

THEMATIC SECTION:

**EDUCATION IN
TIMES OF PANDEMIC**

SEÇÃO TEMÁTICA:

**EDUCAÇÃO EM
TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA**

SECCIÓN TEMÁTICA:

**EDUCACIÓN EN
TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA**

EVALUATION IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC: AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECREATE THE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Based on contributions from studies that mapped the educational situation in Brazilian municipalities and states in the context of COVID-19, as well as on academic articles dealing with evaluation in this scenario, this article explores possible paths to be taken in the return to in-person activities, particularly those paths pertaining to evaluation and curriculum. Bearing in mind the commitment to promoting quality education for all, ways are discussed that allow recreating the public school, which are expressed in new ways of using school space and time, with the potential to face the historical and brutal economic, social and educational inequality that became strikingly evident with the adoption of “remote education” by education systems and schools in 2020.

KEYWORDS EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION • CURRICULUM • COVID-19 • PUBLIC SCHOOL.

AVALIAÇÃO EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA: OPORTUNIDADE DE RECRIAR A ESCOLA

RESUMO

Recorrendo a contribuições de estudos que se voltaram a mapear a situação educacional em municípios e estados brasileiros, no contexto da Covid-19, bem como a artigos acadêmicos que tratam de avaliação educacional, no referido cenário, neste artigo exploram-se possíveis percursos a serem percorridos no retorno às atividades presenciais, especialmente aqueles atinentes a avaliação e currículo. Tendo como horizonte o compromisso de promover uma educação de qualidade para todos, discutem-se caminhos que possibilitem recriar a escola pública, que se expressem em novos modos de ocupação do espaço e do tempo escolar, com potencial de enfrentar a histórica e brutal desigualdade econômica, social e educacional que saltou aos olhos de todos com a adoção do “ensino remoto”, por redes e escolas, em 2020.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE AVALIAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO • CURRÍCULO • COVID-19 • ESCOLA PÚBLICA.

EVALUACIÓN EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA: OPORTUNIDAD DE RE-CREAR LA ESCUELA

RESUMEN

Por medio del recurso a aportes de estudios que se han destinado a mapear la situación educativa en municipios y estados brasileños en el marco del Covid-19, así como a artículos académicos que tratan de la evaluación educacional en tal escenario, en este artículo se exploran posibles recorridos a seguir en el regreso a las actividades presenciales, sobre todo aquellos relativos a la evaluación y al currículo. Manteniendo el compromiso de promover una educación de calidad para todos, se discuten caminos que hagan posible re-crear la escuela pública, que se expresen en nuevos modos de ocupación del espacio y del tiempo escolar, con el potencial de enfrentar la histórica y brutal desigualdad económica, social y educativa que saltó a los ojos de todos con la adopción de la “enseñanza remota” por redes y escuelas en el 2020.

PALABRAS CLAVE EVALUACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN • CURRÍCULO • COVID-19 • ESCUELA PÚBLICA.

INTRODUCTION

The context of COVID-19 and the necessary suspension of in-person classes brought about diverse reactions and approaches from governments, education professionals – particularly teachers –, students and parents, who were suddenly faced with a totally unusual reality. Over the period of approximately one year, several initiatives were implemented by states, municipalities and schools to mitigate the consequences that the abrupt interruption of activities related to school year 2020, which had barely begun, would bring to students in their schooling process and to the social and affective relationships that are part of schools' everyday life.

The proposals that were brought about derived from individual responses built by education systems and schools, as there were no actions by the Ministry of Education (MEC) that might guide and support states and municipalities by organizing parameters and conditions to materialize responses to the extraordinary times that Brazil and the world were, and still are, going through.

What was seen on the part of federal government was the enactment of the Law 14,040 (BRASIL, 2020f), which was sanctioned by the Brazilian president and a few ministers,¹ in August 2020, which “[...] establishes extraordinary educational norms to be adopted during the state of public calamity” and delegates to the National Education Council (CNE) the task of establishing national guidelines to implement said law. However, before that date, the CNE had already issued four opinions (numbers 5, 9, 11 and 15) with guidelines and recommendations for education systems, schools and universities on how to conduct the educational process during the sanitary crisis (BRASIL, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d).

The norms established by said Law basically deal with bureaucratic aspects relating to calendar and the number of school days. Although it establishes, in its article 2, paragraph 9, that “[...] the Union, the States, the Municipalities and the Federal District shall implement, on a collaborative basis, cross-sector strategies for the return to regular school activities in the education, health and social work areas”, no measure can be found that expresses cooperative action between the various levels of government.

One of the goals of this article is to systematize contributions provided by studies published in the form of research reports that aimed to characterize proposals for the continuation of education – including assessment processes – and to describe reactions of teachers, students and parents to, and their interaction with, what was generally denominated “remote education”. In addition to that output, this article

1 It should be noted that Law 14,040/2020 was signed by the President of the Republic and four ministers, with the signature of the minister of economy preceding that of the minister of education, which seems to reveal, to some extent, the weight of the economic to the detriment of educational area.

presents an analysis of academic articles that sought to problematize the subject of educational evaluation in the context of the pandemic.

Based on that output, the other goal is to explore the notion of evaluation and curriculum that has predominated in the Brazilian school and is more clearly revealed by means of questions that have been central in the debates and propositions dealing with the return to in-person classes. In an interlocution with these revelations, the article considers possible paths to be taken in the return to in-person activities as regards pedagogical action, particularly focusing on issues related to assessment and curriculum.

