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NURSING STUDENTS' LEARNING TO TACKLE SOCIAL INEQUALITIES: USING COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS AND SOFTWARE-SUPPORTED ANALYSIS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

Social inequalities, recognized as vital material and existential differences between individuals and groups, constitute a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon. Reducing the impact of inequalities is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, necessitating initiatives to achieve this, including professional training. Thus, an extension course grounded in experiential learning was developed to foster nursing students' competencies to act upon these inequalities. This study aims to analyze the learning developed by nursing students to address social inequalities after participating in an extension course. A qualitative study was conducted with 8 students. Data were collected through interviews focusing on competencies, wherein participants were asked about their experiences regarding the educational intervention, their learnings, and the acquisition of competencies. The interviews underwent Critical Discourse Analysis with the aid of MAXQDA 2022 software, facilitating data organization and the peer coding process to reduce biases. Ethical aspects were respected. Learning encompassed dimensions of Apprehension of Immediate Experience, Conceptual Understanding, Intentional Reflection (Intention), and, to a lesser extent, Extension of Active Experimentation. The mobilization of actions in the competency domains of Identification, Analysis, Action, and Transformation of social inequality situations was evident. Post-course, the relationship between the competencies developed and the experiential learning cycle is confirmed, with discursive strategies expressing evaluative assumptions, modalizations, metaphors, representation of social actors, temporality, and modes of ideology operation. Conclusions: The formative practice's effects contributed to participants demonstrating the intention to adopt attitudes to tackle social inequalities. The use of competency-focused interviews and MAXQDA software was crucial for analyzing learning processes and competency development.

Keywords
Professional Competence; Social Inequalities; Learning; Nursing Students; Qualitative Research.

1. Introduction

Social inequalities are by nature a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, they are not confined to just one sector of society and are recognized as vital material and existential differences between individuals and population groups (Therborn, 2006). The extent of social inequalities is international and inter-regional. Studies published by international organizations (OECD, 2015; UN, 2020) refer to the significant increase in inequalities, particularly in the economies of emerging countries. This is attributed to the reproductive effect of social practices that have spread over several generations. Social reproduction is simultaneously incorporated by society and subjectively legitimized by its actors. Thus, to (re)establish mechanisms of upward social mobility to reduce social inequalities, it is crucial that states, societies, and economies promote and facilitate access to a set of social protection systems and public services (Carmo, 2021).

A fundamental change in how society is organized is necessary to overcome inequalities, and there is evidence that strategies exist to reduce them (Ford et al., 2021). This topic is of global interest, comprising one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations' (2020; 2021) 2030 Agenda, necessitating concrete initiatives to achieve this goal.

Professional training can be a fundamental field for reducing social inequalities (Cairney et al., 2022). The educational process, systematically and organizedly applied and based on appropriate learning methodologies, contributes to the development of individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes (future professional/worker) (Zabala, 2014).

In the health field, nursing professionals, with their broad scope of practice (education, assistance, administration, research, and political participation), must act to address inequalities (Thurman et al., 2017; Silva & Oliveira, 2020). Ethically, nurses should promote health equity for social justice through a practice guided by the Social Determinants of Health, with actions aligned with the demands and needs of territories (Thurman et al., 2017; Thornton & Persaud, 2018).

However, an insufficient approach to social inequalities in training processes results in a stagnant or opposite-direction professional practice to the necessary aspects for addressing social inequalities. These criticisms are evidenced by the lack of progress in developing social reforms, revealing significant gaps in addressing inequalities in the context of nursing professional training (Thurman et al., 2017; Silva & Oliveira, 2020).

Thus, the importance of developing these social actors' competencies to act upon conditions generating inequalities is highlighted. Understanding that healthcare for vulnerable individuals requires professionals to practice transformationally and a critical and reflective education on this reality is a revolutionary and necessary strategy for addressing these inequalities (Santos, 2021).

