



¹Development and Implementation of an Academic Monitoring Group: Lessons and Challenges at a University



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Abstract: The article describes the experience of planning and executing an online listening and reflection group for academic monitors in higher education, addressing the reports of the coordinators involved and the results obtained. The study, characterized as descriptive and based on experience reports, aims to share practices that can improve academic monitoring and contribute to the formation of collective knowledge.

Keywords: Academic Monitoring; Collaborative Groups; Higher Education.

¹ This research was supported by CAPES/Brazil and CNPq/Brazil.





Desenvolvimento e Implementação de Grupo de Monitoria Acadêmica: Lições e Desafios em uma Universidade

Resumo: O artigo descreve a experiência de planejamento e execução de um grupo on-line de escuta e reflexão para monitores acadêmicos no ensino superior, abordando o relato dos coordenadores envolvidos e os resultados obtidos. O estudo, caracterizado como descritivo e baseado em relato de experiência, visa compartilhar práticas que podem aprimorar a monitoria acadêmica e contribuir para a formação de conhecimento coletivo.

Palavras-chave: Monitoria Acadêmica; Grupos Colaborativos; Educação Superior.

Desarrollo e implementación de un grupo de seguimiento académico: lecciones y desafíos en una universidad

Resumen: El artículo describe la experiencia de planificación y ejecución de un grupo de escucha y reflexión en línea para monitores académicos en educación superior, abordando los informes de los coordinadores involucrados y los resultados obtenidos. El estudio, caracterizado como descriptivo y basado en relatos de experiencia, tiene como objetivo compartir prácticas que puedan mejorar el seguimiento académico y contribuir a la formación de conocimientos colectivos.

Palabras clave: Seguimiento Académico; Grupos Colaborativos; Educación superior.

Received at: 2024-08-29

Accepted on: 2024-10-17





1 INTRODUCTION

This article aims to discuss and report the experience of planning and conducting an online listening and reflection group directed at academic monitors of disciplines in higher education, referred to here as academic activities. The research is characterized as a descriptive study in the format of an experience report, based on the perspective of the coordinators of this group in a private higher education institution.

To provide a theoretical foundation for the practices described, a review of the pertinent literature was conducted. The experience report seeks to share a practical experience that can contribute to the construction of knowledge and the improvement of educational practices in the area of academic monitoring. As such, the experience report is a powerful tool for knowledge production, as it highlights the synergy present in life stories and emphasizes the richness of daily life. It values the importance of common sense, which, according to José de Souza Martins (1998, p. 3), "is not common because it is trivial or a superficial and external knowledge, but because it is a knowledge shared among the subjects of the social relationship." Thus, the experience report becomes a valuable source of knowledge by integrating the experiences and perceptions of individuals in the construction of collective knowledge.

Academic monitoring is characterized as an opportunity to expand the educational process for undergraduate students by supporting teaching and learning processes in academic activities or extracurricular projects initiated by undergraduate courses at the university. In the last semester of 2024, Unisinos had 368 monitors.

According to the internal regulations of the Higher Education Institution (HEI), its nature can be:

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[...] related to Academic Activities, or a set of Academic Activities, which involves the role of a student monitor in supporting other students to overcome difficulties associated with the competencies developed in specific Academic Activities; or related to Teaching Projects, which pertains to the role of a student monitor in extracurricular initiatives and activities aimed at enhancing one or more undergraduate courses through activities focused on the mobilization of competencies developed within the course (Unisinos, 2014, p. 1, translated by us).





This practice is developed through support for teaching and learning processes in academic activities, as well as involvement in extracurricular projects promoted by the university's undergraduate programs. The primary objective of monitoring is to provide students with a practical experience that complements their theoretical education, enabling them to apply and deepen the knowledge acquired during their coursework. By acting as monitors, students develop pedagogical, leadership, and communication skills, becoming active agents in the learning process. They assist both professors and their peers, contributing to the creation of a more collaborative and inclusive academic environment.

In addition to strengthening learning, monitoring also provides an enriching experience that can be applied to future professional careers, particularly for those interested in pursuing academia or roles involving teaching and the training of others. Through participation in monitoring, students gain practical experience with teaching dynamics, understand pedagogical challenges, and develop essential skills for their future professional endeavors.

