



## PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABOUT THE SEMINAR USAGE ON THE PHYSIOTHERAPY COURSE

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### ABSTRACT

The seminar is a teaching strategy broadly employed in the academic field with the aim of encouraging the students to do research, comprehend and expose ideas. This study has as goal to comprehend university students' perception regarding the seminar's usage as a teaching strategy. This is a study of descriptive and exploratory character with a qualitative approach, which was conducted through the questionnaires' application with students of the Physiotherapy course in a private higher education institution in the city of Vitória da Conquista-Bahia. The sampling was carried through data saturation and data analysis in compliance with Bardin content analysis. It was found that even though there are failures in this teaching strategy, the students take it into account as an significant tool for the learning establishment.

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### INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence to the current times, the higher education has provoked a major impact on the country's economy, inducing the government to take actions with the aim to solve the vacancies search for public and private higher education institutions. In Brazil there is a higher number of vacancies in private institutions, nevertheless, many families have no financial condition to take over the financial expenses of a private institution and they display difficulties entering public institutions because of the reduced availability of vacancies offered (Silva, 2001; Costa, Costa and Melo, 2011). Thinking about it, the government elaborated programs enabling the access to higher education, like the University for all Program

(PROUNI), the Student Assistance Fund (FIES), the Racial and Social Quota System, the National Student Assistance Plan (PNAES), The Open University of Brazil (UAB), Support Program for the restructuring and expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI), Permanence scholarship, extending this way the entry to the higher education system after the year of 2000. This teaching is shared into three categories: bachelor degree, licentiate degree and technological training among the most varied courses such as Law, Medicine, Physiotherapy and Odontology (Oliveira and Silva, 2017; Corbucci, 2014; Gomes, Machado-Taylor and Saraiva, 2018). Physiotherapy is an upper level occupation that was in the spotlight in Brazil in 1929, with the polio cases and occupational injuries encountered in that period. The professional training in Physiotherapy has as goal to promote a life-long education meanwhile, the physiotherapists training is slowly increasing concerning the scientific character of research in Masters and

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Doctorate courses, and publications in scientific journals (Júnior, 2009; Conselho Federal de Fisioterapia e Terapia Ocupacional, 2018; Warken, Freitas, Domingues and Kietzer, 2016). It is realized the urge to restructure the education technique in Higher Education in the health field, since the traditional methodology is recognized as outdated, once that the physiotherapist attend not only the illness, but its cause requiring them to have a critical and problematizing vision. This way, it is needed that professors search for new teaching strategies with the intention to increase the students' interest, therefore having a successful learning (Santos, Andrade and Dósea, 2017; Souza, Cruz, Santos and Cândido 2018). There is a range of accessible strategies to be used in the classroom: lectures, abstracts, seminars, panel, practical classes, among others. The seminar is conducted through an oral presentation by students who are divided into groups, each group having a different theme or not. This method has the purpose of encouraging the student to research, understand and expose ideas, and his success depends not only on the students but also on the teachers in explaining the seminar stages, organizing the teams, as well as elucidating any doubts that may arise in the seminar (Oliskovicz and Piva, 2015, Paz, Nascimento and Silva, 2016 and Oliveira, 2016). The opinion that the student has regarding the way that the seminar is affecting their learning is of central significance for their intellect's formation and it is also a preparation instrument for future research that they will elaborate. In light of this, the goal of this paper is to comprehend the university students' perceptions regarding the seminars' usage as a teaching strategy and to understand what the positive and negative aspects of this strategy are.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is a descriptive and exploratory research of qualitative approach. The study was performed at a private institution of higher education in the city of Vitória da Conquista - Bahia. The study assumed as inclusion criteria all students registered and settled in the 9th and 10th semesters of the Physiotherapy course of morning and night periods; and as exclusion criteria, the ones that declined the participation on the research and did not completely answer the questionnaire. The sample happened by the data saturation criterion. This way, the initial study's population was of 90 students, of both sexes, nevertheless just 60 were present on the collection days. Even so, in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 31 students took part in the study, and after the data saturation criterion the study had the participation of 16 students with the aged from 21 to 36 years old. The students happened during the TCC classes, in a period of 3 weeks. After the approach, the ones that volunteered got a questionnaire created by the researchers, describing the sociodemographic aspects (gender and age) and student formation (course, period, shift, regular student, irregular student). Furthermore, there were in the questionnaire leading issues concerning the seminar as a teaching strategy, looking forward to comprehend the students' perception of: the seminar as an enabler and a learning stimulator, comparing it with the traditional approach; the way the professors make the seminar in the classroom; which are the positive and negative aspects of this method; and what recommendations the students would like to add to the seminar enabling for better learning process. After the data gathering, there was the identification of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Subsequently, happened the material's reading for the data saturation criterion and afterwards it was done the

