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REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS ARTICLE

NURSING EDUCATION FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW: A REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

ANÁLISE REFLEXIVA SOBRE O ENSINO DE ENFERMAGEM A PARTIR DO PONTO DE VISTA DA FENOMENOLOGIA

ANÁLISIS REFLEXIVO SOBRE LA ENSEÑANZA DE ENFERMERÍA DESDE EL PUNTO DE VISTA DE LA FENOMENOLOGÍA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe nursing education from a phenomenological point of view. **Methods:** theoretical reflection based on the phenomenological approach proposed by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. It is considered an important methodological resource to reveal, rescue, unveil and understand the teaching-learning process. **Results:** Nursing professors are educated by a science under construction, rooted in the provision of care. They are scientists by training, caregivers by nature and trailblazers in the art of teaching and in the world of values. They have been reflecting on and innovating their philosophical and epistemological bases through conceptual models and theories applied to care and, particularly, to pedagogical practices. **Conclusion:** to build knowledge on a particular subject is a true challenge. It requires much more than concatenating ideas and outlining arguments. It is necessary to start from the essence of its existence. **Descriptors:** Nursing; Education; Philosophy; Phenomenology.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever o ensino de enfermagem a partir do ponto de vista da fenomenologia. **Método:** estudo de reflexão teórica. Tomou-se como base o referencial fenomenológico proposto por Husserl e Merleau-Ponty, considerando sua importância como recurso metodológico para revelar, resgatar, desvelar e compreender o processo de ensino-aprendizagem. **Resultados:** o professor de enfermagem, formado por uma ciência em construção arraigada no cuidado, é cientista por formação, cuidador por natureza e desbravador da arte de ensinar e do mundo dos valores. Ele vem refletindo e inovando suas bases filosóficas e epistemológicas por meio de modelos e teorias conceituais aplicadas ao cuidado e, sobretudo, às práticas pedagógicas. **Conclusão:** foi possível perceber que construir conhecimento em uma determinada temática é um verdadeiro desafio e exige muito mais do que concatenar ideias e alinhar argumentações. É preciso partir da essência de sua existência. **Descritores:** Enfermagem; Ensino; Filosofia; Fenomenologia.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir la enseñanza de enfermería desde el punto de vista de la fenomenología. **Métodos:** estudio de reflexión teórica. Tomamos como base el enfoque fenomenológico propuesto por Husserl y Merleau-Ponty, teniendo en cuenta su importancia como recurso metodológico para revelar, rescatar, desvelar y comprender el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. **Resultados:** el profesor de Enfermería, formado por una ciencia en construcción y enraizada en el cuidado, es un científico por formación, un cuidador por naturaleza y un desbravador del arte de la enseñanza y del mundo de los valores. Él ha estado reflexionando e innovando sus bases filosóficas y epistemológicas a través de modelos y teorías conceptuales aplicados al cuidado y sobre todo a las prácticas pedagógicas. **Conclusión:** se observó que construir conocimiento sobre un tema en particular es un verdadero reto y requiere mucho más que la concatenación de ideas y hilvanación de argumentos. Es necesario empezar desde la esencia de su existencia. **Descriptor:** Enfermería; Enseñanza; Filosofía; Fenomenología.

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INTRODUCTION

Brazilian education has long been a result of authoritarian dictates and an anti-dialogical, positivist practice. This resulted in idealistic pedagogical actions in which learning was primarily based on student awareness, in order to integrate and/or accommodate the human being to the established order.¹

The phenomenon of education is human, too human. Thus, it is also an object of the phenomenological method. Whether on its "subject side" or "ethical side", it is inevitable to analyze the subject in which and for which the meaning of education is constituted, redefining the existential meaning of Being. And this being that needs to be examined is ourselves.²

The human being, carrying all those included in the educational context, should constantly make sense of his/her innermost reality, i.e., he/she should transcend and be authentic, since his/her existence is idealized (Existenz).²

As we discuss human existence and its otherness - as a special example, the teacher-student relationship, or the "being-for-others" - we should recognize that, among all cultural phenomena, the educational experience, due to its size, length, breadth and depth, is the most significant to a phenomenology of education.³

Education inhabits our everyday life. We experience it constantly. Thus, it is not possible to seek its meaning. The phenomenology of education is an ongoing process of clarifying the educational experience "with" and "in" the world.⁴

