INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT AS SUPPORT FOR THE DEFINITION OF A NEW E-LEARNING MODEL

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Abstract

The assessment of e-learning in undergraduate studies is carried out through institutional self-assessment since 2010. The process of self-assessment is used as a tool for management and qualification of teaching. The study aims to analyze student's satisfaction with e-learning and to lead the reorientation of distance education in undergraduate courses. The study is part of the project "Self-assessment in undergraduate and graduate studies: studies on the complexity of teaching and learning and on the formative role of evaluation", approved by the Research Ethics Committee [CEP / 402.527]. It is a retrospective study, with descriptive methods, quantitative and qualitative, using a database of self-assessment, collected from 2015 to 2018. The categories of analysis and their results were: (I) Teaching actions on the Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), with 9221 valid answers and 57.57% of satisfied students over the period. The factors of dissatisfaction are related to teaching strategies in the VLE, feedback and low interaction. (II) The articulation between the face-to-face and distance activities presented 60.14% of satisfaction in 9242 responses and the disconnection between the development of face-to-face content and distance activities generate dissatisfaction. The results of the evaluations in the period determined a significant change from 2019, with reorientation of the pedagogical projects, hiring of an interdisciplinary team of support to the teachers and remodeling of the virtual learning environment.

Keywords: Higher Education, institutional evaluation, e-learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

The National System for the Evaluation of Higher Education (Sistema Nacional de Avaliação de Educação Superior - SINAES), created in 2004, has among its goals the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) [1]. The legislation foresees processes of External Evaluation of HEIs, the Institution and all courses, which are carried out by the Ministry of Education. The law also provides for mandatory internal evaluation processes that must be conducted by the Institution’s Committee of Evaluation (Comissão Própria de Avaliação - CPA).

In the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul - PUCRS), self-assessment processes have been happening since the 1970s. In 2006, in addition to the SINAES proposal, the Undergraduate Discipline Assessment (Avaliação de Disciplinas da Graduação - ADG) was implemented. In 2010, specific questions were included regarding the subjects offered in the distance education modality, progressively implemented since 2008 at the University.

The evaluation processes contribute to the pedagogical management of the subjects and courses - they are therefore an important management tool. The results are made available to the managers of the Undergraduate Deans, as well as to the course coordinators and to the teachers, at the end of the process, which is held every six months. The Institutional Evaluation project foresees that the teacher analyzes the results to plan the discipline in the following semester and, in this way, to qualify their pedagogical practices.

An important aspect to note is that national legislation provides courses in the distance modality or, as is the case of PUCRS until 2019, the offer of 20% of distance education of the total hours of the face-to-face courses. Thus, the study presented here refers to this percentage of supply.

Based on the ADG, the present study aimed to analyze the satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors related to the subjects offered in the online modality and to subsidize the reorientation of distance education in the undergraduate courses.
2 METHODOLOGY

The study is retrospective, with descriptive methods of quantitative and qualitative approach, with documentary research and in databases related to self-evaluation, from 2015 to 2018.

The ADG instrument contemplates the evaluation of three dimensions: the discipline, the teaching action and the self-assessment of the student and has been validated in its content [2]. Two specific closed questions constitute an additional dimension in the instrument for the assessment of subjects in the e-learning modality. There is place for comments in the instrument, which can be related to any variable in the instrument.

The qualitative data of the study come from the spontaneous comments, online offer, made by the students in the ADG in the year 2017. The comments were analyzed through content analysis, using the software NVivo. The categories of analysis were: (I) The teaching actions in the virtual learning environment; (II) The articulation between face-to-face and distance activities.

The quantitative analysis refers to the period from 2015 to 2018 and used as a data source satisfaction levels, in 6744 responses in category (I) and 6764 in category (II), of the total of 6955 respondents in disciplinary evaluation instruments E-LEARNING in the period. We used only the valid answers as reference for the analysis, not the total of participants in the evaluation, because the students have the option to indicate “unable to answer” in a certain question, even if they participated in the evaluation.

It is emphasized that satisfaction is defined by a Likert scale, from 1 to 5, in which 1 means very dissatisfied and 5, very satisfied.

The research is part of the project "Self-assessment in undergraduate and graduate studies: studies on the complexity of teaching and learning and on the formative role of evaluation", approved by the opinion of the Research Ethics Committee (Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa - CEP / 402.527).

3 RESULTS

Graphic 1 shows the total number of valid answers in categories (I) Teaching actions in the virtual learning environment and (II) The articulation between face and distance activities, in relation to the total number of participants in the evaluation of the mentioned subjects. It is observed that over the years there was a decrease in participation and, therefore, in the answers to the questions. This is due to the progressive decrease in the supply of online courses over the years, after the progressive implementation through institutional policies as of 2008. In 2018 the percentage of blended subjects was only 4.03% in the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) Actions VLE</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(II) Articulation: presence X distance activities</td>
<td>2501</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total de participantes</td>
<td>2541</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>1132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic 1. Participants and valid answers.

