Article

The pandemic, distance education and remote teaching at the Federal Institute of Goiás (Brazil)[1]

Pandemia, EaD e ensino remoto emergencial no Instituto Federal de Goiás (Brasil)

Pandemia, educación a distancia y enseñanza remota de emergencia en el Instituto Federal de Goiás (Brasil)

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ABSTRACT

The social isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on educational institutions, which were not prepared for remote teaching. Brazil did not adequately institutionalize distance education, which made this adaptation harder, as the necessary support could not be offered. This article analyzes the implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) at the Federal Institute of Goiás (IFG). It adopts the methodology of document analysis and discusses distance education, teacher training and the definition of remote teaching. The results are as follows: the concept of ERT is imprecise or non-existent; the institution rejected the established knowledge about distance education, including its own experience; the ERT is an improvised solution to solve a serious problem, in short, a MacGyverism. We intend to encourage educational institutions to consider the knowledge already established about distance education in the implementation of their educational policies.

Keywords: Distance Education. Improvisation. Educational Planning. Technology. Teacher Education.

RESUMO

O isolamento social decorrente da pandemia de COVID-19 impactou profundamente as instituições educacionais, que não estavam preparadas para o ensino remoto. O Brasil não institucionalizou

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adequadamente a Educação a Distância (EaD), o que dificultou ainda mais essa adaptação, pois o suporte necessário não pôde ser ofertado. Este artigo analisa a implantação do Ensino Remoto Emergencial (ERE) no Instituto Federal de Goiás (IFG). Adota a metodologia da análise documental e discute a EaD, a formação de professores e a definição de ensino remoto. Os resultados são os seguintes: o conceito de ERE é impreciso ou inexistente; a instituição rejeitou os conhecimentos estabelecidos sobre a EaD, até mesmo sua própria experiência; o ERE é uma solução improvisada para resolver um problema grave, em síntese, uma gambiarra. Pretende-se incentivar as instituições educacionais a considerarem os conhecimentos já estabelecidos sobre a EaD na implementação de suas políticas educacionais.

Palavras-chave: Educação a Distância. Improvisação. Planejamento da Educação. Tecnologia. Formação de Professores.

RESUMEN

El aislamiento social resultante de la pandemia de COVID-19 afectó profundamente las instituciones educativas, que no estaban preparadas para la enseñanza remota. Brasil no institucionalizó adecuadamente la educación a distancia, lo que dificultó esta adaptación, ya que no se pudo ofrecer el apoyo necesario. Este artículo analiza la implementación de la Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia (ERE) en el Instituto Federal de Goiás (IFG). La metodología es el análisis de documentos. Discute la Educación a Distancia, la formación de profesores y la definición de Enseñanza Remota. Resultados: el concepto de ERE es impreciso o inexistente; la institución rechazó los conocimientos establecidos sobre la educación a distancia, incluida su propia experiencia; el ERE es una solución improvisada para solucionar un problema grave, en suma, un remiendo. Pretendemos que las instituciones educativas consideren los conocimientos sobre la educación a distancia en la implementación de sus políticas educativas.

Palabras clave: Educación a Distancia. Improvisación. Planificación de la Educación. Tecnología. Formación del Profesorado.

INTRODUCTION

As is well known, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the world so profoundly and quickly that it was impossible to imagine what the immediate future would be like when we were wishing each other a Happy New Year in the twilight of 2019. Even though Brazil was already experiencing a kind of trance under Bolsonaro's government, with his program at the same time authoritarian and neoliberal, even the most pessimistic of us did not foresee years as terrible as 2020 to 2022. In the Brazilian nightmare there are fires and records of deforestation in the Amazon forest, as well as in the Cerrado, dams that break, destroying rivers and killing people with impunity, absurd growth of police violence, the country's return to the Hunger Map, the resurgence of poverty, the emergence of religious fundamentalism, all within the framework of a profound social division.

