

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN INSTITUTO FEDERAL DO ESPÍRITO SANTO

Vitória - ES, april /2015

Vanessa Battestin Nunes - Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Ifes, vanessa@ifes.edu.br

Marize Lyra Silva Passos - Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Ifes, marize@ifes.edu.br

Danielli Veiga Carneiro Sondermann - Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Ifes,
danielli@ifes.edu.br

Yvina Pavan Baldo - Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Ifes, yvina@ifes.edu.br

José Mário Costa Junior - Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Ifes, icjunior@ifes.edu.br

Class - Innovative Experience (EI): Case Study

Educational Sector – Technology Secondary Education (B)

Areas - Macro - systems and distance education institutions, Meso -
Management and Organization, Micro - Interaction and Communication in
Learning Communities

Nature - Completed Study Report (A)

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to describe the search path of the institutionalization of Distance Education, from the Universidade Aberta programs in Brazil and E-TEC Network to the creation of the Reference Center for Training and Distance Education of the Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo, its organizational structure, involved public policies, the theoretical assumptions on which it is based and the challenges in their management toward institutionalization. The methodology was a descriptive research. From the results it was realized the importance of distance learning management, to support the campuses of the institution when it comes to distance learning, the use of technologies in education and the need to offer courses at different levels and modalities, to meet the need for teacher training and of professionals working in education. The need for a nationwide policy for the institutionalization of Distance Education, was also observed, among them the tutoring activity, maintenance of classroom support hubs, infrastructure for Distance Education Training Reference Center composition, regard to the different methodology of Distance Education and definition of cost-student of the distance mode.

Key Words: Management in Education; Distance Education; Formation.

1. Introduction

The Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (IFES) started acting in Distance Education (DE) in 2006, with the creation of the Distance Education Centre (Cead). Later, with Law No. 11,892 of 2008 that creates the Federal Institutes, it started to act also in the teacher training area. These two actions converged and culminated in 2014 in the transformation of Cead Reference Center for Training and Distance Education (Cefor), whose main objectives are: promoting and supporting distance education and the use of technology in education in IFES; and to work in the training of teachers and other education professionals, through teaching, research and extension.

To this end the Cefor has the support of institutional DE federal programs resources such as the Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB) and the Escola Técnica do Brasil (e-Tec) and other funding agencies. The management of Cefor is complex, since the institutionalization of DE and Reference Center format are very recent in the country, and in this case, the Reference Center covers two aspects that although complementary from a pedagogical and conceptual point of view, are distinct in terms of management and operation.

Thus, this article aims to describe the Cefor deployment process, its organizational structure, public policies involved, the theoretical assumptions on which it is based and the challenges in its management. It is expected to contribute with other institutions that are reflecting on these aspects and / or are passing by the constitution of the identity stage. For this purpose, the methodology adopted was the descriptive research.

2. Management in DE

The Distance Learning (DE), is a type of education that seeks to serve people regardless of geographic location or specific time, providing a mediation environment where interaction and cooperation are key factors for the success of teaching and learning processes . Considering their characteristics and peculiarities, the DE can contribute to greater democratization of education access.

Considering the legal aspects, DE was addressed initially in Article 80 of the Law of Education Guidelines and Bases (LDB) - Law 9.394 / 1996,

enabling the development of distance education mode at all levels and types of education. However, it was by Decree 5.622 / 2005 that Article 80 was regulated with the definition of criteria for course offerings, institutional accreditation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, guided by Quality Benchmarks for Distance Education, defined by the Ministry of Education (MEC), in collaboration with the education systems. From then on the DE has its formal recognition as a broad form of regular education.

The authors Moore and Kearsley (2008) state that a distance education system is founded upon the components and processes required for the teaching and distance learning to occur: learning, teaching, communication, creation and management. For them, regardless of its size, be for hundreds of thousands of students or one classroom, a DE system shall contain: a source of knowledge that should be taught and learned; a subsystem to structure this knowledge in materials and activities for students; another subsystem to transmit courses for students; teachers interacting with students; students in their different environments; a subsystem to monitor and evaluate the results, so that interventions are possible when failures occur; an organization with a political and administrative structure.

