

Application Research on “Seminar” Teaching Method of “Outline of Modern Chinese History”

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Abstract—“Outline of Modern Chinese History” is one the ideological and political theory compulsory courses for the college and university students, which is aimed at helping students understand the national history and national conditions, and profoundly understanding how have the history and the people selected a Marxist, selected the Communist Party of China and selected the socialist road. There have been some problems in teaching of Beijing University of Physical, which impacts the actual teaching effects of the “Outline” course. In the education transformation for the subject students, through the application of “seminar” teaching method which combines the teaching and researching and focus on cultivating the students’ scientific research capacity and cooperation ability to achieve the ideological and political education objectives of the cause and improve the quality of teaching courses.

Keywords—*Ideological and Political Theory Course in colleges and universities; Outline of Modern Chinese History; “seminar”; teaching method*

I. INTRODUCTION

In October 2004, the CPC Central Committee, the State Council issued Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the undergraduates’ Ideological and Political Education; in 2005, the Central Propaganda Department, Ministry of Education issued “05 new course implementation plan” on ideological and political theory course of colleges and universities (hereinafter referred to as the ideological and political course), it is a significant strategic move to improve the quality of higher education, and to cultivate high quality talents. “Outline of Modern Chinese History” (hereinafter referred to as the “Outline”) is a new course opened in “05 New Course Implementation Plan”. The Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the undergraduates’ Ideological and Political Education issued by the Central Propaganda Department, the Ministry of Education and its implementation plan indicates that “Outline of Modern Chinese History” is the main course of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities, it “mainly teaching the history of resisting against the foreign aggression, fighting for national independence, overthrowing the reactionary rule and achieving people liberation of China on modern times, it helps students

understand the national history, national conditions, and profoundly understand the how have the history and the people selected Marxist, selected the Communist Party of China and selected the socialist road”.

The ideological and political education objectives of this course is to cultivate the students’ patriotic spirit and noble moral sentiments, enhance the college students’ social responsibility, historical mission and national pride [1]. Therefore, this is a historically based course endowed with the function of ideological and political education. The teaching of the “Outline” course shall use the history details as much as possible to demonstrate the historic logic and to help students to define and deepen the understanding of social law of historical development [2].

As “Outline” course is a newly opened course, the content organization, disposing, the relationship between the related courses and teaching methods are not mature. Coupled with the particularity of sport university students, the teachers found a lot of problems in teaching practice, such as: “chalk and talk” is the main teaching method, that the students just listening passively, and the interaction between teachers and students is less; the content depth of the teaching is not enough, the active learning enthusiasm is not high, the actual effect of teaching is not ideal.

Under this background, in order to solve the problems existed in teaching, improve teaching effectiveness, and achieve the goals of effective ideological and political education in the course teaching through telling the history, we have been paying attention to experience summary in teaching and continuing to explore innovative paths, and carried out a series of reforms. This paper will focus on introducing how to use “seminar” teaching method in the “Outline” course teaching to improve teaching effectiveness

II. INTRODUCTION TO “SEMINAR” TEACHING METHOD AND ITS APPLICATION NECESSITY IN “OUTLINE” COURSE

A. Introduction to “Seminar” Teaching Method

“Seminar” comes from the Latin “seminarium” which means “nursery” or “birthplace”. It is interpreted as “a class for students to study a certain issue and to discuss it with the

teacher”, in the “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English”

, the corresponding Chinese word are 研讨班 (research seminars), 讲习会 (workshops), 研讨小组 (discussion groups), 研讨会 (rap session), and so on. Originated in England, popular in Europe, it is the basic form of liberal arts teaching in the universities of developed western countries, which has been widely used in various courses teaching of many countries in the world. It is a kind of classroom colloquium regularly (for example, once a week) organized by the teacher and participated by the students. All students are arranged to give a speech on some academic subjects or give a report on the scientific research project he engaged in. The participants will query and discuss the contents reported by the speaker in order to achieve the goals of communication, inspiration and mutual learning.

“Seminar” is a teaching form combining discussion with research, which stresses that the undergraduate shall carry forward the spirit of science to explore the truth in the learning activities. In “seminar”, the “creative research method shall be clarified, the personnel with creative ability shall be trained and the independent spirit of science shall be inculcated” [3]. It mainly has the following characteristics: 1. The students’ independent learning. Cultivate the students’ spirit of active exploration and research, the ability of materials collection and sort, independent thinking and problem solving skills. 2. The interactions between the teachers and students and the interactions between the students in the teaching process, rather than the simple traditional inculcating way of the teacher teach and answer what the teacher asks. 3. The cooperation in the students’ discussion is helpful in cultivating the team spirit. 4. The research results shall be exchanged in the manner of oral discussion in the group or among the group.

