

# Status Quo and Enhancement Strategies for Traditional Chinese Medicine Classroom Instruction in Vocational Colleges

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**Abstract:** *Classroom instruction constitutes the central component of the educational process and serves as a critical setting for student development. Accordingly, establishing a well-organized instructional environment and a conducive learning atmosphere is of paramount importance. This study examines the current state of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) classroom teaching in vocational colleges. From the perspective of instructional reform, the study aims to enhance both the quality of classroom instruction and students' learning motivation and initiative. Furthermore, it proposes novel pedagogical strategies and practical approaches for fostering an effective TCM classroom environment in vocational education settings. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for synthesizing experiences and improving TCM classroom teaching practices across vocational colleges and universities in China.*

**Keywords:** Vocational colleges and universities, TCM classroom, Classroom atmosphere, Teaching design, Teaching methods.

## 1. Introduction

In order for teachers to successfully complete the teaching tasks of relevant courses, they must have overall control of the courses. If they cannot effectively control the classroom, the original normal teaching process will be seriously affected. To improve the quality and effect of classroom teaching, good classroom atmosphere and teaching methods are particularly important. Some basic knowledge and professional terms in the TCM classroom are obscure and difficult to understand. If these are simply taught in class, students will feel bored. How to make TCM classroom teaching vivid and interesting without losing professional depth is an issue that teachers should focus on thinking about and solving in the current TCM teaching process.

## 2. Analysis of Classroom Current Situation

### 2.1 Unreasonable Teaching Design

There are numerous knowledge points in TCM. It is unrealistic to explain all the course content in detail within limited class hours. Due to insufficient teaching experience, some young teachers fail to distinguish the primary and secondary teaching content, often resulting in unreasonable distribution of teaching content in terms of class hours and affecting teaching effects. In addition, in medical colleges and universities, TCM courses generally take about three years to complete and start relatively late compared with Western medicine courses. Students have already learned basic Western medicine knowledge and have a relatively systematic Western medicine knowledge system, and are used to explaining the occurrence and development of diseases with physiology and biochemistry. The collision of these two thinking theories will inevitably have a certain impact on TCM teaching. At the same time, in Western medicine-oriented institutions, some TCM courses are completed within one semester, greatly compressing the teaching content and class hours of TCM courses, resulting in insufficient total class hours for TCM course settings. It is imaginable the learning difficulty and mastery level of

students.

### 2.2 Outdated Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are an important guarantee for the education of colleges and universities and play an important role in improving teaching effectiveness. Although traditional teaching methods can impart a large amount of knowledge to students in a short period, they often make students feel monotonous, reduce their enthusiasm for learning, and even cause students to develop a 厌学 psychology. Some teachers want to introduce some more advanced teaching methods, but finally have to give up due to limited teaching equipment, and traditional teaching methods still dominate.

Most of the courses offered in traditional Chinese medicine are classic masterpieces such as the earliest "Huangdi Neijing" and "Compendium of Materia Medica" in China. The profound traditional Chinese medicine theories are rather difficult to establish a good traditional Chinese medicine classroom. Just looking at the professional terms and proper nouns in traditional Chinese medicine, many words are obscure and difficult to understand for beginners. It is obviously too old-fashioned to use traditional indoctrination or simply listing knowledge points to impart knowledge. For example, when teaching the "Yin-Yang and Five Elements" in the basic content of traditional Chinese medicine, the meanings of "Yin" and "Yang" and "Five Elements" cannot be fully understood literally. Because most of the meanings expressed by the existing nouns and terms in traditional Chinese medicine do not meet the basic requirements of modern noun concepts, there is no quantitative analysis of the noumenon substance, no qualitative determination of characteristics, and no formalized definition combined with abstract regulations. Instead, it reflects the overall image of things in the form of concepts. Using the traditional teaching method to explain the meaning boringly will greatly reduce the teaching effect. Therefore, it is necessary to bring forth the new through the old.

