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CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR INSTRUCTORS AT THE ARMY'S INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the characteristics of the teaching staff at the Army Institute of Economics and Finance (IEFEx), in particular the ad hoc instructors, reflecting on the possible impact of their ongoing training on the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. To this end, the basic legislation of the Army Education System, to which this institute belongs, is presented. Through bibliographical and documentary research, the teaching staff, purpose, target audience and teaching areas covered by IEFEx are presented. A diagnosis carried out by the Army on its teaching system is also presented, for comparison and reference purposes. The results show: a low number of teachers trained in the area of Education; a high number of *ad hoc* instructors on the teaching staff; the prevalence of the lecture teaching technique; and the occurrence of pedagogical refresher courses as provided for in the Army's teaching legislation. Considering that this article is an ongoing study, we conclude that there are indications of opportunities to improve the processes of continuing education for *ad hoc* teachers and teaching and learning at IEFEx. Finally, we suggest that the subject be explored further by applying indicators on the effectiveness of IEFEx courses and internships in order to collaborate with the proposal of new tools for improving the teaching staff adapted to the peculiarities of this Institute.

Keywords: Training. Continuing. Instructor. Teaching. Army.

INTRODUCTION

This research represents the first part of an ongoing study into the continuing education of the teaching staff at the Army's Institute of Economics and Finance (IEFEx). As an integral part of the Army Education System (SEE), IEFEx aims to train the Brazilian Army's (EB) administrative agents. To this end, the Institute employs professionals in the field of Economics and Finance from other organizations as part

of its teaching staff, which influences the implementation of its teachers' training process.

Given the extensive contribution of teachers from outside IEFEx, it was decided to carry out a diagnosis of the continuing training of the Institute's teaching staff, in order to help improve the effectiveness of its courses and internships. With this in mind, the aim of this article is to explore the characteristics of the IEFEx teaching staff, in particular the teachers from outside the Institute, reflecting on their training for teaching and the effects on the courses and internships offered.

Based on its objective and preliminary characteristics, this article is considered to be exploratory, using the technical procedures of documentary and bibliographical research. In this way, its conclusion may allow for a better delimitation of the topic studied and its deepening in the following phases of the study.

DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the SEE is to "qualify human resources to occupy positions and perform functions provided for, in peace and war, in its organization" (BRASIL, 1999a). Since the end of the last century, the SEE has included cultural, educational, instructional and research activities carried out by educational establishments, research institutes and other Military Organizations (OM) with responsibilities in this area.

The system also includes "courses, internships and other activities of interest to the Army, carried out by its personnel in organizations outside its structure" (BRASIL, 1999b), including colleges, university centers and universities in Brazil and abroad.

Accompanying the country's socio-political transformations, school education in Brazilian military institutions was molded to better meet the training needs of its ranks. The roots of teaching practice in the EB date back to a period before its current nomenclature, which it recei-

ved “officially when it proclaimed its independence from the Portuguese military organization” (EXÉRCITO BRASILEIRO, [2021?]).

According to Luchetti (2006, p. 64, emphasis added) “the first training center for military education in Brazil was the *Practical Fortification Course* set up in 1699 in the city of Rio de Janeiro”. Since then, evolving along with the changes in the Armed Forces, the Army has diversified the elements that make up its teaching system.

The structure of the SEE is organized into levels, lines and cycles of education (BRASIL, 1999a, 1999b). As for the levels, they are: elementary and middle school, aimed at the professional qualification of corporals, soldiers, sergeants and lieutenants, among other military positions; and higher education, aimed at training at a technological level for sergeants, lieutenants and members of the Auxiliary Staff of Officers (QAO)¹, as well as training at a bachelor’s or graduate level for officers (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2022).

The SEE teaching lines are divided into four distinct segments and are all aimed at the continued qualification of human resources. The Military Warfare Education Line (LEMB) is aimed at directing, preparing and employing the Land Force. The Scientific-Technological Military Education Line (LEMCT) is aimed at directing and carrying out scientific-technological activities and its organization is the responsibility of the Department of Science and Technology (DCT). Finally, the Military Health Education Line (LEMS) and the Complementary Military Education Line (LEMC) are responsible, respectively, for the qualification of personnel needed to direct and carry out health activities and to perform activities not covered by the previous lines.

At the end of the SEE structure, the teaching cycles are organized according to progression in the military career, and are separated into

1. The Auxiliary Staff of Officers (QAO) is made up of junior and intermediate officers who originally joined the army as career sergeants.

the following cycles: training and graduation; improvement; high military studies; and Army Policy, Strategy and Senior Management (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2022).

