

Effects of Pandemic COVID - 19 on Basic Education: Challenges and Perspectives for the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to analyze studies published in 2020, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, its implications and to highlight the challenges and perspectives for rethinking Basic Education in Brazil, in the post-pandemic period. For this, the qualitative methodological approach was used, with a literature review based on scientific papers and essays published in journals indexed in the SciELO database. The analysis of the selected content was based on Bardin (2011), in order to identify in the selected papers the presence of characteristics that corroborated in the construction of this study. It was concluded that the resumption of classroom teaching in the post-pandemic period needs to be planned, evaluated, monitored and redirected continuously, carried out with great seriousness and commitment to the teaching-learning processes and the right to quality education for all children and young people, until the situation of school failure and the educational and social exclusion that exist in contemporary schools is effectively overcome, a great challenge for the 21st century.

KEYWORDS: Right to education. Humanization. Learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s, in a historic moment when the Brazilian State broke with a military regime, to consolidate the process of redemocratization in the country, through the establishment of a Democratic State of Rights, the Federal Constitution of 1988 was promulgated. The Brazilian Constitution expresses in its legal text, in Article 6, the guarantee of social rights: “[...] education, health, work, housing, leisure, safety, social security, maternity protection and childhood, assistance to the destitute, in the form of this Constitution” (BRASIL, 1988, p. 12, our translation).

Specifically, on the issue of the subjective right to education and the duty of the State, the Federal Constitution in its article 205 established that:

Art. 205: Education, the right of all and the duty of the State and the family, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, his/her preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his/her qualification for work (BRASIL, 1988, p. 137, our translation).

To guarantee the right to education, the Federal Constitution, in Article 206 establishes that all education systems when elaborating their public policy proposals should contemplate the basic principles for the teaching of *equal conditions for access and permanence in school, free public education in official establishments, and the guarantee of quality standards*.

In the last several decades, public policy proposals can be evidenced, at the state and municipal levels, with the objective of guaranteeing the universalization of education, that is, the access and permanence of children and young people, from 4 to 17 years old, through the effectiveness of a good quality school.

However, at the start of 2020, the world was abruptly taken by surprise by the COVID-19 pandemic, a disease caused by the coronavirus, called SARS-CoV-2, which culminated in a sanitary, health, economic, social, educational crisis, an unprecedented situation experienced until today, which caused the closing of schools, the suspension of classroom teaching, and its replacement by emergency, remote or hybrid teaching.

Thus, there is an immense social and educational inequality, a major challenge for Basic Education, for public policies, for managers, educators, parents, the educational community, with inequality in access to technological resources, limitations in access to

knowledge, an educational and epistemological process, today, outside the school space, which does not reach everyone, especially the students of the lower classes.

2 OBJECTIVE

This research aimed to analyze studies published in 2020 related to the theme of the COVID-19 pandemic, its implications and to highlight the challenges and perspectives for rethinking Basic Education in Brazil, in the post-pandemic period.

3 METHODOLOGY

For this study, a qualitative methodological approach was used, with a literature review based on scientific papers and essays published in journals indexed in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) database. The analysis of the selected content was based on Bardin (2011), in order to identify in the selected papers the presence of characteristics that corroborated in the construction of this study.

The research was carried out in the SciELO database with the following indexes combined in different ways: Education, pandemic, Basic Education, covid19, remote teaching, Learning, lag. From this search, 79 publications emerged, including papers and essays. After analyzing the findings, five papers were selected, which initially were related to the writing proposal for this study. All selected papers were published in 2020, the time of the sample is limited in view of the theme arising from the pandemic that occurred in the same year in which the productions around the theme intensified. In Table 1 below, the papers selected for analysis are organized.

Table 1: Related Studies: Effects of the Pandemic on Education

Year	Title of publication	Authors
2020	Ensuring Transference on Remote Learning: teaching in pandemic times	CHARCZUK, S. B.
2020	<i>Educar para um futuro mais sustentável e inclusivo</i> [Educating for a more sustainable and inclusive future]	COSTIN, C.
2020	<i>Possível reconfiguração dos modelos educacionais pós-pandemia</i> [Possible reconfiguration of post-pandemic educational models]	GATTI, B. A.
2020	A Further Lesson: the Covid syndemic and education	VEIGA-NETO, A.
2020	<i>A Covid-19 e a volta às aulas: ouvindo as evidências</i> [Covid-19 and back to school: listening to] evidence	OLIVEIRA, J. B. A.; GOMES, M.; BARCELLOS, T.

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2021.

