Curriculum for undergraduate nursing courses:
integrative literature review

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CURRÍCULOS DE CURSOS DE GRADUAÇÃO EM ENFERMAGEM: REVISÃO INTEGRATIVA DE LITERATURA

Curriculum for undergraduate nursing courses: integrative literature review

How to quote this article:

ABSTRACT

Objective: To know what issues have been addressed and discussed in research on curriculum in undergraduate courses in nursing in Brazil, in the period 2000-2013. Method: Used the assumptions of integrative literature review based on the LILACS, SCIELO, BDENF and ERIC databases. Data analysis was organized from the pre-analysis and exploration of material, processing and interpretation of results. Results: 36 articles were selected, which allowed the definition of three categories: Assumptions of curriculum reform; Characteristics of the training of nurses and National Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Nursing courses and curricula. Conclusion: There was adherence was found from studies to relevant legislation, and the emphasis on the need for vocational training based on the principles of the Unified Health System.

Descriptors: Nursing, Curriculum, Education, Nursing, Education.
RESUMO

Objetivo: Conhecer quais assuntos tem sido abordados e debatidos nas investigações sobre currículo nos cursos de graduação em enfermagem no Brasil, no período de 2000 a 2013. Método: Utilizaram-se os pressupostos da revisão integrativa de literatura nas bases de dados LILACS, SCIELO, BDENF e ERIC. A análise dos dados foi organizada a partir da pré-análise, exploração do material e interpretação dos resultados. Resultados: Foram selecionados 36 artigos, que possibilitaram a definição de três categorias: pressupostos das reformas curriculares; características da formação profissional de enfermeiros e Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais dos cursos de graduação em Enfermagem e os currículos. Conclusão: Verificou-se aderência dos estudos à legislação pertinente, e a ênfase na necessidade de formação profissional fundamentada nos princípios do Sistema Único de Saúde.

Descritores: Enfermagem, Currículo, Educação em enfermagem, Educação.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Conocer qué temas se han abordado y discutido en la investigación sobre el currículo en los cursos de licenciatura en enfermería en Brasil, en el período 2000-2013. Método: Se utilizaron las hipótesis de la revisión integradora de literatura en las bases de datos LILACS, SCIELO, BDENF y ERIC. El análisis de datos se organizó a partir del pre análisis y exploración de materiales, procesamiento e interpretación de los resultados. Resultados: Se seleccionaron 36 artículos, lo que permitió definir tres categorías: las hipótesis de la reforma curricular; las características de la formación de enfermeros; y las directrices curriculares nacionales para pregrado en enfermería de los cursos de grado y currículos. Conclusión: Se comprobaron la adhesión de los estudios a la legislación pertinente, y el énfasis en la necesidad de formación profesional basado en los principios del Sistema Único de Salud.

Descritores: Enfermería, Currículo, Educación en enfermería, Educación.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the globalization process, both negative and positive, cannot help but demonstrate, that that in a more open and competitive world, education is placed as a priority. In this globalized world, knowledge has a fundamental function, meaning for all countries, a challenge of renewal and upgrade of their educational systems in the direction of the development of the people with a larger field of superior cultural skills, enterprising and autonomous, able to reappropriate of technologized and complex work processes in the world today.1

The educational challenges posed by globalization include, among other things, the need to build dialogs and conceptions of the common world in the curriculum, learning methodologies, forms of organization of graduate course schools, the educational use of new information and communication technologies, the initial training and continuing education of teachers, among other items, seeking areas of integration and cooperation.

In this context recorded to changes in professional care process in nursing, with attempting to distance from a knowledge centered on the technique and biologicist and turning to the production of integrated knowledge, covering a relational and collective perspective thus paying attention to human needs.2

In this scenario, nursing education needed to find new ways to prepare and develop the professionals with critical reflexive competences, with ethical and aesthetic commitment with the other, capable of achieving the new health policies of the country. The learning, doubts and challenges that result from these changes in the training of nurses, instigate us to develop research, activities and reflections in undergraduate nursing education area, trying to propose and test alternatives (methods and technologies) quality improvement the teaching-learning process and evaluation of courses, programs and nursing projects.

Faced with this reality intensifies the need to deepen the studies about the curriculum of graduate courses, since these influence the process of formation and “acquires centrality, because not only is knowledge, as also is a process that acquires form and meaning, in accordance with the organization in which it takes place and in function of space and time in which materializes itself”4,5,7.