Aiming to offer distance education courses, many government policies have emerged to meet the demands of positions at different levels and areas, particularly positions focused on teacher training.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education has designed and implemented many strategies over the years in offering DE courses in the country. In this article, two national policies will be addressed: the Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB) and the Escola Técnica Aberta do Brasil (e-Tec Brasil).

The UAB System, institutionalized by Decree 5,800, is geared towards the development of distance education mode, in order to expand and internalize the provision of higher education in the country, which focuses on teacher training. This national policy happens with the cooperation of the Union and federal entities by offering higher education courses in the distance modality, by public institutions of higher learning, in presential support hubs (BRAZIL, 2006).

In contrast, the Escola Técnica Aberta do Brasil (e-Tec Brasil) which appeared in 2007 and was established as e-Tec Brasil Network by the Decree

7,589 / 2011, aims to offer professional and technological education in the distance mode and aims to enlarge and democratize access to public and free professional education in Brazil in a collaborative system between federal, state, Federal District and municipalities (BRASIL, 2011).

The UAB and E-Tec Systems, with the approval of annual work plans, subsidize the production of teaching materials as well as resources for the development of courses and payment of research grants for professionals working in the courses.

From this funding proposal arise distance learning courses offered in the various Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPES) demanding the creation of hubs and / or centers responsible for enabling the management of infrastructure and technological resources, as well as the production of material etc. It is in this context arises, in 2006, the Distance Education Centre (Cead) at the Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (IFES), today Cefor.

In line with the Quality Benchmarks in DE (BRASIL, 2007), IFES set strategic goals in its Institutional Development Plan (IDP) and the definition of institutional policy on DE aligned with the strategic vision of the institution was a favorable factor to the expansion and institutionalization of this type of education.

For the management of DE, as well as pedagogical discussion of educational action it is necessary, an administrative management strategy that enables the provision of DE mode. According to Rumble (2003), some aspects to be addressed in administrative management are: a systematization of the flow of the main proceedings, the responsibilities of the administrative, communication and metrics aligned with the strategic vision of the institution.

Thus, it is clear that the knowledge of the DE manager should be broad and can not be restricted to a specific area, for DE management involves technological, pedagogical, administrative, financial and personnel issues. We have to think of a participatory management where all stakeholders can contribute ideas and actions to promote quality DE.

3. Methodological procedures and Object of Study

According to the classification of Gil (2002) about the objectives, this research is classified as descriptive, as it aims to describe how the institutionalization of DE has been made in IFES.

Descriptive research has as the primary objective the description of the characteristics of a given population, a phenomenon or establishing relationships between variables (GIL, 2002, p. 42).

On the technical procedures used, it is a documental research and a case study.

It is a documental research, since several institutional documents were analyzed, such as regulations, historical files, presentations, meeting minutes, corporate and industry websites, ordinances, memoranda, letters, team publications among others.

It is also a case study, since it is a qualitative approach which, according to Gil (2002, p.54), "[...] is the deep and exhaustive study of one or a few objects in a way that allows its broad and detailed knowledge. "As mentioned by Stake (1994, p. 236), a key issue in this approach "[...] is the knowledge derived from the case, or rather what you learn by studying the case." He cites that "case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the object to be studied".

As already mentioned, the research object of study is the Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (IFES). Today IFES has 21 campuses and a Reference Center for Training and Distance Education, distributed in all micro-regions of the ES state.

4. Discussion of Results

The following is the results obtained by the historical data of the institutionalization of DE in IFES and some thoughts on the subject.

