

Research on the Optimal Path of Integrating Traditional Chinese Culture into the Teaching of Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine

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Abstract: To explore the optimal path of integrating traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, this paper takes the students of the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major and Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major of Youjiang Medical University for Nationalities as the research objects. Among them, the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major adopted the traditional teaching method, while Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major implemented the teaching mode of integrating traditional Chinese culture into the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine. After the course, evaluations were conducted through multiple assessment methods including questionnaires, phased tests, and final examinations. The results showed that the students of Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major were superior to those of the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major in terms of TCM syndrome differentiation thinking ability, autonomous learning ability, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability. Meanwhile, their overall final exam scores were higher than those of the 2023-level students, with statistical significance.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Culture, Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Teaching Reform

1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has a long history. It is the crystallization of the wisdom of the Chinese nation for thousands of years and an inseparable part of traditional Chinese culture. The basic theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture, and the two are as inseparable as lips and teeth [1]. Traditional culture serves as the humanistic foundation for cultivating high-level TCM professionals. Basic Theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine, as an introductory course to TCM, focuses not only on understanding fundamental concepts and principles, but more importantly, on constructing a TCM-specific mode of thinking [2]. The basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine is a fundamental and core course for the Chinese Materia Medica major. It aims to provide basic theoretical guidance for the study of Clinical Chinese Pharmacy, Prescriptions of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and professional practice, and is of great significance to TCM teaching, practice, and even research. At present, our university has set Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine as a compulsory course, which is offered in the second semester after freshmen enroll. However, due to the lack of traditional cultural knowledge among students majoring in Chinese Materia Medica and the long-term influence of modern scientific thinking and analytical methods, it is difficult for them to understand TCM. Currently, in the teaching of Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, there is an overemphasis on theory while neglecting clinical practice, and an over-reliance on textbooks while downplaying the importance of classics. The teaching content is abstract and the teaching methods are single, leading to the predicament that students' TCM thinking is weakened and their TCM clinical practice ability is insufficient. At the same time, the traditional cultural literacy of some professional teachers needs to be improved, and the efficiency and quality of the penetration or application of traditional Chinese culture are relatively low, which greatly reduces the quality of course teaching. Therefore, how to properly integrate traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of Basic Theories of

Traditional Chinese Medicine is crucial for TCM education, talent cultivation, and even the overall development of TCM. In order to explore the optimal path of integrating traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the author integrated traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of this course and conducted a comparative analysis with the traditional teaching method. The report is as follows.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 General Information

In this study, the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major and Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major of our university were selected as the research objects, with 60 students in each class. The 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major served as the control group, using the traditional teaching method, while Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major was the experimental group, adopting the new teaching mode that integrates traditional Chinese culture into the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine. There were no significant differences in enrollment age, gender, or academic performance between the two groups of students ($P>0.05$), so they were comparable. The teaching material used was Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine (10th Edition), edited by Zheng Hongxin and published by China Press of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Teaching Methods (Experimental Group)

(1) **Case Design:** The Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine was divided into 4 modules: 1) Introduction; 2) Theories (Essence-Qi Theory, Yin-Yang and Five Elements Theory, Visceral Manifestation Theory, Qi-Blood-Fluid Theory, Meridian Theory); 3) Constitution, Etiology and Pathogenesis; 4) Prevention, Treatment and Health Preservation. Then, according to the course teaching objectives, teachers connected elements of traditional Chinese culture with relevant theories and core content. For example, when explaining the introduction, thoughts of famous doctors, Confucian ethical thoughts, Taoist thoughts, the holistic view, and syndrome differentiation thinking methods could be integrated. When explaining the theories part, contents of traditional Chinese culture such as the awe for life, humanistic care, and boundless love could be incorporated.

(2) **Design of Teaching Combining Classic Appreciation with Second:** Classroom: Project-based teaching was carried out, combining classic appreciation with the second classroom. The activity "Strengthening Classics, Learning Basic Theories of TCM" was launched, through which students learned the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine by reading TCM classics and ancient Chinese classic works.

(3) **Design of Online-Offline Integrated Teaching:** For example, when explaining knowledge points of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, relevant traditional Chinese culture could be introduced, teaching videos could be played, and online and offline teaching could be combined to help students better understand the content.

2.2.2 Evaluation Methods

(1) **Questionnaire Survey:** After completing all teaching contents, questionnaires were distributed to the students of the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major and Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major respectively, asking them to evaluate the teaching methods. The survey content included TCM syndrome differentiation thinking ability, autonomous learning ability, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability.

(2) **Two Phased Tests:** Teachers conducted a test respectively after the teaching of "Theories" and "Prevention and Health Preservation". The tests mainly consisted of multiple-choice questions, aiming to understand the degree to which students mastered the basic knowledge of the corresponding chapters and the teaching effect, so as to improve the shortcomings.

(3) **Final Examination:** The final examination was conducted 2 weeks after the end of the course for both groups. The question types and difficulty of the test papers were similar, and the papers were graded by two teachers to examine students mastery and application of the basic knowledge in the textbook.

(4) **Feedback and Adjustment:** A teacher mailbox was set up to facilitate daily inquiries and

feedback on opinions, so as to identify and improve the shortcomings in teaching.

