

# Study on Setting up an English Teaching Mode for English Nursing Major in Universities of Chinese Medicine

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## ABSTRACT

**This paper focuses on the present teaching mode for English majors in universities of Chinese medicine. According to the survey and research, four problems restrict the development of English nursing major, the teaching objectives, the curriculum, the teaching materials and the nursing English teachers. For helping solve the problems and setting up a sustainable English teaching mode with characteristics of Chinese medicine, this paper provides four suggestions at the same time.**

*Keywords: English teaching mode, English nursing major, universities of Chinese medicine*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the internationalization trend of the nursing talent market has become increasingly obvious. According to statistics, the United States needs 1 million nurses before 2020. In New Zealand's statistics in 2003, 23% of registered nurses were from abroad; 30% of Singapore's registered nurses in 2004 came from abroad, too.[1] In addition, other developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, etc. have the same problem of lacking in nurses. Faced with such a huge opportunity and challenge, most universities of Chinese medicine have established undergraduate English nursing major, aiming at cultivating high-quality nurses and participating in the competition of the international nursing talent market. The major has put forward higher requirements for students' English level, and also poses great challenges to the current English teaching mode. The problems like how to teach English more effectively and how to explore a set of English teaching modes that is more suitable for students of English nursing major are the ones that the English educators in universities of Chinese medicine need to face and think about.

## II. THE PROBLEMS EXISTING IN THE PRESENT ENGLISH TEACHING MODE FOR ENGLISH NURSING MAJOR IN UNIVERSITIES OF CHINESE MEDICINE

Generally speaking, there are four problems existing in English teaching mode for English nursing major in universities of Chinese medicine.

The first one is that the teaching objectives are not specific enough to meet the actual needs of English nursing major. The English courses for them are not much different from the ones for other majors. Students learn college English for one year and learn specialized English for another year. No specific teaching objectives have led to a series of problems. One example is that teaching materials are too simple for students to use; Another example is that teachers pay too much attention to improving students' reading ability and enlarging students' medical vocabulary but ignore the importance of improving their listening and speaking abilities. In short, the lack of rational thinking on the teaching objectives has largely restricted the development of English nursing major.

The second problem is that the English curriculum for English nursing major is too simple. For many years, the English curriculum mainly includes college English course and specialized English course, which overemphasize the training of language skills and the instillation of nursing terminology but ignore the rich humanities, historical and cultural connotations of English as a language, and the practical application of English as a communication tool in the real world. The simple curriculum setting hinders the improvement of students' practical use of English. On the other hand, it also makes students unable to experience the greatest pleasure of English learning, and to a certain extent, it dampens the students' enthusiasm for learning.

The third problem that has to be mentioned is the lack of suitable specialized English teaching materials. Although there are so many specialized English textbooks in the market, the qualities of these textbooks are uneven. First of all, some of the textbooks are

suitable for vocational college students. For most undergraduates, the contents are too simple. Secondly, most textbooks tend to focus on reading comprehension, aiming at expanding the medical vocabulary of students. The English video materials and listening materials used in teaching are seriously lacking. Finally, most of the textbooks are based on western nursing theory and knowledge, and Chinese medicine nursing theory and knowledge are rarely mentioned. In one word, the lack of systematic and targeted teaching materials fails to meet the daily teaching needs.

The last problem is that large amount of qualified nursing English teachers are needed. Due to the characteristics of "English nursing", many universities regard English teachers as the first choice when choosing specialized English teachers. The advantage and disadvantage of this choice are equally obvious. The advantage is that English teacher can ensure the language environment of students and guarantee the continuity of English learning; the disadvantage is that the English teacher knows little about nursing knowledge, so it is difficult for them to answer professional or authoritative questions or problems that students encounter in their study.

### **III. TO SET UP AN ENGLISH TEACHING MODE FOR ENGLISH NURSING MAJOR WITH CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE MEDICINE**

In order to solve the problems above and set up an English teaching mode with characteristics of Chinese medicine, lots of things need to be done.

First of all, we should build specific English teaching objectives according to the cultivating goals of English nursing talent in universities of Chinese medicine. At present, Most universities of Chinese medicine are gradually becoming consistent in the cultivating goals of English nursing talents, that is, "to cultivate compound talents who not only master basic theoretical nursing knowledge of Chinese and western medicine, but also accurately grasp the spirit of Chinese medicine nursing, and spread Chinese medicine nursing knowledge and technology to the world." [2] According to this goal, students graduated from English nursing major should be cultivated as the ones with strong nursing ability and intercultural communication ability at the same time. Therefore, English teaching objectives for English nursing major can be summed up like this, "to cultivate students' comprehensive English ability, especially the listening and speaking ability; to enable students to master a certain amount of English medical vocabulary about both Chinese and western medicine; to enhance students' understanding of western culture and differences between Chinese and western culture; and to enable them to effectively communicate verbal and written information in English in the future."

