



TUTORING IN NURSING THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION: A REFLECTIVE APPROACH

A TUTORIA NA ENFERMAGEM POR MEIO DA EDUCAÇÃO À DISTÂNCIA: UMA ABORDAGEM REFLEXIVA

LA AUTORIA EN LA ENFERMERÍA POR MEDIO DE LA EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA: UN ENFOQUE RELEXIVO

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the role of the tutor in nursing *online* courses. **Method:** descriptive and reflective analysis based on narrative literature review discussing the following topics: • Interactive work for a pedagogical practice in DE and • Tutor's skills with a view to cooperative learning in DE. **Results:** nursing teachers who work in Education Distance need to assume the role of mediator of knowledge to help the student who seeks knowledge. Interactive activities and content are designed with a view to collaborative learning. **Conclusion:** with this perspective, it is understood that the tutor should become skilled in the process of distance learning particularly regarding the content format and the use of tools of the virtual learning environment. **Descriptors:** Education; Education Distance; Nursing, Educational Technology.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar o papel do tutor na enfermagem nas disciplinas *online*. **Método:** estudo descritivo, tipo análise reflexiva, elaborado com base na revisão de literatura narrativa, com a discussão dos seguintes pontos: • Trabalho interativo para uma prática pedagógica em EAD e • As competências do tutor com vistas à aprendizagem cooperativa em EAD. **Resultados:** os docentes de enfermagem que atuam na área da Educação a Distância precisam de uma atuação de mediador do conhecimento junto ao aluno que busca o conhecimento. As atividades interativas e conteúdos são elaborados visando ao aprendizado colaborativo. **Conclusão:** com essa perspectiva, entende-se que o tutor deve se aperfeiçoar no processo do ensino a distância com vistas ao formato dos conteúdos e na utilização das ferramentas do ambiente virtual de aprendizagem. **Descritores:** Educação; Educação à Distância; Enfermagem; Tecnologia Educacional.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar el papel del tutor en la enfermería en las disciplinas *online*. **Método:** estudio descriptivo, tipo análisis reflexivo, elaborado con base en la revisión de literatura narrativa, con la discusión de los siguientes puntos: • Trabajo interactivo para una práctica pedagógica en EAD y • Las competencias del tutor para el aprendizaje cooperativo en EAD. **Resultados:** los docentes de enfermería que actúan en el área de la Educación a Distancia precisan una actuación de mediador del conocimiento junto al alumno que busca el conocimiento. Las actividades interactivas y contenidos son elaborados para el aprendizaje colaborativo. **Conclusión:** con esa perspectiva, se entiende que el tutor debe perfeccionarse en el proceso de enseñanza a distancia para el formato de los contenidos y en la utilización de las herramientas del ambiente virtual de aprendizaje. **Descriptores:** Educación; Educación a Distancia; Enfermería; Tecnología Educacional.

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INTRODUCTION

It is understood that knowledge is the product of social interaction and its role is to work the knowledge in terms of its production and preservation, putting it at the service of society. It is understood that there is a need for promoting the participation of individuals as subjects of society, culture and history, emphasizing the autonomy, the questioning and the awareness. This fact can be developed in the virtual environment of learning.¹

Learning is an eminently social process, an active and integral process of the subject in the construction of knowledge. The influence of culture and social relations stands out here, seeking to consider the student as the subject of the educational process, seeking to implement a pedagogical action committed to the process of construction and reconstruction of knowledge, with social and affective dimensions, with the theory and practice duet and the contextualization of knowledge.²

Tutoring is present in this *locus* as a permanent and individualized activity in the process of development of the course. Its goal is to monitor and provide students the necessary assistance to the process of self-learning, motivating the student on the achievement of the goal. Mentoring in distance education is, therefore, an essentially individual and continued activity in the process of development of a long distance course. The goal is to monitor and provide the student all necessary assistance to the learning process, motivating him to perform the tasks. The relationship among different kinds of knowledge gained with their concrete practice must be sought, facilitating the solution of difficulties encountered.³

Tutoring in Distance Education (DE) is understood as the global guidance that includes actions developed by the tutor focused on the development and enhancement of skills and competencies of his pupils.³

The teacher (tutor) is the mediator, driver of the process, inciting the questioning spirit, competent authority, the actual responsible for teaching tasks, explanation of the matter, for the guidance of activities, exercises, control and verification of learning. The teacher has to understand the student as a concrete and objective person who determines and is determined by the society in which he lives. The tutor must know and consider the prior knowledge that students have on problems, taking what the students know about the content to be taught as

starting point. The tutor should also guide the method of searching for these answers and be the advisor in preparing the summary of the content built by students.

