
ABSTRACT

Objective: to know the viewpoint of Nursing students, the activities that enabled the learning based on the problematization during their academic trajectory. Method: it is study of qualitative nature, with 30 students in the last period of the Nursing Graduate Course. Data collection was based on three meetings of focus group, with ten students each one, in three days and shifts. The speeches were subjected to the content analysis. The collection began only after approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the University Center UNA, under CAAE: 0007.0.391.000-11. Results: problematizing methodologies are essential to the development of a critical and reflexive thinking and this approach seeks to overcome traditional conceptions of teaching. The activities performed during the academic training, which enhanced the teaching-learning process were: Case studies, Extension activities, Use of the Nursing Process, Situational Diagnosis and Scientific Initiation. Conclusion: the best strategy for teaching and learning is that one which proposes to integrate the social reality and the theoretical constructs throughout the academic trajectory. Descriptors: Nursing Education; Learning; Higher Education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: conhecer la visión de los académicos de Enfermería, las actividades que viabilizaron el aprendizaje basada na problematización durante su trayectoria académica. Método: estudio de naturaleza cualitativa, con 30 alumnos del último período del Curso de Enfermería. A coleta de dados se fundamentou em três reuniões de grupo focal, com dez alunos cada uma, em três dias e turnos. As falas foram submetidas à análise de conteúdo. A coleta teve início somente após aprovação pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa do Centro Universitário UNA, sob CAAE: 0007.0.391.000-11. Resultados: metodologias problematizadoras são fundamentais para o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico-reflexivo e esta abordagem procura superar concepções tradicionais de ensino. As atividades desenvolvidas durante a formação acadêmica, que potencializaram o processo ensino-aprendizagem foram: Estudos de caso, Atividades de extensão, Utilização do Processo de Enfermagem, Diagnóstico Situacional e Iniciação Científica. Conclusão: a melhor estratégia de ensino-aprendizagem é a que se propõe integrar a realidade social e os constructos teóricos durante toda a trajetória acadêmica. Descriptores: Educación en Enfermería; Aprendizaje; Educación Superior.

RESULTADOS

El estudio de naturaleza cualitativa, con 30 estudiantes del último semestre de Formación del Enfermero, se recolectaron de datos se fundamentó en tres reuniones de grupo focal, con diez estudiantes cada una, en tres días y turnos. Las actividades desarrolladas durante el proceso académico, que potenciaron el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje fueron: Estudios de caso; Actividades de extensión; Utilización del Proceso de Enfermería; Diagnóstico Situacional e Iniciação Científica. Conclusão: a melhor estratégia de ensino-aprendizagem é a que se propõe integrar la realidad social y los constructos teóricos durante toda la trayectoria académica. Descriptores: Enseñanza en Enfermería; Aprendizaje; Educación Superior.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the charge for a higher level of knowledge has been multi-sectorial, as well as the ability to innovate is being considered as a differential. In this context, healthcare professionals need to seek change and innovation, that is to say, should not replicate anymore a passive posture and an inarticulate learning.

Based on the above mentioned, the Nursing knowledge also follows the evolution of the changes occurred throughout time, emerging from the transition of the health practices, closely linked to the social structures in force.

The appearance of the Brazilian Unified Health System - Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS) and assumptions expressed in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education - Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação (LDB) have identified the need for change in the curricular standards, indicating the need for restructuring of higher education courses and orienting towards the construction of the Brazilian National Curricular Guidelines - Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais (DCN) for all undergraduate courses.

With regard to health, this aforementioned law allowed the implementation, on August 7th, 2001, of the Opinion 1133 of the Brazilian National Council of Education and the Brazilian National Health Council - Conselho Nacional de Educação & Conselho Nacional de Saúde (CNE / CNS), which came to reinforce the need for articulation between Higher Education and Health. After this opinion, in December 2001, the Resolution nº 03, of November 7th, 2011, was approved, and it has established the National Curricular Guidelines of the Nursing Graduate Course - Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais do Curso de Enfermagem (DCENF). But, it is not enough to define the DCENF, it is necessary to implement them, even knowing that the process is slow and demand effort and hard work from the professionals involved to achieve the proposed goals.1,2

The National Curricular Guidelines of the Nursing Graduate Course recommend that every course should provide to the student a generalist, humanist, critical and reflective training, besides to promote the development of competencies and skills that are necessary for the exercise of the profession. They are supported by four philosophical bases: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

