

Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture and Ideological and Political Education in College English

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Abstract: *College English is an important part of college education which has been valued for years. College English course need to be reformed and innovated to fulfill the requirements of ideological and political education. Traditional Chinese medicine culture, one of the fine traditional Chinese cultures, can be integrated into the college English education that makes this course more popularizing and rewarding. This article explains the connotation of TCM culture, analyzes the relationship between college English, TCM and TCM culture, and introduces the methods and practices adopted in GXUCM.*

Keywords: *traditional Chinese medicine, TCM culture, college English, ideological and political education*

1. Introduction

TCM is the unique system and medical practices that reflects the Chinese understanding of life, health and disease. It is described as the treasure of Chinese civilization which reveals the great wisdom of the Chinese people and the whole nation. TCM culture refers to the cultural and social background of TCM as well as its humanistic value, cultural characteristics and cultural connotation. TCM culture includes spiritual culture, life culture and comparative culture^[1]. At present, there are 42 TCM colleges in China, 238 colleges with TCM majors, and more than 700,000 TCM students^[2]. Therefore, colleges have become important platforms to inherit and spread brilliant TCM culture and to train talents of cross-cultural communication.

TCM is recognized for its simplicity, convenience, inexpensiveness and effectiveness^[3]. The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine and The Compendium of Materia Medica, two Chinese medical masterpieces, were translated into English, French, German, Japanese, Korean and published world-widely. It is reported that TCM has spread to 183 countries and regions^[4]. WHO said that 103 Member States have endorsed the use of acupuncture, 18 of which have incorporated acupuncture into their health insurance systems^[5]. Every year, about 13,000 international students come to study TCM while TCM serves for around 200,000 overseas patients in China^[6]. The influence of TCM in the world is increasingly expanding.

2. College English Education

College English (CE) stands for English courses for Chinese college students, either they are compulsory (e.g., English Listening and Speaking), or selective (e.g., Medical English, Acupuncture English). Since the Ministry of Education of China (MOE) promulgated the English course syllabus in the 1980s, CE has witnessed a series of reforms and developments and promoted the cultural exchange between the east and west. Focused mainly on English language skills and learning strategies, Chinese culture-related contents are less involved in previous CE that students cannot express relevant information properly. It's embarrassing for English educators in China to see that some students, after years of English learning, can not translate very popularized cultural terms or annual folk customs into English or explain their cultural connotations. It is the Chinese Culture Aphasia^[7] because of the negligence of our own culture in the English teaching and learning.

Foreign language education should, first of all, solve the problem of guiding mainstream ideological values and educating cultural self-confidence^[8]. A Guide to College English Teaching, released in the October of 2020 by MOE, clearly stated that the cross-cultural education is an important task for CE to better understand the similarities and differences of cultures at home and abroad. At the same time, it is

also reported that CE should be integrated into the school Ideological and political education system, so as to play an important role in building students' moral ethics in higher education^[9].

CE is a language and a culture course as well. Culture here refers to not only learning and understanding western culture, but also, more importantly, disseminating Chinese culture, especially fine traditional Chinese culture (FTCC), through the medium of a foreign language. Therefore, it takes more responsibilities for CE to strengthen Ideological and political education by integrating FTCC into courses.

3. Ideological and political education

Ideological and political education (IPE) is an educational concept and practice that makes full use of the curriculum system, including general courses, professional courses and specific courses in order to create a whole-process education including cultural values, cultural identification and cultural confidence. By exploring the elements contained in different courses and integrating them into teaching and learning, a school explores the "three-in-one" talent training model of value shaping, knowledge transfer and ability development^[10].

The transmission and dissemination of TCM culture requires, first of all, the understanding of the connotations and close links among FTCC, TCM and TCM culture. FTCC is the sum of the cultural ideas, values, national spirits of a long history, extensive and profound^[11]. Deeply rooted in FTCC, TCM's theoretical basis, thinking mode and cultural connotations have all been greatly influenced by FTCC while TCM has also influenced, penetrated and continuously enriched the connotations of FTCC. TCM culture has been inherited, carried forward and developed into a dazzling FTCC. The transmission, development and cooperation of TCM and TCM culture with foreign countries are of great importance in promoting the FTCC, enhancing cultural confidences and the international impacts of Chinese culture.

Courses objectives and settings are crucial to IPE of CE. It's significant to make the moral education a central part of the curriculum, to carry out IPE throughout the whole process of teaching and learning, and to realize the whole process of educating students and educating students in all aspects^[12]. CE curriculum focuses on cultivating students' global vision, cross-cultural communication skills, and more significantly, their confidences and prides in Chinese culture and their ability to spread culture.

Whether it's the medical ethics of healing the world and saving people, or the medical faith of becoming a famous practitioner, TCM culture is highly unified with Chinese core values which attaches great importance to morality and respects talents. Consequently, the overall objective of integrating TCM culture into CE teaching is to find an effective way to link them together for a win-win result in language teaching and cultural communication.

4. The Practice of Integrating TCM Culture and CE Courses

4.1. Tools for Cultural Communication: Stories

Stories are the most popular and easily accepted works of literature no matter it's in the East or the West, home or abroad since they describe the cultural patterns and social lives. Moreover, readers are personally on the scene and re-examining the relevance of the story. Containing 357 vivid and philosophical stories of daily life and experiences, Aesop's Fables is known as the Father of Western Language and the most widely disseminated works in the world. Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales has been translated and published in more than 150 languages and listed in Reading Guidance for Primary and Secondary School Students by MOE. Four Great Masterpieces of Ancient China are known for influencing Chinese ideology, values and behaviors. All of these exemplify the beauty and power of stories as a tool for the cross-cultural communication.