Competency is understood as the capacity for action by subjects who simultaneously mobilize attitudinal, procedural, and conceptual components, linking knowledge to practical utilities (Zabala, 2014). Hence, the significance of experiential learning lies in developing competencies in a specific context and purpose, enabling effective intervention in various social spheres.

To this end, an online extension course was designed to contribute to the development of nursing students' competencies (Silva et al., 2023). After carrying out the activities, the question was: What learnings were developed by nursing students to address social inequalities in an extension course? The present study aimed to analyze the learning developed by nursing students to address social inequalities in this extension course.

2. Method

This qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory research was developed in three stages: 1) literature review aimed at identifying the competency attributes of nurses in addressing social inequalities, to construct and validate a competency matrix for nurses to confront social inequalities; 2) development and implementation of a course with various strategies based on the framework of experiential learning for the development of the competencies identified in phase one to address social inequalities; and 3) analysis of the effect of the teaching strategies used in the course for the development of competencies in addressing social inequalities through interviews with course graduates. The study phases were conducted from February 2021 to March 2022.

This article will present the qualitative data from the last phase of the research, concerning interviews with course participants.

The Nurse Competency Matrix for Addressing Inequalities, constructed in stage one of the investigation, was used to support learning. The matrix defined four domains of competencies at increasing levels of complexity: Identification, Analysis, Action, and Transformation.

In the Identification domain, the student must be able to perceive, classify, and understand social inequalities; in the Analysis domain, the student must examine, reflect, critically analyze, and problematize situations, conditions, or contexts of social inequalities; in the Action domain, the student must develop actions to confront inequalities, perform care for people in situations of inequality, collaborate for the confrontation of inequalities, mobilize individuals, groups, or communities in the face of inequalities, and advocate for actions against inequalities and in favor of social justice; and in the Transformation domain, the student must be competent to resolve, improve, transform, and re-signify facts, concepts, or conditions related to social inequality (Silva et al., 2023).

Based on the competency matrix, the extension course "ComPensar: Development of Nurses' Competencies in the Face of Inequalities" was created and delivered as a Distance Education (EaD) course lasting 30 hours. The first offering of the course took place in the first semester of 2022, from March 7th to April 12th, 2022, for undergraduate nursing students at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. There were 20 students in the first cohort.

The methodological framework adopted was David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which supports the development of analytical skills and improves decision-making engagement (Kolb, 2015).

Specific activities were designed for each stage of the experiential learning cycle, such as watching a documentary and viewing a mural with various images depicting poverty; identifying and interpreting situations of social inequalities in daily life; participating in synchronous classes on topics related to inequalities; reading suggested texts; listening to podcasts created specifically for the course based on the recommended readings; analyzing a case study; participating in tutoring sessions with the course team to propose and develop an intervention to address a situation of inequality; executing the proposed action and presenting the results to the class.

After the course completion, the selection of students for interviews began, considering full participation in the course and the composition of tutoring groups organized for the activities. Two students from each tutoring group were included. The study's sampling was intentional and consisted of 8 graduating participants.

Data were collected through individual competency-focused interviews conducted by researchers from the investigation group experienced in qualitative approaches. The competency-focused interview is based on the premise that past behavior predicts the future, involving specific open-ended questions using past tense action verbs, structured to match a competency profile. Through this technique, the interviewer seeks to identify examples of situations experienced by the interviewee, inquiring about what they did, felt, and thought, as well as the outcomes of a specific action (Rabaglio, 2004).

Researchers followed a semi-structured interview guide with questions that asked participants to report situations of social inequalities encountered after the course and inquired how the course prepared them to identify, analyze the causes, propose, act, and/or resolve the identified situation of social inequality. Questions also covered the course's impact and learning from the experience provided by the course.

The competency-focused interview guide comprised the following questions: (1) Tell me about a social inequality situation you encountered after the course. (1-a) How did the course prepare you to identify this situation? (2) Thinking about the situation you have told me/us about, what causes do you attribute to it? (2-b) How did the course prepare you to analyze these causes? (3) In the situation you described, how did you act/would you act? (3-a) How did the course prepare you for this action? (4) In your action, what change did you hope/would you hope to resolve this situation? (5) How did the course affect you? (6) Tell me about your learning experience provided by the course.

