APPROACHES BETWEEN GRADUATION COURSES IN NURSING ASSESSED BY THE ARCU-SUL SYSTEM

APROXIMAÇÕES ENTRE OS CURSOS DE GRADUAÇÃO EM ENFERMAGEM AVALIADOS PELO SISTEMA ARCU-SUL

APROXIMACIONES ENTRE LOS CURSOS DE GRADUACIÓN EN ENFERMERÍA EVALUADOS POR EL SISTEMA ARCU-SUR

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze aspects that approximate Nursing courses accredited by the ARCU-SUL system. **Method:** qualitative, documental, exploratory and descriptive study, carried out in ten Nursing undergraduate courses in public institutions and a private institution in Uruguay. The survey was conducted using data available online on the ARCU-SUL system page. To organize the data, the Content Analysis technique was used, in the Categorical Analysis modality. **Results:** the following categories emerged: Profile of the egress; Evaluation; Academic mobility. The results showed that the countries offer training corresponding to the health needs of the population and current policies. Academic mobility is still an undiversified activity among academics in the economic bloc. **Conclusion:** there is compatibility in the training process in the analyzed indicators, contributing for the educational process in the MERCOSUR economic bloc to materialize and/or strengthen. **Descriptors:** Nursing; Mercosur; Education Nursing; Accreditation; Education Higher.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar aspectos que aproximam os cursos de Enfermagem acreditados pelo sistema ARCU-SUL. **Método:** estudo qualitativo, documental, exploratório e descritivo, realizado em dez cursos de graduação em Enfermagem em instituições públicas e uma instituição privada do Uruguai. A pesquisa ocorreu por meio de dados disponíveis on-line na página do sistema ARCU-SUL. Para a organização dos dados, utilizou-se a técnica de Análise de Conteúdo, na modalidade Análise Categorical. **Resultados:** emergiram as seguintes categorias: Perfil do egresso; Avaliação; Mobilidade acadêmica. Os resultados evidenciaram que os países ofertam formação correspondendo às necessidades de saúde da população e políticas vigentes. A mobilidade acadêmica é uma atividade ainda pouco difundida entre os acadêmicos no bloco econômico. **Conclusão:** existe compatibilidade no processo de formação nos indicadores analisados, contribuindo para que o processo educativo no bloco econômico do MERCOSUL se concretize e/ou se fortaleça. **Descritores:** Enfermagem; Mercosul; Educação em Enfermagem; Acreditação; Educação Superior.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar aspectos que aproximan los cursos de enfermería acreditados por el sistema ARCU-SUL. **Método:** estudio cualitativo, documental, exploratorio-descriptivo, realizado en diez cursos de graduación en enfermería en instituciones públicas y una institución privada de Uruguay. La investigación se realizó a través de datos disponibles online en la página del sistema ARCU-SUR. Para la organización de los datos se utilizó la técnica de Análisis de Contenido en la modalidad Análisis Categorical. **Resultados:** surgieron las siguientes categorías: Perfil del egresado; Evaluación; Movilidad académica. Los resultados evidenciaron que los países ofrecen formación que corresponde a las necesidades de salud de la población y políticas vigente. La movilidad académica es una actividad aún poco difundida entre los académicos en el bloque económico. **Conclusión:** existe compatibilidad en el proceso de formación en los indicadores analizados, contribuyendo para que el proceso educativo en el bloque económico del MERCOSUR se concrete y/o se fortalezca. **Descriptores:** Enfermería, Mercosur, Educación en Enfermería, Acreditación, Educación Superior.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1991, the Treaty of Asuncion between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay created the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), which, from the outset, had treated education as an important aspect, in the attempt to integrate the regions and promote the circulation of graduates in the block. From 1996, the possibility of mutual recognition of university degrees was proposed, by means of the attempt to create a framework of equivalence between the courses. This proposal was not successful, since it was considered complex and difficult to implement.¹

