



Extension projects as transformers of society: A report of experience of students of the Centro Universitário Senac, Águas de São Pedro campus, with APAE São Pedro (SP).

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ABSTRACT: Higher education goes beyond the development of technical skills, and plays a central role in the social transformation of the environment in which it is inserted. This role is fostered within institutions through research, teaching and extension. This work is a report of the experience of students of the APAE of São Pedro, within the extension project "APAE no Senac", carried out by the Centro Universitário Senac, Águas de São Pedro campus (SP). Its purpose was to promote the social inclusion of these people, given that one of the main functions of gastronomy, since the discovery of fire, has been to bring people together. The APAE students were able to gain experience of activities of the degree in gastronomy technology by applying cooking and recipe replication techniques, in a controlled environment, in twelve demonstrative and practical classes, accompanied by project scholarship students and advisory professors from the HEI. The classes were developed in the kitchens and restaurant laboratories of the college. It was observed that there is potential for replicability of the work model, due to its characteristics and the low investment required. There is also potential to generate the teaching experience for HEI students and social inclusion for APAE students, through the mastery of new tools and techniques in the area of gastronomy.

Keywords:

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INTRODUCTION

Food is not only a vital act for the conservation and survival of the human species, but among many other definitions, it can be seen as productive activity, a leisure activity, or a tool for social integration (HECK et al, 2018). Franzoni (2016) describes gastronomy as the unfolding of a web of sociocultural practices related to food that makes it a kind of media vehicle, in which the gastronomic knowledge of a given locality is shared over generations, and thus, the food identity of that people and the given region is constructed. Peccini (2013) argues that in view of the increasing number of different perspectives and possibilities for understanding the food phenomenon, gastronomy is, naturally, a multidisciplinary subject. A study by Gimenes-Minasse (2020) shows that there is interest in knowing and expanding gastronomy, hospitality and tourism as a science and a profession. The topic can no longer be considered as something incipient, as there has been increasing interest it, in terms of research and scientific publications.

As a result of this increased search for knowledge about gastronomy, there have been incentives for public and private investments in the free, vocational and higher education sector, expressed, in these cases, by an increase in undergraduate and graduate courses and a growth in the number of publications on the subject (MENDES; FALEIROS, 2013; FERRO; REJOWSKY, 2018).

In this process of expanding knowledge regarding gastronomy, it is important to affirm that, with a view to professional improvement and to bring an active contribution to social changes, there are university extension programs within higher education institutions (HEI) (SGUISSARDI, 2019). Since the last century - more precisely since 1931 - these projects have carried the "Statute of the Brazilian University", as an identification regarding the issues and popular demands to the subject.

According to Melo Neto (2003), the extension mode of education, which is the object of this analysis, only finds meaning through the creation and recreation of knowledge that enables transformations of a social nature, which is permeated through the promotion of dialogue as a basic presupposition. The main goal of this type of university activity is to use the scientific knowledge produced within the university, and to align it with popular knowledge. The result of this integration is to promote activities that can benefit the different sectors of society around the university, thus promoting, among these sectors, a more active participation in social issues (DESLANDES; ARANTES, 2017).

According to Sasaki (1997), social inclusion can be seen in the adaptations made by society to include per-

sons with a disability or limitation, enabling them to become socially active. Violante and Leite (2011) understand disability as a situation of disadvantage that a person has in relation to the others, causing certain losses that limit the performance of expected social roles according to sex, age, or the expectations of other members of the individual's social group.

In view of this scenario, projects are developed to promote social inclusion, by various agents of society, such as public authorities, associations, universities, etc. (ROCHA, 2012). These programs are essential in universities, filling the gaps between the universe of knowledge dissemination and everyday practice. In the intricate process of social inclusion, the implementation of these projects is one of the social functions of the university, with the dissemination of academic practices as inclusive initiatives (CHASSOT, 2003).

This context of integration between society and the university for the dissemination of knowledge and inclusive practices, in a similar spirit to that advocated by Santos (2020), led to the creation of the extension project entitled "APAE in SENAC: a contribution to an inclusive society" [APAE no SENAC: uma contribuição para uma sociedade inclusiva] This project aims to strengthen links between teachers, students, and volunteers of the gastronomy course of the Centro Universitário Senac, Águas de São Pedro (CAP) campus, and citizens who have some kind of limitation, whether physical or psychological.