These elements remained present, but as a background to the pandemic, with its more than 700 thousand deaths[2] if we consider the official data, which are possibly underestimated (Prado *et al.*, 2020). In 2019 it was already possible to criticize the federal government for its inaction, but this reached alarming levels during the following three years. Even the federal budget for fighting the pandemic in 2020 was not implemented. The government, especially the president of the republic, did not seemed concerned with saving lives, but kept his eyes fixed on 2022, when he tried to run for reelection.

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2   According to the website https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries. Access on: June 7th, 2024.

If the situation in the area of health was distressful, with three changes of minister during the pandemic, one of which remained as an interim for several months, in the area of education it was no different. The minister of education was also replaced, with the former practically fleeing the country to avoid the risk of being arrested. Worst of all, there was simply no federal plan or even clear guidelines for the various educational systems to develop their activities.[3] Only in October, seven months after the schools were closed, did the Ministry of Education (MEC) release the *Implementation guide of protocols for returning to in-person activities in basic education schools* (Brasil, 2020a).

Faced with the pandemic, the National Education Council (*Conselho Nacional de Educação* — CNE) approved a flexibility in the number of school days and authorized the adoption of distance education tools for the in-person modality. Beyond that, there was no further guidance for schools and universities, with each network or institution making its own decisions about suspending in-person activities, adopting distance education or hybrid education. The state governors and mayors took charge, having been authorized by the Federal Supreme Court (*Supremo Tribunal Federal* — STF) to enact measures to fight the pandemic within their jurisdictions.

The case of Federal Network of Vocational, Scientific and Technological Education, however, is unique, as each of its affiliated institutions has the autonomy to define its own calendar. Thus, each federal institute or center was able to suspend face-to-face activities and adopt, if it so wished, remote or hybrid teaching modalities, depending on the local situation. Most federal institutes and centers suspended the calendar, and it was no different at the Federal Institute of Goiás (*Instituto Federal de Goiás* — IFG), the object of this analysis.

COVID-19's first entry on the institution's website was through a news item published on March 11, 2020, which informed the Ministry of Health's recommendations on the new coronavirus (IFG, 2020e). The following day, a note from the National Council for the Federal Network of Vocational, Scientific and Technological Education Institutions (Conif) was released, stating, basically, that it was aware of the situation (Conif, 2020). On March 13, a new note signed by the dean reported on the creation of the COVID-19 Emergency Operative Committee and highlighted that classes were to be maintained, since there was no "evidence of sustained circulation of the virus in Goiás" (Silva, 2020a).

However, the situation changed quickly. Just two days later, on March 15, the dean signed another note suspending classes for 15 days, as recommended by Goiás' State Department of Health (Silva, 2020b). The following day, teaching, research and extension activities were suspended and it was advised that administrative work should be carried out preferably remotely (Silva, 2020c). On March 23, the academic calendar was suspended until April 15 by Resolution No. 12 (IFG, 2020b). Finally, Resolution No. 17, of April 13, 2020, extended the suspension of the academic calendar indefinitely (IFG, 2020c).

From then on, discussions started on how the institution would deal with the pandemic. The first movement was the creation of a Working Group by the College of Directors and by the Teaching, Research and Extension Council (*Conselho de Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão* — CONEPEX) to assess the situation and provide recommendations to the institution. This Working Group produced a final report with its conclusions, released only by e-mail (IFG, 2020a). After a few months, the Superior Council (*Conselho Superior* — CONSUP) decided to resume the academic calendar and adopt Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), according to Resolution No. 20, of June 30, 2020 (IFG, 2020d). Subsequently, the ERT regulation was prepared, published in Normative Instruction No. 7, published on August 17, 2020 (IFG, 2020f).

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3   In Brazil, we have several educational systems that are organized at the federal, state and municipal levels, both public and private. When accessing the Ministry of Education's website, it is not easy to find any guidance on how to proceed during the pandemic.

