

Virtual Education And Internships: New Forms For New Landscapes

Abstract:

Currently, 100% virtual education, understood as "the development of training programs that have cyberspace as a teaching and learning scenario" (Ministry of National Education, 2009), has developed exponentially, in Colombia in From 2010 to 2015, the number of virtual programs has increased fourfold, from 122 to 487, and students have increased from 12,000 in 2010 to 65,000 in 2015 (Lizarazo Correa, 2015). In this context, university internships appear as a requirement to obtain their degree, seeking students to gain work experience before leaving the training institution, and consolidate and validate the knowledge received (Chesler, et al., 2015). This has generated as a great challenge in the Institutions that offer programs in this modality the realization of the practices, challenge that every time becomes more imperative to solve, by the competitions that the means asks in the recent graduates, and by the necessities of the students. The specific challenge lies in the way of combining virtuality with university internship, that is, a virtual program with a internship that can be virtual or on-site, an example of this are careers in the area of administration.

CEIPA Business School of Colombia, has been a pioneer in both, both in virtual education and in internships under that modality. Since 2002, 14 years ago, it offers 100% virtual education and began to develop practices in this modality in 2006 when the first graduates were about to finish their training. In order to respond to all the challenges that this implied, the Institution focused on two fronts, one the improvement of the technological infrastructure and two a pedagogical model that allows a different education that trains integral professionals. In order to identify the good practices of the process, the information held by the Institution has been systematized and in-depth interviews have been carried out with the people who have been in charge of it. In the results found, in addition to information and communication technologies (ICT), it has been found that the institution's pedagogical model has been key in good developments and manages to enhance it beyond what was initially expected among others.

Keywords: Professional internships, virtual education, pedagogical model

Introduction.

Business internships have been positioned as a key element in the training of university students from multiple programs, but especially in administration programs (Bayerlein, 2015). This reality combined with the new developments in virtual education makes it necessary to look at practices linked to virtuality, and for this the study should be developed from those institutions that have already walked solidly in this way.

The present study seeks to approach the internships developed in virtual modality of the students of CEIPA Business School in the years 2012 to 2016, identifying the best practices of the process and thus be able to enhance them in the future.

The first thing that will be done is to make a description of how the present work has been developed, to then approach the state of the art of the internships from searches in recognized databases, then the process of practices and the main ones is described. findings of the process in CEIPA Business School, in such a way that the best practices of the process are identified and can lead to its improvement.

This document is the result of the research project "The innovation in professional internships: The needs of organizations against the training realities, a comparative study between universities with programs in the area of administration." Approved jointly by CEIPA Business School and ESUMER, in Medellín Colombia.

Methodology

The present work is an exploratory descriptive work, where what is sought is to identify the needs of organizations, the characteristics of professional internships and contrast them to update the process currently done, extracting the best practices from there. For this, it was decided to limit the study to the internships developed between 2012 and 2016, basically due to the availability of information and developments at the level of information and communication technologies that have advanced the practices in different directions (Hayes, 2016)

To achieve this, information was collected in the first place, which was done through interviews with the people who have been in charge of the process, and with the heads of students who have had practitioners from the participating institutions; Subsequently, the information was tabulated in two directions, the interviews conducted, and from the databases held by the institution; in order to finally analyze the information and thus identify the good practices that have been developed in the process, and from there generate future proposals that continue to enrich this process.

State of the art

In Colombia, article 7 of Decree 933 of 2003 defines internships as activities that are part of the university extension function, and as practices and / or programs that do not constitute apprenticeship contracts, developed by university students through agreements. subscribed between higher education institutions and other organizations, which are prerequisites for obtaining a university degree (Ministry of National Education, 2003).

The internships can be considered as experimental learning situations, being popular among universities in search of the preparation of their students; many educational institutions flaunt their internship processes, but in a few occasions these institutions do an integral accompaniment to those responsible for the internships and likewise, they generate few strategies that allow the approach between the University with different companies, often changing the possibilities of employability from the same initial management of internships due to the lack of training of the people in charge of this management (Bay, 2006).

