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Distance education through remote teaching during COVID-19 in an academic nursing masters: experience report

La educación a distancia a través de la enseñanza remota durante el COVID-19 en un máster académico de enfermería: relato de experiencia

Educação a distância através do ensino remoto durante a COVID-19 em um mestrado acadêmico em enfermagem: relato de experiência

ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe distance learning with the use of educational technologies in the academic master's degree in nursing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Method: descriptive study type of students' experience report about distance learning due to COVID-19. The study period took place from June to December 2020. The study was based on Paulo Freire's pedagogy, based on the principle of dialogicity, as an essential proposal for the construction of the teaching-learning process through distance learning. The teachers conducted the classes following a dialogical-pedagogical concept. Result: Distance Learning was challenging and the use of active technologies made it possible to continue the master's classes through the use of digital technologies and tools. Conclusion: until the strategy was consolidated, it was observed that the educational activities were satisfactory, as it made it possible to seek beyond the pedagogical and theoretical knowledge, the understanding of technological resources.

DESCRIPTORS: Education, distance; Education, nursing; Covid-19.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir el aprendizaje a distancia con el uso de tecnologías educativas en la maestría académica en enfermería durante la pandemia COVID-19. Método: tipo de estudio descriptivo del relato de experiencia de los estudiantes sobre el aprendizaje a distancia debido al COVID-19. El período de estudio se desarrolló de junio a diciembre de 2020. El estudio se basó en la pedagogía de Paulo Freire, basada en el principio de dialogicidad, como propuesta esencial para la construcción del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje a través de la educación a distancia. Los docentes realizaron las clases siguiendo un concepto dialógico-pedagógico. Resultado: El aprendizaje a distancia fue un desafío y el uso de tecnologías activas permitió continuar las clases de maestría mediante el uso de tecnologías y herramientas digitales. Conclusión: hasta que se consolidó la estrategia, se observó que las actividades educativas fueron satisfactorias, ya que permitió buscar más allá del conocimiento pedagógico y teórico, la comprensión de los recursos tecnológicos.

DESCRIPTORES: Educación a distancia; Educación en enfermería; Covid-19.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever o ensino a distância com o uso de tecnologias educacionais no mestrado acadêmico em enfermagem durante a pandemia da COVID-19. Método: estudo descritivo, tipo relato de experiência de discentes, acerca do ensino a distância devido a COVID-19. O período do estudo ocorreu entre os meses de junho a dezembro de 2020. O estudo foi fundamentado na pedagogia de Paulo Freire, baseado no princípio da dialogicidade, como proposta essencial para construção do processo ensino-aprendizagem por meio do ensino a distância. Os docentes conduziram as aulas seguindo uma concepção dialógica-pedagógica. Resultado: O ensino a distância foi desafiante e o uso de tecnologias ativas possibilitou continuidade das aulas do mestrado acadêmico em enfermagem por meio do uso de tecnologias e ferramentas digitais. Conclusão: até a estratégia se consolidar, observou-se que as atividades educativas foram satisfatórias, pois possibilitou buscar além do conhecimento pedagógico e teórico, o entendimento dos recursos tecnológicos.

DESCRITORES: Educação a distância; Educação em enfermagem; Covid-19.

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INTRODUCTION

The appearance of the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) installed a worldwide crisis, accompanied by a new way and pace of living, characterized by a context of psychological apprehensions, redefinition of relationships, confined families, social withdrawal and face-to-face work gave way to the remote, however, other professions, being essential, had to continue with their activities.¹

COVID-19 is transforming the reality of schools from early childhood to higher education on a large scale, with the inclusion of technological resources to maintain the teaching-learning process. Technology is the realization of processes based on everyday experience and research, for the development of organized and articulated knowledge and knowledge, therefore, it serves to generate a product to be socialized in order to make it science.²

In this way, the suspension of face-to-face classes in schools and colleges has become an inexorable, though drastic, measure since March 2020. Since then,

daycare centers, schools and universities have followed health guidelines in order to prevent the spread of contamination, considering that the school is an environment of natural contact. On the other hand, there is a consensus of the authorities that the school year could not be canceled and the adaptation by teachers and students emerged.³

