

# Practice and Reflection on Cultivating Nursing Students' Responsibility Under the Guidance of Curriculum Ideology and Politics

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**Abstract:** Under the background of the in-depth implementation of the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, as well as the Healthy China strategy, the nursing profession, with its core mission of safeguarding lives and serving patients, regards a sense of responsibility as an essential core quality for nursing professionals. Curriculum-based political and virtuous education provides value guidance and practical pathways for cultivating a sense of responsibility among nursing students. This paper, considering the new connotations of nursing professional responsibility in the post-pandemic era, systematically analyzes the current status of cultivating a sense of responsibility among nursing students from three dimensions: responsibility cognition, responsibility emotion, and responsibility behavior. It reveals practical issues, such as an imbalance in educational philosophies, insufficient integration into the curriculum, weak practical education, and a singular evaluation mechanism. Furthermore, it constructs a systematic cultivation pathway from four dimensions: philosophy guidance, curriculum integration, practical empowerment, and evaluation assurance, providing theoretical support and practical references for enhancing the quality of nursing talent cultivation and shaping nursing professionals with both virtue and skill in the new era.

**Keywords:** curriculum-based political and virtuous education; nursing profession; cultivation of a sense of responsibility

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## 1. Introduction

Nursing plays a crucial role in the healthcare sector, directly impacting patients' lives, physical and mental health, and their healthcare experience. It is a vital link in safeguarding public health. Responsibility, as the foundation and professional minimum standard for nursing practitioners, encompasses multiple dimensions, including life responsibility, professional responsibility, humanistic responsibility, and social responsibility. It is not only a core competency of the nursing profession but also an important criterion for evaluating the quality of nursing talent cultivation. In the post-pandemic era, the public has raised higher expectations for the quality of nursing services, levels of humanistic care, and professional commitment. The responsibility demonstrated by nurses during public health emergencies has become a focal point of societal attention. However, current higher education in nursing still tends to "prioritize skills over ideological and political education" and "emphasize theory over holistic development". While some students possess a clear understanding of responsibility,

their ability to practice it is weak, exhibiting a significant “knowing is easy, doing is difficult” phenomenon. This is accompanied by prominent issues such as a lack of humanistic care, low professional identity, and insufficient initiative in taking responsibility, making it difficult to meet the practical needs of clinical nursing work and the development of the healthcare sector.

Curriculum-based ideological and political education subtly integrates elements of ideological and political education and value leadership into the entire process of professional teaching, achieving the concurrent advancement of knowledge transfer, capability building, and value shaping. Incorporating curriculum-based ideological and political education throughout the entire process of nursing talent cultivation and using ideological and political guidance to cultivate responsibility is not only an inevitable requirement for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education but also a key measure to enhance the quality of nursing talent cultivation and serve the Healthy China strategy. Based on this, this paper conducts a systematic study on the current situation, problems, and practical paths of cultivating responsibility among nursing students under the guidance of curriculum-based ideological and political education, providing operable ideas and solutions for nursing education reform and the enhancement of responsibility literacy in the new era.