### 2.3 Single Teaching Evaluation

Teaching practice in recent years has shown that pure classroom theory teaching is difficult to attract students. In terms of course assessment, most students take passing as the highest requirement and have no greater interest in improving their learning interest, showing a passive and negative state. The teaching evaluation and assessment forms in colleges and universities are single, mainly closed-book examinations, and there are few forms of special topic reports and defenses. Moreover, the test papers mainly consist of subjective memory questions, and there are few comprehensive analysis and flexible application practical questions. Such an examination method can, to a certain extent, reflect the students' mastery of basic theoretical knowledge, but the knowledge coverage is narrow, the assessment is not comprehensive enough, and it cannot fully reflect the students' learning effects and comprehensive practical abilities. The assessment forms and means should be set flexibly according to the nature and characteristics of the courses.

### 2.4 Insufficient Practical Training

Traditional Chinese medicine is a practical science, so a large number of practical class hours must be arranged in the process of TCM teaching. For example, pulse diagnosis seems simple in theory, but it is actually very difficult to learn well and master it proficiently. One must carry out clinical practice, summarize the characteristics of various pulse conditions, and constantly delve into and think in order to improve professional skills. However, the current TCM practical teaching in medical vocational colleges is not yet perfect. There is generally a disconnection between the arrangement of theory and practice, and the assessment of practical effects also varies. Some colleges are not strict enough in following up and examining the practical links, resulting in unsatisfactory internship effects. For some students who originally had little interest in learning, without strict institutional constraints, practical training basically becomes a mere formality. Therefore, vocational colleges need to strengthen the management of the TCM teaching practice link to improve the quality of talent cultivation.

## 3. Teaching Reform Ideas

### 3.1 Stimulating Learning Interest

To establish a good TCM classroom, enable students to truly learn and understand, and achieve mastery through a comprehensive understanding, the import method should be used to cultivate students' learning motivation and interest. In teaching, teachers should focus on key points and use easy to understand language to teach abstract TCM theoretical knowledge, and do their best to stimulate students' learning interest. During the teaching process, some stories of famous ancient and modern doctors, medical anecdotes, interesting stories of medical history, and the important role of traditional Chinese medicine in fighting against "SARS" can be appropriately told to arouse students' interest in traditional Chinese medicine. All in all, in the teaching process, teachers should as much as possible stimulate students' learning interest and add confidence to learning the TCM course.

For example, when teaching the content of yin and yang and

the theory of yin and yang, teachers should not only thoroughly study what "yin and yang" are, connect the relevant knowledge points of yin and yang, but also consult relevant materials by themselves, combine video explanations and some examples in life to help students understand the meaning of yin and yang, such as "the sun and the moon, the sky and the earth", etc. In this way, it is easier for students to understand, and obscure knowledge becomes easy to understand, and it is not so difficult for students to learn. Teachers are the creators of the classroom. They should not only master excellent professional theoretical knowledge, but also have extensive cultural cultivation and good self-expression ability, so as to grasp the key points and difficulties of the course and have a clear idea. Good expression ability is the basis for the effectiveness of teachers' activities. Clear and correct expression and appropriate and proper description can make the classroom more vivid and the learning atmosphere more intense.

### 3.2 Change Teaching Methods

Expanding from the traditional classroom to the cloud and making full use of the Offline To Online teaching mode can enable students to efficiently utilize the online platform to acquire knowledge and download learning materials. Teachers can also submit and grade after-class assignments on the online platform. The PBL (Problem-Based Learning) classroom adopts a teaching method in the form of "teacher lectures - after-class assignments - group discussions". It embodies the organic and reasonable integration of the lecture method, autonomous learning, discussion method, and cooperative learning. This new teaching mode is conducive to cultivating students' autonomous learning ability and meets the needs of the current transformation of undergraduate universities into applied undergraduate institutions. Its dissemination speed is very fast. In a good classroom, the teacher plays a leading role. Therefore, it is necessary to Prepare well before class and deal with unexpected events in class to better complete teaching tasks.

