Pedagogical coordination in technical professional education in nursing: implications for the brazilian unified health system

Coordenación pedagógica na educação profissional técnica em enfermagem: implicações para o sistema único de saúde

Coordinación pedagógica en la formación técnica profesional en enfermería: implicaciones para el sistema único de salud de brasil

ABSTRACT

Objective: To reflect on the implications of pedagogical coordination in technical professional education in nursing from the experience in an undergraduate course on the pedagogical training of nurses in line with the Brazilian Unified Health System, better known by the acronym SUS. Method: Theoretical reflection based on a reflective portfolio to construct knowledge about the pedagogical practice of the nurse/internship supervisor. Results: The reflection produced by the analysis of the portfolio in relation to the pedagogical coordination for the training of nursing technicians in the context of the SUS allowed the reports to be grouped into four themes: Pedagogical coordination in the logic of health training; The roles and attributions of the pedagogical coordinator; The challenges faced by the pedagogical coordinator; and Purposes of pedagogical coordination. Conclusion: Pedagogical coordination in technical professional education in nursing is present in broad actions that influence the students’ teaching-learning processes, health care and the involved agents.

Descriptors: Nursing professors; Unified Health System; Education, Professional.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Refletir sobre as implicações da coordenação pedagógica na educação profissional técnica em enfermagem a partir de vivência em uma disciplina de graduação sobre a formação pedagógica do enfermeiro no contexto do SUS. Método: Reflexão teórica baseada em portfólio reflexivo para construção do conhecimento sobre a prática pedagógica do enfermeiro/supervisor de estágio. Resultados: A reflexão produzida pela análise do portfólio em relação à coordenação pedagógica para a formação de técnicos de enfermagem no contexto do SUS permitiu que os relatos fossem agrupados em quatro temas: A coordenação pedagógica na lógica da formação em saúde; Os papéis e atribuições do coordenador pedagógico; Os desafios enfrentados pelo coordenador pedagógico; e Finalidades da coordenação pedagógica. Conclusão: A coordenação pedagógica na educação profissional técnica em Enfermagem está presente em ações amplas que influenciam processos de ensino-aprendizagem dos estudantes, a assistência em saúde e os agentes envolvidos.

Descritores: Docentes de Enfermagem; Sistema Único de Saúde; Educação Profissionalizante.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Reflexionar sobre las implicaciones de la coordinación pedagógica en la formación técnica profesional en enfermería en un curso de graduación sobre la formación pedagógica del enfermero en consonancia con el Sistema Único de Salud de Brasil (SUS). Método: Reflexión teórica de un portafolio reflexivo para la construcción de conocimientos sobre la práctica pedagógica del enfermero/supervisor en prácticas. Resultados: La reflexión que produce el análisis del portafolio en relación con la coordinación pedagógica para la formación de técnicos de enfermería en el contexto del SUS permitió agrupar los informes en cuatro temas: Definición de la coordinación pedagógica; Roles y atribuciones del coordinador pedagógico; Los retos a los que se enfrenta el coordinador pedagógico; y Objetivos de la coordinación pedagógica. Conclusión: La coordinación pedagógica en las enseñanzas técnicas profesionales de Enfermería está presente en amplias actuaciones que influyen en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de los alumnos, la atención sanitaria y los agentes implicados.

Descripciones: Docentes de Enfermería; Sistema Único de Salud; Educación Profesionalizante.

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INTRODUCTION

The training of the licensed nurse, that is, the one who exercises pedagogical activities in technical professional education (EPTNM, as per its Portuguese acronym) in nursing – training of assistants and technicians, involves specific and pedagogical knowledge, which should be articulated to the teaching practice, and that is directly related to ethics, to the social and professional commitment of nursing care with the guiding principles of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS, as per its Portuguese acronym)(11).

As for the specific action in the field of education, the licensed nurse can act in elementary and high schools, exercising health promotion activities; and high schools in nursing for the training of nursing assistants or technicians, as a teacher or manager(5). The field of nursing practice in technical schools has been considered extremely relevant, because middle-level workers represent more than 80% of the nursing professional category(9), which implies directly in the health care offered in Brazil.

