

Academic reception and reconfiguration of educational models during the COVID-19 Pandemic: experience report

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Abstract The present article aims to report the experience of applying digital tools in virtual meetings to welcome students entering the Dentistry course at the State University of Piauí (UESPI) during the social isolation phase resulting from the new coronavirus pandemic in 2020. The extension action was carried out in five virtual meetings using the Google Meet meeting platform and collaborative tools such as Padlet, Mentimeter and Google Forms were applied to integrate the group. The participation of freshmen was full, 100% of students enrolled in the first period of the course were present at the meetings. Given the uncertainties regarding the start of the academic period in 2020, the proposal made was successful in its main objective of welcoming new students and establishing a bond with the UESPI Dentistry course family. In this way, the experience proved to be positive, providing students with a welcome during the most critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic and strong social isolation.

Descriptors: Community-Institutional Relations. Education, Dental. Social Isolation. COVID-19.

Recepción académica y reconfiguración de modelos educativos durante la pandemia COVID-19: relato de experiencia

Resumen Este artículo tiene como objetivo relatar la experiencia de aplicación de herramientas digitales en reuniones virtuales de bienvenida a estudiantes que ingresan a la carrera de Odontología de la Universidad Estadual de Piauí (UESPI) durante la fase de aislamiento social derivada de la pandemia del nuevo coronavirus en 2020. La acción de extensión se llevó a cabo en cinco reuniones virtuales utilizando la plataforma de reuniones Google Meet y se aplicaron herramientas colaborativas como Padlet, Mentimeter y Google Forms para la integración del grupo. La participación de los estudiantes matriculados en el primer periodo del curso. Ante las incertidumbres respecto al inicio del periodo académico del año 2020, la propuesta realizada tuvo éxito en su objetivo principal de dar la bienvenida a nuevos estudiantes y establecer un vínculo con la familia de carreras de Odontología de la UESPI. De esta manera, la experiencia resultó positiva, brindando a los estudiantes una acogida durante el período más crítico de la pandemia de COVID-19 y de fuerte aislamiento social.

Descriptores: Relaciones Comunidad-Institución. Educación en Odontología. Aislamiento Social. COVID-19.

Acolhimento acadêmico e reconfiguração dos modelos educacionais durante a pandemia de COVID-19: relato de experiência

Resumo O presente artigo objetiva relatar a experiência da aplicação de ferramentas digitais em encontros virtuais para o acolhimento de alunos ingressantes do curso de Odontologia da Universidade Estadual do Piauí (UESPI) durante a fase de isolamento social advinda da pandemia do novo coronavírus no ano de 2020. A ação extensionista foi realizada em cinco encontros virtuais por meio da plataforma de reuniões *Google Meet* e foram aplicadas ferramentas colaborativas como *Padlet, Mentimeter* e *Google Forms* para integração do grupo. A participação dos ingressantes foi integral, 100% dos estudantes matriculados no primeiro período do curso se fizeram presentes nos encontros. Diante das incertezas relativas ao início do período letivo no ano de 2020, a proposta realizada obteve êxito no objetivo principal de acolher os ingressantes e estabelecer o vínculo com a família do curso de Odontologia da UESPI. Desta forma a experiência mostrou-se positiva, proporcionando uma

acolhida dos discentes durante o período mais crítico da pandemia de COVID-19 e forte isolamento social.

Descritores: Relações Comunidade-Instituição. Educação em Odontologia. Isolamento Social. COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a viral infectious disease known to cause serious respiratory problems. In January 2020, the situation triggered by this disease led international health bodies to declare it as a public health emergency and shortly afterwards, in March of the same year, COVID-19 was recognized as a pandemic¹. The coronavirus transmission routes can occur through intimate contact with bodily fluids², and transmission can also occur when someone touches infected objects and then brings their hands to their face, in direct contact with the eyes and nose. The incubation period of the virus can vary from seven to 14 days, during which infected people must maintain social distancing and monitor signs and symptoms^{3,4}.

Given these characteristics that are inseparable from the means of transmission and contagion of the new coronavirus, health professionals, including dentists, are at high risk of infection, due to the characteristics inherent to their professional practices and office and hospital environments⁵. However, it is not only these professionals who are exposed to the high risks of coronavirus infection. University students are also exposed to the transmission routes of this pathogen, since health education requires students to spend a large workload focused on laboratories and clinics caring for patients⁶.

Furthermore, higher education students are a public characterized by strong active social contact and intense mobility not only inter-regionally but also internationally in academic-scientific knowledge exchange practices, thus facilitating episodes of health emergencies when a case of COVID-19 is found among these groups of young people⁷.

Given the social distancing adopted by most higher education institutions in Brazil, the education of future health professionals faces constant challenges to not only adapt to changes in teaching and behavior but also seek ways to introduce and welcome new entrants into their curricular structure which, little by little, adapted to offering remote or hybrid education to the detriment of traditional face-to-face classroom interaction^{6,8,9}.