In this regard, Lacan (1998) and Oliveira and Neves (2013) emphasize that education should not focus solely on the acquisition of technical competencies or knowledge about the individual. Instead, they highlight the importance of treating each case as unique, emphasizing an approach rooted in the singularity of the individual. Thus, competency-based learning in this context should transcend technical skills, focusing on a profound and individualized understanding of each person, with a commitment to holistic education.

In this context, to engage in the practice of academic monitoring, students must meet specific requirements established by the institution. First, the student must be duly enrolled. Applications for the monitor selection process must be submitted within the dates specified in a publicly announced call for applications. Candidates must have completed a minimum of 20 (twenty) credits at the university, ensuring they possess a solid foundation of academic knowledge. Another essential requirement is that the student must have completed and passed the specific academic activity for which they wish to apply as a monitor. Alternatively, candidates may demonstrate proficient knowledge in the desired field of activity, substantiated by relevant professional or external academic experience.

Finally, if the candidate has previously served as a monitor, they must have demonstrated satisfactory performance during their prior monitoring of the same academic activity. This criterion ensures that the monitor has experience and a proven track record of making positive contributions to the teaching and learning process at the university. By meeting all these requirements, students are





eligible to apply and contribute effectively to academic development.

The group of monitors emerged from the needs identified during the sessions conducted by the Student Support Center (NAE)². A dedicated space was created to strengthen bonds, foster care, support teaching and learning, and facilitate the exchange of experiences among the monitors of academic activities in undergraduate courses. This group was established with the intention of providing a collaborative and formative environment where monitors could share their experiences, challenges, and the solutions they discovered throughout the monitoring process.

In 2021 and 2022, the group held its first cycles of meetings, which became enriching moments of interaction and mutual learning. These meetings enabled monitors to discuss practical issues related to their daily monitoring activities, explore different methods of pedagogical support, and develop new skills that could be applied to their teaching support roles. The focus was not only on enhancing the monitors' abilities but also on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone could contribute and feel valued.

In the second semester of 2023, the group of monitors resumed its activities with a new round of discussions and meetings. Through these gatherings, the group aims to strengthen the community of monitors, fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences that are essential for collective growth. This dynamic allows monitors to develop a critical perspective on their practices, share effective strategies, and support one another, creating a more cohesive and efficient environment for supporting teaching and learning processes. To assist monitors in supporting students, systematic meetings with their peers become valuable opportunities. In this context, the listening and reflection group can serve as an effective mode of intervention.

2 WHERE IT TAKES PLACE

The experience described in this article was designed and planned within the Student Support

² The Student Support Center (*Núcleo de Atenção ao Estudante - NAE*) at the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos) was established in 1998 under the name *Serviço de Atenção ao Acadêmico (SAAC)*. Between 2010 and 2020, it operated under the designation *Núcleo de Assistência Estudantil (NAE)*. In 2020, the current *Núcleo de Atenção ao Estudante (NAE)* was formally instituted, reflecting its ongoing mission. The NAE team comprises a Social Worker, a Pedagogue, a Pedagogy intern, an Administrative Assistant with a degree in Human Resources Management, a Psychologist, and three Psychology interns, all available to support Unisinos students. The center is committed to building networks of attention, monitoring, and support for students. It mobilizes and coordinates efforts involving course coordinators, faculty, families, and external support networks to address learning processes, focusing on inclusive education, accessibility, and organizational, emotional, and learning difficulties. The ultimate aim is to assist students in achieving academic success (Sansone; Costa, 2024).





Center (*Núcleo de Atenção ao Estudante - NAE*), which is part of the Service Management Department at the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos), located in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Unisinos is a community university recognized as one of the largest in Brazil, where the monitor group meetings are held. The main objective of the Unisinos monitor group is to create moments of reflection for its participants, fostering self-awareness and understanding of the challenges and potential inherent in the role of monitoring.

Through these reflective moments, monitors have the opportunity to analyze their practices, identify areas for development, and recognize their competencies, which significantly contribute to their personal and professional growth. Furthermore, the group aims to establish a collaborative and continuous training space for monitors engaged in various academic activities within the undergraduate programs.

