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# Pedagogical reflective practice of nursing undergraduates: the portfolio as an instrument

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PRÁTICA PEDAGÓGICA REFLEXIVA DE LICENCIADOS DE ENFERMAGEM: O PORTFÓLIO COMO INSTRUMENTO

PRÁCTICA PEDAGÓGICA REFLEXIVA DE LICENCIADOS EN ENFERMERÍA: EL PORTAFOLIO COMO INSTRUMENTO

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Analyzing the narratives related to the pedagogical practice experienced during the Supervised Curricular Internship reported in the portfolios of Nursing undergraduate students, regarding the levels of reflection. **Method:** This is a documentary descriptive exploratory study that examined two of the activities proposed for the portfolio preparation. **Results:** Among the 28 analyzed portfolios, all showed the three levels of reflection (technical, critical and metacritical). **Conclusion:** The students had the opportunity to experience the pedagogical practice and presented reflections at metacritical level, reflecting on their performance, the construction of their teaching identity, and about the importance of reflecting on the practice with the objective of transforming it and transforming themselves.

## DESCRIPTORS

Nursing education  
baccalaureate  
Internships  
Learning  
Narration

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Analisar as narrativas relacionadas à prática pedagógica vivenciada durante o Estágio Curricular Supervisionado relatadas nos portfólios de licenciandos de Enfermagem, quanto aos níveis de reflexão. **Método:** Trata-se de um estudo documental exploratório-descritivo que analisou duas das atividades propostas para a elaboração do portfólio. **Resultados:** Mostraram que dos 28 portfólios analisados, todos apresentaram os três níveis de reflexão (técnico, crítico e metacrítico). **Conclusão:** Os estudantes tiveram oportunidade de vivenciar a prática pedagógica e apresentaram reflexões em nível metacrítico, refletindo sobre seu desempenho, sobre a construção da sua identidade docente e sobre a importância de refletir sobre a prática, com o objetivo de transformá-la e transformar-se a si mesmo.

## DESCRIPTORIOS

Educação em enfermagem  
Bacharelado em enfermagem  
Estágios  
Aprendizagem  
Narração

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Analizar las narrativas relacionadas con la práctica pedagógica vivida durante la Pasantía Curricular Supervisada, relatadas en los portafolios de licenciandos en Enfermería, en cuanto a los niveles de reflexión. **Método:** Se trata de un estudio documental exploratorio-descritivo que analizó dos de las actividades propuestas para la confección del portafolio. **Resultados:** Mostraron que de los 28 portafolios analizados, todos presentaron los tres niveles de reflexión (técnico, crítico y metacrítico). **Conclusión:** Los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de vivir la práctica pedagógica y presentaron reflexiones a nivel metacrítico, reflexionando acerca de su desempeño, la construcción de su identidad docente y la importancia de reflexionar acerca de la práctica, a fin de convertirla y convertirse a sí mismo.

## DESCRIPTORIOS

Educación en enfermería  
Bachillerato en enfermería  
Pasantías  
Aprendizaje  
Narración.

\* Extracted from the dissertation "Reflective teaching practice of Nursing undergraduates: the portfolio as an instrument", School of Nursing, Universidade de São Paulo, 2013.<sup>1</sup> PhD Student, Post-graduate Program in Nursing Management, School of Nursing, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, AP, Brazil. <sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Professional Counseling, School of Nursing, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The National Educational Bases and Guidelines Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional - LDB), the National Curriculum Guidelines for undergraduate courses in Nursing, and the demands of the labor market have led health and education professionals to invest in projects that contribute to the training of teachers with skills to act in a critical, reflective and responsible way in the professional education of technical level in Nursing.

Being a teacher requires *more than mastery of specific knowledge where one should act*; it requires a full understanding of the issues involved in one's work, identifying them and solving them independently, and taking responsibility for the decisions taken. Therefore, it means having critical capacity and attitude that allow teachers to evaluate their work, their choices and decisions<sup>(1)</sup>.

