
Application Research of “Course Ideological and Political Education” in Geriatric Nursing Teaching

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Abstract: The aging population has become a global challenge, placing higher demands on nursing professionals ‘professional competence and humanistic care capabilities, making teaching reforms in geriatric nursing studies imperative. This paper explores the integration of ideological and political education into geriatric nursing education, analyzing the limitations of traditional teaching models in cultivating students’ professional ethics and humanistic values. It proposes practical strategies including in-depth exploration of ideological elements, case-based teaching, scenario simulation and role-playing, narrative pedagogy, as well as social practice and volunteer service initiatives. The goal is to organically incorporate the essence of ideological education into professional knowledge transmission, fostering students’ respect for the elderly, profound ethical awareness, exceptional humanistic skills, and social responsibility. Ultimately, this approach aims to cultivate high-quality geriatric nursing professionals who excel in both moral integrity and technical expertise, meeting the demands of the new era.

Keywords: Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum; Geriatric Nursing; Humanistic Care

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1. Introduction

Geriatric Nursing is a comprehensive applied discipline focused on health maintenance, disease prevention, rehabilitation promotion, and hospice care for the elderly. In the context of increasingly severe population aging, this discipline bears the critical responsibility of providing society with a large number of specialized and high-quality nursing professionals. The teaching content of this discipline not only covers fundamental medical knowledge such as geriatric physiology, pathology, and pharmacology, but also emphasizes practical skills including geriatric assessment, nursing care for common diseases, rehabilitation guidance, psychological support, and health management. During the teaching process, emphasis is placed on cultivating students’ communication skills, empathy, and ability to address complex ethical issues. This ensures that students can deliver comprehensive, individualized, and dignified nursing services, effectively addressing the multifaceted challenges in geriatric health care.

2. Disciplinary Characteristics of Geriatric Nursing and Talent Training Requirements

2.1. Subject Characteristics

Geriatric nursing is a crucial branch of nursing science addressing the global challenge of population aging, characterized by interdisciplinary comprehensiveness and practical applicability. This discipline is deeply intertwined with multiple fields such as sociology, psychology, clinical medicine, rehabilitation medicine, nutrition, and ethics, requiring practitioners to integrate diverse knowledge to manage complex health issues arising from aging in the elderly, including coexisting chronic diseases, geriatric syndromes involving falls, incontinence, cognitive impairment, and frailty, as well as multimedications management. Emphasizing holistic practice, it focuses on comprehensive evaluation and individualized interventions, with core methodologies transcending simple disease diagnosis to conduct multidimensional assessments of elderly patients from physiological, psychological, functional status, social support, and environmental perspectives. Assessment results serve as the foundation for developing personalized care plans, aiming not only to treat diseases but also to maximize functional independence, improve quality of life, and promote active aging. The discipline directly translates theoretical knowledge into concrete solutions encompassing long-term chronic disease management, safe care, rehabilitation training, palliative care, and the design and optimization of various long-term care models, with humanistic care and ethical considerations at the core of all practices. Nursing must respect the autonomy, personal values, and dignity of the elderly, fully considering their life backgrounds, preferences, and family circumstances during care, demonstrating profound empathy and professional ethical judgment to ultimately achieve comprehensive, elderly-centered care^[1].

2.2. Talent Development Requirements

According to the 2025 population data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, China has entered a moderately aging society. By the end of 2025, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above reached 23.0%, while those aged 65 and above accounted for 15.9%, highlighting an urgent societal demand for nursing professionals. The cultivation of elderly care professionals requires establishing a comprehensive system that emphasizes both specialized competencies and holistic literacy. In terms of professional skills, students must thoroughly understand the physiological and pathological characteristics of the elderly, be capable of assessing and caring for common chronic diseases and cognitive impairments, proficiently apply techniques such as rehabilitation training, pain management, and medication safety, and implement palliative care principles to provide holistic physical and psychological support. Humanistic care and professional ethics serve as core competencies, requiring practitioners to consistently respect the dignity of the elderly, communicate with patience and empathy, understand their psychological and social needs, and build trust relationships. In practice, nursing staff must also demonstrate exceptional teamwork and resource coordination skills, effectively collaborating with physicians, rehabilitation therapists, dietitians, social workers, and family members to jointly develop and implement personalized care plans. To address innovations in elderly health models and technological applications such as smart elderly care devices and health information systems, students should be trained to actively learn and adapt to changes, enabling continuous knowledge updates and improved care quality. Talent development programs should foster students' sense of social responsibility, helping them recognize their role in addressing aging society challenges and actively engage in practices aimed at enhancing the quality of life and health status of the elderly^[2].

3. The Role of “Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum” in Geriatric Nursing Education

The implementation of “Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum” within geriatric nursing education enhances teaching effectiveness by seamlessly integrating ideological education into professional knowledge instruction and skill development. This approach manifests in two key aspects: Firstly, fostering professional identity and social responsibility.