The aim of this article is to analyze the implementation process of ERT at the Federal Institute of Goiás. Methodologically, this is a documentary research of a qualitative and exploratory nature. The research universe includes the institutional documents referring to the ERT, which explain the institution's conceptions in relation to teaching during the pandemic. The following procedures are highlighted in the process: delimitation and justification of the theme, related to the researchers' scope of action and the constitution of education in Brazil by the IFG; historical contextualization of distance education and its legal improvements; and the offer of ERT at the IFG. For the delimitation, the institutional space of action of the teachers and its importance in Professional and Technological Education was observed. As for the historical context of distance education, a search was carried out in the documents that guide its development in Brazil. The analysis, based on the critical theory of technology (Feenberg, 2015), was carried out through exploratory and analytical reading. Thus, before proceeding with the analysis, it is convenient to make a brief conceptual excursion, discussing Distance Education, teacher training and the meaning of ERT.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

The conceptual aspect of distance education in Brazil refers to the legal dynamics implicit in the Law on National Education Guidelines and Framework (Brasil, 1996). However, the constitution of distance education dates back to previous periods of the 20th century, when distance learning courses were initiated in the world and, in particular, in Brazil. Even though distance education already existed, it was only in 2006 that the System of Open University of Brazil (Brasil, 2006) was created, through decree n. 5,800, of June 8. Aligned with the LDBEN, the decree recognizes distance education as an educational modality in item 80, indicating that its difference in relation to other modalities is, at times, the use of technological resources.

Based on this, it is important to understand what technologies are. For that, we need to think of cultural artifacts and technological devices as human production. Technology does not precede human relationships nor does it surpass them (Rocha, 2019), but it is a product of human work, constituted by material and immaterial elements, as well as the scientific knowledge objectified in it. "Technology is the transformation experienced over time, away from utilitarian determinisms and uses" (Araújo and Marcon, 2020, p. 54).

Thus, it is not possible to talk about distance education without explaining its specificities. It is not about opposing in-person education, but understanding the existing conditions in its political-pedagogical dimension. The ways of understanding distance education in the relationship between education and technology can be conceived along neutral or value-laden axes (Feenberg, 2015). Between technocentric (technique-centered) and anthropocentric (man-centered) views, the process of instrumentalizing the subject as a social being in a multifaceted society is presented, a synthesis of multiple determinations, in different times and spaces.

The document of recommendations for strategic actions in distance higher education at the national level (Brasil, 2005) showed the non-institutionalization of this type of education. It also pointed to the creation of a new form of knowledge in educational practices, accentuated by contradictions, but lacking studies and legislation that would assess its quality. Fifteen years after this document, there is still no clear definition of distance education and no public policies defined for its implementation. Likewise, data on the conditions of teacher training and work are lacking. On the one hand, there is no definition of what distance education is, and, on the other, different nomenclatures are created, without concepts based on scientific rigor and educational epistemology.

The scenario of distance education in Brazil reveals a very fragile institutionalization. What we have is the UAB System in the public sphere and a mostly market-leaned private initiative. The public

system was organized through the hiring of scholarship students to act as tutors, offering courses only occasionally.[4] This shows a fragmented and precarious education, since an open university was not effectively created, as elsewhere, but rather a mere educational program. There are no teachers dedicated exclusively to the UAB and, therefore, there is no career plan. In addition, there are no consistent policies for teacher training to work in distance education, which disqualifies the processes of teaching performance and professionalization.

For international organizations, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), digital culture is a condition for the development of innovation in contemporary societies, although it is not enough. In this context, distance training has several educational subjects: tutors, content writers, coordinators, among others. The figure of the collective teacher emerges, who performs multiple technical and pedagogical functions in didactic work, without being prepared for it, thus becoming a "collective entity" (Belloni, 2009, p. 81).

We can group this formation into two axes: an autonomous and a humanly controlled one. The first axis is marked by determinism or instrumentalism, while the second, by substantivisms or critical theory (Feenberg, 2015). Determinism is the foundation of a society based on the theory of modernization. Instrumentalism presents technology as a tool or instrument to satisfy human needs. Substantivism attaches an inexorable value to technology as a way of developing society. Finally, critical theory understands technology as a means to achieve certain educational and social purposes. It is to the latter that we are linked.

Distance education can be understood by drawing on disciplines such as Philosophy, Sociology, Education, among others. Thus, we see that it has been based on neoliberal thinking and Industry 4.0, marked by mass production. Alternatively, critical-dialectical thinking understands that it is necessary to develop science, technology and innovation through access to quality education. Therefore, it makes strong criticisms of this network society, marked by the strengthening of neoliberalism, with precarious teacher training and education aimed exclusively at the market.

