




Dominance profile student in Problem-Based Learning: perception of tutors and students

Estudante com perfil de dominância na Aprendizagem Baseada em Problemas: percepção dos docentes e discentes

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Problem-Based Learning occurs through work in small groups, facilitated by tutors, and everyone is expected to contribute to the achievement of the learning objectives. The presence of a dominant profile student could lead to some imbalance in the group dynamics.

Objective: to understand, from the perspective of collaborative learning, the meanings attributed by tutors and students to the presence of the dominant profile student in the tutorial group.

Methods: two qualitative studies with tutors and students were conducted at a university in northeastern Brazil. The first aimed to understand the tutor's perception of the presence of the dominant student in the tutorial group. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information. The population consisted of tutors from the physiotherapy undergraduate course with more than two years facilitating tutorial groups. The second study aimed to understand the meanings attributed by students about the presence of the dominance profile in tutoring. Information was collected by focus group. The study population consisted of medical students from the first four years of the course. The process of analysis and interpretation was anchored in the theoretical assumptions of collaborative learning, which also served as a reference for the development of the interviews and focus group scripts. Bardin's content analysis technique was adopted. The studies were approved by the Research Ethics Committee, CAAE: 26191119.5.0000.5569 and CAAE: 38005320.5.0000.5569.

Results: tutors and students highlighted the diversity within the dominance profile. They characterized the student with this profile as collaborative, participatory and prepared. They also pointed out characteristics of impatience, difficulty in listening and accepting arguments contrary to their own. In addition, they reported intrusive behavior, silencing and limiting the participation of others. The tutors reinforced the difficulty in dealing with the dominant student, especially when giving feedback. The students reported that tutors, when facing the dominant student, did not perceive the lack of collaboration in the group and were insecure to intervene.

Conclusion: the students expressed embarrassment and insecurity when faced with presence of the dominant student, leading to losses in the construction of group knowledge and individual performance, as well as disappointment in relation to the tutor's performance. The tutors showed they recognize subtleties within the dominance profile, despite difficulties in adequately intervening.

Keywords: Students; Tutors; Problem-Based Learning; Collaborative Learning.

RESUMO

Introdução: A Aprendizagem Baseada em Problemas ocorre por meio do trabalho em pequenos grupos, facilitado pelos tutores, devendo haver contribuição de todos para o alcance dos objetivos de aprendizagem. O estudante com perfil dominante pode desequilibrar essa dinâmica do grupo.

Objetivo: Este estudo teve como objetivo compreender, na perspectiva da aprendizagem colaborativa, os significados atribuídos pelos docentes e discentes à presença do estudante com perfil dominante no grupo tutorial.

Método: Realizaram-se dois estudos, de natureza qualitativa, com tutores e estudantes de uma faculdade do Nordeste do Brasil. O primeiro estudo objetivou compreender a percepção dos docentes sobre presença do estudante dominante no grupo tutorial. Para tanto, utilizaram-se entrevistas semiestruturadas para coleta das informações. A população foi composta por tutoras da graduação de Fisioterapia, com mais de dois anos facilitando grupos tutoriais. O segundo estudo objetivou compreender os significados atribuídos por discentes à presença do perfil de dominância nas tutorias. Utilizou-se o grupo focal como método de coleta. Participaram estudantes de Medicina dos quatro primeiros anos do curso. O processo de análise e interpretação das falas dos dois estudos foi ancorado nos pressupostos teóricos da aprendizagem colaborativa, os quais também serviram de referência para elaboração do roteiro das entrevistas e do grupo focal. Adotou-se a técnica da análise de conteúdo de Bardin. Os estudos foram aprovados pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com CAAE nº 26191119.5.0000.5569 e CAAE nº 38005320.5.0000.5569, respectivamente.

Resultado: Os tutores e estudantes enfatizaram a diversidade encontrada no perfil de dominância. Caracterizaram o estudante com esse perfil como colaborativo, participativo e preparado. Apontaram também características de impaciência, dificuldade em escutar e aceitar colocações contrárias às suas, além de comportamento intrusivo, silenciando e limitando a participação de outros. As tutoras reforçaram a dificuldade em lidar com o estudante dominante, inclusive em dar feedback. Os discentes relataram que os tutores, perante o estudante dominante, não percebiam a ausência de colaboração no grupo e apresentavam insegurança para intervir.

