

Preliminary Exploration on the Comprehensive Cultivation in the University Teaching of Acupuncture and Moxibustion

Qingyan Zhu¹, Yujie Jia², Wenjuan Zhang¹

¹School of Medicine, Jiangnan University, Wuhan 430056, Hubei, China.

²School of Marxism, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, Gansu, China.

Abstract : Comprehension is an important factor in learning Chinese medicine. But the cultivation of comprehension has been neglected for a long time in modern Chinese medicine education. In the undergraduate teaching of acupuncture and moxibustion, it is proposed that methods such as text interpretation, imagery thinking training, blank-leaving in teaching, comparisons and metaphors can be used in cultivating comprehension.

Keywords : Acupuncture and Moxibustion Teaching; Teaching Methods; Comprehension Cultivation

The educational model purely aimed at imparting knowledge is inefficient in cultivating great masters and innovative talents of traditional Chinese medicine(TCM). Because in the process of inheritance of TCM, which is based on imagery thinking, there is also a strong savvy characteristic, must be learned and mastered through the appropriate methods of comprehension^[1]. But since modern times, the university education of Chinese medicine is based on the education model of modern science, which has followed the rationalist thinking mode advertised by Western philosophy. Scientific rationality as the core are constantly being strengthened, and the cultivation of comprehension is often neglected. This paper presents some teaching methods for comprehension cultivation in modern university teaching which comes from teaching practice of undergraduate acupuncture and moxibustion.

1. Text interpretation

The Chinese ancients believed in writings are for conveying truth, so the wisdom of TCM was imbedded deeply in the TCM classics. Being able to comprehend the meaning behind the Chinese characters in words is the inevitable way to understand Chinese medicine.

For example, the names of acupoints are the key to reveal the profound meaning of acupoints, including the ancients' understanding of the location, indications, and functions of them. For example, you know the location of the Dazhui and Qugu from the name. Anyinjiao and Sanyangluo, whose properties of Yin or Yang will revealed when you see the name. And you will find the factions of Yingxiang and Guangming, just as each name implies. So the first step for students to learn acupoints is believed to catch the meaning of every character in acupoint's name, which indicated the painstaking effort of ancient scholar to carry medicine and inherit the unique learning. For another example, in the description of the original meridian, "under the armpit" and "out of the armpit" are used to describe the locations of the Heart Meridian of Hand-Shaoyin and the Lung Meridian of Hand-Taiyin from the chest cavity to the upper arm. The former comes out from the Jiquan point, which is located under the armpit, so it is called "under the armpit". The latter emerges from Tianfu, which is located at the height of the first intercostals space, so "out of the armpit" has

Copyright © 2021 Qingyan Zhu et al.

doi: 10.18686/ahe.v5i2.3390

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

been used. And it's helpful for the students to differentiate the similar transmission route of the two meridians through words which match so exactly.

It can be seen that the ancients wrote essays carefully and accurately. If we can go deep into the classics of acupuncture and understand the meaning of ancient texts, it is a shortcut to cross the thousand-year cultural barrier and understand the essence of medicine.

2. Imagery thinking training

Traditional Chinese medicine can be traced to the same origin of Chinese traditional culture. The basic imagery thinking methods such as “obtain image from analogy” are directly derived from ancient philosophy. In the teaching process, creating an atmosphere of traditional culture and supplementing ancient philosophical thinking methods will help students interpret acupuncture and moxibustion with imagery thinking consciously.

For example, in the Eight Trigrams, The communicating of Yin and Yang is quite smoothly of the Tai Trigram where Yin is superior to Yang, so it's convenient for upward movement of Yin and downward movement of Yang form a loop. While the separation of Yin and Yang is inevitable of Pi Trigram where Yang is superior to Yin, so it's impossible for circulation of Yin and Yang for the upward movement of Yin and downward movement of Yang. Contrast the two Trigrams, it's easy to insight the balance of Yin and Yang in the human body is maintained by the upward movements of the Yin meridians and downward movements of the Yang meridians. So employing *I Ching* in the teaching is quite helpful for motivating imagery thinking and further understanding.

Due to the great differences between ancient and modern cultural backgrounds and educational environments, the weak foundation of traditional culture among modern college students is obvious. So it is particularly important in the teaching process to supplement traditional philosophical contents and emphasize the imagery thinking of Chinese medicine^[2].

