



Article

Autonomy in the learning process at a distance: the competence to be developed by the student

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ABSTRACT

This article refers to a qualitative research, a case study, on distance education in the development of professional skills in an Educational Institution that offers courses at distance in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The objective of this study is to analyze aspects of the student's autonomy development during the learning process through distance education. Considering the importance of everyday practice analysis and reflections, the methodological choice was based on semi-structured interview, which has shown results that prove the autonomy. Thus, the learning construction becomes innovative for the student through commitment with responsibility, initiative, time management, search for solutions and engagement in activities, as well as collaboration and interaction with colleagues and course tutors. This is a relevant study on incipient context of use of this modality with many positive aspects in education, as a form of democratization and human development in the educational field and qualification for work by increasing the skills, in the development of autonomy and interaction during the process of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Distance Education. Autonomy. Student.

RESUMEN

Este artículo se refiere a la de tipo cualitativo de investigación de estudios de caso sobre la Educación a Distancia en el desarrollo de habilidades profesionales en una institución educativa que ofrece este tipo de cursos (DE) en el estado de Rio Grande do Sul. El estudio de análisis objetivo el desarrollo de estudiante revisor autonomía durante el proceso de aprendizaje a través de esta modalidad. Dada la importancia de los análisis y reflexiones de la práctica cotidiana de la educación a distancia, la opción metodológica fue debido a las entrevistas semi-estructuradas, cuyos resultados demuestran la autonomía. Así, la construcción de aprendizajes es innovador para el estudiante a través del compromiso con la responsabilidad, la iniciativa, la gestión del tiempo, la búsqueda de soluciones y compromiso con las actividades, así como la colaboración y la interacción con sus compañeros y profesores, tutores del curso. Se trata de estudio relevante en el contexto de incipiente uso de esta modalidad con muchos aspectos positivos en la educación como un medio para la democratización y el desarrollo humano en los niveles de educación y habilidades para trabajar por el aumento de las habilidades, el desarrollo de la autonomía y interacción durante el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

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Palabras clave: Educación a Distancia. Autonomía. Estudiante.

RESUMO

O presente artigo refere-se à pesquisa qualitativa – tipo estudo de caso – acerca de Educação a Distância no desenvolvimento das competências profissionais em uma Instituição Educacional que oferece essa modalidade de cursos (EaD) no Estado do Rio Grande do Sul. O estudo objetiva análise do desenvolvimento da autonomia do aluno colaborador durante o processo de aprendizagem por meio dessa modalidade. Tendo em vista a importância das análises e as reflexões da prática cotidiana da EaD, a opção metodológica deu-se pela entrevista semiestruturada, cujos resultados comprovam a autonomia. Assim, a construção de aprendizagem torna-se inovadora para o aluno por meio de compromisso com responsabilidade, iniciativa, administração do tempo, busca de soluções e empenho nas atividades, além de colaboração e interação com colegas e professores-tutores de curso. Trata-se de estudo relevante em contexto incipiente de utilização dessa modalidade com inúmeros aspectos positivos na educação, como forma de democratização e desenvolvimento do ser humano nos âmbitos educacionais e de qualificação para o trabalho através do incremento das competências, do desenvolvimento de autonomia e de interação durante o processo de ensino-aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Educação a Distância. Autonomia. Aluno.

INTRODUCTION

Distance Learning (D-Learning) is the modality formally inserted in the educational context, presenting quickly expansion on the worldwide set. That is understood when analysing new political and social demands meeting the needs and continuing professional development requirements in labour market. On Technological framework, innovations

lead new learning situations. On pedagogical context, D-Learning, as flexible type corresponds to the paradigm of self-training, as a viable knowledge and learning in the current educational context. It faces the current needs, provides building collaboratively knowledge and in networks, regardless of time and space as a way to help in solving some problems of Brazilian education.

The decree 5.622 from 19.12.2005 on article 80, defines D-Learning as an educational modality in which the didactic and pedagogical mediation in teaching and learning processes occur with the use of media and information and communication among students and teachers developing educational activities in different places or times (BRASIL, 2005).

