

INTRODUCING SCIENCE BY DISTANCE EDUCATION TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Exponential growing of scientific and technological knowledge of nowadays society demands new abilities and competences of their citizens. In the other hand, the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the low cost of equipments provide a new teaching strategy, namely distance education, through intranet or internet. The familiarity with of scientific method stimulates autonomy in obtaining information, critical thinking and logical analysis of data. These are useful abilities for science students as well as for common citizens. Aiming the development of such abilities a distance course was developed in 45 hours, using mainly forum and chat in the Claroline platform with technical support of the Centro Nacional de Supercomputação da UFRGS. All the students attending the course were from Fundação Faculdade Federal de Ciências Médicas de Porto Alegre. In this course the following topics were explored: (1) scientific knowledge x common sense, (2) different conceptions of science, (3) scientific method, (4) different categories of science publications, (5) principles of Logic, (6) deduction x induction (7) paper analysis simulation. Scientific project writing was taught/learned through the following items: (1) choice of a problem, (2) bibliography revision, (3) agencies for funding, (4) project presentation by videoconference and (5) analysis of results. The course was evaluated by Likert-type questionnaire and the results from students and teachers indicate a very successful outcome.

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