Thus, in 1998, the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of an Experimental Mechanism for Accreditation of Courses for the Recognition of University Graduation Degrees in the MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile (MEXA) Countries" was formalized. MEXA, after an experimental phase until 2006, gave rise to the University Accreditation System of MERCOSUR (ARCU-SUL System). Accreditation aimed at the recognition of qualifications, but did not allow the right to exercise the profession in other countries, since this depends directly on the professional councils.²⁻³

Accreditation in MERCOSUR's economic bloc has, as a permanent objective, the analysis of quality in training at the university level. For the Nursing course, accreditation aims at recognizing the training of professionals, aiming to provide qualified and internationally recognized, training, providing students and teachers mobility among accredited institutions of the economic block.⁴

The purpose for higher education in the MERCOSUR economic bloc is that the academic has the opportunity to begin his/her academic formation in an institution and to continue and/or complete his studies at another accredited institution in the bloc, having his/her degree recognized in any member country. In order for this process to take place, it is essential that the member countries analyze their curricula with the purpose of adapting the different cycles in force in all member countries, harmonizing the contents and the duration of the training and thus developing, an integrated education.⁵

This practice in education, as well as the free movement of professionals, has already been carried out by the European Union through the Sorbonne Declaration, of May 1998, and the Bologna Declaration, of June 1999, which have emerged with the aim of

providing mobility for citizens, the acquisition of a job and the development of the continent. The Bologna Declaration aims at the regional development of higher education and this has been happening due to the phenomenon of globalization, which seeks to strengthen European regionalization with the aim of making it competitive in the world scenario, attractive and recognized worldwide in the field of education top.⁶⁻⁸

In this context of internationalization, education is endorsed by economic, political, social and cultural needs among countries. Education is therefore recognized as an important strategy for the approximation and the sharing of culture and knowledge.⁹ Indeed, the phenomenon of the internationalization of higher education can also be perceived in countless other aspects, for, it is contradictory, while it has solidarity as intentionality, also reinforces capitalist expansion and commodification.¹⁰

Thus, we ask: What are the approximations between Nursing courses accredited by the ARCU-SUL system?

OBJECTIVE

- To analyze the aspects that approximate undergraduate Nursing courses accredited by the ARCU SUL system.

METHOD

Article extracted from the dissertation << Nursing Courses Accredited by the Arcu-Sul System: characteristics and approaches >>, presented in 2016 in the Graduate Program in Nursing-UFSC.

Qualitative, documentary, exploratory and descriptive study. Inclusion criteria were: courses belonging to federal public universities, accredited by said system, located in the founding countries of MERCOSUR. We analyzed data from ten Nursing undergraduate courses in public institutions (five institutions in Brazil, four in Argentina, one in Paraguay). For the purposes of this study, in order to contemplate all MERCOSUR founding countries, the only undergraduate course previously accredited in Uruguay, belonging to a private institution, was included, thus totaling 11 undergraduate Nursing courses.

The undergraduate Nursing course at the University of Brasília (UnB) was approved in 1975 and was accredited in 2013. The undergraduate Nursing course at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM) was created in 1975 with certificate of accreditation approved in 2014. At the Federal University of

Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), the Nursing course began its activities in 1950 and received accreditation in the year 2013.¹¹

The Nursing undergraduate course of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) was created in 1969 and accredited in 2013. At the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), the Nursing course was founded in 1980 and obtained its certificate of accreditation in 2013.¹¹

In Argentina, the undergraduate Nursing course of the National University of Tucumán (UNT) was created in 1952 and was accredited in 2010. The undergraduate Nursing course at the National University of Rio Cuarto (UNRC) in Córdoba was founded in 1988 and received, in 2010, the certificate of accreditation of the ARCU-SUL system.¹¹

Also in Argentina, the Nursing course of the National University of Misiones (NUM) was created in 1982 and acquired the certificate of accreditation in 2010. The National University of Lanús (NUL) offers the undergraduate Nursing course since the year of 1998 and received, in 2010, the accreditation certificate of the ARCU-SUL system. In Uruguay, the Catholic University of Uruguay (CUU) offers the undergraduate course in Nursing for five years (degree). The institution also offers vocational qualification (undergraduate), lasting for three years. In Paraguay, the National University of Asunción (NUA) received certification in 2010.¹¹

The data were collected through the documents available in the ARCU-SUL system, in addition to the information available in the electronic addresses of undergraduate Nursing courses. These documents, in general (with variations between countries), require analysis of the general and institutional context, academic project and infrastructure of the course.

