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Analysis of a Theoretical Pedagogical Procedure Applied to an Activity Correction in Distance Education: Case Study in the Technical Course on Safety of Work in the “Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba”

Análisis de Procedimiento Teórico-pedagógico Aplicado a la Corrección de Actividad en Educación a Distancia: Estudio de Caso en el Curso Técnico en Seguridad del Trabajo del Instituto Federal de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología de Paraíba

Análise de Procedimento Teórico-pedagógico Aplicado à Correção de Atividade em Educação a Distância: Estudo de Caso no Curso Técnico em Segurança do Trabalho do Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba

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Abstract

With the introduction of distance education in Brazil, new problems have arisen, especially in relation to the pedagogical and methodological bases used in the offered courses, both in public and private education. To prove this assertion, it was analyzed in this article the

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“glossary” activity, in the scope of the “Occupational safety and health law discipline”, of the Technical Course in Work Safety in “Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba”, presenting concepts and reflections on the theme. It was based on the following methodological basis: empirical case study, the use of deductive methods, qualitative and bibliographic and documentary, and data analysis, we used the content analysis. Among the results, it was demonstrated that there are no specific parameters for the correction of online activities in that course, being freely stipulated by the teacher, and in which the tutor does not participate. The legislation and the Education Programme of the course corroborate in the failure to establish those parameters. In sum, we understand that the non-participation of the tutor in the course of the planning stages, including correction criteria, contribute to a scenario of uncertainty and lack of preparation in distance education in Brazil.

Keywords: Distance education. Methodology. Evaluation of teaching-learning process.

Resumen

Con la introducción de la educación a distancia en Brasil, han surgido nuevos problemas, particularmente relevantes para las bases pedagógicas y metodológicas utilizadas en los cursos que se ofrecen, en la educación pública y privada. Para demostrar esta afirmación, este artículo analiza la actividad “glosario”, bajo de la disciplina de legislación aplicada a la seguridad y salud en el trabajo, de el curso Técnico de Seguridad en el Trabajo de el Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba, presentando los conceptos y reflexiones sobre el tema. Se basó en la siguiente base metodológica: estudio empírico, estudio de caso, el uso de métodos deductivos, cualitativos y bibliográficos y documentales, y en el análisis de datos, se utilizó de la análisis de contenido. Entre los resultados, se ha demostrado que no hay parámetros específicos para la corrección de las actividades en línea en ese supuesto curso, siendo ellos de libre estipulación por el maestro formador de la disciplina, y para donde el tutor no participa. La legislación y el Programa Pedagógico del curso corroboran la imposibilidad de establecer esos

parâmetros. Se entende, por el último, que la no participación del tutor en las etapas de planificación de lo curso, que incluye los criterios de corrección, contribuye para un escenario de incertidumbre y falta de preparación en la educación a distancia de Brasil.

Palabras clave: Educación a distancia. Metodología. Evaluación del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje.

Resumo

Com a introdução da educação a distância no Brasil, novas problemáticas surgiram, em especial, no pertinente às bases pedagógicas e metodológicas utilizadas nos cursos ofertados, tanto no ensino público como no privado. Assim, o presente artigo analisou a atividade “glossário”, no âmbito da disciplina de “Direito aplicado à segurança e saúde no trabalho”, do curso Técnico em Segurança do Trabalho do Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba, apresentando conceitos e reflexões acerca da temática. Assentou-se nas seguintes bases metodológicas: empírica, estudo de caso, pelo uso dos métodos dedutivo, qualitativo e bibliográfico-documental e, para a análise dos dados coletados, utilizou-se a análise de conteúdo. Dentre os resultados obtidos, demonstrou-se a não-existência de parâmetros específicos para a correção das atividades *online* na referida disciplina, sendo de livre estipulação pelo professor formador da disciplina, e dos quais o tutor não participa. A legislação e o Projeto Pedagógico do curso corroboram para a omissão no estabelecimento daqueles critérios. Entende-se, por fim, que a não-participação do tutor nas etapas de planejamento do curso, incluídos nisso os critérios correicionais, contribui para um cenário de incertezas e despreparo na educação a distância brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Educação a distância. Metodologia. Avaliação do processo de ensino-aprendizagem.

