

## Contextualized Instructional Design Applied to the Planning of Development Actions in the Federal Public Service

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the contributions of a planning model based on Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) to the development of public servants at a Brazilian federal university. To this end, we carried out participant research with a qualitative approach. Among the procedures, we prepared a diagnosis of the institutional reality, based on document analysis and the application of the SWOT Matrix. In order to evaluate the planning model developed, we held collaborative debates and applied an individual questionnaire with eleven questions using Google Forms. The results of this study include the construction of a planning model that is efficient, flexible and coherent with the university's needs. The model encourages more efficient management of the planning process and can contribute to the quality of the development actions offered to public servants.

### Author Keywords

Contextualized Instructional Design. Educational Planning. Federal Public Service.

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to discuss the contributions of a planning model based on Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) to the development of public servants at a federal public university in Brazil. This article is an excerpt from a master's thesis that investigated strategies that could make the planning of training proposals in the public sector

more efficient and dynamic. Thus, as one of the possible strategies, we developed the planning model that will be discussed in this article.

Looking at the literature, we realize that the development of public servants has gained prominence and is now understood as a valuable strategy for promoting institutional development and generating greater quality for the public services offered to society [1], [2].

We believe, however, that in order to promote the development of the competencies needed to achieve excellence in federal public services, it is essential to invest in quality training activities that encourage a wide range of training for public servants, making it possible to build and update knowledge, skills, values and attitudes [3].

In order to promote quality in these actions, it is also necessary to invest in their planning. We agree with [4] when he points out that planning is more than a legal requirement and that it "is essential for directing an institution's staff training actions towards achieving its aims and objectives".

We therefore argue that it is essential to think about an efficient planning process that allows systematic monitoring of the procedures and stages of this planning, as well as making it possible to anticipate errors and analyze improvements to the development action.

In view of this, we believe that Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) is an excellent strategy to support the planning of training actions in the federal public service. CID has the potential to support a flexible and efficient planning process for development actions in the federal public service.

In view of the above, this article aims to present a planning model based on the guidelines of Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) and discuss the contributions of this model to the development of public servants.

### **CONTEXTUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN IN THE PLANNING OF TRAINING ACTIONS FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS**

Instructional Design is a multidisciplinary field dedicated to reflecting on the production of educational solutions to support learning. The application of instructional design (ID) to military training in the United States during the Second World War marked the development of the field [5]. According to [6], in this historical period,

[...] American educators and psychologists were called upon to develop training materials for military service. With the US victory, this new systemic approach and project management applied to large-scale educational solutions became more widely used.

Instructional Design (ID) can be understood as the intentional and systematic process of teaching that encompasses the planning, development and application of educational methods, activities, techniques and products in specific didactic situations to promote human learning [7].

Over time, as the field of Instructional Design research has evolved, different design models have been created to meet the particularities of different scenarios and the different needs that have arisen. According to [8], these models can be organized into three categories: classic ID models, agile ID models and emerging ID models.

Among these models, we highlight Contextualized Instructional Design (CID), a classic instructional design model, which aims to provide educational solutions that meet educational needs and are consistent with the contextual demands of its target audience.

DIC seeks to promote a better balance between flexibility and personalization in the process of developing an educational solution [7]. Thus, the focus of CID is on the learning processes of the requesting public, but it also considers the use of previously produced learning objects [9].

In summary, the stages in the CID are the same as those in other instructional design models: analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. However, in CID, these stages are not rigid and can be repeated continuously to improve the initial conception while the didactic proposal is being carried out [7].

In this way, we observed that the CID, due to its more flexible structure, promotes greater dynamism in the process of developing a didactic proposal, since it emphasizes the evaluation and continuous improvement of the educational solution developed to meet the demands that may arise from the context and the target audience of the action.

These guidelines from Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) are opportune for thinking about a planning structure for development actions for federal public servants. This is an important innovation strategy for planning training actions in the public service.

