

The Influencing Factors and Strategies of the Connection Between Nursing Education and Clinical Practice in Colleges

Xue Ji

Yunnan Open University, Kunming, 650000, Yunnan

Abstract: In order to better adapt to the needs of modern social development, improve the relationship between doctors and patients in the medical field, and further improve the quality and level of services provided to patients, nursing education in universities has been continuously reformed and innovated in recent years, especially in response to the actual needs of positions, continuously improving talent cultivation models. This paper provides an analytical exploration of the vital elements influencing the connection between nursing education and clinical practice in the context of higher education institutions. Additionally, it proposes strategic measures to enhance this connection, aiming to improve nursing students' preparedness for the demands of clinical work, and ultimately patient outcomes.

Keywords: Nursing education; Clinical practice; Influencing factors of connection; Teaching strategies

Preface

Nursing, as a healthcare profession, is fundamentally concerned with the welfare of patients. The quality of nursing education plays a pivotal role in preparing competent nurses, influencing not only the quality of healthcare services but also patient outcomes. Over the years, the healthcare landscape has evolved, marked by a rise in complex patient care needs and technological advancements, which have placed higher demands on nursing professionals. The connection between nursing education and clinical practice refers to the transition and application of theoretical knowledge and skills gained during formal education to the practical clinical environment. Ideally, this connection should be seamless, with nursing students efficiently translating their classroom learning to real-life patient care situations. However, existing research has highlighted a significant 'theory-practice gap', where new graduates often find it challenging to apply their learned knowledge and skills effectively in the clinical setting^[1].

1. Influencing Factors of the Connection Between Nursing Education and Clinical Practice

1.1 The curriculum

The curriculum is an essential determinant in the connection between nursing education and clinical practice. It outlines the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to gain during their studies, setting the foundation for future clinical practice. An effective nursing curriculum should be comprehensive and integrative, covering both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in balance. It needs to encompass fundamental subjects such as anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and pathology, along with specialized topics related to different areas of nursing practice. Also, it must include the social, ethical, and legal aspects of nursing to prepare students for the holistic nature of the profession.

1.2 Theoretical training

Theoretical training forms the backbone of nursing education, providing students with the fundamental knowledge they need to understand the principles of healthcare and nursing. This includes learning about human anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, pathology, as well as theoretical models and frameworks of nursing. The quality and depth of this theoretical training significantly

influence the connection between nursing education and clinical practice. The comprehensiveness of theoretical training can influence how well nursing students can apply learned concepts in clinical practice. A curriculum that provides a deep and broad understanding of nursing and healthcare concepts is crucial for students' preparedness for clinical practice. Theoretical training should not be separated from practical training^[2]. Instead, there should be a continuous interaction between the two, where theoretical concepts learned in the classroom are immediately related to practical scenarios. This can be achieved through the use of practical examples in theory classes, as well as debriefing and reflective sessions following clinical placements.

1.3 Practical training

The practical training component of nursing education is a crucial factor influencing the connection between theoretical instruction and clinical practice. It provides the hands-on experience that allows students to apply their learned knowledge in a real-world healthcare setting. However, several sub-factors within practical training can influence its effectiveness in establishing a solid link between classroom learning and clinical practice.

The quality of a student's clinical placement plays a significant role. If students are placed in a clinical environment that allows them to apply a wide range of skills they have learned, it can significantly enhance the relevance of their classroom education. Conversely, placements that do not offer a breadth of experience can limit this connection. Clinical placements should provide adequate supervision and mentorship to nursing students. The mentors' proficiency and willingness to guide students are critical, as it can shape the students' ability to transfer their academic knowledge to the clinical setting. The length of practical training and its timing within the course can also impact the connection between nursing education and clinical practice. Extended duration allows for better skills application and a more profound understanding of clinical practice. Additionally, the timing of practical training should complement theoretical instruction, enabling students to immediately apply the concepts they learn.