Introduction

Moodle (2017) is a learning platform designed by an Australian company of 30 developers, financially supported by a network of 60

Moodle Partner service companies around the world. Its goal is to provide open-source, secure, multilingual, integrated learning environments that can be accessed at any time and place, since they are web-based.

The predominance of use of the free and open source software Moodle under the General Public License (GNU), in distance education courses (EAD) has effectively made possible a considerable increase in the offer of online courses, both in formal education (universities, colleges and institutes, public and private, aimed at vocational training at the technical, technological, higher and post-graduate level), and in non-formal education (short courses, etc.). Today, more than 65 million users, both in the academic and business sectors, use that teaching platform (MOODLE, 2017).

Faced with this opportunity for the development of education at the national level, the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba - IFPB (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Paraíba) has been offering technical, higher and postgraduate courses in this educational modality; in the Virtual Learning Environment (AVA), uses the following pedagogical objects, made available on the Moodle platform, for the purpose of student evaluation: forum, chat, quiz, glossary, online text, single file upload and wikis.

The language used in this environment is a relevant factor for the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process, or the exchange of knowledge, in a qualitative and collaborative way, consistent with Paulo Freire's (1987) libertarian education proposal.

Therefore, in order to improve the practice in the development of pedagogical activities in the EAD, to establish, among other aspects, parameters for the elaboration and correction of those, in a collaborative action among their professionals, a questioning was made pressing: What are the theoretical-pedagogical bases used to correct the activities carried out by the students in AVA, within the scope of the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba?

In order to carry out the research, we analyzed specifically the pedagogical object commonly called "glossary", which, according to the

Pedagogical Project of the Technical Course on Safety at Work (IFPB, 2013), is an activity that allows students to create a list of definitions in a collaborative and contextualized way, according to the content of the course taught, in the format of a dictionary.

Thus, the present article has as general objective to analyze the theoretical and pedagogical procedures applied to the correction of the “glossary” activity, within the scope of the “Law applied to safety and health at work” discipline, period 2014.1, of the Technical Course in Occupational Safety of the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba.

As specific goals of this work, we can present the following: a) understanding the teaching-learning process within the discipline of “Law applied to occupational safety and health”, period of 2014.1, of the technical course on Work Safety; b) delineating the pedagogical object “glossary”, within the scope of the “Law applied to safety and health at work”, period 2014.1, of the Technical course on Work Safety; c) reflect on the criteria for correction of the pedagogical object “glossary”, both in the scope of the technical course on Work Safety and in other online courses promoted by educational institutions, attending to the peculiarities of each case.

For this study, responses were sent by students from the discipline “Law applied to safety and health at work”, in the period of 2014.1, of the Patos poles, via glossary, with the purpose of serving as a reference material for analysis and practical application of said pedagogical object. The course for which these texts are intended, as well as the name of the teacher trainer, tutor and students are omitted, in order to preserve the identity of the agents involved.

Therefore, the research was based on the following methodological bases: empirical, for being a case study, by the use of deductive, qualitative and bibliographic-documentary methods (indirect research), and specifically, in the analysis of data collected, content analysis was used.

Based on this premise, this article presents a case study concerning the analysis of the activity called “glossary”, within the scope of the “Applied Safety and Health at Work” discipline, period of 2014.1, Patos

pole, as a result of the Course Completion Work (TCC) of the 2nd group of the mentoring training course, promoted for the tutors entering the year 2014, at the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba.

Before that, and allied to the empiricism of this case study (GIL, 2008), it is a question of examining activities and correction procedures within the federal public institution of education, the deductive (PRODANOV; FREITAS, 2013) and qualitative (LAKATOS, MARCONI, 1992) methods, and the analysis of the data collected was used to analyze the content (LAKATOS; MARCONI, 2002).

With the purpose of supporting the whole study, granting the pertinent theoretical basis, the research contemplates a bibliographical-documentary survey (indirect research) of renowned authors, like Vygosty, Freire, Hermida, among others, as well as of the pertinent legislation and the pedagogical project of the IFPB's Occupational Safety Technician course.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the research carried out sought to introduce concepts and reflections on pedagogical aspects relevant to the standardization, collaboration and strengthening of distance education, which, apart from the technicality of banking education, should be harmonized with an education that is both liberating and providing a comprehensive student learning in a virtual environment.

