



EDUCATING IN PANDEMIC TIMES: IS IT SOMETHING POSSIBLE?

EDUCAR EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA: ALGO POSSÍVEL?

EDUCAR EN TEMPOS DE LA PANDEMIA: ALGO POSIBLE?

Ivan FORTUNATO¹
Milagros Elena RODRIGUEZ²
Osmar Hélio Alves ARAÚJO³

ABSTRACT: This article, written in the form of an essay, partially portrays the moment lived as teachers during the covid-19 pandemic. The text has three moments. (1) The beginning of social isolation is recovered as a time of rupture of a growing pedagogical development carried out from a progressive (self-appointed) perspective. (2) The moment of excessive remote work in favor of an immediate response to maintain the status quo is regretted. (3) It is based on a future of hope based on an optimistic, utopian and dreamy vision by Paulo Freire, but which could very well reveal itself in the future of school education.

KEYWORDS: Teacher training. Remote emergency teaching. Paulo Freire.

RESUMO: *Este artigo, escrito na forma de um ensaio, retrata parcialmente o momento vivido como docentes durante a pandemia da covid-19. O texto se apresenta em três instâncias: (1) Recupera-se o início do isolamento social como momento de ruptura de um crescente desenvolvimento pedagógico realizado por uma perspectiva (automeada) progressista; (2) Lamenta-se o presente vivido de excessivo trabalho remoto em prol de uma resposta imediatista de manutenção de status quo; (3) Assenta-se sobre um futuro de esperança a partir de uma visão otimista, utópica e sonhadora de Paulo Freire, mas que poderia muito bem revelar-se no devir da educação escolar.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação docente. Ensino emergencial remoto. Paulo Freire.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo, escrito en forma de ensayo, retrata parcialmente el momento vivido como docentes durante la pandemia del covid-19. El texto tiene tres momentos. (1) El inicio del aislamiento social se recupera como una época de ruptura de un desarrollo pedagógico creciente llevado a cabo desde una perspectiva progresista (autoproclamada). (2) Se lamenta el momento del trabajo remoto excesivo a favor de una respuesta inmediata para mantener el*

¹ Federal Institute of São Paulo (IFSP), Itapetininga – SP – Brazil. Lecturer at the Pedagogical Formation Coordination. Doctorate in Human Development and Technology (UNESP). Doctorate in Geography (UNESP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1870-7528>. E-mail: ivanfrt@yahoo.com.br

² Universidad de Oriente (UDO), Cumana – Sucre – Venezuela. Department of Mathematics. Doctorate in Educational Innovations (UNEFA) - Chuao and Doctorate in Cultural Heritage (ULAC) – Caracas. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0311-1705>. E-mail: melenamate@hotmail.com

³ Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), João Pessoa – PB – Brazil. Doctorate in Education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3396-8205>. E-mail: osmarhelio@hotmail.com





statu quo. (3) Se basa en un futuro de esperanza basado en una visión optimista, utópica e onírica de Paulo Freire, pero que muy bien podría revelarse en el futuro de la educación escolar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Formación docente. Enseñanza remota de emergencia. Paulo Freire.*

Starting

Can an unequal country, with historically constructed problems, subject to the ills of structural misgovernment, have an Education that helps to free itself from the past and build a new future? (BIZELLI; CRUZ; BIZELLI, 2021, online).

The scathing questioning question presented in the summary of this dossier gives rise to this essay. Here, we seek to partially portray the moment experienced by teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent social isolation caused by health and life maintenance issues. Isolation, in Brazil, began in mid-March 2020 with an initial forecast of two weeks of stopping in-person activities as a strategy to flatten the contagion curve and return to normal life. Well, it's mid-2021, so it's safe to say that the initial prognosis was wrong and that we're living through something unprecedented, perverse, and unpredictable. There is no human wisdom capable of giving us answers. There are only losses; of life, of health, of jobs, of humanity.

Here we are, isolated, trying to get on with life. At the same time, our model of society wants to maintain itself. We cannot stop producing, consuming, teaching and learning. Of course not. We are based on a social status quo that is, at the same time, oppressive, savage and fragile. Either production and consumption are maintained at high rates, exploiting nature and the human labor force, or everything collapses. Therefore, a deadly virus should not be reason enough to put an end to such a structure. It is better to convalesce than to give the opportunity to an unknown future.

Well then, Noam Chomsky (2020, p. 27, our translation⁴) told us: “We are at an extraordinary moment, a unique moment in human history, a moment that is at the same time a sinister omen as the promising hope of a better future”. Stay, then, the question: where is such hope hidden, which does not want to be present in this gloomy juncture?

