

## Academic monitoring in the perception of nursing students

Monitoria acadêmica na percepção dos estudantes de enfermagem

Tutoría académica desde el punto de vista de los estudiantes de enfermería

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**Abstract: Aim:** to know the perception of nursing students regarding the academic monitoring practice performed in a laboratory of nursing techniques simulation. **Method:** qualitative study, developed with 18 monitors, between November and December 2017, through semi-structured interview. The data was analyzed by the technique of content analysis. **Results:** the participants indicated monitoring as an awakening for teaching, exchange of experience among them, improvement in interpersonal relations, moment to remember what they had learned in theory, encouragement to study and strengthening of the student and teacher relationship. **Final considerations:** monitoring has been an important tool for the development of theoretical-practical skills, which are important for personal and professional growth.

**Descriptors:** Education, nursing; Students, nursing; Learning

**Resumo: Objetivo:** conhecer a percepção dos estudantes de enfermagem em relação à prática da monitoria acadêmica realizada em um laboratório de simulação de técnicas de enfermagem. **Método:** estudo qualitativo desenvolvido com 18 monitores, entre os meses de novembro e dezembro de 2017, por meio de entrevista semiestruturada. Os dados foram analisados pela técnica de análise de conteúdo. **Resultados:** a monitoria foi indicada pelos participantes como um despertar para docência, troca de experiência entre os mesmos, melhora nas relações

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interpessoais, momento de relembrar o que aprendeu na teoria, incentivo para estudar e fortalecimento da relação discente e docente. **Considerações finais:** a monitoria se constituiu como uma ferramenta importante para o desenvolvimento de habilidades teórico-práticas, que são importantes para o crescimento pessoal e profissional.

**Descritores:** Ensino de enfermagem; Estudantes de enfermagem; Aprendizagem

**Abstract: Aim:** to determine the perception of nursing students regarding the academic monitoring practice performed in a laboratory of nursing techniques simulation. **Method:** qualitative study, developed with 18 monitors, between November and December 2017, through semi-structured interview. The data were analyzed by content analysis technique. **Results:** the participants indicated monitoring as an awakening regarding teaching, exchange of experience among them, improvement in interpersonal relations, a moment to remember what they had learned in theory, encouragement to study and strengthening of the student and teacher relationship. **Final considerations:** monitoring has been an important tool for the development of theoretical-practical skills, these being important for personal and professional growth.

**Descriptors:** Education, nursing; Students, nursing; Learning

**Resumen: Objetivo:** conocer el punto de vista de los estudiantes de enfermería en relación a la práctica de la tutoría académica realizada en un laboratorio de simulación de técnicas de enfermería. **Método:** estudio cualitativo, desarrollado con 18 tutores, entre noviembre y diciembre de 2017, por medio de entrevista semiestructura. Los datos fueron analizados por análisis de contenido. **Resultados:** la tutoría fue indicada por los participantes como el momento del despertar para la enseñanza, del intercambio de experiencias, del mejoramiento de las relaciones interpersonales, del acordarse de la teoría, del estímulo para estudiar y del fortalecimiento de la relación entre estudiantes y profesores. **Consideraciones finales:** la tutoría es una herramienta importante para el desarrollo de habilidades teórico-práticas, que son importantes para el crecimiento personal y profesional.

**Descritores:** Educación en enfermería; Estudiantes de enfermería; Aprendizaje

## Introduction

Undergraduate nursing courses aim to insert and guarantee the student technical-scientific competence for the development of care, management, teaching and research activities.<sup>1-2</sup> To broaden the learning possibilities for students in the execution of nursing procedures, they have complementary academic activities developed through monitoring in the simulation laboratories.<sup>3</sup>

In this sense, the monitoring activities are considered a pedagogical support for the students, used by the subjects / modules so that they can practice the procedures presented by their teachers in the lecture room. Thus, the monitoring is conducted by students, who have been trained for this activity, in order to strengthen content and / or resolve difficulties presented by

the students in a given theme.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, monitoring figures as a relevant strategy for the teaching / learning process, since it provides security and accuracy for students to develop skills during clinical practice, either in the hospital setting or in primary health care.<sup>5</sup>

