

## Research on the Construction of Core Competence Model and the Optimization of Talent Training Path for Nursery Education Specialty

Jingjing Sun

Shandong Vocational College of Industry, Zibo, 256414, Shandong, China

sunjingjing32449@163.com

**Keywords:** Nursery Major; Core Competence Model; Talent Training Path; Curriculum System; Teaching Staff

**Abstract:** With the development of society and the increasing demand for nursery services, the cultivation of nursery professionals has become the key. This article focuses on the construction of core competence model and the optimization of talent training path of nursery specialty. Through the methods of literature research and current situation analysis, this article analyzes the relevant theoretical basis of nursery education specialty, comprehensively sorts out the work fields and job responsibilities involved in nursery education specialty, and constructs a core competence model composed of professional knowledge ability, practical operation ability, communication and coordination ability, innovation and development ability and professional accomplishment ability. At the same time, the paper reveals the problems existing in the curriculum, practical teaching and teaching staff of the current talent training path. Based on this, this article puts forward some optimization strategies from the aspects of optimizing curriculum system, improving teaching methods, strengthening practical teaching and improving the construction of teaching staff. Its purpose is to improve the quality of nursery professional training, to meet the demand of nursery industry for high-quality professionals, and to promote the healthy development of nursery industry.

### 1. Introduction

In the process of social development, nursery service, as a key link to protect people's livelihood and promote social harmony, has become increasingly important [1]. With the adjustment of China's birth policy and the change of social and economic structure, people's demand for high-quality nursery services has increased sharply [2]. Under this background, cultivating nursery talents with professional core competence has become the core task to promote the healthy and sustainable development of nursery industry.

Nursery professionals shoulder important responsibilities such as ensuring the healthy growth of infants and providing scientific parenting guidance [3]. However, at present, the training of nursery professionals in China is still in the development stage, and there are many problems to be solved urgently [4]. The talent training system is not perfect, and the curriculum and teaching methods are not closely combined with the actual needs of the nursery industry, which leads to the lack of professional core competence of the trained talents [5]. In addition, at present, the definition of the core competence of nursery specialty is not clear, and there is a lack of scientific and systematic competence model, which makes the goal of talent training unclear enough to meet the diversified needs of nursery industry for professionals [6].

It is of great practical significance to construct the core competence model of nursery specialty and optimize the talent training path. From the perspective of industry development, this will help to improve the quality of nursery services, standardize the talent standards of nursery industry, and promote the overall level of nursery industry [7]. From the perspective of personnel training, this can provide a clear direction for colleges and training institutions, improve the pertinence and effectiveness of personnel training, and cultivate more high-quality professionals to meet the needs of the development of the nursery industry. This plays an important role in promoting the early development of infants, providing high-quality care services for families, alleviating the pressure of

family parenting, and thus promoting social harmony and stability. In view of this, it is urgent to carry out in-depth research on the construction of core competence model and the optimization of talent training path of nursery education specialty. The purpose of this study is to build a scientific and reasonable core competence model of nursery education specialty through theoretical analysis and practical exploration, and put forward feasible strategies to optimize the talent training path, which will provide useful reference for the talent training of nursery education specialty.

## **2. Theoretical basis of core competence of nursery specialty**

The construction of the core competence of nursery specialty relies on a series of important theories. The theory of children's developmental psychology lays a foundation for nursery professionals to understand the laws of infant's physical and mental development. This theory reveals the developmental characteristics of children in different stages of cognition, emotion and social communication, so that nursery staff can provide appropriate care and guidance according to these laws and promote the healthy growth of infants. Pedagogy theory points out the direction for kindergarten professionals to implement scientific education. It emphasizes that educational methods should be both reasonable and effective. Based on this, nursery staff know how to plan educational activities suitable for infants, stimulate their learning interest and potential, and cultivate good study habits and cognitive ability.

