

# Teaching the history of nursing: an overview of Brazilian public universities



*Ensino da história da enfermagem: panorama em universidades públicas Brasileiras*  
*Enseñanza de la historia de la enfermería: panorama de las universidades públicas Brasileñas*

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To describe the teaching of the History of Nursing in the curricular structures of Undergraduate Nursing Courses at Brazilian public universities.

**Method:** A documentary, descriptive study with a qualitative approach carried out between February 2021 and August 2023. The sample included the curricula of active face-to-face undergraduate courses at public educational institutions (n=136) identified on the e-MEC platform. The content of the syllabuses was organized into a textual corpus and content analysis was carried out with the support of the IRaMuTeQ software.

**Results:** 99 syllabuses were identified among the 136 courses. A total of 100 (73.5%) courses have a specific subject dedicated to the History of Nursing. Five classes emerged which addressed the historical evolution of nursing in Brazil and worldwide, the creation of nursing schools, the division of labor, dimensions of care, and legal aspects of the profession.

**Conclusion:** The teaching of the History of Nursing is described in the curricular structures by aspects that make it possible to learn about the historical achievements and current challenges of nursing.

**Descriptors:** Nursing. History of Nursing. Teaching. Universities. Nursing Students. Professional Training.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** descrever o ensino de História da Enfermagem nas estruturas curriculares de Cursos de Graduação em Enfermagem de universidades públicas brasileiras.

**Método:** estudo documental, descritivo, de abordagem qualitativa, realizado entre fevereiro de 2021 e agosto de 2023. A amostra incluiu os currículos dos cursos de graduação presenciais ativos de instituições públicas de ensino (n=136) identificados na plataforma e-MEC. O conteúdo das ementas dos currículos foi organizado em um *corpus* textual e realizou-se análise de conteúdo com apoio do software IRaMuTeQ.

**Resultados:** identificaram-se 99 ementas entre os 136 cursos. Um total de 100 (73,5%) possuem disciplina específica de História da Enfermagem. Emergiram cinco classes que abordaram a evolução histórica da enfermagem no Brasil e no mundo, a criação de escolas de enfermagem, a divisão do trabalho, as dimensões do cuidar e os aspectos legais da profissão.

**Conclusão:** o ensino de História da Enfermagem é descrito nas estruturas curriculares por aspectos que possibilitam conhecer as conquistas históricas e desafios atuais da enfermagem.

**Descritores:** Enfermagem. História da enfermagem. Ensino. Universidades. Estudantes de Enfermagem. Capacitação profissional.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Describir la enseñanza de la Historia de la Enfermería en las estructuras curriculares de los Cursos de Pregrado en Enfermería de las universidades públicas brasileñas.

**Método:** Estudio documental, descriptivo y con enfoque cualitativo, realizado entre febrero de 2021 y agosto de 2023. La muestra incluyó los currículos de cursos presenciales activos de pregrado de instituciones públicas de enseñanza (n=136) identificados en la plataforma e-MEC. El contenido de los planes de estudio se organizó en un *corpus* textual y el análisis de contenido se realizó con soporte de software IRaMuTeQ.

**Resultados:** Se identificaron 99 planes de estudios entre los 136 cursos. Un total de 100 (73,5%) cursos tienen una asignatura específica de Historia de la Enfermería. Surgieron cinco clases que abordaban la evolución histórica de la enfermería en Brasil y en el mundo, la creación de las escuelas de enfermería, la división del trabajo, dimensiones del cuidado y los aspectos legales de la profesión.

**Conclusión:** La enseñanza de la Historia de la Enfermería está descrita en las estructuras curriculares por aspectos que permiten conocer los logros históricos y los retos actuales de la enfermería.

**Descriptor:** Enfermería. Historia de la Enfermería. Enseñanza. Universidades. Estudiantes de Enfermería. Capacitación Profesional.

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## ■ INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a profession in the field of health, being a part of different levels of health care institutions. Since the actions of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War, in 1854, the profession gained social recognition and professional education was organized, with an impact that still lingers in current teaching models<sup>(1-2)</sup>. To understand the development of this profession, one must resort to the history of nursing (HS). By analyzing the past, one can understand the present and glimpse the future of the category<sup>(1-6)</sup>.

National Curriculum Guidelines (DCNs) direct the main axes for the training of nurses in Brazil. The hour load of nursing graduation must be of at least 4 thousand hours, distributed in five years or ten academic semesters. The curricular structure of the full-time course allows the student to experience various contents, complementary activities, extension and professional training, in addition to internships in Primary Health Care (PHC) services and tertiary care during their last year, so they can acquire all skills and competences necessary for the labor market<sup>(7)</sup>.

