

Research Progress on Curriculum Assessment Reform for Nursing Majors

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Abstract: This article introduces the limitations of conventional methods of curriculum assessment and the importance of reforming them. Specifically, it analyzes the present status of nursing curriculum assessment reform and highlights the issues that currently exist. Moreover, it also outlines the future development directions of nursing curriculum assessment reform research.

Keywords: Nursing major; Professional courses; Curriculum assessment; Teaching reform

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1. Introduction

Examination is an important means to test the effects of teaching and student learning and is a critical link in teaching work^[1]. It is an activity that consciously measures differences between individuals or groups and motivates students to improve their quality through examinations^[2]. The development of society and medical technology has gradually increased the country's requirements for the quality of nursing students^[3]. Nursing talents not only need solid theoretical knowledge and excellent operational skills but also flexible adaptability, strong self-learning ability, and the ability to deal with problems. However, the traditional assessment mainly tests students' mastery of theoretical knowledge, and evaluating students' innovation and communication skills isn't easy. It isn't easy to adapt to the needs of diversified talent cultivation in today's society^[4]. Therefore, this study summarizes the shortcomings of traditional assessment methods, the necessity of curriculum assessment reform, the form of nursing professional curriculum assessment reform, etc., and proposes existing problems and solutions in nursing professional curriculum assessment reform research, aiming to provide a reference for future curriculum assessment reform plans for nursing disciplines.

2. Disadvantages of traditional assessment methods

The traditional assessment method is mainly a final closed-book examination. This method is simple and convenient, but it has problems such as a single examination format and unreasonable content, making

it difficult to objectively and accurately evaluate students' learning effects ^[5]. In addition, closed-book examinations often focus on objective questions, with case analysis or essay questions accounting for less than 30%. Students can achieve relatively good results by memorizing them by rote, which is not conducive to their clinical thinking and innovation abilities. of cultivation. At the same time, the lack of comprehensive application ability of the knowledge learned will bring great difficulties to students' future clinical internships or obtaining a nurse qualification certificate. Moreover, this method of determining merits and demerits in one examination is difficult to ensure the fairness and impartiality of the assessment results, thereby affecting the quality of nursing talents. Memorizing by rote can no longer meet the needs of social development. Schools need to adapt to the requirements of the development of the times and continuously improve curriculum assessment plans to cultivate innovative nursing talents ^[6].

3. The necessity of curriculum assessment reform

3.1. Impact on students

The reform of curriculum assessment is conducive to cultivating students' application ability. Currently, most course assessment studies in nursing majors reduce the proportion of final examination scores and increase the form and proportion of process assessment. This assessment mode can avoid as much as possible students' rote memorization to cope with the exam before the exam and plays an important role in cultivating students' application ability.

Curriculum assessment reform is conducive to improving students' learning results. Enriching the form and content of process assessment can stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their learning autonomy and learning effects. In particular, the assessment method of group assignments subtly improves students' communication, collaboration, and expression skills. In addition, group members learn from each other's strengths and constantly exchange new knowledge and ideas, which is conducive to cultivating students' innovative thinking.

Curriculum assessment reform is conducive to students' all-around development. For example, group reporting cultivates students' organizational and leadership skills, enhances students' self-confidence during the reporting process, and improves students' teaching abilities. Assessment methods such as situational performances and objective, structured clinical assessments of residents (OSCAR) can fully reflect students' expressive ability, humanistic care ability, and practical ability, and they can help cultivate students' comprehensive abilities to improve students' core competitiveness.

Curriculum assessment reform is conducive to improving students' job adaptability. Process assessment methods such as in-class tests, case analyses, and group reports enable students to more clearly understand the key content of each chapter, cultivate students' ability to use the knowledge they have learned to solve problems and enhance their job adaptability.

3.2. Impact on teachers

This section focuses on the impact of curriculum assessment reform on teachers. It aims to improve teachers' teaching abilities and professional qualities. Teachers are required to invest more energy in designing and preparing relevant assessment materials to effectively conduct course assessments and develop comprehensive assessment plans. This necessitates continuous consultation of literature, staying updated on the latest knowledge in nursing curriculum assessment, regular engagement in clinical practice to enrich clinical experiences, and collection of appropriate teaching cases to enhance the effectiveness of curriculum assessment reform.

