Leisure in virtual social network: a possibility of an authentic dialogue

Objective: To analyze the construction of an authentic dialogue regarding the topic leisure through an educative activity developed in a virtual social group. Methods: This is a documental research, with qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory approaches. Five discussion records were analyzed, which took place in Culture Circles, a closed group under virtual media space of Facebook®, including eleven senior undergraduates in nursing. The data was analyzed according to the interpretative analysis technique, supported by the Dialogical Theory of Freire. Results: It was seen that: there was an educational dialogue towards leisure in virtual fields; leisure in the dialogue among the pairs; dialogue between students and knowledge mediators regarding leisure. The educational activities stimulated the authentic dialogue, emphasizing personal leisure, its benefits, and a reflection regarding professional practice. Conclusion: Social groups founded in virtual media instruments are near to the academic everyday life and can be aimed into educative purposes using dialogue to transform the educational process more innovative, active, and participative.

Keywords: Nursing; Communication; Dialogue; Education; Leisure Activities.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar a construção do diálogo autêntico sobre a temática lazer por meio de uma atividade educativa desenvolvida em grupo social virtual. Métodos: Pesquisa documental, qualitativa, descritiva e exploratória. Foram analisados cinco registros de discussões desenvolvidas em Círculos de Cultura, realizados em um grupo fechado na mídia virtual Facebook® com onze graduandos em enfermagem. Os dados foram analisados segundo a técnica de análise interpretativa, embasada no referencial da Teoria Dialógica de Freire. Resultados: Interpreta-se que houve construção do diálogo educacional para o lazer em campos virtuais; lazer no diálogo entre os pares; diálogo entre alunos e mediadores de saberes sobre o lazer. As atividades educativas estimularam o diálogo autêntico, enfatizando o lazer pessoal, os seus benefícios e a reflexão sobre a prática profissional. Conclusão: Grupos sociais realizados em mídia virtual estão próximos do cotidiano acadêmico e podem ter finalidade educativa pautada no diálogo para tornar o processo educativo inovador, ativo e participativo.

Palavras-chave: Enfermagem; Comunicação; Diálogo; Educação; Atividades de Lazer.

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INTRODUCTION

The means of communication, interaction, and education changed profoundly in the past decades, specially by the use of new technologies. In this sense, the use of virtual social networks has called attention, among which the virtual media instrument Facebook®, which is one of the most used globally, specially by the young.1

While a social and cultural environment, Facebook® is a potential means for dialogic educational actions, due to the devices and functionalities embedded. Besides that, it allows a vast approach and easiness of access, as it is an interactive and free media resource.1,2

The dynamics and interactivity of the social network and virtual media instrument characterize it as permitting the interaction of participants, stimulated by globalization and by the human necessity to live in group and to communicate. In this fashion, virtual social networks can and must be used under pedagogical context due to the fact they present a constructivist characteristic, stimulating interaction, the dialogue, and the construction of knowledge, and furthermore, they are popularly used by students.3,5

In addition, the use of social network and virtual media instrument is seen as a leisure activity, and this topic is relevant to nursing, due to its role in quality of life, promoting of health, and in holistic care, all inherent to the nursing practices.5,7 However, it is not well explored by the health teams.6

To discuss this topic, it was used the Dialogic Theory of Paulo Freire.6,9 Freire was a thinker, and educator, and a researcher in education. His assumptions are applied in various areas of knowledge, such as in the area of health. In his discussions about education, the dialogue is an important and valued theme, as for Freire, the process of learning-teaching only occurs when there is dialogue.8

Within the dialogic context, the thinker did not refer to any format of dialogue, but to the authentic one, defined by the recognition of the other and the self-recognition as a decision and a compromise to collaborate to construct a common and more humanized world.6,9

According to this theoretic referential, the indispensable conditions to an authentic dialogue would be love, humility, and faith. To start with, love, or the idea of lovingness, is represented by a self-donation to the other aiming to build things together. Then, humility is necessary to recognize and value distinct knowledge. In the end, the faith in the human being, its capacity to change, to adapt, and in group, to dialogue would enable to overcome the naïve consciousness to assume a critical thinking about the world and the reality around us.6,9

In regards to the methodological approach, Freire defends that the authentic dialogue happens in Culture Circles: knowledge horizontal moments in which there is participation, convergence, divergence, teaching, and learning in reciprocity.6,9 In regards to the dialogue, to stimulate the communication about leisure through a virtual media instrument among young academics of nursing is justified by the relevance of this environment as a strategy to recreate possibilities of authentic dialogue on the topic towards a critical consciousness, through the use of technology.