The interviews took place in June and July 2022, in-person for 07 participants and remotely for 01 participant, with an average duration of 22 minutes. After recording, the interviews were transcribed and anonymized with a code composed of the letter "E" to indicate the participant and a random numerical sequence (E1 to E8).

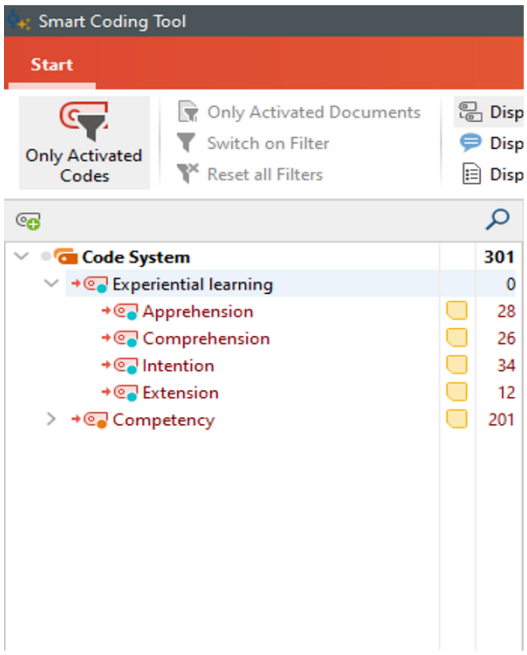
Interview files were uploaded into MAXQDA software version 2022 for organizing the obtained materials, coding, and peer review.

MAXQDA is an academic software that assists in qualitative data analysis and mixed methods, offering a wide range of powerful tools for managing research projects, analyzing data, and team collaboration (Maxqda, 2022).

The discourse of the students was subjected to the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposed by Fairclough, which includes text analysis (lexical and grammatical components), analysis of discursive practice (invocation of social actors), and analysis of social practice (social and political effects of social matrices)(Fairclough, 2001).

For this purpose, the interviews were analyzed using a priori categories related to the Learning Cycle and expected competencies.

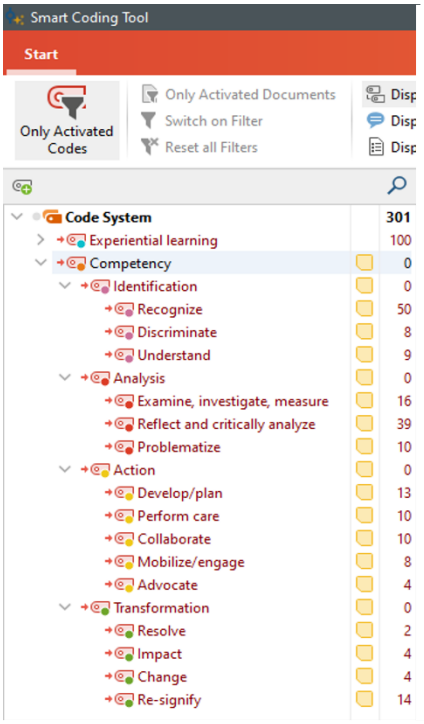
Regarding the learning cycle, four codes were used according to the stages or dimensions of the cycle proposed by Kolb: Apprehension (referring to the stage of concrete experience); Comprehension (referring to the stage of abstract conceptualization); Intention (referring to the stage of reflective observation); and Extension (referring to the stage of active experimentation).



