

The Problems of Yoga Courses in Colleges and Universities and the Countermeasures: Evidence from China

Hongyan Zheng*

Luxun Academy of Fine Arts, Shenyang, 110004, China

*Corresponding author

Abstract: *With the continuous upgrading of physical education reform in colleges and universities, Chinese colleges and universities begin to set up optional yoga courses to enrich the classroom teaching content and improve the physical and mental health level of college students. However, the survey found that there are still problems in yoga courses in Chinese colleges and universities, such as weak teachers, insufficient explanation of yoga theory, yoga cognitive bias and lack of teaching conditions. In response to the problems identified in the survey, the study concluded that: Yoga teachers should receive formal and systematic yoga training, constantly improve their teaching level, strengthen yoga theory learning from their own point of view, correctly publicize yoga knowledge, timely adjust the teaching content, so as to carry out more targeted yoga teaching. At the same time, it strives for school or regional policy and financial support, seeks cooperation between different disciplines and even inter-school cooperation, and ensures the smooth development of yoga courses.*

Keywords: *Yoga courses, university, physical education*

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of the pace of social development, the problems of high learning pressure, psychological anxiety and difficulties in interpersonal communication among college students have become increasingly apparent. Due to the lack of timely and effective counseling, cases of students taking extreme measures due to these problems are frequently reported. In addition, there are not a few students with sub-health conditions such as underweight, obesity and other body problems, insomnia and headaches. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a course to help students adjust themselves physically and mentally.

According to the search on WOS and CNKI with the keyword of "college yoga", the first article on the topic was published in 2005. Since then, the speed of related research has shown the characteristics of slow, fast and steady [1], and the research content has gradually passed from the feasibility of course opening to the construction of course model. The articles of reflection and problem summary about the course opening in stages usually focus on the problems of the course opening in a certain school or region, and have limited significance for guiding the yoga course opening in other regions or colleges. Based on this, through literature review, combined with the actual teaching experience of LuXun Academy of Fine Arts and interviews with students who have selected courses in the past, this study summarized and supplemented the existing common problems in yoga teaching in colleges and universities, analyzed these problems, and then proposed corresponding countermeasures, it hoping to provide certain enlightenment for the establishment of yoga courses in colleges and universities and the improvement of course teaching effect.

2. Related works

2.1 Origin of yoga

Yoga is a Chinese word originally derived from the Indian Sanskrit "yug" or "yuj", which means "unity", "union" or "harmony". Yoga originated in ancient India, is one of the six philosophical schools of ancient India, to explore the truth and method of "Brahma self unity". What modern people call yoga is mainly a series of spiritual cultivation methods.

Around 300 BC, Patanjali, the founder of India's great sage Yoga, created the Yoga Sutra, on the basis of which Indian yoga really took shape, and the yoga practice was formally formulated into a complete eight-branch system. Yoga is a system that helps humans reach their full potential by raising awareness.

Yoga poses use ancient and easy to master skills to improve people's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual abilities. It is a way of movement to achieve the harmony and unity of body, mind and spirit. It includes the posture of body adjustment, the breathing method of breath adjustment, and the meditation method of heart adjustment, so as to achieve the unity of body and mind.

Yoga is a 5,000-year-old physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India with the aim of improving the body and mind. On 11 December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared 21 June as the International Day of Yoga, and the first International Day of Yoga was held in 2015.

From the spiritual level, it says that this unity is the combination of Atman and Brahman, similar to the Chinese philosophical thought of "the unity of heaven and man". At the practical level, yoga is a series of methods that lead practitioners to achieve physical, mental and emotional balance, and it is also a science that can be integrated into daily life to help practitioners develop a healthy lifestyle.

There are many different schools of yoga and different ways to practice it. With traditional yoga: Taking Raja Yoga as an example, Raja Yoga consists of eight parts: forbidden Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, so it is also called Ashtanga Yoga [2]. It can be seen that asana practice is only one aspect of yoga, not equal to yoga. The misperception that asana practice is equated with yoga can lead learners to overemphasize external practice and neglect the guiding role of yoga in leading physical and mental harmony and establishing a healthy lifestyle. Yoga courses in colleges and universities should not be oriented to asana practice and focus on students' practice at the physical level, but should allow students to establish a comprehensive and correct cognition of yoga. Only after having a correct understanding can they truly appreciate the subtleties of yoga practices.

