



UNIVERSITY PLACEMENT TESTS: A PROPOSAL TO DECREASE EVASION AND RETENTION

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RESUMO: Considerando os aspectos de evasão e retenção escolar no ensino superior e como minimizá-la, este artigo foi escrito para mostrar a importância da criação de projetos de nivelamento, nas modalidades presencial e a distância, e dos programas de inclusão da própria instituição e do Ministério da Educação (MEC) na Universidade Federal de Jataí (UFJ), anteriormente Regional Jataí da Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG/REJ). Esses projetos se justificam, baseados em índices de evasão, nas diretrizes do MEC e nos projetos de inclusão da UFG/UFJ. Para a condução desta análise utilizamos como ferramenta o questionário geral online enviado aos coordenadores de curso com a seguinte questão: “*Há alguma política/atividade de nivelamento descrita no PPC do curso? Breve relato*”. Percebemos que não existem ações de nivelamento institucionalizadas, e que esta deficiência tende a propiciar um maior índice de evasão e retenção nos cursos de graduação da UFG/REJ-UFJ. Neste sentido, apresentamos e explicamos propostas de ações de nivelamento a distância e presenciais que poderão proporcionar ao discente um maior sucesso acadêmico e a permanência em seus cursos até a conclusão.

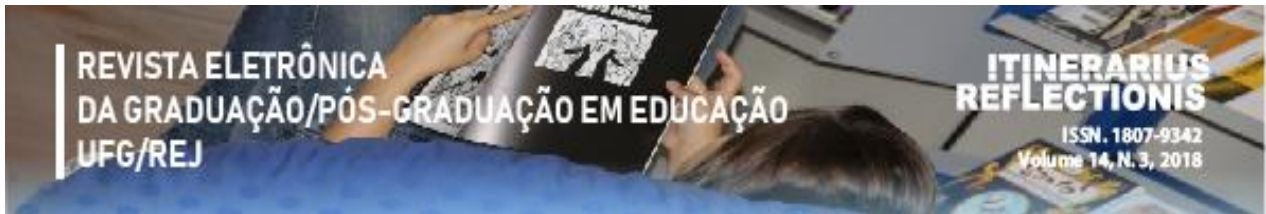
Palavras-chave: Universidade Federal de Jataí. Programas de nivelamento. Evasão escolar.

ABSTRACT Considering dropout rate aspects in higher education and how to minimize it, this article was written to show the importance of creating leveling projects, as on-campus and distance learning modalities, the institution’s and the Ministry of Education’s (MEC) inclusion programs at the Universidade Federal de Jataí (UFJ), previous University of Goiás, Regional Jataí (UFG/REJ). These placement projects are justified, based on evasion rates, on MEC’s guidelines and on UFG’s inclusion projects. In order to conduct this analysis, we used a general online questionnaire as a tool, sent to course coordinators, with the following question: “*Is there any placement policy/activity described in the course PPC? A brief account.*” We noticed there are no institutionalized placement programs, and this deficiency tends to lead to a higher evasion and retention rate at UFG/REJ undergraduate courses. In this sense, we presented and explained proposals for distance learning and on-campus placement actions to provide students with greater academic success and permanence in their courses until completion.

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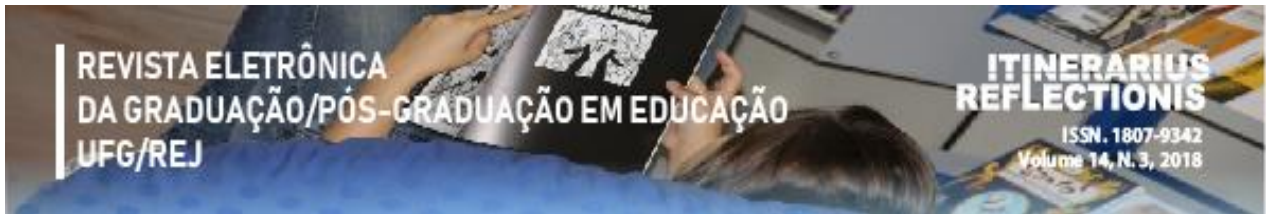
Keywords: Federal University of Jataí. Placement programs. Dropout rates.