The data collection was done through documentary analysis, that allows to transpose a primary document (gross) to a secondary document (reproduction of the first). The first step in documentary research is through the exploration of documentary sources, and first-hand documents, ie, they have received no treatment (official documents, letters, contracts, films, recordings, etc.) and second-hand documents, consisting of documents that have already received analysis (research reports, statistical tables, etc.).¹²

In the second moment, the analytical treatment of the documents was done through spreadsheets, with the purpose of capturing indicators that lead to answer the objective of

the research. This guideline sheet was created from general topics that indicate the characteristics of each course and the necessary elements for the comparative analysis of these courses. These topics are: egress profile, timetable, organization of disciplines, supervision of practices, self-training of students, student evaluation, teacher evaluation, student learning, assessment of subjects, learning process, self assessment, mobility and exchange, teacher training, infrastructure, methodology developed, course organization, institutional wellness program and pedagogical proposal and the guiding principles of training.

Data analysis was performed following the steps: 1. Pre-analysis - reading and re-reading of the electronic pages of higher education institutions and the ARCU-SUL system in which the researcher made the documents pertinent to the study; 2. Exploitation of the material - the material was exploited by means of obtaining the data through the clipping and aggregation, in which tabular spreadsheets with topics that led to the purpose of the research were constructed; 3. Treatment of results and interpretation - the treatment of the results, was carried out in order to answer the research question.¹³ The following categories emerged through the classification and classification of the data: (a) Graduate's profile (b) Evaluation and (c) Academic mobility.

RESULTS

When analyzing the accreditation documents of undergraduate Nursing courses available online on the ARCU-SUR system page, it was intended to seek approximations among the following topics: egress profile, workload, organization of disciplines, supervision of practices, self-training of students, student evaluation, assessment of subjects, learning process, self-assessment, mobility and exchange, professional teacher training, infrastructure, methodology developed, course organization, institutional wellness program and pedagogical proposal. the guiding principles of training.

However, considering the 11 accredited courses that meet the inclusion criteria, some information was not available in its entirety, and it is possible to evaluate, more broadly, the topics profile of egress, evaluation and academic mobility.

University	Graduate's profile
of Brasília	Generalist, humanist, critical and reflective. Sense of social responsibility. Promoting integral health in the life cycle, ensuring integrality, quality and humanization in health, based on professional ethics.
Federal of Santa Maria	Generalists, qualified in a humanistic, critical and reflexive perspective, based on ethico-political-philosophical principles, to intervene on the health-disease process of the human being (individuals, family and community), identifying biopsychosocial dimensions of determinants in the evolutionary cycle.
Federal of Rio Grande do Sul	Generalist, humanist, critical and reflective, focused on the care of the individual, family and community in all evolutionary stages. Social responsibility and commitment to citizenship, promoting the integral health of the human being. Focused on the national epidemiological profile, with regional emphasis, with scientific and intellectual rigor guided by ethical principles.
Federal of Santa Catarina	Generalist, critical, committed to the health needs of the population, with the responsibility of assisting the individual, family and social groups in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Able to contribute to professional development through teaching, research, participation in Nursing entities and in the exercise of social citizenship.
Federal of Rio de Janeiro	It addresses the health needs of the country, the development of disciplines, occupational skills, humanistic, ethical, social and political. The process of teaching learning is sufficient.
Tucumán National	Holistic conception of the human being, focusing on health promotion, disease prevention, rehabilitation and rehabilitation.
Rio Cuarto National	It responds to social, local, regional and national needs. The professional profile is elaborated according to the National Law of Exercise of the Nursing. Adequate to the objectives and institutional mission.
Misiones National	Professional offers, guides and evaluates the care of the individual, family and community. Ethical attitude and commitment to people's rights. Based on knowledge of the biological, psychosocial and historical areas. Different levels of prevention and care (including high complexity). Manage, plan, training programs, continuing education and health policies.
Lanús National	It responds to the country's health needs, disciplinary and occupational development, expressed in the egress profile and curricular axes. Coherence between the profile, competencies and mission, vision and objectives of the course.
Uruguai Catholic	Not informed
Asunción National	It responds to professional and country health needs. It returns to the epidemiological reality.

