
THE PROCESS OF SYNERGY BETWEEN THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION (RENETO) AND THE NATIONAL FORUM ON EDUCATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS (FNEPAS)

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On September 29, 2005, during the IX Brazilian Congress of Occupational Therapy, in Recife, Pernambuco, the first general meeting of the National Network of Occupational Therapy Education (RENETO) was held, thus creating the first official association for Occupational Therapy education in Brazil.

RENETO was created in response to the expectation of teachers who for some years had been beginning to liaise and develop joint actions through a virtual network that gradually took on the role of an education association. Thus, the process of creating the association was intrinsically linked to the participation of the teacher movement in forums, committees, debates and advisory boards on the Higher Education assessment processes undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MEC) since the 1990s and, subsequently, on how to strengthen the training of health professionals to implement the Unified Health System (SUS).

The process that preceded the formalization of RENETO was tightly bound to the constitution of the National Forum on Education of Health Professions (FNEPAS) in July 2004. FNEPAS is responsible for

aligning education associations to the construction and strengthening of the SUS, especially in the field of education in line with the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) and the principle of comprehensiveness.

That same year, FNEPAS received approval from the Ministry of Health (MS) for funding for the development of a collective cooperation project that allowed the associations to develop sector-specific workshops. This commitment resulted in the requirement of each participating association to be formally established and registered as a legal entity, so as to work together in requesting and sharing available resources. The participation of RENETO, even as an informal network, in this process has stimulated and strengthened opinion on how important and necessary it is for the field of Occupational Therapy to form an official education association.

In this regard, joining the process triggered by FNEPAS increased the visibility of RENETO and strengthened relations with other partner associations.

According to its statute, RENETO's central aim is to act in the field of education in Occupational Therapy,

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bringing together teachers, educational institutions and professionals working in education. As specific objectives, RENETO has sought to foster debate on education in Occupational Therapy, contextualized in National Higher Education Policy, and promote exchanges and cooperation with Brazilian and foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations, that operate in the field of education and with professionals and students in the area.

The second board of directors was elected during the 10th National Meeting of Teachers of Occupational Therapy, held at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, in September 2006, when the association began a phase of consolidation, seeking to expand membership and participation of teachers in the area. At this meeting five groups were set up to form the project management. Namely: a) Public Policy, which included RENETO's participation in FNEPAS; b) Organization of data Occupational Therapy student profile, in order to reflect on the challenges of the job market; c) Promotion of the Profession, which sought to increase exposure of Occupational Therapy in society and institutional spaces; d) Research, which sought to improve connections with other research funding entities, especially CAPES and CNPq, and discussing issues related to graduate studies, and finally, e) The RENETO Rules, which intended to contribute to making the necessary adjustments to the association's formalization process.

RENETO incorporated FNEPAS activities on to its agenda and was an active partner in developing their projects, which also allowed set the platform for necessary and fundamental talks regarding the development and engagement of a new association.

In late 2006, FNEPAS initiated the organization of national workshops, with the convening of the Experimental Workshop, held in Rio de Janeiro. Against this backdrop, RENETO participated in the construction of national and regional workshops in partnership with other education associations. Together with this strategy, an integration process of the associations began through support for the development of workshops, open to all occupational categories in specific meetings.

This movement provided something unprecedented on the national scene and made FNEPAS increasingly recognized for its role of articulating and integrating health professions.

In this context, there was support to promote FNEPAS and discuss the principle of comprehensiveness in the SUS and the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCNs) in the 10th Brazilian Congress of Occupational Therapy, held in Goiânia, in May 2007.

In that year there was also support for participation in activities on education and health in the pre-congress of the 10th Latin American Congress of Social Medicine, 4th Brazilian Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities in Health and 14th Congress of the International Association of Health Policy, held Salvador in July 2007.

Moreover, the FNEPAS national workshop activities have always represented unique spaces for liaising, discussing and constructing the forum's political agenda, which has included dialogue with the actions developed by the Ministries of Health and Education. This practice has created the possibility of permanent dialogue between representatives of the associations and collective learning on how to build consensus and at the same time share and give visibility to the different projects of each partner.

There were several other meetings for the associations' participation held in 2007, including: The Forum on Active Methodologies and the Brazilian Congress of Medical Education. It is noteworthy that these two meetings, which were already providing opportunities for multiprofessional participation, incorporated on a permanent basis the activities promoted by FNEPAS. For RENETO, this involvement has strengthened its academic and political agenda and brought to fruition the expectation of a comprehensive and highly visible network, which can always be a recognized partner in this movement.

In July 2007, representatives of FNEPAS-member education associations gathered in Brasilia for the audience with Professor Ana Estela Haddad, then Managing Director of Health Education of the Ministry of Health, to discuss the evaluation of undergraduate courses in the area.

In October the same year, the Minas Gerais State Workshop took place in the XLV Brazilian Congress of Medical Education in Uberlândia, coordinated by

RENETO. Also during this Congress, cross-functional discussion tables were formed to introduce this new issue that shaped one of the focus themes for FNEPAS to develop collectively.

In 2008, sharing the FNEPAS national agenda, RENETO began working on preparing and holding the Greater São Paulo Workshop and supported the organization of the workshops in Fortaleza and Minas Gerais.

The third RENETO board of directors was elected for the term 2008/10 during the 11th National Meeting of Occupational Therapy Teachers, held at the University of São Paulo (USP) in September 2008. At that meeting, alignment of the FNEPAS agendas was maintained, including undergraduate education and experiences of teaching methodologies for integration with public policies on health, education and social work. On these axes, the importance of the debate on service-learning integration and encouraging teachers to participate in these settings were strengthened.