1. Theoretical points of distance education

The process of education in Brazil has been undergoing a profound change since 1988, when the Constituição Federal (BRASIL, 1988) was in force, including, among other things, the fundamental and social right to education, which guided the making of educational legislation at the national level (HERMIDA, 2011), including to meet new demands, such as distance education.

Online distance education course exsurges as a differentiated educational environment, in which the libertarian model of education is the most appropriate, since the knowledge learned and shared must be

based on the collaborative, reflective and creative aspect, and not on the simple imposition of knowledge and without possibility of discussion (FREIRE, 1987).

In the same way, mechanized, uncompromising banking education imposes on us an orchestrated and suggestible education, to lead us to a unified thinking, without possibilities for reflection, and to transform ourselves into domesticated and domesticable beings.

The banking view provokes the absolutization of ignorance (FREIRE, 1987), because it does not allow teachers and students to stand on the same level regarding teaching-learning dialogism, being in a position of superiority in comparison to this.

In the globalized world, in which information and knowledge pass through all means and in a continuous and accessible way to all, and in which we have social networks, online distance education and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) subsidizing all this, this form of banking education should no longer prevail, although it still exists, especially in face-to-face education.

Corroborating with the aforementioned, Oliveira (1993), citing Vygotsky, affirms the necessity and importance of the intervention and relation between people, which, in the Virtual Learning Environment, occurs between the teacher, the tutor and the students, for the development and promotion of knowledge in a particular educational institution.

The action of all the subjects of the pedagogical process, teachers and tutors, must be integrated and collaborative with the students, in order to instigate, interact and share information and experiences, thus motivating their permanence and participation in the EAD courses, constituting a way to avoid a greater school dropout in this medium of educational interaction.

For online education course, in addition to the Magna Carta and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9.394/96) (BRASIL, 1996), there is Decree No. 9,057, of May 25, 2017 (BRASIL, 2017), to regulate said law, specifically its art. 80.

The legislation is silent on the stipulation of guidelines in the process of evaluating the activities carried out by its participants, for the purpose of promotion in the steps necessary to complete the course. Only Annex I of Resolution no. 36/2009 (BRASIL, 2009) establishes this attribution to the so-called teacher researcher or teacher trainer. The tutor is responsible for assisting in the application and *correction of online activities*. For the case of the present study, the Pedagogical project of the Technical Course in Work Safety, distance modality, of the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Paraíba), ratifies the mentioned competences (IFPB, 2013).

In this way, it charges the teachers both the prerogatives related to the elaboration and, subsequently, the establishment of the evaluative criteria of the virtual activities, that also must “considering the objective to be achieved with the respective content that is being administered” (SILVA, SARAMELLI, 2015, p.6), aiming, finally, the learning and the personal and professional development of the student.

Thus, it will seek to comply with national policies and legislation, as well as the particularities of each discipline, course and institution that promotes it. The Open University of the United Kingdom (OUUK) (MAIA; MEIRELLES, 2002), together with the Open University of Portugal, are examples of distance learning institutions that have well-defined and organized evaluation and correction parameters recognized worldwide.

Furthermore, the later stages in the teaching-learning process in distance learning, which is evaluation and feedback, of the tutor’s task, are of fundamental importance for the promotion of the student’s development within the course and future professional performance.

In distance education, the “formative evaluation” of the student has prevailed, in order to analyze its performance through “notes of gaps that need to be improved” throughout the teaching-learning process (ARCHER; CRISPIM; CRUZ, 2016, p. 477). This is what feedback is all about.

Abio, quoting Nunes and Vilarinho (2013), presents some essential assumptions for the accomplishment of an adequate online evaluation,

among which it is necessary to emphasize the dialogicity and the clarity when communicating to the students what are the steps and activities to be carried out, as well as the parameters on which the evaluations will be based on. Added to these factors is the need for continuous, clear, complete, specific and preferably immediate directives (ARCHER; CRISPIM; CRUZ, 2016), when correcting each of the student's activities.

Thus, the constant dialogue between teacher, tutor and student and the availability of the guidelines on the evaluation process increase confidence and eliminate doubts and fears (ABIO, 2013), enabling the permanence, the formation and an effective qualification of the student throughout the academic course.