It is worth mentioning that the pedagogical training of nurses has always been defended by the category(11), which was given greater meaning to Nursing through inductive public policies(8,9), and the search for the quality of health services, with a view to enabling the preparation and qualification of workers in the area(8-10).

Given the relevance of training nurse teachers to work in EPTNM teaching, the Bachelor and Licentiate courses of Science in Nursing course at the Ribeirão Preto School of Nursing – University of São Paulo has proposed to train licensed nurses to work as teachers in primary education and EPTNM nursing schools, in accordance with the health and education legislation in force in Brazil(7).

To this end, the undergraduate course makes pedagogical training courses available to nurses from the first to the tenth semester of the course, many of which are based on the articulation of experiences in reality with theoretical discussions in the classroom, by means of problematizing methodology(7).

One of the disciplines that make up the pedagogical training is called Professional Education in Nursing II, which is planned so that the student has real-life experiences of supervising internship activities in the EPTNM by nurse teachers, which are reflected upon through discussions, findings and questions in small groups of undergraduate students, involving legal, pedagogical, and relational aspects specific to the training in the field of education(7).

In this context, the objective of this study was to reflect on the implications of pedagogical coordination in professional technical education in nursing, based on the experience of an undergraduate course on the pedagogical training of nurses in line with the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS).

METHOD

This is a theoretical reflection on the implications of pedagogical coordination in the practice of EPTNM teachers in nursing. It is the result of a process of knowledge construction about pedagogical practice in the professional education of the nurse/internship supervisor that originated from an experience in a subject that uses the reflective portfolio as a resource for the learning of baccalaureate and undergraduate nursing students.

The reflective portfolio is understood as the elaboration of a text written by the student, where he/she is able to identify and reflect on personal and professional experiences, empirical or scientific evidence that allows him/her to apply scientific and systematized knowledge to construct his/her own cognitive knowledge, skills and attitudes(8-9), thereby favoring the articulation between theory and practice for the integration and construction of solid knowledge(10).

Accordingly, this reflection is based on a search report presented in the reflective portfolio, which addressed issues related to the pedagogical coordination of EPTNM courses, which sought to discuss the following question: How can pedagogical coordination influence teaching practice aiming at training for the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS)?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to support the answer to the learning question, the text was organized in themes, as follows: a) Pedagogical coordination in the logic of health training, b) The roles and attributions of the pedagogical coordinator, c) The challenges faced by the pedagogical coordinator and d) Purposes of pedagogical coordination.

Pedagogical coordination in the logic of health training

When working out the meaning of coordination and coordinating, we understood that, coordination is linked to “the action or effect of coordinating; arrangement or classification in the same order, class, division or category”, while coordinating is established as “organizing and directing activities of those who work toward a common goal; managing, directing, guiding; combining in relationship or harmonious action”(10).

In this sense, pedagogical management in education is an area that encompasses pedagogical coordination and educational guidance activities(10). When addressing these actions, it is fundamental that the members of the educational management have the skills to perform their functions, and teachers stand out in this regard because of their qualifications in the field of Pedagogy(11).

Together with this, the pedagogical management assumes several roles such as the coordination of teaching; the follow-up of the teaching-learning process, both for students and teachers; advising, support and evaluation of the pedagogical activities according to the Political Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the institution, as well
as reinforcing the pedagogical-didactic support among school-teachers-students-family members[14]. Therefore, the management must constantly seek the improvement of the professionals present in its team, in political, scientific and pedagogical aspects, in search of the continuous achievement of a quality education, with good outcomes[12].

The professionals who assume the pedagogical coordination of technical professional education courses in Nursing are required to have a clear position and commitment about the management model and the pedagogical proposal that will be developed while governing the course/school; to that end, it is necessary to understand the political-administrative organization adopted by the educational institution[12] and how such organization relates to the country’s health needs.