⁴ Free translation of the original: “Nos reunimos en un momento extraordinario, un momento único en la historia de la humanidad, un momento que es tanto un presagio ominoso como la prometedora esperanza de um futuro mejor”.





Chomsky (2020, p. 27, our translation⁵) goes a little deeper and registers the following: “We are at a moment of confluence of different crises of extraordinary gravity, before which the fate of human life is literally at stake”. Face to face with this confluence, another question arises: will we follow the path that is already set by neoliberal capitalism that colonizes, oppresses and exploits life, or will we take the other, unknown, but which can bring the experience of a better world?

This text proposes a dive into these questions. It does not bring answers, only reflections, concerns and more questions. The place of speech is none other than Education. It is necessary to address the (in)direct involvement with students, with emergency remote models, with the meaning of education and teaching. It is also necessary to talk about what bothers the world, especially what fatigues, anguishes and distances us from the affections, emotions and humanity itself that should make us more solidary.

All this is done in three moments. (1) The beginning of social isolation is recovered as a moment of severe rupture of the current pedagogical model; (2) We regret the lived moment of excessive remote work in favor of an immediate response to maintain the status quo; (3) It is based on a future of hope based on an optimistic, utopian, dreamy vision of Paulo Freire, but which could very well be revealed in the future of school education.

At the end, it is expected that all observations, reflections, arguments brought here will help to (re)think education – in the emergency times of the pandemic and in the future – and to (re)connect humanity with humanity itself. That's the hope.

Onset of the pandemic: time to isolate yourself

At the end of 2019, we entered a health warning sign due to the discovery of a new virus, whose initial incidence occurred in the city of Wuhan, China. This virus, named Covid-19, quickly spread throughout Europe and the appearance of new cases in Brazil occurred, more prevalently, from March 2020, causing an impact due to its great transmission power and high rate of mortality. It was at this time that measures gained ground in our country to encourage some hygiene care, such as frequent hand washing and the use of alcohol gel, as well as to propose social distance in order to contain the spread of the disease. In addition, places that generate agglomeration of people were quickly oriented to restrict or cancel their activities, and schools and universities were some of the first spaces to follow this orientation, showing concern with taking care of themselves and others (CHARCZUK, 2020, p. 2, our translation⁶).

⁵ Free translation of the original: "Nos encontramos en un momento de confluencia de distintas crisis de extraordinária gravedad, ante las que el destino del experimento humano está literalmente en juego".

⁶ Free translation of the original: “Ao final do ano de 2019, entramos em sinal de alerta sanitário em decorrência da descoberta de um novo vírus, cuja incidência inicial ocorreu na cidade de Wuhan, na China. Tal vírus, nomeado





Although relatively recent, with about a year and a few months of existence, specifying the start of the covid-19 pandemic is something quite complex. What we have are memories, in Brazil, of a troubled March in 2020, as we read in the epigraph, in which we suffered a great impact with the arrival of such a virus, whose negative effects on the human organism were qualified around as a “little flu”⁷, even though it took more than 400,000 lives to death in the country, in an approximate period of one year⁸.

The epigraph also mentions the prophylactic measures of the use of alcohol gel to sanitize hands, although it is silent on portraying that the product soon disappeared from the shelves of commercial establishments, not only because of the evident increase in demand, but because people wanted to make large stocks in addition to several reports portraying the rise in prices⁹. In other words, what could be prophylactic has become the object of consumerism and profit opportunities, requiring intervention by regulatory agencies to try to mitigate such individualistic response on the part of companies and the population. The same happened with protective masks, whose stocks soon dwindled to zero and the price soared. In summary, “the measures to encourage some hygiene care” expressed in the epigraph did not have a very promising start, with the replacement and the value of the products stabilized a few weeks later.

Finally, going back to the epigraph again, we find social distancing as one more strategy to “contain the spread of the disease”. The catchphrase #FiqueEmCasa soon proliferated through social networks and other forms of media, as a way of trying to inculcate the idea that the new virus was really dangerous and that isolation became the best prevention, as contagion is very easy, being transmitted from person to person over the air. Educational institutions, as inherent places of agglomeration of people, adopted the sanitary protocols for the prevention of contagion and closed their doors. Perhaps this attitude did not have the romanticized meaning indicated in the epigraph of demonstrating “concern for taking care of oneself and others”, as

Covid-19, rapidamente se espalhou pela Europa e o aparecimento de novos casos no Brasil sucedeu, de forma mais prevalente, a partir do mês de março de 2020, causando impacto por seu grande poder de transmissão e pela elevada taxa de mortalidade. Foi nessa época que ganharam terreno no nosso país medidas para incentivar alguns cuidados de higiene, como lavagem frequente das mãos e uso de álcool em gel, bem como para propor distanciamento social visando conter o avanço da doença. Além disso, locais que geram aglomeração de pessoas foram rapidamente orientados a restringirem ou cancelarem suas atividades, sendo que as escolas e universidades foram alguns dos primeiros espaços a seguirem essa orientação, demonstrando preocupação com o cuidado de si e dos outros”.

