

# Talking about the Reference of the Characteristics of Nursing Education in France to China

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**Abstract:** By introducing the current situation of nursing education in France, this article analyzes its characteristics in curriculum setting, teaching methods, teaching evaluation and practical teaching to learn from the advanced experience of nursing vocational education in France and provide reference for further improvement of nursing education in China.

**Keywords:** France; Nursing; Vocational Education

Although the development speed and scale of nursing education in China continue to accelerate, there are still some problems that to be continuously improved and perfected. This paper introduces the situation of nursing vocational education in France, analyzes its characteristics and summarizes useful experiences, in order to provide reference for further reform of nursing education in China and improvement of personnel training quality.

## 1. General situation of nursing vocational education in France

The nursing vocational education system in France is relatively perfect. In France, under the management of Health Bureau, nursing colleges are attached to medical centers affiliated to universities and large public hospitals, and mainly train assistant nurses and practical nurse. Among them, the enrollment standard of assistant nurses is junior high school graduate with a school system of one year and the enrollment standard of practical nurse is high school graduate with a three-year academic system. After graduation, they can obtain nursing diploma (bach-

elor's degree) and nurse qualification certificate, and practice freely in European Union. An annual quota of admitted Students is about 30,000. On-the-job nursing education mainly trains specialized nurses, nursing administrators and senior nursing practice nurses. Among them, specialized nurse training includes anesthesia resuscitation, pediatric nursing, and operating room nursing. The academic system is 2 years, 1 year and 18 months respectively. It is required to have obtained practicing qualification, 2 years working experience and obtain master's degree after graduation. The training program of nursing managers requires that they should have more than 5-10 years working experience in related positions and study in advanced health management schools for at least 10 months. Since 2018, a training program for advanced nursing practice nurses has been set up, requiring applicants to have a master's degree with a one-year academic system. After passing the examination, they can engage in related nursing work in the fields of chronic diseases, tumors and kidney dialysis or transplantation.

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## 2. Characteristics of nursing vocational education in France

### 2.1 The curriculum and teaching methods

Taking practical nurses' core competence as the guide, French nursing colleges use the national unified syllabus and set up six subject modules, namely humanities and social sciences and law, biology and medical sciences, nursing practice science and basic methods, nursing practice science and nursing technology, nursing related integrated knowledge and nursing working methods. Under each subject module, courses are offered around the theme of the unit, focusing on the integration of course contents. After the study of basic theoretical knowledge, different courses will be deeply integrated in horizontal connection and vertical penetration of knowledge, and a study project may involve multiple courses. The same course may be offered in different semesters, which makes learning more difficult. This curriculum enables students to consolidate knowledge points in different learning stages and projects, deepen their impressions, help students internalize into a comprehensive knowledge system in their own minds, and avoid isolation and division of learning contents.

The syllabus of nursing education in France uniformly stipulates the teaching methods of classroom teaching, including CM (Cour Magistral), TD (Travaux Diriges) and TP (Travaux Pratique). Each course includes CM and TD, but not necessarily TP. Among them, CM is taught in large classes, and teachers use various teaching methods to explain theoretical knowledge about 1.5-3 hours each class; TD is taught in groups with 20-25 students in each group. Teachers don't focus on lectures and have no fixed teaching materials. They distribute learning materials in advance, which mainly involve theoretical knowledge, clinical cases and problems in previous CM. Students should consult relevant materials before class, think and form personal opinions, and then discuss in groups in TD class to discuss the answers to questions together. In this process, teachers give enlightening answers to students' questions, guide and summarize them moderately, and each TD lasts for 2-4 hours. TP means that students take groups as a unit with about 10 students in each group. According to the learning content and requirements, students need to actively learn the specific steps and methods to carry out the pro-

ject and complete the implementation. Both TD and TP emphasize student-centered learning, and students should prepare for learning before and after class. From the teacher's point of view, the purpose of setting up CM is not to let students fully grasp the course content, but to have a conceptual understanding of what they have learned. From the perspective of students, they acquire knowledge through CM, actively apply knowledge to solve problems in TD, and then apply what they have learned to practice through TP to form core competence. According to the overall allocation of class hours, classroom teaching is 2100 h in total, of which TD is 1050 h, accounting for up to 50%. CM is accumulated for 750 hours, and the ratio of CM hours to TD hours was 1:1.4. Besides, TP is 300 h. This kind of teaching arrangement accords with people's cognitive law, gives students more time to digest and absorb what they have learned, and it can effectively improve students' self-study ability, critical thinking ability, communication and cooperation ability and innovation ability.

### 2.2 Clinical practice teaching

A total of 5100 h professional study was completed during the period of study in French nursing colleges, of which classroom teaching and clinical practice each accounted for 2100 h hours, with a ratio of 1:1. Classroom teaching and clinical practice teaching are closely connected and carried out alternately. There are six semesters in the three academic years, each of which lasts for 20 weeks. The first semester has 10 weeks of classroom teaching and 5 weeks of clinical practice. In the second to fifth semesters, classroom teaching and practice are set for 10 weeks each, and the ratio is also 1:1. In the sixth semester, there are 5 weeks of classroom study and 15 weeks of comprehensive practice. Practice places include emergency medical centers, general hospitals, community home care institutions, mental hospitals, nursing homes, schools, kindergartens and other institutions. During the internship, students receive clinical teaching training on the one hand and one-on-one guidance from college teachers on the other hand. From students' entrance to graduation, the instructors in colleges and universities are usually fixed which enables teachers to grasp the overall situation of students comprehensively and deeply. In addition to making individualized clinical practice learning goals and plans and conducting

teaching follow-up, the tutor will also individually and regularly meet with students about one hour each time to understand the students' internship situation, carry out retrospective reflection training guidance according to the steps of "description-analysis-reflection", answer questions and put forward suggestions and write down records in clinical practice teaching files as the basis for students' academic evaluation.