## 4. Teaching Reform Methods

### 4.1 Rationalization of Teaching System

Conduct in-depth social research. Under the condition of fully understanding the needs of medical institutions for the cultivation of traditional Chinese medicine talents, combine the characteristics of traditional Chinese and Western medicine and the scientific nature of the teaching system. According to the talent cultivation orientation, conduct in-depth research on the curriculum settings and course opening plans of the cultivation plan, and form an ideal state in which the theories of traditional Chinese and Western medicine promote each other, complement each other, integrate with each other, and develop continuously. Fully study the forward and backward relevance, systematicness, and medical practicality of curriculum settings, reasonably design the theoretical and practical class hours, attach importance to the feasibility of practical operation in practice and the guarantee system for practical effects. Through the joint cultivation method of double tutors from the school and medical practice units, and in the form of establishing scientific research teams, adopt the mentoring method of

talent cultivation and medical practice to realize the talent cultivation system that combines theory with practice.

#### 4.2 Active Classroom Atmosphere

Activating the classroom atmosphere and attracting students' attention are very important for improving teaching quality. For example, when teaching the course of "Theory of Zang-Fu Organs", clinical cases can be selected to attract students' attention, tightly grasp students' thinking from the beginning of the course, encourage them to think actively, identify the main and concurrent symptoms of the cases, highlight the key points and difficulties, and then through learning relevant knowledge points, enable students to understand the key points of the content more deeply in combination with the cases, achieving twice the result with half the effort in helping students understand the learning content. For example, when it comes to the causes of traditional Chinese medicine, one of the pathogenic factors is epidemic pathogenic qi. When teaching this, the epidemic situation in China and even the world can be restored, leading students' thinking into that context and enhancing their interest in learning. According to the course content, classical quotations can be cited for explanation to enliven the classroom atmosphere, enabling students to master esoteric and difficult professional knowledge in a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere.

Therefore, in the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine courses, teachers should attach importance to practice and take clinical teaching as the starting point in order to cultivate students' professional abilities. In addition, medical records can most directly reflect doctors' clinical thinking and are rare textbooks. It is recommended that students study a large number of medical records of predecessors, combine with clinical experience, delve deeply, gradually digest, and improve their medical level.

#### 4.3 Strengthening Case-based Training

In the classroom, cases can be set up for students to analyze according to the knowledge they have learned, complete the case analysis within a given time, then conduct group discussions, and have comments between groups. The advantage of doing this is to improve students' enthusiasm, initiative and participation, making students the masters of the classroom, so as to truly mobilize students to raise questions and improve their ability to analyze and solve problems. Teachers play a crucial role in case analysis, and the case-based training method can greatly improve students' learning initiative and participation.

#### 4.4 Diversifying Teaching Methods

By building an online teaching platform and introducing national excellent courses and high-quality curriculum resources, resource sharing is achieved, and information acquisition becomes faster and more convenient. Some traditional Chinese medicine cultural concepts and basic concepts can be taught to students through online classes, presenting esoteric knowledge in the form of animations to make up for the deficiencies of blackboard writing teaching in the classroom. Use "Rain Classroom" for pre-class preview,

marking the knowledge points that students don't understand. For example, in the teaching of the content of "Nursing Application of Auricular Point Therapy in Patients with Lumbar Disc Herniation", the teacher can raise relevant questions according to the teaching key points and the knowledge points that students are interested in and are likely to have doubts, guiding students to think and discuss.

