

DISTANCE EDUCATION: TRACKS OF A ROAD TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION

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Research Report¹

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Abstract

This study aimed to make a discussion about the relevance of the Decree No. 5622 of December 19, 2005, the emergence of government programs that succeeded and subsequent preparation for the institutionalization of Distance Education in universities and institutes federal. An overview of government programs, see the Open University of Brazil¹ (higher education), and the School e-Tec Brazil² (Vocational Education Technical High School) and the National Program for Access to Education and Employment³, whose last expands the e-Tec and extends the Initial and Continuing Training, also called vocational qualifications. Finally, we come to the Ministry of Education's⁴ commitment to making distance education a government policy, to ensure its permanence, expansion and development as pedagogical formal teaching and learning.

Key Words: Distance Education, government programs of distance education, institutionalization of the distance education.

Introduction

This work aims to make a discussion about the relevance of the

¹ In Brazil is called “Universidade Aberta do Brasil - UAB”

² In Brazil is called “Escola e-Tec Brasil”

³ In Brazil is called “Programa Nacional para Acesso ao Ensino e Emprego - PRONATEC”

⁴ In Brazil is called “Ministério da Educação - MEC”

Decree No. 5622 of December 19, 2005, the emergence of government programs that succeeded and subsequent preparation for the institutionalization of Distance Education in universities and institutes federal.

The Decree regulates the art. 80 of Law No. 9394 of 20 December 1996 laying down the guidelines and bases for national education. This article deals more specifically encouraging the development and delivery of distance education programs at all levels and types of education and continuing education. The Decree comes, therefore, that detail the art. 80.

This work was developed from desk research and literature in order to obtain the information for analysis, which process was through qualitative research. The origin of the investigation was based on the Decree 5.622/2005, to seek a preliminary legal foundation for government projects Open University of Brazil, School e-Tec Brazil and National Program for Access to Education and Employment - with emphasis for expansion of the system e-Tec) . In the process we used several times prior to the legislation Decree (since other legal assumptions must be met), as well as those that follow (such as legalization of government projects). Finally, do some considerations about the institutionalization of distance education in universities and federal institutes.

A Vision of the Decree

Decree 5.622/2005 features Distance Education as educational modality in which mediation didactic and pedagogical processes of teaching and learning occurs with the use of media and information technologies and communication with students and teachers to develop educational activities in places or times different.

The decree goes on to consider the Distance Education to the status of educational modality, which presents a methodology, management and evaluation characteristics. This represents an

indication of the quality and concatenation of efforts to regularize the Distance Education as educational proposal viable and legally organized, and therefore respected by society as a whole. Some issues should be considered in a distance learning course (art. 1, § 1): (a) assessments of students, (b) required internships, when provided for in relevant legislation, (c) advocacy work of completion when relevant legislation and (d) activities related to teaching laboratories, as appropriate.

The Decree also regulates issues related to the levels and types for which the Distance Education can be applied, which are: (a) Basic Education, (b) Youth and Adults, (c) Special Education, (d) Professional Education (Technical, mid-level technology, higher level) and (e) higher Education (sequential, graduate, specialist, master and doctorate).

The Basic Education, accredited institutions to offer Distance Education may request authorization from the regulatory agencies of their systems of education to offer elementary and high school distance, solely for the following cases (Art. 30): (a) for completion of apprenticeship or (b) in emergency situations. In these cases, the distance acts to assist the student in the school and the teaching-learning process, and preserve special situations that would otherwise be met in a labored (art. 30, paragraph one). They are: (a) unable, for health reasons, to follow classroom teaching, (b) there are special needs and demand for specialized care services, (c) the student's presence abroad, for any reason, (d) experience in locations which do not present the regular school attendance in person, (e) transfer to regions of difficult access, including missions located in border regions and (f) situation in prison.

As for Youth and Adults, should be considered art. 37 of Law No. 9394 of December 20, 1996, which says that the education of youth and adults will be for those who do not have access or continue their studies in elementary and high school at the proper age.

As for Special Education, must be complied with relevant legal specifics.

Government Programs

From 2005, a vision of government programs, see the Open University of Brazil (higher education), and the School-Tec Brazil (Education Vocational Technical High School) and the National Program for Access to Education and Employment, with emphasis on e-Tec.

- **The Open University of Brazil**

The Open University of Brazil was created by the Ministry of Education in 2005 in partnership with the National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education and State Enterprises under the State Board of Education, focusing on Policy and Management Higher Education under five main themes, as Leite et al. (2009:52)

1. Expansion of public higher education, considering the processes of democratization and access.
2. Improvement of the management processes of higher education institutions, allowing its expansion in line with the educational proposals of the states and municipalities;
3. Evaluation of higher distance education based on the relaxation processes and regulation on implementation by the Ministry of Education;
4. The contributions to research in higher distance education in the country;
5. The financing of the deployment processes, implementation and training of human resources in higher distance education.

The Open University of Brazil was created as a public policy liaison between the Secretary of Distance Education / Ministry of Education and the Direction of Distance Education⁵, linked the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education

⁵ In Brazil is called “Diretoria de Educação a Distância – DED”.

Personnel⁶, with a view to expanding education above under the Education Development Plan. The Open University of Brazil was established by Decree No. 5800 of June 8, 2006.

Currently, Open University of Brazil is under Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel responsibility, backed by Decree No. 6755 of 29 January 2009 establishing the National Policy on Vocational Training of the Teaching of Basic Education. The Secretary of Distance Education was abolished in 2011.

