Research on Teaching Floriculture Using WeChat

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implementation of a teaching strategy based on WeChat, using the course of Floriculture as an example. The integration of WeChat into course instruction proves to be highly beneficial for students' learning experience. It not only enhances students' interest in learning, but also promotes active participation in the classroom, fosters autonomous learning abilities, and encourages engagement in teaching and learning. The utilization of WeChat in teaching demonstrates great significance in reforming the traditional methods of floriculture classroom instruction.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Floriculture, as a scientific discipline, involves the study of the morphology, structure, classification, distribution, physiology, reproduction, application, and all theories and techniques related to the cultivation of flowers (primarily herbaceous flowers, including some small trees and shrubs). As a part of horticultural plant cultivation, floriculture is considered the most intensive and economically efficient scientific approach to plant production and utilization.

Floriculture is a professional course that integrates theory and practice closely. However, there are several main issues with the current teaching methods. Firstly, students lack motivation to actively engage in learning. Additionally, classroom teachers are unable to meet the specific requirements of the course and fail to address the varying levels of knowledge possessed by individual students. Moreover, due to time and space constraints, students are forced to rely

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on online teaching platforms to access updated course materials. However, the current teaching interaction primarily depends on the online quality course platform, which is unable to promptly deliver updates to all users. Consequently, optimizing classroom teaching and establishing effective teacher-student interaction have become crucial factors in enhancing the course's overall teaching standard.

Floriculture is an ever-evolving course that keeps up with the latest advancements. In recent years, agricultural research has led to numerous breakthroughs, making Floriculture the most dynamic and influential discipline within horticultural science. Consequently, the content and teaching techniques of the Floriculture course must be reformed to align with the demands of the present era.

2. Characteristics of Teaching on the WeChat Platform

Today, in the age of information technology, the network has significantly transformed the content, methods, and modes of education. The implementation of WeChat-based course teaching mode has brought about a significant shift from traditional education, providing valuable assistance to students' learning progress. WeChat, an instant messaging service software, has become the principal platform for interpersonal communication among students in educational institutions. Utilizing the WeChat platform in teaching offers unique advantages, such as the ability to disseminate information to specific user groups and directly provide reading materials within the platform without requiring downloads. Additionally, these materials can be permanently saved within WeChat. Moreover, WeChat enables the rapid and free transmission of various digital formats, including text, voice, video, and images, through its network platform. The emergence of WeChat has presented a new learning platform for college and university students (Wu & Wu, 2016).

The emergence of WeChat has provided a new learning platform for college students. WeChat, as a mobile application closely related to personal information, can access the internet anytime, anywhere through smartphones with new media. In addition, compared to other online platforms, WeChat has significant advantages in terms of information dissemination. It offers convenient interactivity and rapid real-time updates in information delivery. At the same time, as a social application, WeChat's convenient interactivity is its distinguishing advantage from other online media. Through terminals such as mobile phones, one can browse news and transmit messages anytime, anywhere, making full use of fragmented time.

The traditional teaching mode employs a one-size-fits-all approach, predominantly relying on passive listening to teachers' knowledge dissemination during classroom sessions, rather than promoting independent inquiry and collaboration among students. This traditional teaching method, characterized by the mere instillation of knowledge, often fails to engage students' motivation effectively.

Many people advocate the use of online teaching platforms, but there are sev-

eral existing issues. For instance, the instructional content is not of high quality, some educational materials lack excellence, and there is an exaggeration in advertising. These problems have caused significant difficulties for students, affecting their learning effectiveness and confidence. Additionally, there is insufficient interaction between teachers and students. Due to time and spatial constraints, it is challenging for online education to achieve face-to-face communication, which hampers students' learning experience and interest. Moreover, there are risks related to internet security. Students' browser plugins may be invaded by malicious software, and course websites may be susceptible to attacks.

In contrast to the traditional teaching mode, WeChat-based course teaching places students at the center of the learning process, with teachers actively participating throughout. This novel instructional model also imposes higher expectations on teachers, necessitating a shift from being mere transmitters of knowledge to becoming facilitators and builders of knowledge in the classroom. Teachers are required to design stimulating questions and learning materials to foster students' interest in independent exploration and encourage them to continuously seek answers, thereby promoting self-directed learning.

The learning content provided on the WeChat platform is enriched with visuals, including pictures and captivating videos, which effectively captivate students' interest and ignite their enthusiasm for autonomous learning. Throughout their study period, students can readily utilize their smartphones to access the internet and quickly search for information whenever they encounter unfamiliar content. This allows them to analyze problems and find solutions independently. Furthermore, teachers can guide students through group discussions to identify gaps in their understanding, thereby enhancing the quality of individual learning and overall learning capacity. Consequently, this process gradually fosters students' interest in self-directed learning as they actively engage in homework completion and problem exploration. In addition, when students receive recognition from their teachers in the form of group reports, they gain a sense of accomplishment and are more likely to exhibit an increased drive for learning (Chen et al., 2015).

3. WeChat-Based Teaching Method for the Floriculture Course

3.1. Pre-Course Study

Before class, course resources will be released on WeChat, and students will be assigned learning tasks such as group reporting on specific topics. Students are expected to complete these tasks on time and review the relevant course materials to grasp the content of the course. This approach allows students to engage in flexible and self-directed learning, enabling them to set their own objectives, manage their learning progress, and fulfill assigned tasks. Moreover, students have the freedom to explore additional knowledge related to specific themes, thus expanding the scope of classroom learning.