In this study, academic monitoring is understood as a form of support for teaching / learning, in which students who have already completed the course contribute to the process of acquiring knowledge among their colleagues, consequently its purpose is to actively assist in the learning process, since monitoring will help students improve their nursing technique and its relationship to theory.<sup>6</sup> The monitor is an actor in the process with whom students can clarify their doubts or further their knowledge, and in turn, enhance their learning.<sup>7</sup>

The legislation for monitoring at university level was instituted on December 20, 1996, by the Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education, Law No. 9,394, in which article 84 indicates that undergraduate students of higher education can be inserted in activities of teaching and research by the respective institutions, developing monitoring functions, provided that it is in accordance with the political pedagogical project of the courses.<sup>8</sup>

Other authors<sup>9</sup> have stated that studies on monitoring in undergraduate nursing courses are of fundamental importance, because the contributions are relevant to the student's teaching / learning process, by providing practice for the procedures and theory that were taught by teachers in the classroom and laboratory and thus contributes to a more beneficial course.

The above gives rise to the question: what are the perceptions of nursing students regarding the practice of academic monitoring performed in a laboratory for the simulation of nursing techniques? To answer this question, the objective of the present research was to determine the perception of nursing students regarding the practice of academic monitoring performed in a laboratory for simulation of nursing techniques.

## **Method**

This is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach, conducted with monitors of an undergraduate nursing course at a public university in Paraná. This course adopts the integrated curriculum, which has as its pedagogical proposal student-centered teaching; that is, the student is the protagonist of their own learning, while the teacher facilitates the teaching / learning process, which in turn encourages logical reasoning based on each student's prior knowledge and personal experience.<sup>2</sup>

The nursing laboratory has a total of 18 volunteer monitors, who are responsible for monitoring the modules: Morphophysiological Aspects in Nursing, and Fundamental Practices in Nursing. To select students eligible for this study, the inclusion criterion was to have been a monitor in the nursing laboratory for at least six months. The selection of monitors is carried out by a public notice prepared by the course teachers, which covers the requirements for the registration and evaluation of candidates. The selection consists of: proof of knowledge relevant to the module to which they are enrolled, curriculum analysis and individual interview to establish the classification order. All students are eligible that have attended and been approved in the modules described.

Those approved within the number of places are trained by the teachers before starting the monitoring. The monitoring period is one academic year and the monitors must comply with a workload of 120 hours per year. Therefore, 12 hours per week must be completed, of which eight are for activities in the Nursing laboratory and four for the study of modules. It is emphasized that the activity of monitors is exclusively for teaching purposes, since monitoring for research purposes occurs in another module of the course in question.

Data collection was performed intentionally, but data convergence was respected, thus, this study had the participation of 13 monitors. It is emphasized that the monitors who participated in the study were monitors from the year 2016 and 2017.

For data collection, a semi-structured individual interview was used, with the following question: What are your perceptions about being a monitor in a nursing laboratory? The average duration of the interviews was 30 minutes. These were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. The collection took place between November and December 2017.

Data were analyzed and interpreted by content analysis technique with the following steps: pre-analysis; material exploration and treatment of results, inference and interpretation. In the pre-analysis, the material was organized, in that there was a floating reading to identify the particularities of each interviewee, which contributed to an elaboration of the initial ideas. Next, we proceeded to the exploration phase of the material, that is, the coding of the letter and number for the interviews performed, so that the extracts which were of interest to the study were grouped into analogous nuclei of meaning that originated the categories. Finally, the results were treated, in which the raw results were treated in a meaningful and valid way, with analysis and discussion of these statements from the interviews.<sup>10</sup>

Ethical precepts were respected, such as the anonymity of information, signing of the Informed Consent Form by the respondents and approval by the Ethics Committee, in accordance with the ethical precepts established by resolution 466/2012. Thus, this research was conceded CAAE No. 75075417.5.0000.5231, under protocol 2.313.845, in October 2017. To ensure anonymity, participants were identified by the letter M, followed by a numeral according to the order of interviews.