We live in a period of great transformations, with a massive use of digital technologies, which was increased by social isolation. However, access to these technologies is very uneven in Brazil, and this is reflected in education: there are centers of excellence, with cutting-edge technological tools available for teachers, and institutions in precarious conditions, which do not possess even the basic infrastructure for functioning, much less digital technologies.

How to train teachers for distance education without having access to information technologies? And, once trained, how can you guarantee the quality of their work without the proper infrastructure in educational institutions? Thus, this is not a case of opposing or favoring a type of teacher training carried out remotely and using digital technologies, but of valuing quality, by critically analyzing the training processes.

In Brazil, the training of educators for distance education was based on a 360-hour specialization offered by the MEC in the 2010 decade. In 2020, during the pandemic, short courses were offered, even "instantaneous" ones, such as lives and webinars, to enable teachers to work remotely. This deepened the precariousness of the formative process.

Especially in public institutions of basic and higher education, it is necessary to qualify the educational process and not commercialize it. This involves overcoming inequalities in the access to technologies, without strengthening the bond with Big Techs, which provide access to their digital teaching tools with the goals of retaining new customers, guaranteeing a captive market and, by doing that that, gaining access to those users' data.

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4   Occasional offer means that access to a course can be offered in one year, but not in the following ones. In other words, there is no continuity in the offer.

It is essential to move towards concepts of distance education based on critical perspectives of both technology and education. We need to adapt to new realities, without giving up of educational theories and critical analysis. As a result, we reject both immobility and uncritical adhesion. Teachers who work in distance education need adequate working conditions: good pedagogical formation, access to technologies and a specific training to use them.

Courses to teach teachers to use certain technological systems are characterized by the absence of mediation in the organization of pedagogical work, that is, they are only training courses. Teacher formation goes beyond that and demands theoretical and methodological density linked to historical, educational and social dynamics. Completion of educational work depends on pedagogical mediation.

Although mediation is essential, what predominates is the provision of technical instruction to teachers and automated interactions in the pedagogical process, which was intensified during the pandemic period. This means nothing but simple training, fast formation programs that are focused on technical learning, without reflecting on the quality of the educational process.

Undoubtedly, teachers and students need technical and technological support for non-in-person education. It is essential to teach them how to use the appropriate software, as well as provide them with the necessary devices for pedagogical work and ensure adequate conditions of communication. In the context of the pandemic and remote education, this would mean making computers and internet access available, and also offering training to use videoconferencing software and the virtual learning environment. That would be the first step. However, in most places, even this has not been done.

Furthermore, a good educational process depends on three factors: 1. the objectives of the educational practice; 2. the historical and cultural contexts of formal, non-formal and informal education; 3. social and political commitment. Now, training guarantees, at most, the correct handling of certain techniques and technologies, without any of these points being considered.

We know that the goal of education is not to adopt increasingly advanced technologies, even when it comes to distance education, but to consolidate the teaching-learning process. The use of digital technologies alone does not guarantee quality in education. It is disturbing to see trends in employing techniques and technologies without any concern for pedagogical training, either in a broad sense, for education in general, or for distance education. There are regulations on technical, technological and pedagogical support, such as the ERT regulation itself at the IFG, but this is not effective in everyday school life. Technical and technological support is not adequate and pedagogical formation is limited to training, when it is non-existent.

With the pandemic and social distancing, in-person education had to adapt to the non-in-person format. Since then, we have all been faced with new tools and technologies, another way of interacting and a new teaching-learning process. The terms distance and remote education, among others, have entered our vocabulary once and for all, not always in a clear and precise way. Next, we analyze the uses of these terms by Brazilian educational institutions, in particular the IFG.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND REMOTE TEACHING: CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY AND OPEN QUESTIONS

The so-called remote education entered the scene in Brazil in March 2020, through the publication by the MEC of Ordinance no. 343 of March 17, 2020 (Brasil, 2020b), which established the substitution of in-person classes with classes using digital media, so long as the COVID-19 pandemic situation lasted. On the following day, March 18, 2020, the CNE issued a clarification note in which it stated that the performance of distance activities by school institutions could be authorized by the education systems themselves at different levels and modalities.