2. Strategies to Enhance the Connection Between Nursing Education and Clinical Practice

2.1 Curriculum reform

The curriculum forms the backbone of any educational program, including nursing. It must be designed to adequately prepare students for the clinical demands they will encounter in their professional roles. It is, however, influenced by a variety of factors including evolving healthcare trends, technology advancements, and societal needs. Thus, continuous curriculum reform is crucial in ensuring the effective connection between nursing education and clinical practice. The primary goal of nursing curriculum reform should be to strike a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. While theoretical knowledge provides the basis for understanding various healthcare scenarios, practical skills equip students with hands-on experience necessary for real-world clinical settings. Therefore, the curriculum should incorporate both elements in a complementary manner^[3].

To ensure the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with current healthcare demands, collaborations with healthcare organizations and professionals in the field can be beneficial. By integrating their feedback and expertise, colleges and universities can ensure that the nursing curriculum is reflective of the present clinical requirements and future trends in healthcare. Moreover, the inclusion of courses that address emerging health issues, such as pandemic management, mental health, and telehealth, can better prepare nursing students for modern healthcare environments. Inclusion of such courses can ensure that nursing students are well-equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills when they transition from educational institutions to clinical settings.

2.2 Simulation-based learning

Simulation-based learning in nursing education has emerged as a crucial strategy for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and clinical practice. It offers students a controlled, risk-free environment where they can apply learned concepts, make mistakes, and reflect on their actions without any real-life consequences.

Simulation-based learning provides scenarios that closely mimic real-world clinical situations, making it a valuable tool in preparing nursing students for the complexities and unpredictability of clinical practice. It offers the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in procedures, patient interaction, and team collaboration before transitioning into actual clinical settings. Moreover, it aids in improving decision-making skills and clinical judgement by allowing students to deal with diverse scenarios that can't always be encountered during clinical placements.

2.3 Faculty development programs

Nursing educators serve as a critical bridge between academic instruction and clinical practice, making their expertise and development a significant factor in the quality of this connection. Faculty development programs can enhance the capacity

of educators to deliver curricula that adequately prepare students for real-world clinical settings. Given the rapid evolution of the healthcare landscape, it's vital that educators stay abreast of clinical advancements and trends. This process ensures their knowledge is current and relevant, thereby empowering them to effectively prepare students for the clinical realities they will face post-graduation^[4].

While nursing faculty often possess substantial clinical experience, they may lack training in educational theory and strategies. Offering workshops and resources on pedagogy can equip faculty with the skills needed to translate their clinical expertise into effective instructional practice. Encouraging a culture of mentorship can have a profound impact on the learning experiences of nursing students. Faculty development programs should include training in mentorship, as well as leadership, to support educators in their roles as mentors and leaders within the academic and clinical settings.

2.4 Strengthening university-hospital partnerships

University-Hospital partnerships are crucial for the connection between nursing education and clinical practice. These collaborations create opportunities for nursing students to gain real-life experience, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications. However, the effectiveness of these partnerships depends on several elements, including communication, mutual understanding, shared goals, and well-established frameworks for cooperation.

Effective partnerships are grounded in clear and open communication, which ensures all parties are aligned in their expectations and goals. Regular meetings, joint committees, or steering groups could be established to facilitate ongoing communication and cooperation. This can also include shared decision-making processes where both the university and the hospital have an equal voice.

Furthermore, these partnerships should be based on mutual understanding and respect. Universities and hospitals have unique cultures and systems, so recognizing and respecting these differences is essential for successful collaboration. A thorough understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and working environments of both parties can lead to more integrated and efficient partnerships. Shared goals are another crucial element of a successful partnership. Both parties should agree on the educational objectives and the desired outcomes for nursing students. These goals should align with the healthcare needs of the community, aiming to produce nurses capable of delivering high-quality patient care.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, through the analysis of the restrictive factors of the connection between nursing education and clinical practice in colleges and universities, effective countermeasures for the close integration of the two are explored, so as to continuously improve the training mode of nursing talents and promote the healthy development of higher nursing education in my country. Nursing education should combine the actual needs of the current market and social development, strengthen practice, promote the combination of higher education and clinical practice, and cultivate excellent nursing staff that meet the requirements of my country's health industry.

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About the author:

Xue Ji (1992-) ,Female, born in Zhaotong, Yunnan, with a master's degree, intermediate professional title, and research on nursing education.