

## EDUCAÇÃO À DISTÂNCIA NO ENSINO SUPERIOR: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA EM ESTÁGIO DE DOCÊNCIA

### DISTANCE EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPERIENCE REPORT IN TEACHING INTERNSHIP

### EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA EN LA ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR: INFORME DE EXPERIENCIA EN PRÁCTICAS DE DOCENCIA

Rebeca Coelho de Moura Angelim<sup>1</sup>, Brígida Maria Gonçalves de Melo Brandão<sup>2</sup>, Verônica Mirelle Alves Oliveira Pereira<sup>2</sup>, Daniela de Aquino Freire<sup>3</sup>, Fátima Maria da Silva Abrão<sup>4</sup>.

#### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Relatar a experiência de mestrandas em enfermagem na disciplina Estágio de Docência por meio da Plataforma *Moodle*. **Métodos:** Trata-se de um estudo descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência onde mestrandas de Enfermagem atuaram como tutoras em um módulo do respectivo curso, utilizando o ensino à distância. **Resultados:** A tutoria, por meio do ensino à distância, é uma abordagem inovadora que, apesar da separação geográfica existente entre o aluno e o professor, pode promover maior interação entre ambos. **Conclusão:** Conclui-se que, nessa modalidade, o tutor tem a tarefa de conduzir o processo ensino-aprendizagem, identificando as dificuldades, sanando dúvidas e contribuindo para aumentar o leque de conhecimentos do aluno. **Descritores:** Docentes; Educação superior; Educação em enfermagem; Educação à distância.

#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To report the experience of master students in nursing attending the subject Teaching Internship through the Moodle Platform. **Methods:** This is a descriptive study, of experience report kind, in which master students in nursing worked as tutors in a module of the respective course, using distance education. **Results:** The mentoring in distance learning is an innovative approach that, despite the geographical separation between the student and the professor, can promote greater interaction between both of them. **Conclusion:** We concluded that, in this modality, the tutor has the task of conducting the teaching-learning process, identifying the difficulties, removing doubts and contributing to increase the student's knowledge. **Descriptors:** Faculty; Higher Education; Nursing Education; Distance Education.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Informar de la experiencia de las alumnas de máster en enfermería en la asignatura de Práctica de Docencia a través de la Plataforma *Moodle*. **Métodos:** Se trata de un estudio descriptivo, del tipo relato de experiencia donde alumnas de máster en Enfermería actuaron como tutoras en un módulo del respectivo curso, utilizando la enseñanza a distancia. **Resultados:** La tutoría, a través de la enseñanza a distancia, es un enfoque innovador, que pese a la separación geográfica existente entre el alumno y el profesor, puede promover una mayor interacción entre ambos. **Conclusión:** Se concluye que, en esta modalidad, el tutor tiene la tarea de conducir el proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje, identificando las dificultades, aclarando dudas y contribuyendo a aumentar la diversidad de conocimientos del alumno. **Descriptores:** Docentes; Educación superior; Educación en enfermería; Educación a distancia.

<sup>1</sup>Graduada em Enfermagem. Doutora em Enfermagem pelo Programa Associado de Pós-graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade de Pernambuco e Universidade Estadual da Paraíba. <sup>2</sup>Graduada em Enfermagem. Mestre em Enfermagem pelo Programa Associado de Pós-graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade de Pernambuco e Universidade Estadual da Paraíba. <sup>3</sup>Graduada em Enfermagem. Mestranda em Enfermagem pelo Programa Associado de Pós-graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade de Pernambuco e Universidade Estadual da Paraíba. <sup>4</sup>Graduada em Enfermagem. Doutora em Enfermagem pela Escola de Enfermagem de Ribeirão Preto/USP. Docente na Universidade de Pernambuco.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Nursing in Brazil has been consolidating, especially after the implementation of master's degree (in the 70's) and doctorate (in the 80's) courses. The existing programs are based on concentration areas focused on nursing disciplines, allowing the profession to consolidate itself as a very broad field of knowledge<sup>(1)</sup>.

Traditionally, the training of teachers for higher education is seen as the preparation of an individual to turn to the in-depth knowledge of certain content, whether it is practical or theoretical. Since postgraduate studies prioritize the conduct of research, it ends up being erroneously seen only as a trainer of researchers, resulting in less interest in its pedagogical function, that is, its role as teacher trainer<sup>(2)</sup>.