Since then, all State Education Departments have started issuing documents to guide and regulate the functioning of their education systems in the exceptional context of the pandemic. In Goiás, the first document related to remote education was Resolution No. 02/2020 of the State Education Council (*Conselho Estadual de Educação* — CEE-GO, 2020), which established the "special regime for non-in-person classes". Art. 1 of the Resolution defines the special regime for non-in-person classes as the "maintenance of pedagogical activities without the presence of students and teachers on school premises, which must be effectuated through a collaboration regime between the federation entities and authorities of the Educational System of the State of Goiás". Thereby, the document shows a clear refusal of the concept of distance education.

The measures, ordinances and resolutions related to education and subsequently published by the federated entities followed the same trend: denying distance education and opting for what was generally known as "remote education". The IFG was no exception and followed the example of other education systems, opting to use the term *Emergency Teaching System* (ETS), of which ERT is part. Despite attempts to define remote education, the concept is not clear in the documents. The central questions are: what is remote education really? What is the difference between distance and remote education?

Several authors (Alves, 2020; Arruda, 2020; Cardoso and Mendonça, 2020; Hodges *et al*., 2020; Joye, Moreira and Rocha, 2020) are unanimous in stating that distance and remote education cannot be treated as synonyms, as they are similar only in the fact that they mediate the teaching-learning process through technology. Distance education is a modality of education, with specific public policies, backed by several years of research and consolidated scientific studies. In turn, remote education, according to Hodges *et al.* (2020), is a temporary educational strategy, which came to meet an emergency need in a specific context of crisis.

Moreira and Schlemmer (2020) reinforce that the term "remote" is related to geographical distancing, and presupposes a form of teaching in which the teachers and students are physically separated, as an alternative that is being used in the context of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alves (2020, p. 358) points out that, "in remote education, a temporary adaptation of the methodologies used in the face-to-face regime predominates, with classes being held at the same times and with the same teachers who are responsible for the subjects of the in-person courses".

Therefore, remote education appears with the main purpose of providing temporary access to schooling processes, aiming to reduce the effects of social distancing. There is no prospect of instituting a new educational model. The focus is on transposing in-person to virtual education, maintaining the traditional teaching-learning pattern. The form of interaction is preferably synchronous, unilateral, with the teacher acting as the transmitter of the content in expository classes and the students listening in a passive way. The space for dialogue is reduced and there is little interaction. Planning is individual, with little or no guidance. There is excessive concern with the workload, in order to equate remote education with classroom teaching. Assessments also follow the traditional model, and are based on activities or tests (Joye, Moreira and Rocha, 2020).

In turn, distance education, as explained above, is much more than the pure and simple use of technologies in the teaching-learning process, or the transposition of the in-person model to the virtual one. In distance education teachers and students interact in different ways, synchronously and asynchronously, and the student is almost always an adult, with more autonomy. Collaborative learning is developed, with different pedagogical strategies. Planning is collective, with the participation of different professionals, aiming at pedagogical and aesthetic quality, as well as the functionality of virtual environments. Distance education emphasizes the construction and socialization of knowledge using different materials and technologies that facilitate interactivity as

well as collaborative and cooperative work. Knowledge and pedagogical training are needed, and the process extends over the long term (Alves, 2020; Arruda, 2020; Hodges *et al.*, 2020; Joye, Moreira and Rocha, 2020; Moreira and Schlemmer, 2020).

The characteristics of both remote and distance education indicate that educational institutions were not prepared for this reality: there was not enough theoretical or practical knowledge to use technologies as mediators of the teaching-learning process or to adopt distance education. We agree that remote education is not really the same as distance education. Remote education appears in this pandemic reality as an improvised solution to solve the problem of education in times of social distancing.

Several issues must be considered when reflecting on the adoption of remote education in the Brazilian educational context. Cardoso and Mendonça (2020, p. 648) emphasize that remote education is a precarious and limited version of distance education that transposes and aggravates all the "inequalities that already mark public education". In addition, thinking that remote education is the solution to all the problems faced by education at this juncture reflects an immediate and fetishized view of the use of technology.

