

The professor's body: discourses on subjectivity to reflect on nurses' education

Corpo do professor: discursos sobre subjetividade para pensar a formação de enfermeiros

Cuerpo del profesor: discursos sobre subjetividad para pensar la formación de enfermeros

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to reflect on the body of the nursing professor in the subjectivity discourse. **Method:** this is a reflective essay on the theoretical and practical reverberations of the nursing professor's body based on the Deleuzoguattarian discourse. **Results:** in the theoretical framework, the body of the nursing professor was considered as a producer of subjectivities and understood without organs, surrounded by strengths, desires, and affections. In the practical framework, we discussed pedagogical strategies developed by professors, such as dramatic games, simulated scenes, presentation of the line of care and living portfolio, characterized by stimulating nursing students to value political, civic, creative, and supportive dimensions. **Conclusion:** based on the subjectivity discourses, the professor's body was demystified as uniquely holder of knowledge, and all participants in the educational scenario were considered active protagonists of collective knowledge.

Descriptors: Nursing; Education; Teaching; Nursing Education; Higher Education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: refletir sobre o corpo do professor de enfermagem no discurso da subjetividade. **Método:** trata-se de um ensaio reflexivo sobre as reverberações teóricas e práticas do corpo do professor de enfermagem fundamentado no discurso deleuze-guattariano. **Resultados:** no plano teórico, o corpo do professor de enfermagem foi considerado como produtor de subjetividades e compreendido sem órgãos, onde circulam forças, desejos e afetos. No plano prático, foram discutidas estratégias pedagógicas desenvolvidas por professores, tais como jogos dramáticos, cenas simuladas, apresentação de linha de cuidado e portfólio vivo, caracterizadas por estimular os estudantes de enfermagem à valorização de dimensões políticas, cidadãs, criativas e solidárias. **Conclusão:** baseado nos discursos da subjetividade, o corpo do professor foi desmistificado como exclusivamente detentor do saber, e todos os participantes nas cenas de ensino foram considerados protagonistas ativos do conhecimento coletivizado.

Descritores: Enfermagem; Educação; Ensino; Educação em Enfermagem; Educação Superior.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: reflexionar sobre el cuerpo del profesor de enfermería en el discurso de la subjetividad. **Método:** se trata de un ensayo reflexivo sobre las reverberaciones teóricas y prácticas del cuerpo del profesor de enfermería fundamentado en el discurso deleuze-guattariano. **Resultados:** en el plano teórico, se consideró el cuerpo del profesor de enfermería como productor de subjetividades y comprendido sin órganos, donde circulan fuerzas, deseos y afectos. En el plano práctico, se discutieron estrategias pedagógicas desarrolladas por profesores, tales como juegos dramáticos, escenas simuladas, presentación de línea de cuidado y portafolio vivo, caracterizadas por estimular a los estudiantes de enfermería a la valorización de dimensiones políticas, ciudadanas, creativas y solidarias. **Conclusión:** basado en los discursos de la subjetividad, se desmitificó el cuerpo del profesor como exclusivamente poseedor del saber, y todos los participantes en las escenas de enseñanza fueron considerados protagonistas activos del conocimiento colectivizado.

Descriptores: Enfermería; Educación; Enseñanza; Educación en Enfermería; Educación Superior.

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INTRODUCTION

This essay comes from acceptance to start reflecting on the "body" element of the professor in the education of nurses. For more than five years, the faculty, every semester, in different institutional spaces, investigate the body that teaches the profession of care and its guiding relationship with the students in the nursing teaching-learning process. Such relationship is thought from the everyday meetings between nursing professors and students, conceptually designed as a precise state of a mixture of bodies in the society, recognizing all the attractions and repulsions, sympathy and antipathy, changes, alliances, understandings, and expansions that affect one another⁽¹⁾.

The fact is that the search for scientific knowledge in the field of nursing is uninterrupted, and however great the strangeness that surrounds the subjectivity discourse can be, especially to accept the body of the nursing professor as a discursive element, we need willingness to handle the diversity of concepts that may permeate this object of study.