⁷ As, for example, in this article: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-55107536>. Access: 10 Apr. 2021.

⁸ Numbers taken from this article: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-55107536>. Access: 10 Apr. 2021.

⁹ Reports that exemplify the increase in value and lack of alcohol gel at the beginning of the pandemic, in 2020: <https://invest.exame.com/mf/preco-do-alcool-gel-subiu-ate-590-diz-procon-sp> and <https://noticias.r7.com/economia/alcool-gel-a-preco-de-custo-vai-demorar-para-chegar-ao-consumidor-26032020>. Access: 10 Apr. 2021.





they followed the legal¹⁰ provisions to prevent the spread of the virus. Obviously, the option to follow the decrees of closing schools was granted because of care for life.

However, like the spread of the virus, closing the schools was sudden, abrupt and violent. It is impossible not to be sensitive to the words of Corrêa and Silva (2020, p. 194, our translation¹¹) describing this context:

The school became just a “lifeless” concrete or wooden structure after all, knowledge does not circulate, does not invade and fill the spaces of these places where learning was something active and constant, mediated by individual and collective experiences that took place in the relationships and crossing of the speeches of students and teachers. Books and teaching materials continue to mark their places on school shelves/shelves. However, they are nothing more than sheets of paper with images or letters/words in the most diverse shades, without the students or teachers, they are useless, they are useless. After all, knowledge takes place through sharing experiences [...].

The rupture of the school model was necessary, but severe. As a result, many lives were saved, which makes the measure to restrict access to school buildings assertive. We cannot lose sight of this positive aspect, as the fundamental objective of everything we do should really be the preservation of life. In this sense, we defend social isolation and keeping schools closed for as long as possible, while a safe return is not possible.

On the other hand, as teachers, we cannot ignore the losses that such a rupture caused at the beginning of the pandemic and continues to cause for more than a year. It is worth reproducing the nine points of severe impact caused by the closing of educational institutions identified by Sobrinho Júnior and Moraes (2020, p. 141, our translation¹²):

[...] the interruption of learning; school meals; adaptation of teachers to the new technological reality; parents unprepared for activities in remote learning and at home; challenge in improving and maintaining remote learning; child care gaps; increase in school dropout rate; children's social isolation; and, the challenges to validating and measuring learning.

¹⁰ On the website of the National Council of Secretaries of Education, for example, it is possible to check all the decrees and other regulations adopted by the state secretariats of education throughout the national territory: <https://consed.info/about/>. Access: 10 Apr. 2021.

¹¹ Free translation of the original: “A escola passou a ser apenas uma estrutura de concreto ou madeira “sem vida” afinal, o conhecimento não circula, não invade e preenche os espaços destes locais onde o aprendizado era algo ativo e constante, mediado pelas experiências individuais e coletivas que se davam nas relações e cruzamento das falas de estudantes e professores(as). Os livros e materiais pedagógicos continuam marcando seus lugares nas estantes/prateleiras das escolas. Entretanto, não passam de folhas de papel com imagens ou letras/palavras sobre as mais diversas tonalidades, sem os estudantes ou professores(as) de nada servem, para nada servem. Afinal, o conhecimento se dá em meio ao partilhar das experiências [...]”.

¹² Free translation of the original: “[...] a interrupção do aprendizado; alimentação escolar; adaptação dos professores a nova realidade tecnológica; pais sem preparação para as atividades em ensino remoto e em casa; desafio na melhoria e manutenção do ensino remoto; lacunas de assistência às crianças; aumento na taxa de evasão escolar; isolamento social das crianças; e, os desafios para validar e medir o aprendizado”.



Thus, before addressing the issues strictly of the teaching and learning process, which were dissipated and lost in the virtuality imposed on the thing, it is necessary to emphasize that the greatest loss of all this was the presence. Without presence, we only have absence. Without a presence, humanity, which was already suffering from its chosen social model (or decided by some), in which individuality and competition predominate, suffers even more from the lack of solidarity, cooperation and empathy. Isolated, we seem to be all against each other rather than all united against an annihilating disease.