The mandatory teacher training for professional education of technical level in nursing was determined by the legal opinion nr. 837/68 of the Chamber of Higher Education, which established the undergraduate course in Nursing. In order to acquire the skills and specific knowledge, the nursing undergraduates need to join internship programs in schools of nursing and health institutions that, according to the COREn Resolution nr. 299/2005, should provide *the opportunity of participating in real situations of life and work within their environment, carried out in the general community or in legal entities of public or private law, under the responsibility and coordination of the educational institute*<sup>(2)</sup>.

The reflection on teaching practice provided by the supervised internship is essential in order that future teachers relate the existing problems within the schools with the theory discussed in the classroom, allowing the construction of new proposals and preparing them for a possible transforming performance<sup>(3)</sup>.

Being a reflective teacher involves the consciousness of a capacity for thought and reflection that characterizes human beings, not as mere reproducers, but as creative subjects in their actions, acting intelligently and flexibly, located and reactive in face of situations often uncertain and unforeseen<sup>(4)</sup>.

The reflective portfolio is a strategy that contributes to reflexive formation and its use has increased significantly in teacher training programs as a learning and assessment tool<sup>(5)</sup>. Its potential has also been explored in Nursing education as a strategy to promote lifelong learning, enhancing personal and professional development<sup>(6)</sup>.

The narratives comprising the reflective portfolios reveal how students experience the lived situations, becoming starting points for reflection that can happen at many levels. The narratives become richer from the time that more significant elements are registered, hence the

importance of recording the facts and also the physical, social and emotional context of the moment<sup>(4)</sup>.

When referring to the use of reflective portfolios in teacher education, Sá-Chaves<sup>(7)</sup> proposes three levels of reflective logic: **technical, critical and metacritical**. At the **technical level**, individuals describe the events that occurred, pondering some elements such as time, space, participants and resources, among others. Opinions may also be issued, giving a more pragmatic character to their actions. At the **critical level**, when critically analyzing the event from an ethical view, individuals report what happened and what could have happened due to some values like fairness, respect, solidarity etc. At the **meta-critical level**, analyzing the situation and themselves, the subjects are recognized as one of the responsible for the focused event<sup>(8)</sup>.

Thinking the formation requires understanding that dialogue assumes a role of great importance, and must happen in three dimensions: *a dialogue with oneself; a dialogue with others including those before us that have built reference knowledge, and a dialogue with the situation itself*. This dialogue cannot remain only in the descriptive level, it needs to reach a *critical and explanatory level that allows teaching professionals to act and speak with the power of reason*<sup>(4)</sup>.

The study of (auto)biographical narratives, held in reflective portfolios, allows deeper understanding of how training teachers mobilize the self-regulatory learning strategies and how their personal and professional experiences affect this autoregulation<sup>(9)</sup>.

The present study aimed to examine the levels of reflection of the narratives related to the pedagogical practice experienced during the Supervised Curricular Internship, reported in the portfolios of undergraduates in Nursing.

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## METHOD

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This is a documentary descriptive and exploratory research. The documentary research draws on materials that have not received an analytical treatment yet, but are a valuable source of information, and old data, among which are included personal letters, diaries, photographs, official letters, etc<sup>(10)</sup>. Exploratory and descriptive research observe and describe the characteristics of certain phenomena and establish relationships between variables, in addition to investigating its complex nature, aiming to provide greater familiarity with the problem in order to make it more explicit or constitute hypotheses<sup>(10-11)</sup>.

The portfolios of undergraduates who completed the discipline of Nursing Teaching Methodology II in the second semester of 2011 and participated of the Supervised Curricular Internship of the undergraduate course in Nursing at a public university in the state of São Paulo

were analyzed. The discipline is offered in the division of *Methodological Foundations of Teaching*, which is focused on theoretical and methodological foundations and on the practices for teacher training. The link between this discipline and the Supervised Curricular Internship ensures the integration between theory and practice<sup>(12)</sup>.