“Seminar” is a burgeoning educational innovation model, more and more teachers apply “seminar” to the teaching to enhance the effectiveness of teaching. But in China’s undergraduate teaching, it is difficult to be implemented in the lobby teaching due to large scale of students and the effect is greatly reduced, so it has not yet become the basic teaching forms like the west. However, if we want to make the ideological and political theory course in colleges and universities to become a course which can benefit the college students a lifelong time and really enjoyed by the undergraduates, new teaching methods must be adopted to improve the teaching effectiveness of the ideological and political theory course of the undergraduate.

B. “Seminar” Teaching Method and its Necessity on Application of “Outline” Course

In the teaching practice of the “Outline” course of Beijing University of Physical Education, there are two problems plaguing us, and affecting the realization of teaching goals of “Outline” course. Students in our university can be divided into subjects students (who have gone through the study in formal secondary school and participated in the college entrance examinations, including the Students of Human Sciences School, Rehabilitation

Department, Management School, Communications Department, Foreign Languages Department, Education School, Social Physical Education Department) and technical students (who have not gone through the study in formal secondary school but have been trained in amateur sports school, provincial sports team, including students of Competitive Sports School, Wushu Institute, Fine Arts Department). On the one hand, the subject students have systematically studied modern Chinese history [4] in the secondary school, if the method of providing facts and clarify the clues without adding new teaching elements is still adopted in the “Outline” course teaching, that will make students feel dull tasteless, and it will become simple mechanical repetition and short sermons. Therefore, the repetition with the high school history shall be avoided in the studying process of “Outline” course; on the other hand, there is a big gap in the knowledge structure between the subject students and technical students, the technical students have not accepted basic education systematically, and they has a general low education level and poor foundation for modern Chinese history, they have never learned or know very little.

So, how to improve teaching methods and improve teaching effectiveness of ideological and political theory course in our university subject to the problems occurred in the teaching of “Outline” course? In the working conference of national ideological and political theory course held in July 2008, Comrade Liu Yandong clearly pointed out that “thoroughly implement the scientific concept of development, enhance the ideological understanding, vigorously promote the reform and innovation, and try to fully realize the target of obviously improving the ideological and political theory course condition in the colleges and universities in 4 years or so”. This has pointed out the directions for in-depth study of teaching law of “Outline” course, taking effective measures and seriously solving the current problems, that is to say “people oriented” is the starting point and ending point of the ideological and political education in colleges and university. Contemporary college students is the main taught objects of the ideological and political theory courses, so we should insist on the principle of student-oriented and highlight their dominant role in the teaching. For the specific details to the teaching work of the “Outline” course of our university, that is to emphasize student-oriented on the following two meanings: on the one hand, the fundamental purpose of this course is for the students’ healthy growth, improving the students’ ideological and theoretical quality, helping the undergraduates establish a correct world outlook, life outlook and values outlook, on the other hand, if we want to teach this course well, we shall understand and master the practical learning and ideological situation of the students in various schools and department, we shall respect students, understand students, care for the students and select the teaching method that the students is easy to accept, then we can get the mind of the students in teaching this course and make that learning this course is the internal urge of the students and fully mobilize their enthusiasm and initiative, to make the harvest on study a conscious action.

In september 2008, the CPC Central Committee Publicity Department and the Ministry of Education once again issued "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the of teaching staffs' Ideological and Political construction in Colleges and University " to encourage exploration of teaching methods in line with the characteristics of teaching law and the undergraduates, to promote heuristic, participatory, interactive, case-based and research teaching, take advantage of multimedia and network, advocate to use new technologies and realize the modernization of teaching method step by step; at the same time, stress to actively explore scientific examination assessment methods, focus on examining the students' ideological and political qualities and moral character. This reform direction reflects the trend of modern education development, also inspires us to reform the teaching methods for the "Outline" course.

Subject to the specific condition of the subject students, in order to avoid the repetition of the high school history and improve their study ability of "Outline" course to a higher level, it is particularly an important issue to guide students to adapt and master the study method of independent thinking, and problems analyzing in university. But the "seminar" teaching method combines the teaching and scientific research and focus on cultivating the students' research capacity and cooperation capabilities, is expected to solve the problems existed in the "Outline" course teaching for subject students and improve the effectiveness of teaching.

III. SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTS OF THE "SEMINAR" TEACHING METHOD ON "OUTLINE" COURSE

After several years of exploration on teaching, from the spring semester of 2014, great changes has been taken place in the teaching content, teaching methods and assessment for the subject students and the students of Education School and Social Physical Education Department . We have changed the teaching model of traditional "chalk and talk" and the students just listening passively in the past, but to play the main role of the students in the teaching, and pass the learning initiative to the students, inspire students to think positively, mobilize the students' enthusiasm and develop the students' independence, change the passive listening to active thinking.