The modality has instruments capable of contributing to the Brazilian education and it is believed that without intensive use of technology, the educational institutions will have difficulties reaching its full range of training and professional qualification on education. As Behar (2009, p. 27), the concept of D-Learning refers to “[...] an organized form of learning that is characterized primarily by physical separation between teacher and student and the existence of some kind of technology to establish interaction between them.” in other words, teacher and student do not need share the same space and / or at the same time so teaching-learning processes are realised in D-Learning.

Due to the flexibility of time and space, in this modality, students need to engage in a disciplined setting fixed hours of study at home and / or work being made available to them a system of material resources, technological and pedagogical, to provide support in the studies. As in this modality occurs physical distance between teacher and student, it is necessary self-motivation and discipline, as well as incentive and investment from teachers and tutors.

Preti (2005) refers to different dimensions of autonomy in distance education, reflecting the role of students, educators and the educational institution. According to the author, it is up to the student, in this new scenario, take on the responsibility of their own training, and autonomy and discipline to the study of all commitments of the educational process.

The challenge is in constant reflection and research on every person involved in the teaching-learning process to occur autonomously and disciplined by the student and at the same time, with communicative character, conversational and collaborative for learning.

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

1.1. The concept of autonomy in the theories of distance education

The development of D-Learning, from the advent of correspondence degree, refers to the description and analysis of the concept of this autonomy to the main theories. The relationship between student and teacher-tutor is marked by physical separation and transactional, which requires self-control and self-direction of the students, as well as relative independence and autonomy of actions before the proposed activities. From this separation, the issue arises and its consequent potential and limitations in distance education related to autonomy. Dewey (1916, p. 353) defined the autonomous concept of activity, stating that children and adults need to be left alone, ie, “[...] through the own observations of students in their reflections, formulation and suggestions, they will be able to expand what is already known.”

Wedemeyer (1975) conceptually described the concept of *learning independent* and Knowles (1988) proposed a concept that has had much impact on educational literature, *self-directed learning*, in which:

[...] students make the diagnosis of own needs on learning process, according to their own goals, identifying the variety of educational resources and planning strategies to use these features, evaluating their own learning and having validated evaluation (KNOWLES, 1988, p. 5).

The first theorists to incorporate the concept of autonomy in a D-Learning theory were Moore and Kearsle (2007), who associated the terms as independence and autonomy.

The transactional distance to Moore and Kearsle (2007) represents opportunity in the process of teaching and learning related to autonomy, that is, the greater transactional distance between the function of the agents variables dialog and structure, the greater the opportunity for the student to carry out their studies in an independent way. Thus, autonomy is the ideal to be achieved by the students, as a indicative of maturity for learning. According to Moore (apud BERNATH; VIDAL, 2007, p. 4): “[...] using the construct, we can design courses for different degrees of autonomy, by varying the dialogue and the structure and the point of view of research, we can explore and test many interactions within and between these variables. “

Peters (2003) associates the terms independence and autonomy processes Industrial mass production. The author incorporates gradually, in his theory, benefits of new technologies (5) of information for independent learning processes, noting that:

Higher activity and interactivity levels are achieved with relative facility, and there are many other promising opportunities for development of autonomous learning and behavior self regulated. The self-direction, which always has to be considered a necessary precondition for student learning at a distance, can be completed with computer assistance in a qualitatively level. For important pedagogical reasons, it would be irresponsible not to

do use these new opportunities for pedagogical optimization. (PETERS, 2003, p. 90).

Therefore, Peters (2003) stresses that educational processes resulting from post-industrial context may encourage self learning. So, new teaching and learning processes will enable the students learning independently, but through the mediation of technologies to enhance the characteristics required for the process of collaborative learning.

For Belloni (1999) D-Learning is essentially characterized by flexibility, openness of systems and greater learner autonomy, more consistent with contemporary social and economic transformations, as the foundation of this model focuses on the learning process on student and not in teaching nor the technologies used. The author states that distance education is another type of education and distance learning relates more to access modes, methodologies and pedagogical strategies, also argues that mode has all the features needed to encourage active stance continuing education and independent learning.

Therefore, D-Learning contributes to education because it brings facilities to the student establish his/her search rhythm for new information and knowledge, unseating the old paradigm that only the school -in its function could formally teach. Ferreira e Silva (2009) corroborates, that D-Learning references such as borderless education and accessible to all people as a way of learning new knowledge and skills:

The traditional face-to-face instruction goes to the model the distance through virtual simulations, continuing education programs on online universe, investing pages in virtual reality which create virtual schools based on e-learning plus a multitude of strategies that motivate students to collaborative learning process(FERREIRA; SILVA, 2009, p. 5).