But why innovate in this planning? Innovation is defined as an intentional process that seeks to conceive and implement an idea for a benefit, whether it's a response to a challenge or a problem [10].

Faced with constant economic, political, social and technological changes, public institutions need to promote continuous innovation practices in order to respond with quality to the new demands and challenges imposed on public service. The National School of Public Administration (ENAP) emphasizes in its Political Pedagogical Project that

[...] innovation is seen as a systemic practice for transformation in the public sector, based on the values of collaboration, proactivity, openness to risk, networking, simplification, empathy and focus on the user. Actions aimed at innovation help to develop solutions that respond more efficiently to the demands of citizens [11].

In view of the above, we understand that innovating in the planning of public servant development actions is a practice that is consistent with the reality of public service. Innovating in this planning is an opportunity to advance the quality of the development actions made available to public servants, as well as to encourage the dissemination of innovation in the organizational culture of institutions.

When we mention planning, we are referring to the broad process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a training proposal. According to [12] we understand that "Planning is the continuous and dynamic process of reflection, decision-making, implementation and follow-up". This planning is essential for the success of an employee development action, because it is through it that we can analyze and structure didactic strategies, aligned with institutional interests and goals, that meet the educational needs of employees.

In the federal public service, planning these development actions is a complex task due to a series of factors that impact on public servants' development projects, such as the high

demand for training, the lack of budgetary resources and adequate infrastructure, work overload and the bureaucratic issues that permeate the public service.

This means that when planning development actions, it is necessary to consider both pedagogical aspects and a series of operational tasks. This reality requires more attention and commitment to the planning of training actions to ensure that all the elements (pedagogical and operational) of this planning are properly taken into account and thus promote the success of the development actions offered.

In this context, we believe that it is essential to innovate in the planning of development actions. We need to continuously analyze and improve this process in order to increasingly qualify the activities made available to public servants. For this reason, Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) is a pertinent strategy for innovating in this planning process, since in addition to making it possible to monitor planning more efficiently, it also encourages its evaluation and constant improvement.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LOCUS

In order to carry out this study, we carried out participative research with the contribution of the public servants responsible for the Qualification Program for public servants at the public university under analysis. According to [13], participant research is characterized by the integration of researchers with the social environment of their object of study. We therefore used participant research to gain a more objective and in-depth understanding of the reality under investigation. In addition, we adopted a qualitative approach for this study in order to carry out a detailed analysis of our research object [14].

As for the procedures of this study, we made a diagnosis of the reality of Divisão de Capacitação e Educação Profissional (DCEP), unit responsible for the Training and Qualification Program of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). Based on this diagnosis, we produced the planning model following the specifications of Contextualized Instructional Design and carried out an evaluation of this model together with the DCEP employees.

For the diagnosis produced, we relied on a documentary analysis of government and institutional regulations, which respectively govern the National People Development Policy and the Training and Qualification Program for public servants, published until 2022 (the year in which this analysis was carried out).

In addition, in this diagnosis, we carried out a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses seen by DCEP staff in the development of the university's Training and Qualification Program. The SWOT analysis, or SWOT matrix, is a tool used for strategic planning in organizations that "identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment, as well as the opportunities and threats found

in the external environment" [15], thus facilitating decision-making.

To build the planning model, we considered the data obtained in the diagnosis to promote coherence and the viability of implementing the model in DCEP practical reality. This model was structured following the five stages of Contextualized Instructional Design (CID): analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. The focus of this model was to encourage greater flexibility, efficiency and quality for the activities of the DCEP team, seeking to respond to the needs imposed on this unit.

To evaluate this planning model, we carried out a collaborative analysis and an individual online questionnaire with the DCEP team. For the collaborative analysis, we held two meetings lasting two hours each with five employees from the DCEP team (which has ten members). In these meetings, the employees were able to analyze and suggest modifications that they considered pertinent to the planning model.

They also discussed whether the model was consistent with the unit's needs, whether it was feasible to implement the model in the team's practices and the possible difficulties in implementing the model. The questionnaire used was produced using Google Form and contained eleven questions, six of which were open-ended and five closed-ended. This questionnaire was based on the guidelines of [13].