The decrease in the offer of online courses was, by itself, an indicator of the need to revise the model of online education at the University. In addition, the levels of satisfaction with the specific aspects of the offer modality, which results are presented below, by category, would be the determinants of the revision of the online education model in the Undergraduate Studies at PUCRS.
3.1 Teaching actions in the virtual learning environment

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is an indispensable tool in online education. The set of functionalities and tools that enable online teaching and learning should guarantee high interactivity, favoring synchronous and asynchronous communication [3]. However, much more than the diversity and potential of available communication tools, it is essential that its use and the actions developed in it reflect what is predicted in the Institutional Pedagogical Project (Projeto Pedagógico Institucional - PPI). The pedagogical practices that base the teaching action on face-to-face teaching should also be expressed in the VLE. The results show that such assumptions are achieved only in part, in the students' perception.

The evaluation of teaching actions in VLE was evaluated by 6744 respondents. 211 students (3.03%) expressed that they are not able to answer.

Among the valid answers, the average percentage of satisfied in this variable was 64.62% during the period (graphic 2). There is a significant difference in relation to the average general satisfaction in blended subjects. The most visible difference is, however, in the percentage of very dissatisfied students, who is superior with regard to actions in the VLE.

The understanding of the factors of dissatisfaction regarding the teaching actions in AVA is related to teaching strategies in the virtual environment, unfrequently feedback and low interaction.

The students express that the teaching strategies used by teachers in VLE are not diversified. Basically, questionnaires, exercises and reading of endless texts are used, without activities that stimulate the reading of the indicated materials and favor the learning. Textual production is requested, but there is no process that allows the construction of knowledge from the student's autonomous activities. Students lack interpretations of texts or media, such as videos.

They understand the importance of developing student autonomy through distance education, but they resent the lack of organization patterns and sequences or paths that lead students to learn. They express that the intention meets the needs of flexibility in the use of time and student involvement in the construction of knowledge, but the fragility ends up generating gaps, even when the student is engaged and committed to their learning.

The low interaction happens due to the limited strategies used by teachers. They understand that for the success of the e-learning the presence of the teacher, although asynchronous, is fundamental.

In addition to deficit strategies, there is also lack of feedback. The feeling that there is no reading of what is produced, the absence of responses to the messages posted in forums and chats are aspects that generate high dissatisfaction. Also, the lack of clarity regarding the evaluation criteria and the disregard of the stipulated schedule are strongly mentioned.
3.2 The articulation between face-to-face and distance activities

Since we are discoursing about face-to-face courses, the Brazilian legislation [4] obliges the performance of evaluative activities in person. Thus, necessarily there are distance activities, and others are developed in person at the University. It is common to have disciplines that perform only half of their activities through VLE. Thus, assessing the articulation between such activities is essential.

The average student satisfaction was 67.12% in the period, in 6764 valid answers. Also in this aspect, it is noticed that the dissatisfaction is superior in the evaluation of the e-learning disciplines as a whole (graphic 3).

The disconnection between the development of face-to-face content and distance activities are mentioned by the students and generate dissatisfaction. They perceive that the activities in VLE are proposed without any continuity to what is proposed in the face-to-face activity.

Often, the topics covered in VLE materials are not resumed in class or face-to-face activities and end up not being thorough.

An imbalance between the use of classroom time and the superficiality of the study provided by the VLE teaching actions make the online portion devalued and misunderstood by the students. It is common to observe that from this imbalance, consider that certain disciplines should only be face-to-face: for better learning and better use of time. On the other hand, mistakenly, they end up considering that disciplines of lesser relevance (in their perception) can be offered in the e-learning modality, since there are no requirements, nor need for the presence of the teacher.

Many times, they write about the confusing schedule of activities at a distance and in-person classes. They understand that having e-learning activities seems simply to be used to fill the hours, without effective learning and, therefore, without connection with what they develop in person with the teachers.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The result of the evaluations in the period strongly stimulated the change of the model of online education in the University. The students’ perceptions regarding the pedagogical practices in AVA indicate the need for consistent, permanent and specialized support for teachers. The content production and organization of the VLE, based on teaching and learning through research, are the way to go. As a starting point, a multidisciplinary team was created that, in the interaction with the managers and professors of undergraduate, are developing the new model of online education for the next years.

The remodeling of the virtual learning environment, in line with pedagogical concepts and institutional identity, will ensure that this teaching space is effectively constituted as an extension of the classroom.
experience. The permanent evaluation of this model is essential, so that the evaluation instruments will also be redistricted and realigned.

REFERENCES