REVELATIONS PROVIDED BY RESEARCH

Considering Brazil's continental dimensions, with marked differences and inequalities between its localities, the studies' results are not expected to encompass the multiplicity of situations, challenges and responses that were set off by states, municipalities and schools. Therefore, the results of the studies listed here should be taken as an illustration of trends of implemented actions, as well as interactions and reactions to the context of the pandemic, since they do not exhaust the number or the nature of experienced situations. In addition, we did not intend to cover all studies conducted by universities and/or civil society institutions that are concerned with the course of education in the current scenario. However, these works provide an overview of perceptions of different interlocutors about the educational process in this context. In Chart 1, we list the title, the organizers, the period of data collection, the breadth, the interlocutors and the goals of the nine analyzed studies.

CHART 1 - Information about the analyzed studies

TITLE/ ORGANIZERS	DATA COLLECTION PERIOD	BREADTH/ INTERLOCUTORS	GOALS
<i>A situação dos professores no Brasil durante a pandemia</i> [Teachers' Situation in Brazil during the Pandemic] (Nova Escola)	May 16 to 28 2020	9,557 responses: 8.121 (85.7%) basic education teachers. 53.4% are concentrated in the Southeast Region.	To understand the diversity of scenarios experienced by teachers. Source: Semis (2020, p. 7)
<i>Educação escolar em tempos de pandemia na visão de professoras/es da educação básica</i> [School Education in Times of Pandemic in the View of Basic Education Teachers] (FCC)	April 30 to May 10, 2020	14,285 basic education teachers from all Brazilian states at public and private schools: 74.4% from the Southeast; 14.3% from the Northeast; 6.4% from the South; 2.5% in the Central-West; 2.5% from the North.	To study how public and private school teachers in Brazil were conducting their activities in the first few weeks of social distancing, reconciling work with private life, and what their expectations were for the post-pandemic period. Source: Fundação Carlos Chagas (2020, p. 1)
<i>Inclusão escolar em tempos de pandemia</i> [Educational Inclusion in Times of Pandemic] (FCC; UFABC; Ufes; USP)	July 10 to 27, 2020	1,594 teachers at public and private schools in all Brazilian states who work: with regular classes including special education students (67.5%); in specialized educational service (AEE) (25.4%); with a bilingual education class or bilingual school for the deaf (2.4%); with a special class or school (4.7%).	To identify the challenges faced by basic education teachers in guaranteeing access and participation for special education students, as well as the strategies to ensure the right to special education from the perspective of inclusive education during the suspension of in-person classes. Source: Fundação Carlos Chagas et al. (2020, p. 1)
<i>Trabalho docente em tempos de pandemia</i> [Teaching in Times of Pandemic] (CNTE; Gestrado)	June 8 to 30, 2020	15,654 basic education teachers in the 27 Brazilian states.	To know the effects of social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching in Brazilian public basic education schools. Source: Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação, Grupo de Estudos sobre Política Educacional e Trabalho Docente (2020, p. 5)
<i>Políticas e estratégias dos sistemas municipais de ensino do ABC paulista durante a pandemia de Covid-19</i> [Policies and Strategies of Municipal Education Systems in ABC Paulista during the COVID-19 Pandemic] (USCS; Unicid; PUC/SP)	May 26 to June 10, 2020	501 education professionals in the seven municipalities that make up the region of Grande ABC Paulista (São Paulo state), working as teachers and school managers in early childhood education and primary education - including youth and adult education (EJA) and special education.	To describe scenarios arising from the policies and strategies implemented by municipal education systems in the region of Grande ABC throughout the social distancing period, based on responses from teachers and school managers working in early childhood education (daycare and preschool) and elementary education 1 and 2 - including EJA and special education. Source: Rosa et al. (2020, p. 2)
<i>Sentimento e percepção de professores brasileiros nos diferentes estágios do coronavírus no Brasil</i> [Feelings and Perceptions of Teachers in the Different Stages of Coronavirus in Brazil] (Instituto Península)	1st wave: March 23 to 27, 2020 2nd wave: April 13 to May 14, 2020 3rd wave: July 20 to August 14, 2020 4th wave: November 16 to 26, 2020	Respondents: basic education teachers with Brazilian public and private schools: Initial stage: 1,536 teachers. 2nd wave: 7,773 teachers. 3rd wave: 3,893 teachers. 4th wave: 2,961 teachers.	To understand how Brazilian teachers are feeling, their fears, desires and demands for support. To evaluate Brazilian teachers' feelings and perceptions in each of the stages of the pandemic in the country. Source: Instituto Península (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d)