In other words, it is necessary to reflect on the subjectivity⁽²⁾ present in the meeting of the professor's body with the student in theoretical and practical scenarios of nursing teaching-learning process, because this close relationship is surrounded by power, desires, and affections able to interfere in the education process and in the life, to the point of generating a product: the construction of being a nurse.

Certainly, these surrounding subjective elements are extremely difficult to locate, because they are disseminated in the environment and are present in the bodies in the form of physical and mental energies. In addition, they may be influenced by effects triggered by pedagogical strategies developed by the professor's body, or be extensions of moments experienced by the professor along with students in the places where life is commonly shared.

These reflections on the daily life of nursing education are unfolded within the universities and, while considering subjectivity as a discursive reference, they make way for developing this reflective essay.

It is exactly through this body, permeated by a multiplicity of subjective discourses, that pervades all the philosophical action of the thought that examines the nature of its activity by establishing the principles that underlie it. This characterizes critical consciousness – a consciousness that analyzes the constitution itself, the very questions⁽³⁾.

Based on such understandings, we present some thoughts on the teaching activities in the field of nursing, guided by the following question: in the practical and theoretical framework to educate nurses, how can we reflect on the professor's body within the subjectivity discourse?

Regarding the creation of reflections, we play the role of the essayist, understood as someone capable of breaking the traditional way of thinking about reality by presenting fragments of thoughts, initial and partial, without the need to theorize a full system of thought. Thus, our essay approaches quick demonstrations of consciousness, of what is intuitive as relevant feature to the formation of knowledge. The systematic objectivity, as presented in science, for example, gives way to fast reflections based on components of the essayist's subjectivity,

which does not imply associating the essay to a merely subjective adventure⁽⁴⁾.

Considering this interest, the arguments in our essay are guided by the aim of reflecting on the nursing professor's body in the subjectivity discourse. Towards this objective, we decided to organize the arguments about the nursing teaching-learning practice, as well as its contents, according to the reflective pillar we present next.

REFLECTIVE PILLAR: THE NURSING PROFESSOR'S BODY IN THE SUBJECTIVITY DISCOURSE

Reflecting on body and subjectivity invariably puts educational managers, students, and especially the nursing professors in challenging knowledge fields. Theoretical frameworks and practical educational findings about these two reflective nuclei intensify the discussions about the education of nurses, whose focus is on the teaching-learning processes that can integrate, unite, and associate knowledge of the professional life with the phenomena of life.

The discourses presented in this reflective pillar approach the body as an operator of the pedagogical syllabus within teaching-learning processes. It is not about the anatomical and physiological body or the dolls (mannequins) that professors offer students at the university. Here we talk about bodies who teach with their (in) completion, beauties, singularities, emotions, feelings, dreams, and comprehensiveness⁽⁵⁾.

In this perspective, it is necessary to look closely at the professor's body that move in different educational institutions and to consider them as the desires, work processes in health already experienced, the stories, the care practices performed, the academic training, and the professional perception as subjective dimensions that enter into deep dialogue with nursing students when teaching them and learning from them the care profession.

Therefore, reflecting on the nursing professor's body as a producer of subjectivities is not an easy task to grasp in its entirety, and it invites us to investigate a set of pedagogical experiences undergone in two educational institutions, one public and another private. Those choices add a taught care that pervades the relationship of the professor's body with the student within two organizational bases of the curriculum: discipline and integration.

Thus, it is essential to understand that the professor's body is composed of different pedagogical bases and features multitude communications able to please, to a greater or lesser extent, nursing students. Therefore, thinking about the body in an intellectual debate when it comes to training nurses, by nature, is thought-provoking and requires a theoretical framework in the field of subjectivity to be contextualized to the processes of teaching and management in nursing higher education for this new century.

This is because coupling the epistemic units, body and subjectivity, here is permeated by the philosophic bet on contemporary thought. Indeed, thinking about the edge between the domains of knowledge permeates reflections which had not yet been raised and which focus directly on several pedagogical strategies developed by teachers who daily live the education of nurses.