It is important to understand how the management/coordination of an educational institution may or may not influence the student’s training for the SUS. The Brazilian health system, with a unique health model, and considering that it is no longer limited to assistance only, it becomes evident that the articulation between theory and practice is essential for the development of a more effective care[13], encompassing the relationship among professionals, EPTNM students in nursing and the teaching and health institutions[12].

It is up to the pedagogical coordination to act in a coherent way among the management model, the pedagogical proposal and the health policy in force in the country. In fact, management is one of the mediations to achieve the school’s goals. Management is a mediating activity, which is developed to achieve certain goals. That is why it is unacceptable that the manager of an educational institution assumes the function of “liquidator” of the school community or of the Health institution. The importance of training the managers of the School for Health, in political-managerial and pedagogical terms, stems from this assumption[12].

Amid this scenario, the EPTNM still has as an obstacle the overcoming of the classic technicist training, molded in the training of professionals restricted to the fulfillment of tasks. This view is still a challenge, especially for the coordination of the institution, which must seek to establish the construction of a teaching-learning process that is flexible and contextualized to the reality of health in the country[12], that is, training for the SUS.

The EPTNM should seek to structure a teaching-learning process that allows the student to articulate theory with practice, overcoming fragmentation, but also without losing sight of the specificity of the different types of care in the search for citizen training and at the service of the Brazilian people[12].

The roles and attributions of the pedagogical coordinator

In 2001, the Regional Council of Nursing of SP (COREN-SP, as per its Portuguese acronym) defined some points related to the role of coordinators of EPTNM nursing courses, aiming to delimit requirements and responsibilities considered plausible to these professionals for structuring teaching[14]. The coordinator must be a nursing professional registered in the Professional Class Council, with a degree and/or training and specialization course in the area of education, as well as having professional experience in practice and teaching, being responsible for the legal, knowledge, administrative, pedagogical and ethical duties[14].

Therefore, the coordinator must have knowledge about legislation involving nursing and education; developing the school plan, courses, curricular grid, schedules, calendars, profile and coordination of the teaching staff; distributing students to the internship field; selecting internship fields; contacting and establishing agreements with health institutions to carry out practical activities; evaluating and monitoring nursing professionals according to their professional performance; supervising the progress of the school’s activity records; and holding periodic meetings with students and teachers[14].

In addition, the tasks of this professional include giving opinions on administrative issues of the institution and suggesting proposals for maintaining the quality of the course; mediating relations between teachers and students in issues involving school administration; constructing and composing the professional team that works in the institution to promote the PPP; facilitating the participation of students and teachers in extracurricular activities; monitoring the performance of students and teachers; participating in student evaluation meetings; and, finally, acting and demanding from nurses teachers of the institution respect for the Code of Ethics of Nursing Professionals, thereby maintaining liaison with COREN for disclosure of possible irregularities[14].

In this sense, the coordination of the institution should work in order to perform readings of daily life and, consequently, articulate the teaching practice with the students’ education[14-15]. A school in which the coordination does not focus only on administrative functions enables a reflective and ethical education, with technical and scientific basis, in addition to being committed to health[14].

It is worth underlining that the coordination must walk in accordance with the propositions of its PPP, negotiating, dialoguing and making exchanges that enable improvements in the assistance provided by students to patients, families and communities, responsibility and dedication in professional training[14], based on the insight into the different health scenarios for the better structuring of the SUS[12].

Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the preparation of the professionals that make up the coordination of a course. It is essential that efforts be focused on the teaching and learning process of students, where each
professional knows his/her function and the importance in the training of future professionals. Nevertheless, a study portrayed the difficulties in recruiting and retaining managers in the school environment[16].

The challenges faced by the pedagogical coordinator

The nurse teacher who works in EPTNM in the field of nursing has suffered several challenges to develop his/her work. Adequate pedagogical training for nurse teachers, including issues specific to the profession, is essential for the proposition of teaching activities in which the student is able to develop critical thinking and theoretical-practical articulation in his/her teaching, thereby going beyond biological and technical aspects[16].