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TITLE/ ORGANIZERS	DATA COLLECTION PERIOD	BREADTH/ INTERLOCUTORS	GOALS
<i>A educação não pode esperar</i> [Education Cannot Wait] (IRB; CTE-IR; lede; Atricon; CNPTC)	May to June, 2020	Secretaries of education or staff at education departments in 249 education systems in all regions of the country – 232 municipal systems and 17 state systems	To help education systems and professionals at this time of uncertainty by providing them with more secure bases for decision-making; to map the actions of public education systems in the country during the pandemic and their planning to return to in-person classes. Source: Instituto Rui Barbosa, Comitê Técnico da Educação do Instituto Rui Barbosa and Interdisciplinaridade e Evidências no Debate Educacional (2020, p. 4)
<i>Educação não presencial na perspectiva dos estudantes e suas famílias</i> [Remote Education from the Perspective of Students and Their Families] (Datafolha – commissioned by the Lemann Foundation, Itaú Social and Imaginable Futures)	Wave 1: May 18- 29, 2020 Wave 2: June 11- 20, 2020 Wave 3: July 7-15, 2020	Interviews carried out across the country with 1,028 parents/guardians of 1,518 students in the public basic education system.	To know whether elementary and secondary education students are getting, accessing and performing remote learning activities during the pandemic in Brazil. To map the difficulties faced by students regarding access, routines and motivation. To identify parents/guardians' perceptions about the quality of school support, progress in studies, dropout possibilities, as well as the challenges in supporting study routines at home. Source: Datafolha (2020a, 2020b, 2020c)
<i>Juventudes e a pandemia do coronavírus</i> [Youths and the Coronavirus Pandemic] (Conjuve)	May 15-31, 2020	33,688 young people aged 15 to 29 in the 27 Brazilian states.	To survey the perceptions of young people from different Brazilian regions and social backgrounds about the pandemic, its context and effects on their lives and society. To produce evidence to support the construction of policies and programs for youth. To institute a process in collaboration with young people for creating mechanisms to expand their voice and express their concerns. To guide and influence public debate and the action of public and private decision makers by means of a process of dialogue and social articulation. Source: Conselho Nacional da Juventude (2020, p. 4)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

As regards the studies that had teachers as their interlocutors, five of them encompassed the national territory, and one was restricted to the metropolitan area of ABC Paulista. These studies aim to cover, to different extents, the stages (early childhood, elementary and secondary education) and types (youth and adult education and special education) of basic education.

Regarding the other nationwide studies listed here, one had education secretaries and staff at central education bodies as respondents, another obtained information from families of students enrolled in the public education system, and finally, one study focused on the perceptions of young people aged 15 to 29, and here we are interested in the responses of those who declared they were attending basic education when data were collected.

As to the goals stated by these nine studies, they can be summarized as: i) to understand the contexts in which the educational process took or is taking place; ii) to identify and analyze the challenges posed to teachers in reconciling work and private life and in developing their pedagogical work with students; iii) to map the obstacles facing students in accessing and performing the activities proposed by the school and, moreover, in getting organized to have a study routine; iv) to know the perceptions of teachers and students about the feelings that emerged in the context of the pandemic; v) to show the effects of the measures implemented by systems and schools on teachers' work; vi) and to support the development of public policies; among others

The results of these investigations shed light on concerns of the various interlocutors about diverse subjects: learning; students' and teachers' access to material and technological tools; teaching methodologies in the context of the pandemic; educational inequalities; school dropout; curriculum implementation; learning assessment processes, external assessment and the National Exam of Upper Secondary Education (Enem); among others. Chart 2 below provides a summarized view of the results of the studies mentioned here.

CHART 2 - Main results of the analyzed studies

STUDY	RESULTS
<i>A situação dos professores no Brasil durante a pandemia</i> [Teacher's Situation in Brazil during the Pandemic] (Nova Escola)	The lag in student learning is one of the main concerns regarding the in-person return. On a 1-5 scale, over 80% of respondents rated the size of this challenge 3-5. Another fear of education professionals regards school dropout. Using the same grading scale, more than 55% rated it 3-5.
<i>Educação escolar em tempos de pandemia na visão de professoras/es da educação básica</i> [School Education in Times of Pandemic in the View of Basic Education Teachers] (FCC)	68.4% of the responding teachers said they kept the subjects' contents (municipal: 59%; state: 79%; private: 81%). 49.7% believe that student learning has decreased (51% in public schools; 45% in private schools). With regard to the return of in-person classes, respondents agreed with these strategies: 84.6% - Readjusting assessment models; 34.5% - Replacing classes; 25.4% - Extending the school year from 2020 to 2021.
<i>Inclusão escolar em tempos de pandemia</i> [Educational Inclusion in Times of Pandemic] (FCC; UFABC; Ufes; USP)	About the support the system/school provides for teachers in defining assessment processes, 54.7% of teachers of regular classes and 61.1% of AEE and special service teachers feel supported. Development of adapted curriculum: 43.8% regular classes and 61.5% AEE and special services. About student learning: it decreased according to 41% of teachers in regular classes and 42.8% of AEE and special service teachers.
<i>Trabalho docente em tempos de pandemia</i> [Teaching in Times of Pandemic] (CNTE; Gestrado)	Student participation in remote activities: - 46.1% said it decreased slightly; - 37.7% said it decreased drastically.