4 RESULTS

The first paper analyzed here, written by Charczuk (2020), focuses on the relationship between teaching and the appropriation of knowledge and imposes the question: How to teach, remotely, in times of pandemic? The objective of the paper was to “[...] present and discuss

elements that allow us to reflect on [...] opportunities between teacher, student and knowledge in a context different from the classroom [...]” (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 3). To support her thesis, Charczuk demonstrates that remote learning (and distance education) have characteristics that differentiate them, but bring them closer together in criticism: the difficulty of interaction. Her work has a line with fundamentals in psychoanalysis, because in parallel the author indicates possibilities – as opposed to her initial idea – that these teaching models can act in the transfer of knowledge, from their improvement. Early on the author points out that the option for the adoption of remote resources for the continuity of teaching caused criticism and resistance from the groups (family members, students and teachers) involved because there were two very clear problems: “[...] the lack of access to the resources needed to participate in remote classes [...] and [...] the opposition between face-to-face learning and distance learning [...], and the alleged quality of the former to the detriment of the latter” (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 2). Here the (false) dichotomy proposed by the author is already clear: to teach remotely or not? Her explanation in the paper demonstrates that there is not one way or another, better or worse, but rather a theoretical-conceptual model behind it, which supports the various teaching models – which, in turn, can be more or less effective. When articulating such theoretical-conceptual models with the teaching modes, the author’s option falls on a Freud-Lacanian emphasis, which has the best tool to, in the context of remote teaching, subsidize the “[...] proposition of a teaching that recognizes both teacher and student as subjects of the teaching and learning process” (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 7). Using reports provided by teachers, parents and students, Charczuk provided a detailed overview of how teaching in the pandemic has been altered and affected, clearly needing new theoretical support. Also, from the analysis of the reports, Charczuk proposed a re-discussion of the student-teacher and parent-teacher interactions, translating the collected scenes and reports and analyzing them from the perspective of psychoanalysis. What remains from this analysis is the questioning of how “[...] to set up and maintain a relationship between the teacher, the student, and knowledge in a context of social distancing” (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 11).

The author points towards education beyond the pandemic, paraphrasing István Mészáros, who said it was the craft of education as that of “[...] a social transformation, broad and emancipatory” (MÉSZÁROS, 2008, p. 39, our translation), and to an evaluation of the period that education goes through indicating the need for reflection in a posteriori “[...] time will be necessary to elaborate this discouraging current scenario, creating tension in the classic ways of thinking teaching and learning [...]” (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 15). In the conclusion of her work, the author demonstrates that, despite the loss of the “bond” between teachers and students, caused by the pandemic, remote teaching has sustained education (albeit with its limits), and also demonstrates that the issue of interaction is something precious, which demands special attention in the experience with remote teaching in this period of pandemic. The singularities of remote teaching for young students of Early Childhood Education and High School, for example, demonstrate how interaction can be more (in the case of younger students) or less (in the case of more mature students) missed. The complexity of the time of the pandemic is considered, by the author, as a challenge aiming at an inclusive education, as well as the psychoanalytic approach that can provide teachers with tools to improve their work in this very critical period in which COVID-19 has placed us.

The second work analyzed in this paper is that of Cláudia Costin (2020), which starts from a finding: the pandemic reached Brazil at the sanitary, economic, institutional and educational levels, however, in the latter, it was particularly Machiavellian: it revealed a social/educational inequality that, even known, its depth was not known, concomitantly brought the differences between social classes, teachers, access to technology, views of what the school represents - which proved to be diametrically opposite, when the socioeconomic differences between students were explicit – as well as socio-emotional losses of various kinds. The paper, which aimed to be a reflection, was produced in the last quarter of 2020, when the effects of the pandemic were already highly accelerated and had a wide impact, at various levels of the Brazilian society. Based on this scenario, the author outlined points on the Sustainable Educational Agenda, addressing two points: to provide new generations with skills for a new period in the post-pandemic era and to sow values through education for the sustainability of the planet. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are aimed at achieving goals in 2030 that allow a better future for the next generations. Among them the inclusive, equitable and quality education, ensuring the acquisition of the necessary skills for insertion in a world based on the SDGs, a world that has been through the greatest catastrophe since the Second World War. Costin (2020) works with two analysis hypotheses, in the field of education: “[...] a) how education will be and how it should be in 25 years’ time, and b) how to prepare students for the reality they will live in 25 years from now” (COSTIN, 2020, p. 45, our translation). Her set of ideas encompasses the concept that COVID-19 is an educational *turning point*, as it serves as a decision accelerator and a driving force behind educational technology as the basis for a revolution in indicators.