In Brazil, some documents provide guidance on priorities and the treatment that should be considered when preparing the objectives for school education, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (1996), the National Curriculum Standards (1998) and State (1998), further highlighting the National Curriculum Guidelines (2001) for the training of nursing professionals, indicating the need to build a political pedagogical project aimed at the formation of citizens, as well as professionals.

From the institutional political changes noticed since the decade of 1960, and magnified in the decade of 1970, the discussions on the curricular thematic seem to have still not produced the desired effect. The inclusion of controversial topics such as training for skills, complementary activities, flexible core, among others, is justified by the need of a social and cultural context for understanding the behaviors and personal values.

The basic parameters for the behavior of people are not built only through the contents of disciplines, experiences, goals of any teaching method. are should be added, inseparably, areas such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, biology, medicine, history, without forgetting thus the changes that these parameters have suffered in recent years.

It is in this perspective of building a democratic knowledge, considering the intimacy between subject and object, mediated by an inter-subjective communicative action, the study proposed here, presents itself as an important reference. It could be on the empirical data, where the exploratory time of knowledge cannot be separated from the contexts in which it develops, from which part of the dialectical analysis to concrete and conscious situated educators, social and historically, against the curriculum of undergraduate courses in nursing.
It is understood that the knowledge about the world, nature and other men will never be the product of an alien mind to everyday concerns, this perspective is that the study proposed here aims to know what issues have been discussed and debated in investigations curriculum in undergraduate nursing courses in Brazil, from 2000 to 2013. The definition of a research topic arises from the need to know the process of change in the formation of nurses in the period that follows the definition of the National Curricular Guidelines (NCG).

METHOD

Qualitative research based on the assumptions of the integrative review of literature. The steps were conducted as follows: a) identification of the theme and choice of the research question; b) definition of the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies; c) definition of the information to be extracted from the selected studies; d) Sample selection; e) inclusion of the selected studies in table format built from Microsoft Excel, organized by the year; f) assessment of studies included; g) discussion and analysis of results; g) final presentation of the study.4

The inclusion criteria were: a) works published in the form of scientific articles with availability of the text in its entirety that discuss the curricular trends, the pedagogical trends and the pedagogical projects of undergraduate courses in nursing; b) published in national and international journals; c) languages: Portuguese, English and Spanish; d) period: 2000 to 2013.

Research and reports were excluded published by other areas of knowledge other than nursing; type articles: literature reviews unsystematic, letters, reviews, editorials; type publications: books; book chapters; government publications; newsletters; theses; dissertations; monographs and completion of course work; studies that are not available online in full format for analysis and duplicate studies.

This investigation began after consulting the databases LILACS, SCIELO BDENF and ERIC through descriptors (Figure 1).

![Figure 1 - Quantitative (n) of articles found (E) and selected (S) after integrative review by the database. Florianópolis/SC, 2014.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Databases</th>
<th>Found</th>
<th>Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LILACS</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIELO</td>
<td>1,948</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDENF</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total found:</strong> 3,794</td>
<td><strong>Total Selected:</strong> 36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data analysis occurred from the operative proposal for qualitative data analysis, that structure through the moments of pre-analysis (floating reading of the corpus of articles collected), Exploration of the material (structured from the definition of the categories of analysis that meet the objectives of the revision), and treatment and interpretation of results. The categories are presented in the format of narratives, being discussed and guided as pertinent scientific literature.5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There were 3,794 articles identified that, after reading the full and submission to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulted in 36. From the total, 1,262 were repeated in databases, 955 were outside of the temporal cutout, 237 available only in the abstract format, 1,150 had no adhesion to the thematic and 157 consisted in editorials, summaries, dissertations or theses (Figure 2).

![Figure 2 - Diagram of the result of the implementation of the search filters, limits and criteria for inclusion of articles.](image)
The SciELO and LILACS databases revealed the greater number of productions found. The low number of productions in the BDENF and databases highlights the lack of scientific production on the subject in the nursing area.

There were 36 articles selected (Figure 3 and 4), of these, 34 with qualitative approach and two with a quantitative approach. The wide possibility of studies about the curriculum of undergraduate courses in nursing showed the different contexts. This influenced the organization and the development of curriculum and the debates on the training for nursing. It was observed that the years 2003 (nine articles) and 2007 (eight articles) were the most significant numerically. In addition, between the studied years, we observed an increase in the number of publications from 2003 and decline from 2008. In the years 2009, 2011 and 2013 not found themselves publications that met the criteria of inclusion in this study.