In these meetings, the bodies who teach express, within or outside the universities, nursing as a profession, and, probably, they do not clearly show the mechanisms of their own struggles, desires, and resistances to strategically include dimensions that are political, sensitive, creative, civic, and supportive in the educational institutions.

Specifically in the practical framework, the pedagogical strategies may cause failures in the operating models aiming to train nurses, since their centrality shifts the teaching activity from projectors or the blackboard to life experiences and relationships established between the bodies in the teaching-learning scenario. It seems that this practice of educating health professionals cause discomfort and tension in the bodies that are used to vertically transmit and receive the syllabus content.

Therefore, it is necessary to stimulate, within the pedagogical meetings, questions of the phenomena of life, as a way of resisting the fragmentation of knowledge and minimizing the reductionism of nursing students to mere content receivers.

Generally speaking, the practical orientations developed by professors to reshape these traditional routes of teaching-learning in the discipline curriculum were guided by: dramatic games, simulated scenes, collages, modeling, occupation of geomythic places in the classroom, all with a strong appeal for scientific research and academic production.

In the integrated curriculum, pedagogical experiences were focused on performing lines of care in the services that compose the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS), on presenting narratives about practices of teaching scenarios, and on living portfolios.

Regardless of the theoretical and philosophical frameworks of the main teaching-learning processes, the landmark of these pedagogical experiments is the detachment of subjective elements that are hidden behind the bodies that establish relationships in the teaching-learning scenarios. In these meetings the student is stimulated by the nursing professor's body to do an exercise of clear, objective communication, from a team work, with the construction of critical arguments, manual dexterity, and ability to improvise⁽⁶⁾.

Thinking about the students who learn and what is done by the bodies of the professors to teach nursing, it is noteworthy to reflect on the production of subjectivities. This is not an easy task and it requires investments in modern philosophical knowledge, with a bold discursive transposition for educating nurses.

Fundamentally, thinking about the body without its biological organization in the nursing teaching leads to thinking about philosophical discourses that broach subjectification processes, i.e., to educate is to produce. In this case, producing nurses, which is not done without an adventure within the Deleuzoguattarian idea of subjectivity production⁽⁷⁾.

In this logic, the unusual idea of the body without its organic-functional structures emerges. In nursing, understanding this provocative concept requires skills to keep oneself in balance in the theoretical lines of subjectivity and to apply its philosophical discourses at meetings between the bodies of professors and students in the university spaces.

It is worth mentioning, in a brief break moment: we do not deny here the biological dimension when speaking of the professor's body in the nursing education of undergraduate students. It is pretty certain that nurses need to understand what an organ is, its integrated functions and activity deviations; but, at the same time, however you try to exhaust all morphological and pathophysiological concepts, they do not perceive the body and refer to subjectivity elements, which are present as inner impulses.

In the theoretical framework, the intellectual products from the intimate partnership between Gilles Deleuze and Félix

Guattari are highlighted. In their philosophical approaches, the body is conceptually designed at its limit, i.e., without organs. Thus, the relationship of our reflective essay with the theory comes together by the contemporary thought of theorists that made body without organs (BwO) theme of a problem present in some of their writings.

For the authors, BwO is populated by intensities, and at the same time is the field of desire immanence – the consistency plan of the very desire. There where desire is defined as a production process, without referring to any external instance. Lack that would make it hollow, and pleasure that would fulfill it⁽⁷⁾.

Reflecting on desires, specifically on practical ways to educate nurses, requires caution. All the caution while transiting through these subjective pathways come from joys and anguishes produced by them, leading the subject that is being educated to the alienation or the discovery of a politically active professional.

Here, desire is not intrinsically connected to the individuation of libido. In terms of subjectivity, the desire surrounding the BwO of professors and students pervades the so-called physical and mental energies that attract or repel them in educational meetings.

In a first pedagogical contact, the ways desire is grasped are apparently invisible to the eye. However, insofar the bodies are related, the pathways of desire are intensified or mitigated, which produces mechanisms of domination or release of the body in the teaching-learning scenario.

