Challenges of academic monitoring of Stomatology in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic: experience report

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ABSTRACT

This article has a descriptive character and aims to report the experience of monitoring in the discipline of Stomatology, developed in the undergraduate course in Dentistry, in view of the new Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). In face of the pandemic scenario, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), through Ordinance No. 343, authorized the use of digital resources as an alternative for continuing academic activities. In this context, the experience of the Academic Monitoring Program took place through the *Blackboard* digital platform, making it necessary to reframe the activities of the student-monitor and the teaching methodologies used, developing skills inherent to teaching and significantly contributing to the teaching-learning process of the monitored students facing the new reality established by the pandemic. It is concluded that the use of digital platforms was essential for the exercise of monitoring activity and the continuity of the school semester, making it possible to find new alternatives for the health education process.

Descriptors: Dentistry. COVID-19. Students.

1 INTRODUCTION

Dentistry has a wide field of action, acting on the entire stomatognathic system, that is, on the entire area corresponding to the face, neck, oral cavity, musculature, bones, joints and adjacent tissues[1]. According to the Federal Council of Dentistry (CFO), among the various specialties in the field of dentistry, Stomatology is responsible for the "*prevention, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of diseases of the mouth and associated structures, in addition to oral manifestations of systemic diseases, as well as the diagnosis and prevention of systemic diseases that may interfere with dental treatment*" [2, 3].

The diagnostic construction process in Stomatology is based on the analysis of the

characteristics of the clinical examination, associated with the knowledge of pathological entities and their microscopic aspects[4], requiring different forms of teaching-learning in order to integrate theory with practice[5]. In this context, among the ways to encourage education is the Academic Monitoring Program (PROMAC), which significantly contributes to integrated training in the scope of teaching, research and extension[6].

It is the responsibility of the student monitor to perform various activities, such as supporting academics who are taking the course, preparing and assisting in the resolution of directed studies, helping to understand the contents taught and clarifying doubts through review classes, with the supervision of the teacher advisor.

However, given the global health crisis caused by the pandemic of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) detected on December 31, 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China[7,8], social isolation became a preventive action, causing the interruption of activities of most institutions around the world, creating new challenges for the educational system.

Consequently, it was necessary to adapt and modernize the education process according to the needs, in order to keep up with the changes taking place in the world. Soon, audiovisual technological resources became important allies for education. Therefore, on March 17, 2020, through Ordinance No. 343, the Ministry of Education (MEC) approved the emergency measure that authorized all public and private educational institutions, at different educational levels, to adopt Education resources Distance Learning (EaD) as an alternative teaching measure[9].

Based on this problem, this descriptive study was carried out, aiming to report the experience in the Academic Monitoring Program for the 2020.1 academic semester, developed in the Stomatology curriculum component of the Bachelor's Degree in the Dentistry course at the University Center of João Pessoa (UNIPÊ), in addition to demonstrating the importance of monitoring as a learning tool for academic training and development.

2 EXPERIENCE REPORT

The Stomatology subject is part of the curricular components of the fifth period of the Dentistry course at UNIPÊ. It has a workload of 100 hours, divided into 20 hours of theoretical lectures, through audiovisual resources and active methodologies such as Team Based Learning (TBL), and 80 hours of patient care in the dental school clinic.

The teaching plan includes a broad programmatic content involving semiotechnics, semiogenesis and clinical propaedeutics of the pathologies of the maxillomandibular complex. From this perspective, its main objective is to integrate technical and scientific knowledge so that the academic is able to suggest diagnostic hypotheses and therapeutic protocols, in addition to properly conducting the follow-up of patients who need to maintain changes in the oral cavity. As a result, the help of monitors in the teaching-learning process is of fundamental importance for the development of these skills.

However, as a result of the global outbreak of COVID-19 and the abrupt interruption of face-to-face activities, higher education institutions (HEIs) had to reassess their methodologies to adapt to a new way of mediating the teaching-learning process.

For this reason, in order to continue the academic semester, UNIPÊ's theoretical classes started to be taught remotely and synchronously, punctually, at the time of the course, using the Blackboard platform and Collaborate resource provided by the institution, accessed from

computers, tablets or mobile phones connected to the internet. For this purpose, meetings, planning by the teachers with the coordination and training were held, so that the learning process was not harmed.