categories sharing, according to Bardin's analysis. Data analysis was carried in stages according to Bardin content analysis method. These stages are organized in the following phases: pre-analysis, material investigation and results treatment, inference and interpretation. The pre-analysis focuses on the complete reading of the material chosen for the analysis, systematizing the material that will be investigated. The exploration involves the in separation of the important aspects, summarizing the paragraphs and justifying the notes. The last stages accounted for absorbing the contents of the found material (Silva and Fossá, 2015). This research was referred and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Higher Education institution under Opinion No. 2,793,396. All participants were informed about the goals, risks and benefits of the present study and it was made clear that they could quit from the research at any time without any sort of penalty. To the ones that participated in the study it was delivered the Informed Consent Term which was signed, respecting the ethical features in accordance with the Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To keep the confidentiality, remaining this way in an ethical character, the students will be labeled with S1, S2 and so on. The research was categorized in the following aspects: a) seminars' classification; b) positive and negative aspects of seminars' usage; c) seminar as a learning enabler and stimulator.; d) seminar x traditional class; e) Professors' seminar conduction; f) Suggestions regarding the seminars' conduction.

**A) Seminars' classification:** In the research, when questioned about how they grade the seminar, most students graded it as a good method for their learning, even the ones who have difficulties in speaking in public. This can be supported by the fact that learners identify the importance of the strategy and, if it is well implemented it won't only provide better knowledge about the theme discussed, but it would promote the oratory topic and may even decrease or eliminate insecurity and the struggles to speak in public.

**B) Positive and negative aspects of seminars' usage:** In the topic: "Are there any positive aspects regarding this strategy? Which are they?", The key aspects were: improving oratory, working in team, encouraging to research and public speaking without fear, as we can see below:

*"– Yes. Scientific research incentive; encouragement to the oratory enhancement; practice in work groups do." (S1)*

*"– Yes. Because through it the students absorbs more of the contents (...)." (S2)*

*"– Yes. The search for knowledge by the own student, (...) it is already a way of getting ready for bigger presentations with a larger number of people, that is not only the professor and classmates." (S3)*

*"– Students preparation for the practical life and it is an strategy that incentives them to lose the fear/embarrassment to talk in public." (S4)*

In accordance with Oliveira (2016), during the seminar the student not only achieves the enhancement on the topic, but it provides to him/her a scientific practice which is a form to lead him/her to the research. To Almeida, Mesquita and Alves (2018), the seminar enables the speaking practice, once in an academic field there the formal and informal speeches. In the

question: "Are there negative aspects regarding this strategy? Which ones?", there were emphasized the following aspects: professors' incorrect assessments, some classmates do not add to the work, professors that assign seminar in a short period of time, struggle with publicly speaking, exams developed basing only in the seminars presented by the students, without the professor teaching like what is stated below:

" – Yes. To focus in your topic, decreasing the concentration level to others themes. Being subjected to false assessments, when the subject chosen to be presented is not properly qualified. " (S1)

" –Yes. The risk of some teams components not contributing with the seminars preparation. " (S5)

" – Yes, (...), the professor sometimes assign the seminars "with a short notice. " (S3)

" –Yes. When the topics presented are just explained by the students, and being charged on the exams, since the professor did not address in an explanatory way with the questions that may come up. " (S6)

" –In a certain way yes. for instance: for the students that have difficulties in publicly speaking it might not be such an effective strategy " (S7)

In the study by Paz, Nascimento and Silva (2016), the negative points of this teaching strategy are related to the students that do not cooperate in the seminary's preparation, and as the professors that use it so that they can decrease their workload and this way, do not teach the class. According to Zanon and Althaus (2010), there are some disadvantages while using this strategy; as the monologue carried by the professor that starts to be taken by the student, the absence of interaction and the superficiality during the explanation. The authors conducted a research with eight students of the Geography and Pedagogy courses, in the questionnaire used a student brought in his statement the fact that the seminars creation did not always include the participation of all, but as the professor does not know about this information, they end up giving the same grade to all group members that being the assessment criterion, labelled as another negative aspect of this strategy.