4.2. Keys to Learn TCM Culture: TCM Stories

Whether it is the famous works of famous TCM experts or the everyday diagnosis and treatment methods, TCM stories have been fully integrated into people's life, which have become an indispensable part of people's daily life. It can be said that it is a summary of the long-term experiences and wisdom of the Chinese people.

TCM stories of Zhang Zhongjing (150-219), the Sage of Medicine and Sun Simiao (581-682), the King of Herbs, stories in The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine and The Compendium of

Materia Medica, stories behind herbal medicines such as xianhecao (*agrimoniae herba*), and stories of TCM-related idioms and sayings like Bei Gong She Ying (Mistake the Shadow of A Bow in One's Cup as A Snake) spread from one to another.

Poetry is the symbol of an era, the expression of the development of the times and social stories. In Su Dongpo (1037-1101)'s books, the recipes, theories and effects of herbs were recorded. There are 93 Chinese characters in Full of Incense—Silent Night Thoughts written by Xin Qiji (1140-1207), 48 of which are Chinese herbal names. Wang Anshi (1021-1086) wrote a poem with the names of varied herbal medicine, too. "The messenger is sitting in the chiche (red carriage) with the brocade tent, laughing and smelling the fragrance of jishexiang". In this poem, chi che (*pellionia radicans*), and jishexiang (*flos caryophylli*) are herbs that are used until today.

Either it is the classical stories of famous TCM practitioners, or the stories behind Chinese herbal medicines, the unique spiritual and cultural connotations of TCM stories are highly compatible with the mainstream and core values (see Table 1). Firstly, TCM stories contain the philosophical wisdom of the Taoism and harmony between man and nature (the unity of man and nature, the five elements, yin and yang, etc); Secondly, TCM stories highlight the way of thinking that changes according to the different time and situation (the differentiation treatments and the three-causes treatments, etc); Thirdly, TCM stories carry the humanistic spirits of the Chinese nation, where life comes first and a good man should be virtuous and broad-minded (great medical sincerity, a benevolent mind and heart, etc)^[13]. TCM culture is not only an inherent requirement for the transmission and dissemination of FTCC, but also an innovative development of CE to achieve an instrumental, intellectual and cultural form of a foreign language education.

Table 1 TCM and Chinese Values &. Cultural Connotations

Values and Cultural Connotations	TCM Concepts and Practices
philosophical wisdom of the Taoism and harmony between man and nature	unity of man and nature; five elements; yin and yang
changes according to the different time and situation	syndrome differentiation; three-causes treatments
humanistic spirits	great medical sincerity; benevolent mind and heart

4.3. Telling TCM Stories in CE

Rather than simply superimposing or creating separated IPE in the course curriculum, foreign language courses should be reformed from various aspects such as the teaching mechanism, professional features, classroom teaching, the ability of CE teachers to offer IPE, as well as the assessment standardization^[10].

Table 2 TCM Culture and Related Practices

Stories of TCM Culture	TCM Concepts and Practices
general culture	culture of herbs; medicinal properties and uses; principles of compounding; origin of terms and food
meridian culture	meridians and collaterals; methods dealing with diseases and deficiencies
food culture	food therapy, diet and health
folklore section	poetry, idioms, proverbs, songs

TCM culture should be integrated into IPE since it has permeated into people's reproduction and development from generation to generation. Using stories as a tool, CE courses can incorporate stories of herbal medicine culture, TCM meridian culture, food culture and folklore culture into the course syllabus and teaching content from multiple dimensions and perspectives. Telling TCM stories may include the following four aspects (see Table 2). The general culture section instructs students to tell stories in English about the culture of herbs: the origin of the terms and food, the medicinal properties and uses, the principles of compounding. The meridian section guides students to learn about meridians, a unique discovery of the Chinese people which deals with all diseases and regulates deficiencies. Food section is indispensable since it's very much concerned by Chinese people and involved in life and health.

TCM folklore section, which are about poetry, idioms and proverbs or songs concerning celebrities, longevity and health, is to learn, respect, pass on and spread traditional culture in CE courses.

4.4. Objectives and Modes of IPE in GXUCM

Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine (GXUCM) is a professional TCM higher education and researching institution in southern China. In this school, the main objectives of IPE in CE include four parts. The first part is to establish a set of scientific and reasonable teaching mode and teaching contents. The second one goes to incorporate students' ability to tell the story of TCM culture in English. Next is to integrate TCM culture into the CE courses to form a special English listening, speaking, translation, cross-cultural and other related courses. The last is to cultivate students' confidence in TCM culture and exchange medical knowledge and culture across languages.

Modes of IPE adopted in GXUCM are as follows. TCM culture is the entry point of culture and values education in CE courses. Teachers have been probing into efficient ways for students' values education, the effective connection between listening/speaking/reading/writing/translation and TCM culture. By taking the advantages of the cultural and linguistic communication, CE in GXUCM aims to realize the innovative education of TCM culture plus English in the most appropriate way. Bilingual books of TCM stories are prepared because teaching materials are the presentation of teaching content. In the CE textbooks used in the past, although the science, technology, education, culture and people were mentioned, almost no Chinese culture or cultural-related know-how were reflected. For example, we can read articles or stories on the development of Western medicine, but not traditional Chinese medicine. It is expected that we can learn not only Alfred Bernhard Nobel and Alexander Fleming, but also Hua Tuo and Tu Youyou.

5. Conclusions

TCM is an important part of building a human health community, so is TCM culture^[14]. English is a bridge for cross-cultural interaction while CE aims to enhance students' cultural confidence and intercultural communication skills, and to disseminate TCM and FTCC worldwide. Learning and telling stories of TCM culture can be an effective method adopted in a TCM university. Telling TCM stories is definitely profitable for spreading Chinese voices and improving Chinese cultural influences.

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