

Training for university teaching: The tendency of the Post-Graduate Nursing Programs in Brazil

Formação para a docência universitária: tendência dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem no Brasil

Formación para la enseñanza universitaria: tendencia de los Programas de Posgrado en Enfermería en Brasil

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Abstract: Objective: To characterize the subjects of the *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs curricula focused on didactic-pedagogical training. **Method:** An exploratory-descriptive research, of documentary analysis in the curricula of *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs and in the teaching plans of the didactic-pedagogical subjects. The disciplinary teaching plans of the 27 *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs in Brazil were analyzed, with 53 plans submitted to descriptive statistical analysis. Data collection took place from March to June 2016. **Results:** Characteristics were presented regarding the curriculum of the programs, focusing on the themes, contents, and teaching strategies of the didactic-pedagogical subjects. **Conclusion:** There are differences among the curricula regarding the fundamental didactic-pedagogical subjects and the contents and

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teaching strategies. There was a need to develop the valorization of the teaching dimension in the *stricto sensu* Nursing Programs.

Descriptors: Education, Nursing, Graduate; Education, Nursing; Faculty, Nursing; Education, Higher; Teaching

Resumo: Objetivo: caracterizar as disciplinas dos currículos dos Programas de Pós-Graduação *stricto sensu* em Enfermagem voltadas à formação didático-pedagógica. **Método:** pesquisa exploratório-descritiva, de análise documental no currículo dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem *stricto sensu* e nos planos de ensino das disciplinas didático-pedagógicas. Foram analisados os planos de ensino de disciplinas dos 27 Programas de Pós-Graduação *Stricto sensu* em Enfermagem no Brasil, sendo 53 planos submetidos à análise estatística descritiva. A coleta de dados ocorreu de março a junho de 2016. **Resultados:** apresentaram-se características quanto ao currículo dos programas, enfocando as temáticas, conteúdos, estratégias de ensino das disciplinas didático-pedagógicas. **Conclusão:** há diferenças entre os currículos acerca das disciplinas didático-pedagógicas fundamentais e dos conteúdos e estratégias de ensino. Evidenciou-se uma necessidade de desenvolver nos Programas *stricto sensu* em Enfermagem a valorização sobre a dimensão do ensino ao ser docente.

Descritores: Educação de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem; Educação em Enfermagem; Docentes de Enfermagem; Educação Superior; Ensino

Resumen: Objetivo: caracterizar las disciplinas de los programas de postgrado en enfermería *stricto sensu* destinados a la formación didáctico-pedagógica. **Metodología:** investigación exploratoria descriptiva, de análisis documental en el currículum de los Programas de Posgrado en Enfermería *stricto sensu* y en los planes de enseñanza de las disciplinas didáctico-pedagógicas. Se analizaron los planes de enseñanza disciplinaria de los 27 Programas de Posgrado *Stricto sensu* en Enfermería en Brasil, con 53 planes sometidos a análisis estadístico descriptivo. La recopilación de datos tuvo lugar de marzo a junio de 2016. **Resultados:** se presentaron características sobre el currículum de los programas, centrándose en los temas, contenidos, estrategias de enseñanza de las disciplinas didáctico-pedagógicas. **Conclusión:** existen diferencias entre los planes de estudio con respecto a las disciplinas didáctico-pedagógicas fundamentales y los contenidos y estrategias de enseñanza. Era necesario desarrollar en los Programas de enfermería *stricto sensu* la valorización de la dimensión de la enseñanza cuando se es profesor.