With relation to periodicals, the Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem published 20 of 36 articles used for this review. The Revista da Escola de Enfermagem of the University of São Paulo published five articles, the Latin American Journal of Nursing, four and the magazine Science, care and health, two articles. The other journals published an article each on the subject over the last 13 years.

**Figure 3 - Synthesis of the articles of agreement with the name of the first author, publication year, reviewed and title. Florianópolis/SC, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS, YEAR</th>
<th>JOURNAL</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bagnato VHS (2012)</td>
<td>Curriculum Without Borders</td>
<td>Curriculum recontextualization in nursing teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis strategies applied to studies have enabled the definition of three categories: Assumptions of curriculum reforms; Characteristics of the training of nurses and the National Curriculum Guidelines for graduate courses in nursing and curricula.

**Assumptions of curriculum reforms**

Nursing curriculum have undergone several transformations over the years, changes taking place in accordance with the demands that arose. In the 1970s the curriculum had a perspective pointing to the model of biologicist and hospital-centric care marked by curriculum organization based in subdivision by medical specialties. Since the 1980s, with the creation of the Unified Health System (SUS) based on universality, integrality, decentralization and community participation, education in the area of health has incorporated a great challenge: to train professionals qualified to act technical, social and politically in the construction of SUS, with a view to the consolidation of Health reform.4, 7

Yet in the 1980s, there was a reflection of the nurses from the data of morbidity of the population, which should be worked with the collective, providing services that hurt the entire population, decreasing the indices of morbidity. This time the category is replaced worry about changes in the curriculum working in scientific research for a higher quality in higher education.8

In the following decade, the undergraduate nursing courses begin the restructuring of their curricula full, constructing collectively curricular proposals based on the principles of the SUS and the concept of health expanded, strengthening the linkage between theory/practice and teaching/service with a view to the consolidation of SUS.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS, YEAR</th>
<th>JOURNAL</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marques MFM (2005)</td>
<td>Revista Lusófona de Educação</td>
<td>Between the continuity and innovation. The higher education of nursing and the pedagogical practices of nursing professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berardinelli LMM, Santos MLSC (2005)</td>
<td>Texto &amp; Contexto Enferm</td>
<td>Rethinking the interdisciplinarity and the teaching of nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freitas MC, Guedes MVC, Silva LF (2003)</td>
<td>Rev. Bras. Enferm</td>
<td>Nursing course at the State University of Ceará - the history and the current political-pedagogical project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernandes JD, Ferreira SL, La Torre MPS, Rosa DOS, Costa HOG (2003)</td>
<td>Rev. Bras. Enferm</td>
<td>Strategies for the deployment of a new pedagogical proposal in the Bahia Federal University School of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandú ENT (2003)</td>
<td>Rev. Bras. Enferm</td>
<td>Curricular Guidelines and the potentiation of the conditions for changes in the training of nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galleguillo TGB, Oliveira MAC (2001)</td>
<td>Rev. Esc. Enferm. USP</td>
<td>The genesis and the historical development of nursing education in Brazil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The minimum curriculum of 1994 and the Law of Educational Foundations and Guidelines in 1996 they strengthened the education in nursing and brought a new responsibility to teachers, students and society. The construction of a new trajectory of training, considering the evidence of new theoretical-methodological perspectives to be assumed in the professional training of nurses, provoked reflections and discussions, by mobilizing the various segments for adopting new postures, other ideas, other ways of doing. Break with certain structures consolidating supervisors of curriculum and of practices cause uncertainties and insecurities that must be worked with caution, since these practices were configuring experiences, knowledge and meanings that they now need-can be problematized (scrutinized) and reviewed.

The change in the curricula of the undergraduate nursing course aims to increase the integration between disciplines and the departments, the autonomy of the student and adopt the formation with the focus in the Unified Health System. Curriculum reform is focused on training generalist nurses with technical, scientific and ethical-political competence to provide nursing care to individuals, families and social groups. It should also be highlighted that because it is a dynamic process, some challenges may arise during the process of curricular reformulation requiring new strategies for its (re)targeting.

The proposed changes to the internships, approaching that of attempts to overcome the hospital-centric biologist perspective. From 1994 we sought to structure the internships based on integrality and articulation between theory/practice and teaching/service, with views to the construction of SUS, process intensified in 2001 with the implementation of the National Curriculum Guidelines.