In the current knowledge society, new information and communication technologies occupy a position of incalculable importance and application, as well as being a broad topic with diverse

options to explore that allow transformations not only our way of thinking, of feeling, and of acting but also of the integral offer of contents and the facility for the handling, the presentation and the understanding of certain type of information (Carvajal Laverde & Pérez Arango, 2014).

Of this reality and necessity, as well as challenge, is that it is possible to sustain that in the Colombian Universities there is a clear and evident commitment to the socio-academic environment, which is why it contemplates from its mission a conception of social projection that allows experiences of their students and graduates processes of social, economic and cultural development in the scenario that their work life brings (Tavera Zafra, 2014).

To this can be added regional, national, and international meetings that are held worldwide on the subject, publications, seminars, courses, which show the clear importance of the topic among universities and their communities (Hayes, 2016).

In Colombia, the National Internships Network was set up in 2011, which seeks to promote cooperative, solidary and participatory relations among the different institutions of Higher Education, through the articulation of work nodes, in order to develop strategies to strengthen the comprehensive training of future professionals and other actors involved in academic internships (National Network of Practices, 2012).

At the level of work is not much that has been developed, as can be seen in Table 2, when searching there are very few documents on the subject, even with searches in English and Spanish. This is even less if articles referring to Colombia are searched, and they are generally systematizations of concrete experiences, with few references to the needs of organizations (Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015).

Table1. Internships in the academic literature.

Data Base	Search equation	Results	Observations
Scopus	business AND internship AND colombia	17	Of the results, only two documents are referred to the Colombian reality. Gámez Gutiérrez, J., & Garzón Baquero, J. E. (2017). New transversal proposal of entrepreneurship and innovation for educational programs in the third level of education Accounting and Administration, 62 (1), 239-261. doi: 10.1016 / j.cya.2016.10.005 Montoya Ríos, F. J., & Aguilar Zambrano, J. J. (2013). The University-business relationship in business practices: A conceptual model from Ideas Generation Techniques. Journal of Technology Management and Innovation, 8(SPL.ISS.3), 196-208. Retrieved from www.scopus.com
Science Direct	(internship AND Colombia) AND LIMIT-TO(topics, "program,unite state,latin america,education,latin,colombia,student")	50	Only one document is of the subject. Gámez Gutiérrez, J., & Garzón Baquero, J. E. (2017). New transversal proposal of entrepreneurship and innovation for educational programs in the third level of education Accounting and Administration, 62(1), 239-261.

EBSCO	business internship colombia	AND AND	5	Of the documents, only one refers to the subject. Herrera-Fuentes, J. L., Rentería-Mosquera, L. M., & Garcia Vega, E. A. (2011). Didactic Structure of the Process of Labor Training in Companies. <i>Revista Investigación, Biodiversidad Y Desarrollo</i> , 30(1), 39-58.
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Source: From the authors

Doing a literature review of the latest articles published in the sciencedirect database, using the search equation: internship and method AND LIMIT-TO (topics, "student, education") AND LIMIT-TO (yearnav, "2017.2016") AND LIMIT-TO (topics, "student, education, learn, business") are 134 results, of which nine (9) are chosen, the most suitable for the present study.

When reviewing the studies, you will find that they have addressed the following direction. A group of them has been concerned with practices as determining factors in different areas, such as the choice of University or program (Fuller & Delorey, 2016) (Stone, Padron, Wray, La Lopa, & Olson, 2017), the registration in one course or another (Sheptak Jr. & Menakerb, 2016), student satisfaction (Jaradat, 2017), the union between what was developed in classrooms and practices (Stansbie, Nash, & Chang, 2016).

Other authors identify the characteristics that the different interest groups involved in the practices (Calvoa & D'Amato, 2015), the use of practices in the development of collaborative projects (Bikfalvi, Marques, Perez-Cabaní, Juando Bosch, & Rodriguez -Roda, 2017), how students perceive practices in the face of their training (Khalil, 2015), and how important employers give to practices (Stone, Padron, Wray, La Lopa, & Olson, 2017).

None of the previous studies speaks of the practice process itself, or of the lessons learned by the stakeholders when developing them, and even less of the virtuality in the Latin American context in the development of the practices, which makes the present study an advance in the knowledge of professional practices.