Descriptor: Educación de Postgrado en Enfermería; Educación en Enfermería; Docentes de Enfermería; Educación Superior; Enseñanza

Introduction

The Brazilian *stricto sensu* post-graduate courses develop academic and professional Master's and Doctoral programs. These focus on techniques aimed at the performance of a high level of professional qualification. The Scholars intend to train for teaching and research at a level of excellence, which is the focus of this research. Thus, as a way of making the post-graduate student's teaching-learning process feasible, a pre-determined number of credits is

required, depending on the subjects of the curriculum proposal, which have the role of developing the issues in depth in the concentration area linked to the student's object of study. This process is characterized by attendance to classes, subjects, and the development of research.¹

In this context, the post-graduate program aimed at training teachers, as well as providing conditions for the development of scientific research, following the expansion of higher education in Brazil. Such purposes are expressed in Opinion No. 977/65.1, which defined the post-graduate courses, as well as in the objectives of the I National Postgraduate Plan (*Plano Nacional de Pós-Graduação*, PNPG).²

Although there is a purpose aimed at teacher development, in general, the structure of the courses has emphasized the development of research, because there is no basis in the mentioned documents that directs the development of pedagogical skills.³ However, the *stricto sensu* post-graduate program is designed to prepare for teaching, considering the purpose for which it was proposed and the requirement of a Master and/or PhD title to ascend to university education. In Nursing, studies show nurses' interest in post-graduate studies, as they consider that they would comply with training for the teaching profession.⁴

The essentiality of these elements for the teaching practice in health echoes in the training of nurses, which is based on the National Curriculum Guidelines (*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais*, DCNs)⁵ and the on Unified Health System (*Sistema Único de Saúde*, SUS). Both require professionals who work based on an expanded concept of health, that meet the integrality of care and humanization. For this, it is necessary to value subjectivity, to propose the student the development of technical skills of reflection on the reality, of contents that work with the health system.⁶ Therefore, the teaching practice needs to be based on the principles of the DCNs, which excel in the formation of the critical-reflective professional, engaged in the reality of the services and in solving strategies that allow for a better quality of

life for the population.⁵

It is noteworthy that the teaching activity is complex, interconnected by knowledge, skills, and attitudes. To exercise this practice in Nursing, the teacher's activity consists of combining elements that are pedagogically oriented according to a process that is not entirely technical, but reflexive, that articulates the domain of didactic content in health.⁷ When there is no pedagogical preparation, it is possible that this combination is lost and that it starts to reproduce teaching practices experienced in previous moments.⁴

With a more central focus, the four-year evaluation in the Nursing area from 2013 to 2016 showed a 30% growth in the expansion of programs, compared to the three-year period from 2010 to 2012,⁸ considering academic programs and professional Master's degrees. This enabled a substantial increase in the number of Masters and PhDs with degrees in the area, totaling 1,309 PhDs and 3,446 Masters in the four-year period in question (2013-2016) regarding the Academic Master's degree. An expansion that tends to increase, considering the goals of the PNPG 2011-2020, regarding the increase of the postgraduates in that time,⁹ enabling work in higher education in Nursing.

Considering this, this study focused on the tendency of the training of *stricto sensu* courses. Therefore, conceiving them as spaces for the training of higher education teachers.¹⁰ In this context, the following research question arises: How are the subjects of the *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs in Brazil contributing to the training of Masters and PhDs for the teaching practice?

Thus, this study aims to characterize the subjects of the *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs curricula aimed at didactic-pedagogical training.

Method

This is a documentary analysis¹¹ in which data collection was carried out from March to

June 2016. The documentary analysis took place in the curricula of the *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs (*Programas de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem*, PPGEnf) and in the teaching plans of the didactic-pedagogical subjects of these curricula. Deductive reasoning was used, observing a tendency in the organization of curricular programs and teaching plans.

In order to delimit the inclusion characteristics, the 30 Brazilian *stricto sensu* PPGEnfs from public universities, which presented both the Academic Doctorate and Master's modalities, recommended and recognized by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal do Ensino Superior*, CAPES) and highlighted in the large area defined by Health Sciences were considered.

Of the 30 programs, 27 teaching plans (Chart 1) were accessed, either on the Post-Graduate Program website or on the Sucupira Platform,¹² making up 53 theoretical subjects focused on didactic-pedagogical training. Regarding the three excluded programs, contact was made via electronic mail, but without response.