Codes	Description
Experiential learning	
Apprehension	Defined as the appreciation of immediate experience, of a more intuitive and instantaneous nature, a product of perception, exemplification, and imitation. For Kolb, the act of apprehending is mediated by attention, valuation, and affirmation.
Comprehension	Compreender os significados da experiência com uma análise objetiva e crítica da mesma. Envolve interpretações conceituais e representações simbólicas, cuja aprendizagem é orientada pela conceituação abstrata.
Intention	Intentional, conscious, voluntary reflection, and determined by mental processes of self-evaluation. Learning encompasses psychic internalization.
Extension	Action in the external world, interacting with other people. Learning occurs through social externalization to expand an act or effect practically.

Figure 1. Codes related to Learning content

In terms of competencies, the material was also coded considering the Nurse Competency Matrix for Addressing Inequalities (Silva et al., 2023), with the following codes and sub-codes related to the competency domains and their respective actions defined in the Matrix: Identification - recognize, discriminate, and understand; Analysis - examine, investigate, measure, reflect and critically analyze, and problematize; Action - develop/plan, perform care, collaborate, mobilize/engage, and advocate; Transformation - resolve, impact, change, and re-signify.



Codes	Description
Learning competencies	
Identification	The ability to recognize and understand social inequalities, identifying situations, facts, contexts, or conditions that generate or express inequalities. It allows for distinguishing their causes, determining elements, and diagnosing individuals, groups, or populations affected by their different forms.
Analysis	The ability to examine, investigate, measure, or reflect critically on situations, facts, contexts, or conditions of inequalities experienced by an individual, group, or population, being capable of debating and problematizing their circumstances, causes, and determining elements.
Action	The ability to act, in an emancipatory way, in the face of situations, facts, contexts, or conditions of inequalities experienced by individuals, groups, or populations. It includes planning, articulation, mobilization, mediation, training, advocacy, and management to confront the circumstances, causes, and determining elements of inequalities. It assumes leadership, engagement, and decision-making in the construction of actions, strategies, and policies for tackling inequalities.
Transformation	The ability to transform situations, facts, contexts, or conditions of inequalities, by innovating processes, negotiating conflicts, redefining actions, and influencing the lifestyles of individuals, groups, and populations. It involves formulating judgments committed to a response, mobilizing values, facing dilemmas, and deciding for what is considered best. It includes actions and strategies for social change.

Figure 2. Codes related to Competency content

After training researchers in using the software and aligning conceptual and methodological understanding of the analysis categories, the interviews were read and discourses were coded according to the listed codes. Two researchers performed this reading and coding phase for each interview individually and independently, and then validated the codings in pairs. A consensus percentage of 80% was adopted by the group, considering values above 75% represent excellent agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Subsequently, the eight interviews were explored, and the data were coded. Codes were reviewed, and the homogeneity of themes was verified, as well as their heterogeneity when comparing interviews with each other. Two analytical categories were constructed: Competencies for Addressing Social Inequalities and Experiential Learning in Competency Development. The results present the connections between the two analytical categories.

The research adhered to the considerations of Resolutions 466/2012 and 510/2016, with approval by the Ethics and Research Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Participants signed the Informed Consent Form and were coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

3. Results

Figure 3 visually presents the connections between the codes of the analytical category Competencies for Addressing Social Inequalities (rows) and Experiential Learning in Competency Development (columns).

The clusters show the relational incidence between the codes, that is, they refer to quotations that are connected jointly from the coding of the interviews. The larger the symbol, the greater the connection between the analyzed codes.

