

## **BOTA PRA FAZER UNIFEI: LEARNING AND COMPETING FOR GOOD REASONS**

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**Abstract:** It is widely known in Brazil that, with the new context of the work environment, especially with the labor reforms and social security reforms in Brazil (constitutional amendment projects: PEC 6787/16 and PEC 287/16) will affect educational institutions. Besides technical skills, graduates should also have, managerial and so-called soft skills, which are characteristics usually found in successful entrepreneurs: group work, leadership, interpersonal relationships, creativity, flexibility, ethics, learning to learn, working under pressure, motivation, etc. Added to this new context, the demand for social responsibility is also a preponderant factor in the society in which we live. Therefore, a country as socially unequal as Brazil must demand from its university graduates a differentiated role, that is, a high-performance professional with an entrepreneurial or intra-entrepreneurial potential and consequently a manager of large projects that will create jobs and generate wealth for the country. Thus, we see that the entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to understand the social, political, economic, cultural environments in which the individual is inserted, present themselves as the main attributes required for a graduate in the current and future working environment. This requirement is also described in the curricular guidelines of undergraduate courses issued by the Ministry of Education's higher education department. Project Based Learning (PBL) and Entrepreneurship Education (EE) present themselves as active learning strategies for educational institutions that aim to be ahead and thus to train their student in order to face the new challenges of this new work environment. The Bota Pra Fazer UNIFEI (meaning: Make It Happen UNIFEI) program, an annual entrepreneurship competition, is an initiative of the Center of Entrepreneurship of the Federal University of Itajubá (CEU-UNIFEI) with the objective of encouraging the academic community to be engaged through social action projects. In 2015, the event was awarded by Endeavor, Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) country organizer, as the one with the greatest social impact. This work aims to compare PBL and EE, defining its main concepts, similarities, differences and later, presents

its application in the Bota Pra Fazer UNIFEI. Participants responded to a survey that, along with the reported theory, demonstrate how the use of active learning is important and could be further explored. With this, it was realized that the students aim to participate in projects in which one can develop entrepreneurial skills and apply what was learned in the classroom. From this result, the need for a greater insertion of active learning strategies in the country's higher education institutions is clear. In this way, besides the students demonstrating more interest in the classes, they had opportunities to develop technical, managerial and entrepreneurial skills demanded in the new work environment with social responsibility.

**Keywords:** Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning, Education Entrepreneur, Social Action.

## **Introduction**

It is known that with the labor and social security reforms happening in Brazil, graduate students should present competitive differentials in the labor market, meaning that having only technical knowledge is no longer enough. Coupled with managerial competences and soft skills, it is possible to match successful entrepreneurs and thus present a differentiated role by becoming an entrepreneur or entrepreneur.

The use of active learning, such as Problem Based Learning and Entrepreneurial Education, is a successful alternative to assist in the teaching of students. Thus, Unifei's Entrepreneurship Center (CEU), organizes each year, during the global entrepreneurship week (GEW), an event that allows students to develop important soft skills throughout social action.

The Bota Pra Fazer Unifei is a great competition of social entrepreneurship actions. Every year it reaches over 700 participants and, in 2015, was attended by 788 participants. The event happened at the same time in Itajubá and Itabira were the two UNIFEI campi are based. It involves the participations of students, professors and public servants from the university. The participating groups compete in four categories: High Impact, Creativity, Hands On and Technical Knowledge. The project is also a way of promoting a returning back to the local the local community the public investment made in institution. Bota Pra Fazer Unifei has emerged and impacted, on average 30, institutions every year, including schools, NGOs, hospitals and nursing homes. As a result, the Bota Pra Fazer Unifei was voted the largest university entrepreneurship event in 2015 by Endeavor and its partners. About 10% of the projects performed during the week saw regular actions in the city during the year, such as Project Play and Taekwondo.

That being said, through this paper, we sought to problematize Brazilian's education situation, which is lacking initiatives for the development of entrepreneurial skills. The Bota Pra Fazer Unifei event was used to exemplify an activity that involves problem-based learning and entrepreneurial education. Participants from the 2015 event answered a questionnaire, which sought to profile the participants, as well as find out if their perception regarding the development ten important entrepreneurial skills.

For better understanding, it will be split into two parts: The first will take a more theoretical approach and will address references on the subject. The second, in turn, will have a more practical approach and will address the results gathered in the research on the Bota Pra Fazer Unifei 2015 event.