Thus, some necessary challenges make themselves timely: the removal of teaching practices centered on the teacher; the overcoming of the fragmented model that does not provide interdisciplinarity and, mainly, the use of active methodologies that provide the articulation between theory and practice.1

It is known that teaching, until recently, was strongly processed and supported on the traditional paradigm. Nowadays, even with the advances that the Higher Education has run across in several aspects, it still faces some challenges, for example: the search for innovative strategies that overcome the traditional practices of teaching. The demand for changing, charging and suitability of the pedagogical design is steadily increasing. The institutions and the educators realize the need to appropriate new strategies, proposing curricular reviews and methodological adjustments.2

For innovating the teaching methodology requires from institutions and students a sense of courage, willingness, training and continuing learning for the professionals involved in this proposal; thus, the achieved results can be an incentive to continue the walking. We need to do something different or enhance what already exists as new ways of thinking about teaching and learning, in a “liberating” perspective, through collective participation and interaction.

Whereas the results of this research can assist in changing paradigms and the adoption of educational models based upon the exchange, interaction with the environment and the active participation of stakeholders, the objective of this study was to understand, in viewpoint of nursing students, the activities that enabled the problematization-based learning during their academic trajectory.

METHOD

It is a qualitative study, which allowed showing what is essential in the researched phenomenon and the existence of an identity between subject and object, since there is always common substrate of identity between the researcher and the researched subjects, making them jointly intertwined and committed.3

The subjects, 30 students in the last period of the Nursing Course, were chosen because they share the construction and evaluation of the course, since the collective participation and interaction are essential to the effectiveness of the learning process. These students who are in the last period have broad vision of its trajectory of formation and may contribute to the analysis of the used
methodologies, before the possibility of articulation of the pair: theory and practice. The experienced in this pathway can indicate possibilities and ways to be reworked, reviewed, reflected and reappointed. The scenario chosen for the conduction of this research was a Higher Education Institution - *Instituição de Ensino Superior* (IES), private, located in the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais/Brazil.

The subjects who agreed to participate in this study were informed about the objectives and procedures and signed a Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF), in accordance with the research standards with human beings from CNS. Data collection began only after approval by the Ethics Research Committee - *Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa* (CEP) of the researched institution, under CAAE: 0007.0.391.000-11.

Data were collected through focus group, which occurred in the second fortnight of June 2011. Three focus groups were scheduled. The meetings were held in peaceful environment, under the coordination of a moderator and an observer, with ten students for each one.

To explore and deepen the interpretation of the data, we used the method of content analysis, which can be understood as a set of techniques for analyzing communications or treatment of information contained in the messages. There was, therefore, pre-analysis, the material exploration, treatment of the results and interpretation. According to the ethical rules, the participants' anonymity was preserved, and they were identified through abbreviations and number. The abbreviation GF corresponds to the focus group, and the subsequent number, to the number of meetings, ranging from one to three. As for the letter A, it corresponds to the student and the subsequent number has variable that ranges from one to 30.

RESULTS

It is known that problematizing methodologies are essential to the development of critical and reflective thinking and the problematization approach seeks to overcome traditional designs of teaching, to make way for the student who will be a producer of knowledge from questionings and reflections about its reality. The results of the focus groups have generated five themes (categories), presented below.

- Clinical case or case study

In these activities, the students work with problem-solving situations experienced in practice, in situations of reality that aim to generate questionings and disturbances necessary to the search for creative solutions and responses, in accordance with a constructivist perspective.

 [...] In the 5th time, we start with clinical cases and the clinical case demanded critical thinking [...] I think I could start a little earlier (GF2A5).

It depends on the teacher's didactic. There are some teachers that, using the clinical case, can place us deeper into reality and there are some teachers who cannot. There are some teachers who can take you inside the hospital and there are other professors who only transmit the theory. And make you memorize that matter and that is all (GF1A2).

The clinical case is very valid and brings a lot of learning for us [...] I suggest that they perform more dialogued classes and discussion about clinical cases [...] (GF1A6).

Projects/extension activities

The extension activities are part of the triad teaching / research / extension, according to the guidelines of the DCENF.

The institution in study offers students the following extension projects:

- Integrated School Programme;
- National Service for Rural Learning - *Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Rural* (SENAR)/RONDON;
- “Long live to the square”, it is a project performed in public squares;
- Project “Capillary Blood Glucose” and Project “Arterial Hypertension”;
- “Overflowing joy”, it is an institutional and interdisciplinary extension project;
- Project “UNA Urgent”.