### **2.3 Academic evaluation and assessment**

In France, the academic evaluation methods in nursing education are very diverse, and the evaluation of learning process is very important. Evaluation and assessment methods include personal assignments, class participation in discussions or speeches, clinical practice performance, online tests, final exams, and group assignments, papers, project reports, etc. In order to get good grades, students must actively participate in various learning activities. Colleges and universities implement the elimination system, and the full score of course examination is 20 points, and students who get 10 points will pass. If students fail to pass the examination in many subjects, including make-up examination and re-examination, they will be eliminated. There is an annual elimination rate of about 10%. Because of the free tuition education in French public nursing colleges, nurses have good employment prospects, so students generally cherish the opportunity to study and study very hard. In the process of academic evaluation, the Credit Allocation Committee (CAC) plays an important role. The organization is led by the department director, and its members usually include college instructors, clinical head nurses, doctors or other health care professionals involved in the clinical teaching process. At the end of each semester, the instructor will report each student's learning situation one by one to the Credit Allocation Committee, and the members will make a comprehensive evaluation of the student's academic performance and clinical practice performance to decide whether the student can enter the next stage of study or make a re-study.

## **3. Thinking and enlightenment of nursing education in China**

### **3.1 Optimization of the curriculum architecture and creation of an integrated curriculum**

The curriculum system of nursing vocational education in France pays attention to cultivating students' comprehensive professional quality, and offers special courses involving anthropology, sociology, ethics, law, public health and health economics, clinical thinking and decision-making, coordination and cooperation of nursing work, etc., which puts the nursing discipline in a broader field of knowledge and constantly strengthens the connection with other disciplines. It not only teaches nursing professional knowledge and skills, but also pays attention to the cultivation of human and social sciences, critical thinking, application of nursing procedures, cooperation between doctors and patients, multicultural nursing and so on. These contents are used repeatedly in classroom teaching and clinical practice, which strengthens and improves students' comprehensive ability. In China, most of the curriculum systems set up in domestic colleges are divided according to organ function system or life cycle. Although courses in prevention and humanities are added, these courses are not integrated with nursing courses, and the combination of theory and practice is weak. Therefore, facing the nursing posts in China, we can refer to the French curriculum system, fully tap the internal relationship between nursing professional knowledge and social humanities, work methodology and other related disciplines, and organically integrate them in the teaching and training process to realize the restructuring of curriculum system and the optimization of contents.

### **3.2 Cultivating students' autonomous learning ability in different teaching methods**

Improving students' autonomous learning and lifelong learning ability is one of the important contents of teaching reform in medical nursing colleges in China. TD and TP teaching methods are widely used in nursing vocational education in France. Flexible teaching methods can bring students' creativity into play, and full use of various teaching resources will guide students' self-study, which can be used for reference in nursing education in China. In the future, more discussion and inquiry learning activities can be carried out to strengthen students' self-learning management ability and learning cooperation ability. In the teaching process, students' intrinsic learning motivation is continuously stimulated, and relaxed teaching situations are created. Meanwhile,

students' unique personality is respected, and students are encouraged to speak freely and express their views, and students' questioning spirit and critical thinking are cultivated. However, the duration of TD and TP courses in France is longer, which may lead to students' fatigue and lack of concentration in class, which should be properly arranged according to the actual situation in China. At present, domestic nursing education advocates flip class, cloud class, micro class, massive open online course and live class. These new teaching forms play a positive role in cultivating autonomous learning ability. However, there are still some problems, such as lack of independent online teaching platform, insufficient technical support, poor curriculum design, uneven teachers' mastery of information technology, and difficulty in measuring students' effective online learning time.

### **3.3 Improving the clinical practice teaching arrangements and deepening the convergence of theoretical and practical teaching**

Integration of theory and practice is the essential feature of nursing specialty, and whether theoretical teaching and practical teaching can be fully integrated becomes the key to determine the teaching level. The deficiencies of nursing education in China are mainly manifested in the unreasonable curriculum and class hours, the inconsistency between the school's learning and clinical practice, and the lag of knowledge update in clinical development, which is related to the practice of concentrated practice in nursing colleges in China. Nursing practice is only carried out in the last academic year, and there are few opportunities for early students to get in touch with clinical practice. Even if short-term probation is arranged, there is a big gap between the ef-

fect and the internship. Clinical nursing practice in France is characterized by early development, cross-dispersion and balanced distribution. Students have been practicing since the first semester. They can apply theory to practice step by step, keep the continuity of knowledge to the greatest extent, and gradually deepen their understanding and mastery of vocational skills. Thanks to the abundant internship time in each semester, students can receive a large number of clinical demonstrations and teaching, and most nursing operation techniques are transformed into clinical training, which also solves the contradiction between school study and clinical practice. Students can also learn new clinical knowledge and progress in time to avoid the disconnection between classroom teaching and clinical practice. It is suggested that nursing colleges in China can learn from the experience of France, disperse and move forward the centralized practice and carry out it in stages, arrange the structural proportion of classroom learning and clinical practice reasonably, and promote the common improvement of students' theoretical knowledge and practical learning, which is conducive to continuously improving the teaching level and quality.

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