

Integration of Ideological and Political Education in Nursing Undergraduate Programs

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Abstract: This paper presents an overview of the resources, classification, and commonly used methods of incorporating ideological and political elements into undergraduate nursing education. It focuses on analyzing the scope of applying ideological and political courses in undergraduate nursing education and the challenges in implementing them within the nursing curriculum. The paper also highlights the shortcomings of ideological and political education curricula in nursing undergraduate programs and proposes future development directions. This work aims to offer guidance for future ideological and political curriculum reforms in nursing disciplines.

Keywords: Ideological and political education; Undergraduate nursing students; Assessment methods; Teaching effect

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1. Introduction

With the rapid increase in people's health needs and the continuous enrichment of nursing service groups and service fields, nursing students are required to not only master basic nursing operation techniques but also be professional and competent. Integrating ideological and political courses into the teaching process can give full play to the role of moral education and improve students' mindset, cultural literacy, and comprehensive quality^[1]. Therefore, there is an urgent need to carry out ideological and political reform of the curriculum in the teaching of nursing majors, cultivate students' comprehensive abilities, improve their political awareness, and establish a correct professional and moral outlook to better meet the needs of medical institutions and society. This paper presents a literature review on the aspects of common ideological and political elements and classifications, the scope of curriculum ideological and political education, and existing problems in implementing ideological and political education in the nursing major. It aims to guide the teaching of nursing majors. It lays a theoretical foundation for ideological and political research for workers and clinical educators.

2. Classification of ideological and political elements in undergraduate nursing programs

Ideological and political elements can be found in various areas of the nursing course, including clinical cases, personal experiences, literature, medical films and television libraries, health laws, etc. Clinical cases and the teachers' work experience are the most commonly used methods in incorporating ideological and political elements into the nursing course. Case studies help stimulate the students' interest in learning and develop their thinking skills. Besides, they also help establish good work ethics ^[2]. Playing medical-related videos is an effective method of integrating ideological and political elements into nursing education. However, while Integrating ideological and political elements can better cultivate students' clinical thinking and professional qualities, but it has less effect on cultivating students' scientific research thinking. Conducting ideological and political courses by copying professional literature can improve students' understanding of cutting-edge knowledge in nursing and become familiar with the latest nursing theories and intervention measures, which plays a vital role in cultivating students' scientific research thinking and abilities. It can also improve students' independent learning ability ^[3].

Research by Li *et al.* ^[4] has shown that the sense of belonging, professionalism, and scientific research spirit are the three major ideological and political elements that are involved in nursing teaching courses. Other common ideological and political elements include safety awareness, dedication, and cultural literacy. Yang *et al.* believe ^[5] that professional ethics and humanistic care are the most integrated ideological and political elements. In short, teachers need to be discerning to discover and refine the rich ideological and political elements contained in the course content and combine the teaching content with patriotism education, value guidance, professional ethics education, scientific spirit cultivation, and traditional cultural cultivation. By including these aspects in education, students naturally grow to love their country more, understand right from wrong, appreciate Chinese culture, and develop a curiosity to learn throughout their lives.

3. Teaching methods of ideological and political courses

There are many types of teaching methods for ideological and political courses, the most common of which are simulations and case studies, followed by role-playing, debate competitions, and mind mapping ^[6]. Simulation is often used in practical lessons or nursing majors, especially in the field of internal medicine. This teaching method can better achieve the unity of knowledge transfer and value guidance and cultivate students' clinical thinking and comprehensive abilities. Case teaching is widely used in basic and applied theory courses for nursing majors. Its unique advantage lies in creating an active learning atmosphere for students, cultivating students' ability to discover problems, analyze problems, and formulate individualized care plans for patients ^[7]. Ideological and political studies are often carried out in a singular way in nursing majors. In the future, we should combine two or more teaching methods to improve the ideological and political effects and students' satisfaction with teaching.

4. Application scope of curriculum ideological and political education in undergraduate nursing teaching

Through searching articles on curriculum ideological and political reform in undergraduate nursing teaching in the CNKI database in the past five years, we found that ideological and political education are incorporated into undergraduate nursing teaching in three ways: basic nursing theory courses, applied theory courses, and clinical teaching.

Among the basic nursing theoretical courses, ideological and political elements are mostly found in basic nursing, introduction to nursing, and nursing management, followed by nursing psychology, health assessment, and nursing ethics; in nursing research, basic immunity and pathogenic biology, etc. It is rarely used in other basic theoretical courses.

Among applied theory courses, ideological and political education is mostly carried out in medical, surgical, obstetrics, and gynecology nursing. There are fewer ideological and political elements in community, psychiatric, and pediatric nursing.

The reason for a bigger proportion of political and ideological education in basic nursing, introduction to nursing, medical nursing, surgical nursing, etc., is because they are the core courses in the nursing profession that significantly impact their qualifications. In addition, these courses are often taught by the entire teaching and research office team with a relatively complete ideological and political education plan. For courses such as community nursing, psychiatric nursing, and pathogenic microbiology, one teacher is often responsible for teaching the entire grade. In addition, students do not pay attention to these courses, resulting in the failure to provide a more complete ideological and political curriculum. Ideological and political education is rarely applied in clinical nursing teaching. It is mainly used during pre-practice training^[8] and internship^[9] to cultivate students' professional ethics and improve their humanistic care capabilities and comprehensive quality. In short, although ideological and political education are widely applied in professional nursing teaching and have achieved good results, they are rarely used in non-professional core courses and clinical teaching. Therefore, their application should be extended to other aspects of nursing education.