Costin (2020) warns of the need for curricular changes aiming at the insertion of students in this new era, in which old competences will be replaced and the demands that arise will demand “[...] autonomy, employability or entrepreneurship and global citizenship to face some risks associated with an eventual growth of social inequalities, such as the strengthening of populist and authoritarian governments” (COSTIN, 2020, p. 47, our translation). Based on this assumption, the author lists some characteristics that the Sustainable Educational Agenda must have, such as the focus on collaborative and creative problem solving, the strengthening of critical thinking, the training of children and adolescents for global citizenship. The appreciation of the teaching career is a prominent point in Costin’s argument, as there is an understanding on the part of the author that this point is significantly linked to the improvement of educational indicators in the country.

Costin (2020), in her conclusion, assesses that this educational agenda can be implemented with agility, mainly due to the fact that some aspects of it are already underway in the various educational segments (municipal, state and federal) enabling the replication of these well-known practices already successful elsewhere.

Bernadete Gatti’s (2020) paper addresses, in general, the particularity of educational management in terms of the physical distance caused by COVID-19 and its implications for education. The author reflects on the possibilities and limits with regard to alternatives to remedy difficulties both in pedagogical aspects and in interpersonal relationships. Gatti points out the need to reconfigure the relations of public and private management with regard to the reduction of inequalities, as well as an education for future generations based on equality and

social well-being “[...] are found in the relationships between the preservation of life and social needs so precious to us humans, gregarious beings that we are, as well as the difficulties related to work, the economy and the sustainability of institutions [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 30, our translation). In view of the diversity of opportunities in access to remote teaching added to the support, or not, of family members in the mediation of curricular content, the author points to a traumatic scenario in education:

Both basic and higher education, through their schools and institutions, public or private, are part of this movement and this pandemic situation, and are not free of conflicts, power disputes, diverse interests and the economic game, within institutional inequalities and between education networks as well. (GATTI, 2020, p. 30, our translation).

The study cutoff selected by Gatti (2020) refers to the specificities of Basic Education and the choices of municipal and state administrations, based on the guidelines and protocols of the health authorities, for the pandemic period when there was a need to adopt remote teaching: “Education, municipal and state departments, state and municipal councils also developed guidelines for this emergency period in conjunction with the respective education departments with regard to calendar, remote education and curricula” (GATTI, 2020, p. 31, our translation).

The researcher states that “[...] there was a lot of disparity between states and municipalities in political decision-making related to public health, with a certain mismatch in actions, which did not stop aggravating the general social and educational situation [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 31, our translation). This statement reflects upon the disarticulation in favor of an emergency policy to meet the educational needs of students in Basic Education.

The author seeks to bring together social realities, the condition of teachers and managers, as well as curricular aspects, in the period of remote teaching, which imposed a new dynamic in the teaching-learning processes. The author highlights the difference between students [...] with good conditions, with access to the internet, with the necessary support (computer, tablet or cell phones) [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 32, our translation) in comparison with those who “[...] not having these facilities, or having restrictions (for example, no internet or computer network or other support, possession of prepaid cell phones with little access to networks; only one cell phone in the family, etc.) [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 32, our translation) have very different learning opportunities. However, the most critical scenario comprises “[...] those without any conditions to use the technological support chosen to supply the in-person learning mode [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 32, our translation).

Gatti (2020) points to the need to relate socio-emotional aspects involved in the isolation process and the face-to-face return to schools, considering the learning needs of students with and without access to technological tools. In relation to teaching methodologies, she highlights the need for “[...] teacher training for school education work in remote mode and for the use of media [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 32, our translation).

In view of the educational reality for the coming years, when hybrid teaching will be present at school, the author suggests the “[...] development of forms of active involvement of students, development of shared activities, and even the assessment of student performance [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 32, our translation). The author also states that: “The return to schools will

be important since aspects of human sociability and learning conditions of children and adolescents must be considered. [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 33, our translation). This transition process for returning to in-person learning classes, according to Gatti (2020), needs an “[...] opening for exchanges, conversations, about how they felt with the new actions that were required of them in the isolation period [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 35, our translation).

In this welcoming for the return of face-to-face activities, Gatti considers it important to “[...] create an environment of serenity among educators in relation to physical, infrastructure, curricular adjustments and for reception [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 35, our translation) of Basic Education students. The author is attentive to the need to consider “[...] differences in biopsychosocial development between them and the different opportunities they had to study or not, receiving support or not. [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 35, our translation).

The author concludes that to resume in-person learning classes there is a need to “[...] create collective conditions to build and assume new ways of thinking and acting with regard to functions and school work [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 38, our translation). Rethinking class times and spaces “[...] creating alternatives for learning in co-participation, and building curricular dynamics with the essential knowledge important for contemporary society weighed by a vision of the future [...]” (GATTI, 2020, p. 38, our translation).

