

The Conception and Implementation of Teaching Reform on Ancient Chinese Medical Literature

—A Case Study of Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine

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Abstract—According to different majors and teaching objects, the research group of ancient Chinese medical literature in our university has carried out special discussions on teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature in order to simplify teaching contents, reform teaching methods and means and increase the proportion of practical teaching. In practice teaching, the teaching mode of "divided classroom" is adopted, which divides the class time into two parts and leaves half to students for discussion and interaction. In terms of contents, it insists on elaborating key chapters and combining theoretical knowledge with literary selection. In terms of teaching, it uses the recitation, dictation and presentation and so on to encourage students to participate in the practice teaching and inspire them to draw inferences about other cases from one instance in order to lay solid foundation for their study on specialty courses.

Keywords—ancient Chinese medical literature, teaching reform, elaborately teaching with many exercises, inspiration and guidance, divided class

I. THE BACKGROUND OF TEACHING REFORM

Ancient Chinese Medical Literature is a compulsory basic course for students in traditional Chinese medicine colleges and universities, which is a bridge and link for systematic study of traditional Chinese medicine courses. As its name suggests, ancient Chinese medical literature is related to the literatures of medicine, which is not only different from basic theory of traditional Chinese medicine, medical history and other traditional Chinese medicine courses, but also very different from pure language and literature courses. This is also the difference between traditional Chinese medicine and other basic courses. It combines medicine with language, literature and culture, and integrates knowledge and interest. Learners must have a basic knowledge of ancient Chinese culture and ancient Chinese. For Chinese students who have been exposed to a large amount of classical Chinese in middle schools, the biggest difficulty in learning ancient Chinese medical literature lies in the memorization of traditional Chinese characters, while for foreign students and ethnic minority students who know little about Chinese culture, it is more difficult for them to learn ancient Chinese medical literature.

The selected articles in *Ancient Chinese Medical Literature* are independent articles without necessary association. The traditional teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature is mainly based on word-for-word explanation, interspersed with

theoretical knowledge of Chinese characters, meaning, grammar and rhetoric. The knowledge points in the articles are numerous and complex. Students tend to accept them passively. They have formed the habit of taking notes and reciting notes. They lack the consciousness of active participation in teaching and the ability to sort out and summarize knowledge points. The learning process is hard while without learning effect and impression. How to effectively improve students' learning interest and efficiency is the focus and key of teaching reform on ancient Chinese medical literature.

In teaching reform, according to different majors and teaching objects, the research group of ancient Chinese medical literature has carried out special discussions on teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature in order to simplify teaching contents and reform teaching methods and means and increase the proportion of practical teaching. In terms of contents, it insists on elaborating key chapters and combining theoretical knowledge with literary selection. In terms of teaching, it uses the recitation, the dictation and presentation and so on to encourage students to participate in the practice teaching, guide them to master the ways to study ancient Chinese medical literatures and inspire them to draw inferences about other cases from one instance in order to lay solid foundation for their study on specialty courses.

Students of various majors in Chinese medicine colleges must read a lot of ancient medical books, study ancient Chinese medicine thoughts and medical experience. And ancient Chinese medical books contain a large amount of ancient Chinese cultural knowledge. Therefore, it is essential for beginners to study ancient Chinese medical literature. Through the study of ancient medical literature, we can lay a certain foundation of ancient Chinese and culture, and then we can read a large number of ancient medical classics, so as to establish the framework system of traditional Chinese medicine and understand the medical thoughts of ancient doctors and the typical medical cases that cure and save lives, thus laying a foundation for improving professional knowledge and clinical practice ability^[1].

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COURSE AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF TEACHING

The textbook of *Ancient Chinese Medical Literature* adopts traditional Chinese characters typesetting and contains articles

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such as medical biographies, medical theories and medical sayings as well as theoretical knowledge such as rhetoric, flexible use of words and change of meaning. Students should have a certain knowledge of ancient Chinese, ancient literature and culture and understand the characteristics of ancient people's choice of words and sentences, the standard of writing and even the meaning of the words and phrases in the article, which can lay a sound foundation for the study of traditional Chinese medicine classics. *Ancient Chinese Medical Literature* is the basis and premise of learning various professional courses of traditional Chinese medicine. Many experts of traditional Chinese medicine have repeatedly stressed the importance and necessity of learning ancient Chinese medical literatures. Only with a good knowledge of ancient Chinese culture can students better study various majors of traditional Chinese medicine.