Results

It is necessary, first of all, to approach the reality of CEIPA Business School, to understand the context from which the present study is elaborated. It was founded in 1972, and since its inception has sought to be the University of the Enterprise, for something its acronym initially meant: Center for Research and Administrative Planning (CEIPA University Foundation, 2002), indicating its inclination towards training in and for the companies. it has been a national reference; in the 70s to the 80s, it was in everything related to technological education; much of the philosophy on permanent and technological education that was aired nationally at that time, had its origin in CEIPA Business School; from 1980 to 2000, was the national reference in literacy and didactics and school learning difficulties; since 2000 it is virtuality that makes it the leading institution in Colombia in this modality, as well as in the e-learning business, in 2002 formally began the programs in virtual modality, with seven (7) students, with court As of November 2016, there were 2,593, which shows growth in this modality.

Currently as a Business School, he takes advantage of all this experience in the training of administrators in different areas, companies, finance, marketing, human management,

international business and public accounting, all of them with emphasis on administrative and managerial disciplines. For the year 2016 CEIPA Business School has 4,108 undergraduate students, of which 2,593 do so in the virtual modality, ie 63%

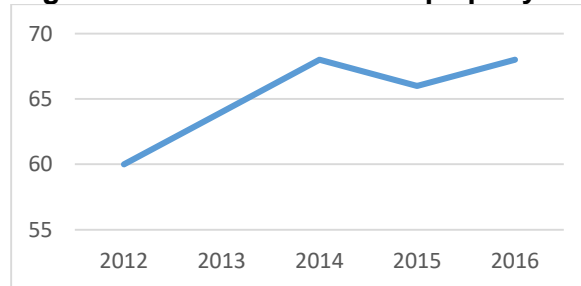
In CEIPA Business School the academic programs last for four (4) years, developed through thematic and problematic topics that are defined as the basic and dynamic unit of analysis, planning, integration and continuous and improved construction of administrative knowledge, related to the solution of problems of the organization; It is also the articulation of knowledge to provide integrated solutions to social and business problems, from different perspectives (CEIPA Business School, 2011), which allows a comprehensive vision of administrative knowledge and avoids the fragmentation of knowledge that must be jointly founded making decisions for the solution of the problems that concentrate the core activities for the achievement of the competences.

In fourth year (4th) is the core of Professional Projection, where students find different alternatives to complete their training and put into practice the knowledge acquired and skills developed in previous years. One of these alternatives is the professional internships consists of the performance of a specific job in a Colombian or foreign organization, which evidences the exercise of some of the competences developed in the academic program in which the student is enrolled. Said practice has a minimum duration of four (4) months and a maximum of one (1) year, on average they have a duration of six (6) months (CEIPA, 2009).

And this inclination towards the management training that CEIPA has been qualifying has been strongly strengthened through professional internships, which over the years have allowed to reach a large number of companies, an example is that in the years 2012 by 2016, practitioners have been located in 321 companies, in the organizational areas related to the training profile.

The internships have been increasing year by year as shown in Figure 1, with a small decrease for 2015, but which recovered its trend in 2016.

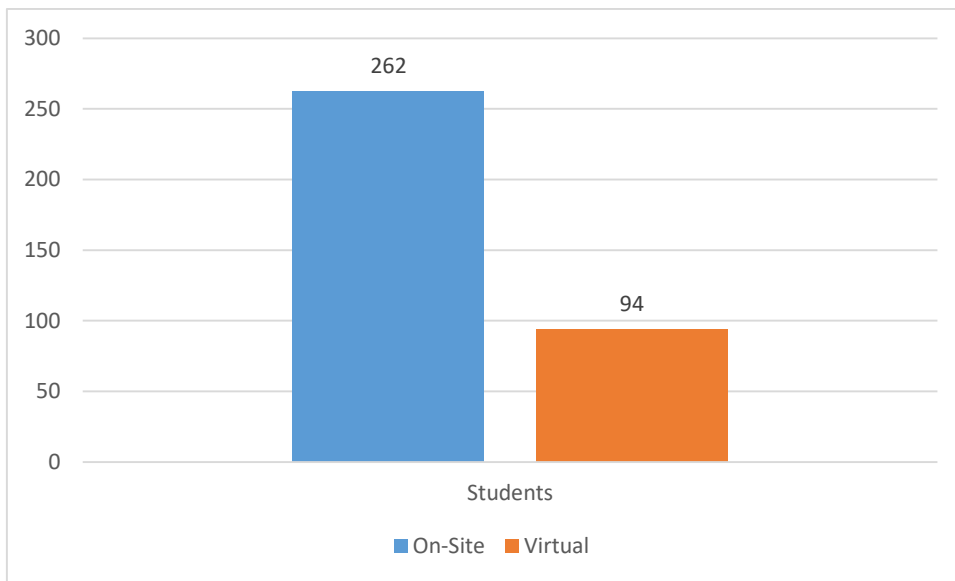
Figure 1. Number of internships per year.



