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Perceptions on culture, health and religiosity in senzala museum

Percepciones sobre cultura, salud y religiosidad en el museo de senzala

Percepções sobre cultura, saúde e religiosidade em museu senzala

ABSTRACT

Objective: to report the experience of visiting a Senzala Museum, conducted by master's students in nursing, as part of the Theory of Nursing Knowledge course, provided by the Academic Master's Program at the University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony. Method: Method: a qualitative, descriptive, experience report type study on the realization of an extramural seminar at the university in April 2019. Participants were 18 students and two teachers. The data were collected through the qualitative view of the authors through a field diary, in order to address cultural, religious and health aspects present in the said Museum. Results: the seminar provided in-depth knowledge about the history of the Museum and proposed a critical visual narrative, raising questions about the local, cultural, religious and health aspects of African peoples. Conclusion: it is relevant that historical heritage can be used by students and teachers as an environment for learning and recovering facts and real milestones of the Brazilian history.

DESCRIPTORS: Education; Health; Nursing; Religion; Culture.

RESUMEN

RESUMEN

Objetivo: informar sobre la experiencia de la visita a un Museo Senzala, efectuada por estudiantes de maestría en enfermería, como parte de la asignatura Teoría del Conocimiento y Enfermería, del Máster Académico de la Universidad de Integración Internacional de la Lusofonía Afrobrasileña. Método: estudio cualitativo, descriptivo, tipo relato de experiencia sobre la realización de un seminario extramuros en la universidad en abril de 2019. Los participantes fueron 18 estudiantes y dos docentes. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de la mirada cualitativa de los autores a través de un diario de campo, con el fin de abordar aspectos culturales, religiosos y de salud presentes en dicho Museo. Resultados: el seminario proporcionó un conocimiento profundo sobre la historia del Museo y propuso una narrativa visual crítica, planteando interrogantes sobre los aspectos locales, culturales, religiosos y de salud de los pueblos africanos. Conclusión: es relevante que los patrimonios históricos puedan ser utilizados por alumnos y maestros como entornos de aprendizaje y rescate de hechos e hitos reales de la historia brasileña.

DESCRIPTORES: Educación; Salud; Enfermería; Religión; Cultura.

RESUMO

Objetivo: relatar a experiência de visita a um Museu Senzala, conduzida por mestrandos em enfermagem, como parte da disciplina Teoria do Conhecimento e Enfermagem, do Mestrado Acadêmico da Universidade da Integração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira. Método: estudo qualitativo, descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência, sobre a realização de seminário extramuros da universidade em abril de 2019. Os participantes foram 18 discentes e duas docentes. Os dados foram coletados por meio do olhar qualitativo dos autores através de diário de campo, a fim de abordar aspectos culturais, religiosos e saúde presentes no referido Museu. Resultados: o seminário proporcionou conhecimento aprofundados sobre a história do Museu e propor uma narrativa visual crítica, com levantamento de questionamentos sobre a história local, cultural, aspectos religiosos e saúde dos povos africanos. Conclusão: é relevante que patrimônios históricos possam ser utilizados por discentes e docentes como ambiente de aprendizagem e resgate de fatos e marcos reais da história brasileira.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Educação; Saúde; Enfermagem; Religião; Cultura.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching-learning strategies in academic master's courses must go beyond traditional methodology and use active methodologies, with an emphasis on problem situations, teaching with research, clinical case studies, group acting and learning, dialogued and participatory classes, team learning, brain storm dynamics with teaching technologies and field seminars.^{1,2}

Active methodologies enable transformations in higher education, in order to motivate the master's students to leave the traditional method of learning and collaborate with the development of a critical view that helps in the exercise of their profession.

Museums are places that have material and immaterial heritage; and therefore, they have peculiar characteristics that can be used as a learning methodology, as they constitute one of the forms of narrative and learning of cultural history and can encourage students to consider the context of their prejudices instead of passively absorbing conventional representations.^{3,4}

These spaces make it possible for many facts and traces of remote times, through their conservation, to be experienced and appreciated by society and researchers, with permissiveness for new reflections on past facts.

Such places should be the object of study by students and university students, since museums are considered environments of epiphanies, of knowledge production, social and economic insertion, being not only a place of conservation but also a resignification of heritage.⁵

Thus, the emphasis on the multiple experiences and alternatives of black populations throughout our history, through cultural heritage and museum exhibitions, contributes to the dissemination of current knowledge, the result of recent academic research on the subject.⁶

The Senzala Negro Liberto Museum is located close to the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony - UNILAB. The university was founded in 2009 and is focused on African Portuguese Speaking Countries (PALOP - Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa).

The museum can be used as a teaching field, in view of its context of creation, through partnership with other African countries, as a way to develop economic, political and social growth among students, and thus form citizens capable of multiplying learning.^{7,8}

Thus, the present study aims to report the experience of visiting the Senzala Museum, conducted by master's students in nursing, as part of the discipline Theory of

Knowledge and Nursing, of the Academic Master's Degree at the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony.

