

The Application of Situational Teaching Method in the Teaching of Nursing Interns

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Abstract:

Nursing is a practice-oriented discipline, and the clinical comprehensive abilities of students are undoubtedly an important indicator of the teaching quality in nursing schools. Scenario simulation teaching methods, as a form of virtual practical training, have become an increasingly popular teaching approach in the field of international education. This method provides students with a safe, non-threatening, efficient, and realistic simulation environment. Applying scenario simulation teaching methods in clinical nursing education fully utilizes the visual, practical, effective, repeatable, and controllable aspects of scenario exercises. Advancing nursing scenario teaching enables students to cultivate their abilities to observe, understand, analyze, and solve problems in real cases and situations, while also allowing for the development and expression of their collaborative spirit, humanism, and critical thinking skills. This paper discusses the connotation of scenario teaching and its application in clinical nursing education, with the hope of providing a reference for nursing clinical teaching.

Keywords:

Scenario Teaching Method, Nursing, Clinical Teaching

1. Introduction

Nursing is a highly applied and practical discipline, and the clinical comprehensive ability of students is undoubtedly an important indicator of the teaching quality of nursing schools. In China, higher nursing education has only been restored for 20 years, and undergraduate education is still not very well developed, with clinical nursing education being a particularly weak link. For a long time, our country has placed considerable emphasis on cultivating students' theoretical knowledge, resulting in a systematic education and evaluation method for subject knowledge [1]. However, the cultivation of clinical abilities is still in its infancy. Thus, the current situation of nursing education is characterized by a disconnect between foundational knowledge and clinical practice, emphasizing the systematic nature of disciplines, which leads to a tendency for theory to be divorced from practice and foundational knowledge to be separated from clinical application. This is detrimental to fostering a patient-centered nursing philosophy among students and creates an imbalance between what students

learn and what is needed in clinical practice, resulting in a gap between theory and practice [2].

Situational teaching refers to a cognitive method that enables learners to understand the teaching content by virtually reproducing the environment and process of an event, thereby enhancing their abilities in a short time. It allows students to grasp the connotations of knowledge, improve their skills, and form their own values through personal experience. Situational teaching is beneficial for enhancing students' imaginative thinking abilities, allowing them to appreciate the status, circumstances, and essential skills of certain roles [3]. It helps students strengthen their ability to predict and address real-world issues through simulated events. In recent years, the situational teaching model has become a developmental direction in the medical field and even in global education, with an increasing number of medical schools beginning to experiment with this approach. Situational teaching creates more opportunities for students to think independently and analyze problems, encouraging self-directed learning and growth. In this model, teachers primarily play an inductive and guiding role, facilitating close cooperation between students and teachers, allowing students to truly take charge of their learning, abandon the habit of passive learning, and enhance their personal qualities while fostering innovation and practical skills.

Currently, nurse trainers are somewhat aware of situational teaching, but most have limited understanding of its implementation methods and application value in clinical nurse training. Therefore, this article analyzes and discusses the application value of situational teaching methods in the education of nursing interns, with the hope of providing significant guidance for situational teaching work and serving as a reference for clinical nursing education.

2. Overview of Situational and Situational Teaching

2.1. Concept of Situational Teaching

In 1989, Brown first introduced the concept of situational teaching in a paper titled "Situational Cognition and Learning Culture." [4] In 1995, Professor Li Jilin defined the concept of situational teaching in China for the first time, describing it as "a teaching model that creates typical scenarios through vivid visuals and language descriptions to evoke children's enthusiastic learning emotions, thereby promoting their active participation in the teaching process." In other words, "situational teaching is a method that uses concrete and vivid scenarios to stimulate students' active learning interest and improve learning efficiency." [5]

The discipline of clinical nursing adopts situational teaching, utilizing role-playing and on-site demonstration methods to assess patients' health status, identify existing health issues that need assistance, implement appropriate nursing measures, and communicate effectively with patients. This approach discards the previously held notion that medicine is dry and abstract, making medical education vivid, intuitive, and engaging. It allows students to encounter patients before clinical practice and learn how to communicate and interact with them, thus serving as an effective method for preclinical education.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation of Situational Simulation Teaching

Teaching requires context. Dewey, in his book "How We Think," presented the idea that "thinking begins with the context of direct experience." He believed that the

teaching process must first establish a context based on educational objectives and devise a situational teaching plan. This plan should then be implemented to stimulate students' interest in learning, followed by the evaluation and summarization of learning outcomes. The teaching model is a stable relationship and structural form of activities among various elements in the teaching and learning process, guided by specific educational philosophies, theories, and supported by certain teaching environments and resources [6].