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STUDY	RESULTS
<p><i>Políticas e estratégias dos sistemas municipais de ensino do ABC paulista durante a pandemia de Covid-19</i> [Policies and Strategies of Municipal Education Systems in ABC Paulista during the COVID-19 Pandemic] (USCS; Unicid; PUC/SP)</p>	<p><i>Report 1 – quantitative analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to 33% of teachers, student performance was not being monitored at all; - 34.6% of managers recognize it was being poorly monitored; - 57.5% of respondents considered the curriculum was being covered “only partially”; - 68% of respondents were concerned about student learning progress; - 41% of respondents expressed concern about difficulty providing support for students with disabilities; - 80% of respondents expressed concern about dropout possibilities; - 50.7% expressed concern about an increased gap between students in public and private schools. <p><i>Report 2 – qualitative analysis</i></p> <p>The needs that were pointed out by teachers include: training events to support the assessment of learning in the context of emergency remote teaching; support in adapting curricula and programs to emergency remote teaching; training events on teaching methodologies and practices that are suitable for emergency remote teaching; training events on strategies and methodologies for collective pedagogical work that are suitable for emergency remote work.</p>
<p><i>Sentimento e percepção dos professores brasileiros nos diferentes estágios do coronavírus no Brasil</i> [Feelings and Perceptions of Brazilian Teachers in the Different Stages of the Pandemic in Brazil] (Instituto Península)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers in the private education system seem to be better prepared for remote interaction compared to teachers in the state and municipal systems; - Among teachers who conducted assessment activities, only 26% believe that students have learned what was expected for the school year (21% in the municipal system, 22% in the state system and 47% in private schools); - 55% of respondents said it is important to monitor and support students in their learning process; - 40% of teachers agree that students are evolving with learning at home; - 29% agree that it is important to set planning routines; - About the possible consequences of schools remaining shut, 30% of respondents believe it is likely, and 61% that it is very likely that poor students will be left behind as it is harder for them to study at home; - Increased inequality seems to be the main effect of the pandemic on education, in teachers’ opinion.
<p><i>A educação não pode esperar</i> [Education Cannot Wait] (IRB; CTE-IR; Iede; Atricon; CNPTC)</p>	<p>Considering only municipal systems, pedagogical interventions are mainly based on the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and on its learning targets (93%) and on the local model curriculum (87%). The Pedagogical Plan is the least mentioned of these three, but it is still a benchmark for 83%. Among state systems, all respondents said activities followed the BNCC.</p> <p>Monitoring Most Education Departments declared they controlled the number of students who have access to the provided contents. However, in part of the cases, this monitoring refers to the sending of activities, not to students’ performance in these activities.</p> <p>Expectations about student learning Most systems expect that students will not regress in their learning, that they will keep their ties with their classmates and teachers, and that this will encourage them to resume studies when in-person classes return. Some expect that this period will also provide an opportunity for developing socio-emotional skills, such as determination, engagement, autonomy and resilience.</p> <p>Strategies to avoid dropout Nearly eight out of ten education systems reported they are already organizing to tackle school dropout, an issue that should become very importance in the resumption of the school year. Maintaining the system’s tie with students and their families while in-person classes are suspended, and showing they have not been forgotten by the school, that they are important and that the school is looking forward to their return, is one of the ways of reducing the chances that they will drop out of their studies.</p> <p>Strategies to address the education gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diagnostic assessment: more than 75% of municipal and all state systems; - Preparation for external assessment: only 20% of municipal and 53% of state systems; - Practices identified in education systems: diagnostic evaluation being planned for the return; some systems specified that this assessment will be carried out for each grade and will cover all subjects in the curriculum; some explain that, based on this diagnosis of students’ actual situation, they will plan the next steps; others are already organizing to carry out extra classes on weekdays or Saturdays.

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STUDY	RESULTS
<p><i>Educação não presencial na perspectiva dos estudantes e suas famílias</i> [Remote Education from the Perspective of Students and Their Families] (Datafolha)</p>	<p><i>First wave</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students in the groups of schools of lower socioeconomic status (Inep classification) had less access to remote learning activities; - 82% are doing most of the school activities sent by the school; - Internet access, difficulty with content, lack of equipment and of interest are the main reasons for not doing all activities at home; - 47% had no guidance from schools, and to 18%, instructions were somewhat or not at all efficient; in secondary education 69% had no guidance. <p>About study routines, parents or guardians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 58% reported difficulties in the routine of activities at home; - 50% perceive some progress in learning, 58% of whom in the initial grades and 44% in secondary education; - 31% fear the student will drop out of school. This percentage is higher for: students with parents/guardians with less (i.e., primary) education (40%); black students (37%); brown students (35%); and young people aged 15 to 18 (34%). <p><i>Second wave</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived risk of dropping out of school: 31%, however, among those who have three or more students at home, this rate reaches 38%; - Increased lack of motivation in students for activities at home, from 46% to 53%; - Difficulty in the routine of activities at home, which rose from 58% to 61%. In families with three or more students at home, this rate reaches 67%; - To 64% of parents or guardians, students are anxious, to 45%, they are angry, to 37%, they feel sad, and to 23%, they are afraid to return to school. In households with three or more students, 72% are anxious, 63% angry, 50% sad, and 34% afraid to go back to school; - To 89% of parents or guardians, return to schools should follow a model of in-person classes combined with activities at home. Support for this format is greater in the South region (94%). <p>About what would be worth doing so that the student would not lose the 2020 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 73% advocate classes on Saturdays; - 72% mentioned extending the school year from 2020 to 2021; - 68% advocate longer school days; - 63% mention classes on alternate days; - The rate of students unmotivated about their studies during the pandemic rose from 46% in May to 51% in July; - From May to July, the percentage of those who perceive difficulties in the routine of activities at home increased from 58% to 67%; - The proportion of students at risk of dropping out of school because they are unable to keep up with the pace of classes rose from 31% to 38%. <p>About the return to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 92% believe that, to avoid losing the school year, schools should follow the hybrid model in returning to in-person classes; - To 86%, the 2020 school year should continue until 2021, with extra classes; - 76% believe it is worth having classes on Saturdays; - 74% advocate classes on alternate days; - 73% would like school days to be longer so that students would not lose the 2020 school year.