We draw on Bolzan (2002), who asserts that the construction of the training process is something built collectively: “[...] it is not unilateral, but happens as we share experiences, life stories, beliefs, knowledge, etc., in a dynamic that does not end but rather unfolds, changes, multiplies, reveals conflicts, and expands” (Bolzan, 2002, p. 27).

This collaborative environment is fundamental for participants to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and learn from one another, enriching their pedagogical practices and enhancing their teaching support skills. With this foundation, when forming our group, we committed to making it a space dedicated to collective learning, where the sharing of experiences and the exchange of knowledge are highly valued. Our goal is to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to actively contribute to decisions and share responsibility for what is collaboratively produced. In this way, we strive to respect and consider both individual possibilities and interests as well as the collective needs and objectives, promoting an environment of joint construction and mutual enrichment.

The concept of a Collaborative Group, which guides our work, is supported by the theoretical contributions of Parrilla and Daniels (2004). We base our pedagogical and ethical approach on their ideas, emphasizing the importance of creating a space where collaboration and knowledge exchange are central. Building on this theoretical foundation, we strive to create an environment that fosters dialogue, mutual respect, and collective learning, valuing the contributions of each participant toward joint development.

In seeking to provide a space for support, guidance, and attention to the various demands that arise in the daily practice of monitoring, we recognize that

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the monitors' daily tasks often involve addressing challenging situations. These require not only academic knowledge but also interpersonal skills and conflict resolution abilities.

What are the challenges faced in the practice of monitoring? How does it, in some ways, resemble the teaching profession, given that student monitors must pedagogically support their peers in developing the specific competencies of each discipline? Which aspects of teacher education could be addressed within the group? Reflecting on these thought-provoking questions, we turn to Nóvoa (2004) to explore these issues further:

The educator forms themselves through reflection on their personal and professional journeys (*self-formation*); the educator forms themselves in relation to others, in a shared learning process that appeals to consciousness, feelings, and emotions (*hetero-formation*); the educator forms themselves through things (knowledge, techniques, cultures, arts, technologies) and their critical understanding (*eco-formation*) (Nóvoa, 2004, p. 16).

Thus, as a formative space, the group provides a safe and supportive environment where the exchange of knowledge emerges as its greatest strength. The practice of monitoring, in a way, mirrors teaching practice. On this topic, Nóvoa (2004, p. 12) states that “collaborative teaching work naturally integrates a dimension of reflection and sharing among peers.” Within the group, monitors have the opportunity to openly discuss their challenges and seek guidance and advice from peers and coordinators, fostering an atmosphere of solidarity and cooperation.

Pedagogy should be grounded in the principles of cooperation, collaboration, and solidarity, emphasizing the strength of collective work. It should encourage the development of students' intellectual, social, and moral capacities, fostering their ability to work together to transform the world with empathy and compassion. Furthermore, it is essential to "unlearn" certain aspects, such as biases, prejudices, and hostile polarizations. Assessment, in turn, should be designed to reflect these pedagogical goals, promoting growth and meaningful learning for all students (Nóvoa, 2004).

In this sense, the Unisinos monitor group serves as a vital space for reflection, collaborative development, and mutual support, contributing to the preparation and awareness of monitors regarding their role in the academic context.

2.1 The Possibilities of the Group

The group is a space dedicated to welcoming, listening, and building connections among its





participants. Its objectives include providing a support network for members to strengthen themselves, form stronger bonds, and overcome their difficulties. We understand welcoming as a dynamic state, a paradox that combines the need for stability for those who arrive with the continuity of care (Schuh, 2023). Simultaneously, welcoming is in constant transformation, addressing daily challenges posed by diverse user demands, new realities, and changes in the teams and compositions of partner institutions. Additionally, it adapts to the arrival and departure of interns, who always bring new aspirations and desires to learn.

The concept of a group is essential to understanding its dynamics and the coordination required for participants to achieve common goals. As a collaborative space, the group represents a meaningful and innovative alternative in training contexts, standing out for its importance in fostering a shared learning environment and collective knowledge construction. It is a space that fosters:

[...] continuous education with characteristics distinct from those observed in courses, lectures, workshops, etc. In these spaces, participants—teachers and other professionals who may work in various fields—engage together in discussions, learning processes, knowledge production, and more, in a continuous, permanent, and holistic manner (Biani; Lorenzato; Gepemai, 2018, p. 87).