2. Analyzing the glossary activity in the field of the ifpb technical work safety course

From the above, the results of the case study are presented in relation to some of the situations that tutors and teachers can go through when designing and correcting activities on the Moodle platform used in the field of distance education of the IFPB, as well as in other educational institutions.

This analysis was elaborated when the author's role as tutor in the last semester of the Technical Course in Work Safety, distance modality, of the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba, called "Right applied to the security and health at work" in 2014. The total duration of the course is two years.

Within the framework of this educational institution, the newly hired tutors and teachers undertake a training course in mentoring, in order to experience the routine of the student in EAD, concomitantly to the exercise of their duties. This allowed a confrontation of the practices in AVA, as well as an accurate reflection on the relationship between the social actors involved in that environment (teachers, tutors, coordinators and students), thus allowing a collaborative and qualitative work for the purposes for which it is intended.

During the course of mentoring training, as well as in each of the disciplines offered by the IFPB's Technical Course on Work Safety, the tutors/students performed different weekly activities based on a specific content, which could be one of the following features available in Moodle: forum, chat, quiz, glossary, online text, single file upload and *wikis*. At the end of the course, the Course Completion Work (TCC) is elaborated, which consists of the production of a report, derived from the experiences of the professional practice (IFPB, 2013), to be sent by the Virtual Learning Environment.

In this case, the tutors should present a case study for one of the activities developed in the discipline of which they serve as a tutor. The chosen activity was the Week 13, period 2014.1, of the discipline "Law applied to safety and health at work" (Figure 1), which consisted of a glossary to be developed by students enrolled in the discipline, allowing the creation of related terms to the content of the week, specifically Law No. 7.410, of November 27, 1985, which provides for the profession of occupational safety technician.

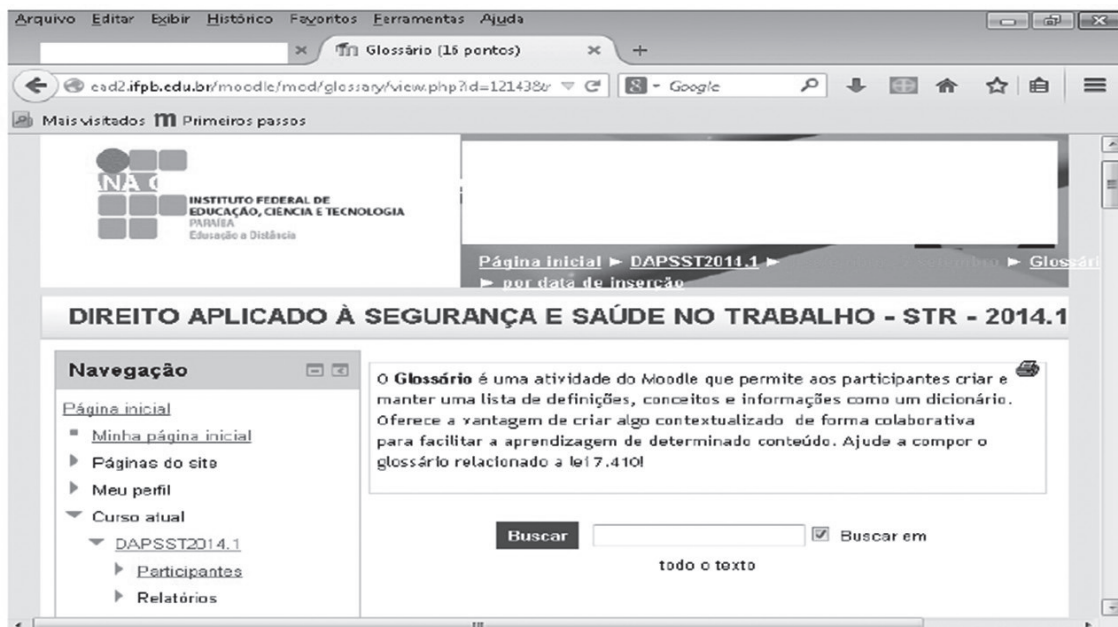


Figure 1: Glossary concept and activity of Week 13.

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the Moodle platform of the IFPB.