### **Literature Review**

In spite of many changes in society, Education has remained almost the same for so many years and this discourages students from wanting to learn and seek new knowledge. There are four ways to encourage people to become leaders: to prepare the younger people before they start college, to create a dialogue between universities and local leaders, to rethink and learn more about small businesses and startups. (GERBER, 2014)

Pavlin (2014) believes that universities play a role that goes beyond preparing students for the market. These students need to leave college with well-developed attributes, abilities and behaviors. For this purpose, it is necessary to introduce classes and activities that aim to develop: planning, problem solving, leadership, creativity and teamwork.

Universities are realizing that offering classes and projects on entrepreneurship is important due to the subject interest, its contribution to economic growth as well as help students in job opportunities. Experts believe that no one is born an entrepreneur, but exposed to factors that foster development, they can learn and develop entrepreneurial skills. (NIAN, BAKAR and ISLAM, 2014).

Schramm (2012) conducted a survey to see how schools deal with entrepreneurship. In the United States, at least 600,000 students take entrepreneurship classes every year and 10 years ago, that number was considerably smaller. But something that caught his attention was that schools were not teaching it the right way because the topic was presented theoretically and could be better explored through projects in which students need to develop and put theory into practice. And, according to the *2014 Youth Entrepreneurship Study annual report*, 62% of universities do not offer any entrepreneurship classes. In addition, 37% of survey

respondents said they would try to open a business. Given this information, it is possible to observe the real importance and necessity of studying entrepreneurship in universities.

Given this context, it is necessary to use practices that teach the student not only the theory, but have him/her implement in a practical way what he/she has learned. Barrows and Tamblyn (1989) defined problem-based learning - PBL as "learning that results from the process of working towards understanding a problem solving [...] found first in the learning process".

Barrows (2000) defines PBL as being an authentic education that forces students to go through situations that they will experience in the real world. It is considered important because it provides the student with learning from the process of working towards understanding or solving authentic problems in their contexts. The PBL involves four main aspects: (1) student-centered approach, (2) ill-structured problems, (3) teacher as facilitator and (4) authenticity (BARROWS, 2000).

Along with the PBL practices, there is Entrepreneurship Education (EE), which is a learning process that helps young people to develop skills and motivation to become entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs. Fowler (1997) states that EE can be defined "as a system that enables groups of people to create and direct their own projects as a vehicle for learning." It is used to provide entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to help students succeed in their careers (NIAN BAKAR AND ISLAM, 2014). In addition to assisting career success, according to Fowler (1997), EE provides the individual "to attain higher degrees of personal fulfillment and social well-being."

According to Fowler (1997), "Entrepreneurs are those who create and manage projects". Social action can be defined, according to McGlone, Spain, and Mc Glone (2011), as "the deliberate and active donation of a time, energy, skills or talents to a charity without getting paid in return." Cychora, Ferrante and Schroeder do not consider monetary or material contributions as acts of social action. Social actions, according to Grant (2012), help to enrich jobs and there are researches that show how doing social work assists in the development of skills. In addition, they bring greater satisfaction and increase productivity because of the feeling of having a positive impact on the environment in which it is inserted.

In contrast, Dees (1998), Welsh and Krueger (2009) define a social entrepreneur as a person who aims to create and sustain social value, also involving continuous innovation and exhibiting a responsibility towards the constituents and the results. "Social entrepreneurs pursue goals and objectives related to the solution of specific problems in the social economy" (DEES, 1998).

## **Methodology**

This section will present a research conducted at the Federal University of Itajubá in order to understand how the event Bota Pra Fazer Unifei provides its participants with the development of entrepreneurial skills. This is an applied research because its results can be applied or used in the solution of problems that happen on a day-to-day basis. According to Appolinário (2009), unlike basic research, applied research would be more focused on commercial objectives, that is, for the development of new processes or products geared to market needs.

The method used to carry out the present paper was the Case Study. The basic purpose of this method, according to Godoy (1995), is the intensive analysis of a given social unit and for Yin (1994) a case study allows an in-depth review of new or obscure phenomena, while "retaining the holistic and significant characteristics of events of real life ". For Yin (1994), this form of research is indicated to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not evident. Despite its advantages, it is important that the researcher is aware of the difficulties associated with it, among them, the difficulty of generalizing his conclusions, as Laville and Dione (1999) recommends.

The method fits in as a fundamentally qualitative approach. The case study is appropriately used when the researcher seeks to answer the questions of "how" and "why", explanatory questions that relate to operational issues that occur over time rather than frequencies or incidences (MARTINS, 2008). According to Gummesson (2004), traditional action research involves: (1) a group of people who use spiral cycles of activities involving planning, acting, observation, and reflection on what happened, shown schematically in Figure 1; (2) try to improve the team's work action processes; (3) that help solve complex and practical problems about which little is known; (4) produces at least one report for the organization of the working group on what was found.