A group is generally defined as a set of individuals who interact and influence one another, sharing a sense of collective identity grounded in mutual experiences and exchanges. Group activities are designed according to contextual needs and may take on playful, cultural, therapeutic, or recreational characteristics, depending on the profile of its participants. For Pichon-Rivière (1986, p. 84), a group is “a restricted set of people connected by spatial and temporal constants, articulated through their mutual internal representation, interacting through complex mechanisms of role assumption and attribution, explicitly or implicitly oriented toward a task that constitutes their purpose.” Thus, learning is understood as a group process, where appropriation of knowledge occurs instrumentally.

The group fosters collective dialogue and enhances participants' understanding of their emotions. By listening to others share their experiences, individuals may hear echoes of their own stories in the voices of others. For Cardoso and Seminotti (2006), the group is perceived by its participants as a space where the necessity for mutual assistance is openly discussed. During activities, participants question available options for emotional support and assistance.

Not everyone feels comfortable interacting and exposing themselves within the group.





Speaking openly or acknowledging vulnerabilities is not an easy task. However, this does not preclude participation as a listener, and despite such challenges, participants often find value in hearing others' life experiences and learning from their stories (Peluso, Baruzzi & Blay, 2001).

The opportunity to share experiences, while also serving as a space for interaction and creation, allows students to express their opinions, feel heard, and expand their social network. From birth, humans are inherently social beings and part of groups—be they family, school, university, workplace, or others. Viewing groups through a socio-educational perspective, as developed in institutions, highlights the importance of practices long employed by social workers or educators as strategies for strengthening emotional bonds and fostering learning among members.

2.2 Creation and Planning

Based on the monitoring sessions conducted with the monitors, group intervention was chosen as a strategy to create a space for strengthening bonds, fostering care, facilitating teaching and learning, and exchanging experiences among undergraduate monitors. Within the group, students cultivate self-care and share their experiences with others (Mendonça, 2005).

The purpose of Thematic Groups is to provide participants with a collective space for questioning and critically reflecting on experiences related to a specific theme. It is believed that organizing a group systematically enhances and broadens interaction among monitors.

The group was coordinated by a Social Work professional, a Pedagogy professional, and a Pedagogy intern. Sharing observations among professionals coordinating the same group creates channels for strengthening teamwork and enabling actions in other dimensions, including research. It is worth noting that, historically, both professions have been marked by extensive experience in group work. The group approach, as a technical-operative instrument for social workers, should be considered “not only in its technical aspects—related to 'doing'—but also in its socio-political implications of practice, which enhances actions, enabling an intervention with a social direction situated within the contradictory movement of society” (Trindade, 2004, p. 39).

The history of pedagogy in group coordination is characterized by continuous evolution, reflecting a significant shift from authoritarian methods to more collaborative, student-centered approaches. This transition has been well-documented and analyzed by various scholars in the field of pedagogy. Moving away from a predominantly authoritarian and vertically directed teaching style, pedagogy has increasingly recognized the value of methods that promote active student participation





and the collective construction of knowledge.

According to Freire (1970, p. 48), one of the most influential pedagogues in critical education, "education is not an act of depositing, but a process of creating knowledge and transformation." Freire argues that pedagogical practice should be grounded in dialogical interaction and collaboration between educator and learner, fostering an environment where knowledge is co-constructed. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process, introducing the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. He posits that learning occurs most effectively in collaborative contexts, where students are stimulated through social interactions that help them reach new levels of understanding.

The shift toward more collaborative approaches is also highlighted by authors such as David Johnson and Roger Johnson, who state that "collaborative groups provide an environment that promotes interaction among participants, encouraging the collective construction of knowledge and the development of social skills" (Johnson, D.; Johnson, R., 1999, p. 75). They underscore that working in groups helps students develop essential competencies for academic and professional success, such as effective communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, contemporary pedagogy emphasizes the importance of the teacher's role—applied here in the practice of monitoring—as a facilitator and mediator, "not the sole holder of knowledge, but rather a mediator, a bridge to access. Crossing the bridge is something the student must accomplish" (Fernandes, 2021, p. 48). According to Minuchin (1974, p. 45), "the educator's role in collaborative contexts is to create an environment that encourages active student participation and the development of collaborative skills." This perspective reflects a shift toward pedagogical practices that value student autonomy and dynamic, interactive learning.