● **System e-Tec Brazil**

The system e-Tec Brazil, also called Network e-Tec Brazil, was launched in 2007, aims to offer vocational and technological education and distance is intended to broaden and democratize access to technical courses in high school, public and free.

The e-Tec Brazil is a project of the Secretary of Vocational and Technological Education⁷, deals with technical courses in high school "concurrent" or "subsequent" not being responsible for the "integrated", as opposed to art. 30 of Law 5622 of December 19, 2005, since the distance can only be applied in regular school, and supplemental learning or in emergency situations.

To understand these terms, we must have recourse to art. 4, § 1, item I II and III of Decree 5154 of 23 July 2004, which sets the terms "integrated", "concurrent" and "subsequent", as follows:

I - Integrated, offered only to those who have completed primary education, with single registration for each student;

II - Concurrent offered only to those who have completed primary school or is attending high school in which the complementarity between the technical professional education middle and high school assumes the existence of separate registrations for each course.

⁶ In Brazil is called "Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES".

⁷ Secretaria de Educação Média e Tecnológica - SETEC"

III - subsequent, offered only to those who have completed high school.

● **National Program for Access to Education and Employment**

This is a program of the Ministry of Education and was sanctioned by Law 12,513 of October 12, 2011, and has as main objective to expand, and internalize democratic offering courses Professional Education and Technology for the Brazilian population. Also part of the program actions already in operation by the Ministry of Education. In this context, noteworthy expansion of the Network e-Tec Brazil (Decree No. 7589 of October 26, 2011), which broadens and democratizes the Professional Education and Technology.

Considerations on the Institutionalization of EAD

The Distance Education has been implemented as a government program in order to advance social inclusion and skills of the population as a whole, with emphasis on the regions more distant from urban centers and less access to education and qualification opportunities.

Complementing this picture, from 2011, the Secretary of Distance Education was extinguished by the Ministry of Education, through the Direction for Regulation and Supervision in Distance Education, belonging to the Secretary of Regulation and Supervision of Higher Education, the assume the regulation and supervision of the actions of distance education in higher education. In high school, who assumes the role of regulation and supervision is the very Secretary of Vocational and Technological Education. The National Institute of Studies and Research⁸ fits the evaluation function of distance education in order to provide quality indicators for

⁸ In portuguese is called "Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas - INEP"

Direction for Regulation and Supervision in Distance Education, Secretary of Vocational and Technological Education and Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, and consequently for the Ministry of Education.

In the case of higher education in the early Open University of Brazil, there were not many options for implementing distance education, the option was to negotiate directly with the deans, via notices, Distance Education operationalized by groups within the Federal Institutions of Higher Education, without spending by departments and councils. There is no doubt that if it followed all the procedural rule of Federal Institutions of Higher Education, with the approval of courses in the departments, boards of central and governing bodies of universities and institutes, Distance Education would still be on paper. However, to subvert the system meant leaving the sport Distance Education marginalized.

Throughout this work the Distance Education was treated as a education mode, because that's what is referred to in the legislation, but from now on, I will refer to it as a pedagogical proposal and as such, remains a challenge that must be monitored, analyzed and evaluated continuously to ensure quality development, and can increasingly be given support and trust of society as a serious and inclusive proposal for education and regional development as well as nationally.

From these premises, do the following considerations regarding the institutionalization of distance education:

- It is vital to the existence of a public policy support education in such a way that seeks financial subsidies for the construction of pedagogical projects consistent and strong. I think that government programs like Open University of Brazil, Network e-Tec and National Program for Access Education and Employment are necessary and fundamental for experimentation towards the institutionalization of distance education.
- Government programs are government policies. In the case

of distance education, institutionalization should be an educational organization, policy and legislation towards developing a national public policy for distance education.

■ It is important that there is legislation that gives support to the development of distance education, which must continually evolve in order to meet the educational needs with quality.

■ The need and importance of a political structure that involves continuous educational institutions, municipal and federal government, which has occurred through the distance education program, even with many challenges and problems, has managed to achieve good results, given access to technical education and superior to many people in areas more distant from urban centers.

■ The need for investment in technological infrastructure to provide grant access to broadband Internet is essential in order that people have access to Distance Education, with a fast network, which enables the use of web conferencing, downloading files faster and without error, use of cameras in electronic messengers (msn), such as Skype and Hotmail, view videos in high resolution and frame rate, use the chat, among others. However, these investments to occur, we need government action, through public policy or government programs (as has occurred).

■ The undergraduate courses must be allocated in the respective faculties of origin with the same approval. For example, the course of Mathematics - Bachelor (distance) should be part of the Faculty of Mathematics and it is this institution that cares for the quality going to happen, overcoming the difficulties. However, trying to develop a distance education institution and teaching material, it is important to have a core or advice, universal in scope, to carry out such activity. .

■ The graduations distance should not be directed only to teaching but also for research and extension.

Final Thoughts

The Distance Education is a pedagogical proposal, with different education classroom, therefore, with different methods, but that has been tried and evolved over the years, so it has accumulated many methodological knowledge.

Furthermore, Distance Education is not an isolated proposal that face, however, some actions has been done to make it complementary and potentiator of presence education.

The presentiality is necessary for the Distance Education, as it contributes to the present teaching. Thus, both can not be viewed in isolation in the process of institutionalization of distance education in universities and federal institutes.

Nota:

1 Documentary research and literature and completed part of the dissertation work in progress in the Graduate Program in Agricultural Education of Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, which is guided by Prof. Dr. Sandra Barros Sanchez.

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