Although widely referred to as synonyms, remote education is distinguished - by its emergency nature - from EaD[10], using digital means to meet academic needs that once regularly existed in the presential classroom environment.

Based on this assumption, the Blackboard platform offers a virtual environment in which classes previously designed for the classroom format can be taught synchronously, with real-time interaction (figure 1) and recording feasibility (figure 2). In addition, it has asynchronous (non-instant) tools such as file sharing, discussion forums, quizzes and recorded lessons.

As it is a complex subject, it has the support of two monitors, designated by the selection process, who during the period of social isolation played a very important role in the learning process.

The monitors went through a training phase together with the course coordination, so that they were able to use the resources offered by the platform. For this, they were inserted as moderators in the virtual room of the discipline (figure 3), which can be accessed by regularly enrolled scholars, monitors and teachers. It is in this environment that all activities are carried out.

During the semester, the monitors followed all the theoretical classes taught so that they could be updated on the progress of the subject. In addition, to provide greater teaching support, a timetable was established for holding virtual meetings, in order to resolve doubts about the contents, through reviews, active methodologies and shifts to clarify questions. Furthermore, a virtual classroom for monitoring and a message group (*WhatsApp*) was created in order to facilitate communication between monitors and students.

Regarding the methodologies used, we highlight the directed studies and the synchronous review classes, under the guidance of teachers and based on the recommended bibliography in the teaching plan of the subject, involving the contents that generated doubts or difficulty in understanding by the students – emphasizing the importance of group messaging for effective dialogue. Allied to this, the student who was unable to participate due to network connection problems would have the opportunity to watch the recording at a later time (Figure 4). The topics most requested by the students were (a) Fundamental injuries; (b) Basis of diagnosis: clinical examination and complementary exams; (c) Infectious diseases with repercussions in the oral cavity (viral, bacterial and fungal); and (d) White lesions of the oral cavity.

Among the active methodologies studied worldwide, problem-based learning is emphasized – PBL (Problem Based Learning). Thus, the discussion of clinical cases through *quizzes* (figure 5) provided by teachers was essential to improve the learning and assimilation of theory applied to practice.

Thus, the students were led to think about the correct way to perform the anamnesis and physical examination, to know which additional tests to request, as well as to analyze the diagnostic hypotheses and treatment planning, taking into account the particularities of each patient.

In addition, asynchronous complementary methods were used, such as the availability of articles, abstracts and questionnaires prepared by the monitors, in order to assist the student in the learning process, favoring the exchange and sharing of knowledge between monitor-students in an active and collaborative way.

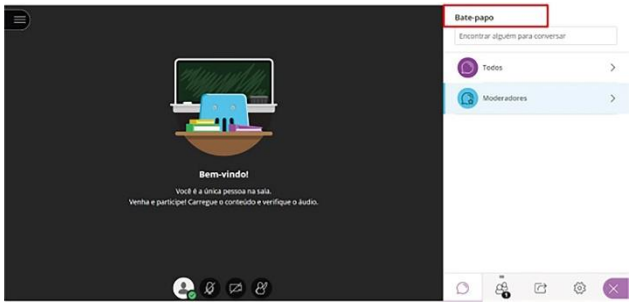

Figure 1. Real-time chat tool. Translation: chat. Everybody. Moderators. Welcome! You are the only one in this room. Come and join! Load contents and check your audio

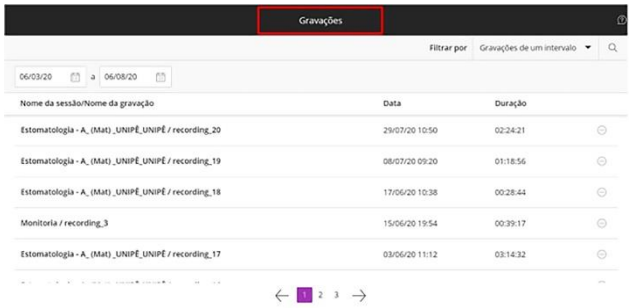

Figure 4. List of recorded classes and tutoring. Translation: recordings. 03/06/2020 to 08/06/2020. Filter. Name of the Session. Date. Duration