To strength its use in academic environment as a learning tool, Facebook® was used as an educative strategy to discuss leisure among senior undergraduates of nursing. Within this context, this study had the following guiding question: How the authentic dialogue about leisure was built under a virtual environment? Therefore, this research aimed to analyze the construction of an authentic dialogue about leisure through an educative activity that took place under a virtual media instrument.

METHODS

This is a documental research, with a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory approach.10 The materials analyzed were the records of five discussions promoted by eleven academics, mediated by an undergraduate student, a graduate one, and a professor, all from the Department of Nursing of a public university of the Brazilian state of Paraná, during seven days of the month of June of 2014, focusing on the topic leisure.

The topic was chosen from a systematic survey of previous knowledge, using questionnaires, which demonstrated to be a relevant educational demand, filled with ingenuity in its concepts, and superficiality in the relation with health, specially the mental area. Based on the theoretical reference of Freire,8 it was wandered to establish the dialogues through Culture Circles. In this study, as the interactions were not-presental, in a closed group under Facebook®, they were renamed as Virtual Culture Circles (VCC).

All participants of the five VCC were females, ages varying from 18 to 25 years old (average was 19 years old), being two participants from undergraduate freshmen year, five sophomores, and four juniors. The discussions promoted between students and mediators of the VCC were transcribed to a Microsoft Word® version 2010 file. In order to preserve the identity of the participants, for each transcription, it was adopted a nickname that was related to the used virtual media instrument. Therefore, the academics were renamed as: Newsfeed, Timeline, Group, Status, Inbox, Friends, Posting, Post, Message, Emoticon, and Selfie; and the mediators were renamed as: Comment, Like, and Share. The feelings and emotions demonstrated with emoticons were inserted in the text, as used by the participants, aiming to maintain the trustworthiness of the testimonies and the expressions used by the academics.

To analyze the data, it was used the technique of interpretative analysis,11 aiming to unveil the authentic dialogue of the culture circles. The interpretations were built based on the most significant and representative information of the study objects, interpreted under the light of the Dialogic Theory references of Paulo Freire,6,9 which explicit the authentic dialogue, discussing them with present literature.

This study is linked to the teaching research ‘Research-action of educational demands under the scenario of nursing’ (Protocol n #401/2013- PPG/UEM), which the opinion of the Permanent
Committee of Research in Human Beings of Maringá State University was approved (CAAE 12664813.9.0000.0104/#375.459 in Aug 05 2013). The research followed all ethic standards present in the Resolution 466/2012 of the Brazilian National Health Council.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following Freire’s references, the analysis aimed to identify the authentic dialogue which occurred under the discussions of the topic leisure: the means to experience it, challenges to have some leisure time during college years, the naïve understanding seen in common sense regarding the benefits of leisure, the inexistence of its insertion under nursing practices, and the creation of a critical thinking that brings awareness to overcome the common perception about the topic, according to the same references. As there is no superior understanding on the issue, but different views that complete each other, in a collective construction for dialogue; the critical evaluation of the participants was not the focus of the observation, but also the presence and the profile of the members of the group, and the path taken while discussing and building the dialogue.

Therefore, the analysis permitted to recognize the dialogues recorded in the VCC among the participants and between participants and mediators, initiated by the planning done for the strategy used, in a dialogic format as well. Then, the interpretation of the facts here presented lead investigators to believe there was:

1) A construction of an educational dialogue regarding leisure in virtual interactive fields, demonstrated by the educational research and development in VCC; 2) The leisure in the dialogue in pairs, characterized by the dialogue observed among the participants of the VCC; 3) The dialogue between students and mediators in building their understanding of leisure, supported by the horizontality of knowledge between educator-educating and through the emancipatory dialogue pushed by the mediators.