Conclusão: Os discentes expressaram tolhimento e insegurança diante da presença do estudante dominante, com prejuízo na construção do conhecimento do grupo e no desempenho individual, bem como decepção quanto à atuação do tutor. Os tutores demonstraram reconhecer as sutilezas dentro do perfil de dominância, apesar de suas dificuldades em intervir adequadamente.

Palavras-chave: Estudantes; Tutores; Aprendizagem Baseada em Problemas; Aprendizagem Colaborativa.

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INTRODUCTION

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has four fundamental educational principles that correspond to the types of learning: constructive, self-directed, contextual and collaborative. The constructive form of learning emphasizes an active process, in which students construct and reconstruct their knowledge based on the exploration of their previous experiences and knowledge. The self-directed learning promotes the students' protagonism, who are responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating their autonomous learning process. Contextualized learning occurs from a real and meaningful context, and collaborative learning provides group work so that knowledge is shared and learned collectively¹⁻⁵.

In this methodological approach, students discuss a problem case in small groups, comprising 8 to 12 students and a tutor, who acts as a facilitator of the discussions. In these meetings, called tutorials, the dynamics of the seven steps are followed. In the first meeting, the first five steps are carried out, namely: reading the problem case, identifying unknown terms; definition of the problem to be discussed; activation of previous knowledge through brainstorming; review of steps two and three; and conception of learning objectives. In the second meeting, step seven is developed, which consists in building knowledge in groups. The individual study (step 6) takes place between the first and the second meeting⁵⁻⁸.

In PBL, the tutor's role is to evaluate the group dynamics in terms of participation and relationships, as well as intervening and questioning when necessary⁹⁻¹². The students perform the coordination and secretarial roles, alternating roles at each meeting. The discussion is recorded by the secretary, in the form of a concept map, and the coordinator guides the discussion, ensuring everyone's participation¹³.

Providing explanations about certain content during work in small groups is one of the aspects of PBL that reinforces the principle of collaboration, implying the creation of thought and, consequently, meaningful learning and knowledge retention^{4,14,15}. The student's contribution is then recognized as a central pillar of PBL, especially when it is verbal. However, verbalization is not synonymous with success in the learning process, nor does silence mean failure, since it is possible for there to be verbal communication without effective contribution and, similarly, collaborative and active silence is possible¹⁶⁻¹⁹.

Considering the quantity and form of verbal contributions, two student profiles can be highlighted in the tutorial environment: the dominant one and the silent one. A silent student is defined as a member of the group who rarely speaks during tutoring, while a student with a dominance profile is one who tends to monopolize discussions. It should be emphasized that between the extremes of profiles, there is

the intermediate one, which corresponds to the student who actively participates in discussions, but respects the speech spaces of their peers, without harming group harmony and contributing to collaborative learning^{18,19}.

Still on dominance, despite its potential harm to collaborative learning, there are few published articles addressing this issue, which is, therefore, not sufficiently valued and explored in the same way as silence in PBL, and it is necessary to further discuss the topic^{20,21,23,24}. Thus, the objective of this study was to understand, from the perspective of collaborative learning, the meanings attributed by students and tutors, within the context of PBL, to the presence of students with a dominant profile in the tutorial group.

METHODS

Two qualitative studies were carried out in a private, non-profit Higher Education Institution in the northeast of Brazil, which since its foundation in 2005 has been using PBL as a learning methodology. This university offers undergraduate courses in nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, medicine, nutrition, dentistry and psychology.

The aim of the first study was to understand the tutors' perception of the presence of the dominant student in the tutorial group. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information. Eight individual interviews were carried out by the main researcher, between June and September 2020. Physiotherapy undergraduate tutors participated, from the first to the eighth semesters, with more than two years of experience in facilitating tutorial groups. All of them, as is customary at the Institution, completed the PBL tutor training course before carrying out their role. The institution where this research was carried out has a Faculty Development Committee (CDD, *Comitê de Desenvolvimento Docente*), which comprises a team of teachers, researchers and specialists in education in the health area. This committee is responsible for planning and performing educational activities, contributing to the pedagogical development of the team of tutors.

The second study aimed to understand the meanings attributed by students about the presence of the dominance profile in tutorials and the focus group was used to collect information. A focus group was carried out in December 2020. The participants were medical students from the same institution as the participants of the first study, who were attending the first four years of the undergraduate medical school and regularly attended tutoring activities, which were carried out remotely, through the Cisco Webex® platform.