2.2 University yoga positioning

College yoga teaching should be carried out according to the actual needs of college students and combined with the characteristics of schools or regions. The postures, pranayama and concentration exercises in yoga can intuitively show the teaching effect, and they are all suitable for the subject teaching. Through physical stretching, breathing control and concentration practice (meditation is a spontaneous state of deep concentration, so general meditation can only be called concentration practice in a strict sense), students gradually shift from external practice to internal change, which can not only improve posture, but also improve emotional control, stability and concentration. In addition, some characteristic colleges (such as art universities) can set up yoga courses with the characteristics of the university (such as physiotherapy yoga) on the premise of teaching basic yoga content, combined with the advantages of the university's disciplines [3]. In order to realize the localization and characteristic of yoga teaching, multi-disciplinary teachers can cooperate to complete the teaching and even carry out yoga teaching through mutual assistance and cooperation between universities.

3. Significance of yoga teaching in colleges and universities

3.1 Enrich the content of physical education teaching

Every college student has different sports preferences, taking into account the individual needs of different students, so many universities now offer different sports options for students to choose. More common physical education options such as basketball, table tennis, badminton, aerobics, volleyball, swimming and so on. As one of the current popular sports, yoga is especially favored by female students, but the number of male students choosing yoga courses is also increasing year by year. Introducing yoga into the optional sports courses of colleges and universities can attract more students, make up for the competitive sports mode of college physical education, enrich the teaching content of college physical education, and provide new vitality for college physical education courses [4]. At the same time, it can also promote the reform and innovation of college physical education.

3.2 Build students' physique

The postural practice method in yoga is one of the main contents of yoga training, the so-called

postural method is that each posture in yoga can effectively adjust different points of the human body, so as to make the body strong. After a lot of research and medical studies have confirmed that if you can adhere to the practice of yoga for a long time, the nervous system and secretion system of the human body can be effectively adjusted to improve the state of health [5]. Therefore, opening yoga courses in colleges and universities has certain benefits for students' physical and mental health.

3.3 Cultivate students' minds

At present, with the continuous development of the times, the competition in all walks of life is increasing, for today's college students, whether it is academic, interpersonal communication or employment, there are certain pressures, these invisible pressures will more or less affect the mental health of college students. How to make college students have a healthy lifestyle and learning style has become the bottom of their needs. The breathing method in yoga can effectively adjust people's breath, so that college students can get spiritual relaxation under the fast lifestyle, relieve their fatigue and pressure, and make them quickly recover their vitality. Yoga needs to be fully invested in the training, so that they are in a very quiet environment, in the soothing music, stretch the whole body, naturally guide students to form a good, optimistic, positive attitude.

3.4 Meet the needs of social interaction

Today's college students have personalized pursuit, and the thinking is more active, yoga training can not only strengthen their body, but also beautify the body, improve their temperament. This is why many female college students choose yoga courses. In yoga training, unconsciously cultivate students' spiritual will, but also promote their interpersonal communication, so that they can effectively communicate between teachers and students and between classmates according to the training course during the training process, increase their interpersonal skills, so that students can better adapt to the future employment development.

4. Problems with yoga courses

4.1 Lack of qualified teachers

Every kind of sports needs to be guided by professional teachers, in order to get a good development of yoga courses, it is necessary to strengthen teachers and improve teachers' professional ability. The professional ability and teaching level of teachers directly affect the classroom effect. Yoga has been entering colleges and universities for more than ten years, but few colleges and universities have set up yoga majors. According to the published literature, most of the yoga teachers in colleges and universities in China are middle-aged and young physical education teachers who have "changed careers", mainly from sports dance, aerobics, gymnastics and other professional teachers. Among them, some teachers have obtained corresponding certificates by participating in yoga teacher training courses offered by the society. However, the actual situation is that China's domestic yoga training courses are mixed, the teaching level is uneven, and there is no uniform training content and assessment standards. Many people began to teach after 200 hours of yoga induction training without a period of self-practice and accumulation, and the quality of teaching is worrying. Some teachers rely on their accumulated teaching experience in physical education, through reading books, referring to online teaching videos for self-study, and integrate these materials directly for teaching. This non-standard learning process is bound to affect the actual yoga teaching effect, if there is carelessness, and even lead to "yoga injury". The shortage of yoga teachers has become an urgent problem for colleges and universities to set up qualified yoga courses.