The majors that offer the course of ancient Chinese medical literatures in our university mainly includes traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and massage, clinical Chinese and western medicine, and English major with students of arts and science background. In addition, there are overseas students from Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and other countries as well as ethnic minority students from Xinjiang. Different students and mixed class teaching bring some challenges to teachers.

Foreign students' native language is not Chinese, and their growing environment is far from Chinese culture, so they lack the foundation and favorable conditions to learn ancient Chinese. And classical Chinese has a long history and numerous allusions, which are different from modern Chinese in terms of meaning and grammar. It is difficult for Chinese students to understand and accept some contents, let alone overseas students. Therefore, students with poor basic knowledge of ancient Chinese literature will lose their interest in learning if they cannot experience the happiness in learning. Their learning attitude brings difficulties to the teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature. In view of this situation, the research group of ancient Chinese medical literature has been constantly exploring in practice, making full use of such a mixed teaching condition as overseas students and Chinese students study together and taking the form of group assistance to give full play to the subjective initiative of Chinese students to help overseas students learn ancient Chinese, understand Chinese culture and language and mobilize their interest in learning. Methods such as recitation, dictation and presentation are adopted to change passive acceptance into active learning.

The reform on the teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature puts forward higher requirements for teachers. Teachers of ancient Chinese medical literature should not only have rich knowledge of ancient literature and culture, but also have basic thoughts of traditional Chinese medicine. In order to be qualified for the teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature, young teachers should follow senior teachers in class and learn the basic theories of traditional Chinese medicine and the history of Chinese medicine by themselves or through learning from senior teachers, so as to improve their professional structure, ensure the knowledge and interest of teaching, maximize students' interest in learning and inspire

students' thinking. Just as the saying goes, "one minute on stage, ten years of hard work off stage."

III. THE CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING REFORM

Ancient Chinese Medical Literature covers a wide range of contents, including literature, history and philosophy. The teachers should have extensive knowledge, use teaching skills and be good at inspiring and mobilizing students' subjective initiative and making them understand the teaching contents. The author has been teaching for nearly 20 years and has been attempting to reform on the teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature. According to the characteristics of students of different majors and nationalities, the teaching methods and means have been adjusted appropriately, and some experience and results have been obtained. Specific ideas and implementation are as follows:

A. It should elaborately teach theories and grasp the key points

After learning classical Chinese in junior and senior high schools, college students have acquired a certain foundation of ancient Chinese. Therefore, it is unnecessary for the teachers of *Ancient Chinese Medical Literature* to cover every detail. They should elaborate and highlight the key points while guiding students to study. When teaching an article, teachers should first make a brief introduction to the article, emphasize the key points and difficulties in learning and guide students to preview. They should adopt the method of spot check to let students try to read or translate, find their errors or deviations in the understanding and focus on the explanation and examples. For example, the phenomenon of "taboo decoration" in ancient Chinese medical literature is the euphemistic expression of the ancients to diseases, death and sex. "Unhappiness" in the *Biography of Huatuo* refers to "sick and unwell".

As a social language phenomenon^[2], taboo decoration is closely related to a nation's social culture and customs with distinct social and cultural characteristics. Taboo decoration is a euphemism for taboo. The ancient Chinese nation has always had many taboos, such as disease, death, sex and so on. Wise ancient people used a large number of euphemistic and implicit words to explain the physiological and pathological phenomena of people and express their ideas cleverly, which is taboo decoration. Through the explanation and examples of this phenomenon and by combining the differences and similarities at all times and in all over the world, students can understand the characteristics of Chinese culture and the character of Chinese nation, thus deepening their memory and understanding of this language and cultural phenomenon.

Another example is ancient Chinese words, most of which can be found in the dictionary. Our task is not only to make students understand the meaning of a word, but also to make them master the method of distinguishing the meaning of a word. For example, the specific meaning of a word can be determined by linguistic environment, context, collocation relation, dual sentence pattern and position in a sentence. We can give some examples to help students understand the characteristics of different methods and draw inferences about other cases from one instance.