The practice of pedagogical mediation in Distance Education (DE) gives some clues about the ways that we are walking and that constantly causes in us a critical reflection in relation to students, but also on our educational practice. It is a process of mutual growth that is constantly made and remade in this collaborative learning environment. Collaborative learning in DE shows the complexity that is to contextualize the whole in its multiple dimensions and at the same time to avoid losing sight of a particular topic to be studied by the pedagogical mediator.

Given the above, it is thought that at the current technological moment, all media and written devices persist, and society has made increasingly use, in an increasingly renewed way, of digital media in order to communicate and inform issues. Digital technology represents a new way to support, but not a break in the way of creating and communicating the content of thoughts.⁴ It is a quest for development of a text written by the student based on previously studied content for construction of knowledge.

The relevance is inserted in a relevant discussion for nursing tutors working with Distance Education and who need a constant reflection on their role as mediators of knowledge to the student who constantly seeks knowledge. DE has its advantages and disadvantages and its necessary characteristics are preserved. Each of one of such characteristics can be appropriate and useful to certain teaching and learning conditions. They must be flexible and adapt to different educational purposes, promising learning outcomes that are consistent with the educational activities.

PURPOSE

- To analyze the role of the tutor in nursing *online* courses.

METHOD

Descriptive study, of the analytical reflection type, based on a narrative literature review to discuss the following points: • Interactive work for a pedagogical practice in DE and • The tutor's skills with a view to cooperative learning in DE.

RESULTS

♦ Interactive work for a pedagogical practice in DE

The act of pedagogical mediation leads us to reflections on the process of teaching and learning that contribute positively to the development of distance education in our country.

Thinking Pedagogical Mediation means, therefore, to understand the attitude of the mediator as learning platform, such as crane that generates movement, being himself (the mediator) in a constant process of revision and also transformation through interaction with students and learning objects, as an astute organizer who puts the necessary elements into arrangements in which the group and/or individuals may be interested and capable.

It is also essential to emphasize the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of the Pedagogical Mediation, focused on communication and interaction that supports the student in his walk of construction of autonomy, with the resources necessary to other more complex learning in ever deeper layers.

It is the tutor's duty to carry out significant interventions to promote the assimilation of information, so that each individual, taking advantage of available resources may compose scenarios in line with the very elements of context, may feel able to transform their intellectual universe and experience.

We highlight as the main actions of the Pedagogical Mediation in DE those that articulate individual practices of study organization, with a view to the better use of time and resources, as well as to enhancement of collective meeting spaces and construction of knowledge. Finally, the mediator should move as an element that mobilizes the communication and interaction resources, building a significant relationship between the students, the teacher who has domain of the content and the material itself, by promoting research and individual and collective productions.

In order to understand the responsibilities of Pedagogical Mediation in Distance education is necessary to understand that this is present through an innovative educational action both in the sense of management, pedagogical mediation and social inclusion. Such activity requires educational methodologies and the use of communicative resources and updated information.

Thus, Distance Education provides joint efforts to institute actions in the area to share expertise, to propose guidelines for a continuous process of knowledge construction in higher education and in graduate courses. In the construction of these pedagogical actions, principles and values that bring the characteristics that are proper of the institution emerge, the need for social inclusion, democratization of knowledge which aims at continuous exchange, interactivity and innovation.

For contextualization, it is important to highlight the Decree nº 5622 of 19 December 2005, in its Article 1 the relevant highlights that distance education, as an educational modality, works the didactic-pedagogic mediation in teaching and learning processes. This takes place through the use of information and communication technologies, where students and teachers develop educational activities in different places or times.⁵

Based on this assumption, the problem of growing demand for distance courses is that it is necessary to ensure the quality of these courses. One cannot simply transpose what is done in person to virtual classrooms. It is understood that one of the alternatives to solve this problem can be the development of skills in the technical, human and economic policy and knowledge related to the area worked by the actors involved in this process.⁶

In this sense, the perspective of pedagogical mediation assumes that teachers take on a new role in the teaching-learning process in which they can mediate the interactions of the student with the object of study/knowledge aimed at interaction and articulation of the proposed contents. The use of technologies to make the teaching-learning process more efficient and effective, in the sense that learning may really happen and be meaningful, is an arduous task. The intention is not to make distance education as a mere transmitter of knowledge and information, but a real possibility of learning.

It is intended to develop the pedagogical mediation in the relationship between the teacher and his work object (the student) in the pursuit of learning as something that needs to be built from critical reflection of the experiences and the teacher's work process. Pedagogical mediation needs to intervene so that the student may experience diverse and enriching situations for making decisions, choices and to have perspective of exchanges from a reflective look. The teacher reflects on how much of his action involves

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the construction of this other person and his learning.⁶

It is necessary to interact, to have a position regarding the study being carried out in the course and register, through the virtual classroom space, the teacher's contributions and comments/interventions on the contributions of colleagues. This ends up changing not only the role of the teacher, but also the role of the student. This is the role of pedagogical mediation/mentoring guided by the teacher's actions aiming at the organization, planning and relevant discussion of issues that come up over his pedagogical practice. These actions must be systematized to ensure the mastery of new knowledge by the group of students, which are the focus of the process under development.