In terms of its purpose, this project takes the positions defended by Freitas, Fossatti and Kortmann (2017) regarding overcoming the exclusion and marginalization of people with disabilities in school environments. In addition to the school environment, as shown by Borges and Longen (2019), there is a significant presence of people with some type of disability within the job market, which strengthens the purpose of the proposal. Finally, it takes the premise that hospitality is an ethical event par excellence (GRINOVER, 2007).

The object of this study was the institution "Associação dos Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais" (APAE) of São Pedro. The partnership between the APAE and the university led to the development of activities and workshops on the application of gastronomic techniques and food preparation. These practices were designed to promote social inclusion among the group of participants, to give pedagogical experiences that were different from their daily activities, and to teach food production and processing techniques.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RELEVANCE

This work is a report of the authors' experience during APAE project at the CAP campus, developed jointly by



professors and students of the institution and teachers and students of the association. The project aimed to develop basic cooking skills and techniques, through a participatory methodology with the application of practical experiences. It also transforms the traditional role of the student (as a mere recipient of information), making the student an active agent in the learning process (QUEIROZ; COUTO, 2015) and building their knowledge, through experiences (HOGA; ABE, 2000). According to Streck (2016), this type of work methodology leads the researcher to consider him/herself as co-producer of knowledge, because the knowledge is developed for research purposes, empirically applying the activities proposed and designed, including by him/herself, making the student the author of his/her own learning. This process is very interactionist, because behavior, environment and cognition operate continuously (VIEGA, VANDENBERGHE, 2001). The report provides an understanding of an alternative to the teaching-learning process of APAE students, and gives the undergraduate students contact with the dynamics of teaching practice, strengthening their knowledge and developing socio-emotional skills, such as empathy.

METHODOLOGY

The activities of the project began with a visit by the scholarship students and volunteers to the APAE institution in the city of São Pedro, in order to understand the environment that the students of the association were used to. This initial stage was aimed at familiarizing the students with their routines and other activities performed, and presenting them to the team of teachers who would be responsible for the activities throughout the week.

In 2019, two scholarship students and two volunteer students attended the project in order to develop the projected activities. These activities were carried out throughout the school year, with meetings every two weeks, in the form of practical classes with a participatory methodology. During the classes, different food preparation techniques were taught, focusing on dishes that were easy to prepare. The meetings were held in the pedagogical kitchens of the campus, which were suitable as they had the necessary equipment and utensils for the activities.

Before the start of the classes, the activities were planned out, including defining the dishes to be prepared and the techniques to be taught. Having defined the scope of the classes, the technical records of the dishes were drawn up, and a shopping list written out for each day and the number of participants. These steps were performed by the scholarship students and volunteers, and reviewed by the teacher.

In addition to the technical aspects, the students also

planned the classes to be taught, including introducing the topic, presenting the technique and how to do it, and supervising the execution of the activity. All this planning, and creating shopping lists, placed the students at the center of the learning process of the teaching work, expanding their vision on how to convey the expected information, and its results.

On the days of the activities, the students linked to the project performed the *mise en place*, with the division of the inputs by the number of stations occupied in the kitchen; separation of the utensils used in the activity and organization of the station for the initial demonstration. As the APAE students arrived, their teachers and the extension students allocated them to work stations. This allocation was guided by the APAE teachers, to minimize stressful situations and outbreaks of temper, due to psychopathological conditions and direct contact between participants. It was observed that as the activities progressed, and the more meetings took place, events of this type decreased, as those responsible for the course became more adept at dealing with such incidents.

Regarding the proposed activities, the first stage was to demonstrate how to execute the dish. In this stage, the steps were explained, in a lighthearted and fun way. This playful-pedagogical approach aims to facilitate the assimilation of tasks and content taught, and has proven to be a common practice for students of the association in different states, as reported in studies such as those of Santos, Flores and Zanin (2011), Riveros and Maciel (2016) and Souza and Amorim (2019).

The group was divided into three kitchen stations and the scholarship students and volunteers were given responsibility for supervising a specific workstation. The workshops focused were on the APAE students, as the protagonists of the process. For the students' physical safety, the use of fire and sharp objects, such as knives, was restricted to certain times only during the session.