However, educational institutions have no guidelines regarding NH teaching<sup>(6,8-9)</sup>. NH is an intrinsic discipline for the professional, especially present in nursing courses. Furthermore, the discipline that discusses NH points at a connection between two axes: nursing and history. Therefore, it is interpreted as an interdisciplinary subject. This discipline has its peculiarities, and retrieves the past using interdisciplinary bridges<sup>(8,10)</sup>.

The study of NH enables a critical analysis of the essence of the profession, endorses the meaning given to its practice and recognizes its professional identity, helping train professionals capable of abstract thought and increasing their knowledge of the events related to the health-disease process<sup>(5)</sup>. Analyzing the trajectory of nursing over time and the context of the profession, historically speaking, helps understand the present from a perspective of advances and challenges<sup>(3)</sup>.

Issues related with NH teaching include: a) lack of interest from students, since it is an essentially theoretical subject based on traditional teaching models<sup>(9)</sup>; b) the high demands of the teaching work, as they have to responsibly teach multiple types of content and, often, are not provided with the resources needed to attend the needs of the students<sup>(6)</sup>; and c) the curricular pressure that emphasizes other content to the detriment of NH<sup>(8,11)</sup>, which can impair its content.

Reflecting on the contributions of NH, we see that the discipline advanced regarding the adoption of innovative teaching strategies<sup>(12)</sup>, especially after the technological leap pushed forward by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>(12-14)</sup>. Digital and non-digital resources can increase students' interest and

motivation about the topic, while helping them fixate relevant content for the development of a critical and reflective sense of the evolution of the profession<sup>(12,14)</sup>.

The study of the syllabuses of disciplines that discuss this topic is based on the following justifications: a) the knowledge of the roots of the profession allows future professionals to understand the origins and evolution of their practice, including the perception of how and why certain practices and standards were established. This includes understanding changes in techniques, philosophies of care, and responsibilities of nurses through time, as well as the possibility of questioning and improving current practices when necessary; b) the value of the profession is based on the study of nursing history, as it promotes the recognition of past contributions from nurses, showing appreciation for the advance that allowed the profession to reach its current status and fostering the preservation of a memory of the profession; c), critical development, since knowledge about one's history allows the nursing workers to develop a critical perspective regarding their profession. As a result, social, cultural, political, and economic factors that influenced the evolution of nursing can be recognized, which help nurses become agents of change that have the awareness to provide a more effective form of care; and d) inspiration for innovation and leadership, since, after studying the story of nursing, students can become inspired in historical figures in order to take on the role of leadership and innovation, learning with the challenges and successes of the pioneers in the field.

This shows how relevant it is to identify the content in the syllabuses of these subjects in order to ascertain whether they attend all needs of NH education. In this regard, a search was carried out on May 28, 2024, in the databases Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE n=520), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO n=11), Latin American Literature in Health Sciences (Lilacs n=82) and Nursing Database (Bdenf n=63) databases. The search strategy used was: ((Curriculum OR Curriculum) AND (History of Nursing OR History of Nursing OR Historia de la Enfermería) AND (Brazil OR Brazil)). The strategy was adapted to the characteristics of each of the databases. The time frame selected was from the year 2014 on, and we search for the presence of the selected terms in the titles, abstracts, and subject.

Despite the relevance of teaching NH in graduation, no previous study was found that had a similar goals the present study, analyzing the landscape of NH teaching in the national context by investigating the content of the syllabuses. Therefore, the following research question was raised: What is the Brazilian landscape regarding the teaching of NH in public universities? To answer it, the study aimed to describe the teaching of nursing history in the curricular structures of Nursing Graduation Courses of Brazilian public universities.

## METHOD

This is a document, descriptive, qualitative research. The intentional sample was formed by nursing graduation courses that are active in Brazilian public universities. Inclusion criteria include Bachelor's degrees and licensing courses in nursing provided by public universities. We excluded institutions whose information was not available online.

Data collection took place in three stages: 1) access to the electronic platform of the Ministry of Health (e-MEC)<sup>(15)</sup>, where we identified the Brazilian public universities that provide the courses indicated using the advanced search feature to find those with the following features: nursing graduation, free courses, bachelor's degree or nursing licensing. This stage was carried out in February 2021; 2) access to the official websites of these universities to characterize the courses; 3) through the websites of the courses, the syllabuses of the disciplines for NH teaching were found via search for the terms "history" or "historic" in the title of the disciplines or in the content of the syllabuses of the curriculum. Data from stages 2 and 3 was collected with the aid of the app *Kobotoolbox*, from February 2021 to August 2023.

