LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIALS OF THE TUNING PROJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO

LIMITES E POTENCIALIDADES DO PROJETO TUNING NAS IES DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO

LÍMITES Y POTENCIALES DEL PROYECTO TUNING EN LAS IES DEL ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO

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How to reference this paper:

CUNHA; M. D.; BIZELLI; J. L. Limitations and potentials of the Tuning project in Higher Education Institutions in the state of São Paulo. Revista @mbienteeducação, São Paulo, v. 16, n. 00, e023024, 2023. e-ISSN: 1982-8632. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26843/ae.v16i00.1303

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ABSTRACT: The following research aims to investigate how public Higher Education Institutions in the state of São Paulo have been engaging with the Tuning Project, specifically in courses focused on teacher education. The Bologna Process emerged as a public policy in the European Union, with the ultimate goal of modernizing Higher Education curricula and internationalizing the perspective of student-centered education. In this sense, the Tuning Project seeks to consolidate policies advocated by the Bologna Process, which, supported by the knowledge society perspective, aims to act as a methodology to harmonize and compare higher education with a view to the transnationalization of curricula and the training of workforce at an international level. Through research on the implementation of the Tuning Project in Latin America and Brazil, it was possible to analyze and reflect on the limits and potentialities of its implementation.

KEYWORDS: Tuning Project Latin America. Tuning Project Brazil. Higher Education Institution of the State of São Paulo.

RESUMO: A seguinte pesquisa busca investigar como as Instituições de Ensino Superior públicas do estado de São Paulo têm se envolvido com o Projeto Tuning, mais especificamente nos cursos voltados à formação de professores. O Processo de Bolonha surgiu como política pública na União Europeia, tendo como objetivo final a modernização dos currículos do Ensino Superior e a internacionalização da perspectiva da educação centrada no estudante. Neste sentindo, o Projeto Tuning busca consolidar políticas preconizadas pelo Processo de Bolonha, que, apoiadas na perspectiva da sociedade do conhecimento, objetivam agir como metodologia para compatibilizar e comparar as formações superiores, com vistas à transnacionalização dos currículos e à formação de mão-de-obra em nível internacional. Em pesquisa realizada acerca da implementação do Projeto Tuning na América Latina e no Brasil foi possível analisar e refletir sobre os limites e as potencialidades de sua implementação.


RESUMEN: La siguiente investigación tiene como objetivo examinar cómo las Instituciones de Educación Superior públicas del estado de São Paulo se han involucrado con el Proyecto Tuning, específicamente en los cursos orientados a la formación de profesores. El Proceso de Bolonia surgió como una política pública en la Unión Europea, con el objetivo final de modernizar los planes de estudio de la Educación Superior y la internacionalización de la perspectiva de la educación centrada en el estudiante. En este sentido, el Proyecto Tuning busca consolidar políticas preconizadas por el Proceso de Bolonia, que, respaldadas por la perspectiva de la sociedad del conocimiento, tienen como objetivo actuar como metodología para compatibilizar y comparar las formaciones superiores, con miras a la transnacionalización de los planes de estudio y la formación de mano de obra a nivel internacional. En la investigación realizada sobre la implementación del Proyecto Tuning en América Latina y Brasil, fue posible analizar y reflexionar sobre los límites y las potencialidades de su implementación.

Introduction and Justification of the Research

The following research stems from the need to investigate the effects of the Bologna Process and the influence of the Tuning Project on Higher Education Institutions in Brazil, specifically on public HEIs in the state of São Paulo, focusing on education and teacher training courses.

The investigation aligns with the global discourse arising from the necessity to review the curricula of higher education programs worldwide, emphasizing placing the student at the center of the learning process and revising the curricular proposals of higher education courses and the impacts and potentialities of these changes.

In this sense, the overarching project seeks to understand how six South American countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru—have reviewed and modernized their undergraduate curricula through the Tuning approach, centered on four different areas: Teacher Training, Humanities, Health, and courses related to the environmental field.

The project, named Alpha Tuning Latin America, is derived from the Bologna Process, which has among its main objectives the mobility and convergence of curricula to meet the workforce demands of the globalized market. This project was designated the Alpha Tuning Latin America Project in the Latin American region, also identified by the acronym PATAL.

Developed in two phases, the first between 2004 and 2007 and the second between 2011 and 2014, PATAL covered 19 countries in Latin America and was funded by the European Commission, coordinated by the University of Deusto in Spain and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands (BENEITONE et al., 2007).

This article will address the implementation contexts of PATAL, highlighting the participating Brazilian universities. Additionally, an analysis will be conducted on the discussions regarding the Tuning Project in Higher Education Institutions in São Paulo, especially those offering education-related courses. The limits and potentialities of the project's effects will also be examined.

The Alpha Tuning Project in Latin America - PATAL

Embedded in a broader context of neoliberal policies that were spreading and exerting a substantial economic influence in Latin America, the Alpha Tuning Latin America Project emerges as a proposal for the adjustment of the reorganization of higher education in the face
of submission to the policies of international organizations, particularly the ideals of the World Bank at that time.

From this initial reform moment, the predominant focus in discussions shifted towards internationalization, regionalization, sustainable development, university autonomy, and internationalization.