The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain a particular and more objective analysis from DCEP employees about the planning model. Thus, we proposed that each person examine the coherence of the model with the reality of the sector, the possibility of applying it in the unit, the contributions made to DCEP actions and the difficulties observed in implementing this planning model.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the demands of DCEP in managing the Training and Qualification Program for public servants. We therefore analyzed the planning of development actions from the perspective of this team. We sought to understand the reality of the unit and evaluate strategies to improve the planning process, taking into account the needs of this team.

The DCEP team has ten permanent employees, including an administrative assistant, two administrative assistants, two pedagogues, a psychologist, three educational technicians and an executive secretary. These employees have a wide range of duties, in accordance with the internal regulations of the UFRN rectory, in addition to planning development actions. In addition to the high volume of duties, DCEP has to meet the high demand for development needs from the university's approximately 5,000 employees.

This highlights the complexity involved in managing the Training and Qualification Program for public servants and in planning development actions in particular.

In addition, we would like to point out that for the development of this study we had the authorization of the People Development Department (DDP) of DCEP. We also ask all DCEP employees who contributed to this research to sign the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

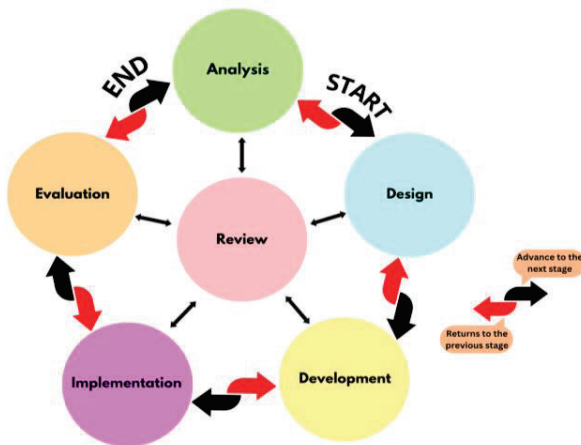
### PLANNING MODEL FOR PUBLIC SERVANT DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

The planning model was based on the guidelines of Contextualized Instructional Design (CID). CID was selected because of its flexible and dynamic nature, which makes it coherent with the needs of Divisão de Capacitação e Educação Profissional (DCEP).

We stress that DCEP faces a context of constant transformation in its day-to-day activities. Consequently, this requires the team to continually innovate and adapt. As such, we believe that the design model best suited to this reality needs to be flexible, so as to allow for the assessment and revision/updating of planning according to the demands of each moment/context.

After selecting CID, we proceeded with the analysis of the diagnostic assessment of DCEP reality and the theoretical framework of the research to structure the planning model. In this analysis, we observed that, in order to address the complexity of planning at the university, we needed a planning model that could simultaneously provide an attentive overview of the entire process and encourage close monitoring of each stage/procedure. A planning approach that aligns with this will enable the DCEP team to equitably manage both the pedagogical and operational aspects present in the public service planning process.

Considering these elements, we have systematized the structure of the Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) planning model (figure 1).



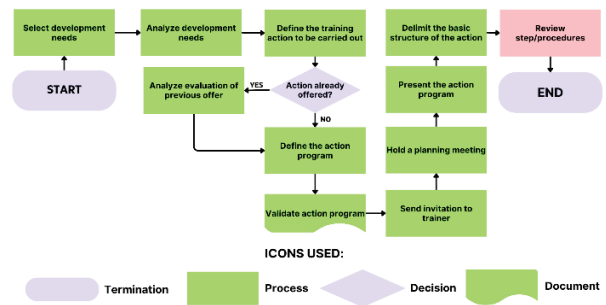
**Figure 1. Planning model. Structure of the planning model. Silva (2024).**

In this structure, we intersperse the five stages of the DIC (analysis, design, development, implementation and

evaluation) with continuous moments of review/evaluation. In this planning model, the planned stages are dynamic so that the DCEP team can move back and forth between them during the planning process if new information comes to light or adjustments need to be made to the development action.