Figure 2 outlines the parameters that students would use to respond to the glossary activity of Week 13, which was limited to determining that each student could send only one term, and stipulated, only, the timeframe for its accomplishment and the maximum score for that activity. The trainer did not explain other guidelines for a better performance of the task by the students.

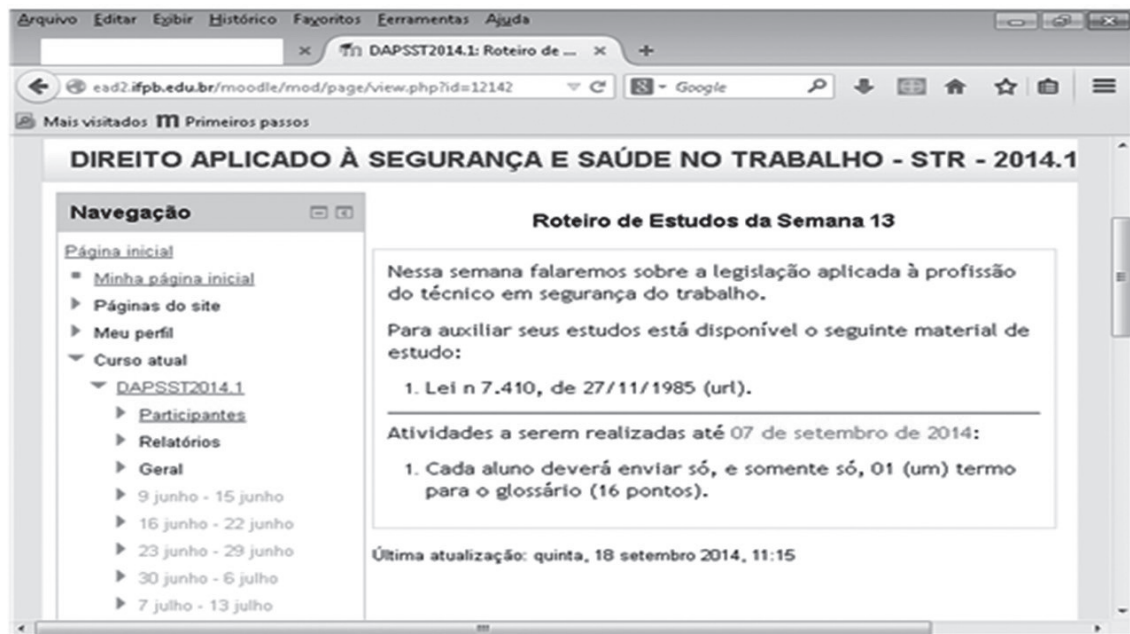


Figure 2: Activity Parameters for Week 13.

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the Moodle platform of the IFPB.

The activity that was the object of this case report was answered by 17 (seventeen) students from the Patos pole, who were enrolled in the course. Of these, only two students responded to the activity identically, although not concomitantly, as shown in Figures 3 and 4 below.