There is no doubt, therefore, that Covid-19 is paradoxical not only for the universe of school education. We saw this in the following statement expressed by Silva, Silva Neto and Santos (2020, p. 35, our translation¹³):

Isolation and social distancing through quarantine has been used as one of the ways to prevent the spread of the virus, however, given these measures, on the other hand, it reinforces exclusion, injustice and increased inequalities, emerging in psychosocial aspects and causing other health problems.

Revealing this paradox becomes fundamental to understanding the moment. Although understanding what is going on is not enough to mitigate its effects. However, we can infer that the urgency of trying to solve the specific situation of school education, centered on the continuity of the school year, compliance with the calendar and the formal curriculum, should not be the main focus of the investment of time and energy of people in educational institutions. Life should be prioritized and not the rush to see the situation regularized thanks to the resources of virtual technology that are supposedly capable of reproducing everyday school life. At most, such resources are capable of reproducing the much criticized, but still present, banking teaching of content deposit, which has nothing to do with the transformative education through the reading of the world advocated by Paulo Freire (FREIRE, 1990).

Unfortunately, this is not what we witness in our institutions and those with which we have direct contact. This leads us to confirm that this proposal to continue the universe of education during the isolation of quarantine, as if nothing perverse was happening in the world, is a constant around the globe. The focus seems to be, as stated by Vieira and Secoo (2020, p. 1027), the “adaptation to this new reality”, as the pandemic “forced educational institutions and teachers, worldwide, to drastically change their educational practices”. Of course not.

¹³ Free translation of the original: “O isolamento e o distanciamento social, por meio da quarentena tem sido utilizado como uma das formas de prevenção da expansão do vírus, porém, diante dessas medidas, por outro lado, ela reforça a exclusão, a injustiça e o aumento das desigualdades, emergindo em aspectos psicossociais e ocasionando em outros problemas de saúde”.





The fact is that the pandemic forced social distancing in respect of life. The distancing, therefore, requires the closing of educational institutions, which are inherent places of human agglomeration due to the nature of the work that takes place in them. The isolation of the quarantine, however, did not force the continuation of the school year, compliance with the curriculum, the transmission of content and regular assessments through the digital technology of the internet. It was society itself, through its educational authorities, that decreed such continuity; after all, the pandemic is not reason enough to change the *status quo*.

In this sense, therefore, even isolated from educational institutions and classrooms, trying to understand the complicated situation in the world, dealing with losses and mourning, we continue our classes and our contents. Virtually.

Living the pandemic: time to virtualize yourself

The COVID-19 pandemic forced educational institutions and teachers worldwide to drastically alter their educational practices. The less than ideal circumstances surrounding the transition to remote learning have allowed teachers and students to experience emerging communicative contexts. From the face-to-face classroom, students all over the world started to take classes in a virtual classroom, from one moment to the next, without prior preparation, and many stopped taking any classes (VIEIRA; SECCO, 2020, p. 1027, our translation¹⁴)

Here we are, in May 2021, still experiencing the covid-19 pandemic. In some parts of the world the situation seems to be under control, but Brazil finds itself in a very chaotic situation, registering a regrettable rate of more than two thousand deaths a day¹⁵. Regarding the closing of schools, as we can see on the UNESCO¹⁶ interactive map, it all started in February 2020, in China, reaching Brazil, through the partial closing of educational institutions on March 16, 2020, and the full closing on March 30th, remaining so until March 1st, 2021, when the

¹⁴ Free translation of the original: “A pandemia por COVID-19 obrigou as instituições educacionais e os professores, em nível mundial, a alterar drasticamente as suas práticas educativas. As circunstâncias nem um pouco ideais que cercaram a transição para o ensino remoto tem permitido a professores e estudantes experimentar contextos comunicativos emergentes. Da sala de aula presencial, estudantes no mundo inteiro, passaram a ter aulas numa sala de aula virtual, de um momento para o outro, sem um preparo prévio, e muitos deixaram de ter qualquer aula”.

¹⁵ As we have seen, for example in this article: <https://g1.globo.com/bemestar/coronavirus/noticia/2021/05/10/brasil-registra-1018-mortes-por-covid-e-chega-a-4234-mil-in-pandemic-media-mobile-follows-above-2-mil.ghtml>. Access: 10 May 2021.

¹⁶ Direct link: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>. Access: 10 May 2021.



status changed to “partially open”. And so it has remained until the last visualization of the map in May 2021¹⁷.

Well, the closing of schools in order to avoid contagion by the new virus and, thus, to preserve lives, brought with it remote emergency education. As we read in the epigraph, the in-person class was promptly converted into a virtual class or no class at all. School education quickly moved to virtual remote education. Faculty and students were compulsorily digitized, becoming virtualized.