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STUDY	RESULTS
<p><i>Juventudes e a pandemia do coronavírus</i> [Youths and the Pandemic] (Conjuve)</p>	<p>To young students who answered the survey, the following are important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities to work on emotions (stress, anxiety, etc.) (54%); - Strategies to help organize time and studies (49%); - Subjects from the current grade's curriculum (32%); - Educational tests, challenges and games (18%); - Cultural content (12%). <p>Proportion of secondary education students who fully or partially agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is hard to bring questions to teachers without in-person contact - 86%; - I have difficulty organizing to study in distance learning - 84%; - My emotional state (fear, anxiety, stress, etc.) has hindered my studies -78%; - Most teachers have difficulty teaching remotely - 75%; - The device I use to study (mobile phone, computer, internet) is not suitable - 63%; - I do not have a quiet environment to study at home - 63%; - I have not had the time to study - 54%. <p>In this education stage, the National Exam of Upper Secondary Education (Enem) is a benchmark goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 56% intend to take the Enem in its next edition, and another 24% are still considering the possibility, which equals 8 out of 10 secondary education students (grades 1 to 3) who answered the survey; - Of these, 63% are very concerned about their performance in the next edition of Enem, and another 18% are partially concerned; - Almost 7 out of 10 students (69%) who consider taking the next edition of Enem said they have not been able to study since classes were suspended; - As a result, 47% of potential 2020 Enem candidates have thought about not taking the test at all. <p>More than 1 in 4 (27%) young people in secondary education in this same survey have thought about not going back to school after the class suspension period.</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The studies showed that the perception of their interlocutors, especially public school teachers, is that the pace of student learning has decreased. Some factors contribute to making this situation worse: teachers have difficulty dealing with technological tools and remote teaching, students' anxiety has increased and they lack the encouragement to do the activities proposed to them, especially because they are often unable to understand them without the contact with the teacher and classmates they would have in in-person classes.

Similarly, there is some incomprehension on the part of teachers regarding the need to reorganize the curriculum, and here we highlight the results that show that the existing curriculum in the system and/or the school was maintained during 2020 – including for special education students. This course of action fails to consider what was suggested by Opinions CNE/CP number 11 and number 15 from 2020, which recommend selecting the content, skills and competencies considered “essential”. Without ignoring the various reasons that lead to this difficulty, it is necessary to recognize that some guiding criteria should have been provided for selecting what is “essential”, as well as a warning that this should not be interpreted as curriculum impoverishment.

It should be noted that the CNE's opinions above were issued in July 2020², and a considerable part of the surveys reported here collected their data before that period. Even though most states had already issued regulations with guidelines on how schools and systems should conduct the educational process during the pandemic (PELLANDA, 2020, p. 35), it is certain that MEC's delay in adopting a clear position (SANTOS, 2020) had effects on the performance of systems and their professionals.

Furthermore, the first half of 2020 was a period of reorganization and planning – often with limited resources – for systems and schools in terms of continuing classes and conducting the educational process. At the same time, it revealed the following problems: both teachers and students experienced difficulty accessing resources, especially technological tools; there were gaps in the training provided to teachers so that they could deal with remote teaching and, at the same time, develop teaching methodologies capable of motivating the participation of students in the proposed activities; guidance on the assessment processes to be conducted by teachers and schools was poorly structured; among others. In addition to such evidence, there is the fact that most students lack preparation to study autonomously, which is aggravated by their lack of familiarity with remote learning.

Still regarding curriculum content, it is worth highlighting the results of the study that had young people as interlocutors. Although 32% of respondents mentioned that working with the subjects of the school curriculum was important, 54% of them indicated that activities to work on emotions was necessary, and 49% said that it is important for schools and universities to teach strategies to help them organize time and studies. The contributions of this age group enrich the findings and revelations usually mentioned in research by pointing to the need for approaches with initiatives that go beyond merely cognitive aspects and/or concerns about covering the curricula prescribed for the school year/grade.

The demand of young people for school activities that work on emotions should be interpreted in connection with the responses of parents or guardians regarding the great number of students who had been showing anxiety, irritation and sadness, as well as fear of returning to in-person activities.

Data referring to public schools, which were highlighted by the analyzed studies, also reveal differences between them and private schools, especially regarding the slower learning progress, the readiness of teachers to conduct their teaching in the context of the pandemic and the probability of school dropout. It should be

2 Opinion CNE/CP number 5, from April 28, 2020 (BRASIL, 2020a), does not explicitly indicate the selection of essential content, skills and competences from the curriculum to be worked on by schools and systems.

noted that access to equipment and the internet for remote study is better addressed in the case of private school students, which is a major factor for increasing the gap between them and public school students.

With regard to learning evaluation processes, the results of the investigations indicate: concerns about how to evaluate student learning in this context; perceptions that evaluation processes need to be readjusted; a need for planning in order to conduct diagnostic evaluation, especially in the return to in-person education, as well as recommendations on the importance of conducting teacher training processes about evaluation.

Regarding large-scale external assessments, only the study that had staff at central education bodies as respondents provided information. According to this survey, 20% of municipal departments and 53% of state departments understand that preparing students for this type of assessment is one of the strategies to combat the learning gap. However, on this issue, the CNE recommends “[...] avoiding external assessments for purposes of evaluation of education systems’ performance in 2020” (BRASIL, 2020c, p. 24).