Source: The authors.

By modality of development of its academic program are face-to-face and virtual students, the proportion of these internships is shown in Figure 2, where it is evident that almost a third of the students that have developed internships are of the virtual modality, that each once it is presented as a valid option to end their training:

Figure 2. Modality of students who did internship between the years 2012-2016



Source: The authors

The wealth found in virtuality to achieve greater coverage of educational programs, together with the development of information and communication technologies, has led CEIPA to make a very clear commitment to this type of studies, as explained above, where a 63% of the students are virtual.

From the interviews developed with the people in charge of the internship process, the following items were identified as the keys in the strengths that have been verified in this process.

The main strength is the pedagogical model of CEIPA Business School, firstly conceives its academic activity around a humanistic philosophy that responds to the requirements of the social and productive sectors, in terms of the formation of integral profiles committed to sustainable development of the region and the country, and defines the pedagogical model as the guiding principles of the academic work system, supported by the new Information and Telecommunications Technologies, for the achievement of significant learning and competencies for personal and professional performance (CEIPA Business School, 2011).

In virtuality, the model is applied starting from the virtual learning environment that is characterized by the strategies designed by the teacher (Arastoopour, Shaffer, Swiecki, Ruis, & Chesler, 2016), to guarantee the pedagogical presence in the student's relationship with the student. knowledge, are directly mediated by virtuality. The quality of the strategy designed by the teacher is of great importance for the generation of significant learning strategies in the student. Hence the importance of having teachers with solid training in their professional knowledge, with sufficient pedagogical training to perform a mediation with quality of the learning processes of students, and appropriate enough of the institutional philosophy and the pedagogical model (CEIPA Business School, 2011).

In order to complement and develop the pedagogical model, CEIPA Business School seeks the truly integral development of the students, for this purpose and in the face of the internship process we

have the support of Integral Community Development, which seeks to be the support for the students from the academic (enrollment processes, certifications, tutorials in specific areas) and the personal (through psychologists). From this accompaniment three tools have been developed to support the process, the first is a virtual course called "Preparation for working life" where key competences are found when presenting for the first time to the world of work, this tool is made seeking to adapt to current generations through multimedia didactics; second, from the feedback of the organizations, an Excel tool course was developed, seeking to improve the competencies in the use of office programs; and the third tool is a mock job interview, with the development of psycho-technical tests, which have made students arrive more prepared.

Two other stones of the development of internships are the advisors, and the technologies that are used. These are two points necessary to be dealt with separately, identifying the successes found in them in their performance in the internship process.

When the student requests to do the modality of internship, and already has an organization that will accept him as a practitioner, he is assigned an advisor, a professional in the area of student internship, with professional and academic experience in it. With the advisor the student develops a process of improvement to some process of the area where he is doing his internship, periodic follow-ups of the work are done (ten in total) and of these there must be three meetings with the immediate boss of the student. The final evaluation of the internship is made jointly by the assessor, who evaluates the improvement work, and the immediate supervisor, who evaluates the daily routine, thus seeking the integrality of the student's view (CEIPA, 2009).

Some key aspects are evidenced, the necessary suitability of the advisor who, with his experience, makes the student apply his knowledge, and resolves the concerns that arise when applying this knowledge in reality; the permanent follow-up, which guarantees a close accompaniment to the student, and confidence generation in his work; and the joint evaluation, which manages to generate trust among all those involved in the process, CEIPA, the student and the company.