In compliance with the recommendation of the Ministry of Education through Ordinance No. 343 of March 17th, 2020 and Provisional Measure No. 934, of April 1st, 2020, public and private educational institutions in the country suspended their curricular activities and were instructed to replace face-to-face classes with digital media, while the COVID-19 pandemic period lasts.^{4,5}

Distance learning is legalized in Brazil through Law No. 9,394 of December 20, 1996, which deals with the National Education Guidelines and Bases (LDB) and regulated by Decree no. 9,057 of 2017 that conceptualizes distance learning as an educational modality in which the teaching-learning activities are developed without the teacher and

student occupying the same physical and/or time space, effected by the intense use of isolated technologies and means of communication or combined, such as digital resources, printed material, teleconferencing systems and videoconferences.^{6,7} It is advisable to be carried out by a qualified professional in Virtual Learning Environments.⁸ In this context, Distance Learning emerges as an educational alternative authorized by the Ministry of Education (MEC) to replace face-to-face classes with digital tools during the coronavirus pandemic period.⁹

The Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA), since the first moment of the pandemic, has been concerned with following the guidelines of the health and educational surveillance agencies in the country and thus institutes Ordinance No. 190/2020-MR and Normative Instruction PROGEP No. 1/2020, as a way to prevent and fight the disease, suspending academic activities for 30 days, this period being extended according to the projections of the contamination rates by COVID-19. Subsequently, on May 18th, 2020, UFMA instituted re-

solution No. 1.999-CONSEPE, creating the Special Academic Calendar for Graduation, extending even further to Graduate Studies, due to the increase in the rate of contamination by the new Coronavirus.^{10,11}

Thus, this study sought to answer the following guiding question: how are students experiencing and experiencing remote teaching to achieve teaching learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?

In the midst of the challenges and uncertainties about teaching during the pandemic and attending to the core of knowledge, through the only viable measure to maintain the continuity of teaching, that is, the remote modality, this article aims to report the experience of students postgraduate studies at a public university in the northeast of the country based on online education activities carried out during the pandemic period of COVID-19.

METHOD

This is a descriptive study type of experience report, based on the experience of students in the first year of graduate studies at the master's level about the process of distance learning in remote mode during the pandemic of COVID 19. This study emerged from the perspective of reflecting on the challenges for learning, in addition to the frequent use of various digital teaching tools that students used to progress to an academic master's degree in nursing at a federal university in northeastern Brazil.

The survey of information is based on experiences lived and learned by master students in a Postgraduate Program in Nursing during the pandemic of COVID-19, between the months of June to December 2020.

The theoretical framework was based on Paulo Freire's pedagogy, based on the principle of dialogicity, as an essential proposal for the construction of the teaching-learning process through distance learning. The teachers conducted the classes following a dialogical-pedagogical

conception, which represents a concern about the content of the dialogue and refers to an organized and systematized revolution in teaching.¹²

RESULTS

Distance learning remotely was an alternative for returning to the academic master's degree in nursing during the pandemic. For this, teachers participated in online training offered by UFMA to make better use of the Google meet digital platform. Primarily, a remote meeting was held between the course coordinator and students, in order to place the proposal for consideration and voting. After debate, the suggestion was accepted by the majority and the schedule was formalized offering three mandatory subjects in the first semester, namely: Research Methodology, Philosophy, Health and Nursing and Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Care. In the second semester, five subjects were offered: Bioethics, Education and Care Practices, Qualitative Research Methodology, Health and Nursing in Primary Health Care and Seminar II.

The special academic period began on June 17, 2020 with the inaugural class chaired by professors in the discipline of Research Methodology. The teaching methodology was duly clarified. The link to access the virtual room was forwarded to the student's institutional email and the remote classes followed the same times and rules established in the traditional model, that is, the student should follow the classes in real time. To maintain the interaction of the face-to-face classes, the students were instructed to actively participate in the teaching process. For this, teachers used several teaching tools such as: films, individual and group activities and active teaching methodologies.