The characterization of the courses included in the sample considered the following variables: 1) "State". 2) "Public higher education university", where the university's name was registered. 3) "Course", which could be bachelor's, licensing, or both. 4) in the variable "type of discipline", there were the options "Specific discipline about NH"; "Mixed discipline", which was when the NH content was part of the discussion of other topics; and "Data not available online", when the information was not available in the university's website. 5) "discipline hour load". And 6) "Contents of the discipline syllabuses".

Data collection and extraction was carried out by one of the researchers (graduation student) after being guided and trained by the researcher responsible for the study. An MS student was also trained so she could collaborate in data collection and extraction. This process was monitored and supervised by the researcher responsible for the study and validated by the research team.

Data related to the characteristics of the courses was structured using Microsoft Excel® and described using descriptive statistics. This analysis was carried out using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29. Textual data (the content of the syllabuses) was structured in a corpus and analyzed using the software IRaMuTeQ (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*), including descending hierarchical classification (CHD), similitude analysis, and a word cloud.

To organize the textual corpus, the content of the syllabuses was transcribed in full into a text document with the UTF-8 extension. Each course was identified in the corpus using a command line formed by the acronym of the name of the institution, preceded by four asterisks. The content was reviewed to eliminate any errors regarding typing and punctuation, paragraphs were removed, bold or italic formatting was cleared out. We also removed special characters such as quotation marks, apostrophes, hyphens, dollar signs, percentage signs, ellipses, and asterisks.

After this stage, the corpus was imported into the software IRaMuTeQ to classify the textual content. In this stage, the standard Portuguese dictionary was selected, and the size of text segments was defined as at most 40 characters. The early evaluation of the software shows the number of texts identified, of text segments, their occurrences and forms.

In the following evaluation, the CHD was requested. This is a hierarchical organization of the text according with correlated words. This classification allows researchers to detect the content of the corpus, name the classes, and identify groups and themes. The percentage of corpus use is presented in this stage.

We also requested a similitude analysis, which allows for a graphical visualization that illustrates the co-occurrence and frequency of word association in the corpus. This analysis was carried out considering active forms with frequencies of ten or more. Later, new active forms with a frequency of ten or more were once again used to construct the word cloud, which is a graphical representation of the words that represent the corpus most closely. The size of each word in the image is proportional to their frequency in the corpus.

IRaMuTeQ is a free software that enables the processing and organization of textual data. However, it is worth noting that data processing tools cannot be seen as an independent method of research or analysis. IRaMuTeQ organizes textual data based on lexical content, providing the researcher with a structure for approximating and classifying the information contained in the textual corpus. As a result, researchers are expected to analyze the content and interpret information considering their understanding and an evaluation of the content as organized by the software, later comparing these findings with previous research.

The content analysis of the syllabuses was carried out using a thematic analysis in three stages, namely: 1) pre-analysis, in which data was organized in the classes selected by the IRaMuTeQ software and the content of each class was carefully read; 2) material exploration, in which the content from the classes was submitted to a critical review, with the support of the tool *color corpus*, which is a feature of the software. The colored corpus shows the content of the

classes categorized in the colors in which these classes were presented in the DHC, allowing the researcher to evaluate the content categorized by the software, its relevance and pertinence; 3) treatment and interpretation of results, to determine the core meaning of the aggregated content <sup>(16)</sup>.

As this study used public access information, it did not require an authorization from the Research Ethics Committee, according with resolution CNS No. 510/2016<sup>(17)</sup>.

## ■ RESULTS

According to the records available in the e-Mec platform in 2023, there were 136 higher education nursing courses in public universities, all of which were in-person. The most common modality was the bachelor's degree, with 126 (92.6%) of the courses. Only 10 (7.4%) universities provided both bachelor's degrees and a licensing option.

Regarding the location of the courses, there were 55 (40.4%) courses offered in the Northeast, 28 (20.6%) in the Southeast, 21 (15.5%) in the Midwest, 18 (13.2%) in the South, and 14 (10.3%) in the North. The states with the highest number of courses were Maranhão and Minas Gerais, with 11 (8.1%) courses each, followed by Bahia, Paraná, and São Paulo, with 9 courses each. 72 (52.9%) courses were from federal institutions, 62 (45.7%) were from state institutions, one (0.7%) was from a municipal institution, and one (0.7%) course was from an institution linked to the Federal District.