It is a classroom course that uses virtual communication strategies in a complementary manner in the Moodle platform (*Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*), where the portfolios were developed. By creating portfolios in digital media, future teachers have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in technology<sup>(5)</sup>.

The portfolio and the learning route were presented to undergraduate students at the beginning of the course. The route was used in order to guide the portfolio preparation, proposing steps and activities to be carried out during the Supervised Curricular Internship by assisting in the developmental process of reflection and self-evaluation of students.

The items related to the Supervised Curricular Internship and proposed by the portfolio in its *learning route* were analyzed as follows: Activity 1 – *Reflective description of the given lecture*, and Activity 2 – *Reflective description of the supervision in the practice field*. The portfolio was an instrument integrating the evaluation process of the discipline, and its selection criteria was presenting the two activities described above. The narratives obtained from each portfolio underwent thorough reading, and were analyzed in light of the levels of reflection proposed by Sá-Chaves<sup>(7)</sup>, as previously described.

This study is part of the project called it *Evaluation of the teacher training in nursing from the perspective of teachers and undergraduates*, registered in the Plataforma Brasil ([www.saude.gov.br/plataformabrasil](http://www.saude.gov.br/plataformabrasil)) and approved under number 145091. The research project was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Nursing and was released from preparing the Informed Consent due to its documentary nature. Anonymity of all students was guaranteed, as well as the confidentiality of information relating to institutions, teachers and other people quoted in the portfolios.

## RESULTS

Among the 43 class undergraduates, 28 completed their portfolios with the two described activities. The narratives were analyzed in the three levels of reflection already described<sup>(7)</sup>. In the activity of *Reflective description of the given lecture*, all students presented narratives at technical level of reflection, 22 at critical level and 15 at metacritical level. This activity called for an analysis of the lesson plan developed and used by the student in the internship, a reflection on the experience, and the description of what could be improved in subsequent classes.

In the activity of *Reflective description of the supervision in the practice field*, the 28 portfolios presented narratives in technical level, 21 in critical level and 16 at metacritical level. This activity requested a report of the experience in the practice field (hospital or UBS- Unidade Básica de Saúde/Health Unit), pointing out the facilities and difficulties encountered in the monitoring and evaluation of students, and the description of interpersonal relationships involving students, teacher supervisors, staff and patients of the institutions where the internship programs were carried out.

### Activity: Reflexive description of the given lecture

#### Technical level

The narratives at technical level have descriptive characteristics; the students present the facts they consider important for the development of their professional knowledge and include elements such as time, space, participants, resources etc<sup>(7)</sup>. Such details place the student in the field where they experienced the internship, as well as their relationships with colleagues and teacher supervisors of the internship, as shown by the narratives:

Today (14/10), I taught a lecture to the class of nursing technicians. The theme of the lecture was vaccines and cold chain, chosen by the teacher, who gave three issues for me and my girlfriends, spread over two days (days 10 and 14/10) (P4).

Some narratives revealed some opinions and justifications, what also characterizes the technical level by the descriptive aspect:

I wish I had taught a more dynamic class, less theoretical, but the theme did not provide me ideas for this. I wish I had used other teaching strategies such as group discussion, a case study or a simulation, for example, a role-playing with the group, but there was not enough time for it, since the teacher would still teach other classes and do an activity with the class after all that (P3).

The chance of assessing their own performance in the classroom was observed in some narratives, highlighting the importance of this feedback:

The group case study was the resource used for evaluating the learning process of students because it allowed more than student assessment, but the evaluation of my own class through questions or misconceptions that students brought (P6).

An undergraduate student demonstrated good acceptance of the difficulties related to her performance identified by supervisors and students, but the excerpt also has descriptive characteristics:

The teacher praised my class and as a comment, she said I should speak more slowly, possibly because I was nervous, and as the students in this class were very interested, they interrupted me, always asking to resume a concept (P21).