These issues converge directly with the training process of the EPTNM teacher, especially in the discussion about the teaching knowledge related to the process of professionalizing teaching[17]. The difficulties within this conjuncture are evidenced by the complications in the actions for the regulation of teaching in professional education, so that the Grounded Orientation nº 052/2017 of the Regional Council of Nursing of São Paulo, identified the increase of teaching nurses with gaps in pedagogical training, active in technical nursing courses, resulting in negative implications for the development of quality teaching[18].

The training for teaching in the EPTNM is marked by the need for individuals who value the reflective process, with guidance in their pedagogical work, from the recognition of their limitations in the context of multiple dimensions of the EPTNM, thereby respecting the affective, relational, organizational and social issues of pedagogical performance, as well as the teaching practice for the training of nursing professionals who are ethical and responsible for the care to be performed[17].

Being an EPTNM teacher in nursing demands that nurses transit between two distinct areas of knowledge (nursing and education), requiring the ability to articulate their ability to educate to the specific knowledge of educational practice, which is, most of the time, thereby devoid of structuring training as a legally established or even socially known or recognized profession[17].

The resolution of CNE/CEB nº 6, dated September 20, 2012[19] establishes the National Curricular Guidelines for EPTNM and reaffirms the role of teaching in technical course scenarios, being necessary the training of these professionals in undergraduate courses, licentiate or in other modes that are agreed with the legislation and other standards proposed by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC, as per its Portuguese acronym) and its councils[19].

Therefore, the teaching role in Brazilian EPTNM is reflected in the direct interaction with young people and adults, in a relationship with the world of work, full of difficulties and challenges that become more complex every day[17].

The demand for professional training of qualified nursing assistants and technicians for the SUS is fundamental for the development of the teacher’s work in this scenario. It is worth underlining that, in these issues, the existence of internal and external factors to the educational process in nursing should be contemplated; the world of work can establish significant pressures for educational training and qualification that respond to the needs imposed by the reality of health care in our country[17].

In this context, the difficulty for teachers to recognize themselves as professionals in the field of education also stands out, making the training process of these individuals more arduous, which is reinforced by the few studies on the topic of nursing licentiate[11]. This gap in relation to research on the training process of EPTNM teachers influences the understanding and interpretation of the teacher’s work in EPTNM institutions, since knowledge about the performance of this professional in this field is fragile and developed discontinuously[17].

Reflecting on the collaborative work between pedagogical management and teachers of the EPTNM should be the key point of the coordinative action, in search of a deep understanding by managers about the most effective teaching practices in the classroom moment[18], or even about which knowledge teachers exercise their work in the educational institution[15]. For these reasons, the professionals who perform their actions in this environment need knowledge in order to develop skills and competencies in challenging and productive work contexts[15], and a continuous dialogue between coordination and teaching is necessary for the proposition of new possibilities of doing teaching.

Purposes of pedagogical coordination

The training of middle-level nursing professionals represents a significant portion of the labor force that will work in the SUS. Therefore, the training of students, based on the guiding principles of the SUS, as well as the Law of Directives and Bases of Education (LDB, as per its Portuguese acronym) and the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN, as per its Portuguese acronym)[16], requires a closer look that must be performed by the educational institution and, consequently, its management and employees.

The search for the formation of future professionals who are ethical, critical, reflective and committed to the users of the Brazilian Unified Health System, in some cases, can be interrupted by closed curricular structures, pedagogically unprepared teachers, teaching methodologies and pedagogical materials that do not provide spaces for reflection, discussion and creation[16]. Some of these points cited can be better analyzed by the coordination in order to improve the quality of the provided education.

The educational coordination must work to expand its references for the training of
professionals in the context of the SUS, in ethical, humanized and integral care for the population\(^\text{(14)}\). In addition, it is necessary that the coordination clearly understands what it wants in its learning processes considering the experienced advances and social contexts\(^\text{(14)}\).

Another important point for the coordination is related to the role of leadership, problem mediation, search for solutions, analysis and discussions about aspects involving the educational institution, especially about the PPP of the course\(^\text{(14)}\), which must be kept up to date and in line with the political-pedagogical proposals of the course in question.

