Implementing the “Humanistic Care Model” in the Undergraduate Nursing Education

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Abstract. In order to instill the nursing students with the value and ethics of humanistic care, our college has implemented a curriculum based on a humanistic care model after a review of both the International and Chinese literature. We implemented “three early stage education models” the introduction of humanistic care education by incorporating in the beginning nursing courses three strategies which are the teaching of humanistic nursing practice, the use of reflective thinking and the implementation of humanistic care in the clinical practicum. In this fashion the nursing students can incorporate the concept of humanistic care, improve the quality of care given, and help students to develop a holistic view of human beings through “knowledge, ability, and quality of care”.

Introduction

The importance of humanistic care has been highly recognized in nursing. Watson [1], was the first to combine the concept of care and humanistic care into one. The Watson Institute for Caring Science (WCSI) and the International Humanities Caring Association (IAHC) has been established to promote the development of global care and care practices. The “China Nursing Career Development Plan (2011-2015) [2]” and the “Quality Nursing Service Demonstration Project” program of activities [3] that was issued by China’s Ministry of Health will raise humanistic care to a higher priority. In China the current teaching of humanistic care is still inadequate. There is a lack of targeted teaching in humanistic care; this results in a less humanistic quality of nursing care. Instilling humanistic care in the nursing curriculum is paramount in the current and the future nursing education programs to produce nursing students competent in delivering humanistic care in a complex health care environment. Based on the multidisciplinary nature of the nursing faculty we are developing a model of “Care and cooperation ability” among the faculty and students. It is one of the four core competencies required of nursing students, and it is being fulfilled by incorporating this humanistic care concept in every course at the beginning of the nursing curriculum, as well as incorporating it in the early clinical experience, and finally by the use of reflective thinking (referred to as “three early stage education model” of education). This is achieved by teaching innovatively to instill the humanistic care and improve the overall quality of care. This allows the nursing students to meet the needs of the society through humanistic caring.
Theoretical Basis

The Humanistic Care Nursing Teaching Model

The teaching model of humanistic care is the framework of the teaching activities and the strategies to institute humanistic nursing care by utilizing the modern teaching theory to improve the quality of the nursing care.

Nursing professionals from both home and abroad have developed the teaching model of humanistic care by changing the teaching methods and increasing the offering of humanistic care courses. The key to constructing a humanistic care nursing teaching curriculum is to combine the teaching objectives and the teaching content to create a context which is rich in humanistic nursing care. Guo Yujie [4] said that they used the “nursing humanistic care quality structure” as the framework of the theoretical model. They did not increase the number of humanities courses in the curriculum. Instead, they integrated the humanistic care education throughout the curriculum to build a program framework of “environment - passion - practice – enlightenment”, and to create a situation with the intent of creating an aesthetic experience that encouraged the non-hierarchical interaction between professors and students throughout the teaching process. The teaching model integrates the theory of humanistic nursing care, the theory of modern pedagogy and the teaching practice of specialized courses. It provides a set of feasible teaching program frameworks and a teaching strategy system to promote the development of humanistic nursing education in the nursing students and is combined with clinical practicum.

Psychological Basis

According to the characteristics of developmental psychology the stage of intellectual development were to develop self-awareness and create a value system occurs during the period between 17 and 35 years old [5]. The values acquired during the time at the university will play a decisive role in the future
of the country, the society, the organizations, and other social groups [6]. The average age of the beginning college students is 18 years old and it occurs at a critical stage in the formation of a value system. As a part of personal value system, the development of care is a process that spans from the awakening of caring to the formation of care cognition and judgment and the practice of care [7].

The nursing students are at a critical stage in the development of achieving self-awareness and establishing a value system. To optimize this development, we use the innovative teaching method of introducing humanistic care at an early stage in their curriculum and increase their knowledge development and reflective thinking. Through clinical practice we also allow them embody the concept of human caring in everyday life. In order to achieve this goal of inculcating a humanistic care value system and ethical caring behaviors in nursing students, we teach in an innovative and transformative way. Through the introduction of the “three early stage education models” methods, we stimulate the students learning facilitate their humanistic value system acquisition by role modeling through experiential, participatory, and reflective teaching (Fig. 1).

The Practice of "Three Early Stage" Model Training

Object of Study

This study covers all the nursing undergraduate students of College of Health Science and Nursing in Wuhan Polytechnic University after September 2009.

“Three Early Stage” Training Model Methods

Early Course Offering.