The medium hour load of the disciplines analyzed was 44.3 hours (standard deviation 33.8 hours; minimum = 15 hours; quartile 1 = 30 hours; median = 45 hours; quartile 3 = 60 hours; maximum = 204 hours). 100 courses (73.5%) had a specific NH subject with a workload ranging from 15 to 90 hours, with a mean of 47.46 hours (standard deviation = 16.01); in 16 (11.8%) courses, the content was offered as a mixed subject, that is, there was no specific subject. In 20 courses, there was no information available about the subjects offered on the institutional websites.

37 courses were excluded from the text analysis as the content of their syllabuses was not available in the official website of the university, with a total of 99 courses analyzed in this aspect. The corpus, formed by the syllabuses of the courses, included 99 texts and was divided in 161 text segments (STs), of which 127 STs were used (78.88%). There were 5,221 occurrences (words or forms), with 619 unique words and 330 that appeared only once.

The analysis of the corpus using the DHC grouped text segments, correlating them according with the similarity of the topics. The content of the corpus was categorized into five classes: class 1 (25.2%), class 2 (31.5%), class 3 (15.0%), class 4 (12.6%) and class 5 (15.8%) (Figure 1).

Based on the organization of the classes using the DHC, we could name the classes using the topics that emerged from the thematic analysis (Chart 1).

The content of the syllabuses, analyzed and organized in categories, allowed ascertaining that disciplines which discuss NH approach several topics that form the basis for a professional education, as opposed to only bringing up historic data and facts. The history of the profession is the starting point for the construction of knowledge and the debate about current questions which are necessary to the praxis of the nurse in the health system, as well as in the social, political, and economic context in which they are inserted.

Furthermore, the content of the syllabuses shows that disciplines which address NH discuss nursing as the practice of caring, showing its evolution over the centuries as shaped by the health needs of populations and by the social and political contexts in Brazil and abroad. It goes from instinctive care, discussing care to those ill as an extension of Christian charity, to the establishment of hospitals by Christian orders and the birth of professional nursing with Florence Nightingale. The consolidation and structuring of nursing as a profession started in the 19th century, as education became formalized, and nursing schools were created.

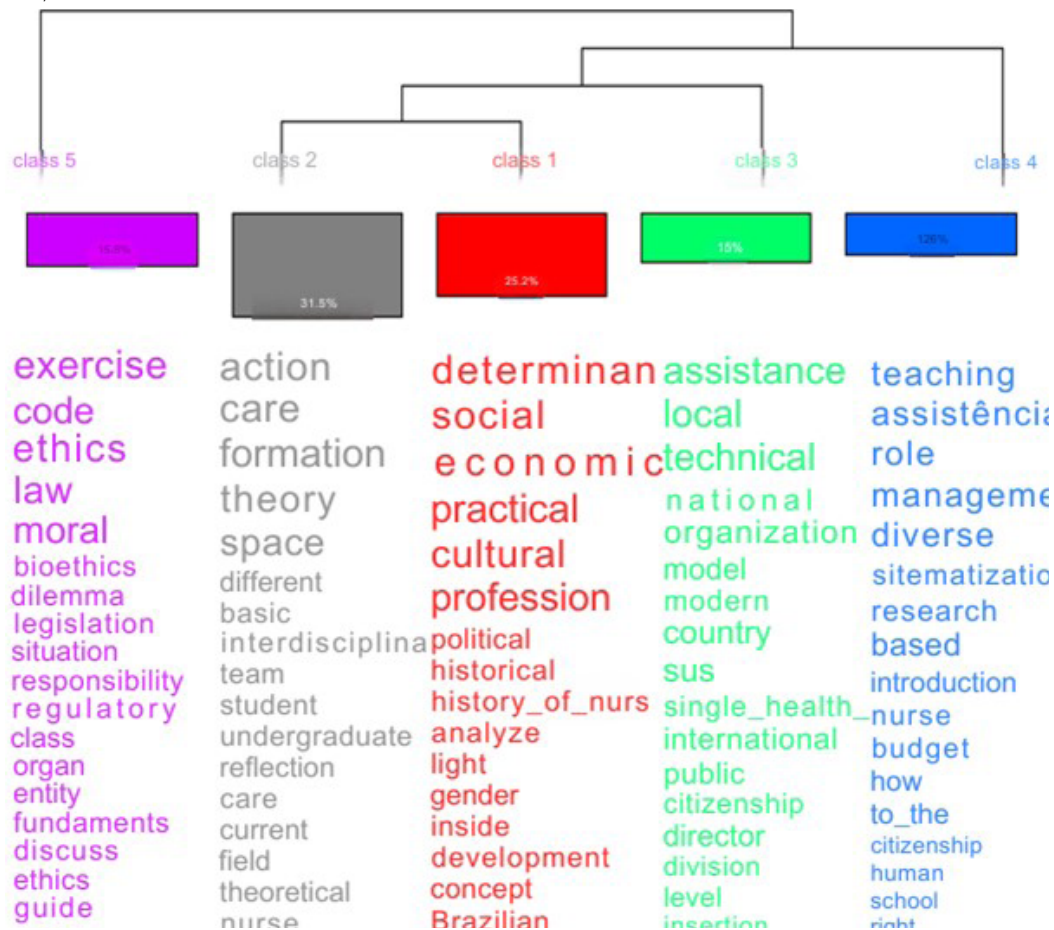
In addition to dealing with historical facts, NH disciplines allow students to glimpse many opportunities for the work of the nurse in health care, management, research, and teaching. They also point to the social division of labor in health and nursing as something that requires interdisciplinary collaboration to a full and comprehensive care for patients' diverse needs. The specific contribution of nursing to the health care assistance, considering the implementation of the nursing process, stands out.

