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A NEW LOOK AT BASIC EDUCATION IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC: REMOTE CLASSES IN THE STATE OF PARANÁ. A NEW LOOK AT BASIC EDUCATION IN PANDEMIC TIMES: REMOTE CLASSES IN THE STATE OF PARANÁ.

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Summary

A new scenario has emerged in 2020 in education worldwide. Therefore, it is necessary to outline this historical moment. In this way, this article meets the need to address Brazilian education in times of pandemic. The new coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19, meant that the reality of regular and professional education schools throughout Brazil constituted a new teaching format, as face-to-face teaching was interrupted. With the aim of preventing the spread of the virus on an even greater scale than Brazil, measures such as the suspension of face-to-face classes were taken in March 2020, seeking to reduce the spread of the new virus. This measure of suspension of face-to-face classes in public and private basic education networks in Brazil established a new situation never experienced before: it was necessary to establish remote teaching and thus continue the school year in question. According to the World Bank report, more than 1.5 billion students were left without face-to-face studies in 160 countries. With this context, states and municipalities had to look for emergency solutions to continue school activities. The solution found for the continuity of teaching was with the help of remote teaching supports and the introduction of new methodologies, supported by digital technologies, as, from one moment to the next, face-to-face classes were replaced by distance learning. (EAD), forcing teachers and students to quickly learn new communication and information technologies (ICTs).

Key words: Pandemic. Remote teaching. Technologies

Abstract

A new scenario has emerged in this year of 2020 in education worldwide. Therefore, it is necessary to outline this historical moment. Thus, this article meets the need to address Brazilian education in times of pandemic. The pandemic of the new coronavirus, Covid-19, made the reality of regular and vocational schools across Brazil a new teaching format, since face-to-face teaching was interrupted. In order to prevent the spread of the virus on an even greater scale than Brazil was, measures such as the suspension of face-to-face classes were taken in March 2020, seeking to reduce the spread of the new virus. Such a measure of suspension of face-to-face classes in public and private basic education networks in Brazil, established a new framework never experienced before: it was necessary to establish remote education and thus continue the school year in question. According to the World Bank report, more than 1.5 billion students were left without face-to-face studies in 160 countries. With this context, states and municipalities had to seek emergency exits to continue school activities. The solution found for the continuity of teaching, was with the help of remote teaching supports and the introduction of new methodologies, supported by digital

technologies, because, from one hour to the next, the face-to-face classes were replaced for the distance learning modality (EAD), forcing teachers and students to quickly learn new communication and information technologies (ICTs).
Keywords: Pandemic. Remote teaching. technology

1. Introduction

The new coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19, constituted a new scenario in face-to-face teaching, both at universities and in Brazilian basic education. Basic or regular education consists of the following stages: Early Childhood Education includes daycare and preschool. Elementary School I comprises the 1st to 5th year. Elementary II comprises the 6th to 9th year, and the last stage consists of high school, vocational education and EJA. However, this article will cover basic education, which comprises Elementary School I and II and High School, in addition to Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in the state of Paraná. With the aim of preventing the spread of the virus on an even larger scale, in mid-March 2020, measures such as the suspension of face-to-face classes were necessary to seek to reduce the spread of the new virus. This measure of interruption of face-to-face classes in public and private basic education networks in Brazil and, in particular, in this present work, in the state of Paraná, established a new situation never experienced before: it was necessary to establish a remote teaching format for continue with the current academic year.

According to the World Bank report, more than 1.5 billion students were left without face-to-face studies in 160 countries. In Brazil, according to data released in August 2020 in a survey carried out by the DataSenado Institute, it was found that among the almost 56 million students enrolled in basic and higher education in Brazil, 35% (19.5 million) had their classes suspended due to covid-19 pandemic, while 58% (32.4 million) started taking remote classes. In the public network, 26% of students taking online classes do not have access to the internet. This data was presented by senator Flávio Arns (Rede-PR), vice-president of the Education Commission (CE), in a live broadcast on social media. The presentation was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education, the National Council of Education Secretaries (Consed), the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (Undime) and the Todos pela Educação and National Campaign for the Right to Education movements. For Arns, “The pandemic has shown the face of inequality in Brazil and this data shows that in access to education this has been no different. Our responsibility must be to ensure that everyone has the same

opportunities. Only then will we be able to move forward as a country", analyzes the senator. The survey data shows that, in the opinion of 63% of parents of students who took remote classes, the quality of teaching has decreased. The survey also shows that 75% of parents whose children have had remote classes in the last 30 days prefer that classes return to being in person only when the pandemic is over. The research concluded that the new reality is worrying, especially with regard to the almost 18 million basic education students, as they are students who depend more on resources from face-to-face classes.