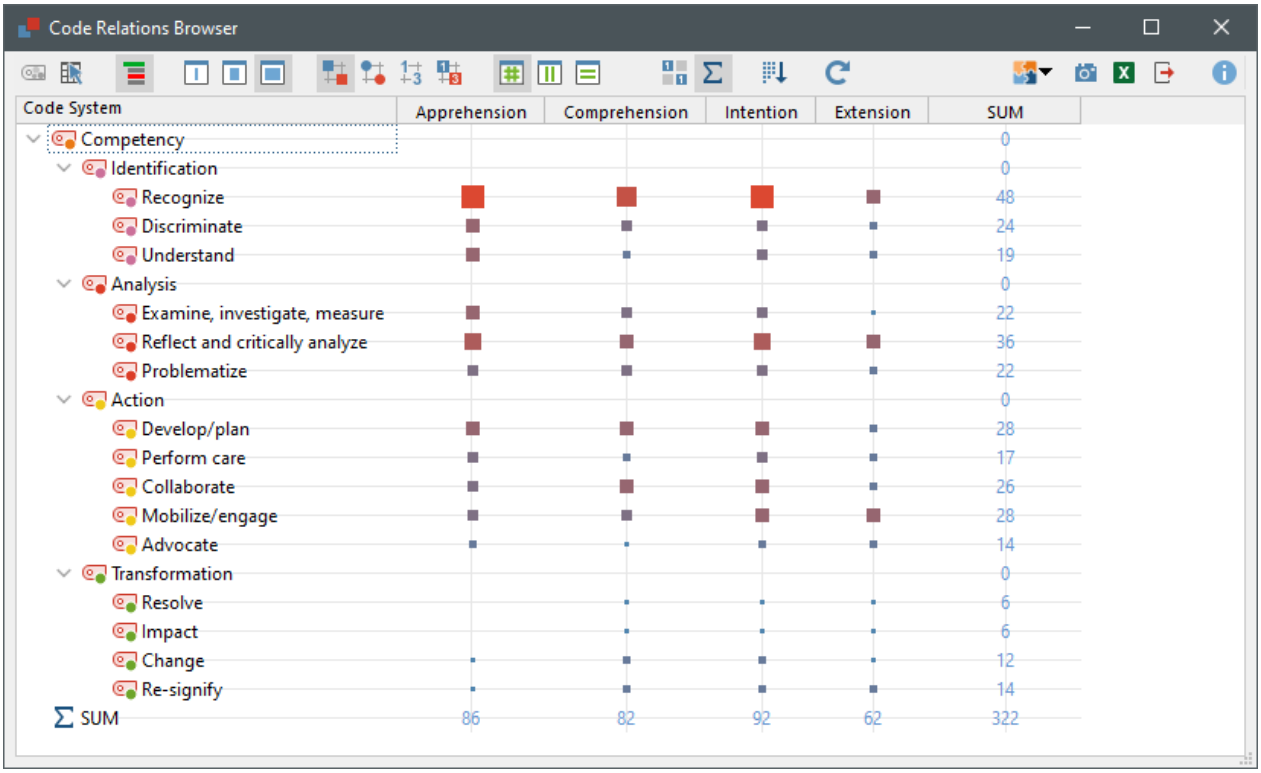


Figure 3. Connection between competency codes and experiential learning generated by MAXQDA software.

The analysis of Figure 3 allows us to understand the effects of the course on the development of competencies necessary to address inequalities across all domains: Identification, Analysis, Action, and Transformation. A greater development is noted in the domains of Identification, Analysis, and Action, spanning all stages of the learning cycle from Apprehension to Extension. The competency domain of Transformation showed a lesser incidence, being better achieved at the moment of Extension in the learning cycle.

The analysis of the category Competencies for Addressing Social Inequalities reveals that in the Identification domain, there was a lesser incidence in the actions "recognize" and "discriminate," with 48 occurrences and 24 occurrences, respectively. In the Analysis domain, the action "reflect and critically analyze" showed greater expression, evidenced in 36 occurrences. In the Action domain, the action "develop/plan" was present in 28 action reports, and in the Transformation domain, "re-signify inequalities" reached 14 occurrences.

Regarding the category Experiential Learning in Competency Development, results demonstrate that the experiential learning cycle was activated, reaching the dimensions of Apprehension, Comprehension, Intention, and Extension, with the latter being less frequent, with 62 occurrences in discourses.

However, despite its lesser frequency, Extension, which refers to concrete experience, was present in all Competency Domains, including the Transformation domain, where the other dimensions of learning were less intense.

