Educating for our future leaders: the role of life education

Diana Lee
Chair Professor of Nursing and Director

The Nethersole School of Nursing
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Nursing Training
vs
Nursing Education
Contents

• Purposes & scope of life education
• Aims of nursing education
• Implementing life education in nursing
• The roles of teachers in promoting life education in nursing
• Challenges & suggestions
Introduction

Education is the foundation of civilization

• Aim of education: Not only to acquire knowledge, but more importantly, to develop a noble character, inspire exploration of life & achieve self-actualization

• In today’s fast-paced & highly competitive society → frustration & loss of self awareness

• What’s the meaning & value of life? How to promote spiritual health & growth through education?
Purposes & Scope of Life Education

• Covers all life-related topics → an ongoing process
• Aim to nurture a noble character & promote spiritual health
  - Intrinsically:
    → Explore the meaning & value of life, respect & care for others, cultivate moral & civic virtues, develop positive attitude & belief towards life
    → Enhance abilities in problem solving, coping with adversity & emotional management
Purposes & Scope of Life Education

- Extrinsically:
  - Promote interpersonal, social, environmental & universal harmony & well-being
    (i.e. unifying interconnectedness)
  - Better understand the meaning & value of life
Four Levels of Life Education

(1) Getting to learn about life
- Ageing, illness & death are realities in life
- Every individual is unique; every life is valuable
- No body is perfect → self-acceptance

(2) Appreciating life
- Change is inevitable in life → dealing with ups & downs as personal growth
- Life is precious & beautiful; not to harm/endanger life
Four Levels of Life Education

(3) Respecting life
- Everyone has the right to live; every life is equal
- Respect life; establish a harmonious relationship with other people, the society & the environment

(4) Exploring life
- Explore the meaning & goals of life
- Love one’s life, live one’s dream, realize one’s deepest desires & capacities
Aims of Nursing Education

- To equip nurses with professional competencies & human virtues to serve the community
  - Professional competencies
    - Equipped with nursing knowledge & skills, leadership, critical thinking & clinical judgment abilities to provide quality clinical care
    - Ability to develop & use new knowledge to meet the changing healthcare needs & to support sustainable healthcare development
Aims of Nursing Education

- **Human virtues**
  - Develop a noble character & spiritual care abilities through whole-person development
  - Explore the meaning of health & the value of life; develop a positive attitude towards life
  - Respect life, treasure oneself & care for patients
Life Education: the ‘Soul’ of Nursing Education

- Nursing is a special type of human caring
  - Holistic care: physical, psychological, social & spiritual health
  - Empathy & compassionate care
  - Assist patients to positively face illness & explore the meaning of life
  - Use own life experience & intelligence
Life Education: the ‘Soul’ of Nursing Education

• Nurses deal with life & death situations → a high level of psychological & emotional stress → a positive value & attitude towards life is extremely important
Life Education: the ‘Soul’ of Nursing Education

→ Nurses should be equipped with professional knowledge & skills + respect & value life + ‘influence life with life’
Life Education: the ‘Soul’ of Nursing Education

• Many nurses feel worn-out due to overwork & overstress, which may weaken their commitment to nursing or even their belief in the value of life

➔ Nurses should learn to love themselves before they can love others, enhance their abilities in coping with anxieties & negative emotions, & develop a positive attitude towards life
Life Education: the ‘Soul’ of Nursing Education

• To help nurses develop a noble character & virtues of goodness, threading life education throughout the nursing curriculum is a must

→ Life Education in Nursing
Implementing Life Education

The Nethersole School of Nursing, CUHK

→ Inheriting the Nethersole tradition of ‘caring with compassionate love’, facilitating students’ whole-person development and virtue cultivation is an important aspect of our education

→ Life education as a generic theme permeates all our nursing programmes & extra curricular activities
Implementing Life Education

- Life education has been implemented to individual subject level with the use of diversified teaching methods to help students understand, appreciate, respect & explore life, & apply their life experience & intelligence in the nursing profession
Implementing Life Education

(1) Nursing Subjects

→ *Interactive Learning Methods* (e.g. group discussion & case study): to encourage students to think about the meaning of health & the value of life, & to enhance their communication & critical thinking skills
Implementing Life Education

→ *Scenario-based Learning Methods* (e.g. role play): to inspire students to develop multi-perspective thinking & self-discovery skills, & to better understand patients’ feeling in delivering empathetic care to patients
Implementing Life Education