4.2 Lack of theoretical explanation

The content of yoga courses in Chinese colleges and universities is mostly focused on asana practice, and the basic theory of yoga is not explained much. After learning yoga, many students still think that "yoga is stretching", yoga is physical practice, and know nothing about the connotation behind the asana, let alone being able to use the concept of yoga to cultivate awareness and guide their learning and life [6]. Take yoga asana warrior pose for example. When we're angry, we tend to have an inner urge to get revenge or plan a fight. If we understand the story behind the warrior style and see that although the warrior has power, his impulsive behavior has led to serious consequences, we can't help but reflect on how to restrain the impulse in the white heat stage. The Yogi Sutra 1, 33, provides a perfect guide: "Rejoice in what is happy, have compassion for what is painful, rejoice in what is good and right, and be indifferent to what is evil, so that the mind remains calm and undisturbed." In fact,

even simple asana exercises have a deeper meaning, and understanding these meanings allows students to closely connect with all life around them during the practice.

The main reason for the lack of theoretical explanation in yoga courses in colleges and universities is that most yoga teachers themselves do not have complete yoga knowledge reserve. Most of the teachers are "halfway monks", their own understanding of yoga is not systematic and in-depth, and the study of yoga philosophy classics is not much, so the class content is thin and shallow. Secondly, the class time is limited, and the teacher may not be able to complete the dual teaching tasks of yoga theory and yoga practice in the short time in courses.

4.3 There are cognitive misunderstandings

There are not a few colleges and universities that carry out yoga teaching because of the lack of correct cognition of yoga. One of the very typical wrong practices is to complete the music of yoga poses, which turns the yoga courses of cultivating concentration and feeling the unity of body and mind into a body course. In addition to art colleges offering dance rhyme yoga or integrating aesthetic education elements into the classroom, normal yoga teaching should lead students to pay attention to breathing and movement, maintain awareness and focus, and feel the changes of body and mind from the inside out, rather than enjoying the beauty of music while stretching the body, resulting in the dispersion of consciousness.

The wrong understanding of yoga is also reflected in the assessment of yoga. Yoga brings not only physical and mental changes to the practitioner, but also social adaptability, ideological and moral improvement, so the assessment of yoga learning effect should also be diversified. It is extremely one-sided and inadvisable to judge the effect of yoga learning simply by the mastery of asana skills or the performance of students in sports such as sprinting. These practices directly lead to students refusing to choose yoga courses because "their flexibility is not good" and "endurance is not enough".

4.4 Lack of teaching conditions

Yoga courses are suitable for ventilated, soundproof, spacious and bright rooms. At present, many colleges and universities are facing the situation of too many students choosing courses and insufficient classroom space. In order to maximize the teaching effect, yoga courses are suitable for small courses teaching, and ideally, the number of people should be controlled at about 15. If there are many students in the space, the corresponding teaching assistants should be assigned to ensure the smooth completion of teaching. At present, most of the yoga courses in Chinese colleges and universities are completed by one teacher independently, and it is difficult for teachers to give personalized guidance to students when there are a large number of students and class time is limited. Secondly, yoga courses in colleges and universities currently lack authoritative Chinese yoga teaching materials available for teaching, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of yoga teachers to prepare courses.

5. Yoga courses coping measures

5.1 Learn yoga systematically to avoid yoga injuries

The level of teachers directly determines the quality of college yoga courses. There is no harm in yoga, and it is often the unskilled instructor or the blind practitioner who causes or suffers harm. Yoga teachers should choose formal yoga training schools or institutions at home and abroad to learn yoga in depth, and must not rely on a few books and some network videos to "self-learn", the content of what they read and learn to move to yoga teaching in colleges and universities, resulting in the emergence of "yoga injury"[7]. In addition, the teaching content should be familiar and good at, to ensure the safety of students.