Figure 1. Characteristics of accredited undergraduate courses regarding egress profile. Florianópolis (SC), Brazil, 2016.

When observing the data, it can be verified that all courses in the area of Nursing in Brazil have, as a profile of the egress, a professional with a generalist, humanistic, critical and reflective background, and this training reflects the proposal of the Guidelines The other higher education institutions also present a general education in their writing, aiming the development of a professional prepared to meet the population's health needs, being qualified for health care with the individual, family and community.

The egress profile is described in a broad way in the documents related to the courses in Brazil and more succinctly in the courses abroad. The general, humanistic, critical, reflexive and socially responsible characteristics appear in general in the courses of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, although their writing does not explain other characteristics beyond the need to have a holistic conception of the human being and focus on the health promotion.

University	Academic Mobility
University of Brasilia	For Nursing, mobility and student and teacher exchange still have to be part of a strategic plan of the Nursing course.
Federal University of Santa Maria	It promotes the exchange of students and teachers in teaching, research and extension through national and international agreements with America, Europe, Asia and Oceania. Enabling students to have diverse experiences in these scenarios.
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul	The exchange of students with foreign universities takes place from the year 2008; a number of students benefited from this mechanism: two for the US, four for Uruguay, four for Spain, three in Portugal, one in Argentina and nine in other universities in Brazil.
Federal University of Santa Catarina	During the visit, mobility and exchange of teachers were identified, many of them linked to research centers. When performing postgraduate studies, mobility and exchanges have been stimulated mainly in the field of research.
Tucuman National University	The institution has policies for student mobility and exchange. This is promoted by the medical school, with the denomination of "scale" in which the Nursing also participates. However in the visit it was observed that this aspect still does not have the appropriate mechanisms and must be worked with intensity.
Rio Cuarto National University	The course counts on policies of mobility and exchange of students, via an agreement with foreign colleges. Such policies are still in the development stage of the course. However, it is observed that the students have made exchange.
Lanús National University	In relation to student mobility, there is an experience with students who attend the University of San Jose in Costa Rica in an equivalent discipline that they must attend at UNL, obtaining approval through this mechanism of equivalence.
Asunción National University / Missiones National University / Uruguay Catholic University / Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	Not informed.

Figure 2. Characteristics of accredited undergraduate courses regarding academic mobility. Florianópolis (SC), Brazil, 2016

Regarding academic mobility, it is identified, through Table 3, that all mentioned institutions have a program of mobility and academic exchange, according to the registers of the evaluators, however, it is perceived that this activity is little explored. It is verified that, in most universities, the Nursing course has its own policy for the accomplishment of this activity and only in the UNT the mobility policy is developed by the medical course. NUL has a partnership

with a university in Costa Rica, providing academics with the experience of taking a course that, once completed, is validated in the curriculum.

Two institutions mention that teachers enjoy the mobility policy, of which, the FUSC reports that professionals use it through the research groups in which they participate and that this activity is motivated, mainly, by the field of research of interest, individually.