The student, in this type of education, cannot be passive, that is, cannot simply watch, read and access the environment. The interaction with the object of study and the group (given place for reading materials, interacting with tools, contributing positively with colleagues and mediators, resolving and reflecting on the challenges, publishing their academic productions, among others) is what indeed brings the authorship of reflection and the critical view in the process of teaching and learning.

♦ Tutor's skills with a view to cooperative learning in DE

The tutor structures his teaching task by establishing contact with the student through discussion groups, lists, electronic mail and other communication means. Thus, it becomes possible to draw a complete profile of the student, by the work he develops based on his own interest or his willingness to learn. The tutorial support realizes, therefore, the intercommunication between the actors of the process (teacher-tutor-student) involved in the system and brings them into a triple function: guidance, teaching and evaluation.³

One must perceive sometimes technical issues that may interfere with the pedagogical work. It is for this reason that the clarity of the messages, involving the size and color of the source, spacing and length of messages in some way favor or disfavor the formation of a culture of using forums as space for building knowledge. For this, the testing of the mediators in relation to what can be productive or not, is of paramount importance, as well as the guidance of some 'tips' that may help students at the time of construction of a message to be posted.

Necessary skills for tutoring in distance courses are: know how to use the tools of

interaction, the Internet and the Web Learning Environment; have a critical stance on the own performance, or constantly do self-assessments; upgrade oneself, either through readings and/or discussions with peers, among other ways; have a sense of organization, not only to manage the discussions and help the students to build knowledge but also to guide activities in general.³

In the analysis of the challenges related to the attitudes of the mediator/tutor and the results achieved, we considered the strategies and tools of interaction and communication in the practice of pedagogical mediation in distance education. Focusing on concrete situations, we defend the idea that there is still a "mental model" recurrent among many students enrolled in distance education, which gives to the simple activity of transmitting content the *status* of "converting information into knowledge". To put this more simply and directly, the information does not become knowledge through the simple direct transmission and learning is not processed through any teaching strategy. The two processes - teaching and learning - are so intertwined that most authors do not admit the possibility of one existing without the other. This is translated in the simple act of spelling the term "teaching-learning".

As for the students enrolled in distance learning, the necessary skills are: master and use diverse research techniques aiming to encourage a questioning and creative culture in students; work with the varied rhythms of student learning; act as a motivator for the learning process; encourage autonomy and critical sense of the students in the learning process; promote clear communication with students; have keen perception to assess the specific context of each student or group; have welcoming and inclusive spirit.³

Given these skills, it is important to recognize the tutor as a part and subject of something bigger that is already in full swing. Seeing oneself in that flow is what gives stability to the whole process in achieving the predetermined goals. Before the students rhythm is established, it is essential also that the student realizes the pace that the course offers so that he may make adjustments and negotiations during the course and this may become successful moments of learning.

Thus, for the training of professionals able to think, decide, plan, and carry out assistance activities in various instances and levels, and to meet the requirements of the university, it is considered that it is important to evaluate students in various activities. This

design meets the expectation of students when it comes to better understand the society in which they live, perceive the relationship between academic work and social practice in its entirety, thus contributing to the formation of a professional with a more critical reflection and prepared for the transformation of reality.⁷

In *online* courses, participants, whether students or tutors, are aware that, in addition to skills related to computer use, they also need to have the following skills for the study: Active learning capacity; Living capacity; Ability to manage time; Organization and responsibility.⁸

CONCLUSION

In order to DE tutors develop a work with good quality, they need some personal characteristics such as dynamism, criticality, ability to interact and propose interactions between students, expertise and domain with the new technologies of information and communication.

The work with DE needs cohesive teams as to the identity of instructional design, making effective the creation of different academic communities that follow different routes always looking for effective learning of the specific audience.

It is also essential to emphasize the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of the Pedagogical Mediation by the tutor, focusing on communication and interaction that supports students in building their knowledge with autonomy, with the resources necessary to other more and more complex learning.

It is, therefore, up to the mediator/tutor of interventions to promote the assimilation of information, so that each individual may take advantage of the available resources and compose scenarios in line with the very elements of his context and may transform his intellectual universe and experience, restructuring it in new arrangements.

Concatenate knowledge means to unite experiments for a collaborative work that allows further study on Pedagogical Mediation/tutoring in Distance Education.

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