

## Implementation of a teaching initiation project in public health and its relevance to medical training

Ana Carolina Álvares Lavigne de Lemos Tavares<sup>1</sup> , Vanessa Barreiros Gonçalves<sup>1</sup> ,  
Kayo Resende Dias e Almeida<sup>2</sup> , Guilherme Pereira Ramos<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Department of Health Sciences, Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz, Brazil. <sup>2</sup> Student of Department of Health Sciences, Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz, Brazil.

How to cite: Tavares, A.C.A.L.L.; Gonçalves, V.B.; Dias e Almeida, K. R.; Ramos, G. P. 2024. Implementation of a teaching initiation project in public health and its relevance to medical training. In: 10th International Conference on Higher Education Advances (HEAd'24). Valencia, 18-21 June 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4995/HEAd24.2024.17183>

---

### **Abstract**

*The study in question reports on the experience of medical students in monitoring activities in the disciplines of Practices for Integrating Teaching and Community Service. The monitoring was able to increase learning efficiency, motivation and commitment to the syllabus. The process of building the autonomy and critical awareness of the subject and his group about the teaching-learning process was fundamental to these results. The monitoring activity is important for establishing, expanding and fostering knowledge, enabling the exchange of information and knowledge between teachers, student-monitors and students, contributing to improved teaching in curricular components. It is concluded that the monitoring effectively enabled the production of critical thinking, the joint construction of knowledge and the systematization of different points of view between the teacher in charge, the monitors and the students, showing that the monitoring proposal enables the construction of learning based on self-awareness of the teaching-learning process.*

**Keywords:** *monitoring, learning, collective health, medical education.*

---

## 1. Introduction

The word monitoring has its origins in the educational system. Monitoring is a pedagogical support tool that provides selected monitors with the opportunity to improve their technical and teaching knowledge, as well as increasing the theoretical and practical knowledge of the students assisted by the project. It also aims to contribute to the development of the skills and abilities necessary for the training of medical professionals, especially when it comes to Brazilian public health, emphasizing the importance of integrative practices and teaching and service in primary health care.

Furthermore, the incentive to start teaching provided by monitoring is extremely beneficial in the context of continuing health education, since this pedagogical project enables the monitor to exercise autonomy in the educational process, develop dialogue, identify demands and create teaching strategies. These resources are in line with the future work of the medical professional, who will have to act in democratizing access to knowledge, in order to help the population that uses health services to understand their rights and duties, as well as promoting the autonomy, emancipation and commitment of social agents in the Primary Care setting.

By including the student-monitor in the construction and development of the disciplines, monitoring can help learning in line with a dialogical educational perspective, in order to bring the actors of the educational process closer together and contribute to future professional performance in the Unified Health System. This concept of educational improvement is reinforced by the National Humanization Policy, from the perspective of developing concrete practices committed to producing health and human beings in their creative and unique capacity (BRASIL, 2013).

At our university, the monitoring activity is linked to a Teaching Initiation Project, in which monitors are assigned certain tasks, such as: guiding students by assisting teachers, carrying out activities in practical classes; participating in activities that provide in-depth study of the content covered by the monitoring subject and assisting students, under teacher supervision, in individual and/or group work, fieldwork and others compatible with their level of knowledge and experience.

This study was motivated by the possibility of contributing to strengthening the exercise of monitoring activities in medical education institutions in Brazil, in which insertion into fields of practice occurs from the beginning of the course, providing a broader view of the reality that people are inserted in (Silva et al, 2015). Thus, this study aims to report the experience of medical students in the performance of monitoring activities in the disciplines of Practices of Integration of Teaching Service Community.

This is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach, based on the experiences of two monitors and the University's professor responsible for the monitoring program.

## **2. Experience report**

The graduate course in medicine at the State University of Santa Cruz (UESC) has now reached the milestone of more than two decades of existence. And although it represents an educational exponent in the state of Bahia and the northeastern region, this course still lacks the necessary advances to become an even more complete academic benchmark in its mission of competent and humane professional training, and in line with the experience of other prominent educational centers in the national territory.

It is worth noting that in order to fill the vacancies for monitors, a selection process had to be carried out, established by the project's teaching/coordination team and published in the form of a public notice for applications on the university's official website. This selection process consisted of a theoretical phase and an interview phase; the theoretical phase consisted of a test, which sought to ascertain the level of knowledge on the main subjects in public health; the interview phase sought to ascertain the suitability of the candidates in terms of aptitude and desire for teaching, availability of time and other subjective criteria; in the event of a tie after the two phases, it was established that the coefficient of performance would become the tiebreaker criterion.

