Chapter 9

A Pedagogical Model of Distance Training for the Continuous Training of Magistrates

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ABSTRACT

Being aware of the importance of e-learning within existing training structures and in different professional contexts, this chapter aims to contribute to the modernization of the training practices implemented in the continuous training of magistrates, through the design of a pedagogical model of distance training, using a hybrid regime, to be implemented in the continuous training of magistrates. The implementation of a model of this nature is of great value for the training carried out by the Centre for Judicial Studies (CEJ), an entity responsible for the initial and continuous training of Portuguese magistrates, as it can constitute a pedagogical innovation of the training practices. The pedagogical model of distance learning that has been developed for the ongoing training of Portuguese magistrates is described and understood as a set of pedagogical assumptions and guidelines for planning, designing, and evaluating the distance training action.
INTRODUCTION

It has become a commonplace to say that human resources are the main asset of organizations (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalh, 2000). All the institutions need highly performing individuals with access to well-done training and on-demand support, not only to achieve their professional goals but also to assure a competitive advantage of the institution in today's financial markets (Adkins, 2006). On the other hand, the conception of ‘career’ has surpassed the mere meaning of a sequence of steps in a profession or organization to acquire a broader meaning. The notion that one moves on from school to an organization and from there to retirement has lost its meaning (London & Smither, 1999), making lifelong learning an essential part of life, in order to acquire, update and strengthen new knowledge and information.

In this perspective, e-learning emerges today as a manifestly recognized mean of diffusion of education and training and a form of structuring training that meant to respond to the great challenges of teaching and learning in the 21st century (Bonk, 2016). Distance learning appears as a mechanism that allows individuals to have access to a lifelong education, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by today’s Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), progressively gaining ground as a complement to the traditional systems of education and training, from the logistic point of view and from the quality of the education provided. In this field, education has gained a privileged position with regard to the personal and professional development of citizens and the promotion of new skills, prevailing an increasing demand for new approaches to promote lifelong learning, with ICT being an essential resource at this level (Pestek, Kacapor & Ritan, 2009).

The increasing globalization and technological innovation that have taken place in recent years have fostered the emergence of new scientific, economic, social and professional requirements which have made a difference to the professional groups and institutions, and the professional group of magistrates is not an exception.

The continuous scientific and technological developments that have been brought to light, require a permanent effort of magistrates to gain, train and develop new knowledge and skills in order to be able to fully fulfill their functions and to be adapted to the changes that have presently emerged (Pestek, Kacapor & Ritan, 2009).

These profound social, educational and technological changes are also influencing the area of law and the judiciary in particular, and there is a need to keep up with those that are considered the best pedagogical practices and the technological advances that occur, mainly through the implementation of distance training schemes, with the creation of more appealing and interactive digital resources and the use of technological tools and online learning resources that promote communication and interaction between trainees and the teachers. Online learning environments and digital tools make it possible, among other things, to support the better management
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