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Research on Innovative Evaluation of Core Literacy of Morality and Rule of Law in Junior Middle School

Yafeng Yan

East China Normal University Xinjiang 7th Division 131 Middle School

Abstract: On April 21,2022, China's Ministry of Education released updated compulsory education curriculum standards. The Moral and Rule of Law curriculum specifically outlines five core competencies: Political Identity, Moral Cultivation, Rule-of-Law Awareness, Sound Personality and Sense of Responsibility. To effectively assess these competencies and achieve educational objectives, this study conducts innovative research on three key aspects: evaluation content, assessment principles, and assignment design. The proposed solutions include precisely setting competency goals, introducing novel assessment formats, and diversifying homework assignments. These measures aim to optimize classroom instruction, enhance learning efficiency through engaging methods, and ultimately cultivate essential moral and legal literacy in junior high students.

Keywords: junior middle school morality and rule of law, core literacy evaluation, new type

1. Determine the content of evaluation based on curriculum standards

1.1 Refine the core quality objectives according to the curriculum standards

The Moral Education and Rule of Law Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) outlines the core competencies, overarching objectives, and stage-specific goals. When implementing these standards in classroom teaching, educators should align with stage objectives and textbook content while considering students' learning contexts to develop precise, detailed competency targets for each academic year, semester, unit, and lesson period.[1]

Core competency objectives in classroom teaching can focus on cultivating one specific skill or simultaneously develop multiple competencies. For example, the lesson "Youth with Integrity" emphasizes nurturing students' moral cultivation and well-rounded character, helping them internalize and externalize principles like "acting with integrity" and "striving for excellence." The lesson "Observing Rules" fosters responsibility awareness, integrates legal concepts, and enhances ethical development.

1.2 Set core competency questions by grade

The 2022 Edition of the Moral Education and Rule of Law Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education proposes that assessment methods should integrate observation, interviews, assignments, and written tests. Considering the varying psychological development across junior high school grades, the author suggests adapting assessment formats accordingly. For instance, the seventh-grade textbook emphasizes guiding students to develop self-awareness,

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build harmonious relationships with peers, teachers, and family members, and establish a proper understanding of life values. As students transition into middle school with underdeveloped mental maturity and limited comprehension depth, paper-based assessments should include not only conventional multiple-choice questions and material analysis tasks but also an additional video-based question titled "Interpersonal Relationships" for evaluation. Well-designed questions allow students flexible responses while maintaining assessment validity.

Similarly, eighth-grade assessments employ scenario simulations, role-playing exercises, and activity planning. For instance, in an interview-based test, students receive materials including He Wei's brilliant commentary on China's men's football team's defeat and viral netizen comments like "Though we have the worst men's football team, we have the most poetic commentators." The question asks: "What insights do you gain from this knowledge?" Students may explore national pride and governance systems, or apply legal principles to rationally expose the Chinese men's football team's shortcomings while upholding national interests. The answers aren't singular—emphasizing practical application of learning.

Ninth-grade students possess a wealth of knowledge, but often lack organization and interdisciplinary connections. Assessment methods such as subject integration, logical diagram design (color), current affairs commentary, and group presentations can be employed. For instance, analyzing the process of European and American countries transitioning to capitalism, or examining how the Soviet Union and China adopted socialist paths, what insights can inspire the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era? Students may start from the premise that different national conditions require different approaches, recognize the inevitability of a shared future for humanity, or envision the future based on social development patterns, striving for the communist cause.

2. Based on the learning situation, grasp the evaluation principle

In academic proficiency examinations, reference answers often become standardized solutions. This not only restricts teachers' grading practices but also stifles their pedagogical approaches, with severe issues of timed scoring and rigid point allocation dominating the evaluation system.[2] Under such mechanisms, even open-book exams for junior high school Morality and Rule of Law courses remain trapped in the "more memorization, more points" dilemma. The Compulsory Education Morality and Rule of Law Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) provides three sample questions, whose explanatory notes demonstrate the need for diversified answer perspectives.

Innovative evaluation questions are flexible and varied, so the corresponding evaluation standards should also be flexible and varied.

2.1 The principle of flexible scoring

From the perspective of motivating students, if teachers can respect students' thinking and encourage innovative thinking in paper-and-pencil test evaluation without being bound by high scores, students will be more willing to express their opinions boldly and systematically. Teachers can give segmented scores for the core literacy reflected in the test and not be stingy with giving high scores.

From the perspective of policy implementation in the high school entrance examination (Zhongkao), cross-regional student recruitment is prohibited. Under the province-wide standardized test system, if students from provincial capitals score 550 points to enter vocational secondary schools while those from ordinary cities achieve the same score to attend municipal key high schools, and if there's no cross-city grading in exam evaluation, the "innovative assessment" section of this subject—despite having a high average score and minimal differentiation—would not significantly impact students' high school admissions. This effectively allows teachers complete flexibility in grading, enabling them to award high scores or even perfect marks to students.