1) The construction of an educational dialogue for leisure under virtual interactive fields

Leisure, as a human care practice, is little evident under Brazilian nursing practices, opposite to what is seen in other cultures, where this practice is already consolidated. The topic, when including the education of future professionals, permits to amplify and qualify care procedures, as it includes the integrity, humanization, and the promotion of health, besides it is one of the biopsychosocial dimensions that belong to the human being. Thus, this education promotes a rupture with the hegemonic biologist care practice.

The design of the educational activity was established in a systematized procedure, highlighting the initial diagnose of the understandings of the students. The content of the dialogue was defined from the real necessities of the participants, brought up, a priori, by a self-explanatory form in which the academics showed their understanding regarding leisure, clarifying its benefits, and their experiences under their personal and professional life.

To consider previous knowledge and to draw the educational practices permitted to select activities linked to the real necessities of the participants, besides strengthening their understandings and overcoming their personal challenges. This premise must guide educational activities aimed to support an authentic dialogue and the emancipation of the subject, with the capacity to stimulate the activities, which are based on lovingness, in the love to other people, in being and build things together.

The first dialogues discussed the virtual environment with the participants, establishing the boundaries of the educational activity and presenting each other. The segment below demonstrates the initial orientation of the educational activity:

This group aims to discuss the topic leisure related to the formation and to the educational of future nurses. Instructions: the participant must perform all activities proposed on the established schedule, either by pressing the "like" button, making a comment, or interacting with the other members of the group. In the case of doubts regarding the activity, comment on this post to facilitate the observation of the moderators, and to get a quick answer. We are at your disposal. Remember this is a learning environment and mutual understanding, therefore feel free to expose your own ideas!!! We wish everyone to participate!!! (Like)

Then, the initial guidelines permitted, besides informing the group dynamics, to highlight its dialogical and participative characteristics. The goal of the initial approach was to allow an educational environment familiar to the students. In order to proceed, strategies were used, such as previous planning, the introduction of the objectives of the group, the personal presentation and explanation of desires/expectations regarding the activities, which all stimulated the development of a harmonic, dialogic, and participative educational environment.

The activities took place under many approaches inside the virtual social group, stimulating the students to make comments regarding their personal and professional experiences, illustrating them with images, videos, and links from other sites of interest. The questions involved distinct and progressive complex levels, and they considered the many formats of learning - visual, auditory, and kinetic. Such preoccupation permitted a more welcoming educative environment, aimed to the interests of the young, enabling that the dialogue between members could take place in a more spontaneous and pleasant manner. The members were stimulated to build a true, constructive, and authentic dialogue.

The efforts made to clarify the actions, having them in a more comprehensive format possible, went through selecting the ones that were dynamic and reflexive, supported by images, texts, and videos, thus collaborating to build the dialogicity. In the end, the evaluation of the educative process as an important data to qualify the planning, and to guide the activity was also highlighted.

It is possible to state that the activities presented an educational and participative aspect, because they were attached to collective and collaborative strategies of learning moderated.
by the involvement and by the participation of the members, overcoming the fragmented perception of the teaching-learning process and of reality.

The discussions aimed to facilitate the educational dialogue filled by humility\(^6\) together with the necessary competence to share understandings; the initial contacts were about personal introductions of the participants and their expectations towards the group, as seen in the extracts below:

- **I am [name], I am 22 years old, I am a freshman in nursing school, and I expect to learn something, to know people, and also, to contribute with the group 😊** (Status)

- **Hi my name is [name], I am 18 years old, I am in the sophomore year of the nursing school, and I wish to share experiences and knowledge with all of you, and I loved the new format in doing the activities in the group! 😊** (Status)

The introductions of the members and their feelings were important to facilitate the creation of a dialogic educational environment, once through dialogue, people share ‘their worlds’, admire them, reflect upon them, build them, and reconstruct these world. Through dialogue, consciousness is built through the individual and collective reflection-action process, one influencing the other, constantly.\(^6\)\(^9\)

Hence, the approximation of the members when they share their expectations and their realities stimulates the origin of a dialogic environment, and at the same time, the creation of an authentic dialogue among the pairs.