The coordinator plays a fundamental role in stimulating the participation of the teaching staff, understanding that the teacher must take on the role of the protagonist of his/her actions, in an active way, not limiting him/herself only to participation in pedagogical meetings\(^\text{(11)}\).

The recognition of teaching, along with the supervision of the teacher’s skills and competencies in the process of educating the institution’s students, is also a role that the coordinator should play out\(^\text{(14, 20)}\). The analysis of the reality in which the course is inserted, the students’ daily life, the teaching trajectory and the search for problematization of real situations and experiences within education should come from the coordination, since the design of the activities proposed for the triad teachers-students-community takes place within the educational environment\(^\text{(14)}\).

The coordinator should provide space for the entire school community, especially understanding that they are vital to the educational process. Therefore, it is up to the coordinator to invest in his/her initial and continued professional training, in the search for knowledge that allows pedagogical bases for his/her performance, in a critical and reflexive way, in the scopes of education and health\(^\text{(14, 20)}\).

Even though in several cases the course coordinator has his/her profession associated with bureaucratic issues only, it is essential that he/she be understood in a broader way, as an active agent in the work developed in EPTNM related to nursing, aiming at overcoming daily difficulties, refining the teaching work of the coordinators, and also contributing to the teaching that is constructed\(^\text{(20)}\).

The educative and management dimensions come into play, and the coordinator must assume a posture that highlights his/her vision of mobilizing the team for the development of work aimed at constructing daily school processes involving quality health with a focus on the SUS.

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The experiences in the subject of the undergraduate course enabled the construction of knowledge, driven by problematization. By actively working with solid theoretical bases, it was possible to approach the theme of teaching coordination in EPTNM related to nursing, thereby enabling the development of coherent reflections on what was observed in reality, linking them to theoretical issues.

Experiencing the training of bachelor and licensed nurses using active methodologies, such as problematization and the reflective portfolio, allows students to glimpse, experience, discuss and understand what the role of the licensed nurse is in EPTNM in the field of nursing, in light of the SUS.

The complex task of reflection, based on the problematization of practical activities, theory, classroom discussions and portfolio construction enabled the development of coherent reflections about pedagogical coordination in nursing technical courses in face of the observed reality, thereby articulating them with theoretical questions about how to face them. Accordingly, it was possible to realize that pedagogical coordination in EPTNM related to nursing requires ethical positioning and clear political commitment to the management model, PPP and health needs of the country. It is up to the pedagogical coordinator to walk according to the PPP propositions, by understanding and articulating the political, educational and social context involved in the development of a course.

Despite the challenges faced by the pedagogical coordinator in the sphere of EPTNM, in terms of also being recognized as an educational professional, he/she must fulfill the purpose of his/her position, that is, the training of future ethical, critical, reflective nursing professionals committed to the users of the Brazilian Unified Health System. Finally, educational coordination in nursing goes far beyond administrative issues related to caring for the organization and maintenance of school infrastructure and the provision of human resources, since it directly interferes in student learning and, consequently, in the care that will be provided to the patient, family or community.

Accordingly, this reflection contributes to an expanded view of the implications and actions of pedagogical coordination in EPTNM related to Nursing, since it is an initial and innovative approach to the theme, especially because it is linked to a search developed in a subject of a training course for licensed nurses. It also highlights a work that goes beyond administrative functions and demonstrates the relevance of the coordinator in the training processes of future professionals committed to the SUS, as well as to the care of the Brazilian population. Finally, this reflection provides room for new discussions about the role of pedagogical coordination in EPTNM in the field of nursing and denotes gaps in applied studies that allow for a deeper understanding of the theme.

The development of this reflection does not exhaust the theme, since research designs with high methodological rigor were not applied. Therefore, these findings present, primarily, data related to national studies on the theme, and searches in international databases were not conducted, which
may imply different understandings about pedagogical coordination in EPTNM in the field of nursing.

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