The analysis of participants' discourses shows that **Apprehension**, through the appreciation of immediate experience, led to the recognition and critical reflection on inequality conditions. The discourses of E6 and E5 unveil attitudes towards these conditions adopted before and after the course: “before I knew, but didn't identify”; “from the course, I learned to have a critical reflection about it... AND SEE”; “but I started to NOTICE things more... it was something I began to pay more attention to, became more alert.”

Furthermore, participants E2 and E3 emphasize the moments of the course that mobilized them to better develop competencies: “thinking with the comments of colleagues and everything”; “And the material about the black population, right? I read it more and more, wanting to improve.”

> Because before, I was aware it existed, but I couldn't identify when a person was facing that inequality. After the course, I learned to reflect more critically about it... AND SEE all sides, because there isn't just one cause, there are multiple causes (E6)!
>
> I research a lot about this theme (inequality), I already researched because it's something that interests me and... but during the course, I could really see the difference, you know? It's... more practical, you know? What really happens in inequality. And to think with the comments from colleagues and everything, to consider the other side too (E3).
>
> Ah yes... it's... I didn't encounter anything too significant, but I started to NOTICE things more...? It was something I started paying more attention to... became more alert (E5)!
>
> ... so, for me, it was mostly like a space for thinking, right? And the material about the black population, right? I read it more and more, wanting to improve... wanting to shed my prejudices (E2).

The participants' discourse embodies a representation of the formative practice's effects, expressing evaluative assumptions about the process. In critical discourse analysis, evaluative assumptions inform what is considered desirable or undesirable; relevant or irrelevant to the discursive agent (Resende & Ramalho, 2014; Vieira & Resende, 2016). In this sense, enabling the understanding of differences, recognizing reality with its multiple determinants, and suggesting a change in previously prejudiced behaviors are characteristics of an emancipatory educational approach and were considered favorable elements by the participants.

In this regard, a study that focused on inequalities and access to health services in Latin America also identified the importance of recognizing the influence of social, environmental and economic contexts on access to goods and services, including the quality of life and health of people and populations (Oliveira, Pereira, 2024).

It also becomes evident that **Comprehension**, as a learning dimension related to conceptual interpretations and symbolic representations, was expanded after the course, in a more expressive relationship with the development of actions such as "recognize" (Identification domain); "reflect and critically analyze" (Analysis domain); "develop/plan" and "collaborate" (Action domain).

Participant E1, in discussing the understanding of social inequality, establishes a relationship with its socio-historical conditioning factors and identifies mediating instruments for confronting social inequalities. Participant E6 also problematizes ways to resolve inequalities.

> Social inequality, to me, is when people do not have the same opportunities, and this is conditioned by historical, cultural, ethnic, gender, and economic factors, for example. This can bring various harms to individuals, such as social exclusion and health problems, in addition to increasing risk factors. [...] Now that I know what the mediating instruments that can transform are, for example, the CRAS (Social Assistance Reference Center), the municipal social service that needs to be activated, even if it leads to nothing, it is necessary to report (E1).
>
> Then, after I graduate, if I see a homeless person needing my help regarding health, I will not ignore it. I'll go there, help them, refer them to the reference unit for what they need. And as a citizen outside of my profession, what I can do, for example, if I see a homeless person, is to ask them: 'What do you need?'; 'Do you need food? Do you need... money?'; 'What do you need?" (E6).

In the discourses of E1 and E6, the discursive category of ideology operation through rationalization is highlighted, meaning when participants seek to explain or justify reasoning with a set of relations. These relations reported as conditioning factors - in the case of E1 - or as the absence and need for economic/material resources - in the case of E6 - inform the understanding of inequalities by these participants. It can be said that they express an objective and critical analysis of what they extract from reality (people without opportunities, homeless person) and return to reality to integrate observation into action: "now that I know what the instruments are (E1)"; "And as a citizen, what I can do is (E6)".