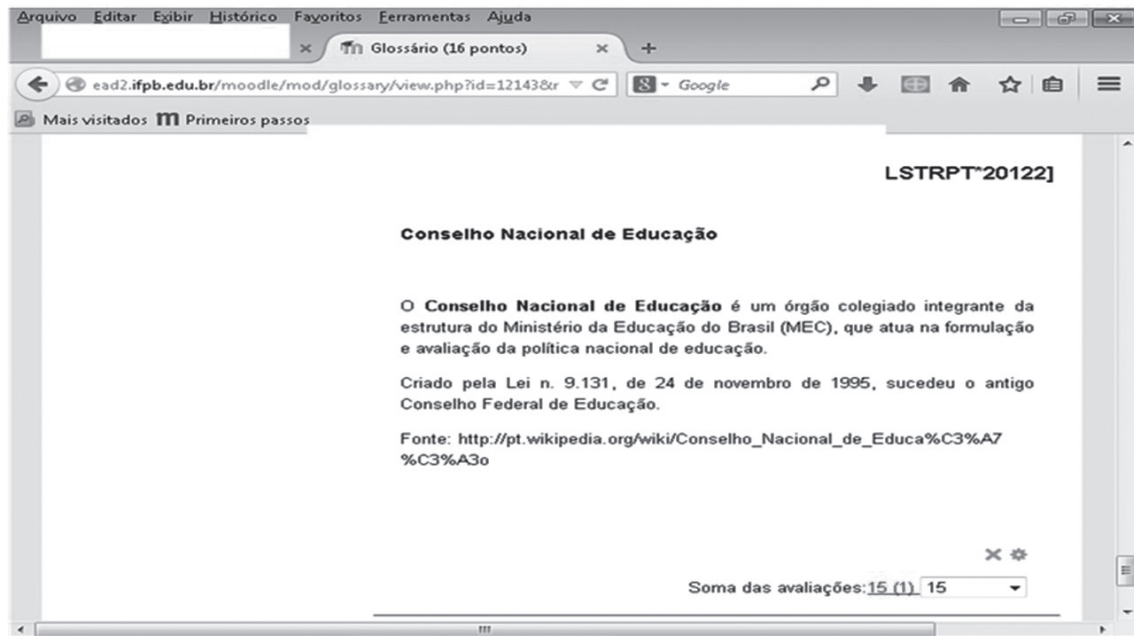


Figure 3: First answer

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the Moodle platform of the IFPB.

However, it is noticed that the first student indicated the source used to answer the task.

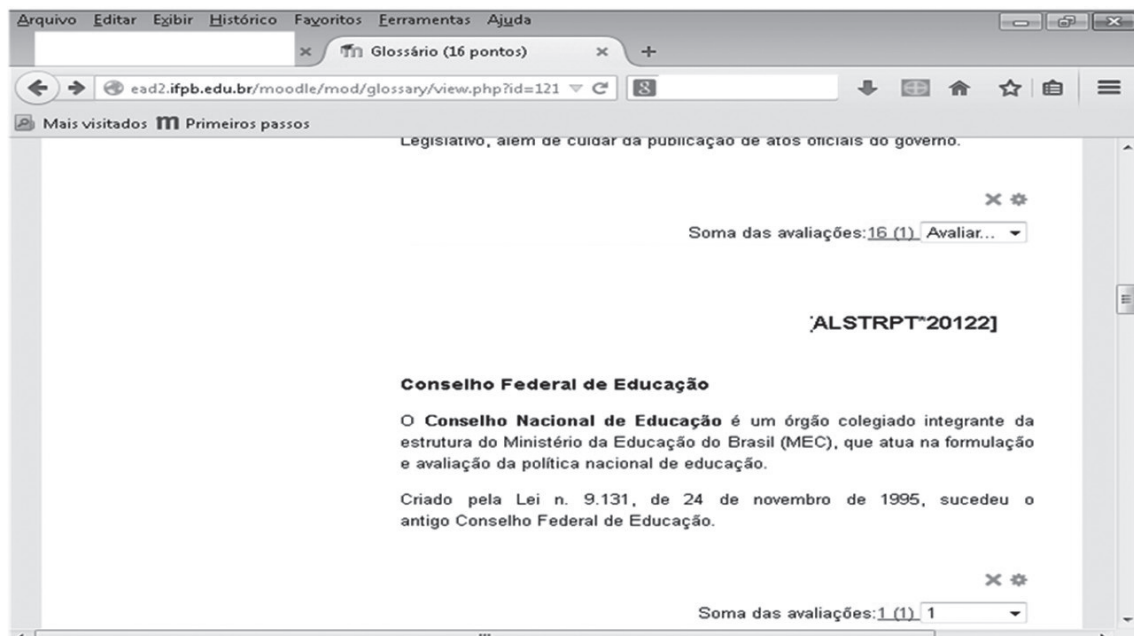


Figure 4: Second answer

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the Moodle platform of the IFPB.

It should be noted that, at the time of the research, the IFPB had 8 poles, namely Cajazeiras, Campina Grande, Catolé do Rocha, Guarabira, João Pessoa, Monteiro, Princesa Isabel and Sousa, in addition to Patos, which constitute cities of the state of Paraíba attended by distance public education in various levels (technical, undergraduate and postgraduate).

The Technical Course on Work Safety was initially created at the Patos pole, and has until now its general coordination, which establishes, among other aspects, the basic guidelines pertinent to the course, which is why it was chosen to carry out this research.