## **Results and discussion**

Of the 13 monitors, eight were female and five male, aged between 21 and 46 years, all attending the 3rd year of the undergraduate nursing course. Through the exploration and organization of the monitors' discourse, four categories emerged.

### **The awakening of teaching**

This category covers the meaning and importance of acting as a monitor during graduation and, especially, an awakening to the possibility of professional performance in teaching. As can be identified in the following statements:

*An opportunity that made me see other career options, even though we didn't teach theory, when we taught our colleagues the procedures, it made me interested in teaching, because we had to explain the theory to demonstrate the practice. (M3)*

*For me, being a monitor was an initiative and an incentive for teaching role, it was essential to arouse this desire. I learned that organizing, controlling and passing on knowledge to others, I saw how difficult it is to be a teacher. (M6)*

It can be observed that monitoring arouses the desire of students to pursue a teaching career. When the student becomes a monitor, he / she follows the academic activities developed by the teacher responsible for monitoring and, thus, becomes familiar with the context in which the educators act. This in turn favors the expansion of their knowledge, opening paths and strategies for an increase of didactic-pedagogical development to graduation and in turn arousing interest in pursuing a teaching career.<sup>2</sup>

Authors<sup>11</sup> have stated that monitoring is extremely important, as it enables students to develop experience and the awakening to be a teacher, as it assists in the teaching-learning process, as well as helping themselves and colleagues in the process of acquiring skills.

### **Exchange of experiences and strengthening of student-student and student-teacher relationships**

The students considered that the monitoring activities constituted moments of knowledge exchange among the students themselves, being an opportunity to strengthen the relationship

between the monitors and the teachers, and also aided the learning of teamwork. The following discourses illustrate this:

*It was positive for us because we learned from the students we were teaching, there was an exchange of experience and it was very rich. It favored the relationship with our colleagues. We learn both in terms of knowledge and in relationships with students and teachers. (M1)*

*It was great to have this experience and feel the confidence teachers have in the monitors. It strengthened my relationship with teachers and classmates. (M9)*

*The assistance of the teachers was also great and I realized that my relationship with them was much stronger. (M12)*

*I liked it a lot, I learned to understand the teachers better and strengthened my relationship not only with the teachers responsible for monitoring, but with all the teachers of the course and also with my colleagues. (M13)*

It was found from the discourses that students consider the experience of monitoring as a practice that provided interaction between colleagues and teachers, as well as feeling valorized by the confidence that teachers placed in their activities. The monitors are closer to their peers than the teacher, hence there is a more open relationship between monitor and student. Furthermore, when this freedom occurs the student feels more comfortable asking the monitor since students are at the same academic level, thus contributing to greater achievement.<sup>8</sup>

It is noticeable that when the student becomes a monitor, he / she develops activities with the teachers and other students of the course making the monitor secure in their performance and encourages the student to develop teamwork, thus improving performance within the university.<sup>12</sup>

For students to become monitors, it is necessary to provide them autonomy and responsibility for the construction of activities, that is, it is necessary to establish a bond of trust

between the teacher and the monitor. Confidence generates the monitors' sense of responsibility towards their peers, and the feeling that they must not disappoint the teachers.<sup>13</sup>

### **Incentive to study and a time to recall what has been learned**

The students' statements reveal that the monitoring was configured in a strategy aimed for them to revise what they had already learned as well as an incentive to seek new knowledge; in that when they felt uncertain about a theme or procedure they sought to learn more about it and then to pass this on to colleagues. These ideas were mentioned in the following discourses:

*An opportunity to be remembering the techniques and theory and when I did not know something I would study. (M2)*

*Being a monitor was great to remember the procedures and their relationship with theory. (M4)*

*I recalled many techniques and their association with theory, because I had not practiced everything during my internship at the hospital or basic health unit. (M7)*

*It was an opportunity to revise and update all the procedures and theory I had learned. (M8)*

*The monitoring forced me to study, because there were subjects I didn't know anymore. So I went to study to learn and pass it on to my colleagues. (M13)*