The inclusion criteria of the teaching plans were the following: those of a theoretical character, which presented in the title of the subject variations of the following terms: didactics, pedagogy, teaching, methodology, learning, teaching strategies; teaching approaches; education, curriculum, skills, teaching planning, education policies, technologies in education, and permanent education. In the end, 53 plans were included in the survey.

Data collection occurred by means of a guide form, using dichotomous, discrete quantitative, and nominal qualitative variables. First, the search was carried out on the Sucupira Platform,¹² a reference of the National Post-Graduate System (*Sistema Nacional de Pós-Graduação*, SNPG), in which the presence of didactic-pedagogical curricular subjects in the programs was observed, totaling 53 teaching plans. Subsequently, the collection took place in the selected plans, observing the variables as to the content covered, the teaching strategy used and the distribution of the themes of the subjects aimed at didactic-pedagogical training.

The content was collected and organized in spreadsheets using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed, using calculations of absolute and relative frequency, through percentages and means, to measure the variables defined in the guide form and to synthesize the data.¹³

Frequency calculations were applied to the dichotomous and discrete quantitative variables, without the need for prior organization of the material. For the data of the group of nominal qualitative variables, consisting of open questions in the guide form, a preliminary organization and grouping of similar responses was made, before frequency calculation. The results of the frequency calculations were exposed to the stages of organization in terms of descriptive statistical analysis.

Chart 1- *Stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs according to each Higher Education Institution, , 2016

Post-Graduate Program	Higher Education Institution
Health care	UFTM - Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro / MG
Clinical Care on Nursing and Health.	UECE - Universidade Estadual do Ceará / CE
Nursing	UFBA - Universidade Federal da Bahia / BA
Nursing	UFC - Universidade Federal do Ceará / CE
Nursing	UNB - Universidade de Brasília / DF
Nursing	UFG - Universidade Federal de Goiás / GO
Nursing	UFPB/J.P. - Universidade Federal da Paraíba/João Pessoa / PB
Nursing	UFPE - Universidade Federal de Pernambuco / PE
Nursing	FUFPI - Fundação Universidade Federal do Piauí / PI
Nursing	UFPR - Universidade Federal do Paraná / PR
Nursing	UEM - Universidade Estadual de Maringá / PR
Nursing	UFRJ - Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro / RJ
Nursing	UERJ - Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro / RJ
Nursing	UFRN - Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte / RN
Nursing	UFRGS - Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul / RS
Nursing	UFSM - Universidade Federal de Santa Maria / RS
Nursing	UFPEL - Universidade Federal de Pelotas / RS
Nursing	FURG - Universidade Federal do Rio Grande / RS
Nursing	UFSC - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina / SC
Nursing	USP - Universidade de São Paulo / SP
Nursing	UNICAMP - Universidade Estadual de Campinas / SP
Nursing	UNESP/BOT - Univ. Est.Paulista Júlio de Mesquita F./Botuc.
Nursing	UNIFESP - Universidade Federal de São Paulo / SP
Nursing in public health	USP/RP - Universidade de São Paulo/ Ribeirão Preto / SP
Fundamental nursing	USP/RP - Universidade de São Paulo/ Ribeirão Preto / SP
Adult health nursing	USP - Universidade de São Paulo / SP
Nursing management	USP - Universidade de São Paulo / SP

Source: Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (2016).

Results

53 teaching plans referring to the theoretical, didactic-pedagogical training subjects of the 27 study programs were analyzed, according to Table 1. The subjects of Teaching Practice in

Health and Nursing prevailed, followed by Teaching Methodology in Nursing, highlighting themes that are in line with teacher training.