Other themes focused on through the work of FNEPAS were the Multidisciplinary Residency in Health and in-service training of occupational therapists. From then on, RENETO has constituted another permanent working group on Multiprofessional Residency.

In late 2009, the association participated in constructing the FNEPAS position in relation to the National Commission on Multidisciplinary Residency, successfully reaffirming acknowledgment of the forum in the nomination of the representatives of the education associations, who became members of that commission.

The following year, RENETO could nominate, also based on alignment with FNEPAS, representatives to compose the technical advisory chambers of the National Multiprofessional Residency Program in the areas of: diagnostic and therapeutic support, clinical and surgical specialties, primary care/family health and community/public health, mental health and functional health.

In this scenario, the discussion about experiences undertaken in Multiprofessional Residency programs reinforced the interest in interprofessional education as one of the central guidelines to be developed by all the education associations, as this is a key component to improving health care skills in the context of the Unified Health System.

One highlight in RENETO's participation in FNEPAS was the workshop entitled *Teamwork in the Context of New Scenarios and Care Projects in the SUS*: chal-

lenges and building new professional actions, in the 11th Brazilian Congress of Occupational Therapy, held in Fortaleza in October 2009, whose objectives were: a) to reflect on the new challenges posed by care practices in relation to changes in job profiles, b) to reflect on the characteristics of multiprofessional teamwork in these new scenarios, c) to build a reference framework for the characteristics and requirements for teamwork performance that would be common to all health professions; d) to identify the contributions and limitations encountered by occupational therapy in the new scenarios; e) to identify training needs in this field, and f) to establish a network of researchers and teachers willing to carry forward the proposed discussion.

This initiative represented a turning point in the development of FNEPAS workshops, for as well as taking on a subject of focus with more clarity, it also required participants to produce texts to be discussed during the event. The result of this work could be shared among all education associations and gave RENETO the unique possibility to lead one of the focus items undertaken by the forum.

This workshop led to the construction of a second regional workshop, held at the PUC (Catholic University) Campinas in May 2010, entitled "Curriculum Integration and Teamwork Training". It was attended by nationally renowned experts, and representatives of the Ministry of Health, which confirmed the importance of FNEPAS taking aboard this theme in future projects.

The current RENETO board of directors was elected at the 12th National Meeting of Occupational Therapy Teachers, held in Curitiba, at the Paraná Federal University (Universidade Federal do Paraná) in September 2010.

The theme of this meeting was 50 years of institutionalized teaching of Occupational Therapy in Brazil and aimed to take stock of the current situation, in which we face a significant set of changes in the fields of education, research and extension studies, caused by the health and education policies in force, which often represent contradictory positions, such as reducing the class hours of health courses in the absence of the position of representative bodies and the campaign to improve the quality of training for health professionals.

With an extensive agenda of activities, the meeting allowed the discussion of occupational therapy teaching

in multiple dimensions: education in the context of public policy, experiences in teacher training and teaching methodologies, the scenario of undergraduate course expansion, distribution and maintenance; continued education, graduate studies and research.

Furthermore, the work of the groups already established in RENETO was further developed: continued education, research and graduate studies, specialization courses, research funding; parameter and evaluation of courses, and occupational therapy journals. A new Working Group was also formed on multiprofessional residency programs in healthcare.

FNEPAS support once again enabled a workshop on the application of active teaching-learning methodologies traditional curricula, followed by another on the construction of concept maps. This activity precedes the start of the meeting parallel to the development of other workshops. There was a high level of adhesion to and interest in the two work phases: the first, of a more theoretical and reflective nature, placed the group, consisting of representatives of various courses of Brazil, in contact with critical reflection on the differences between the principles of active methodologies applied to philosophy, the design of a curriculum and simple use of active methodologies in subjects inserted into traditional curricula. The second part, of a practical and instrumental nature, sought to introduce to participants a tool for building concept maps, widely used in graduate courses outside Brazil.

There was also FNEPAS support for a roundtable on Multiprofessional Residency, with the presentation of the work that representatives of the Forum had been developing in the National Commission for Multiprofessional Residency. Professor Maria Teresa Carvalho made a detailed presentation of the whole process of liaising and coordination between the Ministries of Health and Education, for the structuring of residency programs in health, especially after activities of the newly composed committee began, and answered various questions raised by the group. This activity reinforced the need for the continuity of a permanent RENETO working group focused on this topic.

In the wake of this meeting, RENETO opened its virtual space with the website www.reneto.org.br, which affords the association exposure and enables communication and exchange among all teachers, students, courses and people interested in teaching in the area.

And that is exactly one of the points to be worked on over the next two years of the management: increased communication and participation by everyone. RENETO needs to grow and get stronger, as it has played an important role in the dialogue with government institutions involved in the management of education and health policies and with all the education associations of the health professions, gathered under FNEPAS, which has consolidated as a privileged platform for dialogue and fortification of education in the area.

RENETO recognizes that coordination with FNEPAS has contributed to the process of structuring, promotion and strengthening of the entity, and thus supports the continuity of this forum and the possibility of developing new projects.

For occupational therapy, participation in this movement has been very productive and has provided, in the context of dialogue with several organizations, valuable spaces for reflection and exchange of experiences.

In this brief history, a few of the many events made possible and developed by RENETO and FNEPAS were selected to demonstrate how they have worked together in an attempt to build an identity with all the other health professions, seeking to increasingly strengthen the ideals and projects which unite these two entities in the defense of qualified interprofessional education as one of the necessary axes for the support and continuity of the Unified Health System in Brazil.

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