CHEMICAL ENGINEERING DISTANCE COURSE
THE PIONEER EXPERIENCE OF
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF RIO GRANDE DO SUL, BRAZIL

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The article present one of the first projects of development and implantation of a Chemical Engineering Graduate Course using the Distance Learning Education modality, emphasis in Pretrochemical, in Brazil, implementaded by the College of Engineering of PUCRS, The proposal of the Course originated in the Petrochemical Industry, with the purpose to serve the permanent demand of qualification of this sector of the industry, in order to have a competitive differential. The implementation of the Course aims to qualify potential students, already with high technical level, in several Petrochemical Poles of Brazil, primordially those who integrate the Petrochemical Pole of Triunfo, in Rio Grande do Sul State. The proposal embraces an extensive training of the lecturers, in order to unable them to use the new teaching tools, to properly prepare the support material for the students, as well as permanently advise the students.

The present work originated in an Engineering Graduate Education unique experience developed at PUCRS until our time. It is based on a project that meets the interests of an enterprise of the Odebrecht Group, BRASKEN Petroquímica, a frontrunner in the petrochemical scenery in South America, translated to a Chemical Engineering Graduate Course – emphasis in petrochemical Operation – in the Distance Education modality.

The elaboration of the project took about eighteen months and envolved the academic and technical staff of the College of Engineering - from the fundamental areas, such as mathematics, physics and chemistry, the human areas, such as philosophy, education, psychology and foreign languages, to the specific technical area of chemical engineering – jointly with the representants of the technical and human areas of the company.

The proposal of the programme was consolidated by a multidisciplinary team, which started up identifying the profile of the professional to be formed. This profile was formed through the development of the competence, skills and attitudes desired in the performance of the professional activity. The fundamental goal of the proposal is to qualify professionals for the work market, once the target are professionals who perform the duties of industrial process operators and whose technical training is medium level nowadays.

The article presents the elaboration of a program proposal sustained by a pedagogic approach that fits the purposes and inherences of a form of education in which only 25% of the activities are carried out in the presence of the tutor, being the remaining activities done at distance. The requesites for the achievement of the proposal as well as its contextualization are demonstraded step by step, mainly to show this concrete experience as the deep change that happened with all the teachers, when they needed to change their way of teaching. About the results, this article demonstrated the new profile of the students and teachers after the implementation the first half part of the course and also report same advance in using this new tools for learning.

474 words