Thus, the historical transition in pedagogy, from authoritarian group coordination to collaborative approaches, reflects an increasing recognition of the importance of social interaction, active participation, and joint development in the educational process. This shift has been crucial in fostering more inclusive, dynamic, and effective learning environments.

The coordination of the group does not aim to teach or impart knowledge. Instead, its role is to share and mediate relationships, contributing to the knowledge being collectively constructed. As Paviani and Fontana (2009, p. 79) state, "[...] it does not teach what is already known but creates opportunities for participants to learn what they need to know, adopting an approach centered on the learner and learning rather than on the teacher."





The established group aimed to provide participants with moments of reflection, fostering self-awareness and understanding the challenges and potential of monitoring. It sought to create a collaborative and training-focused space for the monitors, enhancing their capacity to engage effectively in their roles.

2.3 The “I Am a Monitor” Group

The proposal for the group is justified by the objectives of Mentoring, as outlined in Resolution 002/2014, which establishes the general guidelines for the functioning of Monitoring processes³:

Article 2 – Objectives of Monitoring:

- I. To encourage the participation of undergraduate students in the educational process and academic life of the University;
- II. To provide opportunities for theoretical and practical enrichment and the development of students' competencies through the practice of monitoring;
- III. To foster mutual cooperation among students to overcome difficulties related to the knowledge developed in Academic Activities;
- IV. To contribute to reducing failure and dropout rates in Academic Activities;
- V. To stimulate the mobilization of competencies developed within the program in extracurricular initiatives that enhance the quality of education and the program itself (Unisinos, 2014, p. 1).

Thus, the need for a training space for monitors was identified to enhance the quality of support provided to students at the higher education institution (HEI). Once the strategy was defined, actions were taken to promote the group. The first step involved requesting the list of student monitors from the course administration office and subsequently sending out invitations via email. The group's purpose, meeting format, and a schedule structured around eight thematic sessions were communicated during this outreach. Registrations were conducted online through the university platform, with participants later receiving certification.

Group planning is an essential practice for success. In this regard, we draw on Corrêa and Sena (2009), who state:

The planning of any activity is essential to achieving a goal. It indicates what needs to be done, with whom, when, how, where, and with what resources—what is necessary—and whether the results align with our expectations—evaluation. Without planning, we risk 'shooting in the dark,' failing to reach our objectives (Corrêa; Sena, 2009, p. 13).

³The practice of monitoring at Unisinos has existed since the second semester of 1998. See: Scarparo Haag *et al.* (2019).





Planning is a crucial component for the successful execution of a group, and its importance extends to various fundamental areas that ensure the effectiveness and cohesion of collective work. Given the complexity and diversity of activities a group can undertake, comprehensive planning becomes essential to harmoniously integrate and coordinate these elements. Whether in collaborative projects within education, business, or community development, planning involves coordinating efforts, defining common goals, and creating strategies to achieve the established objectives.

In the group, various themes are introduced for debate, reflecting the richness and complexity of the issues addressed. The collaboration of professionals from different fields of knowledge enhances each session, showcasing the interdisciplinary work performed. According to Fazenda (2008), defining interdisciplinarity simply as the combination of disciplines limits the focus to curriculum formatting. However, when interdisciplinarity is understood as an attitude of boldness and a quest for knowledge, it necessitates consideration of the cultural aspects of the places where teachers and researchers are trained.

The themes addressed benefited from the participation and collaboration of professionals from diverse fields, enriching the discussions and promoting a multidisciplinary approach to the challenges faced within the educational context.

2.4 The Group Participants

The group, named *I Am a Monitor*, consisted of 40 students from various programs, aged between 18 and 40 years. A higher participation of female students compared to male students was observed. The eight meetings were held weekly from October 2 to November 20, 2023, always on Mondays, online, in the afternoon, with an average duration of one hour each. The criterion for participating in the group was being a monitor of an academic activity or a teaching project. The group was coordinated by a Social Worker, a Pedagogue, and a Pedagogy intern.