Table 1 - Distribution of the thematic of the didactic-pedagogical content subjects by *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs in Brazil, 2016

Thematic title of the subjects for didactic-pedagogical training	Programs n (%)
Teaching practice in health and nursing	12 (44.4)
Nursing teaching methodology	6 (22.2)
Teaching approaches	4 (14.8)
Teaching-learning process in the university context	4 (14.8)
Theoretical-methodological perspectives of the teaching-learning process	4 (14.8)
Special topics in education	4 (14.8)
Active teaching methodologies	2 (7.4)
Health curriculum	2 (7.4)
Distance education	1 (3.7)
Ethics and training for health teaching	1 (3.7)
Didactic-pedagogical fundamentals	1 (3.7)
Nursing administration teaching	1 (3.7)
Didactics and communication	1 (3.7)
Technologies in education	1 (3.7)
Epistemology of the teacher and teaching action	1 (3.7)
Education policies	1 (3.7)
Theory of knowledge and education	1 (3.7)
Fundamental teaching and learning in nursing	1 (3.7)
Management in health and nursing education	1 (3.7)
Critical-social approach in the education process	1 (3.7)
Teacher and professional training and development in health and nursing	1 (3.7)
Education and health	1 (3.7)
Education at work	1 (3.7)

Source: The authors (2016).

Table 2 shows the frequency of the disciplinary contents, expressing greater emphasis on the Evaluation of the Teaching-Learning Process. Furthermore, the content on Active Teaching Methodologies and training for the SUS was presented in 5.7% of the 53 subjects.

Table 2 - Content distribution related to the teaching plans of the didactic-pedagogical subjects of the Brazilian *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs, 2016

Content	Number (n)	Teaching plan (%)
Evaluation of the teaching-learning process	24	45.3
Teaching-learning strategies	19	35.8
Pedagogical trends in health and nursing	16	30.2
Teaching planning	15	28.3
Political aspects of health education	14	26.4
Pedagogical political project	13	24.5
National curriculum guidelines for higher education in health	9	17.0
Curriculum	9	17.0
Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education	8	15.1
Problematizing methodology	7	13.2
Permanent health education	7	13.2
Technologies in educational activities	7	13.2
Role of the professors	5	9.4
Initial teacher training in health and nursing	5	9.4
Communication in teaching	5	9.4
Teaching plan	5	9.4
Paulo Freire and education	5	9.4
Pedagogical knowledge of the content	4	7.5
Nursing teaching research	4	7.5
Management of the formative and educational process	4	7.5
Concepts related to skills and competencies	4	7.5
Distance education	4	7.5
Critical and reflective thinking in training	4	7.5
Active teaching methodologies	3	5.7
Training for the SUS	3	5.7

Source: The authors(2016).

The teaching strategies (Table 3) were mostly represented by seminars (35.7%). The elaboration of the lesson proposal was present in 12.5% of the plans, while the strategy of teaching, in 3.6%.

Table 3 - Distribution of teaching strategies related to the teaching plans of the subjects for didactic-pedagogical training of the Brazilian *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs, 2016

Teaching strategies	Teaching plans number (n)	Teaching plans frequency (%)
Conversational expository lesson	36	67.9
Seminar	20	37.7
Reading	17	32.1
Group activity	16	30.2
Discussion	16	30.2
Teaching plan elaboration	7	13.2
Use of virtual learning environment	6	11.3
Directed studies	6	11.3
Elaboration of manuscript	5	9.4
Reflective portfolio elaboration	5	9.4
Elaboration of reflections	4	7.5
Simulations	3	5.7
Independent study	3	5.7
Active teaching-learning methodologies	3	5.7
Teaching lessons	2	3.8

Source: The authors(2016).