With a view to a brief evaluation of this activity, the teachers who trained the tutors training course were contacted, who instructed the author/tutor to contact the teacher trainer of the subject in question. He/she gave an opinion on the methodology of correction and then sent a general communication to the other tutors, as would be the criterion, applicable to all modalities of activity (forum, chat, questionnaire, glossary, single file upload and wikis).

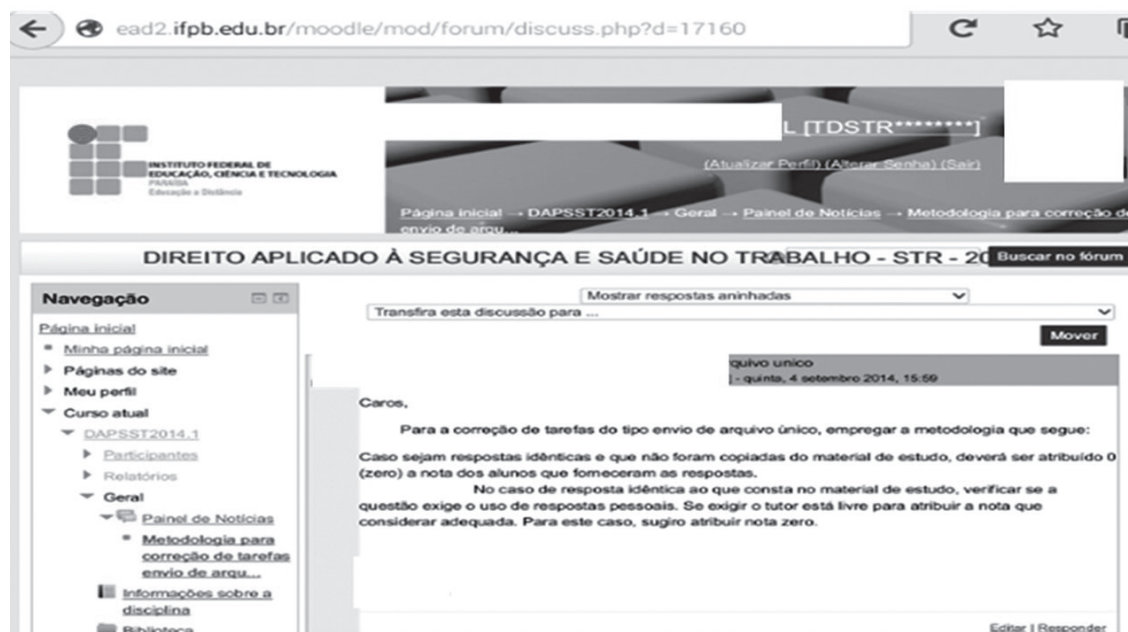


Figure 5: Detail of the correction parameters of the activities

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the Moodle platform of the IFPB.

According to Figure 5, the trainer asked that the tutors use the following correction methodology: if there are identical answers and it was not copied from the study material, 0 (zero) should be assigned to the students who provided the answers. In the case of an identical answer to what is stated in the study material, check whether the question requires the use of personal answers. If required, the tutor is free to assign the grade he/she considers appropriate. For this case, I suggest assigning grade 0 (zero).

Upon request of the tutor, the teacher trainer sent a general information in a panel on the platform, accessible to all the students of the discipline, alerting them to indicate the source for the answers given in the activities, under penalty of committing plagiarism. However, this prescription seems to have been a bit late since the discipline of “Law applied to occupational safety and health” is given in the last period of the course, and the activity under analysis was that of the 13th week, or at the end of the semester of 2014.1.

However, the situation had a specificity not covered by the guidelines, i.e. despite having identical answers, the first student indicated the source used for the answer.

Subsequently, and considering that the tutor had already guided the students in previous weeks, through feedback, to indicate the bibliographic references when responding to the tasks, the activity was corrected, assigning a note to the student who chronologically answered in the first place, because this indicated the source used for the response of the activity. As for the student who answered the activity in second place, the tutor tried, on several occasions, to assign zero grade, but the system did not allow such grade. Therefore, the student received minimum grade, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.

The assignment of the notes sought, therefore, to alleviate the deleterious effects of the lack of prior establishment of specific parameters for the correction of said pedagogical object, of free stipulation by the teacher trainer of the discipline, of which the tutor (face-to-face and/or distance) does not participates.