University	Evaluation
of Brasília	Different instruments validate the evolution of cognitive knowledge, skills and attitudes. Participation in class activities, discussion forums and content. Exercises and activities of postings in Moodle, reflective studies. The assessment is summative and procedural. The educational strategies are: dialogue exhibition, review of texts, analysis and discussion of films and cases, research, fieldwork, technical visits and seminars.
Federal of Santa Maria	Procedural, in the semester, integrating theoretical-practical contents, observing the skills and abilities of teaching-learning. Criteria for the promotion of students follow UFSM rules, with minimum frequency requirements of 75%, average value of seven and final average five, on a scale of zero to ten. Consistent evaluation of the curricular proposal, procedural. Enabling the student to identify their knowledge gaps. The student is a principal actor, encourages self-learning and stimulates the critical spirit.
Federal of Rio Grande do Sul	The evaluation criteria are counted in the teaching plans and are obtained from the student's performance in theoretical, theoretical-practical and scientific production activities. The criteria are procedural and summative, including self-assessment and reflection. Use of concepts.
Federal of Santa Catarina	It will be verified in each discipline against the objectives of the teaching plan. The verification of the achievement of the objectives will be progressive, by means of evaluation instruments. All grades will be graded from 0 (zero) to 10 (ten). The minimum of disciplinary approval is six. The student with a sufficient frequency (FS) and average of the semester evaluation grades between 3.0 (three) and 5.5 (five point five) will be entitled to a new evaluation at the end of the semester, except in the subjects of Curricular Internship, of teaching and completion work of the Course or equivalent, or practical subjects, involving laboratory or clinic, defined by the Department and approved by the Collegiate Course, for which the possibility of a new evaluation will be at the discretion of the respective Collegiate of the Course.
Misiones National	The Assessment System is defined in all disciplinary programs. In each curricular space, the evaluation process (mainly, by check list) is verified. Different methodologies assess theoretical knowledge and practical application. Practices tracking instruments include control and recording of number of activities.
Lanús National	Evaluation by partial, oral and written exams, essays, reports, consultations and bibliographic research, design and execution of socio-medical diagnoses and other Nursing practices, such as the critical reflexive view of the learning process using several ways to obtain evidence on the change that is produced in students.
Asunción National	The approval of a course implies a minimum average income of 60% (sixty percent) in the academic activities considered final evaluation.
Uruguai Catholic Tucumán National Rio Cuarto National Federal of Rio de Janeiro	Not Informed.

Figure 3. Characteristics of accredited undergraduate courses regarding student evaluation. Florianópolis (SC), Brazil, 2016.

It is noticed that the form of evaluation, in all the institutions of higher education, happens in the traditional way. It is verified that, in Brazilian universities, the performance is measured progressively and summatively during each semester. UnB and UFSC report the use of an assessment tool to authenticate the evolution of knowledge and skill throughout the semester.

The following strategies are used for the analysis of academic development in UnB, FURGS and NUL: participation in activities complementary to the classes, discussion and content forums, exercises and posting activities in Moodle (distance learning platform), studies reflective in various situations, dialogues, review of texts, analysis and discussion of films and cases, research exercises, fieldwork, technical visits to regional institutions, seminars, theoretical-theoretical-practical activities, different types of scientific production, exams oral and written partial examinations, essays, reports,

consultations and bibliographic research, design and execution of socio-sanitary diagnoses and other practices of Nursing.

The institutions FUSM, FUSC and NUA express the result of the academic development by means of a numerical scale: note. The FURGS is expressed by concept. FUSM and FURGS describe the application of self-assessment as a method of evaluation, in which the academic has the possibility to reflect on the knowledge acquired during the semester and to verify the still existing knowledge gaps, so the academic realizes that the same is responsible for their learning and reflects on the changes that are necessary to overcome their fragilities and move towards the acquisition of knowledge. The NUAM mentions that in the field of practice, it uses an instrument to control the assistance, in which the number of activities performed by the academic is recorded. The FUSM refers to teaching-learning, with the student as the main actor of their learning.

DISCUSSION

The egress profile, academic mobility and student evaluation policies are important aspects to indicate the approximations between the curricula of the undergraduate courses of the MERCOSUR founding countries, accredited by the ARCU-SUR system. In Europe, debates on the regional integration of universities reinforce and make visible the policies implemented by the European Union (EU).¹⁴ These debates provide support for Latin American researchers to reflect on regionalization and its demands in MERCOSUR countries.¹⁵

In the Nursing courses in Brazil, it is verified that the curricular changes, after the implantation of the DCN, point to the formation of a generalist professional, who acquires broad knowledge (in the sense of specialties) in the Nursing area, needing to build competences in the areas of epidemiology, education in health and management, demanding to present solid knowledge about human relations, dynamism, initiative, teamwork, being able to develop preventive and health promotion actions.¹⁶⁻⁷