Finally, it is noteworthy that the investigations that are dealt with here showed the impression that we will live with hybrid learning in basic education for some time, which is already certain, given the still persistent contamination rates in 2021. This will certainly imply, among others, reviewing evaluation models and instruments in order to promote substantial evaluations that collaborate with teaching and, consequently, with the promotion of student learning.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ACADEMIC ARTICLES

Throughout 2020, academic articles were published that proposed to discuss and analyze the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Brazilian basic and higher education, especially in public schools. Topics such as school management, funding, teacher training, the use of information and communication technologies, education inequality and evaluation, among others, sometimes took on a new shape in the debates that emerged in this context. In this section, we present a summary of articles that dealt with educational evaluation in the current scenario, seeking clues to help us understand the movements observed in this period of “remote education” and in an effort to outline approaches to action that can be relevant in the return to in-person activities.

The articles were selected from the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Portal Educ@ and Google Academic platforms³, using the following descriptors:

3 We also accessed the Portal of Periodicals of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) but it was unstable on the days we conducted our search (January 3 and 4, 2021).

avaliação educacional, avaliação externa, avaliação em larga escala and *educação básica* [educational evaluation, external assessment, large-scale assessment and basic education]. These descriptors were combined with the terms “pandemia”, “coronavirus” and “COVID-19”. A total of 29 articles were found, of which 12 dealt directly with the subject at hand.

Almost all of these articles were written by Brazilians, and two were written by Portuguese authors. Of the 12 articles analyzed, five focus on basic education, three on higher education, three on both levels and only one does not clarify this information. With regard to educational evaluation, the topics addressed by the papers are learning evaluation, large-scale external assessment and evaluation for higher education.

We assume that the short time between the start of the pandemic and the articles’ publication resulted in a predominance of essay texts with an exploratory approach to the subject of evaluation. This characteristic can be seen in the brief references below to the selected texts.

Oliveira and Souza (2020) indicate aspects related to basic education that deserve further attention, mentioning, among them, the evaluation of learning. The authors note that, usually, the evaluation of students takes place in traditional ways, through the administration of tests that aim to assess the mastery of content transmitted in the classroom, whose results are interpreted for purposes of deciding on whether they can progress to the next grade or not. They note the need to revise this concept, since school activities, in the context of the pandemic, occurred remotely.

In the form of an experience report, Silva and Assis (2020) present topics related to educational evaluation and how they are approached in a discipline called Evaluation and Education in Brazil, taught via remote learning by one of the authors in a graduate program in education, with emphasis on exploring the centrality of national exams in educational policies.

With a focus on teaching, Paschoalino, Ramalho and Queiroz (2020) explore evaluation-related challenges faced by teachers in higher education programs provided via distance learning (EaD, in the Portuguese acronym), which were already delivered in this format even before COVID-19. In these programs, evaluations were periodically carried out in person, but were exceptionally suspended due to the pandemic. Therefore, it became necessary for professionals in EaD programs to rethink the goals of evaluation. The article explores possibilities of reinventing evaluation processes and highlights the necessary revision of evaluation practices’ core concepts by the EaD professionals.

With a view to exploring how holistic evaluation serves the educational process in times of pandemic, Monteiro (2020) affirms the importance of conducting evaluations to promote learning rather the classification and selection of students.

Gonçalves et al. (2020) present approaches to external and large-scale assessments in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the statements of 17 respondents at education departments in the five Brazilian regions. The information obtained reveals uncertainties as to whether tests should be suspended or not, or whether they should adjust their focus to provide a diagnosis of students' learning when they return to in-person activities. Most respondents indicated that, due to the pandemic, external assessments are not a priority in this moment, since there are urgent demands, including the implementation of “[...] safe school protocols, new ways of interacting” (GONÇALVES et al., 2020, p. 74), in addition to addressing inequalities.

The article by Scantamburlo, Zangalli and Kohnlein (2020) presents procedures that can be used to evaluate students' online learning in the context of the pandemic. The authors suggest procedures and instruments that can be used for evaluation of remote education: cognitive maps, summaries, blogs, discussion forums, web folio, monitoring of participation.

In order to describe and understand representations of educational agents about Portugal's External Assessment of Learning (AEA, in the Portuguese acronym) during the pandemic period, and to “[...] put them in dialogue with other data from education sciences”, Miranda and Pereira (2020, p. 263) analyzed public records released in March and April 2020 in the media and on the websites of entities. The authors note that

[...] the educational system was able to be flexible so as to maintain its core structure (contents, sequence, calendar stages) but was not able to adapt. Adaptability suggests another type of interaction, one in which schools can change for [addressing] something that emerges from the unique situation and interactions that could only be experienced in this exceptional time. (Cilliers, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Hamido, 2007; Silva, 2019)⁴

Cristo's essay (2020, p. 262) explores “[...] the meritocratic nature” of Enem and the “[...] implications of the [MEC's] initial unwillingness [...] to postpone tests” in 2020, noting, in particular, the consequences of this situation for students in the public education system, who tend to lack favorable conditions to attend remote education, which was implemented as a result of the pandemic. The author concludes that, due to these elements, “[...] social, economic, technological and educational inequalities were maximized” (p. 262).