Management theory helps nursery professionals to manage the operation of nursery institutions. By using the methods of organization, coordination and decision-making in management theory, nursery staff can optimize the allocation of institutional resources, improve service efficiency and quality, and create a safe, orderly and warm nursery environment for infants. These theories are integrated and infiltrated with each other to jointly build a theoretical framework for the core competence of nursery education, which has laid a solid theoretical foundation for the cultivation of nursery education professionals.

## **3. Construction of core competence model of nursery specialty**

The construction of the core competence model of nursery education specialty aims to clarify the key competence elements and their relationships required by nursery education professionals, and provide clear guidance for personnel training. The construction of this model needs to comprehensively consider the diverse needs and professional characteristics of nursery services. First of all, it makes a comprehensive analysis of the work fields and job responsibilities involved in the nursery specialty. The nursery service covers many fields such as infant life care, health care and early education. In terms of life care, the staff should be responsible for the daily affairs of infants' diet, sleep, hygiene and cleaning. In the field of health care, we should master basic health examination, common disease prevention and treatment skills. Early education involves designing and implementing appropriate educational activities for infants to promote their cognitive, linguistic and emotional development. By sorting out the responsibilities of these positions, this article summarizes the ability categories that nursery professionals should have.

Based on the above analysis, the components of the core competence of nursery specialty are determined, which mainly include professional knowledge ability, practical operation ability, communication and coordination ability, innovation and development ability and professional literacy ability. The components and descriptions of the core competence of nursery specialty are shown in Figure 1.

After defining the elements, the core competence model of nursery specialty is constructed. The model is based on professional knowledge and ability, with practical operation ability as the core, communication and coordination ability as the bridge, innovation and development ability as the driving force, and professional literacy ability as the guarantee. All the elements are interrelated and mutually supportive, and together form an organic whole. Professional knowledge and ability provide theoretical basis for practical operation, and practical operation ability is the concrete application of professional knowledge. Communication and coordination ability runs through all

work, promoting information circulation and work coordination. Innovative development ability promotes the continuous optimization and upgrading of nursery services; Professional literacy ability ensures the quality and standardization of nursery work. Through the construction of such a model, it points out the direction for the training of nursery professionals, so that the trained talents can fully meet the actual needs of the nursery industry.