Secondly, we need to establish and improve the English teaching mode and improve the present curriculum. According to the English nursing teaching objectives, the traditional English teaching mode of one-year college English course plus one-year nursing English course should be reformed and enriched. College English course is always regarded as the first stage for English nursing students. At this stage, teachers should teach students various language skills based on the requirements of international authoritative tests such as IELTS or TOEFL. Compared with the Band four College English Test (CET-4) in China, the IELTS or TOEFL test not only has higher requirements for students' basic English skills, especially the listening and speaking skills, but also they are closer to the real life of countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, which will pave students the way for their future development. General English courses, such as A General Introduction to English-speaking Countries, American Culture, British and American Literature, etc., are also necessary for English nursing students and should be offered. On the one hand, they can help students understand western countries about their history, geography, politics, education, humanities and customs more comprehensively and systematically. On the other hand, they can compare different values in Chinese and western cultures; compare different thinking patterns and behavioral habits of Chinese and western people, and minimize the communication barriers caused by cultural differences and conflicts in future work. Nursing English course is the third stage for students to improve both their medical vocabularies and nursing theories. At this stage, teachers should provide large amount of English reading and audio-visual materials on both western medicine culture and Chinese medicine culture, basic nursing theories and knowledge. More importantly, teachers should try to deepen students' understanding of Chinese medicine nursing, and expand students' English vocabulary of Chinese medicine; Meanwhile, teachers should use the two internationally recognized certificate examinations, the American Nurse Qualification Examination Certificate (CGFNS) and the US Registered Nurse License Certificate (CNCLEX-RN) as the guidance to prepare students for employment abroad. In order to improve students' comprehensive ability to use both English and nursing knowledge, Nursing Clinical English course should be added in the curriculum as the fourth stage. Teachers can provide students with a realistic clinical environment to train students to convey information in English accurately and professionally by requiring students to do various activities or write English nursing records, etc. With the vigorous development of English nursing major, more and more universities of Chinese medicine begin to cooperate with foreign medical colleges or directly send students to designated hospitals in foreign countries to cultivate international nursing talents. Students are required to

study abroad at least half one year before they graduate. For example, Guangxi College of Chinese Medicine began to send students abroad to do internship in 2005. This is because that foreign nursing systems such as operating procedures, norms, etc. are not the same as those in China, studying abroad are helpful for students to become familiar with their future work conditions.

What's more, it's urgent for nursing English teachers to edit textbooks and prepare enough teaching materials. At present, the concept of modern nursing has changed from "taking disease as the center" to "taking people's physical and mental health as the center", and the nursing mode has changed from the disease nursing mode to the overall nursing mode [3]. The overall view of Chinese medicine coincides with the overall view of modern nursing concepts, so Chinese medicine nursing is promising. Because of this, universities of Chinese medicine may consider to gather teachers engaged in Chinese medicine teaching and English teaching and work together to independently develop series of nursing English textbooks and teaching materials that meet the characteristics and actual needs of Chinese medicine universities. Besides the English textbooks about western medicine nursing theory and knowledge, the English textbooks about Chinese medicine theory, Chinese medicine culture, Chinese medicine health care, Chinese medicine diet and Chinese medicine foot massage should also be written and published, which can help students consolidate the foundation of Chinese medicine to expand their competitive edge.

Finally, universities of Chinese medicine should give policy support and make a long-term teacher training plan to cultivate professional nursing English teachers. The quality of nursing English teachers largely restrict the quality of teaching in nursing English and nursing clinical English courses, so TCM universities should recruit new teachers with both English and Chinese medicine education background. Meanwhile, it is possible to send English teachers to department of nursing to learn Chinese medicine nursing knowledge or ask nursing teachers to improve their English in department of English. Or the nursing teachers and English teachers can be combined into a team to work together, so that nursing English teachers can ask the team members for advice when they encounter problems in the preparation of lessons, thus maximizing the quality of teaching.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

All in all, with the fast development of English nursing major in universities of Chinese medicine and the increasing competition in the international nursing talent market, the English levels of English nursing students are bound to become higher and higher. The study on setting up an English teaching mode for

English nursing majors in Universities of Chinese medicine will never stop.

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