The Distance Education, supported by communication technologies and teaching methods, brings changes in the traditional functions of teaching and learning, the “classroom” is not the only possible space to the learning process. There is the possibility of changing the classroom - physical space - to virtual classroom, in cyberspace. In that learning environment, it establishes new relationships among teachers- tutors and students. Although in both modalities the goal is the same: build new knowledge and education for citizenship, both behave unlike in their proper places. Paradoxically, Distance Education requires dialogue and permanent interaction and proximity for communication (PRETTI, 2000).

Pretti refers to the new reality:

Close for a few minutes your eyes and imagine a school without classrooms, no walls, no desks, with students coming and going, talking, reading in different open spaces, now gathered in teams, sometimes developing individual activities, with varying times to individual sessions or in groups, with flexible schedule, personalised follow-up, under the guidance of a group of educators, etc. Perhaps you exclaim surprised: “This school does not exist. Who knows, a future is possible! “I’m not talking about future education. In fact, I’m talking about a real education and current, and possible. That is happening in our country, especially in the distance modality, thanks to advances of new theories of Physics, Biology, Psychology, Communication, Pedagogy, etc. and new communication technologies. (PRETI, 1996).

1.2. The meaning of autonomy in D-Learning and its development in students

It is defined autonomy as “ability to govern themselves” (HOUAISS, 2004, p. 78).

That is, an individual is considered independent when it has ability to administrate and manage its appointments and activities; when students establish interactive action with didactic materials and methodologies, stimulated by educational activities of teacher-tutors who act as cognitive instigators providing opportunities for collaborative learning.

In the virtual learning environment, students develop the ability to determine their pace, to access the content whenever and as many times as necessary in the pursuit of understanding of what arouses interest and desire to learn. To support the construction of this new exercise of autonomy in Distance Education, students draw on specific tools that provide ways to access information and establish interactions with those involved in the educational process, cites as Andrew and Costa (2004):

The era of knowledge requires more and more people to be able to build knowledge and skills with others and teach what they know, urging them to enrich their horizons and encouraging them to continuously develop their potential over life. Also, the best way to learn is to teach. (ANDRÉ; COSTA, 2004, p. 85).

In the context of the pedagogical relationship established, autonomy lies in capacity of the person take himself his own training. Job market increasingly requires learning skills so that the trader can not only deal with the many demands of information of virtual networks, but also has the ability to use support technology tools to professionally update. The requirements in the training of each professional area tend to change, and the student must be prepared for the changes; each one has preferred forms of learning that is continuously consolidated throughout the educational process. Thus, it is expected that it builds a autonomy procedurally and continuously through D-Learning.

Autonomy in learning is democratic, it requires discipline, planning, decision, organization, persistence, motivation, evaluation and responsibility. Learning is not a process that occurs “over distance” far from the relationship with each other without interaction and coexistence, and therefore “lonely”; much rather, it should be supportive and collaborative.

The term “*presentiality*” also means “be virtually together.” Physical space is giving way to cyberspace or the construction of “learning networks”, through which teachers and students learn together, interact and cooperate with each other, working and therefore providing opportunities cooperative and collaborative learning. According to Maturana (2001, p 103.): “Learning is not the capture of nowhere: it is the turn in a particular way of recurring interactions. “

Concerning about the meaning of the autonomic student in D-Learning, Arcúrio (2008), conceptualizes it as follows:

An independent learner in the universe of D-Learning should know how to use the technological resources that the modality offers, adapting the various individual needs according with flexible hours for the study, personalised service, innovation of teaching methods, improvement and new assessment of learning opportunities without staining his/her legal norms, as well as the great growth of an interpersonal relationship. (ARCÚRIO, 2008, p. 2).

The D-Learning modality regarding the period of concentration and individual interest for the study, which has potential links to development intellectual as described by Keough (1982). The learning autonomously refocus the passive view of the learner, in this case, needs to be active in learning and study.

Cerdeira (apud PRETI, 2005), to deal with the theme, as well as regards:

When a student receives information which leads him/her to think that his/her success is justified by the conjunction of his/her abilities with own effort, it develops its sense of self-efficacy, improves quality of execution and, even according to social cognitive theory, elevates his/her state of motivation.(CERDEIRA apud PRETTI, 2005, p. 10).