4 CILLIERS, Paul. *Complexity and Postmodernism*. Understanding complex systems. Routledge, 1998. FULLAN, Michael. *Leading in a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass, 2001. HAMIDO, Gracinda. Escola, ecologia viva e reflexiva: o poder de mudar. *Interacções*, n. 7, p. 141-178, 2007. SILVA, Nuno Miranda M. *Liderar organizações complexas: o caso das escolas*. Chiado Books, 2019.

Based on the goals established by the National Education Plan (PNE/2014) and the Tocantins State Education Plan (PEE/2015), Souza, Pereira and Ranke (2020) examine a historical series of pre-pandemic data on school dropout in basic education. The authors note that the high rates observed, combined with the lack of public policies for alleviating the problem, tend to worsen with the closing of schools in the pandemic period.

Based on the responses of education professionals in the state and municipal education systems of Rio de Janeiro about the remote learning adopted by these systems as a result of COVID-19, Cunha, Scrivano and Vieira (2020) record the worsening of social and educational inequalities resulting from the social distancing imposed by the pandemic. The authors note, however, that this context is an opportunity for building alternatives that explore the power that exists in the school space to promote an “[...] emancipatory, quality education and, above all, an education that allows understanding the coexistence of differences as an increase in the power to act in the world” (CUNHA; SCRIVANO; VIEIRA, 2020, p. 135).

The article by Albuquerque (2020) presents partial results of an exploratory study that aimed to map the perceptions of teachers in the Rio de Janeiro state education system about the relevance of carrying out the 2020 Enem and to analyze the offer of remote pedagogical activities to students who would take the exam. The study finds different answers among teachers in relation to carrying out the 2020 Enem, although some of them use similar justifications to advocate different perceptions. The majority of teachers said they believe that the offer of remote pedagogical activities will result in a deficit in student learning, considering the difficulty students have faced in relation to the availability of resources and devices for remote access.

The study by Ferreira and Bastos (2020) presents results of research carried out with teachers of initial teacher education programs at the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD), in Portugal, “[...] about teaching, student learning and evaluation in the context of distance education” (FERREIRA; BASTOS, 2020, p. 109). Information was collected through a questionnaire and its analysis revealed, in sum, that,

[...] for teachers, teaching was carried out through synchronous classes and asynchronous interaction on social networks, in which students' autonomous work and learning took on a relevant role. Also for teachers, a more structured formative assessment was encouraged with distance learning. (FERREIRA; BASTOS, 2020, p. 109)

NOTES FROM THE STUDIES AND ARTICLES

Among the contributions of the studies and articles above, it is worth highlighting those related to school curriculum and student learning evaluation, including concerns and opinions that were expressed and provide clues for deducing what predominates in these records.

The articles, mostly essays, address the inseparability between curriculum and evaluation and, mainly, the impact that evaluation usually has on the curriculum, in addition to indicating the need for evaluation to overcome the selective and classificatory approach in order to support the promotion of learning for all students. This view of the meaning of assessment, which is advocated by the authors, is presented as fundamental for facing the worsening of educational inequalities resulting from the social distancing imposed by the pandemic.

As for the research reports, what stands out in educators' statements, when it comes to aspects of the organization of education, is the emphasis placed on issues related to the need to recover learning content, in a reference to the "lag" in learning, or even the assumption that students "lost" learning.

In addition to the strangeness about the idea of recovery, since one cannot recover what was not learned, other disturbing findings include the notion of "loss of learning" in the period in which students did not attend in-person classes, as well as the disregard for learning that took place in non-formal education spaces. Singer (2020) observes that this view is present in a CNE opinion (BRASIL, 2020c), based on research by American consultants and Brazilian institutions. The author says:

Learning loss is a condition of dementia. [...] we know from experience, tradition and science that we learn from the moment we are born, we learn in different places, in the many social interactions experienced. Outside of the schooling system, we immediately find the idea of "learning loss" strange, used only when referring to dementia and other extreme situations. (SINGER, 2020, online)

The historical and brutal economic, social and educational inequality, which has become strikingly evident in the current scenario, has not translated into issues that gain centrality at this time when the return to schools is being discussed. What predominates is the expression of a notion of education quality that is restricted to covering the prescribed curriculum, or rather, the established content; the notion of assessment tends to focus on mastery of the content defined for each grade, and to be conducted for classification purposes. Hence the absence of evaluation-related propositions that go beyond students' learning to encompass other dimensions that shape their performance – from living and working conditions to the conditions of offer and implementation of what has been called remote learning.

What does this reveal? A notion of curriculum that is limited to content and skills to be mastered in each grade and in each subject. This conception indicates the non-assimilation of a broad meaning of curriculum, i.e., a set of propositions, practices and interactions that take place in the school environment, which goes beyond the definition of goals, contents and skills to be worked on in the educational process – the prescribed and the experienced, relationships, interactions, what is silenced in schools and classrooms. As pointed out by Alves (2014, p. 1478), “[...] the curricula – in the plural – are formed by what teachers and students do and think in the classrooms of each Brazilian school”. The curriculum experienced by schools, through the action and interaction of professionals, students and parents, is never the pure expression of what is prescribed. Fortunately, there are disputes, in everyday school life, of education and society projects (SOUSA, 2020).

As for evaluation, the trend that was revealed reiterates a meaning that has long been present in the school, which is based on the idea of “[...] evaluation as the measuring of knowledge with classification purposes” (SOUSA, 2010, p. 107). Numerous studies conducted across the country allow understanding the principles and purposes that have guided the way evaluation is experienced in the school context, revealing its essentially selective and authoritarian nature.

