

## REFLECTING ON ACADEMIC ROUTINE: AN EXPERIENCE AT THE INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO DE AERONÁUTICA

Cristiane Pêsoa da Cunha Lacaz<sup>1</sup>; Marta Maria Telles<sup>1</sup>; Marina Miranda Lery Santos<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This report addresses the experience instituted at the Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica called Reflita, whose proposal was to promote meetings to discuss topics relevant to graduation, in order to provide opportunities for collective reflection on academic norms and their application in everyday school life. As a starting point for the meetings, current legal documents and the experience of the participants were used. The strategy was implemented and endorsed by an opinion poll, which indicated the feasibility of continuing the proposal. Some developments were perceived, such as, for example, the proposition of the new counseling project and the implementation of a protocol for assisting students in crisis, adapted to the reality of ITA. It is therefore concluded that the strategy was valid, beyond the prescriptive and normative approach, pointing to the importance of a dialogue process with the academic community, intentionally bringing the legal aspects closer to the school routine.

**Keywords:** higher education; teaching work; organizational commitment

### Reflexionando sobre el cotidiano académico: una experiencia en el Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica

#### RESUMEN

En el presente relato se aborda la experiencia instituida en el Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica denominada Reflexionada, cuya propuesta fue la promoción de encuentros para discusión de temas pertinentes a la Graduación, con la finalidad de posibilitar la reflexión colectiva sobre las normas académicas y su aplicación en el cotidiano escolar. Se utilizó, como punto de partida para los encuentros, los documentos legales vigentes y la experiencia de los participantes. La estrategia fue implementada y refrendada por pesquisa de opinión, que indicó viabilidad de la continuidad de la propuesta. Algunos desdoblamientos fueron percibidos, como, por ejemplo, la proposición del proyecto nuevo asesoramiento y la implantación de un protocolo para atención al alumno en crisis, adaptado a la realidad del ITA. Se concluye así, que la estrategia fue válida, para más allá del abordaje prescriptiva y normativa, apuntando la importancia de un proceso de diálogo con la comunidad académica, intencionalmente acercando los aspectos legales del cotidiano escolar.

**Palabras clave:** educación universitaria; labor docente; comprometimiento organizacional

### Refletindo sobre o cotidiano acadêmico: uma experiência no Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica

#### RESUMO

O presente relato aborda a experiência instituída no Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica denominada Reflita, cuja proposta foi a promoção de encontros para a discussão de temas pertinentes à Graduação, a fim de oportunizar a reflexão coletiva sobre as normas acadêmicas e sua aplicação no cotidiano escolar. Utilizou-se, como ponto de partida para os encontros, os documentos legais vigentes e a experiência dos participantes. A estratégia foi implementada e referendada por pesquisa de opinião, que indicou a viabilidade da continuidade da proposta. Alguns desdobramentos foram percebidos, como por exemplo, a proposição do projeto novo aconselhamento e a implantação de um protocolo para atendimento ao aluno em crise, adaptado à realidade do ITA. Conclui-se assim, que a estratégia foi válida, para além da abordagem prescritiva e normativa, apontando a importância de um processo de diálogo com a comunidade acadêmica, intencionalmente aproximando os aspectos legais do cotidiano escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** educação superior; trabalho docente; comprometimento organizacional

<sup>1</sup> State University of Campinas – Campinas – SP – Brazil; [clacaz@ita.br](mailto:clacaz@ita.br); [tellesmartam@hotmail.com](mailto:tellesmartam@hotmail.com); [marinamlerys@gmail.com](mailto:marinamlerys@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article consists of describing an experience named “Reflita”. It was idealized, coordinated, and developed by the taskforce of the Division of Student Matters or “Divisão de Assuntos Estudantis” (DAE), a sector that is part of the Graduation Pro-rectory of The Airforce Technological Institute or “Instituto Tecnológico da Aeronáutica” (ITA). This department is responsible for helping students develop and for providing support to academic life.

The proposal was based on the promotion of meetings for discussing themes that are related to Graduation, after 2018, in order to provide an opportunity for collective reflection on the ITA pedagogical system.

The exercise of reflexive practice finds support in the perspective of Schön (1997), who considers it necessary to produce reflection in action, reflection on action, and reflection in and on action. The action highlights the relevance of individual reflection, based on practice itself, as a counterpoint to what is routinely and simply passed along in the many times overloaded and decontextualized professional everyday life.

Based on this premise, the Reflita can also be understood as an instance of continuous formation, as a comprehensive proposal that is linked to the development of the school, of education, and of the teaching profession. In an exploratory research on the teachers’ motivation to remain in the profession, Davoglio, Spangoli and Santos (2017) demonstrated that the continuous formation is the second most relevant reason for the teachers in the research.

The initial demand, which generated the Reflita proposal, was based on an observation of the members of the DAE team, made up of teachers, an education psychologist, a social assistant, and a pedagogue: normally, there were registrations of situations that indicated lack of knowledge or inaccurate understanding of academic norms and of their application by the teachers in general.

The hypothesis that, probably, explained such situations was related to the singular condition of the ITA, a federal public institution of higher education that is linked to the Airforce Command, whose academic regime combines general rules dictated by the ministry of education and the normative specifications of the Brazilian Airforce.