In the focus group, the role of moderator was played by one of the researchers, who was familiar with the topic and had experience in conducting focus groups. The other two

researchers played the role of external observers, speaking only a few times and seeking to capture and record the participants' reactions.

The selection, both for the interviews and the focus group, was made intentionally. The participants were chosen by the researchers based on their availability, demands and potential speaking capacity ("privileged informant", which in a qualitative study would be that participant, who, due to their context, can bring valuable contributions to the object of the study), respecting the inclusion criteria, such as length of experience and regular attendance at activities^{22,23}. Tutors from the first to eighth semesters of the undergraduate physiotherapy course and medical students from the first four years of the undergraduate course were included. For the interviews and focus group, scripts were created anchored in the assumptions of collaborative learning, namely: work in small groups, common objectives to be achieved, positive interdependence between participants with harmonious participation and the group's final performance depending on the commitment of all²¹. Aspects not foreseen in the script that could be expressed through the speeches were also accepted. Nicknames were used to maintain the confidentiality of both studies and thus preserve the participants' identities.

Both study collections took place remotely, due to the sanitary conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, using WhatsApp for the interviews and the Cisco Webex® platform for the focus group. This lasted approximately two hours and the interviews lasted 35 to 80 minutes. In both cases, the content of the speeches was recorded with prior authorization from the participants.

The speeches were transcribed in full and analyzed using Bardin's content analysis, presented by Minayo^{22,23}. This technique proposes a systematized analysis, divided into phases, namely: pre-analysis, material exploration, treatment of results and interpretation. The researchers from both studies analyzed the contents of the speeches, reinterpreting them anchored in the theoretical assumptions of collaborative learning^{17,18,24,25}. To define the final number of participants, we sought to identify the saturation criterion, when there is recurrence, quality and sufficiency of the material apprehended from the analysis of the speeches, allowing a deeper understanding of the issues raised by the participants and the achievement of the proposed objectives^{26,27}.

The two studies complied with the ethical criteria of Resolution number 510/2016 of the National Health Council. The projects were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the university where the research took place. CAAE 26191119.5.0000.5569 corresponds to the first study and CAAE: 38005320.5.0000.5569 to the second study.

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

Through the critical analysis of the two studies, this article aimed to investigate the meanings attributed by students and tutors to their experiences with the presence of students with a dominant profile in the tutorial group (TG), in the context of PBL.

The interviews were carried out with eight tutors from the first to the eighth semesters of the undergraduate Physiotherapy course. From the sixth interview onwards (Tutor 1, Tutor 2, Tutor 3, Tutor 4, Tutor 5 e Tutor 6), saturation was observed. Nine medical students participated in the focus group, representing the first to the eighth semesters, five of which were female (Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4 and Student 5) and four male (Student 6, Student 7, Student 8 and Student 9).

Based on the analysis of the participants' speeches, the following analytical categories were identified: characteristics of the dominance profile and its consequences for the TG dynamics; the tutor's intervention in the tutorial dynamics; and possible explanations for the dominance profile, with the latter representing an empirical category.

The aspects that will be addressed here refer to those with the greatest demand in the speeches, which will be presented followed by their interpretations, the articulation with the theoretical assumptions of collaborative learning, as well as the reflections raised in the researchers based on them.

Category 1: Characteristics of the dominance profile and its consequences for TG dynamics

Students with a dominance profile are characterized by leading the discussions and making decisions for the group^{10,11,17}. From the perspective of the tutors participating in the first study, the dominant profile can be characterized by a proactive and interactive attitude, which facilitates its assessment, as reported by Tutor 1:

[...] A more open, more active attitude, you know? [...] and also because they are more talkative and more transparent about their behaviors, it is easier to understand and know how they are evolving.

The characteristics highlighted as positive by the tutor, due to the fact that they imply greater exposure through student interaction and communication, are capable of enabling monitoring of the evolution of these students' learning process. However, despite the benefits for the tutor's performance and for the dominant students themselves, it should be emphasized that collaborative learning is only possible through the harmonious participation of everyone in the group^{1,4,21,28}.

Tutor 6 reinforced the perception of Tutor 1, characterizing the dominant student as a leader figure and

guide of the discussion: “[...] They as a leader, they as a person who often guides, who brings a different source, who provides different information. That student who participates a lot, right? The tutoring, it can become valuable.”

