On the Construction of Follow-up College English Curriculum in TCM Colleges and Universities

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Abstract. In order to further improve students’ English application abilities, the establishment of follow-up college English courses is urgent for TCM universities. The follow-up college English curriculum should aim on improving students’ specialized English level as well as cultivating their humanistic quality. The authors suggested multi-module and multi-level courses should be considered in the construction of this system. With its scientific nature, individualized course management, specialized teaching materials, the construction of follow-up college English curriculum will not only integrate the students’ specialized English skill with cultural literacy but also provide a direction for the development of English teachers in TCM colleges and universities.

Introduction

College English follow-up courses refers to English courses offered to college junior and senior students after their first two-year’s basic and general English learning, often related to their major and specialties and emphasize on the cultivation of English practical abilities, aiming to further improve the students’ English level, helping them acquire specialized English, thus enable them to apply English in their future career and academic exchange. “The College English Curriculum Requirements” published in 2007 proposes brand-new rationale and direction for the college English teaching and learning reform and triggers a mode exploration. It says, college English follow-up curriculum should contain courses about language skills, language application, language and culture and specialized English together, and set in different forms like compulsory courses or optional course according to the actual situation to ensure students in different levels have adequate training and improvement in their English application ability. The setting of the follow-up English course will enable English course to cover the student’s whole college years, thus ensure the student’s continuous English learning. With the increase of specialized English course and optional courses, the student’s language application abilities and their specialized English will be improved [1].

Meanwhile, with the wider communication with the outside world, for medical schools, the teaching of ESP (English for Medical Purpose) is becoming increasingly important. Enabling students to read and translate various English medical materials, use English to conduct academic communication, write experiment reports, medical records and scientific papers has become an urgent requirement and objective.

However, the follow-up English courses have not yet been given enough attention and remain stagnant compared with English teaching in the fundamental stage [2]. In this way, the fundamental English teaching and follow-up English teaching have long been detached, arousing confusion in students’ learning objectives and therefore seriously affect the quality of follow-up English teaching. In this case, integrating the specialties of the university with the actual situation of English teaching, establishing a scientific, systematic and individualized follow-up English teaching system and effectively join the fundamental and follow-up teaching sections are of utmost importance for the reform of English teaching in universities of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).
Design of Follow-up English Course System for TCM Colleges and Universities

According to “The College English Curriculum Requirements”, the follow-up college English courses should aim on not only satisfying students’ individual needs but also improving their integrated abilities of using English, especially the listening and speaking abilities. At the same time, broadening the student’s scope of knowledge and cultivating their cross-cultural ability should also be taken into account. From the author’s teaching practice and students’ response, it’s obvious that the students have different needs in language and culture related courses. Therefore, the setting of two course modules, language application and language and culture, is feasible. The English application module contains courses related to the improvement of language skills, specialized English and academic English; the language and culture module includes courses about cross-cultural communication, traditional culture and TCM culture. Thus, the promotion of students’ specialized English skill and cultural literacy are integrated.

Analysis on Feasibility of Follow-up English Course System in TCM Colleges and Universities

The construction of follow-up English curriculum system in TCM colleges and universities is a systematic and comprehensive project, it is by no means about just open a few courses. We should construct and evaluate it from the aspects of curriculum system, course management, textbook, teacher training and so on. The author will discuss the feasibility of college English follow-up curriculum idea from the following four aspects.

