



Artigo

Demystifying a rite of passage: an approach applied to the final paper presentation of the first Bachelor class in Public Administration at distance from Federal University of Juiz de Fora

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present, through an exploratory-descriptive methodology, the advisorship process evolution during the final paper thesis production moment from the first distance Bachelor class in Public Administration implemented at Federal University of Juiz de Fora. Bringing to the context, elements that historically compose the discussion of the ritual, its trends and main elements, in the anthropology and ethnology fields, this paper aims to understand the final paper thesis as being a part of an academic ritual, in which the student is inserted into, and, specifically, as being a rite of passage planned and elaborated for structure and pedagogical practices of a distance course in Public Administration. Among the first obtained results are definition and systematization of the process of creating a research topic and final papers, focusing mainly on the specificities that were identified during the course. The article has an introductory and a second chapters that present the rites of passage as an anthropological concept, another chapter that explains the research methodology and a

fourth chapter that discusses the intervention and advisor process during a final paper production moment with the, followed by the final considerations.

Keywords: Rite of passage. Advisorship process. Pedagogical practices in distance education.

RESUMEN

En este trabajo se presenta a partir de la metodología exploratoria-descriptiva, la evolución del proceso de correlación de los “trabajos de conclusión de cursos (TCC)” desarrollados por la primera clase de Licenciado en Administración Pública, a distancia, de la Universidad Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFFJ).

Llevar los elementos de contexto el trabajo que históricamente han estado componiendo la discusión en el campo de la antropología y la etnología, el proceso ritual, sus tendencias y los principales elementos, el artículo busca entender la TCC como parte de un rito académico, dependiendo del espacio que se

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inserta el estudiante, en el caso concreto de un rito de paso y se preparó para la estructura y las prácticas pedagógicas de un curso en la administración pública a distancia.

Entre los primeros resultados obtenidos, está la definición y sistematización del proceso de construcción de los trabajos de investigación y de plazo, centrándose principalmente en los aspectos específicos que se identificaron durante el curso. El artículo tiene un capítulo introductorio y un segundo capítulo que presenta los ritos de paso como un concepto antropológico, que explica la metodología de la investigación y el cuarto capítulo que trata el proceso de intervención de TCC, seguido de las palabras de clausura.

Palabras clave: Rito de paso. Proceso de orientación. Prácticas pedagógicas en la educación a distancia.

RESUMO

Este trabalho visa apresentar, a partir da metodologia exploratória-descritiva, a evolução do processo de orientação dos Trabalhos de Conclusão de Curso (TCC) elaborados pela primeira turma do Bacharelado em Administração Pública, ministrado na modalidade a distância pela Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF).

Trazendo para o contexto do trabalho os elementos que historicamente vêm compondo a discussão, na área da antropologia e etnologia, do processo ritualístico, suas tendências e elementos principais, o artigo busca compreender o TCC como parte de um rito acadêmico, em função do espaço no qual o aluno se insere, tratando-se especificamente de um rito de passagem pensado e elaborado para a estrutura e práticas pedagógicas de um curso de Administração Pública a distância.

Dentre os primeiros resultados obtidos, destacam-se a definição e sistematização do processo de construção da pesquisa e

trabalhos finais, tendo em vista principalmente as especificidades que foram identificadas no decorrer do curso. O artigo conta com um capítulo introdutório e um segundo capítulo que apresentam os rituais de passagem como conceito antropológico, outro que explicita a metodologia da pesquisa e um quarto capítulo que trata do processo de intervenção do TCC, seguido de considerações finais.

Palavras-chave: Rito de passagem. Processo de orientação. Práticas pedagógicas em EaD.

INTRODUCTION

Rituals are habits and representations that take place in everyday life of man for a long time. Regarding the anthropological and sociological analysis, nearly two hundred years all kinds of rites serve as a research subject and guide various theories about it. The great diversity of peoples and cultures of contemporary society also is reflected in multiple and varied ritualistic organization - whether religious, political, recreational or social nature - which groups represent, both in ceremony situations and in the proper context of everyday life. Understand the functions of these rituals and their role in society is a constant concern to the extent that these rituals often guide the understanding and positioning of individuals faced with a fact or situation.