Important knowledge points and difficult-to-understand knowledge points can be repeatedly watched through vivid teaching videos, micro-courses, MOOCs, etc. within the online platform to improve learning efficiency. Assign after-class homework through the online teaching platform and build a teaching question bank. According to different chapters, release corresponding unit tests to consolidate the important knowledge points of this chapter, and at the same time provide a basis for course assessment and test paper compilation, enabling students to master the core content of each chapter at any time, formulate a learning plan, and digest knowledge. In addition, adopt flexible and diverse assessment methods for the course ending form, setting up various forms such as practical operations, medical topic debates, or medical topic defenses for assessment.

#### 4.5 Explanation with Logic Diagrams

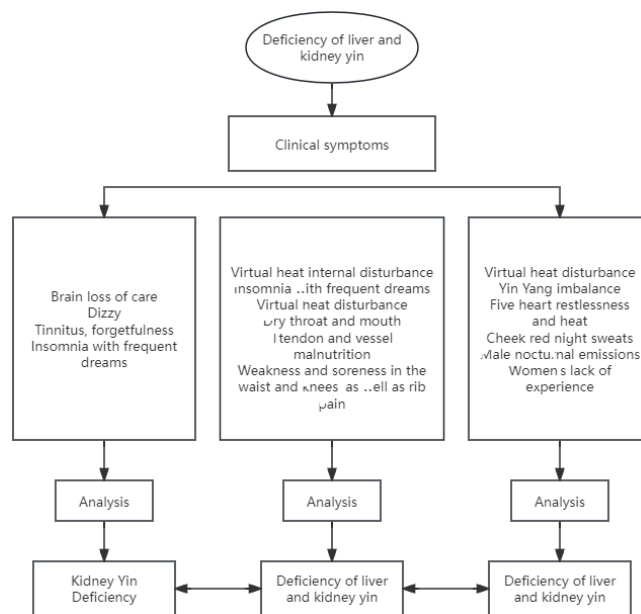


Figure 1: Logic Diagram of Symptom Analysis

Summarize the knowledge points using an arrow logic block diagram (see Figure 1) to make the knowledge context clearer, indicate the internal connections in the teaching content, and make the levels more distinct. This is especially useful in analyzing the etiology and pathogenesis, demonstrating strong logic. For example, in the syndrome of liver-kidney yin deficiency, the clinical manifestations are: dizziness and vertigo, tinnitus and amnesia, insomnia and dreaminess, dry mouth and throat, soreness and weakness of the waist and knees, pain in the hypochondrium, feverish sensation in the five centers (palms, soles, and chest), flushed cheeks and night sweats, spermatorrhea in men, scanty menstruation in women, red tongue with little coating, and thready and rapid pulse. Analysis: Deficiency of kidney yin → dizziness and vertigo → tinnitus and amnesia, liver-kidney yin deficiency → internal disturbance by deficiency heat → insomnia and

dreaminess, upward disturbance of deficiency heat → failure of the collaterals to be nourished, depletion of body fluids and failure of them to ascend → dry mouth and throat, failure of the tendons and vessels to be nourished → soreness and weakness of the waist and knees; pain in the hypochondrium, liver-kidney yin deficiency, internal disturbance by deficiency heat → imbalance between yin and yang → feverish sensation in the five centers, flushed cheeks and night sweats, spermatorrhea in men, scanty menstruation in women, etc. The logic diagram is shown in Figure 1.

## 5. Conclusion

Traditional Chinese Medicine courses are commonly offered in medical institutions of higher learning in our country, which reflects the status and importance of traditional Chinese medicine education in our country and is also a concrete manifestation of the current medical policy of attaching equal importance to traditional Chinese medicine, Western medicine, and integrated traditional Chinese and Western medicine. Combining the problems emerging in the classroom teaching of Traditional Chinese Medicine, an analysis and summary are conducted. Starting from means such as teachers' lesson preparation, improving classroom quality, enhancing students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning, and changing teaching methods, teaching means and methods for vocational schools to establish Traditional Chinese Medicine classrooms are put forward, providing reference ideas and methods for Traditional Chinese Medicine teaching and the classroom teaching of Traditional Chinese Medicine in vocational schools in our country.

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