The learner autonomy is respected in this modality because it recognizes changes in today's society that provides upgrade subsidies and educational consistent practices to the new scenario of education and work. In that perspective, the educational institution has its paradigms increasingly pressured towards revitalizing the educational field. As Levy (1999, p. 157), "[...] we must build new knowledge space models. "

To Belloni (2001), D-Learning provides autonomous learning, which is the student-centered learning, whose experiences serve as a resource for independent student be considered responsible manager for the learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to create an educational planning differentiated for the success in the use of the technological tools during the education process. In D-Learning, passive student gives way to active subject, engaged in the construction process and sharing knowledge.

Taking D-Learning teacher-tutor as a mediator, the student, in turn, is responsible for using such support offered significantly. Palloff and Pratt (2004) list three online student responsibilities, which consider essential: knowledge building, collaboration and management of the learning process. The teacher-tutor is responsible for finding solutions to problems related to course content, considering problems and solutions from different perspectives and even under perspectives of

other colleagues involved in the process. The student must question their own assumptions and those submitted by tutor and colleagues. Thus, engaged in the learning process, learning to learn and develop critical and reflective thinking to the construction of knowledge (PALLOFF; PRATT, 2004)

The second responsibility - collaboration - according Palloff and Pratt (2004), the student must work with other colleagues in order to build knowledge and critically evaluate content being studied. It should be encouraged to seek and share extra material to solve issues presented and provide "feedback" beyond the simple message, because the student must be able to perform consistent comments about the presented ideas (PALLOFF; PRATT, 2004). All these practices help in critical and reflective development necessary to engage in the construction of knowledge and learning. Furthermore, the student should be able to manage and administer their teaching-learning process by participating, interacting and engaging with other colleagues as well as being responsible for the formation of online learning community (PALLOFF; PRATT, 2004). He/she becomes responsible for moving the learning process forward with maturity and capacity for critical analysis autonomously.

Thus, the D-Learning modality seeks for resources to facilitate and promote learning through strategies that encourage participation, interaction, research, debate, dialogue and, especially, collaboration, cooperation and sharing thoughts, ideas and solutions for cooperative learning. If independent learning is focused on creating collaborative learning environments, which strategies can be used to provide such environments in Distance Education?

It is necessary to broadly address the role of the teacher-tutor who intended to be pedagogical mediator in building collaborative environments learning and autonomy. Moran, Masetto and Behrens (2000) mention that

the teacher-tutor has the task of putting into practise some strategies which leads the production of these environments, such as:

Being more focused on student learning, establish relations of empathy, promote shared responsibility and partnership, creating mutual respect for all participants, addressing the construction of knowledge as the articulation axis of the educational practice, practice creativity as an alert attitude to seek, as student, unexpected and new situations, consider subjectivity and individuality of the pieces of the educational process, care so your expression and communication are always able to help learning and encourage the learner, usually to dialogue, launch guiding questions, propose challenges, reflections and problem situations. (MORAN; MASETTO; BEHRENS, 2000, p. 168).

In D-Learning, the teacher-tutor should develop pedagogical mediation which could set students' thinking and help them to implement their projects and share problems, helping them and encouraging them to understand, analyse, test and correct their doubts and failures, in order to develop their knowledge, encourage learning and thinking. Lévy (1999) complements the argument: "[...] especially being an animator of collective intelligence to collaborate with cooperative learning."

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study description

The developed research is of qualitative nature and the research method used is the semi-structured interviews with questions previously elaborated. The individuals were employees who made qualification and training modules, and distance teacher-tutors and coordinator willing to participate in a voluntary way of research.

The qualitative research was analysed based on the statements and information from the participants. The choice for the qualitative approach was given to the fact it sets the researcher in direct contact with the investigated object, having in that its main feature, causing the researcher overcome its own main instrument (TRIVIÑOS, 1987).

For Godoy (1995; 2006), the diversity between qualitative tasks lists a number of essential characteristics able to identify a survey of this kind, which it comprises a set of different interpretative techniques to describe and decode components of a complex system of meanings. It aims to translate and express the sense of the phenomena of the social world; it is to bridge the gap between indicator and indicated between theory and data, between context and action.