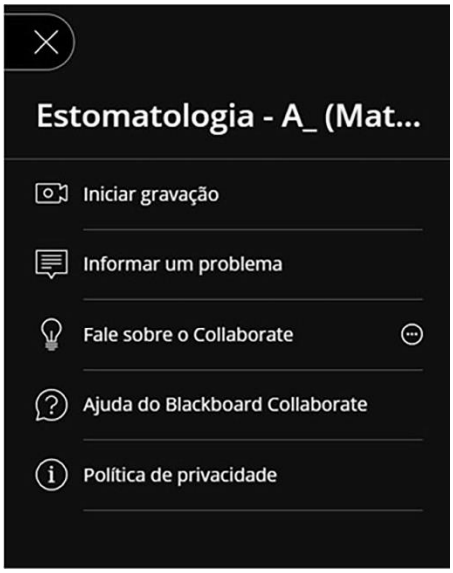

Figure 2. Activity recording tool. Translation: Stomatology – A. Start recording. Report a problem. Talk to Collaborate. Blackboard Collaborate Help. Privacy Policy

Figure 3. Virtual room of the Stomatology discipline. Translation: Stomatology A – Subject – UNIPÊ. Instructors. Details and Actions. List of Participants. Course Description. Groups of the course. Blackboard Collaborate

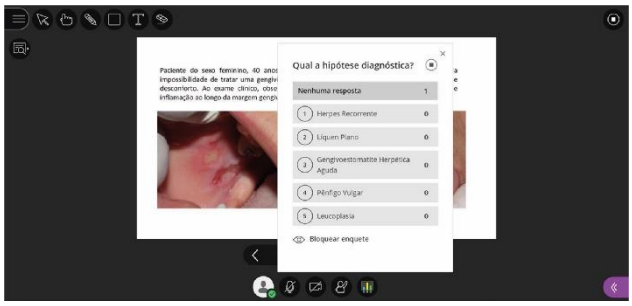

Figure 5. Clinical cases presentation and interactive *quiz*

The resources available on the platform also allowed for a quantitative analysis of the performance of students enrolled in the Stomatology discipline during the 2020.1 semester.

It is important to emphasize that the use of technological resources caused abrupt adaptations in the pedagogical scenario, however they became essential for the mediation of teaching during the emergency period. However, there are controversies regarding the changes implemented, since access to the internet is still restricted to a portion of students in Brazil[10], and it is necessary to review the policies to promote and democratize access to knowledge made available on the internet.

From this study, it can be seen that the use of the Blackboard platform was essential for the continuity of the school semester, since it is easy to work and has didactic resources that provide

instant interaction between moderators (teachers/instructors) and students.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The information from this study allowed us to conclude that the monitoring experience, associated with the use of digital platforms, is essential in the teaching-learning process, as it was able to reframe the teaching methodologies and activities developed by the monitors, contributing to a better performance of students enrolled in the discipline of Stomatology during the semester 2020.1.

RESUMO

Desafios da monitoria acadêmica de Estomatologia frente à pandemia COVID-19: relato de experiência

O presente artigo possui caráter descritivo e tem como objetivo relatar a experiência da monitoria na disciplina de Estomatologia, desenvolvida no curso de graduação em Odontologia do [texto ocultado], frente à pandemia do novo Coronavírus (COVID-19). Diante do cenário pandêmico, o Ministério da Educação e Cultura (MEC), por meio da Portaria Nº 343, autorizou a utilização de recursos digitais como alternativa para a continuidade das atividades acadêmicas. Nesse contexto, a vivência do Programa de Monitoria Acadêmica ocorreu através da plataforma digital *Blackboard*, sendo necessário ressignificar as atividades do aluno-monitor e metodologias de ensino utilizadas, desenvolvendo habilidades inerentes à docência e contribuindo significativamente para o processo de ensino-aprendizagem dos discentes monitorados frente a nova realidade estabelecida pela pandemia. Conclui-se que a utilização de plataformas digitais foi fundamental para o exercício da atividade de monitoria e a continuidade do semestre letivo, possibilitando encontrar novas alternativas para o processo de educação em saúde.

Descritores: Odontologia. COVID-19. Estudantes.

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