1. INTRODUCTION

School dropout has been pointed out as one of the main problems that widely beset educational institutions. Finding its causes has been the object of many studies and educational research, with different approaches and methodologies. In Brazilian public higher education, it is a problem that leads to social, academic and economic waste, given the great government investment in higher education (NETO, CRUZ and PFITSCHER, 2009).

Despite its great impact on public universities, conceptualizing evasion is complex (MEDEIROS ROSA, 2014). Notwithstanding, using the methodology recommended by FORPLAD⁴ (MENDES ET AL., 2015), we find that in UFG/REJ courses, from 2009 to 2018, the completion percentage of majored students was 36.35% while dropout rate was 17.61%. However, such percentage may vary according to the area of study, being higher in undergraduate and graduate courses (see Evasion Study article published in UFG/REJ - Teaching Dossier).

⁴ National Forum of Planning and Administration Pro-Rectors of Higher Education Federal Institutions. More details available at <http://forplad.andifes.org.br/> (in Portuguese).



Even with the considerable evasion impact on universities and public money spending, there are few studies that systematize evasion in education and its causes (SILVA, 2013). In most cases, there is a reason simplification, alleging students' lack of financial conditions to remain at university, no matter how, other issues such as: course lack of affinity, lack of pedagogical assessment for permanence and completion, lack of inclusion and placement policies are seldom discussed.

In addition to what was stated above, the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 deals with Education in Title VIII (Social Order), Chapter III (Education, Culture and Sport), Section I (Education). In article 206, section 1, of Education, we have that, "Teaching will be provided based on the following principles: I - equality of conditions for access and permanence at school ... VII – the assurance of quality standard". Considering the foregoing, we can see placement programs ensure equality of conditions to guarantee teaching quality. Hence, it is not possible to assure without ensuring the quality standard and vice-versa.

Beyond students' permanence, there are school dropout and retention problems. The latter culminates with deadlines exhaustion for course completions and possible evasion, what is a reason for concern. Each year, UFG students' exclusion calls are published for various reasons (PROGRAD, 2014, 2015, 2016). That leads to the fact that some of them return to university, whereas others do not.

In order to minimize the exclusion of so many students, in the General Regulation of Undergraduate Courses (RGCG) restatement (UFG, 2017), exclusion factors were eliminated from previous Regulations, such as: students failing three (3) times for absences in the same discipline or a thematic module and violating the Agreement-Undergraduate Students Program (PEC-G) protocol, according to CEPEC⁵ 1122, Resolution of November 9, 2012). We believe that, if the student can have the needed support, in the beginning of his undergraduate course, through an institutionalized placement program, undergraduate courses retention in curricular components will be much less.

⁵ Teaching, Research, Extension and Culture Council at UFG. More details available at < <https://www.ufg.br/n/97289-conhece-consuni-cepec-e-camaras-superiores> >.



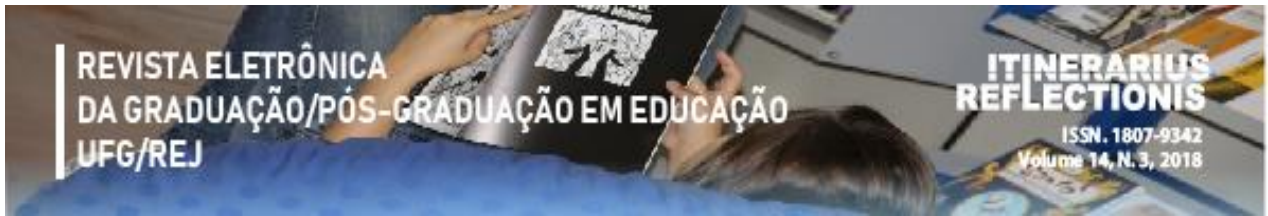
Thus, the purpose of this document is to demonstrate the need to create teaching projects for UFJ students' placement program projects. To justify the creation of these projects, dropout rate issues, the Ministry of Education (MEC) guidelines and UFG and MEC social inclusion projects were addressed.

In Section 2, we will explain the methods used for data collection, as well as the instruments used to lead to results; in Section 3, we will present and discuss the results. Finally, in Section 4, we will write our conclusion.