2.2. Empirical field

The empirical field research was a private company, where administrative headquarters is located in Porto Alegre (POA). The selection took place from the knowledge research used and application of the practice of Education Distance upon employees bearing in mind have already worked as a teacher in that institution. The company chosen for the project - educational institution units in several states - focused on the educational units and at the administrative Porto Alegre sector. To conduct courses on the unit's performance in Distance Education, the institution relied on virtual learning environment allowing interaction between participants from different kinds of media: forum, chat, messages, among others. Although the company makes available courses for internal customers, courses in Distance Education are also offered to external customers, as the unit has specialised service in Corporate Solutions in Distance Education, which advises the structuring of projects, develop and customise content to this modality of education in companies and institutions.

2.3. Study participants

The number of study participants are 12 employees, and 9 of them have completed qualifications and courses in Distance Education in company and / or were in qualifying. Besides them, there is a teacher - tutor who teaches and accompanies them in Distance Education courses in business along a Program Coordinator.

2.4. Data collection instruments

Data collection was performed using analysis tools documents, manuals, hand-outs and reviews of the Distance Education courses software and the virtual environment through learning materials used for company. The collection also drew on data obtained in the application of semi-structured interviews, in order to analyse, deepen and answers and investigate motives, feelings, thoughts and reflections of respondents.

According to Bailey (1982), a semi-structured interview combines closed and open questions and allows the interviewee discuss the theme suggested without the interviewer fix it, a priori, certain conditions or responses. Gil (2002) complements the semi-structured interview is driven by a relationship issues of concern, whose script researcher explores over development.

3. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

3.1. The development of student's autonomy in Distance Education

Autonomy is recognized as a premise for distance education, as is expected of student greater engagement with the learning process, during which it takes most of the management of this process individually, prioritizing among the proposed educational goals, those that will be covered first by organizing the time and study schedules, setting schedules and the search for support

materials, as well as knowing better your own learning style, their difficulties and ways of overcoming. Belloni (1999) and Petters (2003) claims on the Distance Learning as potentiating active, autonomous and independent learning. On interviews conducted with students in distance education, highlights the autonomy as essential to the learning process, and its development occurs usually during the course.

When asked whether distance education requires development of learner autonomy, the responses of respondents reiterate that autonomy is developed in During the course, as the A9's testimony, stating that distance education:

[...] it develops autonomy a lot, because we have to research a great amount of information. I attended a computer course, which was D-Learning and there were some activities that I had to do and seek information. The issue of autonomy means to be patient, to perform any activity, and this is very present in distance education. Autonomy, if the student did not attend the distance education course, he/she can not even build knowledge during the course, and then, gives up.

The testimonies corroborate Pink (2009) on the need for students manage their studies and have autonomy regarding technical issues, task and time. A7 reiterates the assertion stating that:

"[...] Yes, because we all have to go back and seek information, pay attention to timing, not miss deadlines, then all this has made me think I had developed autonomy and even a little more, notice the attitude of the organization, to meet the deadlines and seek other information, and even to establish relationship between content, and exchange ideas with other professionals."

An independent learner in D-Learning should be able to use technological resources in a way that the modality offers, adapting various individual needs according to the schedule flexibility for the study, personalized service, innovation of teaching methods, improvement and new opportunities for learning evaluation without staining legal norms, as well as the strong growth of interpersonal relationship (ARCÚRIO, 2008).

The analysis of the narrative reveals the presence of autonomy towards student engagement, time management and dedication to activities.

A9 quotes: “[...] it is important the dedication in the sense that no one will do it for you, you have to be devoted to that subject, content, because I know that if I do not read if you do not devote myself I will not get learn what the course is offering.”

Autonomy is perceived towards the construction of knowledge itself from the proposed activities. A3 thus reiterates:

[...] The matter of researching, managing to get a content, receiving that content and be able to study and interact with your peers, building a knowledge. You have an independent look on that knowledge you built yourself.

It agrees with Almeida (2003), when states that the digital learning environment there is sophistication that requires certain student's degree of autonomy and break the dependency ratio, ie characteristic of a teaching approach that in some traditional situations, has proved inadequate and inefficient. It is evident, therefore, the importance of development of autonomy by students during the courses.

