

CHAPTER 14

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR BRAZILIAN LEARNERS OUTSIDE BRAZIL

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14.1 Introduction

The experience reported in this article constitutes an Internet-supported Fundamental and Intermediate regular course taught at distance, based on printed material, designed for students outside Brazil who cannot attend regular classes.

This course has been available at Colégio Anglo-Americano in Rio de Janeiro since 1981 through its **Centro Internacional de Estudos Regulares – CIER** (International Center of Regular Courses).

14.2 The Institution

The British-American School – as **Colégio Anglo-Americano** was originally known – was founded in 1919. Its main objective was to provide education to the British and American communities that lived in Brazil. It gradually lost its foreign characteristics and acquired a fully Brazilian personality, composed of school units in Brazil as well as in North and South America, offering from Children's Courses to College Programs.

After some years, Botafogo Unit in Rio de Janeiro was followed by two units in Barra da Tijuca. At national level, Foz do Iguaçu Unit was created to provide educational services to the community at Itaipu Bi-national Power Plant. Angra dos Reis Unit was created to offer a school to the community working at the shipyard company Estaleiros Reunidos Verolme, and Barcarena Unit, in the Brazilian northern state of Pará, was designed for the community in ALBRÁS, the major Aluminum Plant in Brazil.

As Brazil was increasingly becoming a labor-force exporting country in the world scenario, there was a new educational demand among Brazilian families who had been transferred to different nations. Essentially directed to meet the needs of this new clients, the **Centro Internacional de Estudos Regulares – CIER** (International Center of Regular Courses) was created in 1981.

14.3 The Clientele

The Centro Internacional de Estudos Regulares – CIER (International Center of Regular Courses) is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2006. So far it has had about 7,000 students. CIER has provided

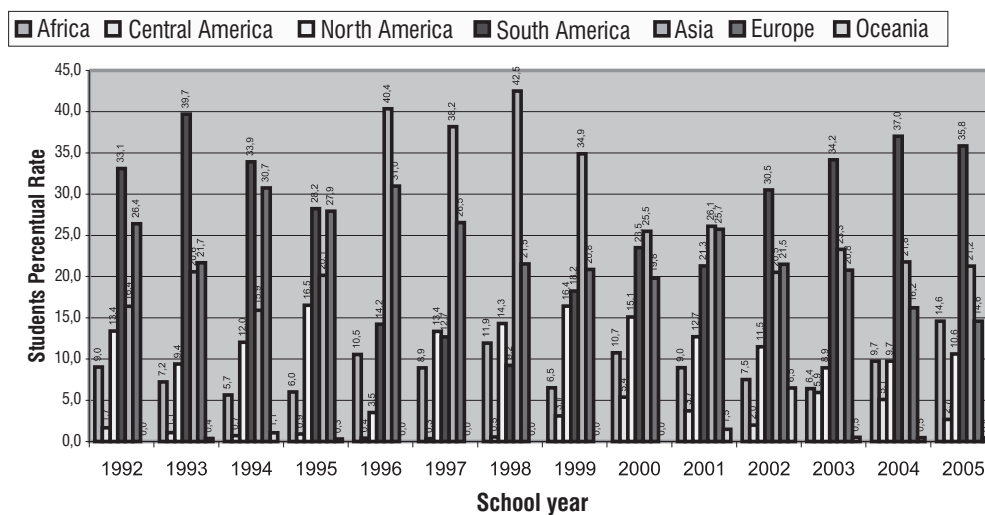


Chart 14.1 Location of students per continent (1992 to 2005)

Brazilian regular education to school-age children and youths who were able to carry on and complete their Basic Education abroad, having the advantage of a rich experience in a foreign country and the assurance that their schooling years would be officially recognized in Brazil when they returned home.

CIER develops its activities in Brazil, benefiting students to whom quality schools are not available in their communities' surrounding areas and students who cannot go to regular schools due to physical or emotional health problems.