Some narratives related to the self-evaluation and self-perception of undergraduate students in relation to their performance in the classroom, demonstrated potential for narratives at critical level. However, no concrete facts or reasons were mentioned to demonstrate how the undergraduate student has reached such a conclusion, as in the following example:

In general, the experience was very valuable for my learning. It was very different from the other classes I taught in the previous semester, with a much smaller class. Although many things have not happened as planned, dealing with the unexpected and still work within the planned objectives was a surprise for me (P14).

### Critical level

The narratives at critical level involve *reflection on the narrated facts in the episodes by identifying its possible causes as well as the consequences and multiple meanings*<sup>(7)</sup>. These characteristics can be observed in this narrative:

I believe this may have happened because of the teaching strategy that we use. Maybe if we had elaborated something more creative, the students would feel more motivated to participate (P15).

This level also involves the reflection on *the role of context in determining the facts, on the functions and roles played and about the concepts that support them, and also on the new roles and functions that could be performed in light of new conceptions*<sup>(7)</sup>. The undergraduate students start to reflect on the events, realizing the influence of the context and of all the involved:

She (the teacher) was essential for planning, once she follows the students from the beginning of the course, then she knows all the disciplines that they've had, how they had, and furthermore, knows the students well, their characteristics, strengths and difficulties (P2).

Identifying the consequences of certain facts gives the narrative a critical level of reflection. An undergraduate student reflects on the consequences of mastering the subject, as follows:

I still think teaching classes requires that the teacher has a minimum of experience, since students bring a lot of doubts and curiosities. In addition, giving lectures with themes that we dominate makes us feel more secure, and the students notice this confidence when the content is transmitted (P10).

Some undergraduates showed reflections at critical level about reaching the class objectives, trying to find its causes. The reflections on their successes and failures, their difficulties and skills are represented in this narrative:

At that time I was quite pleased with the doubts [presented by the students] because, after all the work I had to prepare a lesson, I felt they had confidence in my knowledge and in what I had studied (P10).

Some narratives brought reflections at critical level on the use of different teaching strategies and reflection on the consequences of certain choices:

It may seem unnecessary to say that the teaching-learning process is something individual of every student; however, many times we set aside this individuality related to the teacher, meaning that, knowing different teaching methodologies, we realize there is no better or worse methodology, but the methodology that adapts to the specific type of student and teacher (P13).

Some portfolios presented a reflection at critical level about the *being a teacher*, the teacher's role and the identity of the profession:

The experience of having taught this class was very positive for me: I realized the teacher is still seen by the student as the one who has all the knowledge and that the role of facilitator needs to be emphasized in the teaching practice. I also noticed that the lesson contents must be distributed appropriately, the characteristics of students do not allow classes so complex and full of concepts, it is necessary to review which contents are actually relevant to their professional training (P6).

The narrative below provides a reflection beyond the experience in class, bringing considerations about future challenges, characterizing the critical level of reflection:

As part of my experience, I realized that teaching is not just the action in the moment, it is necessary to prepare the lesson, adapt its content to the profile and needs of students, hold their attention, motivate them to learn more, to question all the time, to participate. This is one of the major challenges that I realized at that moment, as a teacher (P24).

The portfolios also presented narratives at critical level involving the evaluation process. A detached look on the learning object allows that undergraduate students reflect about it and establish a comparison between their prior knowledge and the new learning, in a *reflective continuum that inspires the review of positioning, and intentionally reconfigured in order to represent the evolution of knowledge construction and of the cognitive ability of the student*<sup>(13)</sup>, as exemplified:

However, I realized I could have used an instrument or another strategy (dialogic, dynamic) to receive feedback from the given class. I planned the lesson well in advance, with criterion and dedication, however, in the evaluation part, I realized that it still lacked more planning (P22).

### Metacritical level

The narratives at metacritical level have the subject of the action as the focus of reflection, because they speak *about oneself, questioning ones own roles, functions, performances and conceptions, becoming concurrently actor, reflective subject and object of ones own reflection*<sup>(7)</sup>.