If we consider that we learn with our whole body, we accept that human learning does not only occur in the intellectual sphere, but also through perception, sensations, intuition and imagination stimulated by intersubjectivity.⁵ Learning thus means considering the physicality of "being-in-the-world", because our body potentially outlines a "type of reflection" and this knowledge, like every other, is only acquired through our relationships with others.⁶

The phenomenology of pedagogical practices consists in a hermeneutics, for continuously renewing the act of understanding and interpreting. It reveals thus a reflective act of its "pedagogical doing".⁶ By analyzing the educational "doing" from a phenomenological perspective, we chose to constantly seek a truth to follow in our practice, a constant motivation and a restlessness to solve any educational problem,

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always ensuring our role as mediators, and combining systematized knowledge with culture and the world. This requires the awareness that phenomenology is an intentionally conscious, critical and creative attitude of human life experiences and not just another method.⁶

It is time to rediscover the process of understanding education in nursing, to perceive the society in which we operate, to interrogate its existentiality and its needs. Education needs to be re-understood. The meaning of its existence should be sought through the human being, as the one who performs it, who makes it possible. It must be lived as such. However, this will not occur in a short period of time, but rather through an educational, cultural transformation that begins with the professional preparation of professors.

The aim of this study was to describe nursing education from a phenomenological point of view.

METHODS

Theoretical reflection based on the phenomenological approach proposed by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. It is considered an important methodological resource to reveal, rescue, unveil and understand the teaching-learning process.

As a science, phenomenology is the investigation of essences and of relations between essences, that is, the determination of essential settings of consciousness and its intentional correlates, investigated and fixed in a purely contemplative way in their systematic connection.⁶

Experiences and intentionality are crucial to understanding. In this context, the subject and his/her world are interdependent, including in order to exist. Phenomenologically, a person's consciousness acts intentionally, because it is not closed in on itself.⁶

Both thinkers, Ponty and Husserl, invited educators to adopt a different didactics - one that is not tied up by rigid established techniques and theoretical knowledge supposedly acquired until the moment - in order to be able to see what would be the initial proposal of the phenomenological method.⁶⁻⁷ That is why we chose this way of doing research, without a pre-determined objective, as in quantitative research; finding its way by moving forward and through its contribution: interrogation.

• **The phenomenological approach as a research method**

Phenomenology is a science that describes and tries to understand a particular phenomenon, instead of explaining it or finding its causes. That would be like saying that, through our experiences in the world, the world opens itself to men, and the act of opening or unfolding itself to men is the phenomenon.⁸ Thus, it is essential to grasp phenomenology in order to understand it as a research method.

The term phenomenology was first used by Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728-1777), a Swiss philosopher, in his 'Neues Organon', to designate the "science of appearances"; and by Kant, in his 'Metaphysics', to indicate that part of the motion theory which considered the relative states of rest and motion of matter only in relation to the modalities in which they appear in the external sense. Later, in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (1807), it was used to designate the "come-to-being" of science and knowledge. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Edmund Husserl, in Logical Investigations (1900) starts to use it to mean "the science of conscious experience".⁹

Pedagogical practices have always been influenced by various sciences. From the perspective of phenomenology, it is important to highlight two philosophers, Ponty and Husserl, who valued in their studies the perception, intention and human experiences, contributing to the issue in what concerns the behavior.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was born in France in 1908 and graduated in philosophy. He was a school teacher and lectured in the Universities of Lyon and Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne). In 1952 he won a Philosophy chair in the Collège de France and from 1945 to 1952 he was co-editor (with Jean Paul Sartre) of the journal Les Temps Modernes. He devoted himself to the school of phenomenology and existentialism, arguing that it is necessary to consider the body as a whole in order to find out what will follow a given set of stimuli. The human being is in the center of the discussion about knowledge, give that, from a perception, the subject senses something, imagines it in its fullness, and is thus able to describe it. Among his many works, we highlight << The structure of behavior (1942) >> and << Phenomenology of Perception (1945) >>, his doctoral thesis. Merleau-Ponty was influenced by Husserl and was a reference to thinkers such as Foucault, Lefort, Le Breton, among others. He died in 1961, victim of a heart attack.⁵

Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl, on the other hand, was born in Germany in 1859 and

died in 1938. He studied mathematics and philosophy. Husserl was Jewish but converted to the Lutheran Church. He lectured Philosophy as a full professor in several German educational institutions. Husserl's philosophical thought was mainly influenced by Franz Brentano and, through him, by the Greek and Scholastic tradition; as well as Bolzano, Descartes, Leibniz, English empiricism and Kantianism.¹⁰