After preparing the dishes, the HEI students served them to all those involved. All the utensils, dishes, oven and the workstation were washed and cleaned by the APAE students and the extension students. The activity was ended with a conversation about the topics worked on in the class, and the participants were asked how they had enjoyed the activity.

With regard to the theoretical part of the project, an effort was made to collect data and academic materials on the importance of university extension activities, the situation of people with disabilities, and some examples of inclusive projects that have proven empirically efficient in the development of the participating members.



RESULTS

The project continued throughout 2019, and its renewal was approved by the extension committee for the year 2020. Throughout the stages of the project, the APAE students were attentive, participative and engaged in the proposed activities. No problems with interpersonal relationships were observed, in particular, the hyperactivity that is often seen when students are working in groups. The APAE teachers sometimes intervened, in order to promote a harmonious environment among the students, and assisted in the allocation of students to the workstations, as they were familiar with the characteristics of each student. Thus, the APAE teachers collaborated in the good progress of the classes, and had positive repercussions on the interaction between the students.

In the theoretical introduction made before the start of the practical classes, the APAE students were asked to pay attention as the extension students were introduced. In the practical part, there were no difficulties in handling the utensils. One aspect observed by the students was that the recipes were quite difficult to memorize; however, with the follow-up and repeated experiences, this difficulty was reduced as the classes progressed.

Table 1 includes the preparations worked in the classes and the techniques taught for the students' development.

Table 1—Lessons and the techniques taught

LESSON	TECHNIQUE
Brownie and Vanilla ice cream	Use office cream machine; First contact with fire (water bath and baking)
Escondidinho de carne (meat)	Sautéing
Coxinha de frango (Chicken and potato "drumstick")	Modelling the shape (coxinha) e sautéing
Chocolate Mousse	Mousse aeration technique
Table organization	Service techniques
Gnocchi al pomodoro	Gnoci pasta
Lasagna bolognese	Fresh pasta
Pineapple pavê	Meringue making techniques
Hamburger	Blending and sautéing meat

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Generally, the dishes were all good, with good taste and were adequate to the techniques taught. The final products within the expected result are shown as a reflection of the continuous attention of the students of the association and the follow-up of the extensionists. Subjective aspects related to the experience were also perceived by the students of the HEI, such as the

APAE students' commitment to the classes, the joy of taking part in a playful-pedagogical activity that is different from their usual practices, and the sense of belonging to a team, created by the activities, with establishment of affective bonds. Thus, the APAE students, in partnership with the students of the Centro Universitário Senac, presented excellent intellectual, personal and practical development throughout the workshops, demonstrating interest and commitment to the work.

Another relevant aspect is the valorization and dissemination of the knowledge generated in the faculty for society, with the valorization of food and preparation methods. It should be emphasized that the idea developed in the project can easily be replicated in other communities/cities in partnerships with more HEIs that allow the exchange of information, as it requires the necessary physical structure to be already in place within the institution, as well as available utensils; the cost of acquiring materials for classes is low, and it promotes the social inclusion of APAE students.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that the project was successful in its proposal of social inclusion of students of the APAE of São Pedro through gastronomy. During the project, the students and teachers observed the students' commitment, their learning of technical skills, and their cognitive development.

At the end of the classes, there was a sense of affection and gratitude, and a positive impression among all parties involved. The experience of this project enabled the APAE students to develop technical skills, and gave them an opportunity for personal growth, overcoming some of the barriers encountered in daily life, and gaining new experiences outside the home or school environment, through the practical cookery classes.

This proposal has the potential to impact the lives of those involved in the project on two fronts: i) for the APAE students, it gave them a chance to learn techniques that can provide new situations of inclusion within the socioeconomic context; and ii) for the students of the HEI, it helped them to develop empathy for the other, based on the understanding of the limitations and difficulties of the APAE students, as well as the practical experience of teaching the students and stimulating their training.

For the extension students, they were able to develop skills in planning the class content, preparing technical forms and creating shopping lists. It also broadens its view of education, showing the inclusive potential of the activity in various strata of society. Finally, the activities of the project stimulate empathy, a characteristic essential to the human condition, education and hospitality.



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