An environment that allows the students’ equal participation, as well as their protagonism within the process, is essential for collaborative learning^{1,2,4,28}. In the opinion of the authors of the current study, although they can contribute to the construction of knowledge, the characteristics described by Tutor 6 can also interfere with good group dynamics. Thus, a balance must be guaranteed so that the particularities of the dominance profile are expressed without harming the participation of other group members.

In the tutors’ statements, weaknesses in the dominance profile were also highlighted, such as an authoritarian posture and difficulty in listening. Tutor 6 highlighted the intrusive behavior of the dominant profile, which is capable of embarrassing other students:

[...] So, it is the dominant one who dominates almost through authoritarianism [...]. So, they cut off their friend's speech, right?! [...] They don't know how to position themselves, right?! So this causes embarrassment, it leaves the classmate in an uncomfortable place, so that inhibits, right?!

The adequate operation of the TG promotes significant learning, which occurs through the structuring and organization of thought, allowing connections between new information and that already present in the memory. This creation leads to the processing of information at deeper levels, preventing losses in the relationship and the assimilation of knowledge. Thus, encouraging exploratory conversation during discussions, in which students must be able to listen and reflect on divergent opinions, in addition to promoting harmony in the group, promotes learning retention^{14,15}. The speech of Tutor 6 pointed to a dominant student profile that is not able to listen to the other group participants, but embarrasses them and inhibits their possible contributions, which possibly results in harm to the construction of knowledge by the group.

From the perspective of the second study participants, the diversity within the dominance profile stood out, identifying an oppressive attitude and a collaborative one, as was evident in the speech of Student 1:

[...] there are a lot of people who are really that type, like, who talk, talk over others, ignoring what the other person said and repeat [...] but there are other people, such as... there is the person who talks a lot, but has more of a collaborative profile... and not a profile, like, of taking other people's place [...].”

The dominant student with a collaborative attitude was defined by the students as someone who uses their communication and interaction skills to facilitate the participation of other members. In a tone of regret, Student 2 said that the collaborators make up the minority and, often, they tend to coordinate the discussion in the place of the member who would have such a role:

[...] it is the minority, unfortunately, who has this [collaborative] profile of dominance and uses this to get others to talk too...[...] they stop and say “guys, does anyone want to continue talking about this topic, about I don't know what? and then many times the coordinator doesn't do this, but the person themselves does it and ends up giving space to others [...]”.

One of the functions of the student coordinator in PBL is to lead the discussion. The presence of people who tend to take on this role, to which they were not assigned, can be a factor that generates friction in the group, hindering the good flow of discussion and generating frustrations^{6,10,11,17}. One of the main proposals of PBL is for students to work on developing skills - such as communication, interaction and leadership - and the opportunity to perform different functions within the TG is a strategy that allows their evolution and development^{11,21,24,25}.

From the perspective of the authors of the current study, the problem of the dominant student inappropriately assuming the coordination function makes us reflect on the reasons for this occurrence: are the coordinator and the tutor performing their roles appropriately? Or would the dominant student's behavior be intimidating them, generating silencing? Regardless of the reason, from the moment that just one or two people monopolize the discussion, the collective construction of knowledge is compromised and the question arises whether it makes sense to classify these people as collaborative.

Regarding the oppressive attitude, Student 6 reported that people in their class with such behavior used to get involved in discussions in the tutorial group, resulting in their distancing themselves from the others:

[...] these dominant students end up... they end up being known in their class, in their semester... always saying “ah, I don't want to be tutored with that person... that person won't let anyone talk”, because those who have this dominant profile are people who, in general, have had several arguments, have had real problems like... not talking to someone in the class. These problems started in the tutoring room, you know?![...]”.

The dominant profile's competitive posture leads some students to perceive its presence as a problem due to aggressive behaviors that prevent the participation of others. The dominant profile with an oppressive attitude is capable of awakening such

negative feelings in people that they no longer want to have them around, even outside of the tutoring situation^{10,11,17}.

Also according to the students' reports, the presence of people with a dominant profile in the TG is a factor that produces silencing. For Student 8, this is due to the lack of listening associated with the intrusive behavior of students with the aforementioned profile: "[...] the speaking space is kind of taken over, do you understand?! from the person... they can contribute to that meeting, but... they are not listened to, they are not heard... [...]" The explanation given by Student 8 was illustrated by Student 1, who said: "[...] they took my space, they said: 'I'm going to 're-explain' what she said because she didn't explain it very well' [...] and then, like, that speech I was going to make was totally... curbed, you know?! [...]"