Teaching practices complement each other, leading to an improvement in teaching quality. The new assessment model facilitates prompt and accurate understanding of students' learning outcomes. It enables timely adjustment of teaching syllabi based on student feedback, fostering continuous reflective learning to enhance teaching quality^[7]. Additionally, peer involvement in assessment allows teachers to share teaching experiences and resources. Peers can learn from each other's strengths and compensate for weaknesses, thereby promoting the enhancement of teaching quality.

4. Analysis of the current situation of nursing professional curriculum assessment reform

4.1. Assessment format

The nature of the course, the teaching content, and the assessment form will also be different. There are obvious differences between the assessment forms of theoretical and applied courses in nursing disciplines. The assessment of theoretical courses focuses on judging students' understanding and mastery of theoretical knowledge through various forms and whether they have an innovative spirit and critical thinking. The assessment of applied courses comprehensively assesses students' operational abilities, communication skills, analytical problem-solving abilities, and clinical thinking.

4.1.1. Assessment format of theoretical courses in nursing disciplines

The assessment reform of theoretical courses in nursing disciplines is mainly concentrated on courses such as "Nursing Management," "Nursing Pedagogy," "Nursing Aesthetics," and "Nursing Research." Among them, "Nursing Research" currently has the most research on curriculum assessment reform, which may be related to factors such as the country's emphasis on cultivating the scientific research capabilities of undergraduate nursing students. The assessment forms of theoretical courses mainly include essay writing, proposition exercises^[8], essay evaluation, proposal reports^[9], scenario performances^[10], debate competitions, reading notes, and research reports, among others^[11].

By writing papers, project reports, or evaluating the quality of papers, students can fully examine their mastery of key nursing research knowledge, lay the foundation for students to write their senior thesis, and help improve the scientific research capabilities of undergraduate nursing students. However, the assessment method of writing a proposal or research report does not apply to every undergraduate nursing student. This method only applies to students from nursing schools with relatively high overall quality and a certain number of affiliated hospitals. This part makes it easier for students to get high-quality scientific research training, and they can often go to affiliated hospitals for clinical practice to discover research problems. Teachers will also lead students in conducting nursing research, and the school will have a strong scientific research atmosphere. Writing proposals or research reports is too difficult for undergraduate nursing students in ordinary universities, dampening students' enthusiasm for learning. In addition, it is difficult for this group of students to enter clinical practice in hospitals to find suitable topics for nursing research. To a large extent, they still rely on reading literature to find nursing issues that can be researched. Therefore, when teachers carry out curriculum assessment reforms, they should fully consider the quality of students and the soft conditions of the school, and cannot put the cart before the horse and blindly pursue innovation while ignoring students' feelings. It is essential to always bear in mind that the ultimate goal of curriculum assessment reform is to enhance students' comprehensive quality, ignite their enthusiasm for learning, and improve teaching effectiveness.

Propositional practice is an assessment method that has just emerged in recent years. Its unique advantage is that teachers can understand students' mastery of key knowledge in each chapter through the level of students'

propositions. Secondly, this assessment form can greatly stimulate students' interest in learning. Students will spend more time learning relevant course knowledge to complete a satisfactory test. In addition, by repeatedly consulting the information, students better understand the knowledge. The understanding and application ability will also be improved.

However, there are also certain problems with proposition assessment. With the continuous development of digital technology, even if students do not understand the course content, they can still complete a qualified or even high-quality test paper through information technology, which invisibly leads to unfair situations. In addition, due to the large number of students and the lack of key content in the course, students may plagiarize from each other. The repetition rate of test papers is high, making it difficult to evaluate students' learning effects accurately. Therefore, the assessment method of propositional exercises can achieve relatively ideal results in the assessment of small-class teaching. Once the number of students is too large, it will greatly affect the fairness of the assessment.

In short, teachers should fully analyze their academic situation, choose assessment methods suitable for students, and avoid putting the cart before the horse and overemphasizing innovation, which can dampen students' enthusiasm for learning.

4.1.2. Assessment format for applied courses in nursing disciplines

“Basic Nursing,” “Surgical Nursing,” and “Adult Nursing” are the three courses that have received the most research on curriculum assessment reform. Scenario playing^[12], OSCAR^[13], case analysis^[14], group case report^[15], role-playing^[16], standardized patient^[17], competition^[18], self-designed experiment evaluation, and others^[19], are all forms of assessment that are commonly used in applied courses in nursing.