Discussion

The results show that, although there are programs with didactic-pedagogical subjects, there is no consensus on the development of this theme in Nursing post-graduation, highlighting the need to promote policies that institutionalize the training of the teaching-learning process for higher education teachers at this level of education.³ A factor possibly linked to the CAPES assessment method, which, in general, seeks actions aimed at scientific production at the basis of research.¹⁴ This statement finds reverberation in researchers who question and point out these assumptions as limits of the didactic-pedagogical training.¹⁵

Thus, it is expected that it will be at the discretion of each program to include or not activities and subjects on this theme. In this context, it is worth mentioning the supervised teaching internship, whose performance runs through all programs, according to art. 17 from

CAPES, “The teaching internship aims at preparing for teaching and qualifying undergraduate education, being mandatory for all scholarship holders of the Social Demand Program”.^{14:8}

However, this proposal still does not match training aimed at all students, as it is a mandatory activity for the Master's or PhD student with a scholarship. Consequently, the pedagogical knowledge of some students is built in their professional trajectory, in previous experiences and also after the development of academic post-graduate courses.¹⁶ As the requirement of carrying out a teaching internship is only asked to the scholarship holder, there are PhDs who enter the professorship only after the completion of training.

In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that teacher training requires the adoption of subsidies for the development of epistemological, theoretical, practical knowledge, and techniques for exposing and conducting work in educational activities in the teaching-learning process.¹⁷ When entering the Health field, there is a majority of teachers with training in specific Bachelor's degrees. However, they are criticized for their little ability to integrate different methods and techniques for the good conduct of the teaching-learning process.¹⁸ What exists in the curricula of the programs, and which constitutes a real opportunity to bring together didactic-pedagogical content, is evident in the results regarding the listing of the subjects surveyed.

According to the data (Table 1), there is heterogeneity of subjects, starting with the denomination itself, and this is considered important information in the plan of a subject, as it highlights the institutional curriculum planning, and the profile of student training.¹⁹

The subject that stood out the most was Teaching Practice in Health and Nursing. Inferring the intention of some programs in training post-graduate students, especially about the teaching practice, which covers a range of situational problems that require decision making, accompanied by individual values, feelings, and uncertainties.²⁰

Sequentially, the Nursing Teaching Methodology subject is observed, even though its frequency is present in a portion of the programs. This data corroborates with the literature, when it highlights that some courses are already working with the teaching specificity in the area.¹⁹

However, in both subjects, it is clear that there is no homogeneous distribution among the programs, a consistent basis for training, revealing the most different themes of the Nursing teaching knowledge. An observation also perceptible in other data, since elements such as active methodologies, curriculum, and ethical issues in teaching, among others, appeared sporadically.

The acquisition of this competence, in the scope of didactic and pedagogy sciences, should be an imperative attribute and not sporadic, as noted, since it helps the process of teaching professionalization, providing the teaching-learning situations with greater mastery and performance.

Thus, developing and inciting new discussions in teacher training spaces is necessary for the development and quality of teaching. In order to confirm what is present in the didactic-pedagogical teaching plans, even though distinctly among the curricula, it is worth highlighting the most frequent contents.

The evaluation of the teaching-learning process represented the most frequent content. This is a competence that raises questions, since it is sometimes performed as a value judgment in response to the quantification of the students, considering the traditional teaching concept, generating positions of classification, approval or disapproval.²¹

As the changes in pedagogical conceptions occur, the evaluation needs to assume dimensions focused on the learning process, mainly with regard to the health area, which has been taking a stance of developing critical skills and attitudes, seeking to make the SUS viable.²² Thus, evaluation has become a challenge for Nursing and essential to be discussed in the training of teachers in the area.

Still, the teaching-learning strategies are observed in the results, with great representativeness. The importance of this content being the subject of teaching plans is the

significant learning that this knowledge generates in the student. Such subject matter, when fostered in the training of post-graduate students, collaborates in the understanding and deepening of this process and on what the objective of learning in higher education is.¹⁶

As a way to promote a meaningful education strategy, discussions that address active methodologies have been conducted in the health area.²³ However, their representativeness was small, when compared to the set of teaching plans. Nevertheless, this is a tool that demands active participation from students in their learning process, which is essential for critical and reflective development, highlighting elements that meet the health transformation needs desired by the SUS.

There is a small percentage in the content group that provides a deeper understanding of the movements that promoted changes in the process of Brazilian training. Even though the set of political aspects of health education is representative in its frequency, it does not specify what is being addressed.