That clientele is spread throughout the continent and our range of action is shown in Chart 14.1.

14.4 Reason for Students to Enter CIER

Different circumstances have led Brazilian families with children and youths at school age to stay abroad, even on temporary basis.

Officers of multinational companies, military personnel and diplomats in Brazilian Government-assigned missions, clergy people in evangelical missions, sports people acting as coaches and competitors, graduate students on academic trips – doctor's degree and post-doctoral degree programs –, ballet, music and sports modalities, and long tourism trips as well.

Chart 14.2 shows the reasons for the transfer of Brazilian families abroad, and consequently, the reasons for the students' admittance at CIER.

14.5 Operational Organization

CIER's operational organization is structured as follows: Director, School Secretary, Pedagogical Coordinator and Tutorial. CIER's Tutorial is composed of specialized teachers

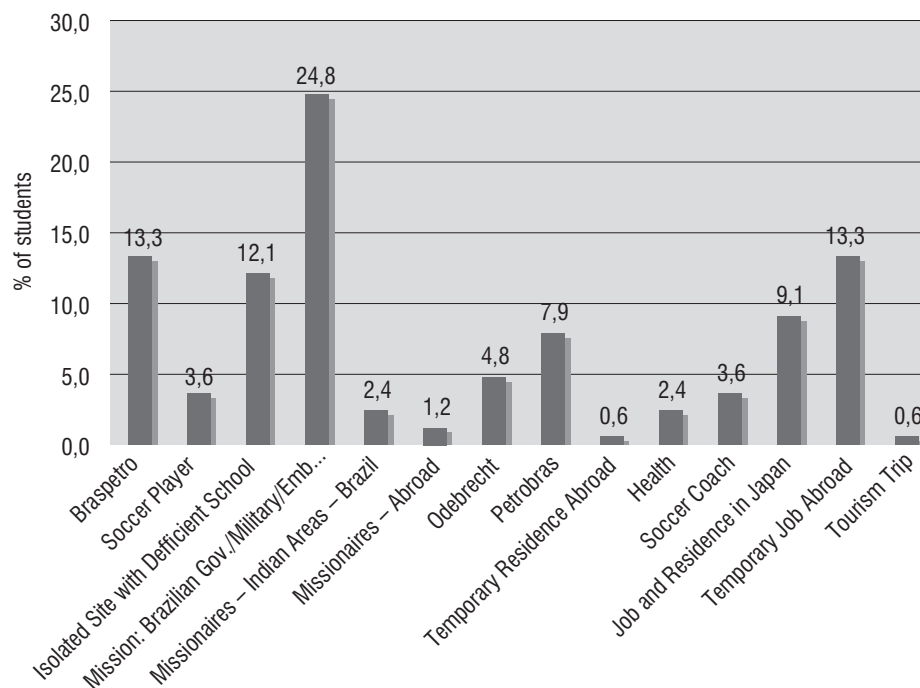


Chart 14.2 Reasons for students to enter CIER (in percentage)

of each discipline, especially prepared to teach at distance through the means of communication that is most appropriate to the student (regular mail, fax, e-mail, virtual environment etc).

Service to the students is carried out through two different modalities: Individual Service and School Centers. In the individual modality, studies are conducted at home, supervised by student's own families and guided by Rio de Janeiro pedagogical team. After the enrollment acceptance, the student receives the first instructional modules together with the guidelines on the development of the course and the student's chronogram. The programmed periods for the development of the activities in each module are in the chronogram, as well as the periods reserved to take the tests and send them to CIER. The dates when the students will receive the other sets of modules are also included in the chronogram. The assessment tests received are corrected by the tutorial staff, which sends back to the students personalized and relevant comments on their performance. In spite of all the development in the technology involved in Education at Distance, hand-written mail is favored so as to establish and keep bonding ties with the student.