The purpose of the work presented here is to bring to the context of rites of passage questioning and understanding the process of building and defending the End of Course Papers (TCC) of the students of Public Administration DE of *Faculdade de Administração e Ciências Contábeis* (FACC) of the *Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora* (UFJF). Accordingly, are presented and placed for discussion the results of a defense proposal of differentiated TCC structure that usually has bachelor degrees in space, built continuously, culminating in a ritualistic representation too specific.

1. SELECTED THEORETICAL MILESTONES: BRIEF OBSERVATIONS

No que diz respeito à orientação antropológica em regards to the anthropological orientation, there are some classic ways to understand the ritual practices: we bring in this article, some theorists who drew an understanding of ritualistic process within modern society as Roberto Da Matta (1977) and Van Gennep (1977). Let us begin by Da Matta, an anthropologist who stood out in the Brazilian context by examining some of the most important rituals of the country's culture, tracing an understanding to guide - and guide today - how to understand the Brazilian cultural manifestation. According to Da Matta (1977), the rite is defined as:

[...] what is below and above the repetition of things "real" and "concrete" of the workaday world. For the rite also suggests and implies the hope of all men in their unending willingness to go and stay, to hide and show, to control and release, this constant transformation of the world and of itself that is entered in the verb live in society (DA MATTA, 1977, p. 11).

Importantly the symbolic character assigned to such rituals within the context in which we are all inserted, which explain and define this ritual action. This guidance symbolism, contemporary studies are based on the conceptual contribution of Stanley Tambiah (cited Peirano, 2003). Follows its definition for ritual, plus explanatory everyday examples built by Peirano (2003):

The ritual is a cultural system of symbolic communication. It consists of sequences ordered and standardized words and deeds, generally expressed by multiple means. These sequences have content and arrangements characterized by varying degrees of formality (conventionality), stereotyping (stiffness), condensation (fusion) and redundancy (repetition).

The ritual action into its constituent traits can be seen as "performative" in three ways: 1) in the direction in which to say it is also to do something as a conventional act as when we say "yes" to the priest's question at a wedding 2) in the direction in which the participants intensely experience a performance that uses multiple media [an example would be our carnival] and 3) finally, in the sense values are inferred and created by actors during performance [for example, when identified as "Brazil" the football team world champion] (PEIRANO, 2003, p. 11).

Van Gennep (1977), one of the first scholars to analyze the sociological rites brought to the academic scene the proposal to insert situational understanding the ritual actions. From the realization that since the ancestors of man until human groups of modernity, symbolic rituals are found in every moment of life, the author adds that "in a multitude of consciously expressed forms or merely implied, there a typical pattern ever-recurring: the pattern of rites of passage" (Van Gennep 1977: 191.). It is about the difference that these rites of passage bring to anthropological understanding of the rituals that Van Gennep concerns and, particularly, is what interests us to reflect on them within the higher academic performance.

Regarding specifically to rites of passage, is possible to draw an understanding of the interpretative trends that appeared in the academic scenario from that concept. The first trend places them as a mandatory adaptive response, as individuals are compelled to change their position within a given system. Seen from this angle, the rites would take social secondary elaborations, as it would appear in order to trim certain conflict generated by some antagonistic transition, inevitable or problematic.

The second interpretative trend changes from the first by its collective character. According to Da Matta (2000), the novelty of this second tendency is to take the

symbolism of the rites of passage drama as values, axioms, conflicts and social contradictions. Explaining: it is entering the rites of passage in the dynamics of human society from a shifted perspective, stressed the linearity and continuity of the actions of men, rather than view them as situations, processes or pathological roles, criminals or by exception.

This is a very interesting and conflicting feature in defining the rites. While Durkheim (1996, p 19) is limited to the position that the rites are conducts that govern human behavior in an absolute manner and lead to a static situation in society - made up of a coercive system of rules - Van Gennep (1977), in turn, disregards this static premise, because in his opinion the rite of passage would be characterized by an intermediary and temporary period of doubt and conflict - a temporal gap - which allows the individual to reflect on their existence in society.