Such movements are in reference to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education, the DCNs and the work perspectives in the SUS that directed the training of health professionals. They ask from the teaching staff in higher education a methodologically innovative work profile, to mediate and promote reflection on reality.⁵⁻⁶

Such DCN proposals are linked to the work expected from health professionals in the current public system. However, as the results show, training for the SUS stood out as content only in three of the 53 plans surveyed (Table 2).

There are a number of other contents found in isolated subjects in different programs, which signal the intention of each course to permeate different knowledge, as noted in Table 2. However, they demonstrate a curricular non-conformity among the *stricto sensu* PPPGs about the necessary themes for the teaching practice, showing that studies on the teaching knowledge needed by the Nursing teacher are still incipient.¹⁸

Still, it is worth highlighting the results regarding the teaching-learning strategies developed in the subjects. In a research carried out with a group of Nursing professors, it was observed that the discussion of a critical and reflective pedagogical practice based on Active Methodology contributed to the reflection on the teaching activities and enabled the participants to rethink their actions, in order to achieve the health learning objectives.²⁴

The results highlighted in Table 3 do not bring the learning strategies as an object of study of the teaching plans, but as actions by which the programs are theorizing the didactic-pedagogical contents. This is an important data, given the recognition that teachers' conceptions are also the result of their experiences as students.²⁰

It was observed that the conversational expository lessons are the most representative strategies in the teaching plans, followed by seminars, reading, group activities, and discussion. It is worth noting that the learning of certain knowledge is related to the student's involvement. Therefore, the student should be encouraged to actively participate in knowledge, in order to avoid passive education and to promote critical reflection on reality.¹⁹

As evidenced, the dialogued expository class is the protagonist strategy in the didactic-pedagogical subjects, which works by exposing the content and by the active participation of the student. The teacher's role is to question, and to discuss the object of study based on the valuation of students' proposals.

The point about this strategy is that, at times, it becomes overused and can be a factor in reducing the student's participation, making them passive agents of this process.²⁵

In relation to the elaboration of the lesson plan, it appears subtly in the set of the researched materials, even though it is a fundamental instrument, as it exercises the teacher in planning and elaborating on the means to achieve learning. However, other studies carried out on teaching planning have already shown an absence regarding the discussion of the lesson plan. Still, it is clear that practical strategies that would be viable ways to understand the

dynamics of the teaching process are almost absent, such as teaching a lesson, which appears in two plans, or performing simulations, present in three plans.¹⁹

Conclusion

This study provides an overview of the teaching plans of the *stricto sensu* Post-Graduate Nursing Programs in Brazil. This evidenced the training trend in the didactic-pedagogical subjects.

There was heterogeneity in the disciplinary themes and content, showing the individual operationalization of each program about didactic-pedagogical development. It is noteworthy that the contents of the teaching process in the SUS are scarce in the investigated subjects.

In view of the data analyzed, it appears that there is no specific training, at least in the *stricto sensu* modality, focused on the knowledge of higher education teachers. This suggests a collective construction about the valuation of teaching at the university, encouraging guidelines aimed at this scope, since if the *stricto sensu* post-graduation is a necessary condition for the rise in higher education, it is imminent that the qualification occurs in this space.

The limitations of the study were due to the fact that this research works only by means of documents that, although presenting the curriculum approaches, they do not by themselves indicate the dimension of the entire context of teacher education. Thus, the importance emerges of new studies focusing on reality, speech, opinion, and observation of the actors that make up this scenario.

Given the above and considering that the qualification of health work consistent with the expectation of the current system is closely linked to the teaching-learning process of the under-graduate student in Health and Nursing and, consequently, to the exercise and role of the teacher in leading this process, this study implies the training of professional nurses. In addition, it generates the need to create a culture among the institutions, so that teaching skills and the mastery of such specificities are recognized.

Its purpose is to develop teachers trained for health education in the post-graduate space, which also presents among its roles the development of teachers for higher education.

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