This vision has been strengthened in view of the centrality that external and large-scale assessments take on in educational policies and school practices, whose results are viewed as an expression of quality, without considering the context of their production (SOUSA, 2020). The formative evaluation approach has not been able to take root in school practices and is confused with the purposes of large-scale assessment.

BY WAY OF PROPOSITION

We are facing a challenge and an opportunity to recreate the post-pandemic school, which includes calling into question the traditional notions of curriculum and evaluation. The challenge is to make the organization of education on new bases a reality. It implies, in addition to objective conditions, a profound transformation in the way schools usually conceive and carry out their work, assuming a confrontation with values that have long been dominant in school culture.

The opportunity is that of setting off changes in the concepts of teaching and learning, curriculum and evaluation, to be expressed in new ways of using school space and time. As for evaluation, we do not propose its elimination, but, instead, that it be experienced in its constitutive sense (SOUSA, 1998).

It is essential to seek inclusive alternatives for receiving students when they return to in-person classes and, from this perspective, it seems opportune to

resume discussions and proposals that were widely disseminated in Brazil in the 1990s about propositions for school organization in cycles.

The notion of cycle assumes the proposition of alternatives for the organization of basic education that overcome the artificial fragmentation of the teaching and learning process caused by the grade system⁵ – that is, to go beyond the 1-year grade as the temporal unit for teaching and learning, which has led to ruptures in schooling, since it makes it possible to fail students. In order to summarize a few elements that guided the discussions and initiatives during that period, we included the quotation below, which, albeit long, allows us to illustrate the propositions' foundations:

The implementation of cycles, by establishing the organization of education on new bases, assumes treating knowledge as a process, and therefore as a living experience that is not consistent with the idea of interruption, but rather with that of construction, where the student, as the subject of action, is continuously and actively experiencing education by building meanings based on the relationships he/she establishes with the world and with other human beings.

The dynamic, relative and plural nature of knowledge gains centrality, in opposition to the idea of knowledge as something static which translates into an array of contents and skills to be mastered by students within a given time frame, in a cumulative way, regardless of individual and sociocultural differences between students, which has historically resulted in our education system, in exclusion and selectivity for a significant part of those who enter it.

What is in question is the constitution of a school that is guided by the commitment to social and school inclusion for all, thus breaking with the traditionally assimilated notion that its purpose is to transmit a given set of information that should be assimilated by all students, but which, "it is well-known", not all students have the conditions to master (self-fulfilling prophecies) in the preset times and conditions, which is why we live with high and persistent school failure rates.

Certainly, of all school practices and routines, the one that is most directly "shaken" by the implementation of cycles is evaluation, and its redefinition in school practice is necessary to make the reorganization of the educational process a reality. (SOUSA, 2007, p. 34-35)

5 "While organizing education in grades does not necessarily result in an excluding conception of schooling, it tends, even because of its origins and dynamics rooted in the conceptions of school agents and in the practices in effect in education systems, to induce classification and selection processes which also naturalize inequalities and do not converge for the goal of universal access to education" (SOUSA, 2007, p. 34).

Exploring paths that allow recreating the school based on the commitment to promoting quality education for all, and which are expressed in new ways of using school space and time, such is the challenge that arises in times of COVID-19.

Should a flexible organization of education inspired by cycles be adopted, it is not enough to decree its implementation. As Sousa (1998) says, it is necessary to create working conditions and circumstances that allow school professionals, students and parents a collective reflection, as well as the construction of new proposals and responses capable of ensuring that this measure, a potentially valuable one in terms of promoting universal access to education, does not translate into a lack of commitment to the school learning process. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the role that government bodies have been playing towards the reconstruction of the public school after the pandemic.

It is opportune to summarize the conditions of implementation of new bases for the organization of education, as listed by the analyses that addressed the implementation of cycles; among such conditions of implementation, we highlight the following, based on Sousa et al. (2007):

- Working together with education professionals, students and parents in order to build a new meaning for school evaluation, imposing a confrontation with values that are rooted in school culture, beyond merely technical questions;
- Organizing classes with a number of students that allows teachers to monitor students both individually and collectively;
- Flexible planning of the time and content of the work to be developed with students, in order to include diverse programs and activities that meet students' needs;
- Forming student groups, with suitable physical infrastructure;
- Allowing teachers time to design teaching programs to suit each group he/she teaches and to keep systematic record of each student's development, with a view to planning and re-planning teaching;
- Promoting collective work so that the joint planning of school actions become viable;
- Offering a "new time and space" to students who do not show the desired development, providing them with viable learning conditions.

The insights provided in the article by Miranda and Pereira (2020) are useful, in this reflection, as they suggest the distinction between flexibilizing and adapting, as treated in the section on the contributions from academic articles:

In addressing the return to in-person classes in public schools, Afonso (2020, p. 136) mentions the contribution of those

[...] who believe that a more radical reinvention of school (especially public school) is not only desirable but possible, in the expectation that this change (or even metamorphosis) will be part, in the post-pandemic period, of the same momentum of expected new national and global social movements of high democratic intensity which can seriously confront ecological threats, growing social inequalities, outrageous corruption processes and different forms of injustice, exploitation and domination.

We close this article by expressing our expectation that the considerations it contains about evaluation and curriculum will instigate reflections, debates and propositions, and mainly that these will continue and bring about studies and collective discussions in systems and schools.

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