One of these changes arising from the impact of COVID-19 on higher education can be cited as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in emergency remote teaching (ERT). Such tools are defined as a set of physical and digital devices, whose main focus is the storage and sharing of information between individuals and occupy a prominent place in ERE, as these digital tools allow interaction between students and teachers through virtual platforms , thus enabling new forms of relationships and exploration of new teaching resources¹⁰.

In this context, this article seeks to report the experience of applying digital teaching tools used in ERT to welcome students entering the Dentistry course at the State University of Piauí (UESPI) during the phase of social isolation resulting from the new coronavirus pandemic. in the year 2020.

EXPERIENCE REPORT

According to what is determined by the National Curricular Guidelines (DCN), the training process of health professionals must rely on articulation and mutual involvement between the educational institution, students and their teachers, who contribute, given their professional experience, to the formation of knowledge, practices and experiences that are fundamental to the training of their students, in addition to being capable of accepting in an open, generous, conscious and critical way all the processes and trajectories of their students^{6,11}.

Faced with the difficulties imposed by the new coronavirus pandemic, dental education faced challenges in adapting to the changes resulting from social distancing practices adopted by 90% of Brazilian Federal Universities. As a way to overcome these obstacles to traditional teaching, some universities in the country have adopted changes, even if

provisionally, in their curricular matrix, starting to offer ERT to the detriment of face-to-face interaction in traditional classrooms, including digital tools that assist in the process. of teaching and learning⁸.

The role of universities received a prominent place during the pandemic and social isolation that afflicted the entire planet, due to the contribution of these institutions with their innovative and adaptive extension activities aimed at combating the impacts of COVID-19 on Brazilian higher education^{12,13}.

In this sense, the Board of the Dentistry Course together with the Dean of Extension and Community Affairs of the State University of Piauí, understanding the importance and prominent role that the University plays in presenting new ways of not only educating but also welcome, they carried out a university extension remotely aimed at incoming students enrolled in the first semester of their degree, before the start of the academic period, during the social isolation phase resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in the months of July and August 2020.

The extension, entitled "Odonto UESPI Family: Freshman Welcome Week" was carried out in five virtual meetings using the Google Meet virtual meeting platform and, for the first time in the history of the course, collaborative learning tools were applied, such as Padlet, Mentimeter and Google Forms, virtually, for group integration (Table 1). The project included the active participation of several members of the institution's academic community, such as the course coordinator, professors and veteran students.

Collaborative Tool	Description	Welcome Activity
Google Meet	Web platform for video conferencing.	The tool was the main means of meeting all participants, through its resources, interaction occurred between all students and teachers, sharing screens, audios and reports.
Padlet	Real-time collaboration web platform.	Applied for student presentation, sharing texts and images about the questions: "Who am I?" "Where I come from?".
Mentimeter	Online platform for creating and sharing interactive slideshows.	Used as a resource for interaction and questioning about: "Why the Dental School?" / "Why our Institution?"
WhatsApp	Instant messaging application.	Used to exchange information and reports.

Table 1. Used collaborative tools.

Given the understanding of the degree of importance they play in the academic training of their students, two professors from the permanent staff of the UESPI Dentistry course reported to the 22 students participating in the action (8 senior students and 14 freshmen) about the beginning, consolidation, the achievements, efforts to overcome structural difficulties and challenges rooted in low public investment in education in the country. Such reports contributed to the new students' understanding that the highlight of the historical improvement of the course they chose to enroll in is not only the result of the commitment of the teaching staff but also the victorious strength of their students, not satisfied with the idea of academic stagnation, always seeking quality intellectual production, extension actions that modify the local reality and the technical practices inherent in the profile of graduates graduated from the institution.

The extension actions developed within the UESPI Dentistry course were also addressed by the veteran students themselves, as a way of instructing and encouraging freshmen, from the first periods of graduation, about the transformative social importance that university extension projects have not only for the community in which they are inserted as well as for the consolidation of their academic and professional lives.

Students recently arriving at the course, through reports from veteran students and their teachers, were able to learn about the care actions aimed at the fishing population in the municipality of Parnaíba developed by the extension project entitled "Mouth Cancer Prevention"¹⁴. The freshmen were also able to follow the reports on oral health care activities for children assisted by the Diocese of Parnaíba and for patients with Down syndrome, such activities being developed respectively by the extensions entitled "UESPI Odonto" and "Sorrisos Especiais"^{15, 16}.

University research gives rise to a new way of learning for students, consolidating knowledge through methodologies that will make them familiar with an object of study and ratify the importance of this teaching element at undergraduate level. Therefore, you can only learn by researching¹⁷. This understanding of the degree of importance of research within Brazilian universities allows the progressive maturation of the student during their graduation and justifies the Institutional Scientific Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBIC)¹⁸. With this premise, students and professors explained the institution's guidelines for developing research projects.