## **2. Analysis of the current situation in cultivating responsibility among nursing students**

### **2.1. Generally high level of responsibility cognition, but imbalanced development across dimensions**

According to relevant empirical research, the overall level of responsibility among nursing students in China is currently at a relatively high stage of development, with an overall average score of 83.48 for evaluations related to responsibility and commitment, and over 70% achieving excellence. This stems from both the inherent professional qualities of nursing, which prioritize “life above all and protecting health,” and the regular basic moral education conducted by various institutions, laying a foundation for the formation of students’ responsibility cognition<sup>[1]</sup>. From the perspective of different dimensions of responsibility cognition, students have a high consensus on the core mission of the nursing profession, which is to “protect life and serve patients,” with cognition scores in the life responsibility dimension ranking highest among all dimensions. Scores for responsibility cognition at basic levels, such as learning responsibility and campus responsibility, are at a moderate level, while cognition scores in the political responsibility and social responsibility dimensions are relatively low, presenting a significant imbalance in the overall cognitive structure. This cognitive imbalance primarily manifests as students having a clear understanding of their individual service responsibilities in nursing but a relatively superficial understanding of the social value behind nursing work, the mission of industry development, and the intrinsic connection between the nursing profession and the national health strategy, lacking a systematic understanding of nursing professional responsibilities from a macro perspective. From the perspective of group differences, the level of responsibility cognition among nursing students shows a significant grade gradient, with senior students having a deeper understanding of nursing responsibilities and a higher level of cognition due to their accumulation of more clinical practical experience compared to junior students. Meanwhile, party members, active applicants for party membership, and students who actively choose and love the nursing profession also exhibit significantly higher levels of responsibility cognition than ordinary students and those who passively choose nursing due to professional adjustment. This fully indicates that cultivating professional identity and ideal beliefs are important driving forces for enhancing the level of responsibility cognition among nursing students<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.2. Positive Emotional Identification with Responsibility, but Insufficient Internalization**

Nursing students generally hold a positive attitude towards social and professional responsibilities and have a high level of recognition for noble professional spirits in the nursing field, such as the anti-epidemic spirit, Nightingale spirit, and the great love of medical professionals. In terms of professional value orientation, most students demonstrate a distinct altruistic tendency and are willing to integrate responsibility concepts into their daily professional learning

and practical operations<sup>[3]</sup>. Relevant survey data show that over 80% of nursing students agree that “love, patience, and responsibility” are the core requirements of nursing work, admire the responsible behavior of frontline nursing workers during the epidemic prevention and control period, and are willing to take outstanding nursing practitioners as professional role models to establish their own career development goals. However, it is noteworthy that most students’ emotional identification with responsibility remains at a superficial cognitive stage and has not been internalized into stable and lasting professional responsibility beliefs, presenting a prominent problem of “disconnection between emotional identification and belief internalization.” When facing real challenges such as academic pressure in professional learning, operational difficulties in clinical practice, and interest conflicts in career choices, some students’ emotional identification with responsibility is prone to weakening, and they may even develop a negative mindset of responsibility slackness and career confusion. This phenomenon is closely related to students’ low professional identity. At present, many nursing students passively choose this major due to adjustment, resulting in weak professional belonging and identity, which leads to a disconnection between responsibility emotions and career pursuits, making it difficult to form stable responsibility beliefs. Meanwhile, the lack of humanistic sentiment cultivation in the nursing education system further exacerbates the problem of insufficient internalization of students’ responsibility emotions<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **2.3. Insufficient practice of responsible behavior, with a significant “knowing is easy, doing is difficult” phenomenon**

Existing research generally shows that there is a significant disconnection among nursing students in the three links of responsibility cognition, responsibility identification, and responsible behavior, with “knowing is easy, doing is difficult” becoming a prominent challenge in cultivating responsibility<sup>[2]</sup>. Students score highest in social responsibility cognition but lowest in responsible actions, with a significant gap between the two, presenting characteristics of “clear cognition but delayed action.” Specifically, most students can clearly articulate the responsibility connotations and ethical requirements of the nursing profession, but show significant deficiencies in actual practice. During clinical training, some students neglect patient privacy protection and lack patience when communicating with patients. In terms of volunteer services, students’ initiative to participate is weak, with most participation behaviors being passive and formalistic, and only a few students frequently engage in public welfare activities. In daily learning, some students lack rigor in their attitudes and neglect the standardized training of operational skills, violating the learning and professional responsibilities required by the nursing profession. From the perspective of grade differences, junior students’ responsible behavior performance is inferior to that of senior students. The core reason lies in junior students’ lack of clinical practical experience, scarcity of practical scenarios, and absence of incentive mechanisms, making it difficult for responsibility cognition to be translated into conscious actions<sup>[5]</sup>.