Philosophy is not an imperfect science - it simply is not a science. The supreme interests of human culture, however, require the preparation of a strictly scientific philosophy, which implies a critique of naturalism and historicism.¹⁰ In addition, all natural sciences are naive in their starting point, including psychology, given that psychology is always psychophysical. This implies, tacitly or expressly, the existential position of physical nature. Moreover, every pre-scientific or scientific object is a datum of consciousness. However, as the structure of consciousness is the "intentionality", i.e., since every consciousness is consciousness-of, the essential study of consciousness includes also that of consciousness-meaning and consciousness-objectivity as such.¹⁰

Husserl's "phenomenological reduction" is the process of "bracketing" the existence of the contents of consciousness or experiences, as well as of the self as a psychophysical subject or an existential support of consciousness, which is thus reduced to the pure or transcendental "I".¹¹ It is therefore the performance of an "eidetic" reduction. The reduction of experiences to their essence ("eidos"), ideal objects which cannot be found in the the mind (psychological hypothesis), nor in the platonic world of ideas (metaphysical hypothesis) or in divine intelligence (theological hypothesis). These objects are ideas, "meanings" unrelated to time and space and of permanent validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We live in an increasingly individualistic society, marked by objectivity and precision. As a result, we experience the disintegration of ethical and moral values, which has been (visibly or not) determining people's behavior, education, society in general.¹²

The student, the object of education, is a reflective being and is unique in his/her ways of interacting with the world, responding to life. He/she is a temporal being who cares about himself/herself, but, at the same time, becomes aware of himself/herself and projects himself/herself in the future.¹³

Teachers/professors can choose their role. They may choose between simply being present and existing in their presence as part of the educational work. Working with phenomenology in education enables a dialectical and careful reflection on the being and his/her actions. It is about watching over the one who educates and the one who is being educated, being open to perceive all horizons.

In the practice of teaching, sharing is outlined as an educational situation, which allows experiences to coexist in the teaching-learning process. That is, the teacher is seen as a being who is a instructor/preceptor/educator, an ontic/ontologic being who chooses to intervene in the concreteness of educational action, thus transforming reality.

Phenomenologically, education occurs through the act of getting to know, through reflection, an important attribute of consciousness. Significance and meanings such as existence are understood through the understanding of the subject himself/herself. In times of global socioeconomic and cultural transformation arising from the phenomenon of globalization, the educational process is being "packed in" and reflecting an operationalized teaching practice. Therefore, it is necessary to realize that, although the contribution of science is essential and valuable for understanding and performing education, it does not relieve the contribution of philosophy.¹⁴

If we consider the educational proposals made from the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, we will see that methods and techniques have been increasingly valued and the true intention of the existence of education has been forgotten. Both methods and techniques are essential attributes inherited from education science for use in pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, the individual pre-existing knowledge of the teacher/professor and the student should not be discarded.¹⁵

Starting from the principle that knowledge is the quest of the human being to interact and be integrated in the world, and the social function of education is to prepare individuals for life, we found in philosophy, in the phenomenological method proposed by Husserl in relation to the subject-world relationship, the reason of the teaching-learning process. We are faced with pre-determined pedagogical and didactic models, which prevent the neutrality of teachers'/professors' actions. Extending this concept, it should be stated that didactics is

the main branch of the study of pedagogy. Therefore, politicizing teacher/professors or future teachers/professors inspires an ideology of education, which may both recover the essence of education and inspire a pre-determined knowledge nature.¹⁶

Pedagogical practices (also adopted in schools of nursing) reveal a fragmentation of education into theory and practice. This prevents the understanding of an elaborate and systematic thinking that aims to achieve selected goals, perhaps with the purpose of simplifying the whole process.¹⁷

It is expected that the evolution of theory and practice should go together and pursue the principle of identity, since at no time in human activity are theory and practice motionless. The theory does not exclude the practice and the practice does not exclude the theory in the social activity of humans.¹⁸

Theory and practice are integral parts of a whole. They do not act separately, but are rather parts that dynamically build the historical process of human activity in society. In the phenomenological perspective, Merleau-Ponty introduces the human being as the center of all discussion about knowledge. In teaching-learning process, this would mean that knowledge and understanding are born from the relations of man in the world. This considers all aspects that are part of and constitute human life, through a reflection on the teaching practice, while still considering students' previous experience.¹⁰

The human being is immersed in its own universe, in a dynamic process of construction of the world and of itself, this process "unfinished" .¹⁹ This approach to human dimension, becoming in pedagogical practices, characterized by understanding singularities and respect ethical values, the values of the life world, of, religious, affection, emotion, reason, and where teaching is seeing his student political beliefs, first of all, as a social being, a member of world to which belongs involved in the growing process of their intellectual knowledge and full cognitive development.