The analysis of the discourses allows us to understand the importance of the course for a critical reflection on the social conditions that structure and reproduce inequalities, contributing to the process of approaching a thought that involves the analysis of the situation. With this approach, we advance towards a critical and problematizing action regarding the practice and protagonism of nursing in confronting social inequalities. It is worth noting that nursing as a social practice, committed to transforming the reality of inequalities, must seek a connection of care based on the reflection on the influence of determination and social determinants, so that it complies with its ethical, political, technical-scientific and humanistic principles in favor of a health that is diverse, inclusive and equitable (David, 2017).

The results also show that the **Intention** learning dimension was achieved, that is, intentional, conscious, and voluntary reflection in learning.

This dimension was associated with actions of "recognizing" (Identification domain); "reflecting and critically analyzing" (Analysis domain); "developing/planning", "collaborating" and "mobilizing/engaging" (in the Action domain).

> [...]From the moment we understand the mechanism, this network that entangles our entire Brazilian society and how it can happen, we end up awakening critical knowledge... a thought for other areas of our life and our society (E1).
>
> In a situation like this... if I experienced a situation like this, I would definitely create a dialogue with the social assistance professional... understand, take notes... at least, jot down what the person is saying and record (inaudible)... Make home visits, know the reality of that person... the neighborhood where they live [...] But, definitely, when I see it as a professional... I think I would react (E2).
>
> Um... I think mobilization! I think today we have such power... of social media, these things I think it's important to show our opinion and fight for what we believe (E3)!

In E1's discourse, the use of metaphorical lexical items ("mechanism," "network," and "entangled") is highlighted, which are associated with the expression "awakening critical knowledge" to refer to the competencies of "recognizing" and "reflectively and critically analyzing." Metaphors in discursive analysis inform the identificational meaning of the text (Resende & Ramalho, 2014).

Identifying or analyzing social inequality metaphorically, on one hand, indicates that these are themes infiltrated into everyday life and, therefore, can be identified with concepts present in concrete reality, such as mechanisms, entanglements, and networks. On the other hand, the metaphor also points out that there is a partial representation of the discursive object because, not knowing how to express it in its genuine meaning, we resort to physical or cultural experiences to allow the comprehension of language. Thus, the dimension of Comprehension in experiential learning, whose nature distanced from immediate and reflective experience allows the formation of mental images (Kolb, 2015), is confirmed. However, in this process, the images were still, from the perspective of participant E1, situated in the concrete experience (of the metaphor), indicating that other activations might be necessary for experiencing the concepts.

The analysis of the participants' discourses corroborates this interpretation. There is a concentration of textual elements and discursive practices that inform the Intention—a reflective, intentional, conscious, and voluntary dimension of the participants. These are attitudes of researching the reality of inequalities, constructing actions, grouping facts, and sharing opinions (Pimentel, 2007), which point to the potential for a transformative action.

In this sense, in E2's discourse, the actions "develop/plan" and "collaborate" (Action domain) are highlighted when describing the intention to "create a dialogue with the social assistance professional," "make home visits to know the reality of that person," "I think I would react." In the latter, the intention is made explicit through the modal use of the verb "think." Modalization is a linguistic resource that indicates probability, meaning the participant is not sure if they will carry out this action but informs that it is possible, thereby indicating the intentionality of the act.

In the same vein, E3's discourse expresses, through terms and phrases like "mobilization"; "social network, these things I think it's important to show our opinion and fight for what we believe!", the intentional reflection of the learned action, that is, the Intention dimension of experiential learning.

The participants' discourses also highlight the temporality between the development of competencies and the learning process. Expressions like "After I graduate" (E6); "From the moment" (E1); and "In a situation like this" (E2) are textual discursive extracts that mark the division between the moment of discourse production and the moment of action. In producing the discourse, participants signal that they Identify and Analyze inequalities. However, the action remains future-oriented, as evidenced by the lesser intensity of the Extension dimension in the Experiential Learning in Competency Development category.