The reforms have been developed by means of collective construction of projects, interest and adoption of new methods of teaching and proposals for construction of integrated syllabuses. These arise through reflections on the daily problems, diversity of subject and of power relations. is concerned, also, with how these changes will be reflected in the role of the student and in conceptions of nursing. Now the student is seen as inducer of their formation, in a logic of nursing Person centered, now defends the idea of a passive student, with nursing focused on disease. This dilemma does not seem to have been largely overcome, constituting a difficult choice in the daily life of the nurse professors.

Characteristics of the professional training of nurses

The vocational training has been guided, increasingly in the Single Health System, a generalist education and the assumptions of humanization, indicating that the challenges for vocational training are multiple, because the social needs of the contemporary world encourage universities to seek ways of being close to these demands, as well as provide training able to answer them. There is a concern with the training and professional development of the nurse, the studies point to the need of the transformation of the care model for a model of work in a multiprofessional team, aiming at the consolidation of the Unified Health System. In Figures 3 and 4, previewing the articles that have covered this category. The training of nurses signals reflections on a change movement in the pedagogical practices and of attention to health as a fundamental strategy to build the integrality of care.

It is perceived that there is a bipolarity, a speech dichotomous and polarized between students when talking about changes in nursing education, one of the positions defended between them is the innovation with the student as the protagonist of his training and with a conception of nursing centered on the person; while others defend the continuity in the passive role of the student and the conception of nursing focused on disease.

In the speeches of some graduates there are some contradictions between the theoretical-practical training and professional praxis, which represents a challenge in daily academic nursing. Therefore, it is understood that if need explore teaching strategies, such as the active methodologies, to promote a greater approximation between training and the professional exercise. Another point pointed to the reflection is the possibility of extension of the participation of the student and the teacher in the production of knowledge relevant to the health needs in the fields of practice, articulated to the public health policies.

The National Curriculum Guidelines for undergraduate nursing courses and curricula

The National Curricular Guidelines (NCG) may have the purpose to provide references for the formulation of Pedagogical Political Projects that articulate both political and social demands of society more widely as to local needs and interests, without stick to or subsuming ourselves in them.

The consolidated curriculum by NCGE caused modifications and reformulations in teaching which have caused tension between the legal fields and pedagogical, therefore, should not be taken as “magic formula” that provides all the answers, already that the historical context-socio-political-economic-cultural must be the largest “guide” for the reconstruction of the Pedagogical Political Projects. Recognize the values of the proposal for the profile of students, however, it becomes important to prioritize new goals and restructure content, offering conditions for the operation of the courses, balancing workloads allocation and doing work collective, being possible to create, signify and experiencing its own ways.

The curricular changes always had the concern to adapt the education of the nurse to the interests of the labor market. However, the challenge is broader and there is the need to transpose this interest, in order to enter effectively the future nurses in the health system.
It highlights the importance of a national policy for investments in order that the curriculum changes can be continuously actioned, according to the needs of every moment in history. The use and adoption of training for skills may have produced a new employee profile, reinforcing the issue of social responsibility of education as training of citizens. Educators need to teach qualification aimed at another profile and is possible to think in a new work ethic, based on the proposed changes, which will contribute to the development of self-criticism and professional responsibility.3,4,6

The adherence index of nursing courses to the guidelines was considered low, pointing to the need for schools seeking better link between the adoption of the epistemological bases present in the guidelines and the proposals contained in the pedagogical political projects.29,37 However, it points to the need, in implementing the PPP, the NCG will be overcome by bringing innovative proposals, critical and creative, focused on the principles of the Unified Health System (SUS).25,28,9,38

The role of the teacher facilitator in moments of pedagogical cycle, also the appreciation of experience in Basic health care scenario, based on interaction theory and professional practice and the approach of the assumptions by SUS, since the beginning of the course, are important aspects in the discussions.39

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of production on the curriculum of undergraduate courses in nursing permitted to be identified its adherence to the relevant legislation, emphasizing the need for formation of a nursing professional with skills to meet the demands of health care of the population, based on the principles of SUS.

We emphasize the increasing need to study the curriculum of undergraduate courses in health, especially nursing to deepen the knowledge of the paths that have led professional training, as well as the gaps that still find this educational working process, thus achieving the possibility of higher quality for the health of the population and also for strengthening and growth of the profession.

REFERENCES