For the new school to take place in the post-pandemic, the management team, the teaching staff and the school community must rethink, based on continuous training, a way of acting for the recovery, not only of learning, but also of interpersonal relationships.

The paper written by Alfredo Veiga-Neto (2020) addresses the perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic from the aspect of seeing this epidemiological phenomenon as a syndemic (a term coined by the researcher in the field of medical anthropology, Merrill Singer), which focuses on explaining, based on a biosocial model, how interactive diseases and social and environmental factors can potentiate the negative effects of diseases.

The focus of the paper was the unfolding of the crises generated by the pandemic in a difficult socioeconomic situation combined with the deficiencies of education in Brazil. This situation, increased by a political period dominated by necropolitics, in the sense of Achille Mbembe, can generate, in the author’s opinion, paths for curricular changes, albeit subtle, that allow a better confrontation of the sociopolitical conditions posed in Brazil, impacted by negationist governments and a pandemic in which there is no end point.

The initial basis for Veiga-Neto’s work, taken from Hannah Arendt, indicates that there is an opportunity to create where the crisis reigns. Developing this motto, Veiga-Neto explores the variables that the “[...] complicated and toxic social, political and discursive atmosphere that surrounds us in Brazil today” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p. 2) where what prevails is the disqualification and deconstruction of the bases (albeit fragile) where Brazilian education is based.

In the first section of the paper, in which the author proposes to make a diagnosis of the pandemic crisis, there is the necessary vocabulary conceptualization, understood by the author as a precursor step, embarking on definitions that help in the understanding of the meaning of the work. There is an explanation of the idea of the syndemic and how it intertwines in the paper. To understand how part of Brazilian society sees the pandemic today, Veiga-Neto (2020) uses the idea of the kaleidoscope, which changes its perception as the observer moves it. The author emphasizes that the difficulty in perceiving the optical phenomena involved in the

kaleidoscope is very similar to the denial or lack of understanding of the pandemic state in which we live today.

In advancing his work, in the second section, Veiga-Neto deepens the analysis of the concepts that part of Brazilian society (more attuned to the current government) uses to explain its defense of ideas related to the pandemic, namely: “[...] negationism, flat-earth theory, conspiracy theory, fundamentalism, anti-scientificism, tribalism and refractoriness” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p. 7). These multiple concepts, which are interrelated, are the foundations of what the author calls a “[...] coherent, firm, conservative and self-justified network” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p. 8), dedicated to cementing counter-information in society in terms of fighting the pandemic.

By advancing in the analysis of the COVID syndemic, Veiga-Neto exposes points of view that corroborate with his central idea that, in exceptional times, an analysis that uses - mainly - an original perspective is necessary for the proper understanding of something so unusual which, in turn, brings together natural and social phenomena (biomedical, geographic, climatic, atmospheric, population, etc.) as was the case with this COVID-19 syndemic. The syndemic, in the author’s opinion, cannot be explained by a single theoretical contribution (again, here, the kaleidoscopic idea is imposed) since there are too many factors influencing and impelling this syndemic to multiply in five other crises: “Covidian, economic, political, ethical and foolish” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p.10) (the latter – as the author points out – directly concerns anti-scientific interpretations or that contradict common sense during the COVID-19 syndemic). The author enters the third and last section of his article (Propositions) and materializes ideas that can be used, applied, matured, discussed and reflected as a focus in the field of scientific education, proposing mainly changes in the curricular emphases. Although, to the author, these are not the definitive solutions, since “[...] school education in our country has accumulated a centuries-old tradition of structural inequalities, exclusions of all kinds, barefaced elitism, facilitation, slackness and curricular superficiality” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p. 11).

The author’s ideas list his proposals in two dimensions: the gnoseological and the formative. In the field of gnosiology, the advancement of content (going beyond the informative, becoming something that articulates repertoires, exercising logical reasoning) is the most outstanding. In turn, in the formative field, the author highlights four points: the incorporation of ethics as a principle, must be paramount (aiming mainly to develop mutual collaboration and the exercise and application of collective values); the development of listening skills; the incorporation of the principle of charity (understood as the duty to attribute to the other the best of intentions and the best possible understanding) and, as if intertwining these three previous points, governmentality (based on Foucauldian ideas, would be the meeting between the act of governance on oneself, the governance exercised on others and the governance that these others exercise on that someone). Veiga-Neto also stresses that these “[...] propositions are nothing very new in the field in which Curriculum Studies deal with scientific education[...].” (VEIGA-NETO, 2020, p. 16), but due to the COVID syndemic these curricular measures can be facilitators for a post-COVID-19 education, which favors the anti-negationist and anti-scientific struggle that is established in Brazil today.