In this sense, we insert in the discussion launched a rite of passage to specific academic context of higher education: the defense of the end of course paper, last action of the student in the student role in its course. Understanding rite by the act or set of behaviors that follow certain rules and are repeated throughout history, it can assign some situations the university career that label ritual behavior. Of all the rituals, the timing of initiation and completion of academic life (hazing and graduation respectively) are among the most recognized. Also in this context, the work presented here intends to bring into question the organization and presentation of end of course paper as one of those significant rites for the recognition of the subject as belonging or not to a particular group or a particular situation.

It is important at first find the historic importance of this rite of passage for the academic community. The first universities were also created in the Middle Ages, in the twelfth century: in 1158, instituted the University of Bologna and, in 1170, to Paris, who later

becomes known Sorbonne University. Back in 1290, the University of Coimbra in Portugal was instituted, which affects more decisively in the academic and professional training in Brazil. These universities also pioneered the development of an extensive ceremonial connected to the responsibility of the university in the preservation of historical and traditional values of the culture of which it is part. "European universities - in particular, the Portuguese - served as a model of scholastic university for Brazil" (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2008, p 129), and next to that model also inherited the adopted rituals, especially those relating to the secular academic solemnities those universities (VIANA, 1998, p. 43).

The End of Course Papers historically signed as requirements for obtaining the titles within these secular academic solemnities are related undergraduate or graduate at the end of the training period. They have the intention of allowing the construction of a characteristically original work, summarizing the research efforts and knowledge of students. In this way, it means the development of CBT as a rite of passage from a point of view that perceives it as continuity of actions, an intermediate and temporary period necessary to complete their formation.

As a rite of passage, it is argued here that the monograph defense in undergraduate courses integrates a moment in which the student may culminate academic life, becoming this act as a kind of transition element between the end of graduation and graduation. Then it can return to the position adopted by Van Gennep (1997), to understand the rites of passage as compounds of phases phenomena, namely, separation and merger sociability. Among these, there is a period liminal, marginal or border, that the subject goes through in order to fit in the collective plan. Framing the rite of submission of the thesis, dissertation or qualification injunction that would allow contextualize the end of course papers as a ritual expression.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

In order to support the realization of an intervention in the end of course papers defense case prepared by graduates of the first class of Bachelor in Public Administration in the distance mode of FACC / UFJF, we seek methodological support in the cutout of the exploratory and descriptive research. This methodology aims to then identify, record and analyze the characteristics or variables that will relate to the phenomenon studied. The definition of Cervo, Bervian and Silva (2007):

The descriptive notes, records, analyzes and correlates events or phenomena (variables) without manipulating them. Seeks to discover, as accurately as possible, often a phenomenon occurs, its relationship and connection with others, their nature and their characteristics. Seeks to know the different situations and relationships that occur in social, political, economic and other aspects of human behavior, taken alone as more complex groups and communities. Descriptive research can take various forms, such as descriptive studies and documentary research. (CERVO; BERVIAN; SILVA, 2007, p. 62)

In this clipping that Cervo, Bervian and Silva (2007) proposes a descriptive research as a method that has dimension of observation and proximity to the phenomenon and, from there propose to identify research problems and guide the analysis.

3. THE PROCESS OF INTERVENTION

The relation of the FACC / UFJF the context of offering distance learning courses began to be settled from 2005, when linked to a pioneering project of the distance higher education in the administration area. The so-called "Pilot Program" course of Public Administration distance had funding from the Banco do Brasil and, lasting from 2006 to 2010, trained about 11 thousand students

from being supported by various federal and state institutions, among which the UFJF .