In this way, we aim to provide more consistent monitoring of the entire planning process and each stage/procedure. Thus, the DCEP team can anticipate possible problems, analyze appropriate solutions and evaluate strategies to improve the activity under construction.

Detailing the planning model, we have the first stage (clockwise in figure 1) of analysis, which aims to assess the elements that will support the design of the development action (figure 2).



**Figure 2. Planning analysis stage. Details of the analysis stage. Silva (2024).**

In constructing this stage, we considered the indications from DCEP diagnosis, which pointed out, among the weaknesses observed in the unit, the lack of a pedagogical concept for the activities, the lack of adequate support/guidance for the instructors in drawing up the training proposal and the need to reinforce the alignment of development actions with institutional policies and goals.

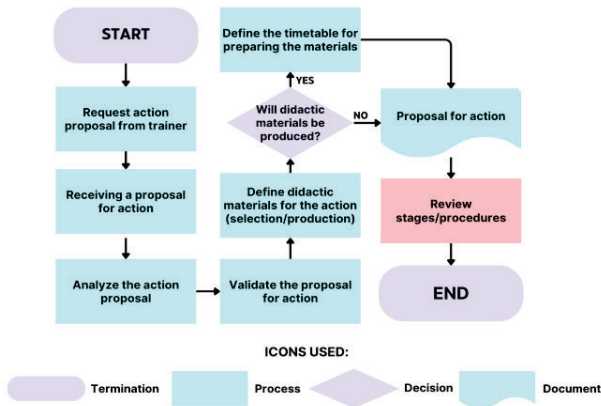
So, in this analysis stage, we have listed the basic elements that DCEP needs to define for each development need, and we have systematized them in a document, the action program. The idea is that this program, built by DCEP, is presented to the trainers to help them draw up the plan/proposal for the development action.

With this in mind, the organization of this stage was designed in two stages. In the first, DCEP is dedicated to drawing up and validating the action's program with the unit's coordinators. To build this program, the team analyzes the need for development, the skills to be stimulated, the objective, the syllabus, the target audience, the institutional policies and goals, etc. At this point, the team also assesses the resources available to support the instructor of the action.

Secondly, DCEP contacts the trainer and holds a planning meeting. At this meeting, the action program will be presented and it will be discussed how the activity to be

taught can contribute to meet the development need. In this way, the instructors will have a clear idea of what is expected from the training activity and will have parameters to support the preparation of the action plan.

In the next stage, the design stage, the outline of the development action will be defined (figure 3). All the pedagogical resources and strategies to be mobilized to promote the teaching and learning process will be defined at this stage.



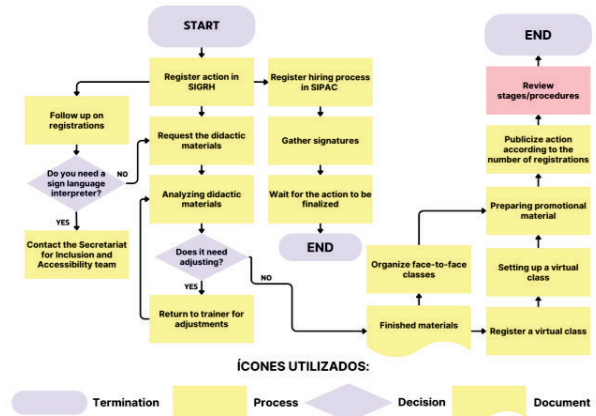
**Figure 3. Planning design stage. Details of the design stage. Silva (2024).**

We observed in the diagnosis of DCEP reality that little attention is paid to this moment of action design. Given the work overload at DCEP, the team is unable to implement closer monitoring of the instructors.

Instructors, on the other hand, in the flow established at DCEP, are required to draw up the action plan in an inadequate amount of time (sometimes two or three days) without receiving more specific guidance on what resources they can use, what is expected from the training action and without being able to effectively reflect on the important elements of the training action (methodologies, teaching materials, evaluation activities, etc.).