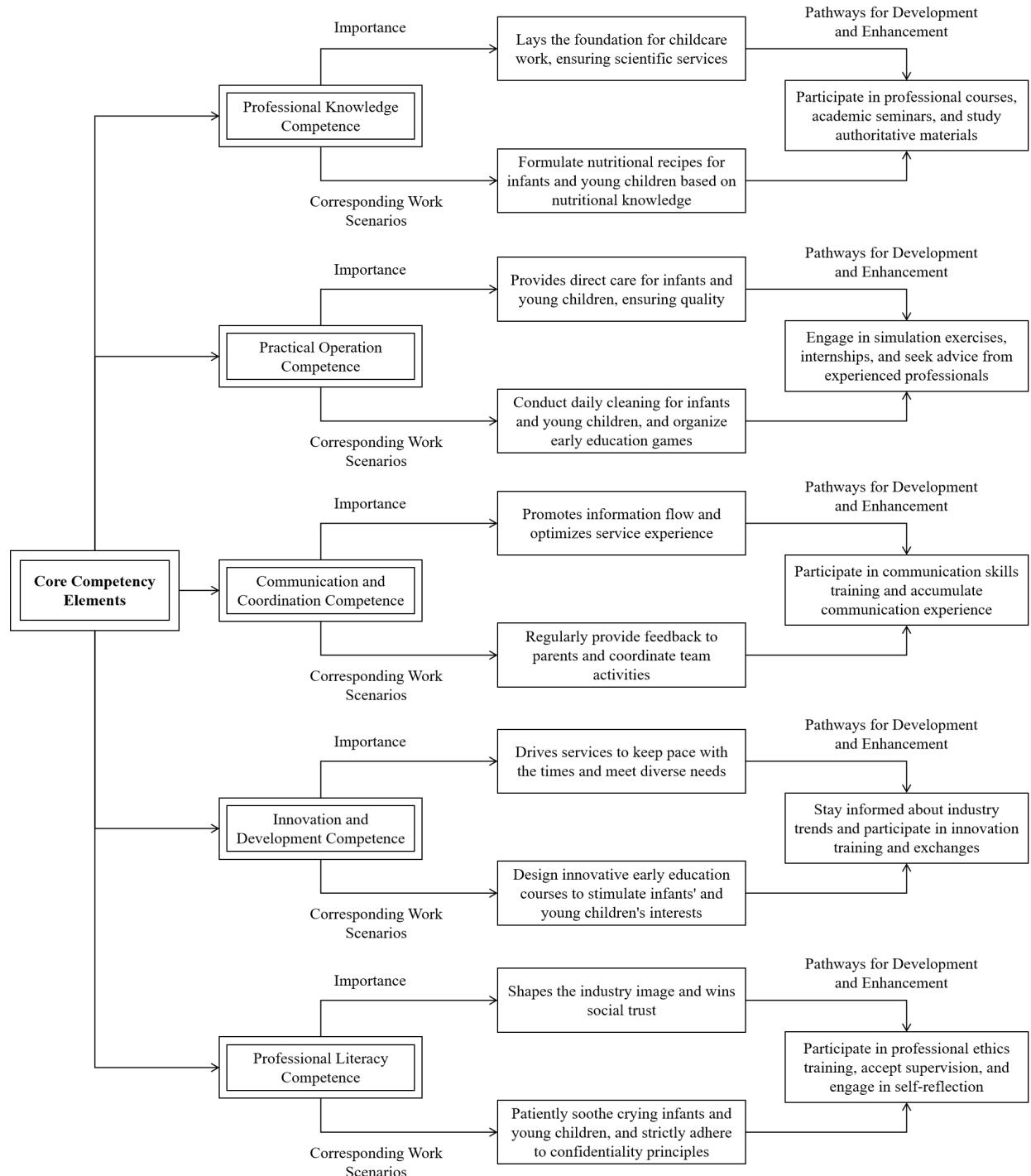


Figure 1 Elements and description of core competence of nursery specialty

#### 4. Analysis on the present situation and problems of the training path of nursery professionals

The cultivation of nursery professionals is very important to improve the quality of nursery services. At present, there are many ways to co-exist in the training path of nursery professionals in China, but there are also some problems to be solved urgently. At present, the cultivation of nursery professionals is mainly through college education and on-the-job training. College education covers

secondary vocational, higher vocational and undergraduate levels. In terms of curriculum, although colleges at all levels have set up basic courses related to nursery education, such as infant psychology and pedagogy, the systematic and targeted curriculum system still needs to be improved. On-the-job training is mostly organized by nursery institutions or related industry associations, mainly focusing on practical operation skills and the latest developments in the industry, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Comparison of the Current Status of Training Paths for Talents in Childcare Professional Programs

Training Approach	Level	Curriculum Design Features	Practical Teaching Arrangements	Faculty Situation
Institutional Education	Secondary Vocational School	Focuses on foundational courses, emphasizing the teaching of life care skills. Courses are mostly theoretical and not closely integrated with practical applications.	Approximately 6 hours of practical courses per week, mainly conducted in simulated childcare settings, with limited real-world practice opportunities.	Some teachers lack frontline industry experience, limiting their ability to provide practical guidance.
Institutional Education	Higher Vocational School	The curriculum gradually becomes more diverse, incorporating professional courses such as health care and early childhood education, but lacks depth.	Four weeks of concentrated internships are arranged each semester. The number of internship bases is limited, and their quality varies.	The faculty has some practical experience, but the pace of updating practical knowledge does not keep up with industry developments.
Institutional Education	Undergraduate	The curriculum system is relatively comprehensive, emphasizing theoretical and research capabilities, but the proportion of practical teaching is relatively low.	A total of 12 weeks of internships are distributed across different semesters. Internship content mostly involves observation and recording, with limited opportunities for hands-on practice.	Some teachers focus on academic research and lack in-depth understanding of practical operational details in the industry.
On-the-Job Training	-	Content is closely aligned with actual work needs, updated frequently, and focuses on short-term skill enhancement.	Immediate practice is integrated into work settings, offering many practice opportunities but lacking systematic planning.	Training instructors are mostly seasoned industry professionals, but they lack professionalism in teaching methods.