→ *Clinical Placement:* to help students face life & death issues & develop their abilities to provide humane & individualized holistic care to patients
Implementing Life Education

(2) University General and College Education

→ To understand the values of different academic disciplines & develop a broad intellectual perspective, to discuss & reflect on the perennial issues of human concerns, e.g. the search for meanings, the value of being human
Implementing Life Education

(3) Overseas Exchange
→ To broaden horizon & enrich life experience through exposing to different cultures, to strengthen self understanding & going beyond self limitations
Implementing Life Education

(4) School Activities

→ *Outstanding Character Award* – to cultivate virtues of goodness

→ *Student Ambassador Programme* – to strengthen students’ passion for nursing, organizational & communication abilities & self confidence

→ *Academic Advisor* – to provide academic, physical & psycho-social support to students
Implementing Life Education

(5) Extra-curricular Activities

→ **Community Services** – to better understand health needs of the community & promote health & healthy lifestyle in the community

→ **Disaster Drill or Emergency Services** – to learn more about disasters & diseases, human & nature, the value & meaning of life

→ **Open Day & Alumni Homecoming Day** – to strengthen passion for nursing, team spirit, & sense of belonging
Implementing Life Education

(6) Close collaboration with the Nethersole Institute of Continuing Holistic Health Education (NICHE)

→ Orientation Day and Graduation Ceremony – to promote the tradition of ‘caring with compassionate love’ and a culture of ‘holistic care’, & develop cohesiveness & a sense of belonging
Implementing Life Education

→ Seminar – to introduce the work and the pressure of nurses in order to prepare students for future challenges both spiritually and mentally

→ Mentor-mentee Programme – nurses (mentors) to share their professional & life experience with students (mentees)
The Roles of Teachers

- Life education in nursing – education for life & through life, model-based learning
  → To teach by example is the key of success for life education in nursing
- Teacher serves as *a ‘soul’ engineer* and *a learning model* to:
  → stimulate students’ learning & thinking
  → help students internalize what they have learnt in life education to become a part of their characters
The Roles of Teachers

- Other roles
  - Planner — During programme design & activity planning, add life education elements to integrate spiritual & professional learning
The Roles of Teachers

→ **Facilitator** – facilitate students to think about the values of life from different perspectives, and use own life experience & intelligence to provide spiritual care to patients

→ **Observer** – pay close attention to students’ development & provide prompt guidance
Challenges & Suggestions

- Student motivation & participation is a key to the success of life education in nursing
  - Suggest adopting diversified approaches & strategies to enhance students’ interests in life cultivation alongside their nursing studies
Challenges & Suggestions

- Teacher as a learning model is crucial to the implementation of life education in nursing
  - Suggest teachers to receive related training to further cultivate their human virtues & strengthen their abilities for teaching spirituality
Challenges & Suggestions

• Life education is a dynamic process in which students are also knowledge builders
  → Suggest adopting interactive & scenario-based teaching methods to encourage critical & multi-dimensional thinking

• Lack of comprehensive & objective indicators to evaluate life education
  → Suggest developing a systematic scale for evaluation of spiritual care abilities
Challenges & Suggestions

• Promoting life cultivation & spirituality in nursing education

→ Suggest adopting an inter-disciplinary approach, such as inviting experts from different fields (e.g. doctors, priests & sociologists) to deliver talks on life & spirituality related topics
Life Education in Nursing –

Through whole-person development, we nurture not only compassionate & professional nurses, but also good & responsible citizens!
References

- 顧雅利。(2009)。靈性護理教育的文獻回顧。 安寧療護雜誌, 14(3), 312-320。
- 張淑美。生命與教育的雙修並練－靈性教育的理念與實踐。 生命教育, 118-128。
- 蕭淑貞、蕭淑美、張元玫、魏麗麗、鈕淑芬、黃玉珠、邱碧如。(2006)。探討生命中給與受的學習－苦難轉化為愛與智慧的機轉。 輔仁醫學期刊, 4(4), 177-186。
- 李高峰。(2009)。國內生命教育研究述評。教育科學論壇, 2, 74-77。
- 歐姿好、黃貞觀、楊克平。(2011)。以議題中心教學探究護生在「生命的可改變性」議題之論證判斷內涵。護理暨健康照護研究, 7(4), 255-265。
- 張永雄。為何而活、如何生活－生命教育的啟示。香港教育局德育及公民教育組。
- 黃栩源。(2012年9月12日)。在職者中護士警察自殺率高。星島日報。