It is worth noting that NH disciplines discuss the legislation that determines which are the assignments and responsibilities of nurses, putting in place standards for professional practice. Ethics in nursing involves respecting human dignity, compromise with the health and wellbeing of patients, and adhering to high professional standards.

Another analysis made using the text corpus was the similitude analysis. Analyzing the syllabuses according with graph theory, we could find how often words occurred and suggest connections between them, helping identify the structure of the content of the textual corpus. The analysis generated 210 words, but only those with a frequency of 10 or more were included.

Figure 2 shows ramifications around the axis "nursing". These show important aspects of NH, especially in the larger connections with the terms "Nursing", "Historic", "Social", "Practical", and "Health". Considering the connection of these

**Figure 1** - Dendrogram of the Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) carried out by the IRaMuTeQ software. Juiz de Fora, MG, Brazil, 2023.



Source: Image generated with the support of the software IRaMuTeQ.

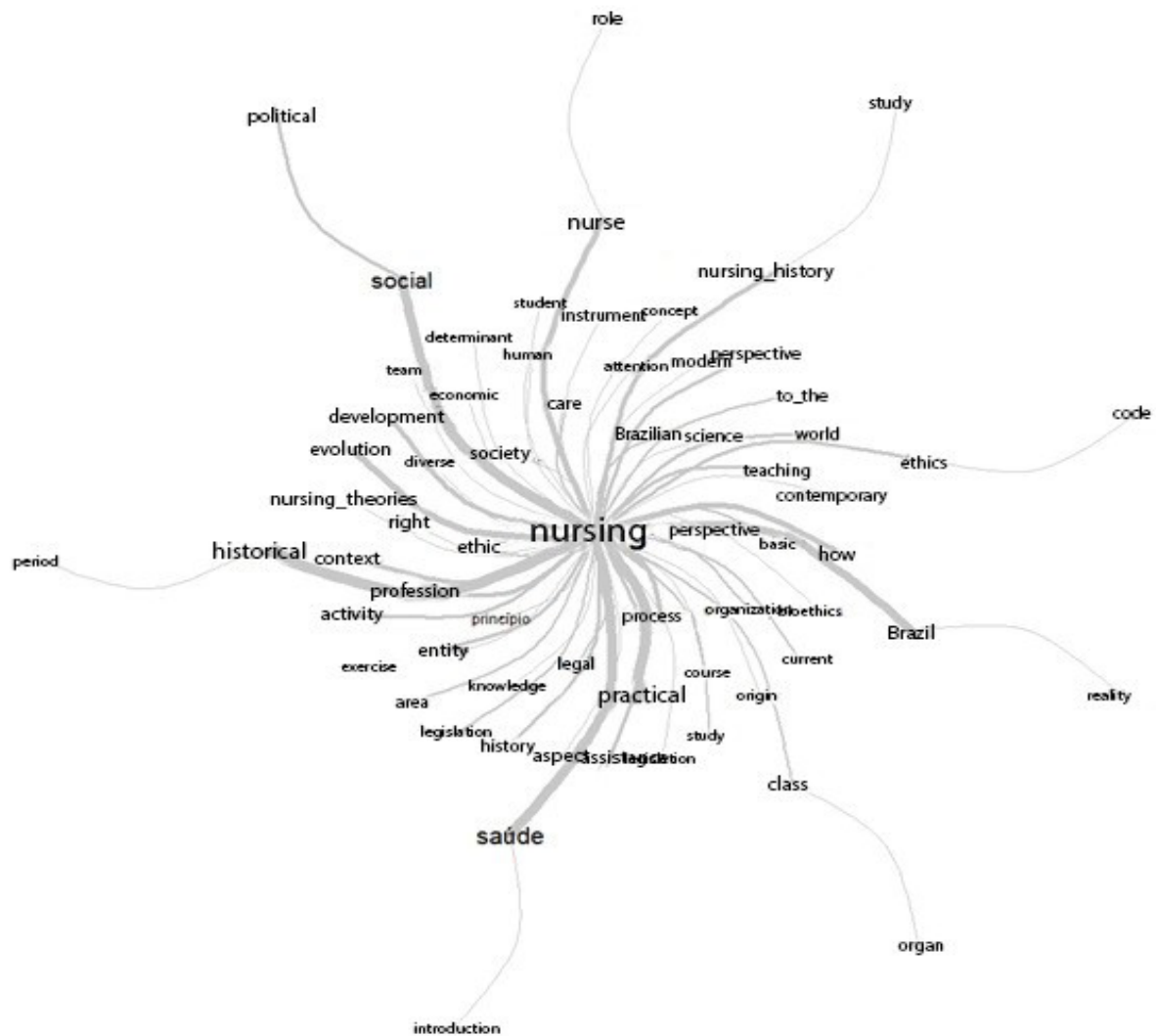
**Chart 1** - Classes obtained from the analysis of the content of the syllabuses of the disciplines that discuss NH, organized according to the Descending Hierarchical Classification. Juiz de Fora, MG, Brazil, 2023.