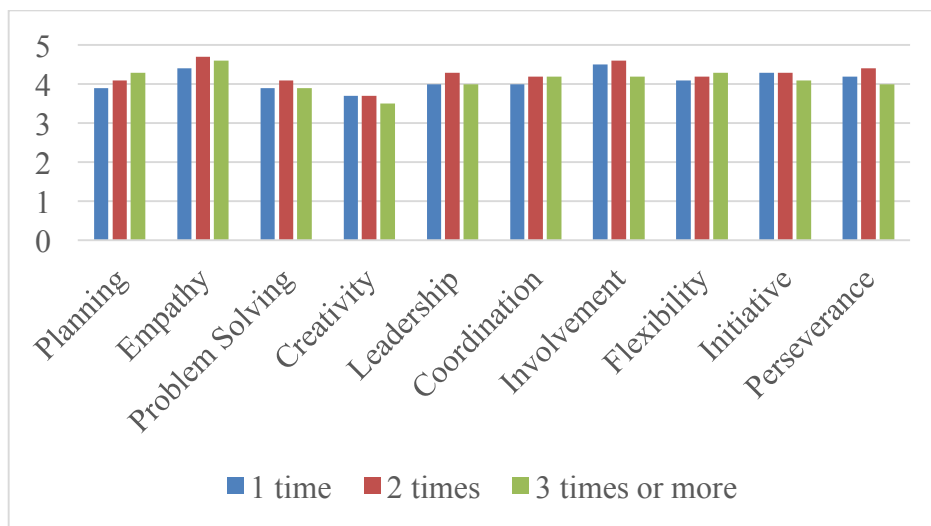
Through the case study in question, the questionnaire was applied and analyzed to students who participated in the Bota Pra Fazer Unifei 2015 event. The present study resulted in the gathering of 208 responses, representing approximately 26% of the students who participated in the event.

## **Results and discussions**

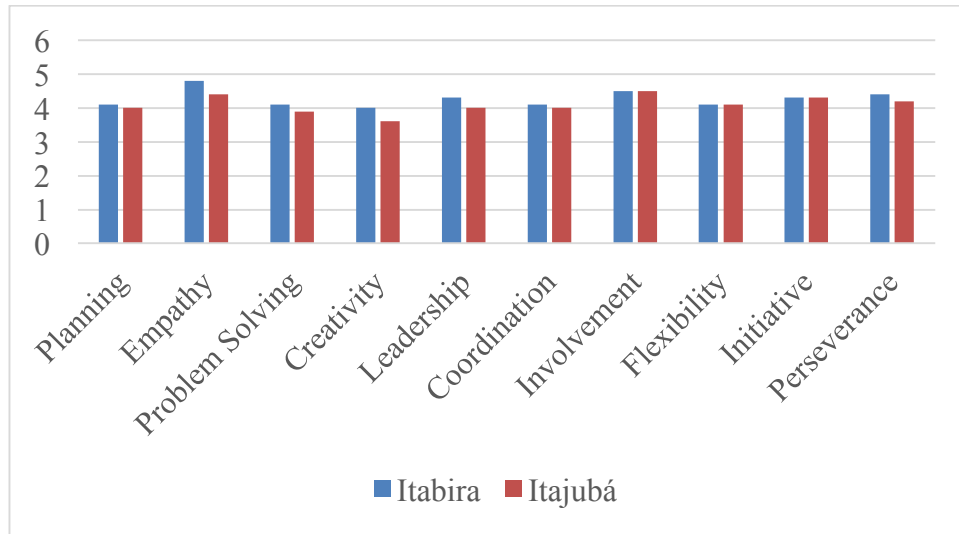
The Federal University of Itajubá is a public graduate institution, located in the city of Itajubá, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. It is considered to be the first technological university in the country. Extremely regarded among engineering universities in Brazil, it carries over 100 years of teaching tradition. Currently, it has 25 courses, 14 of which are engineering. According to a quantitative survey conducted in November 2017 by the Board of Academic Registers in partnership with the sector responsible for information technology of the University, there are about 5121 undergraduate students enrolled in Unifei.

The applied questionnaire had two aspects: a) Profiling of the respondent and b) The participants perception regarding their opportunity for developing entrepreneurial skills during the event. The aimed skills were: planning, empathy, problem solving, creativity, leadership, coordination, involvement, flexibility, initiative and perseverance. In order to analyze the importance of each one, it was necessary for the interviewee to state how much they had developed on a scale of 0 to 5. The survey collected 208 responses, with 75% of the participants participating for the first time, 13% for the second time and 10% for the third time or over.