2. METHODS

This study investigation was directed by MEC's Instrument of Evaluation for Undergraduate Courses – on-campus study and distance learning - Dimension 1, and it was part of Axis 2 studies - About Courses General Conditions (MEC, 2015). As a method tool, a general online questionnaire was sent to course coordinators, displaying the following question: "Is there any placement policy/activity described in the course PPC⁶ or carried out by the course coordination or through an extension or research project? - A Brief Report" (for further information, see article presented on UFG/REJ - Teaching Dossier).

⁶ A Course Pedagogical Project (PPC) is a guiding document that brings the educational actions and explains the political, philosophical, objectives, type of organization, as well as ways of implementing and evaluating undergraduate courses. More details available at <
[https://www.prograd.ufg.br/up/90/o/Orientaes para elaboracao de PPC - vers o 20-04-11.pdf](https://www.prograd.ufg.br/up/90/o/Orientaes%20para%20elaboracao%20de%20PPC%20-%20vers%20o%2020-04-11.pdf)>.

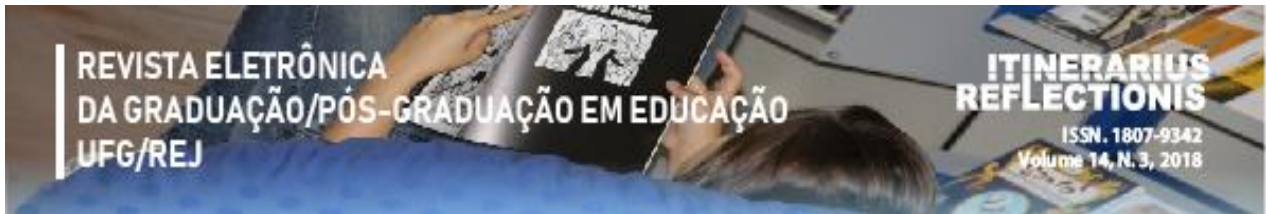


3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the previous questionnaire analysis, we noticed that there are no institutionalized placement programs carried out by UFG – nor by any course of UFG/REJ, nowadays UFJ. Since placement programs are an important factor for student support policies consolidation and permanence, the lack of placement programs is an extremely fragile aspect of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and it can contribute to students' failure.

Regarding that result, it is imperative that teaching projects, aimed at mitigating retention and dropout impact at UFG/REJ courses, be created. Teaching projects should prepare students for disciplines and for complying with MEC and Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP)⁷ requirements.

⁷ INEP, available at <http://www.inep.gov.br/>.



In fact, the Decree n. 5,773, dated May 9, 2006 edition (BRASIL, 2006), regarding the exercise of regulation functions, supervision and evaluation of HEI and undergraduate and sequential courses in the Federal System of Education requires a new Institutional Development Plan (PDI) adequacy of procedures and analysis.

In 10.861 Law of April 14, 2004 (BRASIL, 2004), which establishes the National System for Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES), MEC has initiated a process of attributions and competencies of the Higher Education Secretariat (SESu) review, the Professional and Technological Education Secretary (SETEC), the Education National Council (CNE) and INEP, aiming at consolidating the work done and giving greater efficiency to the devices contained in 9.394/96 Law – Guidelines and Bases of Education Law (LDB), which motivated the previous change (BRASIL, 1996).

Based on the institutional evaluation instrument, on PDI essential thematic axes, number VI Students' Service Policies, Pedagogical and Financial Support Programs and stimuli to permanence (placement programs, psycho pedagogical assessment), among others are essential to students' well-being (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2015).

Although the HEI has funding for monitoring scholarships, meeting the first requirement, and the psycho pedagogical assessment partially meeting the second, placement programs do not exist at UFG nor at UFG/REJ.

