

## Teacher training pathway to work in distance education



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### ABSTRACT

To support the teaching practice in distance education, it is necessary for the teacher to acquire and/or improve didactic, pedagogical and digital skills. Thus, the objective of the present work is to describe the design of the Teacher Training on Distance Education course considering the objectives, the modular structure, the content topics,

the methodology and the evaluation process. This course was structured in three modules: 1- Conceptual contributions and institutional and pedagogical design of distance education at UFRN; 2- Didactic-pedagogical organization of the teaching action; 3- The Mandacaru Moodle as a space for teaching action: from tools to methodological approaches. The modules were taught synchronously through Google Meet, lasting 3 hours each and on 3 consecutive days. At the end of the synchronous stage, the teachers participated in the asynchronous moments for 30 days. In the virtual learning environment, complementary bibliographies and communication forums were made available so that the participants could answer questions after the synchronous stage. The process of evaluating teacher training was procedural, considering the course participant's participation in the forums, the nature of the questions formulated by him and the feedback obtained at the end of the course in terms of evaluation regarding the content, methodology and training contributions to the teaching performance in distance education.

**Keywords:** Teacher training, Planning, Teaching practice.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades of the twentieth century, humanity experienced significant transformations resulting from the development of science and technology, which had an impact on different social segments, among which education stands out. In this context, educational policies and actions were modified in order to adapt to the demands that were configured by the progressive use of digital technologies in teaching and learning processes.

In Brazil, this situation favored the dissemination of Distance Education (EaD (pt-BR)), the framework of which was the sanction of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) in 1996 (BRASIL, 1996), an instrument that supports the offer of this modality in the country. This legal framework effectively contributed to the strengthening of the Teacher Training policy, at the undergraduate level, which aims at improving the quality of teaching and training in Basic Education.



Within the scope of this policy, higher education institutions were stimulated to experience a challenging situation: to build an institutional and pedagogical development for distance learning degrees and, simultaneously, to offer training courses for their own teachers aiming to work in this modality. Since the establishment of the legal framework, the higher education institutions that have taken on these challenges have accumulated lessons and experiences that have led to quite positive results, including the fact that these experiences have become the object of study by researchers and are constantly subjected to internal and external evaluation processes.

Based on these assumptions and considering the need to delimit the subject, we opted for an approach to teacher training for working in EaD, taking as a reference the (per)formative course implemented at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) for its teaching staff. In this perspective, the objective is to describe the outline of the course of Teacher Training in EaD adopted by the institution from the objectives, the modular structure, the content topics, the methodology and the evaluation process. The methodological procedures that guided the research in the guideline correspond to the bibliographic and documentary research and to the activity as teacher-researchers in the course of planning and offering teacher training courses aiming to work in EaD.

## **2 TEACHER TRAINING: CONTEXTUALIZATION ELEMENTS**

The issue of teacher training is widely discussed in the field of education studies and, in Brazil, it has been instituted as a public policy forged in the context of the problems that involve training processes at different levels and the recognition of the need for improvements in educational policies and actions.

Corroborating the assertion of Tardif (2014) - when he states that the teacher's knowledge is not a set of cognitive contents defined once and for all, but a process under construction throughout a professional career -, it is considered fundamental that, being digital technologies a trait of contemporary culture, training opportunities are generated for higher education teachers aiming at acting in the EaD. Finally, education mediated by digital technologies is a modality that is in tune with the present time, whose relationships and interactions are increasingly made possible by digital supports and tools.

In this context, it is a challenge to consider that, in addition to the mastery of the content and didactic and pedagogical skills so dear to the teaching practice, it is necessary that the teacher acquires and/or learns skills related to the use of digital technologies. It is emphasized, however, that technological competences are required for teaching, regardless of whether it is face-to-face or distance mode, yet it is an essential condition for practice in EaD. This affirmation finds resonance in Freire's (1991, p. 80) saying that teacher training should consider, among other elements, "the appropriation,



by educators, of scientific advances in human knowledge that can contribute to the quality of the desired school".

Teacher training in Brazil can be carried out through different formats such as training, apprenticeship, recycling, training and continuing education, each one reflecting a conception of the role to be played by the teacher in his or her professional practice (AMARAL, 2003).

Thus, recognizing the importance of teacher training, regardless of context or modality, and in the expectation of sharing knowledge accumulated throughout the experiences with technology-mediated education, we will now present the outline of the Teacher Training course in EaD, offered every semester by UFRN.