In this context, and trying to overcome the challenge of informing and realizing interventions, the team needed strategies for practice with teachers. How can we raise awareness on the discussion? What are the most relevant themes in the everyday life of schools? How can we create a routine that would lead to a discussion over norms, in an informal way, and at the same time, with good acceptance at school?

These questions by the team led to the idea of collective reflection, based on the knowledge and

practices of the group. Researchers chose to systematize the most important legal documents that regulate the everyday life of the institute, while verifying the themes with the most impact on the activities of the teachers and, also, with academic reverberations on the students. Based on this survey, the members of the DAE team prepared the presentations and guided the discussions by means of examples that had already been experienced in the ITA routine.

## REFLITA IN ACTION

In order to promote the Reflita, biweekly meetings were planned. The starting point consisted of current legal documents, especially, the Regulating Norms for the ITA Graduation Courses (Brasil, 2017) and the participants’ experience. Thus, there were invitations for efforts by the DAE for support by the inner academic community (seasoned and new teachers, instructors, and administration staff) and, in addition, with opportunities for suggestions and other themes of common interest. In this sense, according to Moura and Facci (2016), these are the professionals who are responsible for producing and starting institutional practices at school. Their actions must target the students’ education.

It is important to emphasize that, in 2018, 58 new teachers entered the ITA, by means of a public tender with intense competition, approximately 1.252 valid entries. A quick survey on the profile of these entries made it possible to verify that most of them came from teaching professions, with experience in other institutions of higher education in other regions of the country.

Initially, based on regulating norms, the Reflita meetings dealt with specific themes, such as the main reasons for absence, cancellations, and dropouts, procedures that were caused by the instauration of the Commission for the Verification of School Development, or “Comissão de Verificação de Aproveitamento Escolar” (CVAE), counseling, test review and the disciplinarian regime of the institution.

Discussing the application of the norms to everyday practices is something very important because it allows teachers and administration to get familiar with the mission, with the values and the organizational structure of the ITA because, according to Schön (1997), institutional integration is vital for the development of a reflexive practice.

It is important to highlight the fact that, during the meetings, in addition to the normative themes, the inner community showed interest in action protocols for initial procedure in situations of distress among the students, considering that entrance in higher education implies processes of change that are generally quite significant and determinant for young students.

It is possible to observe, regarding those entering the ITA, some difficulty in adaptation due to the need to move to another city and live away from family

because the students come from distant regions of the country. Although it is not mandatory, most of the students coming from other places choose to stay in the accommodations provided by the institution.

The interest of the teachers in the theme seems to be related to the results found by Davoglio et al. (2017), when the relation with the students was listed as the most relevant reason for permanence of the teachers in the profession. Also, according to Gil (2012), the relations between teachers and students affect not only the students' learning but also the teachers' personal and professional satisfaction.

Regarding this demand, the Educational Orientation Action (SOE) of the Division of Student Matters offered the teachers a small capacitation course on initial assistance for students in distress. The intention was to provide information on listening and support in case of situations of emotional crisis as well as orientation on vocational guidance for DAE professionals for future specialized external service when necessary.

In order to provide support to teachers, a survey was conducted on the most important service protocols, coming from research works and experiences and the institutions that have a profile that is similar to the ITA, and the availability of high demand courses, characterized by competitiveness for entrance and the high level of dedication throughout the formation.

Thus, with the contributions and the critical review of the experienced teachers of the institute, there was a translation and an adjustment to the reality of the ITA, the protocol used by the Massachusetts Technology Institute (MIT<sup>1</sup>). The result of the work was summarized into a prospect that was widely distributed among the ITA community and that, somehow, interacted with the students and understood them as agents for the propagation of good practices among their peers.

Another theme that was approached was counseling, a strategy that has been used since the beginning of the creation of the ITA and that consists of designating teachers to provide counseling to new students. The role played by the counseling teachers consists of supporting and tutoring students throughout their academic trajectory.

Considering the relevance of the counseling, the theme was the object of intense debate at the Reflita. It demonstrated the need to keep up the work on the topic with the intention to develop a new project. To do that, the team got more information and, based on a successful international experience practiced in the Technical Superior Institute, or "Instituto Superior Técnico" (IST) in Lisbon, Portugal.

The already existing approximation between the ITA and the IST, by means of institutional partnership,

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "How to help students in distress" (a publication for MIT faculty), MIT Medical-Mental Health Service (2017).

made it possible for two professionals, from both institutes to propose a minicourse for the teachers of the ITA entitled "Contributions for the refreshment of counseling at ITA: the Tutoring Program of the IST". Thus, this initiative produced results that culminated in the release of a project named New Counseling at ITA or "Novo aconselhamento do ITA".

The dynamics of the meetings remained the same during the second semester with discussions involving the norms for complementary activities (ACPs), the works for course conclusion (TG), and other elements of equal relevance that had been suggested by the participants of the Reflita.