Many researchers were soon willing to investigate the complexity of the situation, trying to understand what all this could mean. Apparently, the great impasse of remote teaching would be centered on two elements: “limited access to technology and the lack of teacher and student training” (CASTIONI *et al.*, 2021, p. 400, our translation¹⁸). And such limiting elements do not seem to be effectively problems, claim Castioni *et al.* (2020, p. 399, our translation¹⁹), because in the case of higher education, the data they present reveal that only 2% of students at this level of education do not have access, just “enable internet and digital literacy to the 2% without access”. Regarding the second impasse, training, particularly teaching, seems to emerge in the literature produced in the context of the pandemic as the slate of salvation in remote education.

Barros Lima and Mota Neto (2021, p. 26, our translation²⁰), for example, carry out a systematic literature review, aiming to identify the teaching challenges in the pandemic and concluded that teaching mediated by digital technologies is an “important tool for the process of universalization of the teaching”. But, according to the authors, universalization (and who knows what this means) has not happened because “there is a need for continuing education for teachers and especially for basic education teachers in the use of these technologies” (BARROS LIMA; MOTA NETO, 2021, p. 26, our translation²¹). The biggest problem with remote learning, they claim, is the fact that “a great part of the teachers were not trained to teach on digital platforms, causing insecurity and a challenge in their pedagogical practice” (BARROS LIMA; MOTA NETO, 2021, p. 15, our translation²²).

¹⁷ We organized, through screenshots, the UNESCO interactive map with the changes on the opening and closing of schools in Brazil since February 2021, which can be accessed at this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mwQm_cEqNypY9x9vJd2Lit3BpXHho4Mk/view?usp=sharing. Access: 10 May 2021.

¹⁸ Free translation of the original: “a limitação do acesso à tecnologia e a falta de formação docente e discente”.

¹⁹ Free translation of the original: “viabilizar internet e letramento digital aos 2% sem acesso”.

²⁰ Free translation of the original: “ferramenta importante para o processo de universalização do ensino”.

²¹ Free translation of the original: “há uma necessidade de uma formação continuada para professores e em especial para os docentes da educação básica no uso dessas tecnologias”.

²² Free translation of the original: “grande parte dos professores não receberam formação para realizar as aulas em plataformas digitais, causando insegurança e um desafio na sua prática pedagógica”.



Vieira and Secco (2020, p. 1027, our translation²³) also state that remote teaching can only be of quality if teachers have “digital competence”, defined by the “technical capacity in relation to the use of platforms and digital resources, in the capacity to organize and didactically guide the distance teaching-learning process, in constant virtual presence and in the ability to read and write fluently in digital environments”.

Moreira, Henriques and Barros (2021) also talk about teacher training in remote teaching tools and models, promptly bringing a list of duties to teachers: guiding, monitoring, motivating, dialoguing, being a leader and mediator, moderator in inter and intrapersonal relationships, creator of digital resources, learning evaluator and facilitator of online groups and interactions, understand the specifics of channels and online communication, synchronous and asynchronous, improve their performance, etc. And, of course, all these “duties” will be fully and satisfactorily achieved if they are trained, trained for all of this. That simple.

However, it is clear that this education virtualization project is not simple. It is necessary to share the warning made by Souza *et al.* (2021, p. 3, our translation²⁴) about what has been happening in this remote emergency modality:

From the point of view of the work environment, making the home environment the workplace, full-time, brought little-explored consequences for the health of education professionals who have supported, for a long time, this hybrid between contractual commitments and life chores toilet.

While “staying at home to teach” may seem simple and easy, everyday things are different. There is an excess of work to prepare classes and the configuration of environments, charges for reports and other documents portraying the strategies adopted, the constant changes in institutional resolutions, etc., in addition to the frustration of seeing all the physical and mental effort to sustain all of this, almost always, resonates in the void²⁵. Ah, but they say that this is the “new norm” and that even if the pandemic is overcome with the vaccination of the entire population and let's regroup in educational institutions, a large part of the teaching and learning process will be virtual.

²³ Free translation of the original: “competência digital”; técnica em relação ao uso de plataformas e dos recursos digitais, na capacidade de organizar e orientar didaticamente o processo de ensino-aprendizagem à distância, na presença virtual constante e na habilidade para ler e escrever com fluência em ambientes digitais”.

²⁴ Free translation of the original: “Do ponto de vista do ambiente de trabalho, fazer do próprio ambiente doméstico o local de trabalho, em tempo integral, trouxe consequências pouco exploradas para a saúde dos profissionais da educação que sustentam, por longa data, esse híbrido entre compromissos contratuais e afazeres da vida privada”.