Finally, we emphasize that, in remote teaching, work is precarious. In general, precariousness is related to the restructuring of work due to the technological revolution. This revolution changed the way work was organized inside and outside industries and factories, resulting in increased exploitation of the working class (Fernandes, 2010).

Regarding the teacher's work in remote teaching, the objective and subjective working conditions are precarious with regard to working hours and lack of training to use technologies. This leads to an intensification of the activities of the teacher's work process, but with space-time limitations, as it is up to the professionals themselves to adapt to the new context, qualifying themselves and meeting the demands that have arisen. The teacher spends more time working and has few moments of rest. In this process, new burdens and work overload arise for this worker, especially for women, due to the added demands of domestic activities, which are traditionally attributed to the female gender in Brazil (Borges, Araújo and Oliveira, 2022).

The option for remote education has several consequences. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on its adoption to the detriment of other possibilities, such as distance education itself. Was it the best option?

THE EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING AT THE FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF GOIÁS

IFG offers distance education as an educational modality in initial and continuing (basic and higher) education. It has a physical, technical and pedagogical structure to offer this type of education, coordinated by the Distance Education Directorate (DEaD), which is linked to the Dean of Education. Since 2010 it has provided actions promoted by the E-Tec Network, technical courses by the Pro-Employee Program (*Programa Profuncionário*) and higher education courses in partnership with the UAB. It uses the Moodle teaching and learning platform with a team that includes technicians, professors and tutors.

Distance education at IFG follows the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) guidelines, guided by the goas of learning how to know, how to make, how to live together and to be. The DEaD's website claims that distance education:

> as well as in person education modality, can be carried out and developed with care, contributing to the expansion of teaching, research and extension and consequently to the democratization of access for more people to socially referenced quality education, characteristic of the IFG. (IFG, 2017)

We emphasize that the UAB system is characterized by a division of the teaching work, that is, by precarious and pragmatic performance and training, by flexibility and the absence of a political-pedagogical dimension. It is informed by a neoliberal agenda of mass training justified by the discourse of access and democratization of education.

It is worth recalling an aspect of the emancipatory training project, articulated with the social function, that was announced in the Institutional Development Plan of the IFG for the five-year period of 2019–2023: "to consolidate as a scientific, technological and cultural educational center for the production and dissemination of knowledge linked to the needs of working class in meeting the socio-cultural diversity that composes it" (IFG, 2018a, p. 13). This social function is weakened by the IFG's adherence to the UAB model, which is in line with the neoliberal dictates of impairing the working class in the world of labor, disregarding educational diversities.

Based on these considerations, it becomes clear that the IFG had some previous experience with distance education, even if it was not ideal. Given the impossibility of continuing with in-person education, it would be natural to take advantage of this knowledge to build ERT. Distance education's concrete experience at the IFG, taking into account the criticisms already made and the investigations of the research groups dedicated to the topic, could serve as a foundation for ERT. As we will see below, this did not happen.

A report by the Working Group that was established by the IFG to analyze the scenario and formulate proposals listed eight guiding principles for decision making, among which we highlight "Equality, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity", the "Guarantee and Maintenance the Quality of academic activities" and the "Resumption of academic activities primarily in classroom mode" (IFG, 2020a, p. 5). At that time, in June, there were no more illusions about the duration of the pandemic and we all knew it would not end soon. The group expressed its rejection of non-in-person teaching, linking inclusion and quality to the presence of students and professors at the institution.

The group analyzed three possible scenarios for the evolution of the pandemic, with mild, severe and very severe health restrictions. If restrictions were mild, in-person activities would likely be resumed and the only consequence would be a delay in fulfilling school terms. With severe or very severe restrictions, the delay would be greater and it might be necessary to cancel the semester or adopt ERT (IFG, 2020a).