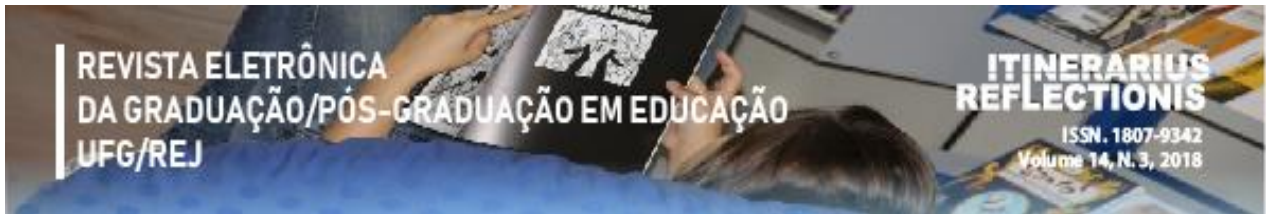
Some proposals can be listed to decrease dropout rates, such (1) placement programs on distance learning basis (for disciplines in initial years of courses), (2) formation being tutored by students attending UFG and UFG/REJ (licentiate courses compulsory curricular practicum). Such placement program types are considerably adequate, both for students who need help and for tutoring students who will practice offering disciplines via distance learning.

Even though online training can be effective for undergraduates, who have computers and Internet at home, it may be ineffective for students who are not privileged, with low digital inclusion or other weaknesses that undermine students' online learning. Thus, on-campus training can be more efficient in some cases and complement distance learning. Such propose, in turn, demands financial investment with teaching materials and scholarships for instructors and students who will be involved in training and placement processes.



To this scenario, MEC's social inclusion and affirmative action programs should be added. MEC has implemented programs and actions to ensure access and permanence of certain segments of the Brazilian population, especially indigenous people, *quilombolas*⁸, Afro-descendants and public-school students at the higher education level.

⁸ Communities composed of African-derived populations that have their territories guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution.



UFG, supported by 12.711/2012 Law and 21/2012 Normative Ordinance, will offer 50% of its openings to: (1) candidates for Opening Reserve, with gross per capita family income equal to or less than 1,5 minimum wage, who have completed High School in public schools; (2) self-declared colored, brown or indigenous candidates, chosen by the Opening Reserve, with a gross per capita family income equal to or less than 1,5 minimum wage, who have completed High School in public schools; (3) Candidates for the Opening Reserve, who, regardless of their income, have completed High School in public schools; (4) candidates self-declared colored, brown or indigenous people, chosen by the Opening Reserve, who, regardless of their income, have completed High School in public schools.

In addition to these social inclusion modalities, UFG still has the *UFG-Inclui* program⁹, CONSUNI Resolution n. 29/2008, modified by 20/2010 and 18/2011 Resolutions, which deal with *UFG-Inclui* at the university campi, according to which there is an opening increase at UFG, specifically to indigenous and *quilombolas*, when on demand.

Regarding what was stated before, it is evident that students with special pedagogical needs have increased and tend to increase even more at UFG and UFG/REJ over the years, hence the need for student support and placement programs (on-campus and online), with scholarships for program participants, as explained before.

⁹ UFG-Inclui is an inclusion program that aims to develop access and permanence actions for students, such as: ensuring all university access, promoting permanence and following these students' trajectory.



The proposal we make is that instructors, professors or majored administrative technicians, and monitors act in strategic teaching areas: a) language usage; b) text interpretation; c) social inclusion policies; d) digital inclusion (use of information technology); e) Basic Mathematics; f) Basic Chemistry; g) Basic Physics; h) Natural and Biological Sciences.

Classes or placement activities may occur on students' counter-shift, during Summer and Winter courses, or online (except for the digital inclusion course) for students who work, consequently they cannot attend university on a reverse shift. Placement program strategies and their organization should be discussed and elaborated by a committee, but it needs funding and human resources. They should be implemented urgently, so that they can help restrain retention and evasion processes and improve undergraduates' equivalent quotient.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a conclusion, we verify that at UFG and UFG/REJ there are no placement programs nor projects, neither institutionalized nor carried independently by any course. Institutionalized placement programs and projects are essential for reducing retention and dropout rates. Initiatives to implement placement courses through long distance learning tutored by students who are attending compulsory curricular practicum in undergraduate courses are interesting and do not demand much cost. However, we believe that there may be limitations from the target public, who lack equipment and technological accessibility. Thus, we propose that, at least, part of the placement programs be on-campus. By proposing these measures, we hope to have contextualized retention and dropout rates at UFG and UFG/REJ and to bring out some strategies that might help avoid students dropping-out and help them conclude their university studies successfully.

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