3.2. Classroom Teaching

3.2.1. Eliciting Problems

In order to establish a dynamic and interactive learning environment, it is important to promote equal exchange and discussion between teachers and students. This enables the clash of different perspectives, which in turn stimulates the curiosity and exploration of both parties (Zhang, 2015; Yuan et al., 2012). To achieve this, teachers should create situations that lead to problem-solving. In classroom teaching, teachers can utilize existing flowers and trees on the school campus to illustrate various concepts, such as flower and tree forms and phenological signs. By asking questions related to these plants, students are encouraged to think critically and conduct hands-on research to find solutions, gaining valuable practical experience. Alternatively, teachers can design problem-based scenarios that align with the classification and habits of specific flowers in Floriculture, thus fostering students' independent thinking skills.

3.2.2. Group Discussion

Organize the class into multiple groups based on its size, ensuring that each group consists of 5 - 7 students. Suggest assigning students with strong sense of responsibility as leader of each group. Based on the issues raised by the teacher, the group members engage in information retrieval, inter-group communication and ultimately synthesize the group's research findings.

3.2.3. Reporting

Each group may adopt different approaches for reporting, with an allotted time of 3 - 5 minutes. Following the completion of the reports, the various groups will assess one another, enabling each student to gain insight into their own learning progress and facilitating further study.

3.2.4. Summarising and Commenting

Teachers should summarize group reports and provide group mutual assessment. During the summarizing process, teachers should review each group's report in an inspiring manner. They should promptly acknowledge good work and encourage further improvement by addressing shortcomings. This approach allows students to experience a greater sense of achievement and attain more learning outcomes in the new curriculum teaching mode.

By establishing a WeChat group, students have the opportunity to raise questions that may not necessarily be answered solely by the teacher. Instead, students can engage in discussions, consult information, and collaborate to find answers. This fosters collaborative skills among students and embodies the spirit of teamwork. It not only cultivates independent thinking and judgment, but also facilitates two-way emotional communication between students and teachers, ultimately enhancing group cohesion.

3.3. Review after Class

To assess the impact of the class, students can utilize the publicly accessible

WeChat platform to exchange their learning experiences and uncertainties with others, fostering collaborative improvement. Additionally, the teacher will reevaluate the students' learning outcomes as a means to enhance the instructional material.

4. We Should Pay Attention to the Issue of Teaching Floriculture Courses Using WeChat

4.1. Engage in thorough Pre-Course Study

Preparing for the course before teaching is an essential factor in successfully completing the course. Students should use WeChat, learning websites, and other resources to sufficiently prepare for the course. Additionally, students should complete any relevant assignments provided by the teacher.

4.2. Carefully Design Classroom Questions

Classroom questions should be closely connected to the textbook, relatable to real-life situations, and interesting for students. The design of these questions should also be aligned with the professional requirements students will face after graduation. Classroom problems should not only cover the curriculum content but should also incorporate students' professionalism, values, and moral development. This approach helps to stimulate students' interest in learning. For example, in the context of garden planning and design, a flower and tree planting program can be provided as part of the planning and design process for a specific green space. During the analysis and discussion activities, teachers can guide students to think about the purpose of the green space and its impact on the environment. This encourages students to consider a broader perspective and arrive at more accurate answers.

4.3. Realising Mutual Help

The discussion, learning, and inquiry activities of the group constitute the fundamental aspects of this teaching mode. Each group member utilizes WeChat, course books, and other online resources to analyze problems, find solutions, communicate, and engage in discussions. Ultimately, the group reaches a consensus and compiles a unified report on their findings. Throughout this process, all group members are required to approach each question with seriousness. This not only fosters individual awareness and independence in completing homework but also encourages classmates within each group to supervise and motivate one another. The questions raised by students via the WeChat platform do not necessarily receive direct answers from the teacher; instead, students are encouraged to discuss, consult information, and search for answers among themselves. This approach enhances students' collaborative abilities and exemplifies the spirit of teamwork (Yan, 2015).

4.4. Timely Evaluation and Review

In order to ensure the effectiveness of WeChat in teaching, it is necessary to

conduct timely evaluation and auditing. WeChat teaching fully utilizes limited time and space resources, enabling teachers and students to interact and enhance students' learning efficiency and effectiveness. It is important to promptly discard any irrelevant or low-quality information and resources, monitor students' learning content on the WeChat platform, and ensure the exchange of information is healthy and effective. WeChat provides a free chatting environment, real-time messaging, message push, and other functions, allowing students to ask questions at any time and teachers to provide timely answers and solutions. Teachers can also use WeChat to understand students' thought processes, address their problems, foster a positive teacher-student relationship, and enhance their overall connection (Yan, 2015).

Network teaching is an ongoing process that requires teachers to meet higher demands. It not only requires multimedia production and web page maintenance skills but also necessitates updating teaching resources and fostering innovative approaches. WeChat teaching should be seen as an auxiliary tool rather than a solution to all problems. Its potential should be fully utilized to assist teachers in completing the teaching process (Yan, 2015). Teaching design based on the WeChat public platform is a novel teaching mode that capitalizes on WeChat's advantages. It incorporates various forms of media, compensates for the limitations of traditional classroom teaching in terms of time and space, strengthens teacher-student rapport, achieves teaching objectives successfully, expands students' learning horizons, optimizes the utilization of teaching resources, and stimulates students' interest in learning (Xu, 2016). The incorporation of WeChat in teaching represents an innovative approach that holds significant value in reforming Floristics classroom instruction.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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