Taking into account that knowledge and professional preparation have been increasingly valued, including in academia, there is the need for pedagogical preparation of teachers and future university professors. In this context, the Teaching Internship is a curricular activity of the postgraduate programs whose objective is to train masters and doctoral students for the teaching career, according to the purposes of the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)<sup>(3)</sup>.

In the Nursing Graduate Associated Program of the University of Pernambuco and the State University of Paraíba (PAPGENf UPE/UEPB), the Teaching Internship is compulsory for all students and lasts at least six months. In this discipline, students teach classes in any module of the Nursing course of the University of Pernambuco (UPE) or the State University of Paraíba (UEPB), depending on the bond of their supervisors and under their supervision.

The current Pedagogical Project of the Course (PPC) of Nursing of the UPE is organized in modules. Each module corresponds to a semester and has a curricular structure distributing the contents in the thematic areas that guide the training of the nurse. The objective is to strengthen the articulation of theory with practice, using a methodology of active student participation<sup>(4)</sup>.

The active methodology stimulates the participation of students in the process of building their own knowledge, using a critical and reflexive approach to problem-solving and evaluation<sup>(5)</sup>. Regarding the PPC of the nursing course and the concept of active methodology,

the role of the graduate student in the teaching-learning process, through the Teaching Internship, is a challenge, since they have to work not only as a moderator, but also to try to extract the best from the student, letting them be the protagonist of their own learning.

The practice of Teaching Internship can be done in class, in person, or through an online platform, in the modality of Distance Education (DE), which is able to complement the subject matter in the field of practice. Some of the advantages of DE are the ease of access for improvement, as well as the possibility to choose the best time to study<sup>(6-7)</sup>.

One of several environments for DE is the Moodle Platform, which is characterized as an environment where the tutor elaborates a virtual material to the students and is available to contribute to their learning. In addition, the platform facilitates the access to different didactic materials, besides the continuous edition, revision of the messages posted and possibility of interaction with different people<sup>(8)</sup>.

Based on what was exposed and considering the importance of performing the Teaching Internship, not only face-to-face, but also at a distance, this study had the objective of reporting the experience of Nursing students in the Teaching Internship discipline through the Platform Moodle.

## METHODS

The present study is an experience report that emerged from the reflections of students of the academic master's course, from the experience in the Teaching PAPGENf UPE/UEPB.

In order to contemplate the activities of the teaching internship, 8 master students were chosen to develop them through the modality of DE, of the Nursing course of the UPE, in the second semester of the year 2014 and the first semester of 2015, resulting in a hour load of 60 hours per semester and a total of 120 hours. The module selected by the coordination of the Nursing course for the two semesters was the sixth module, in which there were, on average, 60 students. By dividing the class into eight groups, each master student was responsible for 6 or 7 students. The curricular unit focused on Adult Health and had the goal of integrating, through complementary activities, the themes approached in the classroom and in the care practices. The activities were recorded in field journals throughout the semester.

This report will describe the experiences of two master students with undergraduate students through the Moodle platform of distance education, under the supervision of the coordinators of the sixth module and the graduation counselors.

## RESULTS

For the insertion of the students of the Master course, initially, a meeting was held with the coordinator, who presented all the guidelines about the participation and use of the tools in the Moodle platform.

The activities were carried out through the tutorial model, in which clinical cases (evaluative didactic material) were elaborated for the students of the Nursing course of the sixth module, covering questions directed to Adult Health.

The clinical cases were organized into four blocks. The first one, for simulation and training purposes (in this case, only a single case of clinical case had to be constructed), which was sent to the undergraduate professor responsible for receiving and forwarding the cases to the platform. At that time, there was no compulsory correction by the tutor-master student, only follow-up of the activity and guidelines regarding the doubts.

Thinking about the student's need, the platform had a space called "Doubts Forum", in which the student-tutor interaction took place online, making it possible to clarify any doubts about the proposed activities.

The other three clinical cases, elaborated below, were evaluative and should be evaluated by the master students, setting a score ranging from 0 to 10 points, according to the pre-established criteria (form for assessing the answers). The final grade would be added to the weighting of the module's integrated tests.