From an interest aroused regarding the integration of distance education mode in the national agenda in the sphere of action of the Brazilian government, other initiatives are now established at the national level to institutionalize the promotion and practice of distance education in the country. The Open University of Brazil (UAB) is a product of a policy aimed at improving the quality of education in the country from the inclusion of Distance Education (DE) in an institutionalized context. Developed and designed by the Federal Government / MEC, the proposal of the organ is the articulation, interaction and execution of initiatives that stimulate the partnership of the three levels of government (federal, state and municipal) with public universities, in order to make mechanisms of development to implementation and execution of syndicated courses, in order to contribute to the internalization of higher education in the country. It is within this UAB proposal appearing key higher education initiatives through distance education in Brazil, including the course of Public Administration, taken here as a research object.

Some issues related to the process of learning and teaching practices are specific to higher education through distance learning. Still, this type still have some situations in common with the model of face higher education. Academic rituals, for example, were not extinguished. The object of the work presented here, which are the term paper course of graduate studies in Public Administration, can be taken as examples of teaching organization and proposed graduation that resemble the face teaching. Regarding the term paper course structure studied here, although the presentation and exhibition of the works has been changing (being explained more clearly below), the proposal of the work as ritual remains the same as ceremony of passage and affirmation before the others.

The curricular organization of the distance course of Public Administration of UFJF has been conceived and structured from prerogatives that take into account mainly the very course teaching mode. The proposal of the subjects of "Thematic Seminar" was organized in order to facilitate a more continuous monitoring and guidance and present at ODL student in this crucial part of building a work that symbolizes the completion of their activities. Thus, the proposal was to create continuous subjects of "Seminars", as follows: Integration Seminar; Seminar theme I, II and III; Thematic Seminar on Specific Training Line (LFE I / LFE II / III LFE), which could make room for planning and development, since the second period of the course, a proposal for students term paper.

From the proposal planned for curricular organization of the course, the intervention related to the actions in the Thematic Seminar was oriented, in our view, from a monitoring and developing the research and all the Term paper building process. This is relevant in that it can interfere with the way the students perceive and effectively face the organization of the final work and the way to understand and behave front of the rite of passage of presentation of the work,

culminated by its construction. In this way, the proposal was to dilute working with the construction of the Term paper in a period longer than the last year of the course, already signaling a differentiated positioning.

Aiming to characterize the proposed intervention, we believe consistent segmenting it into its constituent steps, namely: defining lines of research; Linking the work of the thematic areas; direction of work; textual and methodological assessment and, finally, to carry out their respective defenses, which are detailed below. It should reaffirm that, taking as its starting point the observation that the Term paper were drafted in the scenario of a course taught in the distance, the central proposal then resided in the perspective of release the most of the execution of that rite of passage.

3.1. Definition of Research Areas

Starting from the initial efforts, involving contact with the Thematic Seminar discipline, students were instructed to build their research projects, based on the model adopted in FACC. This effort was then completed in the seventh period, and after an intense process of analysis, defined the research areas expressed in Table 1:

Table 1: Definition of Term paper's Research Areas

Area	Description
1	Strategy, management and public policy
2	People work management in the public sector
3	Operations, systems and services in the public sphere
4	Bids, contracts and agreements
5	Public finance, governance and transparency

Source: UFJF - Course Coordination data (2013)

3.1.1. Segmentation of Research Areas by Thematic Areas and Linking of Term paper

Following the operations and depending on the amount of work prepared by line of research, it was necessary to distribute them by

thematic areas in the most equitable manner possible and to this end, it has become mandatory to maintain direct contact with hitherto elaborate designs. Thus, 106 students built their projects in the research areas described in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Linking the Papers with Research Areas

Area	Description
1	Strategy, management and public policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Area 1 - Public Policies • Thematic Area 2 - Strategy and public management • Thematic Area 3 - School management and health management
2	People work management in the public sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Area 4 - Leadership and motivation • Thematic area 5 - Training and qualification
3	Operations, systems and services in the public sphere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic area 6 - Operations, logistics and quality • Thematic Area 7 - Technologies and information systems
4	Bids, contracts and agreements
5	Public Finance, governance and transparency

Source: UFJF - Coordination Course Data (2013)