2.2.3 Statistical Methods

In this study, SPSS 19.0 software was used for statistical analysis of all data. Measurement data were expressed as ($\bar{x} \pm s$), and t-test was used for comparison. A P-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1 Comparison of the Effect of Improving Abilities between the Two Teaching Methods

The survey results showed that the students of Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major were superior to those of the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major in TCM syndrome differentiation thinking ability, autonomous learning ability, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability ($P < 0.05$), as shown in Table 1. This indicates that the new teaching mode integrating traditional Chinese culture into the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine can greatly improve the teaching effect and help stimulate students' interest in learning the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Table 1 Comparison of the Effect of Improving Abilities between the Two Groups

Group	n	TCM Syndrome Differentiation Thinking Ability	Autonomous Learning Ability	Innovation Ability	Problem-Solving Ability
Control Group	60	3.3 ± 0.79	3.35 ± 0.78	3.25 ± 0.6	3.38 ± 0.69
Experimental Group	60	5.45 ± 0.74	5.52 ± 0.68	5.9 ± 0.66	5.6 ± 0.64
t		-13.95	-16.24	-23.01	-18.27
P		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01

3.2 Comparison of Final Exam Scores between the Two Groups

The overall final exam scores of the students in Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major were higher than those of the students in the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major, with statistical significance ($P < 0.05$), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison of Final Exam Scores between the Two Groups

Group	n	Final Exam Score
Control Group	60	65.82 ± 9.18
Experimental Group	60	69.55 ± 8.41
t		-2.32
P		<0.05

4. Discussion

TCM is the scientific crystallization of traditional Chinese culture. Many ideas and theories in TCM come from or are inspired by traditional Chinese culture. Timely and appropriate introduction of traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of major TCM courses can enhance students understanding of the traditional culture of TCM, improve their cultural literacy in TCM, enable them to absorb the excellent essence of traditional culture, and help them cultivate and form good medical ethics in their medical practice after graduation, which is of great significance. Zheng Hong[3] pointed out that in the teaching of "Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine", attention should be paid to strengthening the penetration of traditional culture, which is of great significance for promoting the all-round development and long-term development of students. Yuan Weiling et al. [4] pointed out that the thought of "correspondence between man and nature" plays an important role in TCM teaching. A correct understanding of the scientific connotation of this thought is not only conducive to enhancing freshmen's knowledge of traditional Chinese culture but also lays a solid foundation for the establishment of their TCM thinking mode. Li Zihui et al. [5] pointed out that integrating traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of "Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine" through various approaches and teaching methods can help students construct a TCM thinking mode, enhance the teaching effect of the "Basic

Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine" course, and play an important role in the cultivation of TCM talents.

The Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine is a compulsory basic course for the Chinese Materia Medica major in our university, laying a foundation for the study of other TCM courses in the future. However, at present, the university offers relatively few traditional culture courses, and the construction of traditional culture on campus is relatively weak. This makes it difficult for students to understand some concepts and knowledge points of TCM in the process of learning the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, leading to a gradual decline in their interest. Therefore, on the basis of relying on teaching materials, we should explore the excellent cultural elements contained in them and integrate them into the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine to improve the teaching quality. In the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, teachers can integrate materials such as historical allusions, classics inherited from folk culture, and stories of famous figures, so that students will no longer find it difficult to understand the knowledge of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine and realize that the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine exists everywhere in life. At the same time, we can also make full use of platforms such as Rain Classroom, China MOOC, Cloud Class, and Xuexitong to push excellent traditional Chinese culture materials to students in the form of short articles, short videos, and cases. For example, when learning the knowledge of "grief consuming qi and anxiety stagnating qi", we can associate it with the case of Lin Daiyu in A Dream of Red Mansions who was overly sorrowful, and explain her series of typical clinical symptoms to help students understand this knowledge point.

TCM classics are heritages left to us by ancient people who created them using traditional thinking and underwent the baptism and verification of the times. At the same time, we can combine classic appreciation with the second classroom. Teachers can start with classic medical books such as The Difficult Classic, Huangdi's Inner Canon, and Shennong's Classic of Materia Medica to cultivate students' interest in learning the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine and classic works. This study attempted to integrate traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine for the Chinese Materia Medica major and evaluate and improve its application effect. The students of Class 1 of the 2024-level Chinese Materia Medica major were superior to those of the 2023-level Chinese Materia Medica major in TCM syndrome differentiation thinking ability, autonomous learning ability, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability ($P < 0.05$). Meanwhile, their overall final exam scores were higher than those of the 2023-level students, with statistical significance ($P < 0.05$). This shows that integrating traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine can improve the teaching effect to a certain extent and help stimulate students' interest in learning the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

5. Conclusion

The Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine is closely related to traditional Chinese culture. Integrating traditional Chinese culture into the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine course is conducive to improving the teaching quality and students' cultural literacy. At present, traditional Chinese culture has been penetrated or applied to a certain extent in the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine course, but the efficiency and quality of the penetration or application are still relatively low. Therefore, teachers of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine course not only shoulder the teaching task but also take on the mission of cultural inheritance. They should conduct continuous research and practice and gradually explore an ideal path for combining the integration of traditional Chinese culture with the teaching of the Basic Theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

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