| Class | Class name                                                             | Themes found in the content of the syllabuses                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | The evolution of nursing as a practice of care and historical periods. | Historical development of health practices; the evolution of nursing as a profession; development of care and health practices in the social context, understanding NH in its political, social, and cultural aspects. |
| 2     | Brazilian nursing and modern nursing.                                  | NH in Brazil, modern nursing, professional career, insertion of the student in the academic environment.                                                                                                               |
| 3     | Nursing schools, health work process and division of labor.            | Nursing schools, health models, health care, health and nursing work processes, Unified Health System (SUS), social division of labor in health and nursing.                                                           |
| 4     | Dimensions of care and nursing process                                 | Nursing process, care, management, teaching, research.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 5     | Legislation, ethics and practice of nursing                            | Professional practice, ethical and legal principles, labor regulations, legislation.                                                                                                                                   |

Source: The authors (2023)



**Figure 2** - Similitude tree from the syllabuses of the disciplines which deal with NH.



Source: Image generated with the support of the software IRaMuTeQ.

terms, one can understand that nursing has a historical, socio-political context, based on the practice of health care.

Then, a word cloud was analyzed, showing how often the terms appeared and what is their representativity and importance in the text corpus. The main ones were "Nursing", "profession", "Health", "History of nursing", and "Evolution". These words were the most frequent in the syllabuses collected, reiterating the findings of the similitude analysis (Figure 3).

The most common words in the text corpus of the syllabuses were: nursing ( $n = 324$ ), health ( $n = 92$ ), practical ( $n = 69$ ), history ( $n = 69$ ), professional ( $n = 66$ ), social ( $n = 62$ ),

work (n = 57), Brazil (n = 54), and nurse (n = 45). The word "nursing" was the most common in the corpus, showing that the content of the discipline NH is focused on aspects of nursing and on its insertion in the historical, political, and social context.

The words “health”, “practical”, “historical”, “professional”, and “social” showed that, considering the relationship between them, one can surmise that nursing was developed as a professional and social practice, aiming to promote health. This reiterates the similitude analysis, which also showed words such as “care”, “assistance”, “period”, and “society”.

**Figure 3** - Word cloud extracted from the syllabuses of disciplines that deal with NH. Juiz de Fora, Brazil, 2023.

Source: Image generated with the support of the software IRaMuTeQ.

The words “work”, “Brazil”, “nurse” also appeared as important terms in the word cloud, showing that other important terms are also part of the educational process in the context of nursing, such as nursing theories, process, and concept.

## ■ DISCUSSION

Since the beginning of nursing higher education in Brazil, the subject of NH has been taught as mandatory content. The teaching of NH in Brazil started in Rio de Janeiro, when the Escola de Enfermeiras do Departamento Nacional de Saúde Pública was created in 1923. Later, it would be renamed as Escola de Enfermagem Anna Nery. This institution was the model for the teaching of nursing in Brazil for several years<sup>(5)</sup>.

Although the National Curriculum Directives (NCD) in effect do not explicitly include NH, all public universities in the sample whose information was available in their websites addressed NH somehow during graduation, showing that they, unanimously, valued this content in professional education. A research in Spain found a different result, showing that NH was not addressed as a regulated discipline in some curricular plans in the last university reform<sup>(18)</sup>. This shows that the content of NH is possibly not valued when compared to other clinical and theoretical content<sup>(8,11)</sup>.