As the second aspect is the use of Information and Communication Technologies, CEIPA Business School has sought to be at the forefront in Colombia in this regard, for this in the last year has used two specific applications, Brightspace, which is a Learning Management System -LMS- endorsed by the best universities in the world, thus covering the new needs that arise in the world of e-learning, this solid and stable platform has been one of the fundamental stones in the development of the practices. Through it, synchronous and asynchronous communication channels are generated that facilitate the internship process; joined to this is Zoom, which is a video conferencing solution developed by Eric S. Yuan, in 2011 with an engineering team (Zoom, 2017). Through this application the advisors meet with the students and with the heads, in such a way that you can have multiple assistants, you can record, share screen, documents, in short, the union of all these facilities make it a tool key in the internships in virtual modality.

The last relevant aspect in the development of practices in virtual modality is the way companies are selected to carry out internships. Candidates must meet the following requirements, first that is a legally constituted company in the place where it is, for this they are requested the legal documents that accredit this, according to the Colombian norms or of the country in which it is; second, that shows its stability through the time of permanence in the market, in this way it must take at least two (2) years developing its activity; third, that the functions to be performed by the

practitioner are consistent with the exit profile of their training program, through a communication where the company evidences these functions; and finally that the practitioner was hired as such, following the Colombian laws for this purpose. This far from making few companies, allows us to have a wide range of possibilities for our students, guaranteeing a practice that really contributes to the student's training.

This wealth, and the correctness of this provision, is evident in the distribution of the size of the companies in which there are practitioners. In Colombia, the classification of companies is determined by Law 590 of the year 2000, the classification is shown in Table 2:

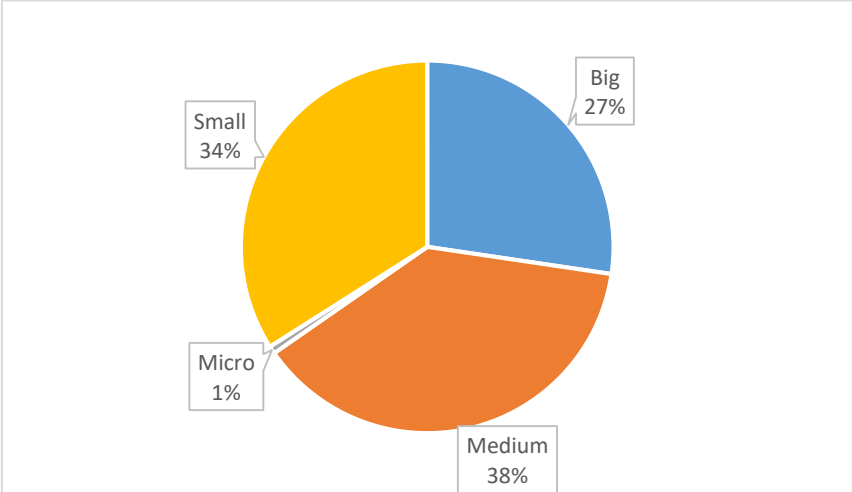
Table 1. Clasification of the companies in Colombia

Clasification	Employees	Total Assets
Microcompany	Less than 10	Until US\$ 119.000
Small company	Between 11 and 50	Until US\$1.184.500
Medium company	Between 51 and 200	Until US\$3.550.000
Big company	More than 200	More than US\$3.550.000

Source: The authors based on (Congreso de Colombia, 2000)

For the companies in which internships were carried out by students of CEIPA Business School between 2012-2016, the distribution is shown in Figure 3, where it is evident that only 27% are large companies, which implies that the vast majority of the students are in medium, small and even micro companies. This is possible due to the conditions applied to companies, which makes CEIPA Business School attractive to find its practitioners.