For this reason, in this design stage of planning, we propose a more systematic follow-up, encouraging joint analysis and validation of the action proposal and the selected elements (teaching materials, methodology, technological resources, etc.). This is the time to examine whether the design put in place for the development action is consistent with the action program and the elements discussed in the analysis stage.

In the development stage, you actually start to build the development action (figure 4). Here, all the previously defined components and the necessary operational procedures will be developed.



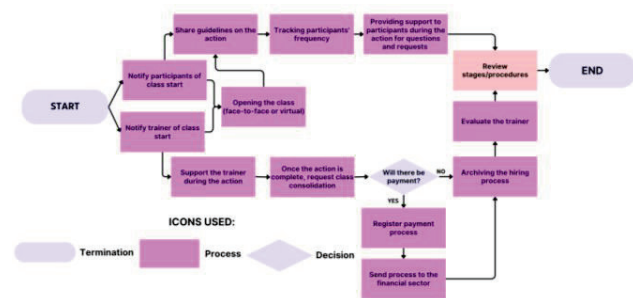
**Figure 4. Planning development stage. Details of the development stage. Silva (2024).**

To prepare this stage, we considered DCEP comments on the need to better reconcile the operational and pedagogical procedures involved in planning actions. As well as the importance of better monitoring of the procedures carried out.

With this in mind, this stage of development aims to ensure that all the planned procedures are carried out correctly. And to help reconcile the operational and pedagogical aspects to ensure that the training activity runs smoothly.

This stage of development must be aligned with the definitions made during analysis and design. However, it is necessary to consider whether all the choices will be viable for the deadlines set or whether they are really suitable for the target audience.

In the next stage, implementation, the instructor sets off to carry out the activity and the DCEP team works throughout the period providing pedagogical-administrative support to the participants and the instructor (figure 5).

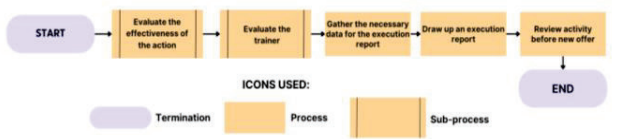


**Figure 5. Planning implementation stage. Details of the implementation stage. Silva (2024).**

This moment of implementation is an opportune time for DCEP to analyze the aspects that favor or hinder the performance of the instructor and the participants during the action, in order to propose new strategies that foster the success of everyone in the activity. It can also evaluate possible improvements for new training activities. In this

way, the DCEP team can, if necessary, re-evaluate the strategies implemented in the action to encourage the achievement of the planned educational objectives and minimize dropout rates.

The last stage of planning is evaluation (figure 6). In this stage, we systematize the procedures for the DCEP team to evaluate the effectiveness of the development action designed, the instructor responsible for the action, as well as analyzing the action as a totality and the planning process itself.



**Figure 6: Planning evaluation stage. Details of the evaluation stage. Silva (2024).**

This evaluation stage is dedicated to observing the entire planning process, its results and the players involved. The data resulting from the evaluation will support the review of the activity prior to the new offer, as well as the construction of the report on the implementation of the people development plan provided for in the Brazilian federal government's National Personnel Development Policy.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS: CONTEXTUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN APPLIED TO THE PLANNING OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS**

Five public servants from the DCEP team took part in the evaluation of the planning model and we held a collaborative discussion followed by the application of a Google Form questionnaire. When analyzing the questionnaire, in order to preserve the identities of the participants, we used the code Server 1 (S1), Server 2 (S2) and so on to mention their answers.

Initially, we discussed the structure of planning (figure 1) and the public servants were encouraged to analyze whether the moments of continuous review between each stage during planning are necessary. In response, four public servants said yes. This continuous review is necessary. And one server said no.