The clinical cases included subjects related to clinical and/or surgical pathologies, focusing on the respiratory, gastric and endocrine system, hepatectomies and liver tumors, hematological system, integumentary system, immunological system and renal and metabolic system. In addition, they also included the health-disease process related to infectious and parasitic diseases, such as leishmaniasis and HIV/AIDS.

The students were divided into groups that contained around six or seven students each, under the guidance of a master student. For each

group, the disease/illness was determined to be approached.

It should be emphasized that, although it was a clinical case per group, the posting and evaluation were individual and the group should serve as a support for each one to elaborate an individual care plan.

The clinical cases were constructed with the following aspects: case description, containing the report through the history of the current disease; previous medical history; psychosocial profile; family history; and information on physical examination. Thus, it was necessary for the student to have prior knowledge about the subject matter and/or to seek appropriate information to define the diagnosis of the clinical case, which had three options of response.

For resolution, the students were asked to define the diagnosis, pointing out signs and symptoms that justified it, including discussion on why they excluded the other diagnoses. In the justification, the student should base their clinical discussion with findings of recent scientific literature. It was requested the elaboration of the Nursing Care Plan based on Systematization of Nursing Care (SNC), which should present Nursing Diagnoses, Nursing Interventions and Expected Results.

A deadline was set for the resolution of the clinical cases by the students, as well as a deadline for correction by the tutors-master students. All tutors should frequently access the platform to answer possible questions and doubts from students.

Through the evaluations, it was evidenced that the students found it difficult to elaborate the references based on ABNT norms (which was a guideline to follow) and that the references cited, in general, came from books and manuals. Thus, the tutors saw the need to guide students about ABNT standards and stimulate the search for scientific articles, preferably from the last five years, so that the students practiced scientific research and interest in reading articles.

The feedback from the tutors was crucial when writing their comments about the evaluation, and the grade that was set with comments containing both positive and negative points, so that the student could understand their mistakes and correctness to seek improvement in the other activities.

## DISCUSSION

The subject Teaching Internship is proposed to bring master students closer to the teaching-learning process and direct them to their field of action, which, in this case, was the Nursing course. They had the opportunity to discuss theoretical contents and apply them to the supervised practice of teaching, whether face-to face or at distance.

Distance education is considered a teaching-learning modality, supported by information and communication technologies, in which the teacher and the student are not in the conventional classroom, as usual. However, it has been recognized as an educational modality that plays an important role in today's society<sup>(9)</sup>, since it expanded the access to educational contents only with the use of Internet<sup>(10)</sup>. Therefore, it is the DE modality is an innovative form of tutoring that transcends the classroom, besides the possibility of access at any time and place.

From the point of view of the activities developed, the positive aspect is the ease in clarifying the constant doubts and the applicability of the SNC, considering that it is a routine care practice of nursing and, consequently, it is a way for the student to exercise it frequently.

The opportunity to answer questions and discuss content is carried out through the forums, where the tutor has the autonomy to write messages, provide recommendations, raise guiding questions, mediate debates and encourage student participation. In short, in the DE modality, the forums are tutoring rooms for pedagogical purposes<sup>(11)</sup>.

A negative point of the DE modality and use of the discussion forums in this study is that some students complained about internet access, which sometimes compromised the interaction in the platform. But this is considered more as a small trouble - which was quickly fixed - than a negative point itself.

In relation to the teaching internship in the DE modality, it was a different experience and of great importance for the training of the future teacher, since it has been frequently used in the curricular program of the undergraduate courses as a tool of support to face-to-face teaching and, therefore, teachers also need to be prepared to work in this area.

In the midst of this context, it should be highlighted that, for the tutor-master student, as a future teacher, the DE modality is characterized

as one more model of classroom to be experienced for their academic training, this model being new and richer in experiences. On the other side, for the student, it is an opportunity to experience a space outside the conventional (since it transcends the classroom), even presenting some similarities with face-to-face teaching<sup>(12)</sup>.

The tutoring experience was of great importance, since it is an innovative approach that, despite the geographical separation between the student and the teacher, can promote greater interaction between both. Both teachers and students begin to play a more active role in the teaching-learning process, as they interact virtually throughout the subject/thematic unit.

This form of teaching places the student as an agent of his/her learning process and the teacher/tutor as a mediator, and it is important that the latter encourages student participation<sup>(13)</sup>.