Monitoring was initially established by agreeing a relationship of trust and availability with the students being monitored, who were free to contact the monitors via personal messages or online groups. This communication strategy aimed to make monitoring demands dynamic, prompt, accessible and resolvable. It was also agreed that meetings would be held between the coordinating teacher and the monitors in order to align the project's activities within a timetable.

Based on this, the monitors often provided multiple and reliable references from extensive bibliographic searches in order to solidify and expand the subject's syllabus, including relevant topics to be presented by groups of students in large seminars, in which the monitors could participate by making methodological considerations about the presentations, as well as asking questions about the topics discussed. In addition, other teaching resources were provided to the students being monitored, such as thematic summaries, a list of residency questions and flashcards.

As for face-to-face activities, face-to-face meetings were held continuously in university spaces, in order to solve doubts or to build health intervention projects in the local community; the Google Meet resource was also used for some activities in epidemiologically unfavorable situations related to COVID-19. Also, the monitors conducted activities to theorize curricular subjects in classrooms, as well as proposing practical activities in meetings at basic health units.

On the other hand, the work of the coordinating teacher and team was also very important to the success of the project, and a work plan was proposed for the coordinator, who should: guide the monitor in the development of their routine activities within their attributions; promote the necessary training of the monitor regarding the use of different teaching and learning methodologies; promote, together with the monitor, a theoretical deepening regarding the contents covered in the discipline referred to for monitoring; hold periodic meetings; evaluate, based on pre-established criteria, on an ongoing basis, the performance of the monitors; monitor the student's performance within the subjects of their course, being sensitive to the possible interference of monitoring activities on curricular performance; provide guidance on the construction of project reports; encourage scholarship holders to participate in scientific events,

presenting products arising from the project; encourage the publication of results in scientific journals, medical congresses and periodicals, enriching training.

Additionally, an effort was made to develop a way to monitor the impact of the mentoring program on the mentored students. A questionnaire was devised to be filled out by the students at the end of the program, to assess the didactic trajectory and gains in the teaching-learning process fostered by the mentoring. Table 1 comprises the questionnaire questions that will serve as a basis for evaluating the program's impact, as well as continuous monitoring of its progress and improvements. In this sense, the evaluation questionnaire considers the protagonism of the student body in the teaching-learning process, taking into account students' opinions on the topics discussed in the course, the assessment methods used, and how the practical activities were conducted. This type of questionnaire reinforces the empowering role of the student in their own education, devising strategies for improvement based on a critical evaluation, comparing the objectives of the course with its didactic delivery.

**Table 1. Questionnaire questions.** Source: elaborated by the authors..

Elaborated questions	Type of response
How do you evaluate the theoretical exams conducted?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
Do you believe the theoretical exams can be improved in any aspect?	Descriptive/qualitative response
How do you evaluate the conducted seminars?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
Do you believe the seminars can be improved in any aspect?	Descriptive/qualitative response
How do you evaluate the completion of practical activity reports?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
Do you believe the practical activity reports can be improved in any aspect?	Descriptive/qualitative response
Do you believe there is homogeneity among students in learning the course syllabus? If there are discrepancies, what do you attribute them to?	Descriptive/qualitative response
How do you evaluate teamwork and relationships within your practice group?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
How do you evaluate the practical activities proposed/performed in the course?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
What do you believe could be improved in the practical activities of the course?	Descriptive/qualitative response
How do you evaluate your professor/tutor?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
How do you evaluate other professors/tutors, in activities where they were together with you?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
What do you believe could be improved in the performance of professors/tutors?	Descriptive/qualitative response
How do you evaluate the course's syllabus in the context of Brazilian Public Health and its guidelines?	Quantitative response (0 to 5)
Was there any topic that could have been better addressed or that have not been addressed that you would like to discuss, in the context of Brazilian Public Health and its guidelines?	Descriptive/qualitative response

It is important to emphasize that throughout the year, the monitors' performance has been adequate in view of the balance of achievements and possible improvements that have been listed in reports that are developed halfway through and at the end of the project's term. These evaluations revealed a very positive balance for the first year of monitoring through the academic development of both the monitor and the monitored. Some of these achievements are: 1) improvement in the students' oratory, communication and critical thinking in the correlation between the subjects studied and the experiences encountered in practice; 2) greater understanding and consolidation of knowledge about SUS norms and policies, as well as other collective and preventive health issues; 3) optimization of study time; 4) greater support for students who find it more difficult to speak publicly during classes and also to express doubts directly to teachers; greater suitability of presentations in relation to the rules recommended by ABNT in Seminars and Intervention Projects in the local community; and 5) in-depth learning for monitors about teaching practices.