Dialogue generates a phenomena and builds an essential historicity to human intersubjectivity, thus originated from relationships in which the initiative of all is necessary.\(^6\) Based on this affirmation, we learn that dialogues through Facebook\(^6\) were based on the interaction between participants, stimulated by the dialogic environment built, designed based on the reality of life of each individual present in the group.

### 2) Leisure in the dialogue among pairs

The consciousness of the world must be reached upon the reflection about the experienced world. In order to achieve this level of understanding, it is necessary to find one's own consciousness, which only occurs through a dialogue with the other.\(^6\)\(^8\)\(^9\)\(^14\)\(^15\) In this sense, in the moments the academics expressed their own experiences regarding leisure, presenting their world to the group, they recognized themselves in the other, and the recognition of each one by the other.\(^8\) Such scenario permitted to build bonds and empathy enough for an authentic dialogue, as it is possible to identify in the description of the leisure activities they had:

- **Going out with friends and family, going to the movies, going shopping, eating out.** (Post)

- **To rest! 😊** (Inbox)

- **I miss my bicycle. 😞** (Posting)

- **Skating my roller is fun! 😊 How I miss it!** (Post)

Reading something you like is also fun! Listening to music, dancing... (Selfie)

For me, cooking is fun, I love it!!! (Comment)

Picnic: you eat, rest, and think about life!! Three good things at once 😊 (Emoticon)

So, you can cook something for a family picnic, riding a bike, and then, burn it all in a muay thai class!! (Text that meant she was laughing) (Emoticon)

While reflecting upon their own choices for leisure time, the academics observed their own priorities in organizing the activities that involve their free time. When sharing these information with the group, they enabled a conscious awareness regarding their choices, filled with humility and lovingness, as well as a collective awareness, through reflection and collective construction of a more critical world consciousness. Adding to that, world consciousness is only built from communion; hence, while sharing ideas, they learn about themselves and about the others. This experience started the type of dialogue defended by Freire.\(^6\)\(^9\)

Despite the fact, the activities listed as leisure ones by the participants are different, the fact about themselves and their realities, and later, their reflections presented in the group, in the VCC, generated room for dialogue about leisure. This fact increased the consciousness and understandings about the topic, bringing together indispensable relationships to understand the differences, permitting a contextualized learning\(^15\). This construction of knowledge is not a reflex of a mirror of society, but on the other hand, is the translation of different understanding positions, followed by a personal and collective reconstruction, permeated by the authentic dialogue in these VCC.

In some moments of this approximation dialogue of the realities of the participants are represented in the fragments below, as they report the importance of leisure in life and in the health status:

- **We shouldn’t not have leisure time, as sometimes we get crazy. However, is not like that most of the times […]** (Post)

- **So, let’s think!!! What is the importance of leisure and of the obligations to us, in our everyday life?** (Like)

- **Lately, the obligations have been having much more importance than leisure 0 which shouldn’t happen at all. Both should be the priority in life…** (Newsfeed)

- **[…] Leisure is important so life gets lighter, a means to socializing with others…** (Post)

In these moments, dialogue permitted an exchange of experiences and attitudes. Converging and diverging opinions showed the path to new practices and views about leisure time, as seen in the segments below:
I think there should be a balance between the two, so you don’t ‘freak out’, we simply neglect leisure over studying because of some lack of time, but if you get yourself organized, it is possible to have some free time and some time to study!!! I don’t know you if got what I meant. (Text that meant she was laughing) (Emoticon)

I always had a day of the week to slow down a bit, and it doesn’t matter what I am supposed to do (work, report...). It looks like you’re loosing time, but no, it only helps you!!! 😊 (Emoticon)

Thus, it is possible to infer that the dialogue opens up for the consciousness to a common world of the consciences, permitting the criticality and the formation of understandings that model the practices. Communication in a group was the motivation of an authentic dialogue, and then, the precursor of the construction of a common world. Therefore, the participants of the present study dialogue over their individual strategies for leisure, and discussed the relevance of the use of leisure time to health, collectively building new strategies that could manage the moments used in leisure activities with the other academic duties. In this context, dialogue could be considered authentic because it enables the convergence, divergence, and reconstruction of new understandings originated from individual knowledge.