In this context, the Union, States and Municipalities had to seek emergency solutions to continue school activities. The solution found for the continuity of teaching was with the help of remote teaching supports and the introduction of new methodologies, supported by digital technologies, as, from one moment to the next, face-to-face classes were replaced by distance learning. (EAD), forcing teachers and students to quickly learn how to use new information and communication technologies or simply (ICTs).

Still referring to research by the DataSenado Institute, it reveals that the difference between education in the public network and the private network is also revealed in students' access to the internet. Of the homes whose students are taking remote classes on the public network, 26% do not have internet. In the private network, the percentage drops to 4%. According to the results, cell phones (64%) and computers (24%) are the most used equipment to access study materials. The survey also revealed that seven out of ten parents interviewed, whose children had taken remote classes in the last 30 days, reported that their child received the activities online and another 20% sought the material at the elementary and high school.

The DataSenado Institute was created in 2005, with the mission of monitoring, through research, polls and analyses, Brazilian public opinion about the Senate, parliamentary performance and topics under discussion in the National Congress. However, as pointed out by the DataSenado survey and cited above, remote teaching does not reach all students, revealing the face of Brazilian social inequality.

2 Theoretical foundation

2.1 Searching for paths: meeting digital technology

In several studies on the national reality, it is found that a third of our population lives in absolute poverty and with low levels of education, without access to

education, work, income, housing, transport and information. Although the country has changed significantly over the last century, these levels of social inequality have remained. It is within this framework that digital exclusion is inserted and witnessed significantly during this period of pandemic. In this way, the idea of transforming digital citizenship into public policy consolidates some points: the recognition that digital exclusion increases social inequality. It must also be considered that the market will not include less privileged social groups in the information age. The same happened with the population's literacy, it would not be massive if it were not for the transformation of education into public policy. The participation of the State in this process is necessary as an essential condition. According to Martini (2005), the only objective is the free use of information technology, with the expansion of citizenship, the fight against poverty, the guarantee of privacy and digital security of citizens, the insertion in the information society and the strengthening of local development. The digitally excluded are on the margins of society, constituting a phenomenon called digital illiteracy by some theorists.

In light of the pandemic, the Government of Paraná implemented remote teaching for more than one million public school students. On the one hand, the Department of Education states that the program is a success as it reaches 99% of students. However, some teachers question the quality of learning and the numbers presented by the government.

The solution listed in public education in Paraná, since the beginning of April 2020, is the “Aula Paraná” application, which works via broadcast via open TV, internet, smartphone application. For students who do not have any type of internet access, they are offered to print out activities that must be completed at school by the students or guardians themselves.

According to the Paraná Teachers' Union (APP), which represents education professionals in Paraná, it has the following position: “In our understanding, the offer is unconstitutional, as it is not being offered equally. There are families with three or four children who only have one cell phone and no computer. In many cities, the digital channel does not work. It is not enough to disclose access numbers if the learning is not of quality”, highlighted the president of APP-Sindicato, Hermes Leão.

However, when analyzing data on the presence of students in remote classes, the State Department of Education of Paraná states that, on average, 10,070 students, that is, 1% of the total, are not delivering the proposed activities, whether remote or

face-to-face. State Secretary of Education Renato Feder says that the data is recorded by a program that analyzes the delivery of homework by students on Google Classroom.

For students who do not have broadband internet access, the State has made classes available through videos and coverage is provided by digital channels, whose contract with open TV costs around R$600,000 per month. In addition to broadcasting the class on open TV, 3G and 4G mobile services are offered. The cell phone was one of the main solutions found to face the pandemic. For this purpose, an application was developed that works on both Android and iOS devices and a free internet package (3G and 4G) was offered. In a recent survey carried out by the DataFolha Institute on “Non-face-to-face education from the perspective of students and their families”, pointed out that the Aula Paraná application, the State's non-face-to-face class system, reaches 97% of students. In Brazil the rate is just 79%, while in the South region, the average rises to 93%.