In this regard, the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN) recommends that NH should be included in all undergraduate and graduate nursing curricula, pointing out that the absence of specific guidelines in this regard is a shortcoming<sup>(9)</sup>. The need to review the current NCD for nursing courses must be highlighted, in order to ensure that NH is mentioned as an essential component of the professional training of future nurses.

In Brazil, the National Council of Health, together with the Brazilian Council of Nursing (ABEn), proposed new NCDs in Resolution No. 573, from January 31st, 2018. This document recommended the mandatory inclusion of NH in the context of Fundamentals of Nursing. Furthermore, it recommended that nursing should be recognized considering its history<sup>(19)</sup>.

Although the findings of this research show that there is no consensus regarding hour load for the HN discipline in the courses of Brazilian public universities, the mean hour load was 47.46 hours. A similar result was found in a study from Spain, where mean hour load was 42.2 hours<sup>(18)</sup>. The time dedicated for NH, as found in this research, is in accordance with recommendations that from 30 to 60 hours should be dedicated to this discipline, this being considered the time needed to discuss and understand the past, the present, and the future of the profession<sup>(2,8)</sup>.

In this research, based on the DHC results, Class 1 discusses the evolution of nursing as a profession, the beginning of health practices and the historical understanding of the profession in regard to social, cultural, and political spheres. The findings can be related with Florence Nightingale's legacy, since her proposals to change care broke through social, political, and practical determinants of her time<sup>(20)</sup>. This shows how important activism was for NH, bringing benefits to patient, community, and helping push the profession forwards<sup>(21-22)</sup>.

The analysis of the historical narratives contributes to identify actors involved in different contexts and situations, and to glimpse at possible changes. Understanding past challenges allows one to anticipate current obstacles, avoid inefficient interventions, and reiterate on successful strategies, while developing and implementing new actions<sup>(11)</sup>.

Class 2 discusses the insertion of the student in the academic environment and the professional career, in which the relationship between NH teaching and the acquisition of technical-scientific instruments must be considered. The historical trajectory shows the integration between teaching and service as something that transformed the role of nursing in the social context, while changing the debate about the development of specialized knowledge in nursing. The nurse, when provided with adequate knowledge, can contribute in the development of strategies and instruments of intervention in reality<sup>(23)</sup>.

An event that materialized the professionalization of nursing was the creation of the first Nursing school by Florence Nightingale<sup>(2-3)</sup>. There, a set of technical-scientific knowledge was established, and based the work of nursing, determining a model of formation that spread in several parts of the world. University nursing education made scientific development possible<sup>(3)</sup>, increasing the theoretical framework of the profession and giving it strength.

Furthermore, Florence Nightingale's proposals determined a division of labor based on responsibilities of direct health care and of organizing the hospital environment and its work team. This model attended to the growing demands of health care from capitalist society, while making the social recognition of the profession possible<sup>(8,10)</sup>.

Classes 3 and 4 discussed nursing schools, health care, division of labor, and the role of the nurse. These aspects of history show the origin of these concepts, considering the systematic and empirical practice of Florence Nightingale, forming a historical milestone of Modern Nursing<sup>(24)</sup>. NH can be seen as a topic that integrates an understanding of the influences, contribution, and advances in nursing care<sup>(6)</sup>.

The fourth class in the dendrogram is related to nursing process, teaching, research, and the role of nurses.

Considering the continuous advances of health care and society itself, nursing teaching seeks to answer the needs of the work market, and, therefore, those of the patients, qualifying professionals for many different situations<sup>(25)</sup>. The NH has an essential role in this process<sup>(11)</sup>. Knowing the historical evolution of nursing care in different health moments, or the process of disease of individuals favors individual planning and health care organization, in addition to impacting the formation of several competences which are essential for the exercise of the profession<sup>(6,11)</sup>.

Class 5 addresses ethics in nursing, legislation, and professional exercise, emphasizing the practice of work and the rules that govern nursing. Professional self-regulation performed within the scope of the Federal and Regional Nursing Councils supports professional autonomy, based on compliance with the law on the professional practice of nursing. The law of professional exercise highlights the space for the role of nurses and the nursing team, encouraging them to occupy the proper spaces to perform their activities<sup>(26)</sup>.