²⁵ It is worth checking this and other related articles: <https://g1.globo.com/sp/santos-regiao/educacao/noticia/2021/04/15/professora-se-emociona-ao-ver-unico-aluno-enter-into-class-online-love-to-teach.ghtml>, access May 2021.



We don't doubt this, as it makes a lot of sense when we look at the virtualization of education as a capital project. In this regard, we could not have articulated the words better than Farage, Costa e Silva (2021, p. 228, our translation²⁶):

Like any system permeated by contradictions, the appropriation of remote education becomes a defense not only for those who are admittedly liberal, neoliberal and far-right, but also for a part of those who consider themselves progressive. With more elaborate justifications, departing from the apparent demand of the popular classes and the inevitability of the situation, large sectors of the teaching movement started to incorporate remote teaching not as a banner for preserving life, but as something inevitable in the face of the so-called "new normal", of a world mediated by technology. Thus, in addition to limiting remote education to an exceptional moment, and admitting the profound losses of this model, they began to defend the transposition of curricula and teaching and learning processes, as if it were possible to transpose the insurmountable. (FARAGE; COSTA; SILVA, 2021, p. 228).

Furthermore, the authors tend to believe that the emergence of remote education, based on the need for social distancing from the pandemic, will serve as a lever for a future project of greater commodification of education. This project will aim to further downgrade the meaning given to school education as transmission of curricular content and preparation for globalized external exams, serving people's certification, as well as maintaining a status quo in which there are few owners in the world and many servants at your disposal. Here's what they say:

This distance learning modality strategy, which, in our assessment, causes a reduction in the quality of teaching, is considered by capital as a way to reduce costs, certify on a large scale and empty the full meaning of the teaching-learning process (FARAGE; COSTA; SILVA, 2021, p. 228, our translation²⁷).

Apparently, the Covid-19 pandemic will have lasting effects on humanity. When we get out of it, making it yet another regrettable record in history, things cannot go back to the way they were in 2019 and the first two months of 2020. But it is not enough to say that we are building a "new normal" in which you need to reinvent yourself by virtualizing yourself.

²⁶ Free translation of the original: "Como todo sistema permeado por contradições, a apropriação do ensino remoto passa a ser uma defesa não apenas dos que assumidamente são liberais, neoliberais e de extrema direita, mas também de uma parte dos que se consideram progressistas. Com justificativas mais elaboradas, que partem da aparente demanda das classes populares e da inevitabilidade da situação, amplos setores do movimento docente passaram a incorporar o ensino remoto não como uma bandeira de preservação da vida, mas como algo inevitável diante do chamado "novo normal", de um mundo mediado pela tecnologia. Assim, para além de limitar o ensino remoto a um momento excepcional, e admitir as perdas profundas desse modelo, passaram a defender a transposição das grades curriculares e dos processos de ensino e aprendizagem, como se fosse possível transpor o intransponível".

²⁷ Free translation of the original: "Essa estratégia de modalidade de ensino a distância que, em nossa avaliação, provoca um rebaixamento da qualidade de ensino, é considerada pelo capital como uma forma de reduzir custos, certificar em larga escala e esvaziar o sentido pleno do processo de ensino-aprendizagem".



Post-pandemic education, in particular, cannot give in to neoliberal pressures that demand cost reduction and standardization. On the contrary: it must resist its automation and prioritize humanization. No inert contact mediated by screens, their gadgets and fiber optics, but by the presence and affections that mobilize feelings and emotions, that is, the humanity in each one of us. Here is utopia.

After the pandemic: a moment of hope

Humanity urgently needs new knowledge that provides “knowing how to use knowledge” for the survival of human beings and for improving the quality of life. This concept of knowledge constitutes a guide to action - the knowledge of how to use knowledge for social well-being - could be called the science of survival and is a prerequisite for improving the quality of life. I take the position that the science of survival must be built on the biological sciences and extend beyond its traditional boundaries and include the most essential elements of the social and human sciences with an emphasis on philosophy, which strictly speaking means "love of wisdom". A science of survival must be more than a particular science, and that is why I propose the term Bioethics to emphasize its two most important ingredients to achieve that new knowledge that is urgently needed: biological knowledge and human values (POTTER, 1971, p. 8, our translation²⁸).