## **3. Practical issues in cultivating a sense of responsibility among nursing students**

### **3.1. Imbalanced educational philosophy: Emphasis on skill transfer over value guidance**

For a long time, there has been a prevalent ideological bias in China’s nursing education field towards “emphasizing skills over qualities.” In the process of talent cultivation and evaluation, the degree of mastery of professional skills and theoretical examination scores are regarded as core criteria, while “soft indicators” such as a sense of responsibility and humanistic qualities, which are crucial for the career development of nursing, are marginalized. This stands in stark contrast to the educational requirements of “value guidance and the cultivation of both moral and technical skills” advocated by curriculum-based ideological and political education<sup>[6]</sup>. Some institutions simply define the core goal of nursing talent cultivation as “training skilled clinical nursing practitioners,” with an excessive focus on explaining and training technical content such as disease nursing and operational norms, while neglecting the significant impact of responsibility qualities on students’ long-term career development and the overall progress of the nursing profession. This leads to a lack of systematic planning and design for responsibility education, ultimately rendering it superficial<sup>[7]</sup>.

Meanwhile, the educational philosophy of “curriculum-based ideological and political education” has not fully penetrated the cognition of nursing educators. Some teachers still hold the erroneous belief that “ideological and political education is the exclusive responsibility of ideological and political course teachers,” directly resulting in a clear “disconnect” between professional courses and ideological and political courses<sup>[8]</sup>. In the teaching process, professional course teachers emphasize the transfer of professional knowledge and operational skills while neglecting the in-depth excavation and organic integration of ideological and political elements, such as responsibility ethics and professional spirit, embedded in the curriculum. Ideological and political course teachers, lacking nursing professional knowledge and clinical practical experience, often resort to abstract theoretical expressions when explaining responsibility connotations and professional commitment, making it difficult to establish effective connections with students’ actual professional learning. This renders responsibility education fragmented and superficial, failing to truly penetrate students’ minds and achieve the goal of value guidance.

### **3.2. Insufficient curriculum integration: Shallow and inadequate excavation of ideological and political elements**

The curriculum serves as the core carrier for cultivating responsibility. In the current nursing professional curriculum system, the integration of ideological and political elements with professional courses lacks depth and systematicness, constraining the effectiveness of cultivating responsibility qualities. On one hand, nursing core courses primarily focus on technical content such as disease diagnosis, treatment nursing, and operational procedures, with limited coverage of content related to responsibility, such as bioethics, professional responsibility, physician-patient empathy, and the spirit of self-discipline. Even when mentioned, it is merely as an embellishment and fails to permeate the entire teaching process. On the other hand, the setup of humanities courses is unreasonable, accounting for a low proportion of total class hours. Most institutions only offer 1–2 humanities elective courses, with content that lacks targeted integration with nursing professional responsibilities, failing to form a systematic curriculum system for responsibility education<sup>[4]</sup>. Additionally, curriculum design lacks a layered and progressive logic, failing to conduct targeted cultivation based on the cognitive patterns and professional development stages of students in different grades, resulting in a disconnect between responsible education and students’ growth needs and making it difficult to achieve precise talent cultivation<sup>[9]</sup>.

### **3.3. Weak practical education: Lack of scenario support for responsibility practice**

Practice is the key link for internalizing responsibility qualities. Currently, practical teaching in nursing faces issues such as misaligned positioning, single scenarios, and inadequate guidance, which do not align with the requirements of “practical education and the unity of knowledge and action” advocated by curriculum-based ideological and political education. During clinical internships, teaching faculty primarily focus on skill assessments and operational guidance while neglecting guidance and feedback on students’ responsible behaviors. Students lack in-depth experiences and reflections on responsibility scenarios such as ethical conflicts and physician-patient communication, making it difficult to hone their ability to take responsibility in practice. Furthermore, practical platforms are relatively limited, mostly limited to hospital clinical settings, lacking diversified practical carriers such as community nursing, elderly care services, and public health emergencies. The volunteer services and public welfare activities that students participate in are mostly short-term and sporadic, lacking a sustained practical mechanism, making it difficult to form stable, responsible behavioral habits. Meanwhile, the integration of practical teaching and ideological and political education is insufficient. Most practical activities only focus on skill application without designing targeted responsibility cultivation goals and evaluation criteria, significantly reducing the effectiveness of practical education.