A9 express affirmative through personal experience: “[...] as I attended a B.Tech.

course in D-Learning, had to learn to develop that autonomy and the other courses I was following the same line; of course always learn a lot, but the first is always the biggest challenge. “Autonomy is realised for the student through time management, deadlines and dedication to activities. A7 illustrates the affirmative:

“[...] In D-Learning, if you get lost, do not do the activities and not follow the schedule and being in this environment that the teacher is also talking to you, and not access, you lose bonds. You must be accessing everything in quality, delivering the tasks.”

Autonomy in D-Learning contributes in a democratic way for education and at the same time, requires the student to develop discipline, organization, persistence, motivation, decision and responsibility. Analyses and statements reiterate the theoretical basis of Pallof and Pratt (2004) when mention that the student is responsible for his teaching-learning process in the construction of knowledge, working collaboratively with members of the educational process. A4 expressed the importance of discipline and study habits in D-Learning:

[...] The autonomy of study requires discipline and responsibility, in other words, requires more discipline, because the internet has many points that can divert attention, it has many fast resources, material, videos. If you are studying over the computer, on Internet you take that risk. so I think that's discipline in D-Learning, of everyday go to school and study. Discipline is a habit, is something that grows with you to develop about. You will realise you need it.”

Each individual has its preferred method of learning and gets you in the process of learning and study. For the student to build

their autonomy in accordance with time, Distance Learning offers and makes viable several languages of learning for a specific question. Moore and Kearsle (2007) see it as an ideal to be achieved by encouraging learning and maturity of the student:

A2 expresses the development of autonomy from the Distance Learning courses:

“[...] the autonomy I have today is more interact with peers, to participate more. I participate much more than I participated once. I was afraid, stood something, it took too long to post “.

Autonomy is perceived as competence to be developed during the course on D-Learning which is confirmed by A8 when states: *“[...] I consider autonomy a competency indicating that I make my schedule my hours of study, I know where to search, then it is a commitment and commitment comes with expertise, then I see it as a responsibility.”*

Zarifian (2001) identifies three areas of competence: autonomy, accountability and communication. This rating strengthens skills training directly related to the process of teaching and learning in distance education and the theoretical assumptions already outlined above. According A8, a personal experience of its distance education courses proves:

“[...] My virtual communication has improved a lot, I have been more objective in e-mail responses, some activities related to the course, searching things on the internet has become much easier, the interaction itself to use the sources and authors, the search for articles already have a huge facility and seek databases.”

A5 illustrates development of autonomy in distance education, including relating it to the practice of his work:

“[...] Yes, I developed autonomy, because I was doing wrong or I thought I was right about a certain situation, and during the course I learned that it's no, it is otherwise. The correct way to do the activity is that way. So I managed to put into practise what I learned, and this allows some autonomy.”

A3 also reinforces the affirmative when it recognizes the importance of autonomy in activities and interaction with teachers:

“[...] Yes, because you have to read more, you have to study loads more, because if you are with a teacher there and asks the question he will answer you. In Distance Learning you must have such interaction, many of the teachers that I had did not answer, and said, look at this stuff here, look at this site, search where you will find the answers.”

According to Moran, Masetto and Behrens (2000, p. 16), “We can only educate for autonomy, for freedom, with fundamentally participatory, interactive, liberation processes, to respect differences, to encourage and support the oriented ones.”

The D-Learning teacher-tutor rests “[...] promote communication in the learning community, encouraging the exchange of experiences and the circulation of knowledge between the agents of the process” (ARCURIO, 2008, p. 3).

In this interactive process, with freedom of time and space, developing the autonomy potential of learner, it lies in its exploitation to come across new ways to learn, to know and to make appropriate use of technology with features and forms of incentive for participation, interaction and collaborative learning of the students involved in the educational process.

Through the C1's testimony, highlights the importance and the emphasis of autonomy in learning and studies in D-Learning, as

"[...] We talk a lot on the issue of autonomy, who is working or studying in the distance in order to develop that autonomy. Indeed, much depends on the student and more of the student. Because what happens, in the classroom sometimes, you work all day long and comes at the end of working hours, you take your materials and go to class without having been prepared, without having done even a reading before it."