Although the difficulty in adequately articulating ideas and the lack of knowledge may be the causes of the lack of verbal contribution, it must be reinforced that the lack of interaction and inadequate conduct of the discussion can contribute to the silencing of voices^{17,18}. For the participants in the second study, the TG seems to be seen as a place for discussion of which members should be part. However, for the authors of the present study, through the expansive way through which they impose themselves, the student with the dominant profile ends up taking the lead in debates and moving other students to the margins of the discussion, depriving them of their speaking spaces.

The students demonstrated that, by offering obstacles to other people's participation, the person with a dominance profile makes the tutoring not fulfill its objective. According to Student 6, this becomes evident when reviewing content, about which there was no collective discussion, and one gets the impression that they had never studied it: "[...] when they finish the objective there alone... [...] I go later, for instance, to review for the test, there are many times when it seems like I had never seen this in tutoring [...]"

By measuring information retention after a month of a relevant discussion, a controlled experimental study, carried out with students at Maastricht University and published in 2009, showed that, in the long term, providing explanations has a better effect on recall of the discussed subject than just passively listening to the same discussion¹¹. These findings are consistent with the reports of participants in the second study, for whom not contributing verbally harms the retention of content, to the point of appearing not to have participated in the TG.

In addition to impacting participation in discussions, with consequent damage to the retention of content, the restriction of speech spaces also creates a disincentive to study the objectives of tutoring, as Student 4 said: "[...] the guy will get there, he'll say everything and I'll be like... I'll just accept what he said and I won't have the opportunity to

speak... and for me, this is the most important thing... the lack of motivation to study. [...]"

This perspective corroborates what David Ausubel postulated. For the psychologist, meaningful learning of content requires that both logical and psychological meanings be attributed to them. While logical meanings refer to the nature of the content, psychological meanings depend on the individual experiences of each person¹⁴. Therefore, for the authors of the current study, tutorial dynamics have the potential to influence the meaning of the object of discussion. The presence of the dominant profile in tutoring can lead to the attribution of negative psychological meanings to the content, damaging the motivation to study it.

Thus, the potential harm caused by the presence of the dominant student does not occur only at step seven of tutoring, which should include the opportunity for cognitive enrichment through participation in the discussion, but also at step six (moment of individual study), as students who have their spaces restricted report lack of motivation to study the learning objectives.

It is considered, then, that despite the positive potential of the dominant profile mentioned by both tutors and students, it is essential to maintain attention to the importance of collective work, respecting differences and reinforcing the ethics of collaboration. These aspects must be worked on with the dominant student, in a way that they preserve their qualities and adapt them to the principles of PBL.

Category 2: The tutor's intervention in the tutorial dynamics

The excessive participation of the dominant student and the difficulties generated during the learning process in the TG may require the tutor to have skills and strategies to guarantee the group's functionality. Interventions through feedback and informal conversations were reported by tutors as challenges in mediating conflicts with this student profile.

According to Tutor 1, a participant of the first study, when the dominant student's speech is guided and speech space is offered to other participants, the group tends to become harmonious:

[...] And then, generally, when I realize this, I wait for the speech to end and then I say: so-and-so, I realized that you were trying to bring something, come on, just put it [...] I'll bring the person around, then the group calms down, you know?! it brings better harmony.

Conducting the TG discussion, in order to achieve the learning objectives and encouraging participation on the part of students are some of the tutors' functions^{12,13,29-31}. Despite not being directive, the tutor's role is an active one, and the best way

to intervene is by asking metacognitive questions to stimulate articulation and creation of knowledge on the part of students, in addition to building an environment that allows the free flow of ideas^{13,32-38}. In this sense, it is necessary for interventions to be carried out by tutors during group discussions, reinforcing aspects of harmonious dynamics, the importance of the speaking space and everyone's collaboration.

Tutor 1 demonstrated concern not to curb this dominance or leadership behavior, but to work on balance and positively use this characteristic to enrich tutoring:

[...] to polish is the word, polish any and all is... Behavior... thought, skill, you know?! The attitude, how can I improve this attitude? [...] Because this dominance has to be a dominance in a good, balanced sense. I think all excesses are complicated, both for more and for less.