3.2. Guidance of Work

Initially, ten teachers were contacted, in order to meet the necessary guidance to start that process, with each one responsible for conducting around ten guidelines. Following,

performed to understanding and normalizing actions with guiding to municia them with information about the intervention process. Seven stages of evolution were fixed, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Stages of Evolution of Work

Stage	Description
1	Choice and thematic setting or thematic correlation
2	Preparation of theoretical framework (*)
3	Development of methodological aspects
4	Full reference theorist and early case study
5	Full wording of the case or application focus
6	Final review
7	Apt for delivery and defense of work

Source: UFJF - Coordination Course Data (2013)

The process started then, in August 2013. In order to ensure the construction of fruitful relations between the parties directly involved, it should be clarified that all the selected teachers had strong knowledge in their

respective thematic areas. Meanwhile, it was up to the Coordination establish a schedule of work, set out in Table 4, below, to support the deployment of the steps deemed related.

Table:Work Schedule of students

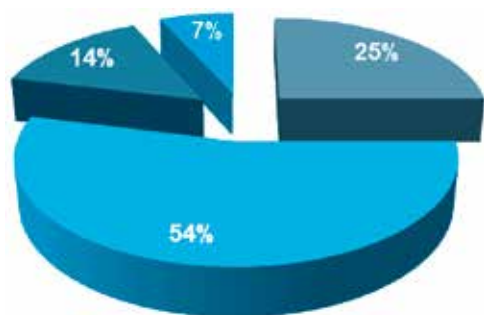
Seq.	Activity	Starting date	Ending Date
1	Activation of discipline - Term paper seminar	10/08/2013	10/08/2013
2	Effective guidance process	12/08/2013	13/12/2013
3	Time for term paper delivery in text - students	16/12/2013	18/12/2013
4	Deadline for the term papers capture - Appraisers	19/2/2013	20/12/2013
5	Return of evaluated term papers	19/12/2013	15/01/2014
6	Defense of papers	18/01/2014	18/01/2014
7	Delivery deadline of corrected term papers - students	20/01/2014	31/01/2014

Source: UFJF - Coordination Course Data (2013)

In order to make driving the guidelines were parameterized in the Virtual Learning Environment course ten disciplines of term papers, duly indexed by guiding, whose participants are the students linked to teaching. Them as complementary content, the files were made available with the guidelines for the preparation / formatting of term papers

and poster, as well as the slides appear in-person meetings on the subject at hand. Thus, from the initial class, they were shown to the students the stage of progress of work, as well as the projected schedule. A month later contact and, based on the collected data, the initial panel involving the work of the stage of evolution can be seen in Graph 1

Graph 1: summarization of the Papers General Situation (Sep/ 2013)



Status	Quant. Students	%
1- Choice/definition of theme or thematic correlation	26	25%
2 - Preparation of theoretical framework	56	54%
3 - Development of methodological aspects	15	14%
4 - Full theoretical framework and early case study	7	7%
Calculated total	104	100%

Source: UFJF - Coordination Course Data (2013)

Although the situation found could reflect some comfort regarding the implementation of the orientation process, the data revealed lead as the expectations of Coordination. The intensification of analysis of data collected also revealed some additional insights, such as:

1. The status involving the preparation of Theoretical Referential with 54% market share proved reasonably aligned with our expectations, as we expected that most of the work was initially classified in that position, considering, therefore, the efforts already previously performed in course of "Thematic Workshop" discipline;

2. It surprised us favorably the perception that 7% of TCC already show the status

4, revealing thus that those buildings have completed the Theoretical Reference and are now in the drafting stage of their Case Study;

3. Similar Perception fell on the status of preparation of the Methodological aspects, from the finding that 15 students were already in that direction;

4. However, worried in identifying that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the students (25% of works) are still anchored in the choice and definition of their respective themes or thematic correlations.

The completion of the orientation process occurred in December 2013 when then the tabulation of the data revealed the situation expressed in Table 5, below.