Geriatric nursing directly addresses societal demands arising from an aging population. Through incorporating traditional virtues like “respecting and caring for the elderly” and upholding life dignity, the curriculum strengthens professional commitment while guiding students to deeply understand the social value of nursing work. This cultivates a sense of mission and responsibility, reinforcing the professional ideal of serving the elderly and contributing to healthcare initiatives. Secondly, enhancing humanistic care and comprehensive competencies. Geriatric nursing not only focuses on physical care but also requires continuous attention to the psychological and social needs of elderly individuals. Through case analysis and scenario simulations under the framework of ideological and political education in courses, students can gain deeper insights into the emotional and psychological needs of elderly patients, cultivating empathy, communication skills, and patience to address the traditional teaching approach’s tendency to prioritize technical skills over humanistic values. Thirdly, it fosters ethical decision-making and critical thinking. In complex elderly care scenarios involving hospice care and resource allocation, integrating ideological elements helps students develop ethical judgment, legal awareness, and social responsibility awareness. This approach enhances their ability to navigate ethical dilemmas, improve teamwork skills, and apply professional ethics in practice. Fourthly, it promotes value internalization and contemporary responsibility. The curriculum helps students recognize nursing’s pivotal role in fostering social harmony and addressing aging challenges, transforming core values like patriotism, professionalism, integrity, and kindness into professional conduct standards while strengthening their sense of mission in the modern era ^[3].

4. Application Strategies of “Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum” in Geriatric Nursing Education

4.1. Deeply explore ideological and political elements in curriculum content for systematic integration

In elderly care education, specific knowledge points should be meticulously designed and systematically integrated with ideological and political elements. For instance, in the chapter “Common Diseases and Nursing Care for the Elderly,” case analyses comparing care plans for seniors from different cultural backgrounds and economic statuses can guide students to reject age discrimination and embrace values of respecting individual differences and equality of personality. When teaching “Safety and Environmental Nursing for the Elderly,” introduce the “fall prevention” topic by having students wear specialized equipment before class to simulate aging experiences like visual impairment and joint stiffness, followed by scenario drills and case discussions during lectures to help them personally experience elderly vulnerability and reinforce the sense of responsibility and dedication rooted in “life supremacy.” In the “Long-term Chronic Disease Care” section, vividly illustrate professional ethics such as “humanity, benevolence, and dedication” through stories like Florence Nightingale’s establishment of nurse rounds during the Crimean War to reduce mortality rates and modern nursing staff’s contributions during pandemic responses, making professional spirit tangible. When addressing “Elderly Care Models and Policies,” not only explain policy regulations but also incorporate local cultural resources like Fujian Province’s integration of Mazu’s “Great Love and Benevolence” with Nightingale’s spirit to create localized ideological and political case libraries, guiding students to understand contemporary inheritance of “filial piety culture” and the social governance concept of “co-construction and sharing.” The entire process explicitly incorporates ideological and political objectives into teaching syllabi, organically permeating knowledge delivery, case analysis, and skill practice to avoid didactic approaches, ultimately cultivating elderly care professionals with both exceptional skills and profound humanistic compassion ^[4].

4.2. Adopting case-based teaching methods to create authentic scenarios incorporating ideological and political themes

In geriatric nursing education, the case-based teaching method naturally integrates ideological and political topics into professional learning through the design of clinically relevant scenarios. For instance, when explaining “palliative care,”

a case study of Mr. Wang, an 85-year-old solitary elderly patient, can be introduced. The patient remained conscious but suffered from advanced lung cancer and explicitly expressed his desire to discontinue chemotherapy and spend his remaining years at home. His children, who had traveled from afar, insisted on continuing all possible treatments due to emotional attachment and familial obligations, creating a conflict between patient autonomy, family preferences, healthcare resource allocation, and traditional cultural values. During classroom discussions, students role-played as nurses, patients, family members, and ethics committee members. They first analyzed the patient's physiological condition and psychological needs based on case materials, evaluating potential consequences of continued aggressive treatment and quality of life outcomes. The discussion then shifted to communication challenges: how nurses should listen to both parties' perspectives, explain that "respecting patient wishes" does not equate to abandoning care, coordinate family meetings, and balance medical facts with emotional conflicts. This process compelled students to reflect on the true meanings of "dignity," "autonomy," and "filial piety" within specific contexts, while recognizing nurses' pivotal role as communication bridges in interdisciplinary teams. Through in-depth discussions, abstract ethical principles were transformed into actionable decisions, helping students understand that palliative care transcends technical procedures to embody holistic respect for life, and that nursing practice requires not only professional skills but also humanistic empathy and ethical judgment.