At present, the problems existing in the training of nursery professionals are more prominent. In terms of curriculum design, the combination of theory and practice is not close, which can not meet the complex and changeable needs of practical work. In practice teaching, whether it is the lack of practical opportunities in college education or the lack of systematicness in on-the-job training practice, it is difficult to effectively improve the practical ability of talents. On the teaching staff, the lack of practical experience of college teachers and the lack of teaching professionalism of on-the-job training teachers have all affected the quality of personnel training. These problems restrict the training of nursery professionals and need to be solved by optimizing the training path.

## 5. Optimization strategy for the training path of nursery professionals

In order to solve the existing problems in the training of nursery professionals and improve the quality of nursery services, it is necessary to optimize the training path. The optimization strategy should start from curriculum system, teaching methods, practical teaching and the construction of teaching staff. First, it is very important to optimize the curriculum system. Take Table 2 as an example to show the optimization direction of curriculum in different stages:

Table 2 Optimized Curriculum System for Childcare Professional Programs

Learning Stage	Professional Foundational Courses	Professional Core Courses	Expansion Courses	Practical Courses
Basic Learning Stage	Fundamentals of Infant Physiology and Psychological Development, Interpretation of Childcare Policies and Regulations	Basic Skills in Infant Life Care, Basics of Common Disease Prevention and Care	Fundamentals of Childcare Institution Environment Creation	Twice-weekly simulated childcare scenario practices, each lasting 2 hours
Intermediate Learning Stage	Infant Nutrition and Feeding, Theories and Methods of Early Childhood Education	Infant Behavior Observation and Analysis, Basics of Childcare Institution Operation and Management	Design of Parent-Child Educational Activities, Basics of Caring for Children with Special Needs	Four weeks of practical learning in partner childcare institutions each semester
Advanced Learning Stage	Quality Assessment of Childcare Services, Cutting-Edge Research on Childcare Industry Development	Formulation of Personalized Education Plans for Infants, Crisis Management in Childcare Institutions	Case Analysis of Innovative Childcare Services, Cross-Cultural Childcare Services	A six-month on-the-job internship before graduation, involving comprehensive participation in all aspects of childcare institution operations

In teaching methods, teachers should adopt diversified means. Teachers can introduce case teaching method to cultivate students' ability to solve practical problems through actual case analysis; Using situational simulation teaching, let students exercise their skills to deal with various situations in virtual scenes. In teaching, teachers can also carry out group cooperative learning to improve students' communication and cooperation ability. Practice teaching needs to be further strengthened. Schools need to establish a stable and high-quality practice base, increase the length of practical teaching, and ensure that students have enough time to apply theoretical knowledge to practice. At the same time, strengthen the guidance and supervision of the practice process to ensure the effect of practice teaching.

The construction of teaching staff is the key to optimize the path of talent training. Schools should encourage college teachers to participate in industry practice and improve their practical guidance ability; Invite industry experts to give lectures in colleges and universities regularly to share the latest industry trends and practical experience. For on-the-job training teachers, provide training in teaching methods to improve their teaching professionalism. Through the above optimization strategies, the training quality of nursery professionals will be comprehensively improved to meet the needs of the development of nursery industry for high-quality professionals.