5.2 Strengthen theoretical learning and do a good job in knowledge reserve

Yoga theory can not only cause students to think deeply about life and study, correct life attitude, but also guide students to develop good living habits, integrate the practice on the yoga mat into real life, and have more keen awareness. Therefore, in order to have a good yoga courses, teachers should be familiar with yoga courses, strengthen their learning of yoga theoretical knowledge, and do a good job in the corresponding knowledge reserve. In the case of limited class time, it actively explore the hybrid teaching mode combining online and offline, organically arrange the teaching content into different teaching links online and offline, and provide sufficient learning opportunities for students to systematically learn yoga.

5.3 Correct publicity and guidance, adjust the teaching content

The correct understanding of yoga is the first step to learn yoga. Yoga teachers can promote the basic knowledge of yoga through lectures and online public platforms. There are many colleges and universities elective yoga courses students are mostly girls, boys are less, this phenomenon and yoga publicity is not in place has a lot to do with. In addition, during the development of yoga courses, attention should be paid to collecting students' reflections and suggestions on the course content, timely finding the problems in teaching, and making appropriate adjustments according to the actual needs of students. For example, for students with dysmenorrhea problems, it can be suggested that they practice supine girdle angle pose, cat stretch pose and other poses for relief, so that what students learn and their actual needs are closely integrated.

5.4 Strive for the support of colleges and universities and cooperate in courses development

Yoga teachers in colleges and universities should strive for the support of colleges and universities in teaching venues and teaching equipment. The winter temperature in the north and some parts of the south is low, and indoor temperature control is particularly important. If the heating conditions cannot be reached, the class can be started at a suitable time by reducing the class time or increasing the frequency of classes [8]. In addition, yoga learning is not subject to gender, age, faith, status and other external conditions, therefore, yoga teaching is by no means the "patent" of physical education teachers, any love yoga, interested in spreading yoga college teachers can participate in yoga teaching activities. Teachers of different disciplines in the same institution can cooperate to start courses, give full play to the characteristics of the university, and even strive for inter-school cooperation to start courses. With the development of yoga courses in colleges and universities, textbooks with school-level or regional characteristics will continue to emerge, and the publication of high-quality yoga textbooks in China is also expected.

6. Conclusion

Although yoga courses have been offered in Chinese universities for more than a decade, problems still exist in the level of teachers, teaching content, cognition and teaching conditions. In order to carry out yoga teaching smoothly, yoga teachers in colleges and universities should systematically learn yoga, strengthen yoga theory learning, correctly publicize yoga, and strive for the funding and policy support of their schools, and actively cooperate with teachers in this school and even other colleges and universities. After solving these basic problems, yoga teachers in colleges and universities can devote more time and energy to innovating yoga teaching methods, constructing reasonable course evaluation system, and further improving the teaching level and effect of yoga in colleges and universities.

References

- [1] Liu L J, Liu C, Cai H. *Investigation and Research on the Current Situation of Yoga Curriculum System Construction in Some Universities in China [J]. Sports Research*, 2018, 39 (4): 46-53.
- [2] Ma Y. *Research on the Current Situation and Development Countermeasures of Yoga Curriculum Offered in Ordinary Universities in Jiangsu Province [J]. Journal of Jilin Institute of Physical Education*, 2009, 25 (6): 109-110.
- [3] Yin S G. *Research on the Teaching Reform of Yoga Courses in Universities [J]. Journal of Mudanjiang University*, 2020, 29 (11): 106-109.
- [4] Chen Y. *The construction of online and offline blended teaching mode for yoga courses in ordinary universities [J]. Journal of Changchun Normal University*, 2020, 39 (10): 127-129.
- [5] Wang G C. *Research on the Application of Flipped classroom in College Yoga Teaching [J]. Contemporary Sports Technology*, 2020, 10 (7): 92-93.
- [6] Yang Y D. *The Current Situation and Development Strategy of Yoga Curriculum Teaching in Chinese Universities [J]. Youth Sports*, 2019, 12 (01): 125-126.
- [7] Long Y. *Research on the Construction of Yoga Option Class Teaching Model [J]. Contemporary Sports Technology*, 2016, 6 (07): 59-60.
- [8] Weng Y. *Current situation and improvement strategies of yoga teaching in universities [J]. Science and Technology Economy Guide*, 2016, 12 (30): 131.