Some normative themes such as means of canceling undoubtedly generate direct impact among the students because, in practice, cancelling men's for students a delay in their graduation, which is something that might lead to emotional instability. In this sense, it was possible to perceive that this fact also affects teachers and, because of that, there was the decision to approach them again in the second semester, while amplifying the scope of discussions and warning students against emotional consequences and providing them with guidance regarding the most suitable way to proceed when it is necessary to stay away from the institution for a while.

## RESULTS

Even without counting on the full participation of the teachers in the meetings, the professionals who worked in the Graduation Pro-rectory started to observe great interest by people who were introduced to the proposal because of the discussions implemented by the Reflita as well as for the dynamics used in the meetings, where researchers always try to keep up the right mix of objectivity and informality while following the rules.

Thus, as a consequence of the positive history of the Reflita, the DAE team was invited to give a lecture in other organizations that were somehow involved with the teachers. There was the invitation by the Center of Preparation of Airforce Officers, or "Centro de Preparação de Oficiais da Reserva da Aeronáutica de São José dos Campos" (CPORAER)<sup>2</sup>, for a lecture on the assistance protocol for students in distress.

At the end of 2018, in order to assess the first year of development of the Reflita, and already announcing intentions to maintain the meetings in the following year, an opinion poll organized by the SOE was realized. The intention was to direct future plans and actions.

Despite its small participation in the opinion poll, the team was positively assessed regarding the Reflita, and

---

<sup>2</sup> The center of preparation of Air Force officers aims at preparing candidates for second class officers as well as promoting complementary activities for students in their professional ITA course. Another objective is the preparation military officers for the team of Air Force engineers, active and retired ones.

there was clear indication of the need for continuing in the following year. Among the themes approached during the meetings, counseling was considered by the research as the most appreciated by the participants, followed by the theme of action protocol for assistance to students in distress. Such results corroborate the idea of appreciation by the teachers on matters that involve the construction of the teacher-student relation (Rodrigues & Garms, 2007; Veras & Ferreira, 2010).

Based on the answers to the opinion poll, the DAE team also understood that other things could be developed with the teachers during the following meetings, especially things related to the teaching and learning process by means of mediation by the education psychologist and the pedagogue network at the SOE.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The history experienced here, with its actions guided by reflection, awareness of the rules, and of correct and safe applicability, produced new ways of relationship with the involved ones, relationships based on open dialogue, on the desire to overcome difficulties, and on the complexity of rules practice by the institute. Thus, it was also possible to understand some aspects related to the more experienced and the new teachers who had not gotten familiar with the administrative activities, and the academic management. Efforts like these point at the same direction – the need to guarantee consistent formation for students and a satisfactory work environment for teachers.

In the words of Bolzan and Powaczuk (2017), the constitutive processes that involve the teaching profession are characterized by time spaces that outline the teachers' careers and also contemplate a network of relations that are instituted in this trajectory.

By proposing the Reflita, the objective was to propose a dialogue that goes beyond the prescriptive, normative approach. The intention was to reach, by means of

norm, analyses, interpretations that are focused on the teachers' comprehension of the processes and dynamics that consider the students as subjects in the process.

### REFERENCES

- Bolzan, D. P. V. & Powaczuk, A. C. H. (2017). Docência universitária: a construção da professoralidade. *Revista internacional de formação de professores*, 2(1), 160-173. Recuperado de: <https://periodicos.itp.ifsp.edu.br/index.php/RIFP/article/view/660/652>
- Brasil (2017). Ministério da Defesa. Comando da Aeronáutica. *Portaria DCTA Nº 202/DCA, de 31 de Julho de 2017. ICA 37-332/2017 Normas Reguladoras para os Cursos de Graduação do ITA*. Recuperado de: [http://www.ita.br/sites/default/files/pages/collection/NOREG-GRAD\\_ICA\\_37-332%202017.pdf](http://www.ita.br/sites/default/files/pages/collection/NOREG-GRAD_ICA_37-332%202017.pdf)
- Davoglio, T. R.; Spagnolo, C. & dos Santos, B. S. (2017). Motivação para a permanência na profissão: a percepção dos docentes universitários. *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*, 21(2), 175-182. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2175-3539/2017/0212109>
- Gil, A. C. (2012). *Didática do ensino superior*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Moura, F. R. & Facci, M. G. D. (2016). A atuação do psicólogo escolar no ensino superior: configurações, desafios e proposições sobre o fracasso escolar. *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*, 20(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2175-3539/2015/02031036>
- Rodrigues, S. A. & Garms, G. M. Z. (2007). O lugar da afetividade no ambiente de aprendizagem: desafio da prática docente. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação*, 1 (2), 231-239. <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v1i2.450>
- Schön, D. (1997). Formar professores como profissionais reflexivos. In Antônio, M. S. S. N. (Ed.), *Os Professores e a sua Formação* (3a ed). Lisboa: Dom Quixote.
- Veras, R. S. & Ferreira, S. P. A. (2010). A afetividade na relação professor-aluno e suas implicações na aprendizagem, em contexto universitário. *Educar em Revista*, 38, 219-235. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0104-40602010000300015>

This paper was translated from Portuguese by Régis Lima.

Submitted on: October 19, 2020

Accepted on: December 26, 2020