The general training aims to provide professionals, with fundamental knowledge, to work in all areas of Nursing. It is necessary that, in some situations, after the training, the egress should seek a specialization course focused on the area of interest, since the training provided by the undergraduate degree does not fully develop the competencies to perform in some specific areas.¹⁸

In Argentina, Law 298/99 aims to ensure a comprehensive, continuous, ethical and qualified health care system in Nursing care, in accordance with the needs of the population, based on the principles of solidarity and equity, collaborating in the improvement of health people, family and community. The third article of this same law states that health care should be practiced throughout the life cycle of the person, family and community and in their environment, in the promotion, prevention, recovery and rehabilitation of health.¹⁹

In Uruguay, training in the Nursing area points to guidance and training in Community Health and Primary Health Care. The study plan of the current course is from the year 1993, is in the phase of changes, but establishes, as axis, the training in Primary Health Care. In Paraguay, after changes in health policies, units and teams were installed in Primary Health Care. In this way, there was

an increase in the need for professionals to meet this health demand.²⁰

Thus, it can be seen that the countries provide training in response to the current political need of the moment; it is identified that training and/or labor market has similar points in the member countries of the economic bloc, with the purpose of training a professional of competent and ethical Nursing, with a profile prepared to meet the individual, family and community, taking into account the singularity of each person or situation.²¹⁻²

The changes that have occurred in training over the years seek to respond to the demands of the labor market, which, currently, requires a professional who is attentive to his own development, capable of making fast, innovative and creative decisions, in a humanistic way. The undergraduate courses propose to train professionals to interact effectively with their team, identifying and interfering, in a critical-reflective way, in the various situations that will appear in their professional daily life, qualified for care with the individual, family and community.²³

Academic mobility is a differential, since it can reflect critical and reflective formation, including, due to the need to adapt to different contexts. In this way, the experience becomes productive, since the academic acquires knowledge in new cultures and languages, political systems, acquiring experience in his professional area, as he experiences a new academic environment.

All the analyzed institutions presented a mobility program. It has been found that activity among academics in the economic bloc is still sporadic. It can be cited as barriers that make this practice impossible: access to information; the financial situation of the academic and/or the financial incentive of the management; the language or even the possibility of delay in training due to the incompatibility of validation of credits in the curriculum.²⁶⁻⁸

As far as mobility of students (and teachers) is concerned, this is favored by the system, although there are limitations on the free movement of professionals. Professional councils or colleges still lack more dialogue. Among the pedagogical strategies, it was possible to identify the student evaluation policies and, although perceived here in a macro aspect and not at the level of the teaching plans, brings indications that allow to approach the universities of the founding countries of MERCOSUR, in relation to accredited courses.^{29 30}

The study presented important limitations regarding the organization of the results concerning the evaluation content in the institutions, and these contents are indispensable in the analysis for the course to receive the accreditation certificate. It is considered that, the document issued after the accreditation of the institution does not have uniformity in the presentation, but that all items evaluated during the accreditation process are included, in the document, so that, the population has the possibility to know the reality of the accredited institution. As a contribution, the MERCOSUR economic bloc provides considerable advances in the area of integration and mobility of people in the educational sector. Thus, intensifying the need for further studies on the possible free movement of Nursing professionals in this economic bloc, which is a little-known and publicized theme.

CONCLUSION

With the research, it was possible to analyze how education is significant for the MERCOSUR economic bloc, since the creation of the accreditation system proposes a quality education in higher education. It was verified that the egress profile, academic mobility and academic evaluation policies are indicators that approximate the analyzed institutions, since, in general they present similarities in these indicators, which contribute to the concretization and/or strengthening of the process education in the economic bloc.

All institutions Accredited by the ARCU-SUL system, in the MERCOSUR economic bloc, express that the training is geared towards a generalist, humanist, critical and reflective professional, and this professional is qualified to respond to the health needs of the population.

The study contributes to Nursing education in the MERCOSUR economic bloc, because it mentions the approximations and distances in the training present in accredited institutions. With the results, it becomes feasible for the educational sector of the bloc to assess the real needs, so that, the consolidation and/or reformulation of the practices already developed can occur, aiming to increase academic mobility and, consequently, the free movement of professionals.

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