Van Potter (1971) screamed for help when warning about the conditions of humanity, in 1971, and the need to be trained in defense of life. Today, without a doubt, the present moment puts our hope to the test, reveals that we are made, that we are indignant, that we are full of courage; but we attract our resilience and wisdom and endurance; we reveal our love for humanity and we are filled with a future of hope based on an optimistic, utopian and oneiric vision of Paulo Freire, but one that could very well turn out to be reality in the future of school education.

What awaits us after the pandemic? A “new normal”, as the saying goes, in which everything has been “reinvented”? For nothing has been reinvented: the status quo is still in place and very much alive. Things migrated more intensely to virtual platforms, including education work.

²⁸ Free translation from the original: “La humanidad está urgentemente necesitada de un nuevo saber que proveerá ‘el conocimiento de cómo usar el conocimiento’ para la supervivencia del hombre y para el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida. Este concepto de saber constituye una guía de acción - el conocimiento de cómo usar el conocimiento para el bienestar social - podría ser llamado ciencia de la supervivencia, y es un prerequisite para el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida. Me afilio a la posición de que la ciencia de la supervivencia debe ser construida sobre las ciencias biológicas y extenderse más allá de sus fronteras tradicionales e incluir los elementos más esenciales de las ciencias sociales y las humanidades con énfasis en la Filosofía, que en sentido estricto significa «amor a la sabiduría». Una ciencia de la supervivencia debe ser más que una ciencia particular, y por lo tanto propongo el término Bioética para recalcar sus dos más importantes ingredientes para alcanzar ese nuevo saber que se requiere con urgencia: conocimiento biológico y valores humanos”.





Will we be able to overcome the stigma that “teachers need more training” and enter the logic that “teachers need more support”? Because everything that is bad in school education falls to the teacher (BICUDO, 2003). Let's see: it didn't matter if in the world before the pandemic there was no chalk on the blackboard, the classrooms were stuffy and overcrowded and the students were taken to school hungry and without material to study - the solution was in continuing education, which should happen because through short training courses on learning theories and state-of-the-art active methodologies. In the emergently remote world of the pandemic, it is necessary to train teachers to use the internet and its very well-designed gadgets to teach virtually, even if one cannot afford to pay for adequate access, that personal equipment is obsolete and does not exist. Appropriate place to practice your profession indoors.

Is this the “new normal”? A world in which everyone “reinvents” themselves to respond to an oppressive model of society, in which they find themselves guilty of the problems generated by the model itself, right at the tip of the iceberg?

We hope not.

Again, we are talking about education and teaching because these are the places we have chosen to occupy.

We fight for the right to life, a complex bioethics that reveals its actions as an ethics of life, of wisdom as the art of inhabiting the planet. We resist through ecosophy as the art of inhabiting the planet, ecosophy being “a cosmic existential pragmatics, criticism whose interpretations follow a plural logic with a cultural and complex sense, but, at the same time, committed to the destiny of the human being and the Earth” (PUPO, 2017, p. 10, translation²⁹). From there, we enter the pandemic crisis that reveals an opportunity to promote another way of being that defines us as beings full of solidarity and love.

We believe this is a unique moment for us to rectify ourselves as a species; to repair our mistakes and realize the fragility of our lives, the unpreparedness of the global health system, and how well states must be prepared to act assertively in similar situations in the future. But this also enables us to appreciate the immense creation that is the planet, realizing the complexity of this homeland, in which, by affecting us in a part, the whole is affected. We see that this dependence permeates us, and we must work together to elevate our complex ecosophical and bioethical conformation, opening the way for the defense of life.

²⁹ Free translation of the original: “una pragmática existencial cósmica, crítica cuyas interpretaciones siguen una lógica plural con sentido cultural y complejo, pero al mismo tiempo, comprometida con el destino del hombre y la Tierra”.





Let us remember wise words, which we retrieved from ancient writings, and which may well lead us to other scenarios of valuing life and the purpose of human happiness. Writings that can rescue the philosophical essence that we came to serve and be happy, reconnecting our responsibility in the face of our lack of solidarity and anti-human behavior:

Aristotle already said that ethics should seek the “good life”. Thus, bioethics is the confluence of various types of knowledge, in order to seek a new art of living in a society very different from Aristotle's Greek society, and this new art of living is inserted in the multiple interrelations of current existence. It seeks good behavior in relation to a wisdom ("science with conscience", reflexivity, precautionary principle...) of Life in a co-evolutionary society between human beings and nature, in the evolution that leads to true human development (“evo-devo”) in the midst of rapid and profound changes (GOLDIM, 2014, p. 7, our translation³⁰).