4.3. Utilizing scenario simulation and role-playing to enhance professional emotional experience

In geriatric nursing education practice, employing scenario simulation and role-playing teaching methods can enhance students' understanding of the complex emotional world of elderly populations. Instructors may design simulated scenarios focusing on typical clinical dilemmas, such as "confronting an elderly patient with recurrent inquiries due to cognitive impairment and exhibiting anxious behavior" or "maintaining dignity during physical hygiene care for a disabled elderly individual." Prior to activity initiation, students must form groups to thoroughly analyze case backgrounds, including the patient's medical history, social support status, and potential psychological needs. During simulations, nursing students must complete the entire process from assessment and communication to implementing specific care interventions. For instance, in a "visiting lonely and depressed elderly patients" scenario, nurses should not only inquire about physical conditions but also identify signs of loneliness through open-ended questions ("What do you most frequently think about lately?") and subtle facial expressions, while attempting to engage patients in simple reminiscence therapy. Elderly role actors must wear specialized glasses to simulate blurred vision, use joint restraint straps to limit mobility, and authentically experience the sense of helplessness associated with functional decline, demonstrating emotional responses such as stubbornness, silence, or irritability according to role specifications. Post-simulation structured debriefing is crucial for effective learning outcomes. The teacher guided students to revisit key segments, focusing on analyzing the effectiveness of communication by "nurses": which words fostered trust, which gestures (e.g., crouching with eye level, touching the back of hands) conveyed respect, while exploring alternative approaches. This embodied experience and reflection enabled students to gain a profound understanding of textbook concepts such as "respect" and "empathy"^[5].

4.4. Integrating narrative teaching methods to convey values and emotions through storytelling

The narrative teaching method utilizes authentic stories to transform abstract theories and values into perceptible and resonant learning experiences for students. Teachers should carefully select or guide students to explore representative clinical cases, exemplary deeds of nursing predecessors, or personal practice reflections, and organically integrate them into knowledge delivery. For instance, when teaching "Common Diseases and Nursing Care in the Elderly," a real-life adapted case was introduced: Grandpa Li, a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patient, experienced recurrent hospitalizations, dyspnea, emotional depression, and treatment resistance due to persistent respiratory distress. Nurse Xiao Wang, responsible for his care, went beyond routine medication administration and oxygen therapy. She devoted significant time to listening to his childhood experiences as a carpenter, fears of losing independence, and attachment to houseplants. Based on these insights, she integrated respiratory exercises with daily plant care activities in her nursing plan and encouraged him to share woodworking knowledge with fellow patients. Simultaneously, she patiently explained

disease management essentials to Grandpa Li and his family while coordinating support systems. Within months, his pulmonary function and quality of life improved significantly, accompanied by marked emotional recovery. When presenting this case, instructors should emphasize key details such as how nurses identify patients' core needs through "listening," transform professional respiratory training into meaningful patient activities, and proactively establish support networks when family involvement is limited. Subsequently, students should discuss how the "patient-centered" philosophy manifests in nursing practices and the synergistic role of professional skills (e.g., respiratory management) and humanistic care (e.g., psychological support and communication). Such discussions help students deeply understand that geriatric nursing is not merely technical operations but holistic care grounded in understanding life stories.

4.5. Integrating social practice with volunteer services to cultivate a sense of social responsibility through practical experience

The teaching program establishes fixed practice bases through collaboration with local elderly care institutions and community service centers, incorporating volunteer services into course assessments. For instance, following the chapter on common geriatric diseases and nursing care, students are organized into groups to conduct regular services at partner nursing homes for 4-6 weeks. One group designs and implements weekly health education sessions for diabetic seniors under supervision, including creating simple food models and monitoring postprandial blood glucose levels. Another group provides twice-weekly daily care services such as bed hair washing, repositioning, and back patting for disabled seniors, while documenting skin conditions and emotional changes. Prior to deployment, specialized training covers elderly communication skills, safety protocols, service ethics, and emergency response plans. During service delivery, students are required to complete structured "Practice Logs" documenting case details of 1-2 seniors and analyzing observed issues like constipation and loneliness using classroom theories such as "geriatric syndromes" and "social support theory." Post-service evaluations focus not on superficial reflections but on case seminars addressing real-world challenges—such as balancing autonomy respect with health promotion when seniors refuse rehabilitation training, or coordinating multi-stakeholder support networks for isolated elderly individuals within resource-limited communities. Students are encouraged to translate service outcomes into practical deliverables like the "Home Environment Assessment Manual for Elderly Fall Prevention" or micro-proposals for "Cognitive Impairment-Friendly Community Environments." This comprehensive closed-loop process of "training-execution-documentation-reflection-output" enables students to integrate professional knowledge, practical skills, and the cultivation of social responsibility when addressing specific and real-world aging-related societal issues.

5. Conclusion

"Course-based ideological and political education" is an innovative educational concept that provides core support for deepening the connotation of elderly care education and cultivating nursing professionals with both moral integrity and technical skills. In the future, it is necessary to continuously deepen teaching reforms by encouraging teachers to actively explore diversified teaching models, building a teaching system that deeply integrates ideological and political elements with professional knowledge, strengthening the construction of on-and off-campus practice bases, and broadening students' channels for social participation. These efforts aim to enhance students' humanistic literacy, professional ethics, critical thinking, and innovative abilities. Consequently, this approach will cultivate high-quality professionals capable of leading the development of elderly health services and demonstrating strong social responsibility, thereby contributing solid strength to China's realization of the Healthy China strategy and the building of a harmonious society.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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