Some undergraduate students were able to realize the personal characteristics related to the educational practice that interfered with their performance in the classroom. Many times, such characteristics are accepted with difficulty, especially for teachers in training:

This experience was key to my learning because I realized how students interacted with me during class. I learned to say, - I cannot answer that question, but I can look for the answer and tell you later. It is not always easy for teachers to assume they don't know something. I also had new ideas to give a better and more didactic lecture. I could only have this feeling by experiencing the process of becoming a teacher (P21).

Metacritical reflection is a *process that seeks to know oneself in order to become, by one's own effort, of the clear consciousness and the greater courage*<sup>(7)</sup>. The following narrative then moves in that direction, because the undergraduate student realizes his evolution in it:

I realize that I had an evolution between the first and the second class taught, once the moment of giving the lecture in the first semester was very tense and insecure. In this class, on the other hand, these feelings decreased significantly, and it all ran more smoothly (P22).

The important thing at this level of reflection is proposing changes for personal improvement and of the pedagogical practice, using the knowledge gained from reflection and reflecting on the change. In other words, *reflecting metacognitively, and with the knowledge emerging from this reflection, intervene in the way of acting in contexts and with oneself, stimulating the chance of becoming*<sup>(7)</sup>. The narrative exemplifies this level of reflection:

To improve my next class I would do some initial banter with students using the theme of the class, trying to bring them closer to me and explain the content more simply (I thought the way I introduced the content was a bit hard for students to follow). And I would speak calmly and try to be more serene during my explanation (P21).

#### **Activity: reflective description of the supervision in the practice field**

At the hospital and/or in the Basic Health Unit (UBS – Unidade Básica de Saúde) the undergraduate students accompany the assistant and the nursing technician in practical activities that will lead them to develop core competencies for the profession.

#### *Technical level*

Most undergraduates began the activity placing their internship in time and space and contextualizing the institution, which characterizes the technical level of reflection:

My supervision internship in the practice field occurred in the surgical center and in the CME (Center for material and sterilization) in the period from 02 to 08/09. I followed

the groups of students who are studying the discipline of clinical medicine (P19).

Then, they presented descriptive narratives about the facilities and the difficulties encountered when monitoring the students and how was the relationship among the students, teacher supervisors, staff and patients. They emphasized that their previous experiences influenced the monitoring of students as showed by the following narrative at technical level:

Although it was an administration internship, it was held in the liver transplantation ward. When seeing patients or their medical records, the students brought questions related to this topic, which I have not mastered, but tried to find information about (P15).

The undergraduate students could notice their evolution in relation to the internship, but did not explain the reasons that led them to such perceptions, which gives a merely descriptive feature to the following narrative:

My experience as an undergraduate student/internship supervisor was much more complete this semester. I could participate in the internship of students of the School of Nursing from the beginning until the end, and see the progress of the students, the teacher and my own (P12).

#### *Critical level*

At this level of reflection the undergraduate students identify the multiple and possible causes, consequences and meanings of the narrated events, the role of context in determining the facts, the roles played and the conceptions that sustain them, and also the new roles that may be played<sup>(7)</sup>.

The prior knowledge of the internship field, of the students and the teacher supervisor was also highlighted as a factor that can influence the performance of undergraduate students. The relation of cause and effect that characterizes this level is exemplified in the following excerpt:

Analyzing the interpersonal relationship with the teacher and the employees, I believe it was great. Obviously, accompanying the internship in the same place and with the same teacher has contributed a lot to it. I felt a little difficulty in the relationship with the first class on the first day, but I attribute that to the fact that they were finishing the internship when I started and I had a little trouble adapting, since it previously coincided that my first day was also the first day of the students (P5).

This narrative goes beyond the description, specifying the reasons why the relationship with the teacher supervisor facilitated the internship program:

The main easiness I found was the fact that the teacher accompanying the internship established a relation of trust with me and treated me as a future teacher, giving me the opportunity to really follow students in procedures and clarify their doubts, and not only observe her performance as a teacher (P1).