In the justifications for these answers, we observed that these moments of review during planning, for the four public servants who considered them necessary, can contribute to monitoring each stage, anticipating errors/difficulties that jeopardize the following stages, assessing whether what was planned is being achieved.

In addition, they also mentioned that these reviews can help to obtain more systematized and objective data in order to better define meaningful strategies, as well as to constantly improve in order to meet the needs of the development action.

The public servant who felt that the review between each stage was not necessary explained that it would be more feasible to have a final evaluation stage that covers each planning stage. In the words of the public servant, we note that:

*I think the process of evaluating all the stages is extremely important. However, with the reality of the sector in mind, I think it would be more feasible to have a final evaluation stage that takes into account all the stages carried out. This doesn't prevent corrections from being made throughout the process and "formalized" in the final stage (server 3, 2024).*

We understand that given the unit's workload, drawing up a plan that encourages continuous review of each stage may seem like an inadequate strategy because it suggests more work for the team. Certainly, in order to carry out these reviews satisfactorily, the staff will need to devote more time and attention to each stage. This consequently results in a longer planning process for each development action.

However, we believe that this continuous review allows for closer and more effective monitoring of planning, which enables the team to analyze, intervene and promote improvements in the stages of action planning. This generates greater efficiency in the planning process which, in turn, leads to greater quality in the training actions produced.

Another aspect discussed in the evaluation of this planning model was its consistency with the reality of DCEP. In the questionnaire, we asked the public servants if "**This planning model is coherent with DCEP reality?**". We obtained four affirmative answers and one partial answer that indicated "more or less". In their answers, the four public servants agreed that the model is compatible with the unit's needs. However, they stressed that, as this is a new experience, it will be necessary to study its application in practice. The public servant who answered "more or less" to this question explained that

*We would still need to have more training moments, as well as improving the organization of work so that the implementation of this model is feasible (server 4, 2024).*

We agree with the position of these public servants on the need to apply the model in the practice of the unit for a more in-depth analysis, evaluating the data/results obtained and implementing possible adjustments for its better suitability.

In order to implement this, it will be necessary to invest in training for the team, to think about possibilities for reorganizing procedures, deadlines and internal flows (of all the team's other duties) to ensure the best reconciliation with this planning model.

Another point of evaluation refers to the contributions made by this planning model to DCEP. When we asked in the questionnaire if the model under analysis could contribute to the unit's actions, all the public servants answered yes. We then asked them to describe what contributions they see in this model.

We can see from the comments made by these public servants that the model developed has the potential to support better management of the planning process, stimulating greater efficiency and quality in actions. According to the public servants' analysis, the model's contributions include

*1-Visualize the priorities of the activities at each stage of the work processes; 2-Define who is responsible for each process, if applicable; 3-Raise the productivity and efficiency of the deliveries; 4. Use the scheduling of resources efficiently (server 1).*

*Promote the quality of the courses offered; Optimize the capture of evaluation data for the execution report; and contribute to a reliable evaluation of the courses (server 5).*

Thus, we realize that this model allows for closer monitoring of the planning process, which fosters better management of resources, mitigation of possible errors/failures at each stage and effective evaluation of the development courses/actions offered.

In addition, we note that encouraging constant evaluation is seen as a contribution of the model. This evaluation can help to constantly improve the planning model and the development actions that have been drawn up.

Despite the significant contributions that this planning model can make to DCEP, we discussed possible difficulties in implementing the model with the team. Of the five public servants, only one indicated that he saw no difficulties in implementing the planning model.

In the responses from the other public servants, we noticed some obstacles such as time management, the overload of operational tasks, inadequate infrastructure and the constant changes related to the National People Development Policy (PNDP). Server 1 details these aspects well when he says that

*DCEP biggest challenge is time management. It's a sector that needs to be dynamic, but has an overload of operational and bureaucratic tasks. This overload has intensified in recent years, above all because of infrastructure/budget issues (there are no computers, there are no more fellows in the sector, there is a shortage of professionals, among others) and changes in the national People Management policy (there is a more operational bias in the People Management policy). As a result, the team may not be able to implement the model due to time constraints (server 1, 2024).*

The work overload of the DCEP team was also pointed out by server 2, who highlighted the need to scale the number of active servers and the actions offered. However, server 2 added that the other duties imposed on the DCEP unit must also be scaled so as not to affect the provision of development actions. He also stressed the need for support from the university's top management if the model is to be implemented.