In the pedagogical meetings, the professor, often without realizing it, is observed by the nursing student as a biologically reduced body able to teach merely by desire, which earn concreteness in their gestures, orality, in their positioning in space, body, and facial movements. Moreover, considering the expression plan: their clothes, voice timbre, the way they smile, their eyes, anyway, the organs of the professor's body, act as open doors for intensifying what is being built as a professional and social product.

Hence, the desire is always the way of constructing something⁽⁸⁾. Constructing the own nurse, things, and processes. This teacher-student relational space is certainly responsible for positioning subjects in the social production of a world that, far from value judgement, may be based on meeting the needs of the other, on selfishness, solidarity, authoritarianism, citizenship, petulance, respect for life, greed, care availability, among other elements.

It is as if the flows of desire surrounding the BwO of the professor reach the surface of the student, in order to deepen their human existence and find out what the body is and what it wants to be. Certainly, the reflection on the subjective process of educating nurses concerns a propulsive energy that provides strength for the bodies to trigger changes.

It is an education induced by desires from pedagogical experiments, in whose relations the teaching-learning process is not only achieved with the amount of theoretical content or even with pre-established ideas by the professors' bodies, but with incentives for students to become citizens with their own opinions, able to reveal emotions, and act collectively⁽⁶⁾.

In this orientation, the university social space is highlighted as a producer of subjective professional marks for nurses-to-be. Hence the importance of the professor in recognizing the desire surrounding their bodies in order to stimulate, within

different pedagogical strategies, the sharing of the common good: knowledge.

In fact, many students, especially those recently submitted to the nursing profession, have expectations, anxieties, and distress concerning the choice made. All of these concerns can be identified by the professor's body and by studies conducted at the university, in these intersubjective areas that are created when the bodies meet and exchange information.

The decrease in the distance between the professor's body and the students within the university presupposes reformulating the nursing education characterized by partnerships, collaborative and less competitive relationships among peers. What we perceive is the idea of a subjective body that becomes individualized and, at the same time, horizontally, is part of a collective.

In fact, in teaching-learning scenarios, the professor's body plays a key role in the release or imprisonment of students, who can be stimulated or susceptible to passivity by the intensity of oppressive forces, desires, and affections that surround the nursing learning-teaching game.

This is the subjective logic: the body is able to affect and be affected by allowing, in the meeting, intense movements of collective socialization of knowledge and practices to take place. Thus, affection is responsible for allowing deviations in the stories of individuals, because the meeting of bodies cause singular effects with different responses to those involved in a given scenario and period⁽⁹⁾.

This relationship established in nursing education from the affection logic opens dialogue to an education of nurses that is based on the collective, characterized by partnerships that arise dreams and broaden a critical vision of the world in all those involved in these existential experiences. Affections built in the gaps of hegemony, in the voids, in their conflicts, and contradictions emerge where there are no straight answers or they are no longer accepted, where there is resistance concerning what you have or what is established, hence the boldness, the creation, the doing it without knowing it, with the question, with the desire⁽¹⁰⁾.

When finding these philosophical foundations, it is important to bring incentives to the practical and theoretical framework for the education of nurses who do not have limits concerning their care development, future health professionals who are able to look and see in their patients the complexity of the human being expressed by basic desires and necessities.

Although not overcoming the abstract philosophical ideas of Deleuze and Guattari that deal with body and subjectivity, the search for reflections were focused on critical descriptions about professors' experiences in nursing education. In the following sections we considered the limitations and contributions of this reflective essay for the field of nursing.

Study limitations

Generalizing is not possible yet. Accordingly, we consider as the limitation of our reflective essay the fact that discursive formulations have been produced from the analysis arising from pedagogical experiences in two undergraduate nursing programs: a public one, guided by a disciplinary curriculum; and a private one, guided by an integrated curriculum that is based on active teaching-learning methodologies.

In the light of the text, we should consider, in the pedagogical experiences of the first undergraduate nursing program, an appropriation of the classroom as a living laboratory for research. In this institutional context, professors develop teaching-learning strategies that stimulate in the students' feelings which are very close to those that patients receive in the nursing care.