Another work, analyzed here, was Oliveira, Gomes and Barcellos’s (2020) whose main objective was to examine situations of paralysis, use of time and the impact of technologies on

students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work was structured based on the examination of evidence and its links with this situation, generating the conclusion that there are possibilities for narrowing the gap between the lack of in-person teaching and an eventual drop in the quality of education.

The literature review work focuses on the theme of the impact of COVID-19 on education, based on scientific evidence, seeking to understand how the impact of the closure of schools has interfered or will interfere in the performance of students, in both short and long term. The paper is divided into four parts, in addition to the introduction, namely: 1) evidence regarding the impact of school closures, for more or less long periods; 2) the examination of potentially obvious or promising interventions, but whose effectiveness is not supported by the evidence and generates unjustified costs; 3) the examination of structural limitations that hinder the implementation of effective measures (with an emphasis on limitations associated with teacher quality and access to technology) and, 4) the presentation of evidence about what could work under the circumstances and available resources in the country.

The study covered the reading and research of 101 works that focus on different aspects of the theme. Some points are highlighted in each section of the paper that summarize the relevance of the study. With regard to closing for long periods – in this case, school holidays – and its relationship with the decrease in knowledge on the part of the students, the evidence collected, in general, points to small losses in the students' knowledge. When analyzing, in the second section, interventions that make it possible to reduce the educational gap (with an increase in school days or the implementation of a full day) and its relationship with costs, the authors did not find enough evidence to justify this hypothesis. The third section of the paper, intended to analyze the structural limitations, focused on the teacher and technology, and their correlation with the quality of teaching, whether remote or online.

The analysis of the studies presented leads to a finding, by the authors, that “[...] it is not the availability of equipment and access to the internet that would make a difference, but rather how technology is inserted in the school context” (OLIVEIRA; GOMES; BARCELLOS, 2020, p. 563, our translation). The fourth section of the paper is dedicated to analyzing the potential of educational resources that, in a period of pandemic and with the inherent difficulties that education in Brazil presents, can be better applied.

The items that the authors assess as the easiest one to apply are noteworthy: “[...] (a) literacy using phonic methods, (b) reading; (c) diagnostic evaluation; (d) structured teaching; (e) tutorials; (f) homework; and (g) the guarantee of school attendance” (OLIVEIRA; GOMES, BARCELLOS, 2020, p. 565, our translation). These items make up a set of strategies that would be promising for the teaching model that the pandemic situation requires, for example, demanding an optimization of the time available in the school year.

When concluding the paper, the authors draw attention to the fact that the revised evidence proposes policies that, even in a post-pandemic time, can be used and included, in the sense of what Veiga-Neto (2020) also proposes in the paper previously analyzed.

There is also a mention that the answers found by the authors are not definitive, but rather, introductory to a debate that will be constant in education, with the resumption of the course of education in Brazil. The authors point out that the solutions cannot be restricted to the truism already widely inserted in the educational daily life, such as “[...] remote teaching,

use of technology and the increase in the number of hours” (OLIVEIRA; GOMES, BARCELLOS, 2020, p. 567, our translation), and should move towards activities more grounded in the literature, with special attention to making a diagnosis of the students that can serve as a starting point for the gradual resumption of teaching.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis carried out, it is considered that the educational and social inequality, present today in basic education, needs to be overcome. For this, the studies point out some conditions for educational proposals in the post-pandemic period, which are:

- Reform of the education system, understood within the scope of a proposal for public and democratic management committed to the right to education and to a humanizing education.
- In-depth diagnostic study by the managers of the Education Department and educators on the conditions of the students, the profile of each class, the socioeconomic, cultural and learning profile, as a starting point for resuming in-person learning activities.
- In-depth study by the Education Department managers and educators on the economic, environmental, sociocultural characteristics of the local community and the school community.
- Curriculum reorientation movement, with the effective participation of all educators, students and the educational community.
- Continuing education process for educators.
- Formative meetings with families and community.
- Process of resuming the construction of knowledge.

It can be concluded that the resumption of classroom teaching in schools, safely, in the post-pandemic period, needs to be planned, evaluated, monitored and redirected continuously, carried out with great seriousness and commitment to the teaching-learning process and the right to a quality education for all children and young people, until the situation of school failure and the educational and social exclusion existing in contemporary schools are effectively overcome, a major challenge for the 21st century.

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