Moore (1993) believes that autonomy comes with the individual maturation process, stressing that the Distance Learning programs, due to its structure, require students with autonomous behaviors in order to achieve successfully complete the learning programs. The conclusion, therefore, that the autonomous learner profile must be developed in distance education courses, which is proved in testimony as affirmative C1:

"[...] It is very important that he/she is an independent student, but it is also possible that he/she developed this autonomy over their studies. Because some people do not have experience with distance education and during the process they will have the opportunity to check and develop this competence."

It reinforces the statement the practical example of professional experience in the issue of autonomy, which allows the development and organization of attitude:

"[...] I took a course in distance learning and it was very positive that in the end the students came to say " look teacher, the organization I do need to study in the distance helped me organize myself for the rest of my life. Because I have to organise my time to study, time to

develop the activities. And that organization to be a virtual student, an organization which provides opportunities for the student's life is really strong, as well as autonomy."

Undeniably, the modality of D-Learning promotes to the student indicates that, with its active and resolution posture, it takes the responsibility and maturity to the learning process.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The context of contemporary society has demanded new attitude to training and improvement, so with that, people can stay participating actively in society.

According to Belloni (2001), it is part of the evolution the continuous changing; thus, the current social context needs a new model of citizen; therefore, the obligation of education helps to enable and train the new model upcoming that will have multiple skills, be cooperative and has ability to adapt to different situations that will face in their professional and social daily life.

We are required to provide greater flexibility, proactivity, fast response, immediate and correct, and these factors are related directly to the usability, access and adaptation on technologies that allow access to the virtual world and its possible updates. Thus, more and more we should be independent on learning, training higher education and professional actions.

The new society requires job skills in collaborative staff, because the virtual interactions are increasingly constant. Autonomy, creativity and flexibility are the key elements for that the individual can optimize access to numerous virtual possibilities of responsibly, ethically, consistent and highly productive.

The modalities of teaching and learning democratise themselves through Distance Education, promoted by technology, by interaction and communication between users of this type breaking geographical and spatial boundaries. Therefore, seeking educational processes for communication means to make the exchange, dialogue and change in learning and, therefore, interactivity possible, distance learning time / space flexibility, collaborative networks, greater autonomy, integration of media and languages become essential features of distance education.

The most important in Distance Education is the student facing the challenge of studying alone, getting autonomy of the act of learning and, therefore, needs to develop the ability to have an independent learning (FERREIRA; SILVA, 2009). This is because the student takes on the responsibility of their training, supported by some materials and human components, monitoring and evaluating so that is possible to build autonomy and learning during the process.

This perspective puts it as subject, author and conductor of the process training, enables the individual to appropriation and of content reworking and the construction of knowledge. The student must have the skills to develop study in computerised learning environment with self-determination, orientation, selection and decision-making ability, organizational learning and metacognitive skills.

Although technologies are linked to education, necessarily, they do not change the pedagogical concept adopted as advocates Moran (2003), but the use of technology in pedagogical issues will make, yes, a difference. We have possibility to use the internet in Distance Education to only reproduce the model on transmission of knowledge, or we can take it and use the potential this technology to make innovative education, with

pedagogical model more student-centered, emphasising collaboration, interaction, construction knowledge and learning, autonomy and critical reflective thinking.

To meet the needs of the individual, professional and student, it is necessary a few changes in ways of teaching and learning. The model of teaching learning based on information-transmission, memorization and replication of contents no longer meets the expectations of the individual, the technologies of information and communication nurture personal interaction necessary for the virtual environment, where knowledge is dynamic and the construction is continuous. For the interactivity happen, it is essential to create a favorable environment in the process of teaching and learning, inserting concrete and satisfactorily technologies in pedagogical work. Because of these factors, it appears that Distance Education requires a lot commitment and responsibility in facing numerous challenges for a meaningful learning.

bearing in mind the compelling theme item - Distance Learning - which approach provides study opportunities and qualification through autonomy, it notices an important resource for learning, for work and the construction of democratic learning. With Distance Education, the educational construction of quality occurs regardless of place, time or on-site teacher.

whether in institutions or business, it is necessary and possible to transpose challenges that get in the setting of Distance Education, for the excellence and quality can be offered from basic learning to higher level, for example, master's and doctoral courses. Regardless of age, cultural condition or any other classification, D-Learning occupies definitive and fundamental space for education and democratized compromised.

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