Table 5:Guidance process shutdown

Status	Qtd. alunos	Dec. 2013
1 - Choice theme or theme correlation	2	2%
2 - Preparation of theoretical framework	5	5%
3 - Development of methodological aspects	3	3%
4 - Full theoretical framework and early case study	3	3%
5 - Full case study or theoretical test	2	3%
6 - Final review	1	1%
7 - Apt for defense	90	85%
Calculated total	106*	100

(*)Since October/2013, two laggards students began the orientation process.

Source: UFJF - Coordination Course Data (2013)

Accordingly, it was remarkable the effort undertaken both by students and by their supervisors, to conduct the defense 90 completion of course work in a relatively short period of time. With 85% success, this is a result that can be seen as significant.

3.3. Term paper Textual Rating

The continuity of this process then suggested that the work be textual and methodologically evaluated. So, to perform this

important step, we adopted a practice to promote a kind of rotation between the guiding teachers, so that those jobs guided by a certain teacher were evaluated by another colleague. In this particular aspect, we consider that this intervention proposal has enabled us to break through, too, with the paradigm that involves the formation of a panel along the lines seen as traditional. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, after the orientation process, which already represents the first evaluative frame of the proposal under construction,

at the end this step, it can be said that every work has undergone two evaluations.

The criteria that guided this evaluation were clarity and textual objectivity, appropriateness of the proposal to the selected thematic thread, methodological rigor, research proposal adherence to previously formulated purpose, coherence in the construction of literature review and finally, the establishment of final considerations. Thus, based on compliance with these criteria, each Term paper was evaluated with a note whose amplitude could range from 0 to 50 points.

3.4. Term Paper Defenses

The outcome of this intervention process took place on January 18, 2014, through a profound change in the rite of passage, involving the defense of Term Paper before an examining board. Thus aiming to release that ritual, put in charge what we call "cultural clothesline", which, in short, is a oral form of presentation of the Term paper performed in the open air on the university campus, and undergraduates supported by a poster. The expression "cultural clothesline" was adopted to legitimize the deployment of practical, in that the posters were literally placed in a "rope" and by the presence of a teacher, the author of each poster had fifteen minutes to perform an explanation Oral elaborate work. On average, about ten Term papers were evaluated at a time and simultaneously.

To assess the merits of this final stage of the process, each teacher sought to ascertain the reliability and accuracy of the oral presentation of the student, linking it to the constant elements of the poster. It is important to mention that all graduates of the period received specific and detailed instructions for formatting of both the Term papers itself and the corresponding poster.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finalizing the text, for absolute clarity on the reasons that motivated us to write this paper, we consider appropriate to mention the proposed "release an academic rite of passage." The importance and magnitude involving the defenses of Term papers, under any circumstances, is associated with critical notation on the ritual itself because, provided educators who carry out their daily actions in the university space, periodically participate actively in this, as well as other rites that make, legitimize and, more than that, give identity to the teaching practices in higher graduation.

In these terms, our respect to these transcend practices, too, contemporary and merely binomial relationships that connect education x learning, the exact extent to which academic rites, to be considered as well, come the trajectory of an institution whose longevity points to a centuries-time perspective and therefore deserves respect and reverence from us. Therefore deemed to devices through which the academic practices occur and effectively legitimize, rites of passage impart identity to the citizen training process, preparing them for integration into society from the interpretation of multiple roles required by professional practice, supported by multiple areas of human knowledge.

However, exposure to rites of passage, especially with regard to the defense of final works of course, tends to occur in an atmosphere of apprehension and tension, enhanced by a sense of closure, linked to the limited space of a classroom and in the presence of members of the examining board, whose expression itself already carries intimidating air. This proposal, in a way, sought to minimize the factors that lead to bullying and create a quieter atmosphere and conducive to the presentation.

On that basis, it is true that Distance Education practices have contributed strongly to spray relations space versus time, which still guide the educational efforts evidenced in classroom mode. Thus, pressed by this feeling, we feel motivated to write this work in order to give visibility to a learning experience that helped not necessarily to disfigure the rite itself, but to soften its application without loss of quality, giving the student graduate in the distance the possibility of dialogue in a different way with a rite of passage considered here as high relevance and symbolism of the academic performance space.

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