4.1 DE History in IFES

Over the years, new courses have emerged and currently IFES has eleven courses, as follows: two technicians - Computing and Administration, four graduate programs - Technology in Systems Analysis and Development, Bachelor in Computer Science, Bachelor in Literature and Pedagogical

Complementation, and five specializations - Computers in Professional Education and Technology, Professional Education Integrated to Basic Education in Youth and Adult Education mode, Public Management and Municipal Public Administration - all courses in progress. For the second half of 2015 are planned three new specializations - Methodologies and Practices for Elementary Education, Interdisciplinary Education in Health and Environment in Basic Education, Education: curriculum and teaching.

And still other activities of DE involving the training of professionals, including courses in: Distance Education Practice for Teachers, Tutors and Instructional Design Training and some courses from the Department of Continued Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (Secadi) And the short courses: Web Conferencing, Hangout, Proofreading Tools among others.

Currently, IFES has partnered with 27 presential support hubs from UAB, 14 e-TEC hubs and the possibility of expansion through its own campuses. Altogether it has 35 municipalities covered by IFES.

4.2 Reference Center for Training and Distance Education

The objectives of the Formation and Distance Education Reference Center (Cefor) can be summarized as follows: (i) DE - Encourage and support distance education and the use of technology in education in IFES, through DE policies and support to campuses, with regard to training and advice in DE, both for the production of educational resources as pedagogical and technological support and (ii) Training - Assist the training of teachers and other education professionals, through teaching, research and extension.

These objectives are in line with the law 11,892, for the creation of the Federal Institutes and the term of agreement on goals and commitments, which state that 20% of the positions are for teacher training. They are also aligned to various goals of the National Education Plan of 2014 (PNE), which explicitly mention the DE and the training of professionals of education as key strategies for meeting those goals.

4.3 Organizational structure of Cefor

The organizational structure according to Chiavenato (2004, p. 287)

"[...] is the way in which the organization's activities are divided, organized and coordinated. [...] It refers to the organization of organs and staff of the organization. "The Following is the organizational structure of Cefor.

Cefor is a subordinate body to the Board of Distance Education which belongs to the Dean of Education, its organizational structure is classified as vertical, and is divided into four hierarchical levels: general management, general coordination (Education Research and Extension, Educational Technologies, Information Technology, Management and Development Programs), area coordinators, under the general coordination and sectors, plus two advisory body.

4.4 Methodology of distance learning courses

Cefor in its governing body function of DE methodology in IFES, established some guiding principles for the functioning of the modality in the institution, such as prioritizing the construction of knowledge as an educational principle; efficient forms of communication between the subjects of the teaching-learning process; monitoring of the learning process; promoting interdisciplinarity based on a dialogic relationship between disciplines, among others (BRASIL, 2014b). Based on these principles, the DE methodology proposed by Cefor, seeks to provide dialogue among participants in the teaching-learning process (teacher, educational designer, pedagogue, course coordinator and tutor), besides access / construction of teaching resources and infrastructure that may be used by students. Classroom moments and synchronous meetings are also part of the methodology adopted by IFES.

The multidisciplinary team may vary according to the course or federal program. It is noteworthy that Cefor can manage and offer courses funded by federal programs such as UAB and e-Tec, or without fomentation, such as the postgraduate degree in Educational Technologies, which constitutes the first course experience produced by teachers of Cefor without fomentations of decentralized external resources. This is then an important initiative with regard to the institutionalization of DE in IFES which leads to many reflections.

4.5 Some results and challenges in the institutionalization process

As results and challenges, it was found that the primary focus of Cefor is the management of DE for the support for campuses of the institution with regard to distance learning courses and the use of technology in education. This involves administrative personnel specialized in computing for management tools such as Moodle environment, web conferencing etc .; designers to create animations, illustrations, textbooks etc .; video production and writers, for recording video classes; of pedagogues and instructional designers for support to the creation of course project, choice of resources to the disciplines, guidelines definitions; staff to select multidisciplinary teams; etc. The second focus resembles a campus, to offer courses at different levels and modes, focusing on training education professionals, and research and extension activities. It needs teachers and administrative staff for the academic secretary, administration, library etc. One of the key issues when there is talk of institutionalization of DE is tutoring, ie, how to hire this professional and / or how to account for this activity.