METHOD

This is a qualitative, descriptive, experience report type study on the realization of an extramural seminar at the university, by students of the Academic Master's Degree in Nursing at the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony-UNILAB, as part of the Theory of Knowledge discipline and Nursing, in April 2019.

The setting for the extramural seminar was the Senzala Negro Liberto Museum, a historical heritage site in the municipality of Redenção, Ceará, Brazil. The museum started its activities in 2003 and is open to the public until today. It occupies the seat of an old farm that had a slave regime. At the side of the highway, on Avenida Abolição, at the entrance of the city. Currently, the museum receives visits from countrymen, university students, teachers and tourists.

The target population was represented by 20 students of the master's degree in nursing from UNILAB in the class (2019-2020). All students received the invitation in the classroom, in person, and through

virtual means, through the WhatsApp messaging application. The seminar was attended by 18 students and two PhDs in nursing, teachers of the Master's.

The proposal of the extramural seminar was a visit to the Negro Liberto Museum, in the morning, through a guided tour with professional expertise in local history and

the museum, with explanation of the places and constituents of the history for the students and teachers of the discipline.

In each place of the visit, events related to the historical context, the way of life of the slaves and their owners, ways of working and customs related to spirituality were discussed.

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Thus, the study presents the qualitative view of the authors, in order to address cultural, religious and health aspects present in the said Museum, with a description of the most relevant aspects, which emerged from the experience of the authors and participants when they came into contact with the place visited, using as a demonstration of the theme proposed for the seminar, which dealt with the characterization of religious and nursing knowledge, about the constituent countries of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP - Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa).

The study did not require approval from the Ethics and Research Committee. All scientific productions used in the research were duly cited and referenced, with respect to copyright.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The visit lasted four hours, which passed through the mill, big house, slave quarters, cane fields and store of products obtained from cachaça. Through the guided tour it was possible to get to know more deeply about the history of the Museum and the slave regime of the time and to propose a critical visual narrative, raising questions about the local history.

Through this experience it was possible to identify which subjective experiences of the participants were confronted with museum exhibitions and to discuss, for example, historical issues, such as the granting, on March 25th, 1883, of freedom to all black captives, five years before the Golden Law by Princess Isabel.

Figure 1. Entrance to the Senzala Negro Liberto Museum



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAsBOIY2mEO>

Figure 2. Casa Grande



Source: <https://cearapraias.com.br/redencao-ecoturismo-com-lazer-e-cultura/>

Figure 3. Historical release document



Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

Figure 4. Historical collection of the Museum



Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

The local documents of liberation present in the Museum were analyzed by the participants of the guided tour and discussed the real motivation for the liberation by

the participants: “Kindness?” or “Political-monetary interest?”

Thus, it is clear that museums are places that incite the critical-reflective thinking of

those who visit them, making them raise questions about the past and have access, through material and immaterial heritage, to reflections on the reality experienced at the time and its political situation.

A museum is an educational space and a non-formal environment that can provide personal narratives, because, in addition to activating memories, it can provoke us to produce subjectivities that interfere in the game between imagination and understanding.⁹ The process of formation of the human being goes far beyond the university or school space. Learning can be achieved in interpersonal relationships and in concrete and meaningful experiences developed not by formal/traditional education scenarios, but also in other environments. Therefore, it is necessary to extrapolate the walls of the school/university and allow students multiple experiences.¹⁰

Many feelings were provoked in the visit to the big house, patrimonial objects of the home, torture artifacts, pictures and paintings, awakened new meanings in the construction of knowledge. Many participants touched objects of torture and presented a facial expression of sadness when they saw the way that many artifacts were used, as a source of physical martyrdom, as shown in figures 5 and 6.

In the meantime, it is possible to identify that the historicity of the human condition requires that the practices of power and domination be renewed. The so-called legacies of past horrors: slavery, colonialism or holocaust, are only possible because of this renewal, which only occurs in the present. Thus, even in relation to the past, the struggles of the present are necessary so that the past does not repeat itself.¹¹

The museum's slave quarters have a special characteristic that sets it apart from the others in the Brazilian scenario, as it is built underground and holds memories of the 18th century that portray the moment lived in the country at the time of the slave and master of plantation binomial. It was possible to perceive the precarious conditions that the slaves experienced in that dark place, without light, ventilation and with a maze-like structure. The place has no

Figure 5. Object of torture (Vira-mundo)



Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

Figure 6. Object of torture (Handcuffs / Gargalheira)



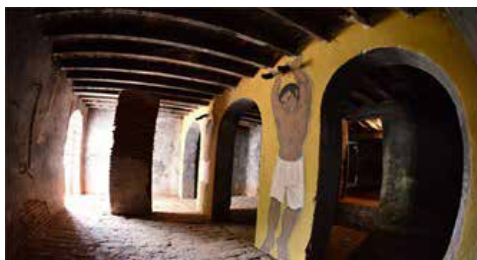
Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

Figure 7. Senzala



Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

Figure 8. Senzala



Source: <http://www.rodandopeloceara.com.br/2015/11/museu-senzala-negro-liberto-redencao.html>

electricity, and because it is underground, there is also no ventilation, as shown in figures 7 and 8.