It is also important to note that dialogue is also built in moments of silence and reflection, which are called moments of solitude. In VCC, we have learned that these moments were also present as demonstrated in a clinical case for the discussion of solitude.

Characterized as a chronic disease, passible of nursing prescriptions, the case demanded from the participants a critical reflection of the reality and the proposition of strategies for action. It is possible to observe that the moments of solitude, seen by the lack of posts and comments, were important to rebuild their own understandings, once to achieve a learning goal regarding the consciousness of the world, it is necessary to go through lucid and silent reflections, permitting that the authentic dialogues arise to help to build collective constructions of knowledge and practices.

3) Dialogue between students and mediators building understandings about leisure

The dialogue, to be considered a liberator one, must occur from reflection and critical unveiling, searching for a communion between people, an exchange of understandings and experiences mediated by the world. Based on these assumptions, the educative activity in VCC took place, recovering the horizontal dialogue between educating and educators, here represented by the participants and the mediators. The dialogue between them happened in mediations and discussions, stimulating the development of ideas, reflections, and reconstructions.

Considering the necessary humility to an authentic dialogue in a sense to have respect and valorization of the previous and built knowledge, we observe this posture was necessary to make bonds, to allow a natural development of the discussions, and for the transformation of understandings. This occurred under the VCC while stimulating the people involved to search for resolutions to the questions raised, and to build moments in which it was possible to share the knowledge produced, welcoming and respecting each one’s previous understandings.

The excerpts below demonstrate a fragment of a discussion of a case in VCC, when the participants presented some uneasiness to expose their knowledge about the nursing procedures leisure and their benefits for one of the most prevalent chronic condition found in Brazil: arterial hypertension. The participation of the mediators in this episode reinforces the humble, welcoming characteristics they embraced, and at the same time, starters of the dialogue:

Surely I need to learn with you about what to do, because I think my answer was still too vague.... (Text that meant she was laughing) (Newsfeed)

We can see that in this activity you are having a hard time, but I’d like to say that it is necessary to answer based on the discussions of the group. Answer with your own words and views. (Comment)

I’d say to take at least one day off. First, because he is a hypertensive person, and secondly, because of work and the large load of stress. Incorporating to the list of tasks a moment or a day, during the weekend, for example, to rest mind and body. Relaxing is also taking care of health. (Inbox)

What is the physiological relationship between stress and arterial hypertension? I think it is important to think on this relationship. Let’s go! Who wants to start? (Share)

Stress increases arterial pressure. Then, it is important to make that clear. As more he invests in leisure, better will be the results of the treatment and in his quality of life. (Post)

That’s it! (Like)

The dialogical intervention of the mediators was aimed to support reflection, and to the expression of opinions and previous knowledge, at the same time they conducted to the discoveries, feeding the authentic dialogue by the collective and shared construction, such as seen:

In regarding to what was said, it is important to perform one or more supervised physical activities, and also to identify the elements of stress, if it is at work, in the family, or other areas, having a holistic view, so the proposals can be considered as intervention measures, guiding the person to leisure... (Friends)

You brought an important information: stress increases arterial pressure. But how it happens? Which elements are involved in this process? Let’s review our understandings regarding physiology? 😊 Stress liberates more adrenalineline, working in the Central Nervous System, promoting
peripheral vasoconstriction, increased heart frequency, and increased arterial pressure. (Post)

That’s it! 😊 Girls, I’ll share a video to remember this mechanism [video link] (Comment)

That’s it! Guys, this video explains very well. It’s worth watching it! (Like)

We need to remember that leisure is not only beneficial to fight against stress, but also generates learning, socializing, build character, supports self-esteem, and so on - a real daily instrument that can aggregate many other benefits! Do you agree? Have you thought about that? (Share)

I’ve never thought of all these benefits. Share! I agree with you 😊 (Comment)

Me neither, I’d never noticed it!!! (Like)

It is important to mention that few interventions were performed, as the mediators have the role to generate favorable conditions to the dynamics of the group and to the discussions, reducing to the minimal their direct intervention during the dialogues, with the objective to stimulate the autonomy and the construction of knowledge. Therefore, there was an stimuli to create the spaces destined to the reworking and to the reconstruction of a world that, besides it was also built by them, it was not truly for them, and that, besides it was humanized by them, this world does no humanize them back.⁸ ⁹ After all, only by communion and union, the changes occur in men and in the world.⁸

Thus, the mediators were supported by the dialogicity to perform their comments and to conduct the students to reflect regarding the process of care and leisure. Hence, the assumed the role of drivers of the understandings and the discussions, as the group construction of knowledge and experiences only takes place under the authentic dialogue.