The second modality – the School Centers – is developed through partnerships with the companies that transfer a considerable number of employees abroad. In this case, a School Center is settled, with the infrastructure of a school. It has a Pedagogical Coordinator, in charge of its whole operation and the partnership relation with the company. Brazilian teachers selected by study area are also available to guide the students' modular schoolwork in the Center, supervised by Rio de Janeiro Tutorials.

School activities proposed in the Centers follow the pedagogical chronogram developed in the School Units of Colégio Anglo-Americano, also including special projects

designed to develop citizenship awareness involving local community issues. So, as it happens in the individual modality, assessment tests are sent to the CIER in Rio de Janeiro and corrected by the Tutorial staff teachers, who write their replies as described above.

Some of the partner companies are: Braspetro, Petrobrás, Construtora Norberto Odebrecht (CNO), Construtora Brasileira de Projetos e Obras (CBPO).

14.6 Operational Model

A long way had to be followed before the current action model could be created. The first step was to appraise the potential clientele (companies sending abroad employees with children at school age). The defined of general objective was to offer a regular course in Basic Education at distance, and the choice of disciplines (contents) was formalized, with the respective description of contents and hour load, as well as the definition of norms, periods and procedures.

The instructional resource defined in the initial project was the module, which would be created by a specific team especially qualified for that job.

PERIOD	LOCATION	PARTNER COMPANY	JOB
1978 to 1979 (before CIER's creation)	Iraq (Basra)	Braspetro	Exploration of Majnoo oil fields
1982 to 1987	Peru (Arequipa)	Construtora Norberto Odebrecht	Irrigation project
1985 to 1986	English Guiana (Georgetown)	Geotécnica	Soil irrigation for rice growth
1985 to 1987	Brazil Mato Grosso do Sul (Rondonópolis)	Companhia Brasileira de Pneumáticos MICHELIN	Caoutchouc extraction farm (raw material)
1985 to 1987	Ecuador Guayaquil	Construtora Norberto Odebrecht	Hydroelectric power plant construction
1986 to 1993	Brazil Pará (São Félix do Xingu)	Minerações COMIPA and São Francisco de Assis	Cassiterita extraction (Mocambo Project)
1988 to 1994	Peru (Trujillo)	Construtora Norberto Odebrecht	Soil irrigation with Andes' glacier melting waters (Chavimochic Project)
1990 to 1995	Argentina Patagonia (Cipoletti)	Companhia Brasileira de Projetos e Obras (CBPO)	Hydroelectric power plant construction (Pichi-Picun-Leufú Project)
1992 to 1993	Singapore	Petrobras	Construction of oil platforms
1995 to 1997	Japan	Servitu Assessoria	Service to the children of Brazilians ("dekasseguis") who live in Japan
1997 to 1998	China (Quinhuangdao)	Petrobras/Hyundai	Construction of oil platforms
1995 to 2001	Angola (Luanda)	Construtora Norberto Odebrecht	Hydroelectric power plant construction

Considering the necessary regulations for the course authorization, the curricula structure should be organized according to the Colégio Anglo-Americano's curricula structure, which currently complies with Article 26 and Sections of Brazilian National Law of Education (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases # 9394/96), regarding the peculiarities of this teaching modality.

The courses taught through the distance system are characterized by the hour load flexibility. However, as CIER teaches regular courses, the self-instructional material for each grade was structured to be developed along the school year, based on the same hour load for disciplines adopted at Colégio Anglo-Americano.

It was initially established that every school grade would correspond to sixteen modules per discipline, four every two months. This organization remains the same until now.

In CIER's early days, communication took place through the only means available at the time: regular mail and telephone. Later, as new technologies were created, a new project had to be developed in order to incorporate the advances.

The media mix to be used for the course was then defined: use of interconnected media, according to the new trend in Distance Education, responding to the diversity of learning styles and rhythms.

So, according to the model above, CIER should offer students: printed notebooks, on-line classes, (synchronous and asynchronous) interactive and support tools on the course Internet site. A study was carried out then, to define a support and management platform for the course that would be both adequate and affordable.