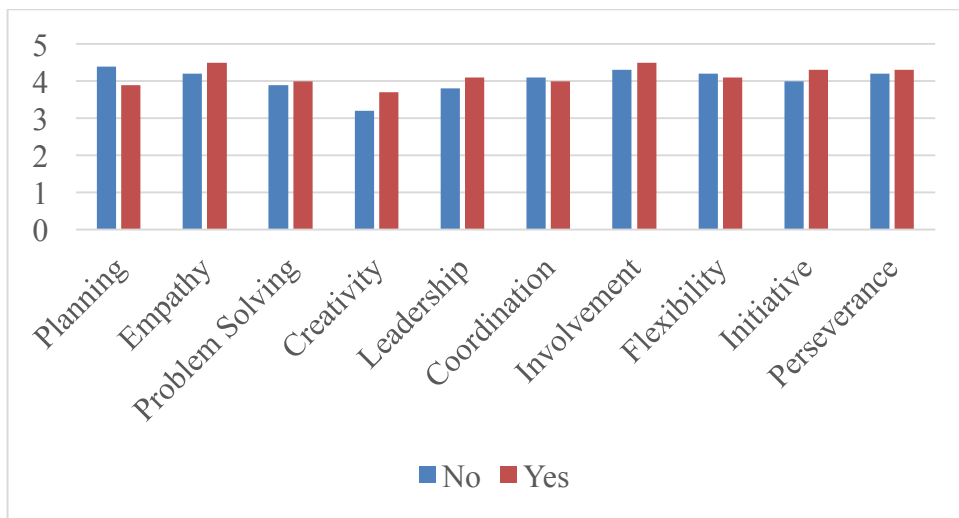
Observing the relation between the number of times students already participated in the event and how they consider their development in each skill, one observes that all of them were above average, creativity having the lowest average of all.



The Federal University of Itajubá presents two campuses (Itajubá and Itabira). One of the researches was about which campus the project was carried out at and, correlating this information with the questions about skills, it is observed that the students from the Itabira campus believe that it was more developed than the campus of Itajubá. Since the averages were equal to or higher than the averages of Itajubá.



One of the questions was related to the possibility of the participant enrolling again the following year to take a new action, and 197 answered yes while 11 answered no. Comparing the answers with the grades given in the development of the skills, it can be concluded that the fact that the students do not want to participate again is not related to the fact that they did not develop the skills. Even though they are not interested in participating again, they give above-average grades for skills development.



Finally, it is important highlight some commentaries made by the respondents:

- A research was done at The Federal University of Itajubá with all the courses, in all, 25 undergraduate, where it was possible to verify some results. Observing the average of each course, Bachelor Physics stands out as the course that considers that the event fully develops the abilities during its course and Computer Engineering as the one that agrees the least with the development of the abilities.

- "The city (Itabira) started to see UNIFEI and the students in a quite different perspective: people realized that we, students, can change the city for the better, that we are not here just to enjoy this college phase, they saw that it is not only the parties that move the university students and that we can contribute positively to society. I hope that the Bota Pra Fazer UNIFEI reaches great proportions so that more people can know about it and participate, and that this idea is disseminated by other universities. "

- "Bota Pra Fazer should happen all year long."

- "I enjoyed seeing that 2015 was the year that had more students and teachers involved in Bota Pra Fazer. And I realize that if it continues like this, every year the number of people involved will increase. The Bota Pra Fazer has everything to be bigger than it already is. "

## **Conclusions**

The objective of this paper was to problematize the education situation that has remained the same for a long time and that there are some new developments arising to make this environment better and healthier for learning. We aimed to show one of the ways to learn with a different approach, which is through the Bota Pra Fazer Unifei event, in which through project-based learning and entrepreneurial education. Adding to it, the possibility of enhancing the development of entrepreneurial skills that the market demands in a professional.

For that, a case study was carried out at the Federal University of Itajubá - UNIFEI, where the event takes place yearly. The objective of the research was to compare the theory of Entrepreneurial Education and Project Based Learning with the Bota Pra Fazer Unifei 2015. After a meticulous analysis, it can be observed that all the participants consider to have developed entrepreneurial skills above average, the participants of the campus of Itabira consider to have developed even more than the participants of the city of Itajubá and great part of the participants would participate again in the event. It strongly suggests that active learning is important for the development of softskills and by combining problem-based learning and entrepreneurial education, achievement rates are much higher when compared to theory-based learning.

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