The next narrative presented critical level with potential for metacritical level, because in addition to realizing the problems in the relationship of the teacher supervisor with the student, the undergraduate students began to reflect on their role:

In relation to the aspects that hindered my performance in the monitoring and evaluation of students, it is worth noting the lack of communication between the students and the internship teacher, showing a relationship of subordination of students to the teacher; the lack of communication between teacher and students; the need to be the link, the bridge, between them in some cases, realizing *Im alone with students at times, and dont know what course to take in face of the doubts and anxieties brought by them* (P18).

Some narratives at critical level demonstrated recognition by the undergraduates, about the importance of the internship for students and for themselves, as in this example:

The internship field is a very good place to be next to the student. Unlike what happens in the classroom, where students often *dont participate in the construction of their knowledge, in the internship theyre the most active part of learning. For me, it was a very rich experience and I believe it couldn't have been better* (P15).

Narratives at critical level also demonstrated the opportunity of experiencing the *being a teacher* by some undergraduate students. Below is a narrative with potential for metacritical level, because apart from showing a reflection on the experiences, the undergraduate student demonstrates perception of what these experiences can bring to one's own performance in the future:

This internship was a watershed for me, in which I had the opportunity of really experiencing the teaching practice. I was regarded as a teacher both by the students as by the staff of the unit, and being able to relate with a teacher was very enriching and confirmed my desire to continue in this area (P12).

#### Metacritical level

At this level, the narratives highlight the reflections on oneself, *ones own roles, performances and conceptions, becoming the actor and object of ones own reflection*<sup>(7)</sup>. They involve the recognition of one's own performance and the undergraduate students related the described facts with previous experiences, both in teaching as in Nursing:

I felt a little trouble on the technical part, because I *dont have much practical experience. Despite being graduated and having worked in the Family Health Strategy, I havent done some procedures for quite some time, so I had to revise techniques and train before starting the internship* (P12).

Some narratives highlighted the perception of the meaning of the internship for the future pedagogical practice, the need for changes and improvements:

I believe the internship helped me feel more confident to act as a teacher, although I know I still need to improve myself in several aspects, such as shyness and difficulty with public speaking. But surely this was a valid experience that added greatly to my learning (P1).

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that in the two activities analyzed, all portfolios presented narratives at technical level, but not all have reached the critical or metacritical levels, which may have been influenced by several factors.

Considering that humans are by nature *storytellers*<sup>(14)</sup>, it is natural that the account of pedagogic practice appears in all portfolios, characterizing the beginning of the process. It is expected that a teacher training permeated by reflection starts from the *description of educational events* and progresses towards developing the ability to *reconstruct conceptions and practices*<sup>(14)</sup>.

The learning route, which in addition to guiding the undergraduate students, was aimed at encouraging them to achieve the metacritical level of reflection, may have influenced the greatest concentration of results at technical level. This fact may be related to the wording of questions, because although the titles *Reflective description of the given class* and *Reflective description of the supervision on the practice field* refer to reflection, the guidelines for each one of them used verbs as *report* and *describe*. The act of reflecting begins with a description, requiring activities of the thought, *no one is able to think of something without experience and information about it*<sup>(15)</sup> and the understanding about activities translates into another factor with great influence on the results.

The subject, *when narrating, narrates oneself and, in doing so, reframes experiences, learnings, giving them a new meaning*<sup>(9)</sup>. Thus, by allowing the systematization of records and a subsequent look at the lived events, the portfolio may have provided the organization of thoughts, of experiences and theoretical searches<sup>(16)</sup>, allowing that some undergraduate students perceive the context and its influences (critical level) reaching the perception of themselves and their role in this context (metacritical level).

The *posterior reflection about learning favors a connection between the context of the classroom and the personal life story, making possible the expansion and the reflection on learning and teaching at the same time*<sup>(17)</sup>. In that moment, happens the reflection about their practice and the process called *reflection-about-the-action and about the reflection-in-the-action* is triggered, leading the undergraduate students to the *reflection-about-the-action or the reflection about the act of teaching*<sup>(17-18)</sup>. Thus, the experiences offered by the internship, which were different for every individual, together with the life experiences that are also

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unique, can influence the number of portfolios with reflections at critical and metacritical level.