According to Tutor 3, giving adequate feedback to the dominant student is important to guide their behavior and maintain the functionality of the group:

[...] show, give positive feedback, this imperativeness of theirs, this desire to participate, to interact, but which sometimes also gives negative feedback that they have to give space to other classmates to speak, especially those who did not participate just as actively.

Tools such as feedback can help the student in self-assessment, helping to identify aspects to improve and implement change strategies³⁸. Based on the presented speeches, the tutors demonstrated that they understood the importance of their role in controlling inappropriate behavior, through positive statements and reinforcements, stimulating listening spaces and the power of synthesis, using feedback for this purpose.

On the other hand, the reports of the students participating in the second study showed inadequate actions by the tutors in the face of disharmonious dynamics caused by the presence of the student with a dominant profile in the TG. Student 1, for example, emphasized that one of the flaws in this performance is the apparent lack of awareness about the silencing and lack of collaboration in the group:

[...] there were three tutors with the same group... and then I realized that one found it all very fun, like "ah, what extroverted people!" and one...she realized something was wrong, you know?! [...] it depends on the tutor's subtlety to understand and there are some who don't understand and it goes unnoticed, ending up as a harmonious group in the end, although it was not harmonious for the person who was being hindered [...]

In a cross-sectional study, carried out at a medical university in Pakistan (2011), students and tutors were asked to classify, according to frequency and harm, the main problems related to tutorial dynamics. The dominance profile was called the most common problem by students, while tutors classified the silent profile and lack of commitment as the most common. According to the level of loss, the students also reported that the presence of the dominance profile in the group was the main problem, while tutors pointed out that the greatest loss is caused by the lack of commitment¹⁰.

Evaluating the findings of the Pakistani study, the students' position regarding the dominance profile is in line with that of the students in the present study, who also reported great negative interference in the dynamics of the tutorial group associated with such profile. The tutors' position differs slightly, since in the current study they also point out the dominant student as a problem for group harmony. However, in the present study no comparison was made with other behaviors, nor was the frequency of the presence of these profiles addressed.

Student 4 reported that, when telling a tutor about her suffering in the presence of a student who dominated the discussion, the tutor stated that she had already noticed this type of problem, but revealed insecurity about taking action:

[...] I went to the tutor [...] "look, this is happening". She really noticed, she said "yes, I realized it and I was studying ways on how I could slow things down" [...] she said my name, asked what I thought, then, like, she started intermediating and then it was much more relaxed. [...]

To effectively exercise the role of tutor, one needs personal attributes and skills in different areas. In the social domain, it is necessary to have the capacity for interaction, empathy with students and the ability to create an environment that favors the free flow of ideas, keeping the discussion alive. In the cognitive domain, it is necessary to be able to express oneself in the students' language and know when to intervene in the discussion^{9,11,13,35,39,40}.

Aiming to avoid interruptions and allow everyone to participate in the discussions, a tutor carried out some interventions described by Student 9. According to the student, the measures proposed by the tutor were not successful because they did not allow the discussion to flow: "[...] she asked you to raise your hand when you wanted to speak... people spoke in order and there was no way to run over other people's speech... the disadvantage is that sometimes, when you were going to speak, the other person had already said what that you had in mind"

Congruence is expected between the members of the TG, that is, a balance between external regulation, carried out

by the tutor, and the students' self-regulation. To be effective in their role, the tutor needs to understand that, more important than worrying about the number of interventions, they must be aware of the moment and the way in which they intervene, as well as the benefits that their action can bring to the group. For this to be possible, critical reflection on the practice is necessary, defended by Paulo Freire as a crucial moment in the ongoing training of teachers^{35-38,41-43}.

Before the development of skills that allow the effectiveness of tutors' actions, it is important to reinforce training so that they understand, based on the theoretical framework of collaborative learning, what is expected from a harmonious tutorial dynamic, reviewing the concept of collaboration. Through the reports presented herein, it was demonstrated that even when tutors perceive the disharmonious dynamics, they do not feel qualified or comfortable to intervene. Therefore, the findings of the present study will contribute to improving the effectiveness of the tutor's training and, consequently, the exercise of their function in terms of guaranteeing harmonic dynamics in the tutorial group.

Category 3: Possible explanations for the dominance profile

This is an empirical category identified in the first study, based on the tutors' reports, who gave possible explanations for the dominant student's behavior, according to their observations in the practical field. Aspects such as maturity level, exposure to previous experiences, failures, personality and physical, attitude and voice characteristics were brought up.