Monitoring requires the student to continually seek theoretical and practical advancement, strengthening their learning, which in turn generates a sense of self-confidence and responsibility, as well as stimulating students in general. Furthermore, the students see that the monitor is a student just like they are, who through their efforts were able to develop advanced knowledge on a particular subject. This leads to the conviction that they will also be able to achieve a similar level of knowledge.<sup>5-6</sup>



The monitors seek to update and deepen their scientific knowledge, while developing their activities, so they can perform this function with quality and, consequently, offer the students greater benefits from the course. Evidently this improvement must be on a continuous basis, which leads to the conclusion that this experience promotes learning, both by the need to revise what was taught and constant incentive for the student to update and seek new knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

It is highlighted that monitoring offers an incentive to study continuously, because knowledge is required both by the teacher responsible for the monitoring whose function is to stimulate reading for theoretical and practical strengthening, but also the need for the monitor to lead colleagues in a discussion on various themes, as well as the resolution of problems that are seen in the clinical practice of nurses.<sup>6-7</sup>

The monitoring activities enable an exchange of experience and provide a solidification of theoretical and practical knowledge and especially improve the relationship with the teachers of the discipline and other nursing students.<sup>2</sup>

Monitoring is a process of professional capacitation, since it enables exchanges of experiences, reinforces knowledge, and facilitates relationships with teachers and students.<sup>1,4,10</sup> It is noteworthy that the monitor becomes the bridge between teacher and student and has the main function to review and strengthen the material studied in the classroom. However, the continuous presence of course teachers is necessary, since the monitor is also a student and may have the same difficulties, such that on seeking to answer their questions with the teacher there ensues an enrichment of knowledge among all involved.<sup>15</sup>

### **Collaborating to professional training**

It can be seen from the discourses that being a monitor was an important tool for developing communication and demonstrating the responsibilities that they will need to become professionals.

*We were encouraged to develop our communication during the monitoring, because I had to teach the techniques and the theoretical foundation. So communication was important. (M10)*

*I learned to communicate better and had a vision of the responsibility we will have when we are nurses. (M3)*

The discourses showed that students considered monitoring to be favorable to communication. Other authors reported similar results to the present study, showing that monitoring leads to the development of communication skills and contributes to professional practice and personal growth.<sup>16</sup>

A study<sup>17</sup> identified that a monitor program contributed to an understanding of what it is to be a nurse. Monitoring provides an insight into what professional practice will be like in the provision of care, management of health and nursing services, and teaching, as well as showing the importance of political participation and social control. Monitoring awakens the development of an ethical and political posture towards the profession, as it enables the development of essential skills and attitudes.<sup>17</sup>

A limitation of the study is the impossibility of generalizing the results, considering that the interviewees were monitors from a single undergraduate nursing course. Nevertheless, the study contributed to an advancement of knowledge, since monitoring was seen as an important tool for the teaching and learning of nursing students, thereby demonstrating undergraduate managers and teachers the importance of implementing monitoring in their scenarios.

## **Final considerations**

It can be affirmed that monitoring was an important tool for the development of theoretical and practical skills, which are important for personal and professional growth. It is extremely important to implement academic monitoring programs in undergraduate courses, considering that they help the monitors in an awakening to the teaching profession, in the incentive for study, as well as in the expansion and improvement of knowledge. Furthermore, it is an activity that promotes interaction between the students themselves and their teachers, besides contributing to the visualization and reflection on professional practice in the area.

Therefore, universities should invest and encourage monitoring programs in the relevant sectors. This is essential for Nursing, since monitoring is a resource that enables better preparation of students for practice in the field of internship, as well as an improvement in techniques; this factor will lead to enhanced quality of nursing care for patients and their families.

The importance is emphasized of inserting new teaching practices in universities, especially the realistic simulations afforded by high-fidelity manikins that will ensure monitoring much closer to the hospital reality.

Finally, the need to develop new studies on this theme is emphasized, since the importance was established for academic monitoring in the teaching-learning process of nursing students.

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