The platform used for our online meetings was Google Meet, a video conference call tool, which emerged from the separation of Hangouts chat and the video resource. It represents a specific

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application for conducting videoconferences with up to 250 people.

The two elements of knowledge - teachers and students - presented themselves in different ways, bringing their difficulties and expertise and in a mutual help they went one step at a time when having to use several tools, which for the vast majority was unknown, and yet, make the class participatory, dynamic, innovative and with a positive result. In their homes, those involved in the process, in front of a computer screen for an average of 4 hours of class, tried to assimilate the syllabus, associated with the need to handle various educational technologies in a timely manner.

Before the pandemic, the computer and the Datashow were the most used tools and to increase the dynamics of teaching, case studies, seminars, portfolios, dialogues, group discussions, among others, were used. Given the new context, the teaching process became more dynamic with the innovation of virtual methodologies, such as: Menti-meter, Google Docs, Socrative, Slido, Nearpod, Kahoot, Canva, Webnode, Powtoon, WideoApp, Podcast, Mind Maps, Padlet, Quizizz, Padlet, Verbal Group and Observation Group.

DISCUSSION

Distance learning in remote mode has led to the use of new technologies, media and digital tools and their innumerable variability of resources and strategies, as well as practices. The choice of the tool will depend on the management capacity and familiarity of the teacher in adopting such resources.¹³

Distance learning in remote mode was challenging, each class a task beyond the syllabus. The methodologies were gradually presented, such as construction of diagrams, mind maps, dynamics of reading complex texts and discussion in an online room and various digital tools.

Distance learning should be mediated by trained professionals and requires

Dynamism was a characteristic present, teachers were concerned not only with the content taught, but with the ability of the student to absorb and for less tiring classes. For some subjects, experienced teachers in specific content were invited, providing moments of intense discussions.

high quality of the content transferred. Teachers must have experience and mastery of the content of the subjects they taught, providing quality and fluidity in virtual classes, ensuring learning.⁷

The remote teaching environment should be built in a way that favors student-teacher interaction, since the use of low-dynamic strategies tends to favor vertical teaching methodologies, banking design, where the teacher plays a leading role in the teaching-learning process.¹⁴

Dynamism was a characteristic present, teachers were concerned not only with the content taught, but with the ability of the student to absorb and for less tiring classes. For some subjects, experienced teachers in specific content were invited, providing moments of intense discussions. It is interesting to note that if the classes were in person, this fact, due to geographical conditions, would be unlikely to occur.

We know that socioeconomic inequalities would be an obstacle to the continuity of the teaching-learning process in the remote modality. Appenzeller, after mapping the needs of students to accompany remote education, concluded that to guarantee the continuity of the process, it is necessary, initially, to guarantee equity of access.¹⁵

According to the report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the development of educational strategies against COVID-19 culminated in unequal educational actions, mainly due to an existing discrepancy regarding access to the internet, devices and environments suitable for learning 16, it is important to consider individual and collective issues, as they directly interfere with educational practice.

To reduce the digital inequalities that hinder the development of remote education, UFMA made available the aid of digital inclusion through the distribution of chips and tablets to students enrolled in graduate programs, in order to serve students who did not have equipment and/or internet access data

package to monitor and develop remote academic activities.

CONCLUSION

Social distancing became a general rule throughout the world and the practices of daily life suffered an abrupt rupture, revealing to us a reality never experienced by our generation. On the other hand, it showed an educational system rooted in practices, sometimes outdated, based basically on a single way of making it happen.

We walk every day with hesitation, anxiety and doubts in view of the scenario that remains uncertain about when classes will resume as we

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previously knew it. But from another perspective, a wide range of opportunities were discovered through the approach to active technologies of teaching and learning. The skills and competences with the technological tools enabled innovation in the educational and organizational arrangements of the institutions, due to the fast decision-making requirement for the entire academic community.

For the students, this “new normal” allowed a challenge to understand the new learning strategies through the active methodologies and from this point of view the improvement has become continuous, since these tools are constantly reformulated and updated. ■

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