The document shows mistrust of any type of non-in-person teaching, which is clear in its final recommendations. This hesitation or even rejection of any non-in-person modality may have led to a delay in reflections and studies on this topic, so that, when the IFG decided to adopt remote education, it had not accumulated a body of knowledge nor prepared its professionals for it. The perfect framework for hastiness was designed.

The inflection took place at the Higher Council meeting that took place on 29th of June, 2020. The Council decided to revoke the suspension of the academic calendar, approving the resumption of teaching, research and extension activities and authorizing the adoption of "Emergency Remote Teaching in all IFG courses, during the period of social distancing due to the pandemic generated by COVID-19" (IFG, 2020d). It decided, moreover, that the new academic calendars had to be sent to the Superior Council by August 10th, after approval by the campuses and by the Dean of Education. In practical terms, the deadline was 25 days, as most professors had 15 days of vacation scheduled for that period. It is also worth mentioning that the CONSUP did not offer the institution any definition of what ERT would be, neither of its own making nor referring to an external source.

Even though the ETS is composed of remote and in-person forms of organization, Instruction No. 7/2020 deals only with ERT. The guiding principles of this document follow those prescribed in the Working Group's report, mentioned above: basically, they focus on ensuring access to quality education for students and decent working conditions for professors and administrative technicians.

Item VII of chapter III is worth highlighting: "[The g]uarantee of continued technical and pedagogical support and training in remote teaching for civil servants and students" (IFG, 2020f, p. 2). Despite this text, it cannot be said that this was achieved; the institution did offer a Virtual Learning Environment (basically, Moodle and videoconferencing software) and a self-formative online course on the platform, but there was effectively no pedagogical training, which indicates a technicist view of education.

The ETS is defined as "the set of pedagogical, didactic and academic procedures, in-person and/ or remote, synchronous and asynchronous, whether or not using information and communication technologies (ICT), in specific circumstances, since that the procedures set forth in this instruction are met" (IFG, 2020f, p. 3).

Aside from the mention of specific circumstances and references to the instruction itself, there is nothing here that does not apply to the routine functioning of the institution outside the context of the pandemic. The document insists on clarifying that the ETS "is not characterized as distance education because it may or may not allow the use of information and communication technologies" (IFG, 2020f, p. 3). This conceptualization explains the theoretical precariousness of the instruction. For IFG, the ERT is not distance education, of course, but what is ERT, anyway?

Chapter VIII mentions the "didactic-pedagogical transposition of curricula designed in-person for the adoption of ERT" (IFG, 2020f, p. 4). However, how to do this without a clear definition of ERT? Furthermore, how to make this transposition without specific guidelines and pedagogical training?

Immediately after, in Art. 17, I, we are informed of the obligation to carry out, per discipline, "a weekly moment where a remote synchronous activity is conducted, with a maximum duration of 60 minutes, for exposure and dialogue on the content, for each class" (IFG, 2020f, p. 4). This determination excludes any ambiguity: even without a clear definition, the ERT regulation in the IFG shows that it was intended merely to remotely emulate in-person education. It seems to us, without a doubt, a failed attempt. As an aggravating factor, it massively and uncritically adhered to Google's solutions, according to data from the Surveillance Education Observatory (Iniciativa Educação Aberta, 2024).

Since its origin, the institution has chosen to theoretically base its educational practice on the concept of omnilateral training, aiming at a formative process that would contribute to student emancipation. The IFG's Institutional Political Pedagogical Project (*Projeto Político-Pedagógico Institucional* — PPPI) emphasizes that there must be an "articulation between education, culture, art, science and technology, in the theoretical, methodological, political and pedagogical statements of institutional educational action" (IFG, 2018b, p. 3). In addition, the document reinforces that the academic and school education offered must be based on work as an educational principle.

Thus, there are three basic principles that, according to the IFG's PPPI, should guide the institution's political-pedagogical practice: an omnilateral formation, work viewed as an educational principle and education for emancipation. The three principles are articulated with each other. Work as an educational principle is based on Gramsci's (1978) conception of unitary school, a school in which there would be no dichotomy between manual and intellectual work, theory and practice, and which would be the same for all, regardless of social class differences. The main objective is to build the students' intellectual autonomy and political awareness, through the concept of work as praxis and humanization, a constitutive element of teaching.