Faced with this situation, it was noticed that the lack of more objective and explicit criteria, both for the students and for the tutors to correct corrections of these activities, may have provoked similarity in the answers.

Together, it is noticeable that the system has not been properly designed to avoid identical responses, which may give rise to the hypothesis of plagiarism. And, once the total or partial appropriation of content owned by other authors, without express reference to the source used, plagiarism constitutes one of the types of violation of academic integrity and intellectual property rights of the author (JOCOY; DIBIASE, 2006).

Abio, adapting what Palloff and Pratt (2013, p. 82) advocated, suggested as possible techniques for treating plagiarism: reducing “the use of individual and competitive situations,” such as using the “glossary” verifying the “pedagogical sources cited in the students’ works” and teach them “what constitutes plagiarism”.

Therefore, even if that feature did not allow feedback to the students, i.e., a response to the mistakes and the correct answers, and that is present in the other modalities of pedagogical objects mentioned in this article, the tutor came in contact with the two students, justifying the attributed note and clarifying about the plagiarism.

The tutor still responded to other students who sent messages to question the grades applied, indicating the criteria established by the teacher trainer on which the assessments were based.

Final considerations

the experience as EAD students, specifically through the ongoing training of IFPB tutors, enables the development of skills and knowledge relevant to the effective performance of the tutor, who must be a clear “mediator” in the interpersonal and professional growth of the students involved.

Corroborating this assertion, and based on the thought of the theorists mentioned in this article, according to which learning is enhanced

through interaction with others and with the environment, the active exercise of the tutor in distance education presupposes the construction of the students' knowledge, in an online learning community, through the so-called socio-affective interaction, understood as that communication which contains affective components tending to stimulate the emancipated participation, interactivity and cooperation of the students, and promoting among them a process of exchange of information, perceptions and notions in an integrated and autonomous way, constituting, in the end, one of its essential abilities.

The collaborative interaction among the those who make up distance education online course should, therefore, be increasingly stimulated to encompass all stages of teaching.

However, this case study reinforced the understanding that the lack of theoretical and pedagogical criteria defined for the evaluation and correction of the activity, or its design concomitant to the course and/or discipline, including the pedagogical object "glossary", compromises the student's current performance, as well as the teaching-learning process of the later stages.

In addition, for this activity, there was no possibility for the tutor to give feedback to the students, creating an instability atmosphere in virtual relationships, already so excessively weakened by the immanent distance from this teaching modality.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement improvements in the operationalization of the platform in which the course/discipline is being offered, which includes greater qualification of its technical staff or, when it becomes impossible, the choice of different modality of pedagogical object that is not only about a numerical performance. This should be a subsidiary of the promotion of a qualitative and substantive performance of the student, since the completion of a course or discipline with proper use will not only reflect in their professional performance, but also in their professional performance before society.

Sometimes, it also occurs that the teacher does not respond to either the student or the tutor, either does not modify the form of the assessment or does not interact in the platform as it should, both being

restricted to the one stipulated by the teacher, and committing the dialogue and coexistence of those agents in the cybernetic environment and the integral development of the student.

The legislative omission, coupled with the non-participation of the tutor in the planning stages of the Pedagogical Project of the course or its disciplines, included in this the corrective criteria, can contribute to a scenario of uncertainties and unpreparedness in Brazilian distance education.

The training required for tutors to work in the virtual learning environment, that is, postgraduate and teaching experience for at least one year, established in the Resolution cited in this article, as well as the continuous training of professionals online, similar to what has already been done by the IFPB, makes them apt to the pedagogical action together with the other professionals in distance courses, including to define evaluative parameters of the activities developed within the Virtual Learning Environment.

Therefore, the collaboration of all distance education professionals is essential for the discussion and unification of the criteria for the students' evaluations, especially the tutor, since, although he/she does not actively participate in the pedagogical planning of the course, he/she interacts more directly and intensely with the students.

Probably, the cooperative performance of the tutor with the coordinators, technicians and teachers in all stages would allow the valorization of their work and the consequent improvement of the teaching-learning quality. This includes the definition of face-to-face or online meetings between them, which can occur by chat, for example, seeking, among other objectives, the establishment or improvement of parameters for conducting formative assessments and the communication or repair of failures in the system.

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