Scenario play and role-playing are the most popular forms of assessment among students. By allowing students to write their own scripts and role-play, students can have a deeper memory of the knowledge they have learned. At the same time, this role-playing method can also cultivate students' empathy so that they can better think about problems from the patient's perspective, thereby improving the quality of care.

The OSCAR and standardized patient assessment forms are designed to create a clinical environment for students as much as possible. This allows students to complete consultations and physical examinations and propose nursing diagnoses and measures in an immersive manner, which helps cultivate students' clinical thinking.

The assessment form of case analysis and case report mainly examines students' ability to discover, analyze, and solve problems and judges their mastery of nursing knowledge of key diseases through their analysis of clinical cases. Moreover, this method of collective discussion or group reporting can improve students' learning initiative, encourage students to collect cutting-edge knowledge about diseases, and cultivate students' innovative spirit.

The assessment method of competition has obvious advantages, especially the competition has a strong motivating effect. Through competition and cooperation among students, they can learn from each other, improving the teaching effect and cultivating students' team spirit. However, the assessment form of self-designed experimental evaluation has too high a requirement for students' innovation ability, making it difficult for students to design novel and operational evaluation plans.

Therefore, the assessment focus of applied courses should be how to comprehensively and objectively assess students' mastery of common nursing operations and how to cultivate students' clinical thinking, adaptability, and caring abilities through assessment. Among the many assessment methods, OSCAR and standardized patient assessment are relatively easy to achieve the above functions. In the future, OSCAR or

standardized patient assessment should be promoted on a large scale to restore clinical reality to the greatest extent possible and lay the foundation for students to conduct clinical internships successfully.

4.2. Evaluation method

The curriculum assessment reform has changed the status quo of teachers' independent evaluation and developed forms such as peer evaluation, group evaluation, and multi-person evaluation to ensure the fairness of teaching evaluation. For example, research by Liao and Xu shows that the assessment and evaluation method in which student evaluation and teacher evaluation account for half each can improve students' learning enthusiasm, timely discover their shortcomings, and help cultivate their reflective ability and independent learning ability^[20]. However, the quality of peer evaluation is restricted by many factors, such as the popularity of the student being evaluated among peers, whether the level of peers is consistent, and the reliability of peer evaluations will all affect the evaluation results. Therefore, to improve the objectivity and accuracy of peer evaluation results, it is best to allow students in the same class to form groups freely to avoid biasing the evaluation results due to factors such as popularity. When multiple people are evaluating, the evaluators should be trained uniformly to ensure the consistency of evaluation results among teachers as much as possible and to ensure the fairness and impartiality of the assessment.

5. Existing problems and prospects

Currently, although there have been certain achievements in the reform of curriculum assessment for nursing majors, there are still unresolved issues. Primarily, the existing process of assessment evaluation mechanism lacks perfection, particularly when multiple teachers assess performance; ensuring complete objectivity and fairness in assessment results poses challenges. In the future, it is imperative to comprehensively train teachers' teaching abilities and employ collective lesson preparation to maximize consistency in evaluation results among teachers.

Secondly, in group assessments, instances arise where individual members fail to contribute to group assignments, undermining the fairness of examinations and complicating accurate evaluations of students' abilities. It is necessary to reform the evaluation method for group work results, assigning grades based on each member's contribution.

Furthermore, cases selected in the OSCAR may deviate from actual clinical scenarios, with clinical manifestations and nursing diagnoses aligning more closely with textbook content than real-life complexity. This approach hinders the cultivation of students' adaptability. Increasing the proportion of actual clinical cases in OSCAR and avoiding standardized cases is recommended. Additionally, strengthening examination room arrangements and increasing the number of assessment teachers can render settings more realistic and assessment results more objective and accurate.

6. Summary

Nurses need to possess strong theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and an innovative mindset to identify and solve problems in clinical work quickly. They must also strive to improve work efficiency and patient satisfaction. Moreover, higher education institutions now emphasize developing students' self-management abilities and enhancing their overall quality. Therefore, it is essential to continuously improve the assessment methods of nursing courses, revise the assessment standards, and develop an assessment plan that is satisfactory for students, teachers, and colleges. This will ensure that the assessment is fair, scientific, objective, and

comprehensive to the highest degree possible, leading to an improved teaching effect.

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