I attended an extension project [...] I came with a patient and you made a measure of the pressure and it was 150x100 mmHg, you already start to question him about everything you have learned in practice. If he has any problem, whether he is hypertensive, takes some prescription medicinal drug, came running up. So, let's sit down, take some water, wait here and we'll take your medication now [...] (GF1A5).

The RONDON was an amazing experience [...] because, we had to detect problems and find quickly and effectively solutions. And, furthermore, there was the contact with all professionals (GF1A3).

The project "Long live to the square" is very good. Once I attended a girl who was traveling and needed to update the vaccination card. Make it real and not in the
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actions to solve this problem and assess (GF₂₄₁₃).

We did diagnosis in the fifth, the seventh and in the last period. I think practicing was very important for us. We did realize difficulties during our traineeships and we've tried to give an answer to the unit (GF₂₅₁₃).

- Scientific initiation

The registration units identify the relevance of scientific initiation during the training, mainly, for the development of the questioning attitude from the beginning.

Another point is the issue of the scientific initiation that can contribute a lot to this questioning attitude. In the second period, I tried and had no project in the Nursing field. This stimulus should be initiated from the institution (GF₂₄₁₃).

[…] We had to be instigated from the start of the Faculty to work with research, we should be moved by this, and we would develop the critical thinking much more easily (GF₂₅₁₃).

DISCUSSION

In the training of the nursing professional, it should be perceived yet, the educational practices that oppose themselves to the necessity of forming autonomous, critical and reflective individuals, in response to the several social realities. The professor of Higher Education was not prepared to teach and, most often, its didactic is related to the experience as a student. The teaching exercise derives from practical experiences of day-to-day, stuck to the traditional teaching methodologies. Furthermore, there is a relationship of requirements, which added to the charges and ethical issues contribute to the overloading and wearing out of the teacher.²

The data explained that the main difficulties of the institutions are in the implementation of activities that arouse the students’ interest and to seek articulation with society / social reality and health. The complementary activities, intramural or extramural, open up possibilities beyond the classroom, laboratory, and internship fields. They broaden the viewpoint of the student so that its eyes see beyond the “borders of here”.

When the teaching-learning process happens based on active teaching methodologies, which propose challenges to be faced and the building of knowledge, the student becomes the protagonist and the teachers assume the role of facilitator /
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mediator. The use of these methodologies implies in the confrontation of the structural and the organizational changes and, even, the traditional teaching conceptions. The student has the chance to learn by doing, and the production of knowledge is linked to the social reality.¹⁰

The use of clinical case or case study to develop critical and reflective thinking materializes itself through situations that problematize the reality and promote the elaboration of a knowledge based on discussion and practical living. This context leads us to findings of other surveys that have explored the thematic: “methodology of problematization”.

It is noteworthy that this methodology allows the development of a broad gaze about the relationship among University / service / community, besides the development of a humanistic, ethical, critical and reflective stance. The adoption of Problem Based Learning (PBL) can be seen as a possibility for innovation. The PBL is a:

[…] Modality of curricular dynamics organized for the development of the skill for solving student-centered problems, […] crucial subject in the teaching-learning process, which becomes able to build in a mature form, the knowledge itself, perspective inscribed at the core of the praxis of learning to learn.¹¹¹²¹³

The PBL searches, at all times, a close relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge, without prioritizing one at the expense of the other, as in the traditional model. The importance of both is recognized and it is realized the effort to the “horizontalization” of knowledge.

To overcome the vertical pair - theory and practice - it is essential to have training from the perspective of action-reflection-action. The “know what” and “know how” possess, each one, their diversified importance and status; one is not dependent on the other and neither is based. They are independent, but can be articulated. The initial training process is criticized, which still exposes the theory as clearness, explanation and organized discourse. Any trial, execution and manipulation would be considered as practices. Only after thoroughly understood the theory, it is assumed that students or professionals will be prepared to apply it.¹²

Some authors characterize the extension project as “a set of temporary activities of educational, cultural, artistic and / or scientific nature, developed by teachers and students through actions focused on relevant social issues.” They explain, furthermore, that the extension project, as a teaching-learning strategy, can be considered a differentiated form of building of knowledge.¹³ The actions or extensionist activities develop in students the ability to respond to the conflicts between society and health demands, besides to establish an exchange between academic and popular knowledge.