### **3.4. Single evaluation mechanism: Lack of assessment on responsibility qualities**

A scientific and effective evaluation mechanism is an important guarantee for cultivating responsibility. The current evaluation system for nursing students fails to fully reflect the goals of cultivating responsibility qualities and has

obvious shortcomings. In terms of evaluation content, theoretical examinations and skill operations still dominate, with an emphasis on assessing students' memory of professional knowledge and proficiency in operations, while lacking quantitative assessments and comprehensive evaluations of indicators related to responsibility qualities such as responsibility awareness, humanistic care, professional attitude, teamwork, and volunteer services<sup>[10]</sup>. The evaluation subjects and methods are relatively limited, with school teachers being the primary evaluators and a lack of participation from clinical teaching faculty, patients, internship units, and other diverse subjects, making it difficult to comprehensively and objectively reflect on students' responsible performances in different scenarios. The evaluation methods primarily rely on summative evaluations, excessively depending on final examination scores while neglecting dynamic tracking of students' learning processes, practical performances, and the cultivation of responsible behaviors. This leads students to focus only on the final evaluation results while ignoring the accumulation and improvement of daily responsibility qualities, constraining the effectiveness of cultivating a sense of responsibility.

## **4. Practical pathways for cultivating a sense of responsibility among nursing students**

### **4.1. Adhering to ideological guidance and establishing a solid ideological foundation for responsibility cultivation**

Ideological guidance serves as the prerequisite for cultivating a sense of responsibility. It is essential to base efforts on the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, firmly establishing an educational philosophy that integrates moral and technical education with ideological and political guidance, and comprehensively incorporating responsibility cultivation into the entire process of nursing talent development to address the ideological deviation of prioritizing skills over qualities. Firstly, it is important to strengthen top-level design by integrating life responsibility, professional responsibility, humanistic responsibility, and social responsibility into talent development plans, course syllabi, and classroom teaching standards in alignment with the strategic requirements of "Healthy China" and the developmental needs of the nursing profession. This involves formulating layered and progressive responsibility cultivation objectives to achieve regular and standardized responsibility education. Secondly, enhancing the construction of teacher ethics and professional conduct is crucial to leveraging the exemplary role of teachers. Regular training on teacher ethics and professional conduct, as well as ideological and political research activities for courses, should be organized to guide teachers in deeply exploring political elements within professional courses and integrating responsibility awareness and professional ethics into the entire process of classroom teaching and practical guidance. Meanwhile, establishing an incentive mechanism for ideological and political teaching in courses and incorporating the effectiveness of responsibility education into teacher performance evaluations and title assessments can help break cognitive misconceptions and form a responsibility cultivation pattern involving full participation, whole-process education, and all-around education. Thirdly, creating an immersive educational atmosphere is essential. By leveraging the characteristics of the nursing profession, a campus culture centered on responsibility should be cultivated through characteristic activities such as promoting the spirit of Florence Nightingale, nurse cap-awarding ceremonies on Nurses' Day, and sharing stories of outstanding nursing practitioners. This enables students to strengthen their responsibility awareness and deepen their emotional identification with responsibility in a subtle manner, internalizing responsibility concepts into their professional pursuits.