The selected platform, Quantum System, was developed in Brazil for the educational market. Quantum is a system created to meet the needs of administration and application of contents/courses at distance based on the Web (Internet or Intranet web). It promotes an interactive relation between student/teacher, developing the cooperative learning in the construction of knowledge.

Besides the selection of this platform, all the modules were re-made at the light of multidisciplinary work founded on pedagogical theories and new communication and information technologies, so as to reframe the teaching context and to comply with the new LDB requisites, focused on the methodology adopted by Colégio Anglo-Americano, whose main objective is the full development of the student.



Figure 14.1 Course homepage – <http://www.angloamericano.edu.br/CIER>

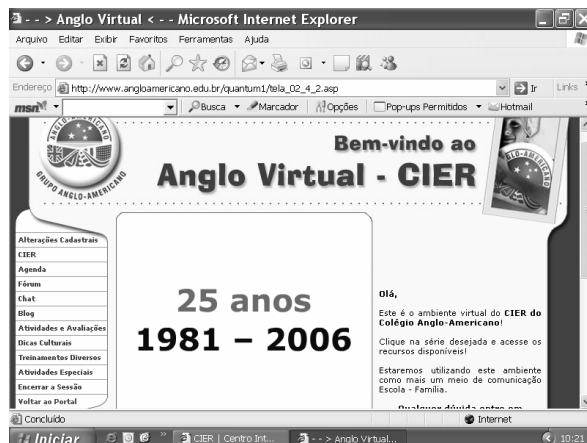


Figure 14.2 Access to the virtual classroom – <http://www.angloamericano.edu.br/CIER>

The learning environment available as support to the course – provided via Quantum System – integrates different tools that operate as the bases for the accommodation of different learning styles and preferences. The access to this environment can be made at any time through a password provided after registration.

Figures 14.1 and 14.2 show the home pages in the virtual learning environment.

The material supplied through the Internet, as well as the applied tools and flexibilities are defined after considering the focused grades. The student has a database of questions for tests, communication tools (e-mail, agenda, library, bibliography, bulletin board and question-answering sections), collaboration sections (cultural sections, best papers, downloads, FAQ) and interactive sections (chat, forum). On-line classes are still under development, but the students can have support for the content from the printed modules on the links supplied in the course map.

Figures 14.3 to 14.5 show the access pages and the communication, collaboration and interactive tools applied in the course.