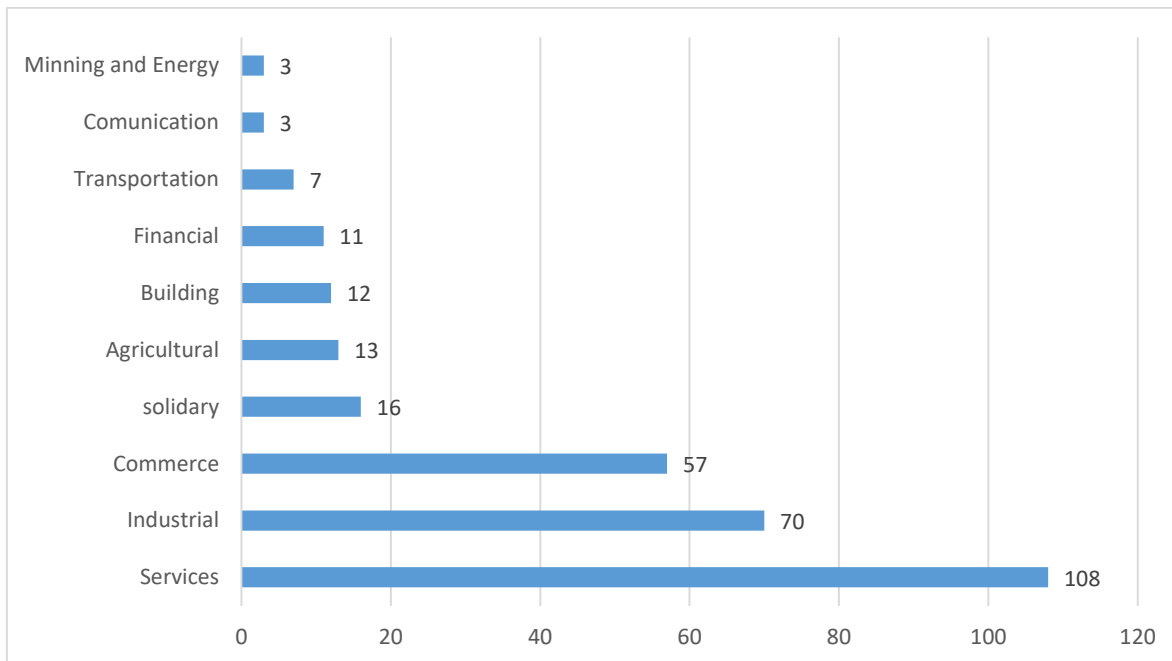
Figure 3. Companies in which there are practitioners according to their size.



Source: The authors

The same can be said when observing the distribution of companies according to the economic sector (Graph 4), which shows that although there are three sectors that stand out, services (108), industrial (70) and commerce (57) have had practitioners in all economic sectors, which positions CEIPA practitioners in the market properly.

Figure 4. Companies with practitioners according to the economic sector to which they belong



Source: The Authors

Conclusions and suggestions

From the above, it can be seen that virtuality in education and in internships has been increasingly established with greater coverage and stability, a fact supported very strongly in the technological developments that have allowed interconnection and access to information asynchronously, and from anywhere.

The keys to developing a practice with students in virtual mode go through different aspects of the same process and the institution in which they are developed, hence the good practices developed in CEIPA Business School are identified with them.

The main thing is an educational model that allows these developments, if virtual practices are given as simple "accidents" in the "normal" of an Institution will not have a future development, while if they occur as normal, then always seek to improve in this type of business practice.

After and very interrelated is the need for qualified personnel and close monitoring of the process, without adequate advisors who truly accompany practitioners in the process, and in their development within the organizations the student will be limited to fulfill some assigned functions, without truly applying what has been learned, and better still, developing the skills that are sought in a graduate of administrative careers.

In third place is technology as a mediator of the process, which in virtuality is an indispensable requirement, this technology must respond to the specific needs of the internship process, and allow multichannel communication throughout the process.

Finally, there are the companies, they must also be willing to accept practitioners under this modality, and assume what this implies, hence the need for no distinction between the type of company or the economic sector to which practitioners access.

All this leads to identify that although the process of practices in virtuality has been increasing in presence and development, there is still much needed in new developments for its full implementation, the road is open and available for these new challenges, especially in institutions such as CEIPA Business School whose guiding principle implies this type of development: "We are a leading company that manages managerial knowledge in face-to-face, virtual and global environments; committed to the development of people and organizations, the promotion of entrepreneurship and comprehensive training. We walk with our clients generating Futuro. "(CEIPA Business School, 2011).

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