Although the ability of reflection is innate to humans, it is proven that people of any age reveal difficulties when putting into practice the reflective mechanisms. A major effort is needed to move from a merely descriptive or narrative level to a level that seeks *articulated and justified interpretations and cognitive systematizations*<sup>(4)</sup>.

The confrontation of teachers in training with what they wrote, besides providing a reflection on what happened in the classroom or in the hospital, may become a source of conflict between the attitudes, teaching philosophies, the theories seen as followed, the behavior and the actions effectively adopted by them. So, reaching the metacritical level is not only difficult because it involves self-assessment and openness to criticism, but also because discovering that what one is doing is not in accordance with what one believes can be deconstructive<sup>(19)</sup>.

Besides the aspects inherent to the portfolio proposal, it is necessary to take into account other aspects that may influence the levels of reflection presented by the portfolios. A study aiming to explore the implications of using the portfolio in the initial training of reflective teachers came to some conclusions that can be considered. The students involved in the study may not find themselves all at the same level of reflective development. A greater representation of narratives at technical level leads to the assumption that the involved students are going through a process of reflective development, starting from what the authors called an *almost zero starting point* and during which they are developing themselves<sup>(20)</sup>.

According to this study, a teacher in training may have analytical abilities for reflection and develop a consistent practice with these skills, and yet, not showing this in his/her portfolio. Moreover, the portfolio by itself, will not necessarily lead teachers to critical reflection, and as a strategy, it cannot go beyond capturing a moment of the training process that teachers are going through<sup>(20)</sup>.

Another aspect to be considered is that the *development and the degree of structure/selection of the narratives content seem to go hand in hand, since the writing process seems to reflect (and/or be a reflection of) the stage of personal and professional development of the one who writes*, and also seems to be able to provide incontrovertible evidence about the process itself that the teacher is going through, with regard to the professional growth<sup>(19)</sup>.

As the whole process of pedagogical practice ends up being taken into consideration in the moments of evaluation, for the teacher-interns it may become difficult to ignore the evaluative dimension of their productions, which may influence the development of their narratives/reflections<sup>(19)</sup>.

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## CONCLUSION

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The analysis of the narratives related to the pedagogical practice experienced during the Supervised Curricular Internship reported in the portfolios of nursing undergraduates showed three levels of reflection. The majority of narratives were focused on the technical level, followed by the critical and metacritical levels.

The undergraduate students had the opportunity to experience the teaching practice and many showed reflections at metacritical level about their performance, the construction of the teacher identity and the importance of reflecting about the practice aiming at transforming it and transforming themselves.

The evolution in the levels of reflection may have been influenced by several factors, from those related to the internship and portfolio proposal, until those related to the undergraduates as subjects only.

The characteristics of the learning route, especially the description and understanding of the purpose of each activity, together with the experiences of each student in the internship, may have influenced the level of reflection achieved. It may also have influenced the life moment of each one, and their ability and willingness to reflect. Further research will be necessary for a detailed study on the construction of activities with statements that encourage the reflection at critical and metacritical levels.

The importance of the Supervised Curricular Internship became evident as a relevant aspect of the curriculum and its ability to create opportunities of real life experiences for the undergraduates with a view to solving problems. The portfolio showed selected and illustrative samples of how the future teachers developed their pedagogical practice in the spaces where their activities occurred.

The portfolio becomes a space for reflection on the practice experienced in the curricular internship, provided it has clear objectives, is well understood by teachers and students and that they are clear about its main features and how it should be constructed and evaluated. The characteristics of the portfolio, when properly used, make it a current instrument and coherent with the new approaches to education, leading the subjects to the awareness of their role and the responsibility of finding ways to fully develop their capabilities.

The differential of this study is the elucidation of the narrative analysis in relation to the levels of reflection, contributing with teachers working with reflective portfolios in order that they have support to analyze the reflective practice of their students and guide them in the development of reflections beyond the descriptive level, helping them to transform their practice.

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