In addition, server 3 reports that routine elements can make it difficult to carry out certain planning stages. According to server 3,

*Some points in the routine can make it difficult to fulfill all the stages of the proposed planning, such as untimely demands, staff reductions at certain times for various reasons and a significant number of development actions on offer.*

We understand server 3's point, but in fact, not complying with all the planning stages to the letter is not in itself a problem. The Contextualized Instructional Design structure allows the steps and procedures to be revised and adjusted whenever there is a need to adapt to a particular context or demand. This structure is flexible enough to adapt to the dynamism present in DCEP reality. However, the points listed by server 3 may indicate greater difficulty in carrying out the planning procedures and stages with maximum quality and attention.

These are important issues and we understand that they may have an impact on the implementation of this model. Even if this model aims to be coherent with DCEP reality, its application will still require tackling these issues.

From the evaluation of this planning model, we can see that Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) is a pertinent strategy for innovating in the planning of development actions for public servants.

Among the CID contributions to planning, we highlight three: 1) the CID makes it possible to build a flexible planning flow for the public service, encouraging the stages and procedures to be evaluated and adjusted according to institutional needs. In addition, parallel or complementary flows can be created, based on the original model, to meet the different types of training actions (such as a flow for face-to-face activities and another for distance activities); 2) The orderly structure of the CID allows for more efficient monitoring of the planning process as a whole. In this way, opportunities for improvement can be analyzed at each stage and possible errors can be foreseen which could impact on the quality of the training action under construction. In addition, the CID contributes to better management of the resources (budgetary and personnel) used in the planning process by encouraging a more attentive evaluation of their application; 3) The CID ensures a better reconciliation between the operational (bureaucratic) procedures existing in the public service and the pedagogical procedures present in the construction of a formative action. As a result, this encourages better quality in the development actions offered to public servants, as well as ensuring that these actions are coherent with institutional goals and objectives.

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article we present a planning model for the development of federal public servants. The model followed the guidelines of Contextualized Instructional Design and was designed to meet the needs of Divisão de Capacitação e Educação Profissional (DCEP).

In the analysis of this study, we noted that the application of Contextualized Instructional Design (CID) represents a pertinent strategy for supporting the planning of development actions in the federal public service. This planning model enables more efficient management of the stages and procedures carried out, as well as the resources invested.

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Based on this model, with the stimulus of continuous review between each stage, the planning process can be more closely monitored, analyzing and adjusting the choices made, whenever necessary, to better meet the development needs of public servants.

In this way, the model is flexible and allows the DCEP unit to constantly review and improve it. This is a significant contribution, considering the dynamic nature of the DCEP unit, which needs to adapt to frequent changes in its reality.

This model also makes it possible to better reconcile in the planning process the pedagogical elements that are essential to ensuring the quality of development actions and the operational elements present in the federal public service. This makes it possible to offer development actions that meet the educational needs of public servants, promote the achievement of institutional objectives and goals, and satisfactorily execute the legal procedures.

However, implementing this model requires overcoming some of the challenges seen in DCEP reality. Among the challenges are XXXX's work overload, the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources, and the lack of training for the DCEP team itself and for the instructors. These issues have a negative impact on the quality of the development actions offered to public servants, which is why they must be mitigated.

We therefore stress the importance of examining the reality of the units responsible for staff development programs, understanding the difficulties they face and reflecting together with these teams on possible solutions to the challenges observed.

In summary, despite these challenges, we understand that Contextualized Instructional Design applied to the planning of development actions is a valuable opportunity to invest in the quality of these actions. The model is coherent with the practical needs of the unit and makes significant contributions to the institution.



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