Despite such a positive impact of monitoring on the academic experience of monitors and mentees, it is important to note that there were challenges to overcome in this process. The first challenge consisted of the need to better operationalize the new technologies and active teaching-learning methodologies, such as roleplay/dramatization, the creation of concept maps and the use of Team Based Learning (TBL), which had been advocated in the project, but which were little explored when compared to the more conventional teaching methodologies. The second challenge consisted of the possible lack of physical spaces at the university to carry out some face-to-face activities, so virtual platforms became important tools for maintaining these activities. The third challenge was the conflicting schedules between the planned activities and the curriculum of the monitors, who, as a result, were unable to attend them; in addition, because the PIESC discipline proposes dividing students into smaller groups that must be inserted into an ESF or UBS, the monitors' monitoring of these groups in situ proved to be unfeasible. Finally, as this is an unprecedented project in the medical course at UESC, there was gradual and progressive adherence to the project by the students being monitored, who initially did not have the culture of seeking academic reinforcement offered by monitors.

### **3. Discussion**

The core motivation behind the monitoring project lies in the intention to improve the treatment and participation of students in the educational process in Collective Health, both in the teaching-learning activities themselves and throughout the construction of academic life, thus also mitigating problems of academic evasion, learning gaps in the syllabus, as well as making it possible to research new teaching methodologies that suit the disciplinary proposals, integrating human and material resources to build sophisticated, complete and satisfactory didactics, by strengthening an autonomous attitude towards knowledge, a view shared by Frison (2016).

In the meantime, the monitoring project aimed to deepen the knowledge of Collective Health for the second year students of the Medicine course at the State University of Santa Cruz, so that they understood the main health problems and needs of the collective, as well as being able to develop realistic interventions to solve social problems, based on the compression of the services offered in Primary Health Care in the Brazilian Unified Health System. While this project is also characterized as an intervention in the teaching-learning process, contributing to critical and creative training in the future professional performance of the students contemplated by the program. As a result, the tutoring work has been able to contribute to learning, especially for those who have more difficulty understanding the teacher's explanation, those who need more time to work on the proposed activities and to understand the content (Anastasiou & Alves, 2006).

On the other hand, the development of the monitoring project aimed to develop teaching skills for the student-monitors, seeking to improve their academic training, thus enabling them to act in a responsible and competent professional manner in the future. In this sense, the program also establishes conditions for theoretical improvement, strengthening the interface between practical knowledge and theory, supported by student involvement in the teaching-learning process..

From this situation, it can be inferred that tutoring was able to increase learning efficiency, motivation and commitment to the syllabus, above all through a process of building autonomy, control and critical awareness of the subject and their group about the teaching-learning process (Anastasiou & Alves, 2006).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Considering that the project in question aimed to promote the adoption of strategies to contextualize content, approaching it in an interdisciplinary way, the introduction of monitoring provided an opportunity to develop planning skills and teaching responsibility, giving students greater autonomy in their process of constructing knowledge, which was reflected in a deeper understanding of the content taught.

Thus, it can be inferred that the monitoring activity is an important space for establishing, expanding and fostering knowledge, enabling the exchange of information and knowledge between teachers, student-monitors and students, contributing to improved teaching in curricular components.

In addition, one might inadvertently think that monitoring is an easy form of teaching, but on the contrary, it is a demanding practice that requires constant monitoring, commitment and care in the training and qualification of the monitors. Not only was the teacher in charge the producer of critical thinking, but students and monitors also built knowledge together, systematizing

different points of view, showing that the monitoring teaching proposal makes it possible to build learning based on self-awareness of the teaching-learning process (Frison, 2016).

## **References**

- Anastasiou, L. G. C., Alves, L. P. Estratégias de ensinagem. In L. G. C. Anastasiou & L. P. Alves (Orgs.), Processos de ensinagem na universidade: pressupostos para as estratégias de trabalho em aula (pp. 67-100). Joinville, SC: UNIVILLE.
- Brasil, Ministério da Saúde. Política Nacional de Humanização. 1 edição, Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2013. Disponível em: [www.saude.gov.br/bvs/humanizacao](http://www.saude.gov.br/bvs/humanizacao)
- Frison, L. M. B. Monitoria: uma modalidade de ensino que potencializa a aprendizagem colaborativa e autorregulada. *Pro-Posições*, v. 27, n. 1, p. 133–153, abr. 2016.
- Gusso, G; Lopes, J M C. Tratado de Medicina de Família e Comunidade - Princípios, Formação e Prática. 2 ed. Artmed. 2018.
- MF da Silva, PAD Costa, MCS Fernandes, ACALL Tavares, MN Santana, MAS Margotto. (2015) The contributions of social interdisciplinary practices in problem-based learning medicine course. College of Medicine, State University of Santa Cruz, Bahia, Brazil. 1st International Conference on Higher Education Advances, HEAd'15:250–257 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4995/HEAd15.2015.255>