In its early stages, the project gained the participation of 18 countries in Latin America. The Alpha Tuning Latin America Project aims primarily to contribute to constructing a Higher Education Space in Latin America through curricular convergence. The specific objectives, as outlined by Rueda (2017), were formulated based on 18 agreements between national governments and the 182 universities involved in the project's initial phase (2004-2007).

The Alpha Tuning Project in Brazil

Given the context, Brazil, as a signatory to the Alpha Tuning Project, committed to coordinating organizational counterparts and formulating public policies that would integrate the project's proposals into Brazilian universities. Thus, universities with excellent evaluations that adhered to the project were consulted by the Ministry of Education - MEC in the early 2000s.

Figure 1 – Map of Universities that joined the program

Source: Alfa Tuning – Brazil. Own map, 2023.

Listing specifically the participating Brazilian universities and their representatives, based on information available on the official project website:
Table 1 – List of Universities that joined the Alpha Tuning Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Thematic Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State University of Londrina - UEL</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Pernambuco - UFPE</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Brasilia</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie Presbyterian University</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University of Campinas</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Minas Gerais – UFMG</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the state of Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Ceara</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Ouro Preto</td>
<td>Geology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Para</td>
<td>Geology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro – PUC/RJ</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Santa Catarina</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Uberlândia</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Caxias do Sul – UCS</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Bahia – UFBA</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of São Paulo - UNIFESP</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of São Paulo - USP</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alpha Tuning Project. Compilation: Own, 2023.

Despite extensive discussions about the projects and their outcomes, especially in the realm of internationalization, it is essential to note that, within the Brazilian context, only two universities, UNICAMP and UFMG, officially participated in the thematic area of Education.
The Tuning Project in Public Higher Education Institutions in the State of São Paulo

As revealed in the documentation and files consolidating the Alpha Tuning Project, it was identified that formally, only two universities embraced the proposals for changing course curricula in Brazil in the field of education: the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) and the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). Thus, as the research subject, it was determined that the only public higher education institution in São Paulo that adopted the proposal was UNICAMP.

After analyzing UNICAMP's documentation related to the period of adoption of the Tuning project in Brazil, participation in general meetings, readings, and analyses of the proposal was confirmed. However, no specific changes in the curriculum were identified that could be directly attributed to the university's adherence to the project.

As investigated by Ferreira (2014), who interviewed the manager responsible for implementing the Tuning project at UNICAMP:

The interviewee emphasizes that, since the project's launch, he was entrusted with its development within the institution. However, it was observed that this development remained in the realm of writing, with everyone involved in the process tasked with enriching some aspects within its propositions for the Brazilian context, considering regional and national demands in general (FERREIRA, 2014, p. 110).

The lack of evidence directly linking changes in university guidelines and curricula to the Tuning Project was observed in other research, such as that of Cachapuz (2011) and Siebiger (2013). This gap is directly linked to the exhaustion of funds allocated to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the lack of self-resources for project implementation, and the absence of a continuous policy favoring the full implementation of the project.

Final considerations

Apesar de não constar em documentos oficiais da universidade elementos objetivos que enfatizam as mudanças originadas pela adesão ao Projeto Tuning, é possível observar a incorporação nas discussões de algumas das premissas disseminadas no discurso da Reforma Universitária, tendo sido apropriada no discurso geral das IES. Isso inclui a questão da mobilidade acadêmica, universalização do ensino, competência relacionada aos créditos, fomento ao intercâmbio, internacionalização e a propagação do discurso do aprendizado por competência.
Furthermore, the ramifications of the proposals of the Alpha Tuning Project are evident in other proposals for Higher Education mobility programs based on the idea of international credit, such as Erasmus Mundus, and have a direct influence on a range of national documents, programs, and legislations, such as the Programa de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais (REUNI)³.

Another inference from the Tuning Project in Brazil, specifically in the State of São Paulo, is the configuration on which the fourth state University of São Paulo was founded, the Virtual University of the State of São Paulo (UNIVESP). It was analyzed that 2012 the Virtual University of the State of São Paulo (UNIVESP) was instituted through Law No. 14.836 of July 20, 2012, whose courses are structured by axes, presenting the possibility of changing courses within a standard matrix per axis. The disciplines are distributed based on competence, and the curriculum proposal is guided by the development of Integrative Projects, bearing many similarities to the proposals disseminated in the Tuning Project.

In conclusion, while there are no elements allowing for a direct analysis of the transformations in the curriculum matrices of teacher training courses in Higher Education Institutions in the State of São Paulo and their changes resulting from adherence to the Tuning Project, there is evidence that the premises established in the Tuning Project, of which Brazil was a signatory, are disseminated and incorporated into documents of national Higher Education, especially those developed from the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

REFERENCES


³ Restructuring and Expansion Program for Federal Universities.


**CRediT Author Statement**

**Acknowledgements**: We would like to express our gratitude to the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the São Paulo State University (Universidade Estadual Paulista - Júlio de Mesquita Filho).

**Funding**: Post-Doctoral Fellow of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

**Conflicts of interest**: There are no conflicts of interest.

**Ethical approval**: Not applicable.

**Data and material availability**: The data collected for the article and the research are summarized on a public website prepared by the author: https://tuningsp.com.br/.

**Authors' contributions**: The authors participated in all stages of the research.