**C) Seminar as a learning enabler and stimulator:** In the question: "This teaching strategy makes your learning easier and it stimulates the reflection regarding the discussed topic? Justify it". Notice the following justification:

" – Yes. I realize that when there was a need to prepare the seminars I ended up deepening on the topics that were to be discussed. " (S8)

" – It depends. If besides being addressed and presented by the students being approached and displayed by the professor. " (S6)

" – No, because I have difficulties to teach the subjects as well as to learn what other students explain. " (S9)

" – It is easier in parts. Depending on the presentation form. And yes, it stimulates the reflection regarding the topic, assisting in the scientific knowledge search, in the interest of looking more and exploring on the addressed topic " (S10)

Nicola and Paniz (2017) highlight that there are diversified strategies to encourage learners regarding the learning process. Such strategies have as goal to provide the student with the opportunity to enlarge their studies with what was already explained by the professor and when they learn through the resource used, the student feels more motivated to expand their quest for knowledge. According to Mesquita, Almeida and Alves (2018), the seminar is a teaching strategy which provides the learning for the ones who prepare it and the ones who present it as well as for listeners. According to Souto *et*

*al.* (2018) display in their research, the knowledge acquired by the student becomes profound and enduring when they are stimulated to develop it through the professors' assistance.

**D) Seminar x Traditional class:** When questioned whether "Do you learn more with the seminar teaching strategy in comparison to when it is used the traditional class style(expository lesson)? Justify it. "We noticed the following arguments:

" –Yes. The expository class displays a big amount of failures, among them the difficulties to create interest on the topic." (S8)

" – No. Most of the times the seminar becomes superficial, for what we wanted to learn not coming up to the mark." (S11)

" – In parts. I like when after the presentation the professor makes the corrections and needed considerations. I like the strategies link. " (S12)

" –It depends. Because there are students that address the subject in a way of easy comprehension and others present difficulties in exposing the topic, not facilitating the approached matter. " (S13)

In line with Guimarães, Severo, Serafin and Capitanio (2016), the expository lesson is described as a passive and transmissive technique, not maintaining the student engaged in a satisfactory form with their learning. For Rondini and Marinheiro (2017), the professor who looks forward to the students' evolution, search for stimulating in them the curiosity and the critical sense via differentiated and dynamic teaching methods. In the study of Neto and Araújo (2015) performed with 28 high school students, 30% preferred the seminar as the method that add the most to their learning, and 11% chose for the expository class. In the research done by Oliveira (2016) with 100 students from the Nutrition and Physical Education course of an institution of Higher Education in Rio de Janeiro, 51% of students said that the seminar is a method that offers better learning. This strategy enables the student to explain what he/she comprehended during their research, creating a solid knowledge and a higher security in the moments of debate or discussion that can happen at the end of the presentation. In the study by Sousa, Santos and Cândido (2018) performed with 20 nursing students, it was verified that for the major part of the students the dynamic and practical classes are the most comprehended, although some prefer the traditional way. This happens because they are already used to it since school, and for this reason any change results in a certain shock and distrust even though they mention to be exhausted with the long expository classes.

**E) Professors' seminar conduction:** It was also investigated the way that teachers handle the seminar, with the following question: "Can we state that most teachers performed this strategy correctly? Justify it. "The answers are displayed below:

" – No. Many professors assign us works that not even them pay attention to during the presentation. Another issue is the professors way of evaluating, sometimes I notice inconsistent assessments." (S14)

" – No. Commonly, we are not oriented about the demanded seminars subtopics. The presenter choice is made through a draw, without the possibility of a new presenter in the case of the selected not being able to present which undermines all of the components that created and were dedicated to the seminar. " (S1)

“– No. The collaboration and the calmness of most students is not transmitted and they are not properly led to a presentation.” (S4)

“– No. There are professors who choose the seminars by the applicability as a replacement for their classes (...).” (S10)

“–Yes. Because they give a time for the preparation of the seminar (most of them), and make themselves available for answering to doubts.” (S3)

We can notice that in accordance with the majority of students answers that there are some failures practiced by the majority of professor from the students' view. Something that catches the attention is the S14's reply because, according to him some professors use this strategy and, at the moment of the exposition they do not even pay attention to the topic that is being discussed. This affirmative takes us to some questions: the reason regarding the use of this strategy by the professors that act in this manner? What criterion will they use to make the students assessment in a proper way? If there are professors who do this, how should we require from the students an ethical posture, with commitment and respect?