## 6. Conclusions

This article focuses on the construction of core competence model and the optimization of talent training path of nursery specialty. In the construction of core competence model, based on the reality of nursery work, an organic whole model is defined, which takes professional knowledge and ability as the cornerstone, practical operation ability as the core, communication and coordination ability as the link, innovation and development ability as the driving force and professional literacy ability as the guarantee. This model comprehensively and systematically presents the key ability elements and their internal relations required by the care professionals, and provides a clear direction for the determination of talent training objectives.

Looking closely at the current situation of the training path of nursery professionals, this article finds that there are many problems in curriculum, practical teaching and teaching staff. The curriculum system is out of touch with the actual demand, the practice teaching link is weak, and the teachers are lacking in practical experience or teaching specialty. These problems seriously restrict the training quality of nursery professionals. To solve the above problems, this article puts

forward a series of optimization strategies. From the optimization of curriculum system, the construction of a phased and progressive curriculum system with deep integration of theory and practice, to the application of diversified teaching methods, strengthening practical teaching and strengthening the construction of teachers, all strategies are interrelated and synergistic. Through the implementation of these strategies, it is expected to comprehensively improve the training quality of nursery professionals, so that the trained talents can better meet the development needs of the nursery industry.

In the future, the development of the nursery industry will continuously improve the requirements for professionals. It is very important to continue to pay attention to the industry trends and further improve the core competence model and talent training path optimization strategy based on practical feedback. Only in this way can we continuously transport high-quality professionals for the nursery industry, promote the quality of nursery services, promote the sustainable development of the nursery industry, and make greater contributions to the well-being of the people.

## Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the Shandong Province Education Science '14th Five-Year Plan' 2023 Self-Funded Project: Research on the Training Mechanism of Early Childhood Care Talents in Higher Vocational Colleges in Shandong Province under the Background of Multi-dimensional Integration of 'CPPCC-School-Enterprise-Medical' (Project No.: 2023ZC607)

## References

- [1] Liu Suping. Research on the Construction of an Evaluation System for Five-Year Higher Vocational Early Childhood Education and Care Talents Guided by Core Competencies[J]. *Education Horizon*, 2024, (34): 64-69.
- [2] Yang Lijun, Wang Xinxin. Research on the Components and Development Paths of Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Teachers[J]. *Teacher Education Research*, 2022, 34(05): 116-123. DOI: 10.13445/j.cnki.t.e.r.2022.05.001.
- [3] He Jing, Zhou Xingguo. The Value Demands and Path Exploration of Curriculum System Construction for the Early Childhood Education and Care Service and Management Program in Higher Vocational Colleges[J]. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 2022, 43(26): 31-37.
- [4] Cheng Weiyi, Cheng Guansan. Research on the Connection Between Infant and Toddler Care Vocational Competencies and Vocational College Curricula[J]. *Early Childhood Development*, 2022, (04): 42-54.
- [5] Hong Xumin, Tao Xinmeng, Li Handong. Predicting the Demand Scale for Early Childhood Education and Care Service Resources Under the "Universal Two-Child" Policy—Based on Estimates of the Urban and Rural Population of Children Aged 0–3 from 2020 to 2035[J]. *Studies in Early Childhood Education*, 2021, (02): 16-29. DOI: 10.13861/j.cnki.sece.2021.02.002.
- [6] Cui Yue, Hou Meiling. An Investigation and Study on the Current Status of the Curriculum for the Infant and Toddler Care Service and Management Program in Higher Vocational Colleges in Jiangsu Province[J]. *Data*, 2023, (03): 59-60.
- [7] Zhang Mingzhu, Zhao Shuang, Lu Yanan. International Experience and Enlightenment of Qualification Access for Childcare Staff in Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions[J]. *Research in Educational Development*, 2022, 42(02): 47-54. DOI: 10.14121/j.cnki.1008-3855.2022.02.008.