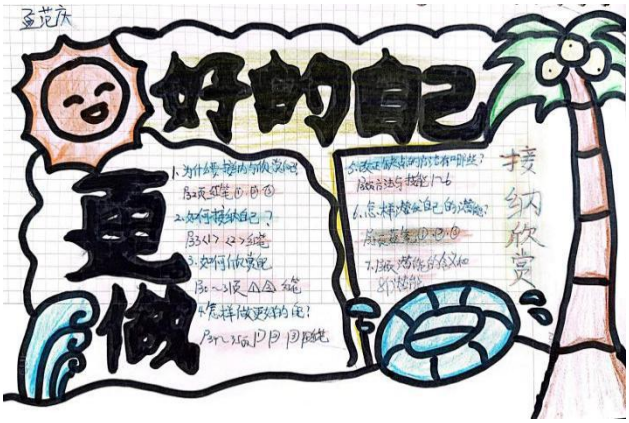
2.2 The principle of diverse question types

In Chinese composition exams, teachers can flexibly evaluate essays without standardized answer templates.

Students' writings showcase diverse perspectives and academic rigor, with various angles and levels of expression. In contrast, the actual questions from the Moral Education and Rule of Law section in the high school entrance exam exhibit a tendency to "overemphasize textbook answers." When combined with history exams, students often waste excessive time on Moral Education and Rule of Law questions due to their lengthy "standard answers." This question format completely undermines the purpose of open-book exams, reducing students to mere "matching-the-references" exercises: reading question stems, identifying keywords, consulting reference materials, finding corresponding knowledge points, and then copying them.

English exams typically include listening sections that require multimedia support. Why can't the Morality and Rule of Law test adopt similar formats? In this information age, modern classrooms integrate audio, visual, and interactive elements. For current affairs news and video materials in assessments, instead of traditional text-based formats, we could introduce innovative question types: playing videos with follow-up questions, designing creative blackboard layouts using colored pens for clear organization, implementing keyword associations to simplify answer prompts while expanding response scope, and conducting thematic discussions that mirror high school classroom methodologies.

3. Optimize evaluation and homework based on "double reduction"



3.1 Fun blackboard work

The design of the blackboard for hobbies can fully display the individual thinking of each student, decorate the homework with their favorite elements, sort out the logical relationship, and cultivate innovative thinking.

3.2 Homemade video assignments

According to the content of the teaching material unit, teachers set up a theme and unit assignment for the group to shoot homemade short films. In this process, students work in groups and can experience multiple roles such as screenwriter, director, cameraman and actor, so as to strengthen the sense of teamwork, cultivate the sense of responsibility and improve the personality.

3.3 Teacher-student interactive work

To better understand students 'learning progress and generate formative assessments, homework assignments should incorporate interactive teacher-student dynamics. [3] For example, students could anonymously write on paper: "What terms or phrases in the textbook have you yet to grasp?", "Who is your favorite classmate during Moral Education and Rule of Law classes, and why?", or "Which aspect of the teacher's instruction or knowledge presentation do you find inappropriate? Please suggest alternative approaches". Through these anonymous responses, students develop critical reflection skills, learn from peers' strengths, provide authentic self-assessment feedback, and enable teachers to make timely instructional adjustments.

3.4 Hot topic review assignment

In today's information-saturated society, it's crucial for students to use smartphones wisely and develop digital

literacy through "information dieting". By assigning tasks requiring analysis of trending topics, educators can guide students to critically evaluate and filter information. This approach helps bridge the generation gap in data usage – as age differences create stark variations in smartphone preferences and content recommendations across four generations. Such disparities breed mutual confusion, deepen communication barriers between teenagers and parents/teachers, and ultimately lead to self-contained "digital communities" that fuel family conflicts.

Teachers coordinate the textbook content and assign corresponding topic assignments to students, such as "How do you view the Liu Xuezhou incident?", "Would you envy Gu Ailing?", "Why can't I manage my time well?", and "How should community trash bins be placed for better organization". These topics can serve as a foundation for high school thematic teaching, encouraging students and parents to participate together in searching and organizing content, deepening personal interactions, identifying parent-child conversation topics, cultivating shared habits and hobbies, broadening students' horizons, and preventing the detrimental effects of online games and low-speed internet culture on teenagers.

Epilogue

The "Innovative Assessment" of Moral and Legal Education Core Competencies in junior high schools is a series of exploratory studies aimed at cultivating students 'political identity, moral cultivation, legal awareness, well-rounded personality, and sense of responsibility. Utilizing homework design as a tool, it relies on the objectives of the new curriculum standards and employs innovative test formats as assessment methods. The purpose of these new formats in examinations is to innovate test structures and content, stimulate students' interest in the subject, and broaden their horizons, rather than serving as obstacles to increase differentiation or complicate assessments. Such questions should be "point-generating questions" rather than "question-setting traps." Only by adhering to this principle does this research hold practical significance.

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