In accordance with Pereira e Santana (2018), the professor should act as the one who offers the instructions making it possible for the students to build their reflexive and critical thinking, as well as their autonomy, however in line with Carbonezi (2016), there are professors who do not recognize this strategy's advantage that this tool provides to the students if well handled and conducted. According to Oliveira (2016), it is essential that for the professor shares the seminars assessment into items grading each one, aside from being aware to the students who experience struggles in expressing themselves, avoiding this way wrong assessments.

**F) Suggestions regarding the seminars' conduction:** In the questionnaire, it was also displayed the question: "What suggestions would you give on how to handle this teaching strategy in a way that it enables a better learning?" Below there are some of them:

“ – Not use the seminar as the only way of “class”, because it has happened and continues to happen and this discourages the student, mainly for the ones who wished to follow the discipline areas in which the professor acts like this. Moreover, when they include the seminar it should be the maximum of 1 per unit and in a creative way making the students to be interested and therefore learn this way.” (S11)

“ – That seminars are presented by all students, so that everyone is assessed.” (S6)

“ – Encourage the students about the importance to study for a seminar; the teacher give guidance to the students before to the seminar, giving tips, clearing doubts, clarifying some important aspects that ought to be added to the seminar presentation. It would be good if the teacher was not only examining the student but also acting as a mediator during the presentation.” (S13).

“ – The maximum of 1 seminar a day, so that the listeners pay attention to the presentation check if the presenter is able to perform the task, in a negative case, perform a newaffle and punish just the first student.” (S1)

“ – Explain the subject in a better way even after the presentation.” (S15)

“ – (...)professors' full attention during the seminars presentation by the student.” (S12)

“– I think it may exist a discipline that comprises this strategy since it is essential the oratory domain and it makes us grow as individuals. I believe it would add a lot.” (S16)

Junior, Filho, Neto and Sobrinho (2014) state that there is required for the professor to trace a scheme explaining the

seminars' goal to assist the students, providing to them instructions regarding the bibliographies, to say how the assessment will be performed among others. In the study of Santana, Goya and Santos (2018) carried with high school students that had to present a seminar focused on a book suggested by the teacher, the students had guidance classes about the seminar, the groups' division, the assessment criteria, and they got the necessary source for the creation of the work. Afterwards, the students had a period of one month for the preparation and construction of the seminar, with extra classes in the opposite shift. The authors settled that this organization, the groups' interaction, and the teacher-student relationship were essential for students' learning.

As we noticed, the students recommend that there is a better organization to present the seminars, like:

- a. **One seminar per day or one per unit:** Such statement happens because when there are numerous seminars, mainly when they are presented on the same day, the student cannot manage to focus on the other presentations because he/she is concerned about their performance, and therefore they do not obtain an effective learning.
- b. **Not to use the seminar as the only teaching method:** As this survey was going on, we noticed that there are failures in this method, and that the link of it with other strategies, stimulates the student, while making the learning process easier.
- c. **Incentive, feedback, guidelines, and full attention on the professors' part, such as being a mediator and not just examiner:** The interaction between professor and student is of central significance for the learning achievement through the seminar, to the extent that when there is a positive relation, the student feels more confident and encouraged, in particular the ones who experience difficulties in expressing themselves.
- d. **A subject that approaches the strategy:** Maybe a framework that in the starting semesters would be interesting to make the students to get ready regarding the formal language like how behave themselves in front of the public, the oratory practice, stimulate the student to lose the fear / insecurity about speaking in public, among others.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consistent with the participants reports, we may realize that the seminar teaching strategy allows the critical-reflexive thinking development, oratory development and it is a good learning method. Nevertheless, they even esteemed that there are some shortcomings regarding the way that it is coordinated by the professors and carried out by the students. The students acknowledged that there ought to be the commitment on their part to improve the seminars' strategy that have to complete each required stage for the seminar's building, making it easier the knowledge acquisition. Besides it, they proposed that the professors that opt to use this strategy are conscious of the way they should apply it; guiding and inspiring the seminar creation; including the final considerations to offer a comprehension of the suggested topics. This paper is essential for the academic field because it grants a comprehension regarding the students vision about the seminar as a teaching strategy, it has also provided the understanding of the way that this method is happening in their learning process. In face of

the few analysis concerning this topic, it is recommended the execution of new researches with a higher number of participants and the inclusion of other courses.

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