B. It should be good at inspiration and make the best use of circumstances

When teaching an article, teachers should first put forward the question and let students think. Through inspiration and guidance, teachers should let students understand the topic of article. For example, *Virtue of a Great Physician* is an excellent work of Sun Simiao in Tang dynasty to expound medical ethics, which still has reference significance for today's medical practitioners and medical students. *Virtue of a Great Physician*, these five words clarify the focus of this article: professional and sincere, that is, the doctor is required to have noble medical ethics and superb medical skills. This article discusses in detail several aspects of the "professional" medical skill and the "sincere" medical ethics, which are closely related to the deep influence of Confucianism and Taoism on Sun Simiao. In addition to making students master the article's knowledge of arts and sciences, teachers should combine with the reality to explore the source of doctor-patient relationship, clarify the basic quality and professional ethics of doctors and emphasize the practical significance and value of this article. It should guide students to establish a good professional ethics with the idea of love and equality and shoulder the sacred mission of healing.

There are many idioms and allusions in ancient Chinese medical literature. Teaching this knowledge can increase the interest of the classroom teaching and impact students in a gradual manner. For example, it is recorded in the *Biography of Danxi* that Zhu Sanxi acknowledged Luo Zhidi as his master, which could be connected with the allusion of "standing in the snow to wait upon Master Cheng respectfully". It could not only enliven the classroom atmosphere, but also inspire students to study hard while understanding the spirit of respecting teachers and respecting principles of ancient people, thus killing two birds with one stone.

C. It should stimulate interests and teach through lively activities

"Interest is the best teacher of learning." Learning theoretical knowledge is a boring thing. The theoretical knowledge of ancient Chinese medical literature is the theoretical basis for students to learn the selected literatures. Therefore, this part is very important. When explaining this part of knowledge, teachers should start from interest, so that students can acquire knowledge in pleasure. For example, some interesting examples can be given when teaching the chapter of "ancient calligraphy" (the theory of "six books"). For example, the toilet articles (the Chinese pronunciation is guan), two hands in a vessel filled with water, it means to wash by using articles. To take another example, the Chinese character Jie, which is composed of horn, cow and knife in this character. Thus it means to dissect a cow. From pictographs to connotation, it is a sign of the progress of human civilization. While learning the knowledge of ancient Chinese characters, it should let students feel the wisdom of ancient people, so as to establish cultural confidence. By using this method of example, it not only can make the boring theory interesting, but also make students accept it more directly and vividly. For some key problems in teaching, teachers can understand whether students master them or not from their response to questions, and then carry out targeted teaching.

For some simple paragraphs or articles, it should let students participate in the teaching process by using such methods as discussion in groups, preview study contents and presentation. On the one hand, it is helpful to help them overcome nervousness and build their confidence. On the other hand, it can find the common problems in students' learning, timely check and fill in the gaps, and solve the difficult problems in their learning process.

D. It should be dare to demonstrate and enhance guidance

Ancient Chinese medical tests are required to be recited and written by heart. In order to eliminate students' fear, teachers can set an example for students to guide them to master recitation skills while explaining the key points of knowledge. While letting the student study independently, teachers might as well try personally, especially those more difficult articles. For example, in unit exercises, teachers can do demonstrative exercises, emphasize the key points and difficulties and integrate the relevant knowledge points in the article to deepen students' impression on words and grammar, while naturally guiding them to do their homework. By doing so, it can train them to develop the habit of activeness in learning, thinking and discussion, which can arouse their desire for knowledge, thus improving their quality of ancient Chinese.

E. Divided classroom teaching

It should strengthen the reform in practical teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature. In practice, the mode of "divided class" is adopted^[4], that is, the class time is divided into two parts, half of which is allocated to teachers for teaching and half to students for discussion and interaction. The purpose is to implement "student-centered" teaching concept and put the ability improvement into practice.

IV. CONCLUSION

The reform on the teaching of ancient Chinese medical literature is a long and arduous task. In our teaching practice, it should combine with the characteristics of students and find out the breakthrough point. It should expound cultural value and aesthetics contained in ancient literature on the basis of the interpretation of word meaning and rhetorical allusion of ancient Chinese medical literature to impact students without notice, broaden their horizon on language and culture, and guide them to establish a good professional ethics and build confidence, thus promoting traditional Chinese medicine culture.

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