### **3 TEACHING IN EAD: (PER)FORMATION COURSE**

The EaD Teacher Training Course is one of the action strategies of the Distance Education Secretary (Sedis) of the UFRN, in partnership with the People Management Program (Pro-reitoria de Gestão de Pessoas - Progesp), which has as its general objective to train teachers who work in the institution's undergraduate courses in the acquisition and/or improvement of competencies and skills for the exercise of their attributions in the teaching and learning process in the distance modality. As specific objectives, it seeks to understand the concept of EaD; to identify the characteristics and the subjects that work in this modality, highlighting their attributions within the model adopted at UFRN; to understand the didactic-pedagogical organization of the teaching action; to develop competences and skills regarding the use of the resources of Moodle Mandacaru, the virtual learning environment (VLE) adopted by UFRN, associated to active methodologies.

In harmony with the objectives outlined, the course was structured in three modules. Each one of them includes theoretical and practical learning sections, whose design took into consideration the institutional and pedagogical development adopted by UFRN for the distance learning degree program. Thus, the structure of the course and its respective contents include:

Module 1: "Conceptual contributions and institutional and pedagogical development of EaD at UFRN". It covers learning lessons about the EaD from the perspective of its definition and characteristics, as well as the differences between the distance mode and the emergent remote learning. The institutional and pedagogical development adopted by the UFRN for the offer of distance graduation courses and of the distance curricular component in face-to-face courses are also objects of study of this module. In this context, the elements that make up and/or subsidize this development are addressed, focusing on the approach of the AVA Moodle Mandacaru, the Presential Support Center, the Tutoring System and the Didactic Material. In addition to the elements, the subjects that are part of this distance learning network and their respective attributions are presented. They are: teacher,



student, course coordinator, course coordinator, course coordinator, tutoring coordinator, teaching assistant and multidisciplinary team.

Module 2: "Didactic-pedagogical organization of the teaching action". It deals with the planning of the teaching action, from the systematization of the teaching plan of the curricular component to the preparation of the virtual classroom in AVA Moodle Mandacaru Acadêmico. The initial approach highlights the importance of planning, communication and interaction in EaD. The didactic-pedagogical orientations assume a sequence, according to the following description: planning, which takes into account the study of the curricular component and the didactic material produced for the distance courses, and is carried out by means of the choice and definition of methodological and evaluation strategies, complementary materials and audiovisual resources; elaboration of the teaching plan of the curricular component (characterization of the component, methodology, objectives, contents, methodological procedures, learning assessment, schedule of activities and bibliographic references); and organization of the virtual classroom, considering the didactic-pedagogical orientations in all its aspects (study and activity orientation, assessment process, among others). In this module, the teacher understands the dynamics of the practice characteristic of the modality, observing, above all, the planning, the management of time and activities, both asynchronous and synchronous, considering the specificities of the academic calendar.

Module 3: "Mandacaru Moodle as a space for teaching action: from tools to methodological approaches". It comprises learning modules about the AVA, having as content the conception and design of the virtual environment, with focus on the virtual classroom. In this perspective, the existing resources and functionalities of the VLE are presented, such as forums, chats, file and image uploading, creation of web conferences using BigBlueBotton©, sending individual and mass messages, creation of *on-line* questionnaires and delivery of *off-line* assignments, among others. This module emphasizes the conceptual approach to active methodologies and learning process.

The offer of this course is made possible by means of registration of interested parties in the institution's Academic Activities Management System (Sigaa), where information is available, among which the agenda, the modular structure of the course, the program and the link to access the synchronous sessions carried out through Google Meet stand out. In the synchronous meetings, which last 3 hours each, distributed in 3 consecutive days, after the presentation of the module content topics by the lecturers, we proceed to the interaction with the trainees through a dialogue based on questions and answers, as well as exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Once the synchronous stage is finished, the teachers are directed to the AVA, in order to participate in the asynchronous moments, which last 30 days. In this environment, complementary bibliographic references are available. In addition, there are communication forums for the participants to expose their doubts, thus enabling the exchange of experience on the practice. The process of



evaluation of the teacher training takes place in a processual perspective, considering the participation of the trainee in the forums, the nature of the questions formulated by him/her and the *feedback* obtained during the course in terms of evaluation regarding the content, the methodology and the contributions of the training to the teaching practice in EaD.

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The UFRN, recognizing the importance of teaching in EaD, has implemented policies and actions in this modality, stimulating the formative course of the subjects who work in it. The EaD Teacher Training Course focuses on contents related to didactic, pedagogical and digital competences that are fundamental to work in the distance learning modality. In this context, it addresses the conceptual contributions, the institutional and pedagogical development of the modality and the didactic-pedagogical organization of the teaching action, and presents the Mandacaru Moodle as a space for teaching action. The offer of courses of this nature is in tune with the perspective that continuous training is essential to maintain the quality of educational services.



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