### **4.2. Deepening curriculum integration and constructing a responsibility cultivation curriculum system**

Breaking down barriers between ideological and political courses and professional courses, a layered, progressive, and comprehensive responsibility cultivation curriculum system should be constructed to achieve deep integration of responsibility education and professional teaching. In public foundational courses, content such as the Healthy China strategy, the spirit of pandemic resistance, and the responsibility of healthcare workers should be incorporated to solidify students' ideological foundations and patriotic sentiments. In professional foundational courses, elements such as

reverence for life, professional norms, and the spirit of self-discipline should be infiltrated, helping students establish a clear framework for responsibility awareness and strengthen professional identification by combining the characteristics of courses such as human anatomy and nursing ethics. In core professional courses, ideological and political elements should be deeply excavated and naturally integrated. By combining clinical scenarios in courses such as medical-surgical nursing, critical care nursing, and emergency nursing, students' responsibility connotations, such as the spirit of self-discipline, patient safety, humanistic care, and teamwork, should be reinforced. Meanwhile, characteristic courses such as nursing humanities cultivation, life education, and professional ethics and regulations should be offered to address shortcomings in responsibility education. Innovative teaching methods, such as case teaching, situational simulation, and dual-instructor collaborative teaching, should be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of responsibility education and achieve deep integration of medical theory instruction and value guidance.

### **4.3. Strengthening practical empowerment and establishing diverse platforms for responsibility practice**

A diverse and collaborative platform for responsibility practice involving classrooms, clinics, society, and culture should be constructed to promote the transformation of responsibility awareness into behavior and fulfill the requirements of practical education. At the classroom practice level, practical teaching forms should be enriched by incorporating responsibility-related training, such as patient communication and privacy protection, into nursing skill training. Responsibility reflection sessions should be set up during case discussions to cultivate students' teamwork and responsibility awareness. At the clinical practice level, a "dual-mentor system" combining ideological and political guidance with professional instruction should be implemented to address the issue of prioritizing skills over ideological and political education in clinical teaching. A clinical responsibility practice recording system should be established to guide students in recording their responsibility experiences and reflections during practice, ensuring that responsibility development permeates the entire internship process. At the social practice level, long-term cooperation should be established with community health service centers and nursing homes to organize regular volunteer services for students. Students should be encouraged to participate in public health emergencies, rural medical assistance, and other activities to expand their responsibility boundaries. Volunteer services should be incorporated into credit management, and an evaluation mechanism should be established to incentivize students to actively practice responsibility. At the cultural practice level, activities such as responsibility-themed essay contests and exemplary speaker sessions should be organized to create an educational atmosphere that values responsibility and promotes the conscious development of responsible behavior.

### **4.4. Improving evaluation and safeguards and establishing a long-term mechanism for responsibility cultivation**

A multidimensional, diverse-subject, and dynamic three-dimensional evaluation system should be constructed to leverage the guiding, motivating, and constraining roles of evaluation. In terms of evaluation content, indicators such as responsibility awareness, humanistic care, professional attitude, teamwork, volunteer services, and internship performance should be comprehensively incorporated into the evaluation scope. Clear quantitative and qualitative evaluation standards should be formulated to achieve comprehensive coverage of responsibility literacy. In terms of evaluation methods, a combination of process-oriented and summative evaluations should be adhered to, dynamically tracking students' responsibility literacy development through classroom performance records, practical training assessments, practical reflection reports, and volunteer service archives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluations should be adopted to ensure a comprehensive and objective evaluation. In terms of evaluation subjects, a diverse evaluation mechanism involving schools, teachers, students, clinical instructors, patients, and employers should be constructed to comprehensively reflect students' responsibility performance in different scenarios. The application of evaluation results should be strengthened by directly linking responsibility literacy assessment results with students' merit-based evaluations, internship recommendations, scholarship assessments, and graduation qualification reviews to leverage the motivating

role of evaluation. Meanwhile, evaluation results should be regularly analyzed and summarized to promptly optimize educational measures and adjust cultivation plans in response to issues identified during the responsibility cultivation process, thereby promoting continuous and in-depth progress in cultivating a sense of responsibility among nursing students.

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## Disclosure statement

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