Since the 1990s, this structure of military education has been integrated into national education, in accordance with the provisions of both Law No. 9,786 of February 8, 1999 (EB Education Law) and the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB):

Art. 83: Military education is regulated by specific law, admitting the equivalence of studies, in accordance with the norms established by the education systems (BRASIL, 1996).

In this context, and through the inclusion of Military Sciences in the list of sciences studied in Brazil in 2001 and Defense in 2017, several *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs were created within the EB, authorized by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and accredited by the National Education Council (CNE). Some examples are the academic master’s and doctoral courses of the Postgraduate Program in Military Sciences of the Meira Mattos Institute (PPGCM-IMM) of the Army Command and General Staff School (ECEME), which include military and civilian students in its faculty and student bodies (MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO, 2001, 2017).

The Military Sciences cover 36 areas of concentration, including Administration, Accounting, Law, Management, Logistics and Economics and Finance (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2010). With the increased integration between the SEE and National Education, since the beginning of the LDB and the EB Teaching Law, the synergy between the military segment and society has been strengthened (EXÉRCITO BRASILEIRO, 2023). Currently, the Military Sciences system is considered an integral part of the Defence Major Area of Knowledge and can be conceptualized as:

the system of knowledge related to the art of war, obtained through scientific research, practice in the military sphere, experience and observation of the phenomena of wars and conflicts, using the methodology proper to military higher education (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2010).

In order for the entire SEE structure to function, it is up to teaching agents to carry out its core activities as well as complementary activities such as research and the dissemination of professional, cultural and scientific-technological issues. In this sense, military personnel appointed to the positions of teacher, instructor, monitor and others pertinent to teaching are considered direct and indirect agents (BRASIL, 1999b).

Delimiting the universe of selection of the Army's teaching agents, Technical Manual T 21-250 (Instructor's Manual) states that all military personnel are specialists in their field and must be trained to help with instruction missions. This same Manual also considers the equivalence of the term instructor in relation to military and civilian teachers in the Military Teaching Corps and the Complementary Staff of Officers (MINISTÉRIO DO EXÉRCITO, 1997).

In view of the concept of teaching agent, the Teaching Staff of the EB Teaching Establishments is made up of the commander (Director of Teaching), deputy commander, instructors, teachers and appointed monitors (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2000). Appointed officers are recruited through a standardized selection process based on criteria of qualifications, skills and duties defined by the establishment's own regulations and in accordance with the EB Teaching Law (BRASIL, 1999a).

In addition to military instructors and monitors, civilians can also be recruited to the teaching staff of Army educational establishments, and this selection process is carried out through a nationwide public competition (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2000).

Once the teaching staff has been formed, the EB's teaching legislation provides for continuing training for its teachers, instructors and monitors, on an annual basis and carried out by means of the Pedagogical Updating and School Administration Internship (ESTAPAE), the Pedagogical Updating Internship (ESTAP) and training provided for in the Army's various course plans (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2000).

To this end, it is the responsibility of the Director of Education to "encourage and promote the improvement of the teaching staff, following the rules of the management body of the teaching line, without prejudice to school duties" (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2000).

The Army has a number of Management Bodies (MBs) responsible for running courses and internships aligned with the four SEE teaching lines. Among these bodies, the Secretariat of Economy and Finance (SEF) is considered to be the managing body for an area that cuts across all the teaching lines: budgetary and financial management (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2022).

As part of the Direct Federal Public Administration, EB has a legal obligation to correctly use the resources placed at its disposal and, in order to fulfill this objective, it relies on the SEF, its Sectoral Management Body (ODS), which has the following purposes:

guiding, monitoring, controlling and coordinating, within the scope of the Force, activities related to budgetary governance, financial administration, accounting, assets, costs, personnel payment and *training of administration agents in related areas*, as well as participating in internal control, providing timely and effective advice to the Army's senior management, within its sphere of responsibility (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2020, p. 1, emphasis added).

For its part, the SEF has the IEFEx, recognized and accredited by the EB as an Institution of Higher Education, Extension and Research

ch (IESEP) and qualified to offer and conduct Higher Education courses and internships in the Distance Education (EAD) modality (MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA, 2013, 2017).

Throughout its existence, IEFEx has offered more than 430 courses and internships in Brazil and in friendly nations, training more than 100,000 civilians and military personnel from the Ministry of Defense (MD), the EB, the Brazilian Navy (MB), the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) and the Military Police and Firefighters of various Brazilian states (VIDEO, 2023).

IEFEx currently offers 23 *online* internships through the Army Education Portal and two hybrid internships, as well as webinars and seminars created at the request of the SEF and the Army General Staff (EME). The prevalence of *online* training is remarkable due to the national and international scope of the universe of students, including hard-to-reach border regions of Brazil. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, this modality has been strengthened in all aspects, from increasing security in the transmission of sensitive subjects to the construction of recording studios.