The **Extension** dimension in the learning cycle refers to learning through social externalization to expand an act or effect practically. Although connections in this learning dimension were fewer compared to others, significant connections were noted with actions "recognize" (Identification domain), "reflect and critically analyze" (Analysis domain), and "mobilize/engage" (Action domain) as evidenced in the actions proposed by E8 in a social intervention attending to the vulnerable population of immigrants.

> [...] yes, I was following up with this patient, and then, you know, talking to her, understanding more, and the interest in understanding her story also came from me [...] So we tried to check with the consulate too, to see what had been said. Then we went to talk to one of the people who was more involved in this to understand how her process was going, you know, regarding her children's immigration. That's when we said: look, we can do this, let's try to check with her, to see if she's up for it if it's feasible for her. And she actually agreed [...] and we organized a mobilization (E8).

Highlighted in the discourse is the use of expressions like "and the interest in understanding her story also came from me "; "we tried to check"; "we went to talk"; "we went and said"; "we can do this" and "we organized a mobilization". There is a representation of actors that actively includes the participant directly ("came from me") or as part of a generic group ("we"). This finding indicates the participant's commitment to the developed action and consequently their ideological stance in favor of the activity they perform (Resende; Ramalho, 2014).

From the learning perspective, Extension is pragmatic (Kolb, 2015). The active experimentation reported by the participant indicates that the learning cycle has been completed because transformation action only comes after appreciation, observation, and conceptualization. The discourses of E6 and E8 exemplify this finding.

> But to help with what the person needs, to ask 'Look! What do you need?'; and from there see what I can help her with. Not waiting for someone else to do it: if I note this happening, I'll go there and act to be able to help (E6).

> It's about telling her about her rights, understanding the context she lives in, taking a stance, right? It's about mobilizing, seeking alternatives, this is advocacy, and although many professionals do a lot of advocacy or not, depending on the place as well, but they just don't label it as 'health advocacy', right? So I think from the strategy that we couldn't mobilize, I saw even more of the action, you know: what I can do, what I can mobilize, what I can learn about, how I can really make a difference in this inequality (E8).

The Extension dimension, according to Kolb (2015), reflects action in the external world, generating new experiences. The notion of extension symbolizes expanding an act or effect, making it long-lasting (Pimentel, 2007).

In this sense, active experience and experimentation are important for the development of nurses' skills aimed at tackling inequalities, with a commitment to social transformation (Gandra et al, 2023).

However, few reports indicated the achievement of the Extension dimension and observed a lesser incidence in the development of actions within the Transformation competency domain ("resolve", "impact", "change", and "re-signify"). This observation presumes limitations related to students' time constraints for effective participation in the extension course due to the normalization of the academic calendar post-pandemic, limited student involvement in the field (practice scenarios), and the offer being limited to just two federal public universities in the State of Minas Gerais given the operational capacity limits of the researchers to expand the offer to other universities.

4. Final Considerations

It is concluded that nursing students experienced learning that favored the development of competencies for tackling social inequalities. The findings highlight the mobilization of competencies related to the conceptual component with identification, understanding, and intention to act in the face of social inequality situations, as well as the extension, albeit less intensely. The analyses demonstrated that after the course, the discourses refer to the structural dimension and the intent to adopt attitudes for tackling social inequalities.

The use of competency-focused interviews and MAXQDA software was essential for analyzing learning processes and competency development. The competency-focused interview allowed participants not only to report what they experienced during the course but also to predict what and how they would act in the future, exploring aspects of the extension of learning. MAXQDA software was employed in different stages of the study (Storage of different investigation documents; Coding of documents; Analysis of documents; and Study reports). Its utilization facilitated and expedited the collaborative work of the research group.

Considering that changing practices is a complex process dependent on educational initiatives, the 30-hour course based on a problematizing framework that stimulates critical thinking achieved a potential result, making it necessary to think about its continuity and replicability in other national and international territories. Especially, there is an indication of the need for other pedagogical strategies to favor the learning extension dimension with opportunities for participants to actively experiment and reflect on unprecedented experiences, the knowledge apprehended, understood, and reflected upon.

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