Tutor 5 raised the possibility that these characteristics are related to the student's own personality or to the short time they have had experience with the learning methodology:

[...] if this is a characteristic this student has had since the beginning of the course, right?! I am in the fifth semester, so in general, they're already used to the method, and sometimes it is something that they have already been doing this way since the first semester.

It is important to highlight that collaborative work allows sharing and solidarity, values that were lost throughout the establishment of a competitive and individualistic society^{1,4,28}. From this perspective, we can consider that the short time of exposure to the methodology can influence the existence of dominant behaviors, due to the lack of habit of working collaboratively and in small groups.

According to the perception of Tutor 2, the majority of dominant students come from good socioeconomic conditions and from larger cities, and the environment can influence the student's profile:

[...] The majority came from good, better socioeconomic conditions, who have access to many things, certain things, more easily. They come from bigger cities [...] I think that the environment, logically, too, like, I don't know, I think that where you came from, the environment in which you were raised favors this too [...]

She further suggested that the dominant student would have received more stimuli and encouragement in their previous life experience: "[...] They are the ones who were encouraged, most of the time, right?! It's the one that was most encouraged, that kind of thing. Sometimes even more challenged."

Aspects such as habits; culture; understanding and preparing a vocational project for life in higher education; understanding and assimilating the learning methodology; levels of maturity and autonomy; and access to a support network, such as family and friends, can facilitate the development of confidence to assert oneself and participate in academic activities³⁰.

For the authors of the present study, involvement and interest in the learning process can also be factors linked to the dominance profile. These students can understand and identify with PBL, allowing themselves and challenging themselves in the face of this new learning approach.

According to Tutor 4, the dominant student has peculiar physical characteristics, posture and voice:

[...] The voice timbre, right?! The capacity, not only of the timbre, but the capacity for greater convincing power, a conviction in the speech. A much firmer look, and not necessarily a firm look just for the tutor, a firm look for everyone.

A study carried out in two dentistry schools (in Australia and Ireland), in 2016, whose objective was to understand the meaning of student behaviors in tutorial groups, characterized the profile of the dominant student as a person with an active voice, a posture of power and decision-making, with these skills being considered natural¹⁷. In the current study, the tutors identified physical characteristics, such as posture, voice and gaze, which could guide the tutor in identifying students with possible dominant behavior.

For the authors, it is important that, since the first meetings in the TG, the tutor can identify the characteristics addressed here, with the aim of planning possible strategies to work on organizing the dynamics generated by the different behaviors, aiming to prevent harm to the student with the dominant profile and the other participants in the group.

CONCLUSIONS

The tutors characterized the student with a dominant profile as collaborative, participatory, prepared and leader of the

group. They also pointed out characteristics such as impatience, as well as difficulty listening and accepting statements contrary to their own. Some tutors reinforced the difficulty of dealing with the dominant student, especially in giving feedback, due to the concern of not depriving their participation.

The students, through their reports, expressed feelings of embarrassment and insecurity in the presence of the student with a dominant profile in tutoring; loss in relation to performance and construction of knowledge; attribution of negative meanings to the moment of tutoring, which becomes a place of discomfort dissociated from meaningful learning; and lack of motivation to study the objectives created during the meeting.

It was observed, through the study participants' speeches, that although the problems related to the presence of the dominance profile are evident in some situations, tutors may have difficulty identifying its real effects on the TG, as this can be mistakenly interpreted as collaborative.

The tutor is important in identifying the dominant student in the group and must be prepared to identify the characteristics of these students and manage them, aiming to support their collaborative actions and shape their intrusive behaviors, ensuring the functionality of the group and the success of learning.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Weldma Karlla Coelho: Participated in the planning of the research project, collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and writing and reviewing of the manuscript. **Laryssa Gomes de Araujo:** Participated in the planning of the research project, collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and writing and reviewing of the manuscript. **Maria de Fátima Costa Caminha:** Participated in the analysis and interpretation of data, and in the writing and reviewing of the manuscript. **Ana Rodrigues Falbo:** Advisor of the two studies that originated the manuscript (Master's Dissertation of the first author of this manuscript and the second author's Undergraduate Research). Thus, she participated in the conception and planning of the research project, the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and the writing and review of the manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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