2.2.1. Constructivist Learning Theory

The earliest proponent of constructivism can be traced back to Jean Piaget from Switzerland. Constructivist theory posits that teachers should aid and guide learners in utilizing environmental elements to foster their initiative and engagement in learning, rather than merely imparting knowledge. Therefore, an effective and high-quality teaching process should involve students actively and proactively constructing their understanding of theoretical knowledge, summarizing practical experiences, and innovating work methods, under the guidance of the teacher. It is a process through which students develop their professional competencies and qualities through career experiences. This implies that teachers must adopt entirely new teaching models (completely abandoning traditional teacher-centered approaches that emphasize knowledge transmission and view students as mere recipients of knowledge), novel teaching methods, and innovative instructional design concepts. Thus, it inevitably challenges traditional pedagogical theories and concepts, leading to the formation of a new generation of learning theories—constructivist learning theory—while progressively developing compatible new educational models, teaching methods, and instructional design ideas.

2.2.2. Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning refers to the process whereby students gain firsthand experience from daily life or structured programs created by others, followed by activities such as reflection, generalization, discussion, and evaluation, ultimately leading to new insights, emotions, and actions, which are then tested and applied in practice to guide subsequent behavior. David Kolb is a representative of experiential learning theory; he argues that learning is not merely the acquisition and transmission of content, but rather the process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience [7]. Kolb uses a learning cycle model to describe experiential learning. This model consists of four steps: (1) Concrete Experience: fully immersing oneself in the actual experiences at that time and place; (2) Reflective Observation: observing and reflecting on the actual experiences from multiple perspectives; (3) Abstract Conceptualization: logically deriving concepts and theories through observation and reflection; (4) Active Experimentation: applying these theories to make decisions and solve problems, and validating the newly formed concepts and theories in practical work.

2.2.3. Situational Learning Theory

Situational learning theory was proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger from the University of California around 1990. The situational simulation teaching method is commonly used in management discipline education, with its core being role-playing and passionate engagement. Through this situational process, learners can achieve qualitative changes in their self-practice abilities [8].

2.3. Nursing Education-Related Teaching Methods

2.3.1. PBL Teaching

The “Problem-Based Learning” (PBL) model, developed by American neurology expert Professor Barrows, has been widely adopted in the educational field. PBL teaching centers on students, utilizes group discussions as the teaching format, and employs clinical problems as the principal stimuli to inspire students’ motivation to learn and apply knowledge to analyze and solve problems. This design concept reflects a human-centered educational philosophy. PBL can be classified into pure PBL teaching, partial PBL teaching, blended PBL teaching, and full PBL teaching.

2.3.2. PDCA Teaching Method

The PDCA cycle, also known as the Deming cycle, includes four phases—Plan, Do, Check, Act—and eight steps (analyzing teaching quality, identifying problems, determining the causes of quality issues, finding the main factors affecting quality problems, formulating specific plans, implementing, checking results, summarizing experiences and lessons, and carrying over unresolved issues to the next cycle). This process of continuous iteration can effectively mobilize the enthusiasm of nursing interns, allowing them to purposefully complete their internship plans according to the careful organization and scientific management of the four phases and eight steps proposed by Huang Youhan and others.

2.3.3. Case Discussion Teaching Method

Fei Hong proposed conducting case discussion classes in clinical teaching and suggested specific implementation methods, including preparation for case discussion classes and the application of cases during discussions. The introduction of case discussion classes has enhanced students’ enthusiasm and motivation for learning, shortened the distance between theory and clinical practice, and simultaneously promoted teachers’ self-accumulation and improvement of knowledge.

3. Application of Situational Teaching in Nursing Education

3.1. The Impact of Situational Teaching on Nursing Interns’ Interest in Learning

Psychology suggests that curiosity and desire are the foundation for generating interest. It is this psychological need that inspires students’ motivation to learn and engages them in learning activities, capturing their attention and interest for extended periods in the quest for answers. Most scholars argue that learning interest is the most crucial factor in stimulating learning motivation. Meaningful teaching must prioritize cultivating students’ interest in learning, thereby encouraging their initiative; it should be grounded in observation and sensory experiences, enhancing students’ exploratory learning; centered on developing students’ thinking, with a focus on fostering creativity; driven by nurturing students’ emotions, intertwined with educational values; and utilizing problem-solving as a means, emphasizing practical application. The design of teaching scenarios can fully reflect the initiative, exploratory nature, creativity, and practical skills of students’ learning [9].

