THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

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TEMA

2. Promovendo Qualidade Educacional em aspectos específicos da Educação à Distância, Flexível e Baseada em TIC

CATEGORIA

Educação pós-secundária ou universitária

In Education in the distance, the tutor's figure is essential, an obligator requirement for good functioning of the courses. In this function, he assumes the role to make linking of the worked content, giving to the student conditions to absorb the information as a whole, being a mediator between it and the knowledge. Besides, he is a link between the institution and the student. When he is assisting the professor, it brings to the planning of the activities the contact gotten with the students at synchronous and asynchronous moments. These new perspectives produce a new profile for the tutor, where the knowledge of computer science, the domain of content and the work in team if overlap to the simple aid the professor. The work developed for this tutor needs the technological aid, of a support for the access and contact with the student. This contact is only on computer, but with intensity, therefore the tutor is co-responsible in the academic activities. The education of many for many, also an applicable characteristic the new Education in the distance, therefore makes the interaction of the tutor/pupils/professor a collaborator and cooperative work, where the differences are increased in the context of the production. The growth of the number of students, the incentive of the Federal Government and the technological advance stimulate this process. It is essential the more dynamic advance in the field of the research and the search for ways and methods.

Keys word: Tutor, Education in the distance, function

1 INTRODUCTION

The oldest report we have of Education in the distance (Ead) is on the Bible, telling the work of the Christianity´s diffusion made for apostle Pablo, when he wrote to the church , feeding the new Christian faith, and these letters were passed again to catholics. (NETTO, 2001).

In the modern version, Sweden registers the first experience in this education`s field in 1883. In 1840, it is noticed in England ; in 1856 in Germany and the in 1874 in The United States. In Brazil, around 1904 (ALVES, 2001).

The time took care of giving technological air to this transmission of knowledge, having the letter as first way to spread knowledge to everyone and succeeded for radio and television and finally for InterNet.

The use of new Technologies of the Information and Comunicação (TIC) in the educational context created a division in the history of the Ead. This division has as main factor to the magnifying of the availability of modern technologies as way of communication between the knowledge and the student.

We can establish parameters when verifying that before the InterNet, the communication was made one to one (letters) or one to many (radio and TV), and after the InterNet can afford by anyone we have a new category: many to many (LITWIN, 2001; NETTO, 2001; BELONNI, 1999).

As unquestionable worth, the education in the distance comes consolidating itself and acquiring credibility whiile the institutions start to know its characteristics and peculiarities.

According to NUNES (1994), the education in the distance is a resource that allows to the attendance the great contingents of students in more effective way than other modalities and without risks to reduce the quality of the services offered in result of a great number of people.

ARETÍO (1994, apud NUNES, 1994; BITTENCOURT, 1999) cites some factors that had determined the development of the Ead, for example, the constant necessity of adaptation in its varied administrative and educational sectors, the intense demand for education and the raised number of people that is far from the reach the formal education.

The experiences of the last years indicate that, to effectively answer a great group of students, there is necessity of an adequate infrastructure of support, as well as a team of tutorial teachers to guarantee the quality of this process (REIS, 2004; SELEME, 2004).

2 THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR IN EAD

> "The guardianship as method was born in century XV in the university, where it was used as orientation of religious character to the students, with the objective to infuser the faith and the moral behavior. Later, in century XX, the tutor assumed the role of a person who orientates and companion of the academic works, and it is the same role incorporated the current programs of long-distance education " (Sá apud Machado, 2003).

The definitions found in the dictionaries for the Tutorial word are unanimous when indicate "person that exerts the guardianship of another person, as a defender, protector". They also define tutor as "pole or prop, put in the ground, to support new, flexible a tree". Both definitions give idea of this function that works in the Education area, helping who wants to get the knowledge. Analyzing these meanings, tutor is someone who protects, spreads out, supports and confers protection (Struchiner, 1998).

The current trend of characterization of the environment teachers of Ead is reproductive of the traditional teacher or as a tutorial, whose function is just assist it in the learning, without no specific identity. The teacher has acted in the environment of EaD in the same way he was acting in a conventional classroom, forgetting the peculiarities of these environments.