Social work has played a crucial role in group coordination throughout its history, evolving to adapt to changing social and political needs. From early efforts to organize communities and support individuals in vulnerable situations, the field of social work has integrated group coordination practices to promote collective well-being. As Moreira (2013, p. 11) writes, “Group work is an inherent practice within the professional culture of social work and has been present in fieldwork since its inception.”

During the group sessions, some participants missed meetings, and a few decided to withdraw.





Participation and activities conducted by group members were recorded in case notes. These records were utilized by the coordinators as a source of information about the meetings and participants, facilitating the monitoring of the group's progress and subsequent reflections, which enabled the writing of this experience report.

To evaluate the group, the "Word Cloud" tool was used. At the end of the final meeting, participants anonymously selected words to describe their impressions of the sessions. The data for this study were collected through an analysis of the case notes from the *I Am a Monitor* group.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The topics discussed in the group were carefully selected and developed with the goal of creating a collaborative and formative space that integrated different areas of knowledge. The aim was to foster an interdisciplinary environment where themes could be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the group sought to enrich the debate and understanding, allowing for a more holistic and collaborative approach to the issues raised. Thus, the topics were chosen in alignment with the group's stated objectives at its inception. For each meeting, activities were developed to promote discussion and reflection on the proposed themes. These activities are detailed in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Theme of each group meeting

THEME	CONCEPT
Welcome and Attention	The Importance of Welcoming and Individualized Attention in Creating a Supportive and Inclusive Environment This theme emphasizes how effective welcoming practices can positively impact students' development and well-being, highlighting the need for strategies that address their emotional and academic needs. A well-executed welcoming process fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion, helping students navigate challenges and build confidence in their academic

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	<p>journey. By providing individualized attention, educators and monitors can identify specific needs, offer tailored support, and create a safe space where students feel valued and understood. This approach not only enhances academic performance but also promotes emotional resilience and a stronger connection to the academic community. Through activities such as reflective discussions, case studies, and role-playing scenarios, participants in the group can explore practical methods for implementing these strategies, ensuring that the support provided is both effective and empathetic.</p>
Ethnic-Racial Issues	<p>The impact of ethnic-racial issues on students' lives is a crucial topic, exploring how diversity and power relations influence the educational environment. The discussion includes how equity and inclusion strategies can be promoted for all students.</p>
Perspectives of Teachers in Monitoring Practices	<p>The variety of perspectives among teachers responsible for monitoring practices is examined to understand how their different approaches and experiences shape the support provided to students. This discussion aims to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring practices and promote a richer and more diverse learning experience.</p>
Social Media Management	<p>Effective social media management is discussed to understand its role in communication and the promotion of academic activities. The importance of strategies for managing online presence and engaging productively with the academic community is a central focus.</p>
Time Management and Career Paths	<p>Efficient time management and the exploration of different career paths available to students are analyzed. The discussion includes techniques for optimizing time management and considering career options, helping students make informed</p>

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	choices and balance their responsibilities.
Technological Tools for Organization	The use of technological tools to enhance organization and productivity is an important topic. The discussion explores how these tools can be employed to facilitate task and project management for both students and teachers.
Understanding Student Support	Understanding student support practices is discussed to identify how institutions can improve the services provided and meet the specific needs of each student, ensuring a more personalized and effective approach.
Managing Student Emotions	Finally, the management of students' emotions is explored, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing emotions in the educational environment. The discussion focuses on how to create an environment that supports students' mental and emotional well-being, promoting a more balanced and successful environment.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

The selection of topics for each meeting was based on a discussion about which subjects would provide a dual meaning in the training of student monitors. The meetings were carefully designed to provide participants with an experience that would develop their critical thinking skills and their understanding of diversity both within and outside the university. It is important to note that, even though we know the world's diversity is infinite (Santos; Araujo; Baumgarten, 2016) and that no general theory can fully capture it, we focused on topics related to race, gender, inclusion, and social vulnerability. Speakers highlighted how these issues affect the pursuit and continuity of academic mentorship through sharing their real-world experiences.