The similitude analysis has a single and main axis, which is "nursing". From it, words emerge such as: social, health, teaching, care, human, and ethics. These words are part of the Ethics Code for Nursing Professionals and in the NCD. Therefore, nursing can be understood as a set of social, political, and ethical practices, in an attempt to provide inherent care to human beings in the scope of health<sup>(11,25)</sup>.

Similarly, the word cloud highlighted, as its main axis, the term "nursing". The other words or terms included reiterate the aspects that the NCDs prescribe for the formation of the nurse, as well as the role of the NH in the consolidation and confirmation of the connection between several aspects and axes of professional formation. It is worth noting that it is necessary to discuss and increase the debate around NCDs as the guides of nursing professional training, including its technical, ethical, political, and humanistic dimensions, aimed at ensuring a socially responsible activity, committed to citizenship. The role of the nurse also includes promoting human integral health and consolidating the SUS with quality and innovation as rights of workers and users<sup>(27)</sup>.

In all analyses, the terms "history" and "NH" were observed, showing the content to be treated in the discipline. Their goal is elucidate historical facts, showing that nursing is related with other fields of knowledge<sup>(8,10)</sup>. The function of history is elucidating the context experienced and explain the meaning of this context<sup>(6,9)</sup>. The study of NH should involve professional training as an axis that guides the construction of competences such as: knowledge for the practice of nursing, person-centered care, collective health, nursing as a science and discipline, quality and safety in nursing practices,



interdisciplinarity, use and implementation of innovation and technology, leadership, and personal development<sup>(11)</sup>.

In this regard, the search for the implementation of new technologies in the teaching of NH helps understanding, increases student interest, and contributes for the consolidation of information<sup>(12-14)</sup>. This can help forge a professional who is more conscious of their socio-political role<sup>(5,14,22,28)</sup>. Although there are requirements for students to teach more content, using innovative resources and teaching strategies, they rarely receive additional time or resources to do so<sup>(6,14)</sup>.

In general, when one thinks of studying NH, this is at first understood as studying the origins of the profession, based on facts alone. However, as we delve deeper into the topic, we find that studying the historical construction of the profession makes it possible to better understand one's duties and show more enthusiasm for one's ideal<sup>(29)</sup>. Therefore, we can associate the findings in this investigation as a way to understand the historical trajectory and contribute for the development of the social, political, cultural, and economic responsibility for professional identity and perception<sup>(5,30)</sup>.

Looking at nursing history, based on evidence, makes it possible to deconstruct stereotypes and give a voice to the profession, since history is dynamic when considered in relation with the unfolding of the context in which the professionals are inserted, and is reflected on it. The pedagogical proposal needs to stimulate professors to become more autonomous and creative professionals, capable of working in a disruptive way, following advances in health care as part of a complex cultural and sociopolitical context<sup>(1)</sup>.

Limitations of this study include the fact that some universities were excluded as they lacked on-line data. They could have had elements different from those presented here in their syllabuses. Future research could be conducted using different strategies to identify and search data, in order to expand the content analyzed in this research, such as: asking the institutions for data via e-mail or phone; seeking contact with the institutions through their official social networks; or finding researchers associated with these institutions in the Lattes platform that could start a contact with the institution. In addition, it is necessary to expand this investigation to involve private institutions, which form an important portion of nursing workers<sup>(25)</sup>. The teaching of NH in public and private universities should have guidelines, so the presence of the content and its hour load could be ensured.

## ■ FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the analysis of NH teaching in Brazilian public institutions, we could identify differences regarding the hour load dedicated to the discipline. The content of

the syllabuses includes a discussion about the evolution of nursing, since antiquity to current days, in Brazil and in the world, addressing changes in the practices of care in different historical periods. They study modern nursing, as introduced by Florence Nightingale, and the creation of nursing schools, the health work process and the division of labor, in addition to dimensions of care, the nursing process, legislation and professional ethics. It was ascertained that the topics addressed include topics that can give support to the practice of nursing and the insertion of this profession in the social, historical, political, ethical, and humanistic contexts.

The innovation brought forth by this study is the fact it presented a compilation of what is discussed about NH in the training of nurses in Brazil. Simultaneously, it shows the diversity related to the hour load dedicated to content, suggesting the need to discuss this aspect. Furthermore, this study suggests that the NH is built every day, with the contribution of each member of the nursing team, valuing conscious and committed actions carried out by individuals or groups, to provide a new direction and reach new achievements, so future nurses see themselves as the subjects that build the history of the profession and social agents in the deconstruction of stigma and the rupture of paradigms.

This study is expected to contribute for a critical analysis of the curricular base used in the formation of nurses, reiterating how important and necessary the study of NH is. After all, to reach a solid development and social recognition, the profession must be aware of its origins.

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