Situational teaching reinforces nursing interns’ theoretical knowledge while also improving their practical skills. It fully engages nursing interns’ enthusiasm and creativity, giving them a greater sense of autonomy. This transformation shifts the

traditional teaching approach from a “teacher-centric” model to a “competency-centered” model, effectively improving learning outcomes. Thus, utilizing situational teaching methods makes the learning experience novel for nursing interns, resulting in superior performance regarding learning motivation, learning objectives, in-depth learning, self-directed learning, and solid learning. This evidence indicates that situational teaching methods stimulate students’ interest in learning and cultivate their ability for self-directed learning.

3.2. The Impact of Situational Teaching on the Development of Nursing Interns’ Potential

Situational teaching advocates for group cooperation and collective participation. Since the 1970s, the use of cooperative learning in classrooms in Western countries has become widespread. Through cooperative learning, students can share emotions, assist each other, and progress collectively. At the same time, cooperative learning increases students’ interest in participating in teaching, stimulating and enhancing their motivation to learn. This approach transforms students from passive receivers in traditional teaching to active participants in the learning process. In such teaching scenarios, students complement each other’s strengths and contribute their best, creating opportunities for mutual teaching and learning. In situational teaching, learning groups collectively share responsibilities and tasks related to their studies. The role of the group leader includes distributing roles, guiding members in researching materials, rehearsing the performance process, and encouraging all group members to actively participate, while recording the issues encountered by each member during rehearsals and the methods for resolving those issues. This process can inspire and cultivate students’ abilities in communication, collaboration, and management. Cooperative work means that individuals must understand themselves and their relationships with others, acknowledging the interdependent relationships among team members. Through cooperative learning, students acquire methods and skills to solve real-world problems.

3.3. The Impact of Scenario-Based Teaching on Nursing Interns’ Critical Thinking Skills

Scenario-based teaching aids in the development of critical thinking skills among nursing interns. Judging the appropriateness of rescue measures using critical thinking has become an important component of evaluating comprehensive clinical skills and is one of the methods for assessing the core competencies of contemporary nurses. Scenario-based teaching is vivid and engaging, providing nursing interns with a sense of immersion. They not only practice the sequence, focus, and techniques of clinical nursing but also learn to communicate effectively with “patients,” ensuring they provide timely comfort, feedback, or assistance. This method helps them learn to take decisive and effective actions in critical patient situations, ensuring the preservation of life in the shortest possible time. Consequently, it enhances nursing interns’ sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and achievement, improving their clinical adaptability.

3.4. Analysis of the Impact of Scenario-Based Teaching on Nursing Interns’ Satisfaction

Scenario-based teaching has increased nursing interns’ satisfaction with clinical nursing education. Clinical nursing education is an important organizational form of nursing instruction and a key phase for nursing interns to connect theory with practice.

The scenario-based teaching model standardizes the clinical teaching procedures and enhances the quality of clinical education provided by instructors. Although clinical instructors are usually very experienced, they often have dual roles as nurses and educators. While conducting teaching, they must also fulfill a substantial amount of clinical nursing work, which can hinder their ability to fully engage in teaching. Additionally, variations in instructors' professional abilities can also impact the effectiveness of clinical teaching. The scenario-based teaching model enables instructors to provide systematic and targeted education to nursing interns based on the established framework.

3.5. The Impact of Scenario-Based Teaching on the Abilities of Nursing Interns

Scenario-based simulation teaching methods are beneficial for enhancing the comprehensive qualities and abilities of nursing interns. During scenario exercises, students are required to pay attention not only to the specific medical conditions of patients (including the patients' psychological and social issues) but also to guide and explain relevant information to patients based on their conditions and the procedures involved, while providing appropriate health education. This not only strengthens the students' sense of professional responsibility but also helps cultivate a good sense of professional ethics for their future clinical work. As students newly enter clinical practice, their interpersonal communication skills and language expression abilities are relatively weak, often leaving them unsure about how to interact with patients, express their thoughts, and effectively provide health education tailored to patients' needs. Scenario setting in teaching allows students to engage with patients more frequently in the created scenarios, prompting them to constantly reflect, utilize their learned knowledge, and hone their communication skills. This method enables them to quickly adopt the role of a nurse. Surveys indicate that after engaging in scenario-based teaching, 86.5% of students felt that their communication abilities with patients had significantly improved, and 96.1% reported a notable enhancement in their ability to express their thoughts and opinions [10].

4. Conclusions

Scenario-based teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning and foster their ability for autonomous learning. Additionally, scenario-based simulation teaching contributes to the development of nursing interns' critical thinking skills, improves their humanistic qualities, and increases their satisfaction with clinical teaching in nursing. More importantly, scenario-based teaching methods are beneficial for enhancing the comprehensive qualities and abilities of nursing interns. Well-designed scenario teaching can significantly improve the quality of clinical nursing education and demonstrates strong feasibility and practicality, making it worthy of further promotion and application.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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