The topics addressed in the meetings were selected to promote a deep and integrated analysis of the educational issues discussed. Each topic brought to light crucial aspects for understanding and improving the academic environment, providing valuable

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insights for pedagogical practices. Each of these themes contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the educational context, providing a solid foundation for more effective and inclusive pedagogical practices. The collaborative and interdisciplinary work carried out throughout the meetings enriched the analysis and offered valuable perspectives for the continuous improvement of the academic environment.

4CONSIDERATIONS

This article aims to discuss and report the experience of planning and implementing an online listening and reflection group for peer tutors in higher education. The findings indicate that the group meetings held in 2021, 2022, and 2023 highlighted the importance of this space as a means of strengthening the peer tutoring community, fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences that are essential for collective growth. Given these findings, the need to maintain the group was identified. In the meetings, peer tutors have the opportunity to analyze their own practices, identify areas for development, and recognize their competencies, which significantly contributes to their personal and professional growth. Including participation in the group as part of their workload could motivate other peer tutors to join their colleagues in discussions.

Through this report, it became evident that the meetings serve as a valuable space for sharing experiences and strengthening bonds among peer tutors. By discussing their doubts regarding student support services, they bring real-world experiences to the group and gain confidence in sharing their personal stories.

Another relevant factor in the selection of topics, and especially in the choice of speakers, stems from the issues that arise when analyzing the project's ideas. For instance, we considered the perceptions that non-peer tutor students have of those involved in peer tutoring. When reflecting on this issue, we can conclude that many students avoid seeking academic tutoring because they feel inferior to peer tutors, given that both are enrolled in the same course, but one is in a position to help their peers with their difficulties while the other seeks guidance due to their own challenges.

As a suggestion to address this demand that may be influencing the demand for tutoring, we plan to hold meetings where non-peer tutor students can be the speakers and address topics that will be relevant to the training of participating peer tutors. This will reinforce the idea that everyone can contribute in their own way, without establishing a relationship of superiority on the part of the peer tutors or inferiority on the part of other students.

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To reflect on key issues that may be influencing academic tutoring practices, we dedicated a meeting to each issue. For instance, we provided guidance on time management and optimization to assist tutors in addressing scheduling conflicts with other students, which often leads to attrition from tutoring programs. We also focused on expanding skills in managing social media networks, particularly developing techniques for promoting academic tutoring on digital platforms to increase its reach and appeal to other students. Additionally, we worked on developing leadership skills among tutors to coordinate tutoring activities and improve communication between tutors and tutees, preparing them to handle both pedagogical and non-academic issues that may arise.

It is evident that when planning a project, it is crucial to be attentive and sensitive to all issues that may be negatively influencing the practices of the target audience in their role, in this case, academic tutors. The experience of planning a listening and discussion group provides opportunities for reflection, discussion, exchange of experiences, and in-depth exploration of topics that often do not permeate our daily lives.

Throughout this planning process, we often encounter challenges related to conflicting ideas that we must collectively overcome. This has allowed us to enhance our cooperation and teamwork skills, as well as foster closer relationships. Undoubtedly, leading the planning of a group aimed at influencing academic tutors beyond pedagogical and academic issues is a significant challenge. However, it has enabled us to expand our creativity, critical thinking, and sensitivity to important and relevant issues within the university environment. Through this group, we can transcend the limitations of the classroom.

The importance of collaborative coordination between Social Work and Education within the group is emphasized for the operationalization of meetings, mediation among participants, and the invitation to moments of reflection and self-awareness. The group's facilitation was found to promote a space for listening to and supporting tutors regarding the challenges and potential of being a tutor, as well as building relationships throughout this process. It is concluded that the experience with the group of peer tutors in higher education was positive for both coordinators and participants.

It can be stated that the production of research on peer tutoring groups or academic tutoring in higher education in Brazil is scarce, given its importance for the continuous improvement of the academic environment. It is believed that this study has enabled a better understanding of the planning and execution of an online listening and reflection group for peer tutors in higher education and has contributed to the consolidation of the work of professionals interested in and involved in the training and development of peer tutors. For future studies, a comparison of the peer tutor's experience before





and after participating in the group is suggested to identify the effectiveness of the training in terms of student support.

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