In this process, mediators fulfilled their dialogic educational role, as they taught and also learned, in a dialogue with the learning, unveiling an educational process in which teaching and learning only occur based on the communion and the respect to the understandings and experiences.⁸ ⁹

Denying the oppressive dialogue,⁸ mediators used possibilities of discussion not centered on them. On the contrary, they gave opportunity to a liberator dialogue, as it is supposed to be during the educational process, in order to facilitate the search for knowledge based on a reflection about the world, in communion with others.

To move away from banking education, which uses the oppressive dialogue, still very present in educational actions, was a challenge for the people involved in the VCC. To promote a dialogic and problematizing education, which could break down the vertical schemes of banking education, it was necessary to use a format of dialogue that, in fact, permitted the construction of understandings supported by freedom of expression, by the autonomy of participation, and by the criticality to what is exposed.⁸ ⁹,¹⁴

Horizontal and participative dialogicity was relevant to overcome the naïve understanding, founded on lovingness, humility, and faith.⁹

The use of dialogical approaches and active participation of the educating showed fundamental to the emancipatory educational process, and for the changes in educational paradigms. In order to do so, tools and technological innovations, in special the social media, are a possibility to transform teaching in a dynamic and provoking.¹⁶ The choice of pedagogical reference is done based on the assumption the mediators recognize the importance of man and his environment, and the capacity to act upon it. The theoretical references of Freire reinforces the dialogue and it values the educating when mentioning the faith on the human being, the potential of construction, reconstruction, and change through the dialogicity, in this case, the construction of the authentic dialogue between students and the mediators.

Under these premises, there are reflections about the professional practice of the nurse in leisure, influencing the academics to rethink the dialogue between the professionals and the clients, taking into the consideration the desire to change and to insert the topic during care practices as a nurse:

And what I am taking from here are the experiences of each one, and to try to improve my relationship with the patients, specially asking them what they like doing! Really good! (Selfie)

Regarding the topics, there was lots of reflection to be done and at the same time they add up to our learning process! I hope to apply it all in my life and in those I’ll care 😊 (Inbox)

Hence, the authentic dialogue took place in living words, which led to the recognition of consciousness, expressed and elaborated the world, in communication and collaboration between educators and educating. This process permitted that students moved from naïve consciousness - not relating leisure with care/nursing prescription - to critical consciousness, permitting to reconstruct nursing assistance under this topic.

It is only possible to achieve critical consciousness and empowerment through authentic dialogue. This element has the central role in care-educational practices of nursing, as it guarantees more effective care and self-care, and more prepared professionals¹⁴ to take over the demands and attributions.

CONCLUSION

The development of VCC permitted the construction of an authentic dialogue. Its presence was innovative under the context used, and it was seen as a learning strategy that matches the necessities and desires of educating that experience in their everyday lives the use of technology.
Hence, it is believed that the virtual media instrument Facebook® was an important learning tool, and at the same time, of leisure, in which the use as an educational proposal supported by dialogue made the educational process as innovative, active, and participative.

In regards to the topic leisure, it is possible to highlight that the use of a virtual media was capable to transform the naïve knowledge participants previously had about the issue.

Considering the social relevance of present research, it is supposed it can be applicable in other contexts of nursing practice, both to the education of the population and to the professionals in the area of health. This study brings scientific contributions that agglutinate new possibilities of teaching and research, and also of dialogue, in which the use of technology would reinforce a practical and inherent tool of education, and as supporting the development of science.

However, the research present limitations related to the number of participants, as it was small, it does not permit to consider VCC to be applicable to a larger group. In this sense, it is suggested that other studies can amplify the present results.

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