

International Journal of Human Sciences Research

AN EXPERIENCE REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PILOT PROJECT FOR INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE DENTISTRY COURSE AS A STUDENT STAY POLICY

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Abstract: The construction of social inclusion policies began to be debated more frequently after the implementation of vacancy reservations in public university institutions. At the State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS), in Bahia, it was no different. The institution takes measures such as offering scholarships and grants, creating and maintaining the restaurant and university residences, in addition to specific measures for each course. In the UEFS Dentistry course, since 2011, an Instrument Loan Bank (BEI) has been maintained for more than 300 students, but this measure began to signal inefficient logistics, as the instruments and equipment were under the management of the students themselves, throughout the course. Some items were not returned in perfect condition and could not be handed over to the next class, causing some classes to receive more permanence materials than others. Currently, the course is undergoing a process of modification of this permanence policy, making it possible to expand the availability of instruments for all students in the UEFS Dentistry course. The teaching materials are now managed by the three UEFS clinics in accordance with the curricular components, physical structure and available human resources. Thus, this work aims to report the experience of volunteer monitors and collegiate coordinator in the construction of a Pilot Project for the Instrumentalization of the UEFS Dentistry Course.

Keywords: Education in Dentistry, Dentistry Students, Social inclusion, Teaching Materials.

INTRODUCTION

The term “affirmative action” emerged in the United States of America in 1961, coined in Decree 10,925 of then President John Fitzgerald Kennedy (SOWELL, 2004), which established the Presidential Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, one of the

struggle’s achievements for American Civil Rights. The author Thomas Sowell (2004), in his book, brings that these policies exist all over the world, although using different terms. In Sri Lanka they are called “standardization”, in Malaysia and Indonesia “preference to the ‘sons of the earth’”, in the United Kingdom and India “positive discrimination”, in Nigeria “reflections of the national character”, among others.

At the national level, affirmative actions were based on the results obtained by numerous international conventions, to which Brazil became a signatory – from the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008 – (UEFS, 2018), and the struggles of Brazilian social movements. In addition, the implementation of actions aimed at combating inequality is supported by the Federal Constitution of 1988 through laws such as number 12711, of August 29, 2012, the so-called Quota Law, which provides for admission to federal universities and federal institutions of secondary technical education (BRASIL, 2012).

The state of Bahia also drafted laws to combat inequality. Among them are Law No. 13.182, of June 6, 2014 (BAHIA, 2014), which establishes in its article 6, item VII, the implementation of measures and affirmative action programs aimed at confronting racial inequalities in education, in culture, in sports, in health, etc.; and Law No. 13,458 of December 11, 2015, which institutes the State Permanence Assistance Project for students in conditions of socioeconomic vulnerability of the State Public Universities of Bahia, and other measures (BAHIA, 2015).

The democratization of access to university has exposed new problems within public University Institutions (HEIs) that are reflections of the country’s profound social inequality (ANTUNES; LEMOS,

2018; FLORES, 2017; PEREIRA; MAY; GUTIERREZ, 2014). The process of deselitization of public university meant that institutions had to create, in addition to access policies, policies that ensured the permanence of these students until the end of graduation.

The State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS), in Bahia, following this reasoning, making use of the constitutional right of autonomy and listening to the agendas of student movements, takes measures such as offering scholarships and grants, the creation and maintenance of the restaurant and university residences, in addition to specific measures for each course (SANTOS et al., 2018). The Dentistry course at this IES, since 2011, maintains a Loan Bank of Instruments (BEI) for its more than 300 students, but this measure began to signal inefficient logistics.

Dentistry requires the professional to master the technique, which is only acquired after long practical training, whose execution requires the acquisition of materials, equipment and instruments specific to the area. Becoming a Bachelor of Dentistry is expensive and this expense may not be in line with the family income of some of the freshmen (FONSECA et al., 2013). Faced with this reality, some institutions in the country sought, through different strategies, the implementation of Instrumental Loan Banks (EIB) as a form of student permanence policy (FONSECA et al., 2013; MARTINS; MENEZES; QUEIROZ, 2019; CAVALCANTE et al., 2020; TEIXEIRA; SILVA; SILVA, 2021). UEFS is included in this group of HEIs committed to social inclusion also in the Dentistry course through affirmative action.

Created in 1985, the UEFS Dentistry course was designed to give feedback to the community through the provision of services and is organized in Integrated Studies, as proposed by the national curriculum guidelines, with a focus on Public Health

(UEFS, 2015). Currently, it has 48 curricular components, 10 of which are from the basic cycle, 38 from the vocational course, optional curricular components and complementary activities. The graduation conclusion is effective when the student completes the 5 years of the course (which can be extended to 7 and a half years) and obtains a workload equal to or greater than 4,335 hours.

Initially, 40 vacancies per year were made available, and later, in 1992, they were increased to 30 per semester and, with the implementation of vacancy reserves in 2006, they increased to 32 semesters (UEFS, 2015). Fifteen places were set aside for those coming from public schools, 1 for those belonging to indigenous groups and 1 for those from Quilombola communities. In light of this new scenario, since 2011 the institution has had an EIB as a measure that aims to guarantee the permanence of students. After being purchased, the instruments began to be lent when the groups reached the 3rd semester of the course, a period in which laboratory and clinical practices begin at UEFS. All instruments that were requested in the lists from the 3rd to the 10th semester and which had been acquired by the institution were delivered at once to the students, who, in turn, were responsible for their custody, being able to take them home and return them after the completion of the course.