In this proposal, integration between work and education is not exclusively related to a preparation for the market, but aims to develop an omnilateral formation, which would foster all human potentialities, human beings appropriating knowledge as social beings. Work as an educational principle appears in the context of the production of knowledge for the development of a conscious, critical subject, capable of transforming his own reality, emancipating himself and building his own conception of the world.

The institutional guidelines of the IFG presuppose a teaching-learning process that adds a proposal for the subject's emancipation, either in his way of acknowledging the relationship between education and work, or in his/her conscious and active role in the society in which he/she lives. It is necessary that there is a concrete articulation between theory and practice, between intellectual work and manual work and, above all, that everyone has access to the schooling processes.

The option for remote education contradicts the IFG's political-pedagogical project. This is because remote education is an emergency solution, implemented without due reflection and planning. A formation based on the principles of omnilaterality and emancipation cannot be put into practice without spaces for adequate reflection and planning. There must be careful planning and study of the students' specificities, both by the professors and the institution itself, with the collection of reliable data and adequate analysis.

The trampled and hasted implantation of this emergency proposal favored the uncritical transposition of the traditional, in-person model of education to the virtual environment. A question arises: if the remote teaching process is done in abruptly and uncritically, how can it contribute to the formation of critical and emancipated subjects, as required by the IFG's institutional guidelines? The answer is that this is not possible, as the ERT and the omnilateral and emancipatory formation reflect different conceptions of education and, therefore, cannot be articulated with each other.

One could justify the option by saying that this is a temporary situation due to the crisis caused by the pandemic. However, if the IFG has a teaching-learning view based on a critical, reflective formation, focused on the development of all the subject's potentialities, it is its duty not to be carried away by hurried, disruptive proposals. And remote education is nothing more than the precariousness of distance education, which leads to the weakening of teaching work and to a unilateral, crippled and deficient formation.

FINAL STATEMENTS

Academic production on distance education is abundant, considering the most diverse perspectives. As teachers of basic technical and technological education, we defend a critical position towards education as a whole and distance education in particular. We reject the precariousness of teaching work, rushed education that is focused exclusively on the market, the uncritical adoption of digital technologies and uninformed adherence to solutions offered by Big Techs.

As we have seen, distance education in Brazil is marked by the precariousness of teacher training and work: the UAB has consolidated itself merely as an educational program, guided by economic interests to the detriment of educational ones. This has prevented the real institutionalization of distance education in Brazil, as educational institutions created sectors or boards of distance education, which are not dedicated to the fundamentals, nor to policies and training in the distance modality. Thus, they simply implemented the pedagogical model "instituted" by the UAB, based on the performance of scholarship tutors. Since teachers do not have adequate training and there are no professionals dedicated exclusively to this modality, due to the absence of a specific career, it is impossible to move towards the universalization of a public, free and quality education — an even greater need in times of crisis.

The IFG guidelines recommend that the formation offered at the institution be omnilateral and emancipatory. We know how difficult it is to realize these intentions, whether through in-person or distance education. However, this objective must not simply be abandoned, even if it is progressing slowly. We consider it unacceptable for the IFG to give up its guidelines, especially in a moment of serious crisis, such as the one we are experiencing. The pandemic and social isolation do not justify the acceptance of neoliberal dictates or setbacks in the access to and quality of education. On the contrary, in the face of denials and social chaos, educational institutions must stand up as

guardians of the most diverse knowledge and, more than ever, train people to be capable of facing the problems of society.

The authors of this work actively participated in the debates that culminated in the drafting of the ERT regulation. They warned on several occasions that it would be more effective to assimilate the knowledge and tools of distance education and apply it, critically and as far as possible, to remote teaching during the pandemic. The only success achieved was to limit the duration of synchronous meetings, this being the only part of the document in which we were able to locate a minimal understanding of distance education concepts. In effect, the IFG chose not to use the consolidated knowledge about distance education, preferring to invent a nonexistent modality and conceptualize it in a precarious way, as an "improvised solution to solve the problem", which is exactly the definition of *MacGyverism* (Gambiarra, s.d.).

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