The Institute's teaching staff is made up mostly of *ad hoc* instructors² who make up 99%³ of the staff employed on all courses and internships offered within the SEF (EBAULA, 2023). The IEFEx Pedagogical Coordination Section holds preparatory meetings with the instructors assigned to each new course or internship in order to inform them of the teaching guidelines, which includes indicating the teaching techniques considered most effective for the respective situation. Pedagogical refresher courses are held for the Institute's appointed teaching staff.

Bearing in mind that military personnel are specialists in their fields and that they must be trained to assist in the teaching-learning process, it follows that the Institute's methodolo-

gical guidelines are sufficient to guarantee the quality of teaching.

However, if we look at the teaching materials and instructional aids used by IEFEx *ad hoc* instructors, we see that 92% of them use the lecture teaching technique (EBAULA, 2023).

Allied to this, the data on the training of this majority of the Institute's teaching staff reveals that only 41.25% of these agents have some kind of course or internship in the field of education recorded in their curriculum (INSTITUTO DE ECONOMIA E FINANÇAS DO EXÉRCITO, 2023).

This data raises questions about the effectiveness of the instruction provided by IEFEx, especially *online* instruction, given its asynchronous nature, which leads to less interaction between students and teachers and, consequently, fewer opportunities for group dynamics, exchange of knowledge, demonstrations, practice, etc.

In this context, it is worth highlighting the diagnosis made by the Working Group for the Study of the Modernization of Teaching (GTEME) in a 1996 report on the SEE, which culminated in the writing of the current edition of the Instructor's Manual (MINISTÉRIO DO EXÉRCITO, 1996).

In this document, among various considerations about opportunities to improve the SEE, it was noted that:

The teaching-learning process remains centered on the teacher [...Teachers and instructors are not prepared, either technically or psychologically, to carry out their duties [...] they do not have sufficient pedagogical training to use the different teaching processes available to them [...] In practice, lectures prevail over other processes, which are sometimes more suitable for learning specific subjects and which, at the same time, help to stimulate the need for continuous self-improvement [...] As a general rule, with the exception of the QCO, all of them show

2. An "*ad hoc* instructor" is a member of the military who is assigned to teach on a temporary and specific basis.

3. In 2023, 82 instructors were registered for IEFEx courses and internships, only two of whom belonged to the OM IEFEx staff.

a lack or deficiency of pedagogical training. As for the teaching directors, not all of them have experience in the field or previous experience [...] The instructors themselves, selected according to demanding criteria, are unfamiliar with the techniques of group dynamics, particularly those relating to conducting group work. As a result, they do little to exploit and value the experience of their trainees. The Pedagogical Updating and School Administration Internships have not effectively achieved their objectives (MINISTÉRIO DO EXÉRCITO, 1996, p. 4-6).

Based on the above observations, GTEME has made some suggestions for improving teaching at EB, which have been duly incorporated into the updating of the Instructor's Manual and the continuing training procedures for teachers, instructors and monitors:

Knowledge of pedagogy, didactics and methodology is necessary for the effective performance of their duties. Experience in teaching also helps to improve the performance of these professionals (MINISTÉRIO DO EXÉRCITO, 1996, p. 6).

From a comparative analysis of the observations made by GTEME and IEFEx, respecting the peculiarities of each scenario, we can see signs of similarities that include suggestions for solutions and improving the teaching-learning process.

It is therefore proposed that an in-depth study be carried out to adapt the tools used in the continuing training of IEFEx *ad hoc* instructors, compatible with the peculiarity of the distance between these teachers and the

physical space of the Institute and its other teaching agents, as well as the monitoring of indicators that reflect the effectiveness of the courses and internships offered.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this study was to explore the characteristics of the IEFEx teaching staff, in particular the *ad hoc* instructors, reflecting on the possible impact of their continuing training on the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

Based on an understanding of how the SEE works and its peculiarities, especially in the area of budgetary and financial management, the following aspects were observed in relation to the continuing training of IEFEx teaching staff: a low rate of teachers trained in the area of Education; a high number of *ad hoc* instructors making up the IEFEx teaching staff; the prevalence of the lecture teaching technique; and the occurrence of pedagogical refresher courses as provided for in EB teaching legislation.

The study on the continuing education of IEFEx *ad hoc* instructors should therefore be studied in greater depth, in order to propose new tools for improving the teaching staff, adapted to the peculiarities of this IESEP.

Finally, due to the limitations of the exploratory methodology used in this article, it is suggested that this research be continued with the application of indicators on the effectiveness of IEFEx courses and internships that can contribute to a more in-depth analysis of the subject.

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