Once the students have entered the Nursing program the first two years of curriculum are mostly concerned with the basic curriculum of basic medical knowledge and learning Human Anatomy, Pathophysiology, Biochemistry and other medical basic courses. We now integrate the humanistic concepts into the teaching of basic courses, from the four dimensions, which are concept, knowledge, ability and perception. We also adopt a variety of teaching methods, carry out student-centered teaching and build non-hierarchical relationship between professors and students. As a result, students can master the basic theoretical knowledge, and at the same time get humanistic caring through education by experiencing the humanistic caring and mutual respect.

Integrating humanistic care into the medical basic courses. Let us give a few examples of the modification we made to our nursing curriculum to integrate humanistic care in the basic medical courses.

As an example, we use the case of John Macleod, a preeminent British anatomist to educate the student about how his early curiosity about dissecting the master’s dog made him become a preeminent anatomist because the master forgave him and requested that he draw up a diagram of the human skeleton as well as the human circulatory system. Through such examples we teach the students to learn tolerance and respect. Because of the special experimental conditions in anatomy classes, the professors face the body in a way to create a caring atmosphere by the way they face the body. In so doing when they face the body they guide the students to overcome obstacles by learning the natural laws of nature. By their attitude of respect for the body, the professor also fosters an understanding of the respect for life and establishes a high level of professionalism in the students. In the course of Pathophysiology through the observation of pathological specimens, the professors stimulate the students to
seek truth from the facts and guide their understanding from the pathological changes in the disease to also include the state of human health, resulting in empathy, and fostering humanistic care values.

Teaching changes made in basic nursing courses and humanities courses. Here are some examples of the changes we made in undergraduate courses to increase their humanistic care content. In the course Nursing Theory, the nursing theory is no longer the only subject of the class but now also puts more emphasis on professional nursing content. The course content when covering the Maslow Theory also requires us to cover the need to understand the hierarchy theory, autonomous learning and situational simulation teaching. To do so, we assign the following learning tasks to the students so that they understand the theoretical knowledge by a search of the review of the literature, and then writing up medical situation cases, in order to for the nursing students to be able to participate in the role-play in classes. In this way we change the past teaching philosophy from the “teacher is the subject” by using experimental teaching making the understanding of the student the main objective. This way we guide the students to obtain insight, develop empathy, to reach the emotional, cognitive and behavioral resonance of humanistic care.

Another example is that when we discuss the history of nursing development we not only talk about it but also show pictures of those having made outstanding contribution to nursing as well as explaining the historical evolution of older generations by signing nursing songs to help the student instilling professional values and stimulate the student to attain a high level of professional pride. In the third semester of our curriculum we have added two new courses Humanistic Care of Nursing and Interpersonal Communication. These courses impart knowledge directly, connect theory with practice, organize humanistic care and provide effective communication practice. In addition, we pay attention to the development of a humanistic teaching environment at the college, so that students can learn in the rich humanistic environment and by observation adopt the inspiration of humanistic spirit.

Early Clinical Practicum.

We have also made many changes to the integration of clinical practice learning after the students have taken the courses in class. We now arrange ahead of time with the clinical agencies and have included in our clinical experience clinical probation and volunteer service in early learning stage as the students enter college. In this way, the students can carry out various forms of clinical contacts by integrating the theory learned in class in light of their clinical experience. For example the students begin immediately to obtain clinical professional experience through the cooperation with the teaching hospital as they enter college. By their experience in observing clinical nursing work and with the guidance and socialization of the faculty the students develop a professional attitude.

Another example is in the chapter on hospice care in Nursing Theory where we take the students in the hospital hospice care unit for the students to observe and emphasize the actual physical and mental needs of the patients the late stages of cancer. In this fashion students learn to spontaneously offer the care and spiritual support that should be given to these patients. With early clinical contact the students are able to consolidate nursing theory, clinical skill acquisition and professional behavior simultaneously. The student can integrate consciousness, social consciousness and professional emotion. After reflection, this, strengthens the humanistic care of this abstract concept of understanding and awareness and establish a professional humanistic care awareness.
Early Practice of Reflective Thinking.

The acquisition of a professional value system is an important part of the college student extracurricular life. This has many meanings for them, such as deepening their understanding of the profession, valuing nursing profession as a whole, preparing for the transition to the workplace, and integrating the competitive advantage of employment. To accelerate this process, we actively promote the organization and participation of activities which promote the meaningful acquisition of a professional value system binding the professionalism and the acquisition of knowledge in the extracurricular activities of nursing students.

For example: we encourage the freshman class to join the Youth Volunteers Association, the Love Club, and to organize groups of young volunteers to participate in the activities of the “love ward school” in the Wuhan Union Hospital. In this fashion the students use their knowledge to help others, reflect their personal values and learn to appreciate the importance of love and respect for all people. The volunteer service activities of the nursing students are jointly developed by professors and students, and this interaction is nonhierarchical. In every aspect of these activities professor and student can show their personal understanding of empathy, their mutual appreciation and self-appreciation and learn from each other. In the process of social practice, it cultivates the humanistic care quality of caring for others and dedicating.