The incompleteness or inconclusiveness of human beings is a natural part of vital existence and education is one of the strands that is always present in the construction process of individuals. Thus, the teacher should learn to see himself/herself and act as an individual and collective mediator. In order to do so, he/she must use humanizing pedagogical strategies. Phenomenologically, a simple example would be the use of ludic educational activities, establishing an

integrated inter-relationship between theory and practice.²⁰

The ludic is a method of learning in which laughter, humor, pleasure are essential elements of the teaching practice. Learning by "playing". In this method, laughter mingles with the discovery of knowledge, joy whirls its wings around creative imagination, singing is intertwined with the learning of signs, linguistic codes, body language, playing activities help learn rules, collaboration, partnership.²¹

The teacher, as mediator, organizer and supervisor of the teaching- learning process should realize every moment and make the most appropriate methodological choice. According to Merleau-Ponty' phenomenological view, the methodological strategy must be able to see all human diversity and collaborate with its training, especially its ethical training (through discussions and the experience of ethical values, solidarity, respect, tolerance and an understanding of cultural, social, political, religious, sexual, racial and physical diversity). For this, teacher planning is essential, but never immutable. It should be critical, strategic, based on contextualized and articulated epistemological bases for the purpose of what one intends to teach.

Phenomenology leads to the reflection on what we have and how we have been teaching. It proposes the replacement of traditional subjects in textbooks by subjects that are part of the everyday life of students, involving situations in which both students and teachers make themselves present; avoiding the appropriation of meaning and concepts; enabling the student to build his/her own concepts and learning process. All this without abandoning the existing educational curricula proposed by educational organs and the educational legislation.⁶

From the perspective of phenomenology, the knowledge process, by means of consciousness, can be synthesized as a process that begins as a historical possibility, which is intentionality, then objectivity or the moment of apprehension and comprehension of reality in the common sense level, the pre-reflective consciousness. Thus, it is necessary epistemological rigor. Next, is the emergence of critical thinking (going beyond the level of objectification). Finally, the historical possibility, which is evidenced by transcendentalism. Therefore, technique, the knowledge of natural experiences mediated by a scientific knowledge, makes human knowledge transcend the physical and reach the essence (transcendental consciousness).²²

It is worth mentioning that, according to the literature, until the 1980s, nursing pedagogical practices were configured to follow educational mandates and comply with rules, i.e., they were based on discipline, obedience and rigid ethical standards, generating uncritical professionals, 'molded' and oriented to providing purely technical care to patients. This view is still adopted today, as one of the parameters stipulated by the Ministry of Education regarding reformulations in nursing education is the reinterpretation of didactics, abolishing teaching techniques regarded as traditional.²³

The fact that the essence of things is in the phenomenon does not turns the essence into the phenomenon. On the other hand, it is the essence that defines the phenomenon. Thus, the essence is not outside of the phenomenon, but rather in the phenomenon itself.⁴ Thus, introducing phenomenology as one of the ratios of education is essential to break with the paradigms of instrumentalization and technicality of teaching in our practices, and reflect on the constructed model of planning and on methods, respectively.

CONCLUSION

The teaching-learning process is a complex phenomenon that involves several dimensions. Among these is the teacher-student relationship, which builds itself up fully and intentionally through teaching practices, actions, words, symbols, among others. Both the teacher and the student are pillars of a quality education, operationalized by affinity between subjects.

Hurssel and Ponty bring philosophy into our daily lives through phenomenology. We need to reflect on the possibility of surmounting the barriers of instrumentality and technicality in search of humanization and of an emancipatory, intentional attitude, theoretically grounded in curriculum components, methods, educational and philosophical theories, and in ethical and citizenship principles.

A multi- and interdisciplinary, reflective learning activity, dialogically mediated, is clearly part of the fabric of learning, anchored in a pedagogical intentionality, and in a process that involves action-reflection-action.

From the phenomenological perspective, a didactic-methodological approach should, above all, include two elements: its essence and the subjects involved (teacher and student), considering them as different but fully connectable universes.

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