The Scientific Nature of the Follow-up English Course System

The consistency, gradualness and practicability of the course system are conducive to improving the students' English level. First of all, as a curriculum system, it must consider the students' learning levels and adhere to “the step by step” principle. In both the language application courses and language and culture courses, the students' law of learning and the difficulty of the teaching content will be fully considered and the specific courses can be divided into three different levels. Language skills improving courses can further improve students' listening and speaking skills, and by combining medical subjects, the student will accumulate the related professional English vocabulary lays a solid foundation for entering the professional English study, thus effectively link the stage of general English teaching and the later stages of professional English teaching. Since the professional English course requires students to master certain basic specialized knowledge, it is more suitable for the third and fourth-year students. The focus of academic English courses is to teach language knowledge and skills needed for academic research, mainly for seniors and graduate students who are engaged in academic research and exchanges. On the setting of cultural courses, the gradient from the communication, knowledge to professional development is also reflected [3]. Secondly, on the specific setting of the course content, language application and language & culture course embodies the specialized features of TCM colleges and universities, the teaching content is closely related to medicine and traditional Chinese medicine, aiming at improving their language application and communication skills according to the students' learning facts.

The Individualized Course Management

The setting of follow-up college English curriculum involves the training plan of different departments as well as the unified course system of the university, if set unreasonably, it will bring difficulties to teaching management and students’ course selection [4]. In order to set up a scientific course system, the author suggests that the courses on improving language skills like English listening and speaking course should be taken as compulsory courses, start right after CET4. As for the other follow-up courses, whether an individual course should be compulsory or elective in form will be considered according to different students' English level and learning needs. With better English level, after finishing the language skills improving courses. Students in the eight-year-classes can be required to select courses from the specialized and academic English course module to proceed their learning, thus to take enough credits to get their degree. At the same
time, set the language & culture courses as school elective courses, students can flexibly choose specific courses according to their personal interest, own needs, teachers' advice. In addition, the teaching management department also can make full use of their platform to offer more specific and distinct information to guarantee the course selecting process.

The Specialization of Teaching Materials

Different from the English courses in fundamental stage, the follow-up English courses often lack ready-made high-quality materials, especially textbooks for TCM English and academic English course. In the present teaching, teachers often compare and research the existing relevant material, reorganize and create PPTs with rich and lively content and subsequently write the trial teaching material and supplementary notes according to their actual teaching situation. Thus, English teachers are no longer scripted, but began to evaluate and study the teaching material according to the school features and become the master of it. In fact, this is the beginning of the textbook compilation. Through funding teaching and research projects, colleges and universities can encourage follow-up course English teachers and specialized TCM teachers to cooperate to write and publish textbooks which are suitable for TCM colleges and universities.

The Diversification of the Teachers’ Development

Establishing a diversified follow-up college English curriculum system and expanding the depth and breadth of language and culture courses has expressed higher requirements for college English teachers' knowledge structure and professional quality, according to the author’s interview with the students, most think teachers who teach TCM and academic English courses should be the ones major in English and be proficient in specialized TCM knowledge, they expect these teachers to be not only fluent in spoken English, but also with the advanced teaching idea, flexible teaching methods and specialized knowledge. At present, most teachers engaged in college English teaching are masters major in British and American literature, linguistics, translation and intercultural communication, they have solid basic skills and rich language and cultural knowledge, so are qualified to teach courses center on improving language skills and language and culture but they lack the necessary specialized TCM knowledge and academic English teaching theory.

TCM colleges and universities can improve the teaching staff through the following three ways: Firstly, encourage English teachers to participate in further study and academic exchanges to constantly update their teaching idea, improve their academic level and teaching methods; Secondly, English teachers should have more contact with teachers specialize in TCM and receiver regular training on specialized knowledge of TCM; Thirdly, advocate team spirits in the system construction team, forming a team centers on teachers with medical English background. Facing the reduction of public English classes, college English teachers should keep pace with the reform trend and seek a way out for their own professional development, therefore the construction of follow-up courses provides a new platform for college English teachers’ professional development.

Summary

With the development of college English teaching reform, the importance and necessity of the follow-up college English course construction in colleges and universities of TCM is highlighted. Build a scientific, systematic, individualized college English curriculum system is not only an inevitable choice for both improving students' comprehensive language application ability and the cultivation of international TCM talents, but also the necessary professional development for college English teachers in colleges and universities of TCM.

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References