But, we can see a solution when we have teachers searching qualification to work in the Ead, reviewing their education practical concepts. The blackboard is a computer screen in Ead, and there is not personal and physical contact in the classroom. The term "to give lesson" does not fit in the Ead, therefore the knowledge is opened, giving to the students conditions to create the facilities and benefits in their way. When somebory assumes the tutor´s condition of Ead he starts to be a co-author of the knowledge, not being more "owner" of all it. He does not teach a lesson, but he guides and he reorients how many times will be necessary, assisting in the doubts, difficulties and activities of the students , giving opportunities, the tutor and the students together with the other students and tutors an opened community of knowledge and in constant movement.

Today, the relevance of the tutor with the concept of the Ead is different of the teacher of presence rooms, therefore long-distance he has to be alive and to be showing life, in contrast of the traditional teachers rooms where the student can contact the teacher any time. The tutor abilities include, since the beginning of the works, full domain of the educational politics of the institution, discipline , contents, courses that are of their responsibility, therefore these information will have passed at any time to the students.

In general way, the necessary knowledge to the tutor are not different a good teacher. He needs to understand the structure of the subject that teaches, the principles of its

conceptual organization and the principles of the new producing ideas of knowledge in the area. Their theoretical formation, on the pedagogical-didactic scope, will have to be brought up to date with the formation in the practical one of the tutorial spaces.

It is necessary to the ideal tutor to have an excellent academic and personal formation, because the formation gives to intellectual capacity knowledge about the subjects, mainly the didactic techniques and methodology , including the ability to plan, to follow and to evaluate and to motivate the students in their the daily activities. In the personal area is necessary domains educationally and geographically heterogeneous groups, beyond emotional maturity, empathy, mediation of questions between the students and the institution, leadership and cordiality (Sá apud Machado, 2003).

Litwin (2001) presents three dimensions of the intervention of the tutor in the distance education. The time is a factor to be considered by the tutor, therefore the instructions, revisions and information are able to the students, in propitious time to the course of the activities. But the student does not mark the time of reply or the doubt, having the tutor to be apt to clarify them in time, because the student cannot have this kind of problems . Thus also the chance that the tutor must have before the contact of the student, offering him more quality to each meeting between them. These factors lead to a risk, which the tutor must know every moment: the student to be led to an erroneous knowledge, because of a little contact that has between the teacher and the tutor, and also for being unaware and not being accustomed the new way of knowledge construction. It leads the tutor to remake the work of instruction and reconstruction of this knowledge, starting with a contradiction.

The knowledge does not have beginning in the figure of the tutor, but he is responsible, inside defined structures, helping more complete transmission. The Ead used the tutor of that period when the letters were directed to the students, when it was his function to keep the communication with the student, being stimulated to search information and concludes it his objectives. They are necessary to guide, to direct and to supervise the process teach-learning.

The tutor has as attribution to comment the written works, to collaborate for one better agreement of the student, being clarified points of difficult understanding, guiding works, projects and periods of training, intermediating the relation of the pupil with the institution and the teachers (Emerenciano, 2004).

He should be the person who stimulate presently all the students, always ready to clarify, to review, to indicate and to teach the way that the stundent must tread in the search of the knowledge. This attitude demands a deepened knowledge of ways and methods for the conduction students. Two important and necessary qualities to him are: initiative and sensitivity: sensitivity in recognizing and detecting problems between the students and the knowledge and initiative to search solutions, in groups or with the institution he takes part. These qualities are not taught in the university and can be stimulated and be trained perfectly for the institutions.

3 CONCLUSION

Today we see that the tutor concept is extended, thought the evolution of the education and the Ead. Each institution trains its tutors to play the functions assigned for practical the daily. But the tutor who detaches needs to read, to search knowledge and a specialization in the educational technology, the long-distance education and the new methodologies. The experience of these tutors as students of distance courses also deepens the knowledge, when he starts to know the side of the student perceiving which will have to be his attitudes in front of the difficulties and the development of the students.

The institution has necessity of tutors proportionally of its growth and the search always falls on the graduated with experience as a teacher, but it does not obtain tutors with specific formation. The interest for the Ead grows to each day, the institution always searches between its formed the necessary man power. The experience as a teacher in the presential education is a strong point to a person who wants to become a tutor in the future, but it must have in mind that his steps must be ready for the change. The perception for this change must be in the institution at the moment of the training, therefore in the majority of the times this is the first contact that it has with the Ead.

The opening of this new world must be planned, be stimulated and be supported by institution, with help its tutors who already are made familiar to the institution methodology. A support material, with the lines of direction of the institution, its objectives and forms to reach them, complementary readings and tutorial printed matters are adequate ways and less traumatic for this new tutor.

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