In this line of thought, "we understand that, in a course in the distance modality, the tutor must adopt a collaborative, supportive and constructivist attitude that stimulates the student and helps him/her to develop curiosity, participation and initiative"<sup>(9)</sup>. Thus, it becomes relevant to guide the student to "learn how to learn", so that knowledge facilitates the construction of a professional identity and the skills can be transformed during professional practice over time<sup>(14)</sup>.

In the meantime, in view of the fact that, in recent years, Nursing has presented itself as an expanding science, requiring professionals to be more knowledgeable, updated and improved<sup>(15)</sup>, we see that today's society needs a new type of professional in all sectors. This need is for the pursuit of multiple skills, teamwork, the ability to learn and adapt to new situations<sup>(16)</sup>.

Therefore, in order to carry out a care with excellence, it is necessary to seek new modalities and alternatives of learning that allow students and professionals in the area a constant update. One way of achieving this growing demand in the area of Nursing is through the incorporation of information technology and communication in health<sup>(15)</sup>.

It is necessary to understand that the Information and Communication Technologies are important tools for the success of the DE, provided they are not trivialized as mere technological instruments<sup>(17)</sup>. In this way, it is crucial that all the actors involved in the teaching-

learning process are aware that, in general, the success and/or failure of DE is strongly linked to the forms of communication between the participants and the technological instruments of DE, since they are of paramount importance to optimize the tutor-student relationship, serving as an effective approach to the enhancement of the knowledge acquired both in the classroom and in clinical practice.

The DE has been democratizing education and providing quality training according to the availability of each student, which has contributed to the increase in demand for this modality that, since the beginning of the 20th century, has had its methodologies improved<sup>(18)</sup>. Thus, it is a modality that favors the access to the information and the formation of the citizen.

Thus, the DE is a process of inclusion and training of information technologies, which has several advantages, such as the elimination of barriers of space and time, savings of financial resources, flexibility and accessibility<sup>(19)</sup>.

Another important aspect that must be mentioned relates to subjective factors, which help students easily adapt to this reality, such as motivation for study, self-esteem, being a predominantly individual type of study, forms of interaction with the tutor, the construction of autonomy and metacognition<sup>(20)</sup>.

The act of educating is not about the simple fact of transmitting knowledge. There is, within the educational process, an ideal, a project of a professional that wants to graduate and begin in the labor market. Faced with the transformations that have taken place in society as a whole, especially in its aspects of interpersonal relationships, values, beliefs and, consequently, in the educational process, it is necessary to seek ways to innovate the achievement of these transformations. In this sense, the applicability of educational media under the DE modality, linked to training and improvement courses, contemplates the need for professionals and students (who are already part of the labor market and cannot withdraw from it) to seek new knowledge<sup>(15)</sup>.

In view of the discussed aspects, the incorporation of DE means a restructuring of the teaching-learning process, which must follow the same scientific and methodological rigor of face-to-face teaching, and whose contribution to society is relevant, allowing flexibility for the study. In fact, flexibility is an important characteristic for the individual to achieve

adaptation to the society demands, being able to handle work and study, fact often found in the reality of individuals these days.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The Teaching Internship is an important step for the graduate student, characterizing as a pedagogical strengthening subsidy regarding the preparation for the teaching practice.

Among the major challenges of the Teaching Internship is the possibility of having to conduct distance learning. Through the experience of DE with undergraduate students, the master students could conclude that this modality of education requires preparation and study, since the teacher/tutor has the task of conducting the teaching-learning process, identifying the difficulties, and helping to increase the student's range of knowledge.

This study had as a limitation the fact of reporting the experience of the Teaching Internship in only one approach, which was the DE. New reports of teaching in the classroom and in the practical aspect should be performed, thus integrating these three approaches and extracting the positive and negative points of the experiences, as a way of reviewing what can be improved, aiming at a greater learning for the undergraduate student and a greater professional growth for master student.

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**Mailing address:**

Rebeca Coelho de Moura Angelim  
Street Arnóbio Marquês, nº 310 – Santo Amaro  
ZIP CODE: 50100-130 – Recife/PE - Brazil

**E-mail:** [rebecaangelim@hotmail.com](mailto:rebecaangelim@hotmail.com)