The differences and responsibilities of each Pro-Rector were also discussed. The new students were able to understand the role of the Dean of Extension and Community Affairs (PREX), which governs and manages all existing extension projects within the university, and understood the role of the Dean of Research (PROP), which is intended for matters relating to research carried out within the institution, coordinating groups and projects and managing annual notices such as the PIBIC.

As one of the ways adopted to integrate new students into the university environment of the UESPI dentistry course, the freshman welcome week introduced them to the Associação Atlética Acadêmico Nociva (A. A. A. Nociva). AAs are part of academic sports leagues that promote sociability and leisure among university students, providing social interaction with other students with whom they have similarities and with whom they identify. It was observed, therefore, that AAs became the main responsible for promoting sociability and leisure practices among academics, helping them to strengthen ties and social interaction during the period's social distancing measures¹⁹.

There is no way to idealize a teaching-learning process restricted to activities carried out in school clinics. It is necessary that knowledge is also built through contact with professionals working in the job market, considered a trainer, in addition to expanding the professional vision within the context of their development, so that the graduate can add experiences and build their own knowledge to practice their profession consciously²⁰. Based on this, the freshman welcome week promoted a virtual meeting between graduates, opening spaces for discussions that permeate the first years outside the university and professional modeling for the practice of Dentistry in the micro-region that surrounds the Professor Alexandre Alves de Oliveira da campus. UESPI.

Among the reports are the primary difficulties that being a dental surgeon goes beyond knowing how to perform dental procedures, but it is also essential to know and manage your workplace and assume an entrepreneurial role. Reports from graduates showed the importance of continued education even when outside the walls of the university and the need to seek understanding that dentistry demands from its graduates the dexterity of combining knowledge about liberal market practices and the activity of your profession.

The extension week to welcome freshmen students also included the presentation of the course pedagogical project (PPC) and its curricular matrix by the coordination of the Dentistry course at the State University of Piauí.

Knowing the professional profile guides and assists changes in the profession, new trends and needs in the job market, in addition to contributing not only to future decisions by undergraduate course managers, but also plays an important role for those who have just entered their area of training²¹,²². In this way, the coordination of the UESPI Dentistry course, based on the DCN, showed incoming students what should be expected from the training of future dental surgeons: a generalist, humanist, critical and reflective professional, to work at all levels of health care, based on technical and scientific rigor²³.

The digital tools used, such as Google classroom, in order to mediate the teaching-learning process have gained a prominent place around the globe and have remodeled educational models and are shown to be a real and concrete possibility of teaching in which the virtual environment is capable of providing^{24,25}. The use of ICTs in higher education in the country is indisputable in the pandemic scenario caused by COVID-19, intensifying investment in the technological training of teachers for the inclusion and handling of these tools in the university context²⁴.

Examples of this inclusion of ICTs in ERT include the recording of classes and their availability on online platforms such as YouTube; the administration of tests using Google Forms and the creation of a virtual classroom with materials available in different formats (videos, PDFs, links to electronic addresses), facilitating communication between students

and teachers. Furthermore, instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp and the creation of groups further facilitate communication and interaction between teachers and students²⁶.

The Moodle platform was another prominent ICT in ERT, which consists of a virtual room that provides teachers and students with a personalized learning environment, providing and sharing access to forums, wikis, chats and blogs that are collaborative tools for the progress of virtual classes²⁷.

Virtual classes proved to be effective in meeting their objectives, reconfiguring standard educational models. The participation of freshmen was full, all 14 students enrolled in the first period were present at the proposed meetings.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this article was to highlight the importance of developing teaching and integration alternatives in public universities at the current time of confronting COVID-19, as well as providing students entering the Dentistry course with the necessary integration and welcoming into the community. academic through the reconfiguration of educational teaching models in 2020.

This experience report confirms the importance of recognizing and continually discussing the country's teaching-learning practices and their relationships, aimed at the training of students and committed to a country and society project. In this sense, understanding the university's integrating mechanisms contributes to criticality and dialogue about higher education policies that, in addition to being committed, are truly feasible, from the perspective of social emancipation and the exercise of citizenship, especially in this new pandemic scenario in that society reinvents itself, in order to face not only the physical, psychological and economic ills caused by COVID-19, but also in the sense of reviewing values, concepts, attitudes and behaviors in relation to traditional teaching-learning.

Given the uncertainties regarding the beginning of the academic period, the proposal was successful in its main objective of welcoming new students and establishing a bond with the UESPI Dentistry course family. The initial difficulty in locating the students was resolved by the assistance of the Academic Center, which contacted the new students through social networks, managing to locate them and invite them to participate in the project. In this way, the experience proved to be positive, providing a welcome for students during the most critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic and strong social isolation.

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