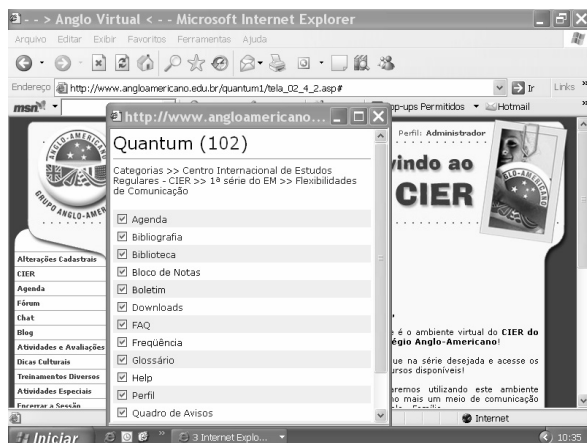


Figure 14.3 Communication tools applied in the course

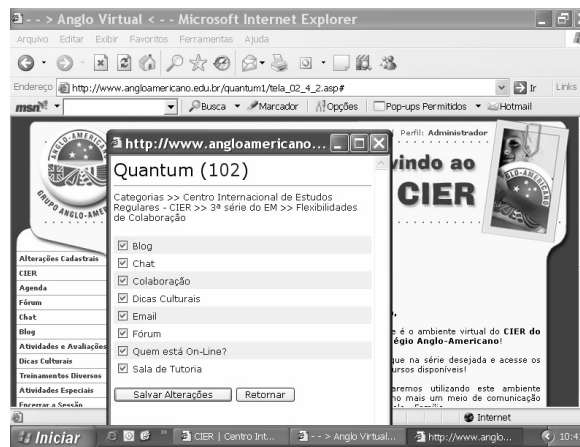


Figure 14.4 Collaboration tools applied in the course

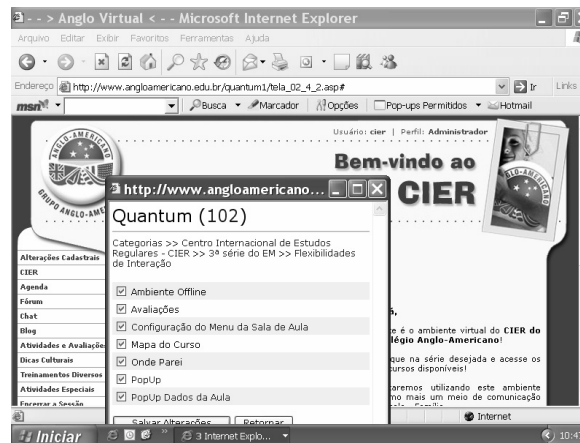


Figure 14.5 Interactive tools applied in the course

After the necessary first adjustments, the chronogram of the planned work included the accomplishment of a discipline module every two weeks, period when the students are expected to dedicate to the studies, as planned in the curricular structure. The teacher is supposed to correct the tests during the weekly hour load established in function of the number of students enrolled, to give the student feedback and to be available to reply to the student in the question-answering section, as well as to participate in chats, which are extremely important for the students who cannot benefit from the physical presence of this professional.

As soon as the course starts, the Coordination and Tutorial must keep daily, constant follow-up on the site, update information, conduct administrative routine procedures, and accompany the replies to students' and teachers' requests. In addition to this follow-up, the Coordination must be ready to offer advice and make decisions, because there are not only everyday routine tasks, such as updating the board, including reminders – as for instance, the appointment of a chat date for a discipline, information about the theme pro-

posed for debate – but also the accomplishment of unplanned tasks, such as information about an extra text that the teacher wants to distribute or a specific difficulty of communication, or even a student's personal problem that might be damaging his or her learning process.

CIER has been going through constant improvements to adequate to students' needs and to the requirements of Brazilian Educational Authorities in charge of its regulation. A survey on this issue was carried out among students and responsible at two different moments: occasion when they leave, when they evaluate the course in a general way, and a semester after the students return to the educational traditional face to face system, when they evaluate their integration regarding cognitive, social and emotional aspects, among others. The results in both situations have been positive.

In addition to the objective data collected through these surveys, CIER also has many reports made by students and their responsible, which attest the efficiency of the methodology of the course offered. The students in the intermediate grades are adequately reintegrated to the traditional system and they demonstrate that they have acquired skills such as self-discipline, responsibility, commitment, and organization. In spite of the fact that many of the students have traveled through several cities and countries, and have gone to different schools, those in final grades not only feature the same skills, but also demonstrate full command of academic knowledge by passing exams to enter Brazilian and/or foreign universities.

Growing transfer of Brazilians overseas (Brazilian companies foreign countries, "*de-kassegui*" movement) and the movement of small entrepreneurs investing in tourism areas in Brazil where quality educational infrastructure is not available are remarkable. Examples of tourism travelers are owners of inns and traders in Jericoacoara in Ceará and Caráiva no Sul, Bahia, as well as naturalists in Taquara, Rio Grande do Sul. Other Brazilians located in remote areas of the country are military officers working in Brazil's frontiers as in Tefé, in the Amazon region, and missionary and professionals doing their jobs in Indian villages. Each one of these Brazilian groups needs an educational alternative of quality to attend the students that travel along with their parents.

The model used by CIER can be expanded to provide education to this public and several other communities away from large city centers, which have to cope with the absence of teachers and schools of quality, as well as to offer Youth and Adults Education services to the great number of students who are already engaged in the labor market.

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Site: <http://www.angloamericano.edu.br/CIER>