With the intimate partnership of undergraduate and graduate students, all protagonists of the educational process are encouraged to feel and think, to look and see, to hear and listen, to reflect and write, as actions that transcend the specific exercise of performing a procedure in the field of nursing. Thus, the inclusion of the referred dramatic game, simulated scenes, modeling, and collages aims to invoke thinking, to enhance reflections, and to raise questions about the reality of the profession in the modern world.

To do so, we highlight the central concepts included in the organizational syllabus that guide these pedagogical experiences developed by the professors: nursing, nursing care, nursing work process, subject-citizen, health, health-disease process, completeness, and interdisciplinarity.

Particularly in the second undergraduate nursing course, what is evident as structuring centers and assumptions of the integrated curriculum is: expanded semiology of the subject and of the collective; policy and management in health; ethics and humanism; construction and production of knowledge in the field of nursing. It is noteworthy that one of the main features of this curriculum regards its organization, which comes from general to specific aspects, approaching students and professors to actual health contexts.

Hence, the pedagogical experiences adopted by professors point to a continuous movement of reflection on the education of nurses, based on the integration of teaching and service. To do so, students are stimulated by professors to go through the SUS network as a way to producing lines of care, narratives concerning practices and portfolios based on knowledge and practices in the field of nursing.

In both production contexts of these reflections on the body, we highlight the experiences of nursing professors who teach in training programs with curricula whose organizational bases and the underlying pedagogical processes differ. Hence the recognition that subjectivities produced by the professors' bodies are especially involved in teaching strategies and theoretical-philosophical references applied to the daily life of teaching-learning in nursing. Thus, we certify that the opinionated character related to the education of nurses can differ according to the contexts in which these educational pedagogical experiences are conceived and applied.

Contributions of the reflective essay to the field of nursing

As a contribution of these reflections to the nursing education, we highlight the inseparable discussion of the nurses' education and the philosophical bases on body and subjectivity. We believe that this complex conceptual inseparability area is a priority agenda for professors and managers involved in the education and management in health.

We expect that this critical analysis of the pedagogical strategies in their subjective relationship with the bodies who teach and learn the care profession to be able to broaden the way we think about educational processes and how nurses are being trained. Bodies understood within the relationship established between

the professor and the nursing student who feature subjectivities in the surrounding strengths, desires, and affective flows.

CONCLUSION

In order to (not) conclude and enhance this philosophical approach in nursing research, let us state: reflecting on the body and subjectivity in the education of nurses involves an investigation attitude. Indeed, it was necessary to balance Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophical diagrams to assume, in these reflections, the mottos: guiding relationship, intensities, BwO, and desires.

All this terminology was focused on practical and theoretical discourses that broach the education of nurses, considering subjectivity, especially when considering the relational spaces of the bodies who teach-learn nursing and the educational instance between them.

Considering such idea, the syllabus represented by the professors' bodies reach students with different learning strategies. In addition, the students' senses grasp visual and auditory messages that may be related to their future professional performance from a desire burning in their bodies.

Focusing on the practice of teaching-learning nursing, what we questioned here regards the replacement of the discourses on life, in favor of a range of contents that only favor scientific

rationality, pathophysiological mechanisms of diseases, their signs-symptoms, and biological records that disregard the basic needs of patients.

To address this, were illustrated dramatic games, simulated scenes, collages, modeling, and geomythic places used by professors when they teach nursing within a disciplinary curriculum in a public university. Furthermore, we consider the pedagogical experiences developed by professors in the integrated curriculum of a private university, which were focused on the release of subjectivities from narratives of practice, developing lines of care, and presenting living portfolios. It is noteworthy that all these pedagogic strategies were able to (re)create the bodies of professors and release the minds of nursing students within the geometric spaces of universities.

With the certainty of the unfinished, we believe that these discursive formulations can contribute with teaching-learning processes experienced in several contexts and benefit the posture of professors for a nursing practice that meet the needs of the care subjects-patients and of the profession itself.

In this direction, it is vital to stimulate intervening research with the philosophical references here addressed to think about an education of nurses that can demystify the professor's body as uniquely and exclusively holder of knowledge, making all those involved in the educational scenario active protagonists for the production of scientific knowledge in the field of nursing.

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