Some participants gave up on continuing to visit the interior of the slave quarters for various reasons: excessive heat, low light and ventilation, a feeling of being trapped by the shape of the maze and the number of bats, which can reach more than three thousand at certain times of the year.

According to this scenario, it is emphasized that the unfortunate legacy of slavery reappears as a historical trauma to be overcome and serves as a basis for requests for reparations.¹² Such feeling reinforces the importance of extra-living moments, which enable real experiences that awaken new ways of thinking and acting.

In one of the slave quarters galleries that were intended for slaves to express worship to deities, there was a critical discussion about religious entities, known as orixás, in which it was possible to understand that African slaves believed that the Orixás spirits were their African ancestors who were deified, and that such Orixás also represent their entities in the health-disease process. However, there is still a mistaken notion of cultural practices of African origin, known pejoratively as macumba.¹³

In addition to the Orixá religiosity, other religions of African origin were discussed, such as Candomblé and Umbanda. In this way, as Catholicism was the predominant religion in Brazil, African slaves were forced to disguise their Orixás in Catholic saints, whom they worshiped only apparently, when their real intention of worship was directed to their African ancestors. According to a consulted study¹⁴ the Negro did not mix the Catholic saint with the African orisha.

It is clear that despite being imprisoned, sold and transported to other continents, enslaved blacks did not give up their divinities and their views of the world. It is even impossible to imagine them with a receptive and passive posture of the cultural and religious standards of those who had subjugated them. Thus, within the brotherhoods of blacks and their descendants, a process of Africanization of the Catholic religion,

a black or African Catholicism, emerged.¹⁵

The approach with the religions of African origin within the Museum enabled a better understanding of African religious culture, with a breakdown of prejudices, which undeniably still exists in our society, in relation to Umbanda, Candomblé and belief in the Orixás and ancestral spirits. The experience allowed reflections on the practice of nursing care, since it aroused sensitivity to understand and respect the faith of the other.

Knowing religions is fundamental in the process of building health professionals trained to provide care that involves the integrity of being, because although nurses do not believe or do not identify with other religions than their own, they must respect, stimulate faith and if possible, talk a little with the patient about the patient's religion. People convinced in their religions believe in divine protection and recognize religiosity as a support and comfort as a patient and their family, which helps in coping with illness.¹⁶

Admitting as true other knowledge and its forms of transmission, expressions, practices, representations and techniques, through intangible heritage, is an advance that leads to recognizing the past and present existence of different groups as producers of culture, memory and as agents of their stories.⁶

In such a way, through the visit it was possible to rethink values and conduct, in addition to the ability to respect and seek to understand through a broader view the cultural and religious context of the other, as well as review purely technical health practices for care that works faith together with medicine to achieve the physical and spiritual well-being of clients. It is essential to understand the spiritual dimension, to identify the spiritual needs of patients and humanize care.¹⁷

During the visit, many issues of the health-disease process of African slaves were listed, and it became evident that despite the investment represented by each slave, not all owners took care of them properly.

This is an issue that deserves attention: the contradiction of taking care of a 'thing'

that is not a 'subject', as the slave was seen as a commodity, although the health of the slaves is a precondition in fixing their value, even without opportunity to any health treatment. The issue of the health of the slaves was neglected and neglected by the landowners and masters, since it was a commodity, in a dynamic in which interpersonal relationships were not established, but relationships between subject and object.¹⁸

Through the extramural seminar, the importance of the Senzala Museum was perceived, not only as a historical heritage, but because it keeps history alive. The Senzala Museum preserves in its structure traces and objects from the daily lives of the slaves that enabled the construction of a new vision on culture, religiosity and health of the African peoples through the proposed exhibitions.

By assuming an educational role, the museum instigated a break with the logic of the traditional class, in order to experience the visualization of the past, through artifacts preserved over time and to propose narratives that problematized the historical plot and led to the production of critical and reflective knowledge.

The lived experience portrayed the relevance of new spaces as a teaching and learning methodology, promoting in students, new reflections and critical thoughts through the observation of extramural phenomena at the University.

CONCLUSION

The extramural seminar provided opportunities for master students and teachers, in terms of being the first city to abolish slaves in Brazil; clarity as to how human beings were treated and enslaved, and the present influence of cultural and religious traditions brought by slaves that have not been lost over time.

It was noticeable that the various religions practiced in Brazil, have direct influence from the African peoples who were brought to the country as a means of slave labor, and who practiced their traditions and cults in a hidden and silent way. Religions such as Umbanda and Candomblé,

widely practiced in Brazil, originate from African countries, and even today their traditions are maintained.

It is important to highlight that, even after so many years, the Negro Liberto Mu-

seum preserves the place and objects that were used by the planters to apply punishment and torture to slaves, and especially when we talk about preserving the memory of the African peoples who passed through

here. It is important that this heritage is always open to students and the population in general, because only then, it is possible to retrieve facts and real milestones in Brazilian history. ■

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