Some of the main challenges in this process have been: the financial management of funds from different sources; the DE methodology for different levels of courses; service to a large number of campuses and the management of technological resources. There is no definition of a clear policy for cost-student funding in DE for public institutions, in particular by UAB incentive programs and e-TEC, with some particularities of difficult implementation without the partnership of the federal government, municipalities and compensation through grants.

The institutionalization of DE in IFES is in a political and economic moment where this method has been debated for achieving compliance with the goals of the National Education Plan, given the possibility of its geographic range and reach of a higher enrollment . However, part of institutionalization make the actions of DE increasingly closer to the classroom teaching, as an ally for the Education and Technology.

5. Conclusions

The DE process of institutionalization of IFES has been carried out by

development of practices that made possible the spread of DE. However, as with any public IES depends on the regulations and policy at the national level. The first step was taken by UAB and e-TEC programs, however it is necessary to move forward so that DE is established to the fullest and not outside of regular classroom courses.

Along the way Cefor appears that, beyond the institutionalization of DE has the challenge of providing training.

Given this reality, Cefor has been formed through the institutional support, with the allocation of teachers and administrative staff who work in the promotion and support of DE and the provision of training courses. A next step is to change physical structure for a suitable space, as the current space no longer meets Cefor needs.

However, the institutionalization of DE, that is the definition of a physical structure and personnel consistent with the Reference Center's needs, there is a long way to go, given the dialogues that need to exist at the national level and considering the need to meet the different characteristics of such a large country like Brazil.

References

GIL, Antonio Carlos. **Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa**. 4. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2002.

STAKE, Robert E. **Pesquisa Qualitativa**: estudando como as coisas funcionam. Tradução: Karla Reis; revisão técnica: Nilda Jacks. Porto Alegre: Penso, 2011.

CHIAVENATO, Idalberto. **Administração nos novos tempos**. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2004. 6ª reimpressão.

BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Capes. Diretoria de Educação a Distância. **Universidade Aberta do Brasil**. Disponível em: <<http://uab.capes.gov.br>>. Acesso: 09 mai. 2015a.

_____. Presidência da República – Casa Civil. Lei nº 11.892, de 29 de dez. 2008. Institui a Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica. **Diário Oficial da União**. Brasília, DF: 30 dez. 2008. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2008/lei/l11892.htm>. Acesso em 12 jan. 2014.

_____. Senado Federal. Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional: nº 9394/96. Brasília : **Diário Oficial da União**. Brasília, DF: de 21 dez.1996. Disponível em: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9394.htm. Acesso em 12 jan. 2014.

_____. Presidência da República – Casa Civil. Decreto nº 5.622, de 19 dez. 2005. **Diário Oficial da União**. Brasília, DF: 20 dez. 2005. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2004-006/2005/Decreto/D5622.htm>. Acesso em 12 jan. 2014.

_____. Decreto nº 5.800, de 08 de jun. 2006. Dispõe sobre o Sistema Universidade Aberta do Brasil - UAB. Brasília: **Diário Oficial da União**. Brasília, DF: 09 jun. 2006. Disponível em: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2004-2006/2006/decreto/d5800.htm>. Acesso em 12 jan. 2014.

_____. Ministério da Educação. Secretaria de Educação a Distância. **Referenciais de qualidade para a educação superior a distância**. Brasília, DF: 2007 <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seed/arquivos/pdf/legislacao/refead1.pdf>. Acesso em 12 jan. 2014.

MOORE, Michael G., KEARSLEY, Greg. Educação a Distância: uma visão integrada. São Paulo: Cengage Learning, 2008.

RUMBLE, Greville. **A gestão dos sistemas de ensino a distância**. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília: UNESCO, 2003.