3. Blank-leaving in teaching

Comprehension is centered on self-inspiration and sensitive experience, which means that learners cannot comprehend completely through indoctrination, and must have their own feelings and thinking. In teaching process, the teacher should leave blanks and ask questions instead of giving direct answers. Therefore, enough space and time can be available for learning and understanding of students, so to stimulate inspiration after full experience.

For example, if students are required to carefully draw the meridians and acupuncture points according to the original text in practice course of Meridian and Acupuncture, they will find that the expressions of any meridian is based on a certain posture. Then after consulting the acupoint maps themselves, they will understand the importance of proper posture in practicing drawing meridians and acupoints and even in clinical acupoints placement. And through the hands-on practice in finding acupoints positioning and acupuncture operations in practice course of Meridian and Acupuncture, students found that most of the acupuncture points are located between muscles, tendons, and beside bones, and they can better understand the location characteristics of acupuncture points. The effect of the students' own experiences, which can be verified by themselves, can't be achieved by direct information from other people's words.

Just as Confucius's edification of teaching “Instruct only who is anxious to learn; teach only who wants to express himself but does not know how.” Confucius puts students' self-learning experience in the first place, and the teacher's advice and inspiration in the second place. Such wisdom of the ancients in enlightening comprehension is worthy of inheritance in our teaching today.

4. Contrast and comparison

Comparative teaching is an important part of traditional teaching, which can inspire deep understanding and deepen cognition.

For example, comparing the positions and functions of the acupoints of the same character, such as Fengchi, Fengfu, Fengmen, etc., which can help comprehend the similarities and differences of wind acupoints in the treatment of wind syndrome. For another example, comparing the effects of acupoints with that of pharmaceutical prescriptions, such as the effects of acupuncture at Hegu with reducing method are dispelling wind and relieving the surface, clearing the heat and removing heat which are similar to that of herbs such as *Pueraria lobata*, *Nepeta*, *Fangfeng*, *Scutellaria baicalensis*, *peppermint*, etc^[3]. Mutual reference and inspiration of acupoints and Chinese herbs will not only improve students' understanding of the effects of acupoints, but also expand and enlighten

the thoughts of how to use them.

In the study of TCM, if you just try to get it done without trying to understand it, it is often paradoxical and you will never get anything. Only by being meticulous and seeking truth through discernment can we gain deep understanding in discernment and see true knowledge in comparison.

5. Analogy and metaphor

The ancients like to use metaphors and fables to inspire later learners. In teaching, making good use of metaphors can effectively overcome stereotyped thinking and stimulate the potential of guiding and understanding^[4].

In classical works of acupuncture and moxibustion, there are a lot of analogies and metaphors. For example, “Swim in the alley” is used to describe the state of meridian-qi flowing in the meridian, and the felling of Deqi is likened to “like a fish swallowing a hook”. In order to allow students to correctly understand the meridian-qi circulation and the meridian route figure, draw an analogy between the flight of an airplane with the route diagram. Only when an airplane flies over, there is a route, just as there is a flow of meridian-qi and there is a meridian circulation. The line in the route map is the record and abstract expression of the navigation route, just as the dotted line in the meridian model or the meridian map is the record of the meridian-qi activity. This analogy avoids equating the stereotyped meridian image with the meridian itself.

In-depth understanding evoked by good analogies and metaphors can guide students to realize some artistic conceptions that can only be understood but not spoken, even enlighten students’ wisdom just like some ancient masters done.

6. Conclusion

In summary, all the following methods can be employed in the teaching of acupuncture and moxibustion for comprehensive cultivation ,such as text interpretation to unlock the hidden meaning of traditional medicine in words, imagery thinking training to close the origin thought of TCM, Blank-leaving in teaching to penlight student’s self-inspiration, comparison and metaphors for further and deeper understanding. But obviously, the effectiveness of perceptual teaching is related to the students’ own talents and teachers’ academic accomplishment, and is also the result of mutual learning and teacher-student interaction.

References

1. Wei H, Qiu W, Wu J. On cultivation of understanding and thinking of college students of traditional Chinese medicine. *Education of Chinese Medicin* 2013; 32(4): 74-76.
2. Wang Q. Significance of research on original thinking in traditional Chinese medicine. *China Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy* 2012; 27(1): 140-141.
3. Li S. *Commonly used acupoints for clinical use*. First edition. Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House; 1996.
4. Zhao J, Jia H, Xiao Y, et al. Improve comprehension, attach importance to Chinese medicine thinking; read clinical medicine, strengthen quality training. *Global Traditional Chinese Medicine* 2015; 8(11): 1410-1413.