The data highlighted by the research places Paraná among the best class solutions during the pandemic period, also confirming the data highlighted by Business Intelligence (BI), the platform's own monitoring system, which indicates a high student participation, around 97%, in remote teaching implemented in the state of Paraná. Such indices are linked to the wide variety of solutions created by the Government of Paraná to face the challenges of the pandemic. There are several means available for students to follow the content. The system has three digital open TV channels, a cell phone application with free internet, the Aula Paraná YouTube channel, Google Classroom virtual rooms and printed materials. This set made access to remote classes widespread.

2.2 An uncertain direction, however, with no return

The pandemic brought to light an issue that has long been on the agenda of discussions related to distance learning, distance learning and the use of digital technologies in education. Changes in society and ways of teaching have also undergone changes in recent decades, with both teachers and students realizing that many so-called traditional classes are outdated. Therefore, the question is fundamental, paraphrasing Drummond here, “you march, José! José, where to?” Where to move? How to teach and learn in a globalized, interconnected society? Referenced by the Freirean conceptual framework that highlights the teaching-learning category, this research is characterized by

observation of the remote teaching context, with a qualitative approach, with the intention of understanding the praxis through the analysis of bibliographical productions, research on websites and published research. In this vein, Paulo Freire writes

> Teaching content through the appropriation or apprehension of it by students demands the creation and exercise of a serious intellectual discipline that has been forged since pre-school. [...] But, just as it is not possible to teach how to learn, without teaching a certain content through whose knowledge one learns to learn, the discipline I am talking about cannot be taught except in and through the knowledgeable practice of which students become increasingly critical subjects (FREIRE, 2006, p.82).

Changes are important and necessary to change society. Technologies are increasingly present in the daily lives of families, companies, schools, in short, the digital space is a path of no return. Therefore, it is essential that there are investments and public policies so that these technologies are spaces for inclusion and not exclusion, aiming to have all social classes connected to the internet. Ideally, each student would have access to a notebook. However, the pandemic reveals that we are still far away in terms of social equity. It is necessary to invest in distance education, continuing education, short courses. But, of course, technology alone is not enough. “Teaching is a constant challenge” and made worse in the current pandemic scenario.

Technology presents itself as a means, especially at this moment, to collaborate in the learning mediation process. It is important as an instrument to encourage someone's learning, as an additional tool.No and thetechnology that will solve Brazil's educational problem. It can help, however, if used properly.

According to Moran (2006), distance education is the teaching-learning process, mediated by technologies, where teachers and students are separated spatially and/or temporally. Therefore, it is this teaching modality that the State of Paraná has chosen to guarantee teaching during the pandemic period.

Final considerations

Even though there are pros and cons in the application of EAD, it is necessary to refine strategies and pay attention to the duty of adaptation on the part of the subject/user/student as one who is enrolled in a social formation, and who assumes a subject position that seeks a certain autonomy. Denying it would not bring benefits in the search for a solution to the current reality in which we find ourselves. The internet is recognized as the great revolution that

transformed the relationship between subjects and society as a whole. The globalized world creates production conditions that involve subjects in a wide network of dynamic relationships and knowledge acquisition in the virtual universe, with EAD being a teaching modality with a significant connection with the subject of its time and which meets the needs of lack of in-person teaching suspended due to social isolation. The concept of teaching is more linked to the teacher who transmits knowledge and experiences to the student. The concept of learning is directly linked to the student who produces their own reflections and knowledge, research, dialogues, debates, changes in behavior. In short, the learner grows and develops, the teacher acts as a mediator between the student and their learning. The student assumes the role of active learner and participant, which leads them to learn and change their behavior. In the classroom, feedback between student and teacher is direct and permanent, as it is enough to look around to see if the students are engaged, if the class is understanding what is being taught, etc. In distance learning, there is no such control. Hence the need to think about solutions and rethink practices.

Therefore, much more than just as an intermediary of technologies and the internet, distance learning also requires a reflection on methodologies, which demands even more from teachers in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic scenario. Despite the numerous challenges of distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers, students and families have sought to adapt to reality, promoting a satisfactory exchange of learning, as the most important thing at this time is to protect lives of all. In this sense, the State has provided some support so that education reaches students, ensuring the continuity of the school year in order to cover the largest number of students in the public network.

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