5. Evaluation index system for ideological and political teaching in nursing undergraduate professional courses

The scientific and standardized evaluation system promotes educational reform and improves teaching effectiveness^[10]. Although the ideological and political reform of the curriculum for undergraduate nursing students has achieved certain results, a scientific and universal evaluation system has yet to be formed, making it difficult to evaluate the effect of the reform.

The effect of curriculum ideological and political reform is mainly evaluated through course grades, course (teaching) satisfaction, process evaluation, self-made teaching evaluation forms, etc.^[11,12]. However, there's a lack of assessment regarding students' subjective experiences, including their ideological and moral development and emotional growth, which are essential components in comprehensively evaluating the course's ideological and political impact. Traditional evaluation methods often prioritize final exam scores and utilize self-designed questionnaires for satisfaction assessments. Additionally, various scales, such as the professional attitude scale^[13], the humanistic care ability scale^[5], the "touching deeds report"^[14], etc., are employed to gauge the effect of political education. However, the questionnaires are usually focused on the students' feedback and not the teachers' self-evaluation. Wang proposed a novel assessment approach, emphasizing the growth and changes observed in students before and after the implementation of ideological and political courses^[15]. In the future, it is imperative to continue to innovate and improve the assessment methods for ideological and political education, considering inputs from teachers, students, and institutions. This entails decreasing the reliance on final exam scores and increasing the evaluation of subjective factors like students' ideological and moral development and patriotism.

6. Existing problems in the implementation of curriculum ideological and political education

6.1. Lack of systematic integration of ideological and political elements

Research indicates that there's a growing need for Chinese studies on ideological and political components and their implementation pathways to enhance systematicity and integration. It's crucial to carefully select suitable ideological and political elements for inclusion in the curriculum ^[4]. In the future, it is recommended to encourage major universities to establish curriculum teams dedicated to organizing high-quality ideological and political resources. These teams can develop exemplary ideological and political courses and standardize the implementation and evaluation processes. This approach aims to enhance nursing students' professional competence and humanistic care skills.

6.2. The need for improvement of teachers' competency

Teachers are the main force in the ideological and political curriculum, so their ideological and political literacy are important factors that determine the effectiveness of ideological and political education ^[16]. However, some studies have been done on the competency of ideological and political teachers. According to research conducted by Zheng *et al.* ^[17], the primary factors influencing teachers' ideological and political teaching competency include the school's ideological and political environment, teachers' workload, and students' attitudes. The study suggests that undergraduate nursing teachers generally exhibit above-average ideological and political teaching competency. However, there is room for improvement in teachers' organizational and control abilities ^[18].

6.3. Lack of emphasis on ideological and political education by teachers and students

Nursing undergraduate programs are rather taxing, with students needing to learn a vast amount of content in a short period of time. Hence, the teachers are more focused on teaching the syllabus, with less emphasis on ideological and political education.

Furthermore, some colleges and universities neglect to provide adequate training to enhance teachers' ideological and political abilities. Consequently, many teachers lack a clear understanding of the ideological and political elements and methods relevant to their respective disciplines, making it challenging for them to effectively deliver ideological and political education ^[19]. Basic medical courses often do not incorporate ideological and political education, making it challenging to fully integrate ideological and political content into the curriculum. Moreover, full-time teachers, who primarily focus on teaching duties, may lack sufficient clinical experience and prioritize knowledge transfer over the incorporation of medical humanities into vocational education. This oversight hampers the cultivation and enhancement of students' humanistic care abilities ^[20].

6.4. Nursing undergraduate students' cognitive attitude towards "ideological and political courses"

Research by Liu *et al.* shows that undergraduate nursing students are generally not interested in ideological and political courses ^[21]. Students' interest in the nursing major is an important factor affecting their cognitive attitude toward the ideological and political orientation of the curriculum ^[22]. Therefore, teachers should enrich the course content, improve their teaching methods, and interact with their students regularly so that the students will become more interested in the course. In this way, ideological and political education can be carried out more effectively.

7. Prospects

The purpose of constructing an evaluation index system for ideological and political teaching in nursing undergraduate programs is a tool for impartially assessing the quality of ideological and political instruction within nursing courses. This system aims to foster the integration of academia and practical experience, encourage collaborative teaching initiatives with medical institutions, and support educators in enhancing the depth and scope of ideological and political content within the curriculum. Additionally, it serves to enrich the repository of case studies for ideological and political courses, thereby improving their overall quality. Furthermore, it is essential to provide regular training for teachers on curriculum ideological and political education to cultivate a conducive teaching environment and enhance teachers' awareness of and proficiency in implementing ideological and political education within the curriculum.

8. Conclusion

Nursing work is closely related to human life, so the integrity of the nurses is a crucial factor in the quality of medical services provided. Therefore, nurses need to develop good work ethics and morals during the span of their studies^[23]. Nursing undergraduate programs are important for cultivating qualified nursing talents for the nation. Incorporating ideological and political elements into the curriculum is essential to cultivate high-quality nursing talents^[24]. In the future, multi-level research should be carried out to improve teachers' and students' awareness and emphasis on ideological and political education. Schools should encourage teachers to engage in clinical practice, establish an ideological and political database specifically tailored for nursing programs, and regularly conduct lectures to enhance teachers' ideological and political competencies. Additionally, there is a need to improve the ideological and political assessment system for courses. By collaborating closely with schools, teachers, and students, we can maximize the ideological and political effectiveness of the curriculum, thereby nurturing high-level nursing professionals who are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of society.

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