Additionally, we organize “Interpersonal Communication” activities regularly and we practice it frequently. Each practice group presents the problems and experiences that they encountered in the process of professional socialization and in their clinical practicum by post-conference, analyzing communication patterns, and reflecting on their clinical experiences. By reviewing and analyzing the communication patterns in the care of the patient in their clinical practicum, the nursing students obtain and understanding and a perspective of humanistic care. Through these exercise they are able to assimilate the uniqueness of the nursing humanistic care activities and the physical, psychological, and spiritual changes that results from a humanistic caring framework. Through this exchange of ideas and examples of humanistic care, students acquire a strong professional value system.

The Implementation of “Three Early Stage” Education Model

Before the implementation of “three early stage” education model, we interviewed the nursing students through in-depth interviews to assess the level of understanding of the humanistic care concept of the nursing students. It was found that the cognitive level of care quality was very uneven and that most nursing students were not aware of humanistic care and did not understand the humanistic care in practice.

After more than seven years of teaching a modified curriculum that uses the “three early stage” education model since September 2009, we evaluated the success of the teaching reform by the following methods with the graduating students: a nursing questionnaire and an in-depth interview and the feedback of the employers. We analyzed these results and present the results here. The results show that the humanistic care quality of undergraduate nursing students has been improved comprehensively. The nursing students’ communication, cooperation, learning and critical thinking has also been improved significantly since the implementation of the new curriculum. Thus, overall, the concept of humanistic care contributed significantly in changing the attitude and caring behavior of the graduating student. For instance, four consecutive classes of
graduates received outstanding reviews from their employers from 2013 to 2016.

Discussion
The “Three Early Stage” Education Model Emphasize the Importance of Professors and Students to the Humanistic Care Education

“Three early stage” education model require that professors and students participate jointly in the teaching learning process. The professors and students to learn and progress together with the changes incorporated in the early curriculum of obtaining early clinical experience and early professional socialization and the requirements that the professors integrate the humanistic care spirit into the teaching activities. The education model of “three early stage” is in line with the educational concept of “knowledge, faith, and practice”, so after students acquire and understand the essence of humanistic care, they will apply it in clinical practicum with reflective thinking in the delivery of care to patients. This new curriculum allows growth and development as a person for both professors and students and demands high professionalism at all times.

Early Professional Socialization can Effectively Develop the Spirit of Humanistic Care

Professional Socialization can take quite a variety of forms. It is mainly concerned by the integration of theory and clinical practicum. This development raises the self-esteem of the individual and the understanding of the perspective of humanistic care and mutual respect when caring for the patient. The students also improve their professionalism, stimulate their learning enthusiasm and improve their capacity to deliver respectful care.

Early Clinical Practicum Requires Positive Guidance

The advent of medical problems and of burnout is common problem in nursing students. With the implementation of early clinical practicum in the new curriculum it becomes imperative to properly guide the students to rapidly attain humanistic care values and implement these in the patient care delivery. This can be achieved through self-introspection, group discussion and reflective thinking journals. In this fashion the students integrate their experiences and internalize a humanistic value system. This allows the student to attain early a high level of professionalism.

To Improve the Scientific and Effectiveness of Humanistic Care Education

At present, China's research on nursing humanistic care is still in the stage of exploration and development. It is an important task for every nursing educator to find a scientific and effective teaching method that allows the integration of humanistic care in their curriculum. It also produces highly professional future nurses with a commitment to provide humanistic care to the patient. We incorporate the study of the humanistic care theory and research the effectiveness of the teaching reform on the students. Through the “three early stage” education model of humanistic care the value system of the nursing student can be transformed from a medical model and skill based education to a highly skilled humanistic caring behavior with a highly professional value system from the start of their nursing education.
Summary

Humanistic care is one of the core professional competencies of nursing students. The implementation of “three early stage” education model in our college improved the competency of the nursing students to provide humanistic care and also develop a highly professional and caring behavior. However, acquiring a humanistic care value system is a long process of continuous exploration. Now, there are still so many shortcomings in the theory and practice that need improvement overtime to overcome the difficulties of practicing these humanistic caring behaviors in the challenging Chinese health care environment. Both educators and students need to commit themselves for continuing this challenge and practice humanistic care so that all patients will benefit from it. Our Chinese health care system depends on this to succeed in the future because every patient deserves this care.

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References


