

Technical training for the sector in the public education system

By Caroline Martin

An achievement for the pulp and paper sector and an innovation in the public technical education system. This is how industry executives perceived ABTCP's initiative (Brazilian Pulp and Paper Technical Association) of introducing the first Technical Pulp and Paper Course.

In partnership with the Paula Souza Technological Education Center, which runs 188 Technical Schools (Etecs) in the state of São Paulo, the first class of 40 students began attending, free of charge, their Pulp and Paper Technical classes at Conselheiro Antonio Prado Technical State School (Etecap), to conclude in two years.

Located in Campinas, inner São Paulo, Etecap was chosen for its physical structure and proximity to companies in the sector – roughly 18 companies are installed in this region.

The organization and structure of the first Pulp and Paper Technical Course was assumed by Etecap's director Rosângela Pellegrino. In turn, the courses that make up the curriculum were defined by a team of professors from the school. "The selection was based on the requirements and study of existing courses, both technical and high school levels, aimed at developing technicians that satisfy the current needs of the labor market", said Luiz Wanderley Pace, Etecap professor responsible for the Raw Materials for the Pulp and Paper Industry course.

The dialogue between school, companies and association of the sector is considered fundamental by Pace in order to align pulp and paper industry demands in the educational-learning process. At present, the labor market lacks professionals with knowledge in the environmental, instrumentation, maintenance, management and sustainability areas. Hence the importance of the company-school partnership in running the course, as well as training the teaching staff itself.

Students will also be contemplated according to this alignment. "Technical visits, already common in our schools, are conducted with the objective of providing students with hands on experience in their future professional job", said the professor. Pace also informs that Etecap possesses an internship sector, which facilitates the entry of students in the labor market during their school years. Plants in the sector that have openings may already use the school bulletin board to divulge opportunities for students.

In the current context of Brazil's economic ascension, the Etecs will play an important role in overcoming the lack of specialized labor that the country is already suffering – so much so that, this semester, strategies are being implemented by the federal government to reinforce technical education with the launching of stage two of the Production Development Policy (PDP2).

In this month's Interview to **O Papel**, the director of the first Etec offering the Pulp and Paper Technical Course talks about the work of technical education institutions and reveals her expectations on expanding Etecap's curriculum.



BY SÉRGIO BRITO

Rosângela Pellegrino: "students need to know about the technical courses and learn about possibilities in the job market"

O Papel – In what way do the Etecs contribute to the professional qualification that the country lacks so much?

Rosângela Pellegrino – It's a fact that the lack of qualified labor is one of the main problems Brazil faces today. There are a large number of work fronts without the necessary number of qualified professionals. The Paula Souza Center, responsible for running all the Etecs in the state of São Paulo, identifies areas that lack professionals and sets up specialized courses. For students, the

Etecs offer a series of opportunities. We play a very important role in society, not only in the education of youngsters, but also in the qualification of professionals who are already in the job market and are looking to grow career wise. The majority of Etecap students, for example, leave the school already with a job. Even in cases where students don't identify with the course they are taking, they may still use the job they obtained from the technical course to finance their undergraduate education.

O Papel – What is needed for technical course to become popular among students?

Rosângela – I believe they need to be targeted and divulged in high schools. Students need to know that the courses exist and the possibilities they will find in the job market. I can use my own experience as an example: when I was in seventh grade, I took a course called Education for Work. It was during these classes that I found out about a chemistry course. Since then, I decided what path

to pursue. Today's youngsters also need access to information about courses that are available and promising.

O Papel – In what way does Etecap seek to strengthen this dialogue?

Rosângela – We annually promote a forum of professions at the school to assist high school students. We bring at least 25 professionals from various areas so that adolescents can understand exactly what each activity encompasses. In addition to the in-house event, last year we held a public fair on courses offered by our school, including the Pulp and Paper Technical Course. What happens, however, is that we only inform about the courses that Etecap offers. It would be interesting that each Etec inform the courses it has in its curriculum. There are an infinity of them; what's need is information and people to transmit this.

O Papel – What was ABTCP's participation in setting up the Pulp and Paper technical Course and how will this partnership work looking forward?

Rosângela – ABTCP helped us – and continues to do so – in gathering bibliography relating to the subject matter, as well in divulging the course and training the professors involved. In all, we have 30 professors qualified to teach classes relating to the pulp and paper industry, but many of them do not thoroughly know the companies in the sector. Through the Association, we are scheduling visits of our professionals to different mills in the sector. The partnership with ABTCP will also focus on offering internships to students.

O Papel – What kind of interest did students show towards the Pulp and Paper Technical Course?

Rosângela – In view that this is a new course, the demand was low compared to the other technical courses already offered by Etecap (Chemistry, Biochemistry and Environment). Nonetheless, we received 40 students for this semester of 2011. Even though students interested in the course may take the college entrance exam as of their senior

year in high school, 60% of the students in this first class are aged 25 or older and have already graduated from high school. A complete academic background is common among participants of the evening courses at the Paula Souza Center. They are more mature students who come to the school with a true desire to study, and this new class is a good example. They are quite excited about what they are going to learn and have excellent expectations regarding the job market.

O Papel – Does the Paula Souza Center intend to expand the Pulp and Paper Technical Course to other Etecs?

Rosângela – Yes. The idea is, further down the road, to include the course in the curriculum of other schools. The initiative may also come from the other schools themselves. Every Etec that's interested in offering the course may request authorization from the Paula Souza Center. If the physical structure is appropriate, like Etecap's current laboratories, the process is even easier. ▲

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