The university extension is essential, since the action of the institution together with the community results in more contact with the social reality and enhances the articulation between theory and practice. In the registration units it should be verified that the students value this activity and recognize its importance to the exercise of the praxis and the possibility of formation of the praxis awareness. Finally, it develops a questioning and problem-solving attitude. From the moment in which the subjects perceive problems and try to resolve the situations arising from the reality, the extension produces knowledge / reflection from the experience. The commitment of the educators goes beyond the professional technical training; it is linked, too, to the creation of ethical individuals and committed to the social dimension that surrounds them.¹⁰

The contact with the practice since the beginning allows the contextualization of the theory by means of the experienced practice. Thus, this is not emptied of meaning and cannot be reduced to mere performance. The activities that provide the problem analysis, the search for evidence, reconstruction and organization of information and constant planning and implementation of effective strategies can be considered a way of developing the critical and reflective thinking.

Regarding the speeches which explained the nursing process as a problematizing activity, we should emphasize the importance of the teachers of nursing incorporate the use of the nursing process in their disciplines and traineeship fields, whether through discussions in the classroom, clinical cases, seminars, among other activities; the nursing process allows problematizing the reality, valuing the role of nursing professional and improving the quality of care provided to the client.

Another activity highlighted by most students was the Situational Diagnosis, since, in the Health field, the duties of nursing professional are many and are related not only to the healthcare, but also to the management of services. The Situational Diagnosis is a management tool that assists the practitioner in directing its actions,
allowing it to identify and analyze the reality of health. From there, it should be highlighted the main issues that are there and are likely to face through an actions planning. This activity enables the articulation of theoretical and practical knowledge, overcoming the old dichotomy when it searches for epistemological references able to ensure analytical treatment of the technique as a knowledge.

Well before the approval of the DCENF, some authors already had mentioned that among the functions of the University, the development of the scientific attitude is essential, because of the need to develop creativity, objectivity and critical analysis of the student. In Brazil, mainly the private higher education institutions, still are not worried about the need to develop scientific attitude, production and socialization of knowledge and are increasingly concerned with the professionals training to respond to the market demands, showing little incentive to the research.

Despite the DCENF reinforce the need for complementary activities, such as research / scientific initiation, the registration units taken from focus groups differ from the proposals of the DCENF, because, of the totality of subjects who participated in the survey, no one took part in scientific initiation activities.

It should be noted the need to establish research and extension activities that enhance the relationship teaching / service and the pair: theory and practice. This perspective allows students to visualize the everyday problems and search for creative and genuine solutions based on the social reality. The practice based on the problematization and in the collective building favors the exchange of knowledge and provides subsidies for a critical and reflective learning.

It should be noted that there are still educational institutions that are unaware about active learning methodologies and didactic and pedagogical strategies based on the problematization and subsequent approximation of the reality. The educators who still ignore this perspective should reflect that “learning is to construct, reconstruct, confirm to change (...) teach is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its production or construction”.18/951

For the full training of the student, it is necessary to redefine some teaching practices and realize that for the effective teaching-learning process are key elements: allow more interaction and motivation to the students; implementation of active and participatory methodologies, in which teachers and students construct the knowledge together; improving the teacher-student interaction, dialogue and mutual respect; redefining the objectives of the lesson, so that the students can discuss, debate and analyze the proposed information; and, moreover, amend the evaluation process, which needs to be discussed, planned and conducted in an integrated manner.16

CONCLUSION

To research about the teaching-learning process in Nursing is a rich and unsettling experience. Given the extent of this issue, the reached conclusion at this moment is that one which identifies its incompleteness and the non-definitive character of the approached reflections. This study does not end here, since it can open spaces for new discussions about the activities developed during the training of the nursing professional, which enhanced the questioning attitude and the ability to solve problems.

The study allowed us to expand the knowledge about the articulation of knowledge and reinforce that all training is theoretical and practical at the same time. The best strategy of teaching-learning is that one which aims to integrate the social reality and the theoretical constructs, from the beginning. One of the most important points in the study is linked to the students’ suggestions with regard to the nursing training process, described below:

Aspects related to the activities performed during the training:

- Use of clinical case discussions during the disciplines to let the student closer to the reality of health/care;
- Appropriation of active methodologies of teaching-learning. The most teachers are still stuck to traditional methodologies;
- Use of the nursing process in other disciplines, since it assists in the development of the critical thinking;
- Allow the building of the Situational Diagnosis during the supervised traineeships;
- Elaborate and encourage the students to participate in extension and scientific initiation projects; it should be noted that the scientific initiation is still incipient and has few alternatives.

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Given the aforementioned, the procedural execution of teacher training regarding the development of problem-solving methodologies becomes relevant. Most teachers do not have pedagogical training and bumps into difficulties for the implementation of innovative practices.

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