crisis and the responses of major countries, as well as the invasion of fascist countries and the responses of the people around the world, the evaluation-based unit design is presented below:

Unit Assignment Task 1

Based on the textbook and your knowledge, draw a diagram showing the relationship between economic crises, the different ways capitalist countries intervene in the economy, and their impact. (Hint: This can be done in a variety of formats, such as mind maps, tables, and logical relationship diagrams. These correspond to assessment items 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3, and to levels 1, 2, and 3 of learning objective 1.)

On the basis of completing unit assignment task 1 and having a preliminary understanding of the basic historical events from 1929 to 1945, we will proceed to unit assignment task 2: using historical pictures as a carrier, clarify the internal logical relationships and characteristics of the times of the basic historical events from 1929 to 1945, and understand the various connections in the process of historical development.

Unit Assignment 2

Draw a world map and mark the major events during World War II. Add images representing these events to the corresponding map markers. Analyze the causes of the Great Economic Crisis and the different responses of major countries based on textbooks and other credible historical materials. (Corresponding to assessment content 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3, and corresponding to assessment criteria Levels 1, 2, and 3 of Learning Objective 2.) (Hint: Draw a simple map of the world map, outlining its general outline. Analyze the causes of the Great Economic Crisis and the different responses of major countries from a domestic, international, and historical perspective. Gather resources online, from libraries, and from museums to ensure a well-reasoned and well-founded analysis, drawing on historical evidence and integrating historical and theoretical perspectives.)

Table 1. Rubric for the unit assignment "The Great Depression and World War II"

Learning Objectives Task)	Evaluation content (Evaluation observation point)	Evaluation subject			Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation level (excellent, good, poor)
		student	teacher	School		
Objective 1: Understand the major economic crises and the responses of major countries, as well as the invasion of fascist countries and the responses of the people of the world; gradually establish a sense of historical time sequence and spatial concepts.	:Be able to talk about the major economic crises and the responses of major countries; 1-2: Ability to explore the value of different historical materials and use them to explain important historical events in "The Great Depression and World War II"; 1-3: Be able to understand the significance of important historical events from 1929 to 1945, and be able to apply historical materialism to make reasonable explanations and brief evaluations of important historical events.				Level 1: Historical events are organized completely and accurately; explanations of important historical events are well-reasoned and well-founded; and reasonable explanations and brief evaluations of important historical events can be made from the perspective of productivity and production relations. Level 2: The historical events are basically complete and accurate; the explanations of important historical events are basically reasonable and well-founded; and the student can basically make reasonable explanations and brief evaluations of important historical events from the perspective of productivity and production relations. Level 3: The historical events are partially complete and accurate; the explanations of some important historical events are well-reasoned and well-founded; and reasonable explanations and brief evaluations of some important historical events can be made from the perspective of productivity and production relations.	
Goal 2: By collecting historical pictures related to "The Great Depression and World War II" and introducing them, we can clarify the internal logical relationships of some pictures and grasp the basic context and characteristics of the development of the world history from 1929 to 1945.	2-1: Be able to mark major events in the course of World War II on a world map, add images representing these events to the corresponding map markers, and clarify the internal logical relationships of some images; 2-2: Be able to analyze the causes of major economic crises and the responses of major countries based on historical facts; 2-3: Be able to analyze the invasion of fascist countries and the Chinese people's response strategies and their significance.				Level 1: The image selection is accurate, the spatial and temporal positioning is precise, and the logical relationships within the selected images are clearly analyzed. The author is able to accurately analyze the causes of the Great Economic Crisis and the responses of major countries from ancient times to the present. The analysis of the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the Chinese people and their significance is well-reasoned and coherent. Level 2: Image selection is generally accurate, spatial and temporal positioning is generally correct, and analysis of the internal logical relationships of selected images is generally clear; analysis of the causes of the Great Economic Crisis and the responses of major countries is generally accurate, drawing parallels between the past and present; analysis of the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the Chinese people, as well as their significance, is generally well-reasoned and coherent, and provides a coherent understanding of both the past and the present. Level 3: The image selection is accurate, the spatial and temporal positioning is correct, and the analysis of the internal logical relationships of the selected images is clear. The author is able to provide a generally accurate analysis of the causes of the Great Economic Crisis and the responses of major countries from ancient times to the present. The analysis of the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the Chinese people, as well as their significance, is generally well-reasoned and coherent.	