However, some items were not returned in perfect condition and therefore could not be delivered to the next class. This created a deficit in which some classes received more permanence materials than others, thus reducing their role of guaranteeing student assistance. In addition, this strategy made it impossible to control what was in inventory. Given the above, the College of Dentistry of UEFS, sought new management strategies and materials logistics, mobilizing professors, students and employees of the institution's

three dental clinics in the construction of a project that would guarantee and consolidate student permanence. Thus, the objective of this work is to report the experience of volunteer monitors and collegiate coordinator in the construction of a Pilot Project for the Instrumentalization of the UEFS Dentistry Course.

METHODOLOGY

The College of the UEFS Dentistry course, in 2017, created a commission with student representatives who are members of the Academic Directory – voluntary monitors –, faculty representatives and employees of the institution's three clinics, with the aim of reassessing and reformulating the existing permanence policy. It became imperative to search for solutions to be able to preserve the items, in addition to controlling, in a more efficient way, the entry and removal of these materials from the inventory.

Initially, a survey was carried out to find out which and how many instruments were available in the inventory. It was found, therefore, that the UEFS Dentistry course has all the instruments and equipment identified as essential for learning by the Brazilian Association of Dental Education, ABENO, (MORITA et al., 2016) and a few more items. Damaged instruments were discarded in accordance with the University's standards and new ones were requested from the sector responsible for purchasing inputs.

The logistics were rethought so that the responsibility for managing these instruments could be decentralized, dividing this demand among the 3 clinics of the University. Each of the clinic managers started to organize the processing, storage and loan of instruments according to the curricular components, physical structure and available human resources.

The function of the volunteer monitors, in addition to assisting in the elaboration of the Project, was to organize the instrumental kits returned by the trainees, join those available in the inventory and form kits according to the lists of curricular components that would be offered in the 3rd semester. There are 40 kits for each dental procedure. These kits were delivered to the clinic where the practical classes for that semester take place.

A Practical Guide for the Pilot Project for Instrumentalization of the Dentistry Course was prepared containing the dental materials and equipment available at the institution, as well as a step-by-step guide on how the student must apply for a loan. In addition, moments of orientation were given to clinic employees on how to proceed with the new work routine.

The change in the course routine is being built gradually so that the clinics have time to organize themselves, preparing the structure and human resources. This conduct will also allow for performance evaluation through feedback from students, professors and staff.

The student, when requesting the loan of the material, must sign an minutes book. After using the instrument in the procedure, it must be washed, dried and returned. Upon return, on the same day as the loan, the ASB count the instruments and then the student signs the book again. Then, the assistants place the clean instruments on surgical grade paper, seal and forward them to the UEFS Material and Sterilization Center.

The inclusion of other groups and the distribution of more kits to the clinics take place every six months. The permanence policy following this methodology will be considered as a "pilot" until the first group of the Project completes the 10th semester of the course or until this strategy is confirmed as the best option to maintain student achievement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vasconcelos (2016) states that young people with a per capita household income of less than the minimum wage are the ones who least reach higher education, and in 2010, only 6.7% were attending or had completed an undergraduate course. It also found that the socioeconomic level of the family strongly influences the access of young people to university when comparing these data with those of young people with a per capita household income of three or more minimum wages and young people with a per capita household income greater than five wages minimum. More than 60% and 70% of young people, respectively, were attending an undergraduate course. Also according to the author, young brown, black or indigenous people, with a per capita household income of less than the minimum wage, represented 38.0% of young people between 18 and 24 years of age in the country, and less than 4.1% of these young people attended the university in 2010, and only 0.7% had completed it.

Mussliner et al. (2021) say that academic dropout compromises the effectiveness of expanding access to education and represents financial waste for the government. In addition, they point out that dropout can be caused by numerous reasons, such as: the student's difficulty with the course subjects, the difficulty in adapting to academic life, the impossibility of reconciling work schedules and study schedules, the discovery of a new vocation, among others. Therefore, this needs to be tackled by each educational institution based on studies of the causes of dropouts.

The Pilot Project made it possible to expand the availability of instruments for all students in the UEFS Dentistry course. Martins, Menezes and Queiroz (2019), in their research carried out with quota students, point out that the loan of dental instruments as an inclusion action can prevent or reduce

academic dropout. In the case of UEFS, despite not guaranteeing all the instruments on the list, nor belonging to the brands suggested by the professors, there is an evident reduction in expenses with materials.

Over the three semesters of the Project's validity, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Coronavirus Disease 2019), it was possible to observe that, until then, the new measures are meeting the demands. Efforts by all sectors of the university to consolidate the student retention policy contributed to this preliminary success. The participation of student representatives in the construction of this Project contributes to the humanized academic training so dear to the institution, as opposed to a purely technical training, without the slightest social awareness.

The difficulties faced fall on the physical structure of the institution's dental clinics. These have reduced space for the storage of instruments, requiring greater investment in the physical adjustment of the environment, which can be an obstacle since the urgency for funds for the rehabilitation is directed towards the efforts of the state universities in Bahia to improve sanitary conditions for the safe return of your activities.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The new policy may have facilitated the permanence of many students in the Dentistry course by saving money on the expenses with the purchase of instruments and equipment requested by the professors. Furthermore, it made it possible to consolidate it by institutionalizing it. It is also suggested that research be carried out to map the socioeconomic profile of students and to collect data on academic dropout and on the contribution of the course permanence policy to the reduction of dropout, since there is a lack of information in the literature on the reality of the students of the Dentistry course at UEFS.

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