A. Specific Implementation of "Seminar" Teaching Method

Our specific approach is: we can arrange the focus and difficult problems of the "Outline" course to 14 questions, that is: 1. In 1840, why did the Opium War outbreak (what kind of problems exactly existed in China before the Opium War) ? 2. In Sino-Japanese War, Why Beiyang Navy is completely annihilated? 3. What is status and role of Hong Xiuquan - the representative of Chinese farmers, in the Chinese revolution and modernization? 4. What is the reason for failure of Hundred Days' Reform? (Analysis from subjective reasons)5. From Reform to 1911 Revolution, why modern China selected a development road of revolution? 6. Why Chinese people did not embark on the road of capitalist when modern Chinese people exploring the way for the

country? 7. Chinese advanced intellectuals selected Marxism as the theoretical weapon for reformation, what is the reason for this decision? 8. After the October Revolution, why did the post Soviet Union bring the National Party and the Communist Party of China together to carry out the National Revolution ?9. From the failure of 1927 Great Revolution to Zunyi Meeting of 1935, what caused the consecutive "left" errors in the Chinese Communist Party?10. What are the causes and characteristics of the factions of Chinese Kuomintang ? 11. From 1927 to 1937, what kind of political, economic, cultural and diplomatic initiatives did the National Party take for China? 12. During the anti-Japanese war period, why there were so many traitors in China? 13. What is the real reason of the breakup of the Second Cooperation between the Communist Party and the National Party and what is the historical responsibility of the outbreak of the civil war?14. What caused the failure of the Chinese Nationalist Party who had ruled China for 22 years? The students can be divided into study groups with members less than 8 people, and each group will get one question. The first is group discussion, this question can be analyzed from which aspects? Then is work division, the students shall be responsible for their own part of information access, collection, arrangement, and reading a book while completing this work. Then is the group discussion and completion condition checking. After determining the subject content, all members of the group shall go to the teachers' office, and tell teachers the prepared content that at his own responsibility, the teachers should carefully examine whether each student has done the work carefully. The teachers shall record the content while listening, and give out a score for the students according to the student's statement. After the completion of the report, the teacher will give out an assessment to their report and point out their shortcoming and which aspects needs a further information access and a supplement while correcting wrong point of view. The students shall make PPT according to their preparation and teachers' guidance. In the following course, each group, or one or two assigned student shall represent the group to give a speech on their work on the teacher's desk, or each team member give out a speech on his prepared part, and the teacher shall make a record while listening, and require other students to listen carefully. After the speech, there are two opportunities for the students to ask questions and give assessment to the work of the group. And point out the advantages and disadvantages of this work, or raise a question to the content of the speech, or make a supplement. The teacher shall record the speech case in the "education record sheet" as a reference of the classroom performance scores. Finally, the teacher shall give a summary assessment and give appropriate complementary explanations. After the class, the teacher shall give the final grade for the work of each student in the group according to the last show of the work in the class (the work grades of the group members are different). This allows the subject students to further understand the history problems basing on the history acknowledge studied in the original high school and improve their historical reference capabilities when solving the practical problems.

B. Effects after the Implement of “Seminar” Teaching Method

In the end of the semester, we gave out questionnaires to students, a total of 760 valid questionnaires. The questions of the questionnaire are: In the link of classroom teaching, the students participated in the classroom teaching in the form of “group discussion after class-reported to the teacher-work presentations in the class”, please evaluate the effects of this teaching method and write out the harvest and recommendations. There are five options of excellent, good, ordinary, poor, bad, 588 people chose excellent, accounting for 77% of the total; 158 people chose good, accounting for 21% of the total, 14 people chose ordinary, accounting for 2% of the total, the people who chose excellent and good together accounting for 98% of the total. Among the seven categories of harvest, 28% of students (456) think they “have learned knowledge and methods of access to information”; 19% of students (298) think their “independent learning ability and learning efficiency have been improved”; 17% of students (266 people) think they “have enhanced the interest in learning and motivation”; 15% of students (241) think their “courage, language skills and teaching ability have been built up”; the selection proportion of the previous four selections has obviously exceeding the average selection proportion, which indicates the evident harvest. 13% of students (209) think they “have improved the team-work ability” ; 5% of the students (77) think they “have strengthened the communication and interaction with the teacher, and realized that the teachers work is hard”; 4% of students (63) think that they “have learnt to think from a different perspective.”

IV. CONCLUSION

The application of “seminar” in the teaching methods of “Outline” course can pass the initiative of learning to the students and change the students’ passive listening to active thinking, which can help students understand the national history, national conditions, enhance college students’ understanding and cognition to “three selection”, cultivate the students’ scientific research ability and achieve the teaching objectives and requirements of “Outline” course more effectively.

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