Learning Objectives (Task)	Evaluation content (Evaluation observation point)	Evaluation subject				Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation level (excellent, good, poor)
		student	teacher	School	society		
Objective 3: Undertake the design of the "The Great Depression and World War II" exhibition board during the "Remembering History and Looking to the Future" campaign, recognize the important position of Roosevelt's New Deal and the world's anti-fascist war in the development of world history; gain a preliminary understanding of peace and development as the theme of the times, and form an awareness of building a community with a shared future for mankind.	3-1: Through the design of the exhibition board "The Great Depression and World War II" as part of the "Remembering History and Looking to the Future" activity, we will recognize the diversity, differences, and uneven development of world civilizations; 3-2: Understand the development of human society from fragmentation to integration through the invasion of fascist countries and the responses of the people of the world; 3-3: Be able to summarize the lessons learned from major economic crises and the responses of major countries, as well as the invasion of fascist countries and the responses of the people of the world; be able to deeply understand that peace and development have become the themes of the times, and deeply understand that building a new international order and building a community with a shared future for mankind are the inevitable trends of world history.					<p>Level 1: The design of the exhibition board is highly consistent with the theme, combining aesthetics, literary quality, and authenticity. Through undertaking the design activity of the exhibition board "The Great Depression and World War II" in the "Remembering History and Looking to the Future" activity, students have an accurate understanding of the diversity, differences, and imbalances in the development of world civilizations; have a deep understanding of the development process of human society from dispersion to integration; have a profound summary of the lessons learned from the Great Depression and the response of major countries, as well as the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the people of the world, and have a deep understanding that peace and development have become the theme of the times, and have a profound understanding that building a new international order and building a community with a shared future for mankind are the inevitable trends of world history.</p> <p>Level 2: The design of the exhibition board is highly consistent with the theme, combining aesthetics, literary quality, and authenticity. Through undertaking the design activity of the exhibition board "The Great Depression and World War II" in the "Remembering History and Looking to the Future" activity, students have a basically accurate understanding of the diversity, differences, and imbalances in the development of world civilizations; have a basic understanding of the development process of human society from dispersion to integration; can basically summarize the lessons learned from the Great Depression and the response of major countries, and the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the people of the world, have a basic understanding that peace and development have become the theme of the times, and basically recognize that building a new international order and building a community with a shared future for mankind are the inevitable trends of world history.</p> <p>Level 3: The design of the exhibition board is highly consistent with the theme, combining aesthetics, literary quality, and authenticity. Through undertaking the design activity of the exhibition board "The Great Depression and World War II" in the "Remembering History and Looking to the Future" activity, students have a partially accurate understanding of the diversity and differences of world civilizations and the imbalance in their development; they partially understand the development process of human society from dispersion to integration; they can partially summarize the lessons learned from the Great Depression and the response of major countries, as well as the invasion of fascist countries and the response of the people of the world; they partially understand that peace and development have become the theme of the times, and they partially realize that building a new international order and building a community with a shared future for mankind are the inevitable trends of world history.</p>	

Unit Assignment 3

As part of the "Remembering History, Looking Forward to the Future" activity, students from Class 1, Grade 9, were tasked with designing a display board titled "The Great Depression and World War II." (Hint: This design can be done using handwritten newspapers, mind maps, logical relationship diagrams, or short essays. The design must be well-reasoned and well-reasoned.) (This corresponds to assessment content 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3, and to assessment criteria levels 1, 2, and 3 for Learning Objective 3.)

This unit's design is task-driven, ensuring consistency in "teaching, learning, and evaluation." This fully embodies the unit's design philosophy of "learning by doing" and "learning by doing." This strengthens students' ability to apply multidisciplinary knowledge and skills for comprehensive inquiry and infuses interdisciplinary thematic learning. Evaluation is integrated throughout the entire unit design process. Students, teachers, schools, and society use the unit's design rubric to record learning performance, grade learning outcomes, and reflect on them. These assessment results are used to improve instruction, further promoting the achievement of learning objectives, fostering the implementation of core historical literacy, and ultimately achieving the fundamental goal of "cultivating morality and educating people."

6. Teaching and Learning Enhancement Through Evaluation Feedback

When interpreting and providing feedback on evaluation results, more attention should be paid to student progress, focusing on value-added evaluation and performance-based evaluation. "We should focus on students' improvement in mastering knowledge, applying methods, solving problems, demonstrating and expressing themselves, as well as changes in their cooperation, communication, and emotional attitudes during the learning process." [9] Teachers should fully utilize the results of the unit assignment evaluation rubric to identify problems in teaching, adjust teaching progress, content, capacity, and teaching strategies in a timely manner, and give full play to the role of evaluation results in improving "teaching and learning." The design of junior high school history unit assignments based on evaluation fully implements the integrated teaching and evaluation concept of the new curriculum standards. Greater efforts should be made to implement core competencies in history, activate students' higher-order historical thinking, promote the improvement of students' comprehensive abilities, and cultivate students' international perspectives and global awareness.

References

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