So we feed on faith and hope, we recover our ethical sense and try to overcome our own knowledge; all of this “to safeguard the cosmic miracle that the emergence of life represents” (COLLADO, 2016, p. 54, our translation³¹). But, for this, we have many doubts: Has education been aimed at favoring life or at maintaining the state of competition among people, even during the pandemic? What ethical, solidarity and compassion values have been our foundation in times of crisis? Do state policies put life first? What happens to the care of the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and people in neglected economic conditions? Will education systems in general continue to maintain their curriculum content before human development?

These are issues that the liberating education permeates the necessary changes to privilege life. This is because the urgent awareness in times of crisis “implies that, when the people realize that they are being oppressed, they also understand that they can free themselves insofar as they manage to change the concrete situation in which they perceive themselves to be oppressed” (FREIRE, 1974, p. 25, our translation³²).

In the middle of the centenary of Paulo Freire's birth, in the present year of 2021, the people are still oppressed, they die in the streets, they are afraid of an attempt on their own lives; many are unable to buy oxygen, much less have anything to eat in this world of total

³⁰ Free translation of the original: “Ya Aristóteles decía que la ética debía buscar la “vida buena”. Así la bioética es la confluencia de diversos saberes, para buscar un nuevo arte de vivir en una sociedad muy distinta a la griega de Aristóteles y, este nuevo arte de vivir está incrustado en las múltiples interrelaciones de la existencia actual. Ella busca el comportamiento bueno en relación con una sabiduría (“ciencia con conciencia”, reflexividad, principio de precaución...) de la Vida en una sociedad coevolutiva entre el ser humano y la naturaleza, en la evolución que lleve al verdadero desarrollo humano (“evo-devo”) en medio de cambios rápidos y profundos”.

³¹ Free translation of the original: “para salvaguardar el milagro cósmico que representa la emergencia de la vida”.

³² Free translation of the Spanish version: “implica que, cuando el pueblo advierte que está siendo oprimido, también comprende que puede liberarse a sí mismo en la medida en que logre modificar la situación concreta en medio de la cual se percibe como oprimido”.





quarantine caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. People are mistreated in their own homes, with teachers being exploited in front of a computer to perform tasks for which they were not trained and in which they neither believe nor see meaning in the imposed bureaucratic tasks, and for which they were not even instrumented with equipment, for virtual access and ergonomics... nothing. They make use of what they have and how they can. Meanwhile, those less favored in the exclusion of technologies have less and less opportunities to continue their training processes, be it basic or higher education certification.

Nevertheless, we still have hope for the future; but, we go with Paulo Freire denouncing the model of oppression that we have in schools, which reproduces the model of social oppression, even more fiercely in the pandemic. It is urgent to become aware of this reality and think about forms of resistance – in our case, through education (is it possible? is it possible? we keep asking ourselves...)

We always return to Paulo Freire, seeking in his legacy a political praxis at the service of the permanent liberation of the human being, which meets this reality in the midst of a pandemic, leading to a radical transformation of structures, in the process of which consciences are transformed (FREIRE, 1974). No awareness, no transformation; no transformation, no hope. This consciousness-awareness movement that tells the most privileged that the virus that permeates the entire world kills equally, no matter if the privileged are encapsulated in their selfishness, in their meager humanity; the virus also infects those who claim to think that death would be for those who hindered them, such as the poorest and the elderly, because they no longer contributed to the world economic system. We hope that this lack of awareness will go away, along with the pandemic.

In these moments of crisis, we see that happiness is not in travel, belongings or anything acquired through a successful economy. We see that human beings have forgotten their ethical responsibility to be happy and collaborate so that the other reaches its fullness; we forget the complexity of happiness, which is not reduced to affective prosperity. Human beings must reflect to build their lives according to the values: respect for life is urgent, but love and solidarity are part of it. In the complexity of happiness, neither freedom nor responsibility can be neglected in the face of compromising our actions. Being happy presupposes that human beings are able to achieve a balance that overcomes their contradictions and conflicts? Of course, if human beings want to be happy, they should not forget that happiness is the result of an achievement, their actions and their conscience.

In these moments, giving hope, solidarity and love is to alert, with Paulo Freire, the falsehood amid the inhuman treatment that we carry with our actions; as well as false





educational policies; but also to warn about the individualism that permeates us. The pedagogy of the oppressed, accompanied by an authentic humanism, which is not a sterile humanitarianism, is splendidly exteriorized as a pedagogy of the human being, a pedagogy that begins with the selfish interests of the oppressors; that it is an egoism wrapped in false paternalistic generosity, materializing, in the crisis, by the false help, which “makes the oppressed objects of its humanitarianism, and which in itself sustains and represents oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization” (FREIRE, 1990, p. 36, our translation³³).

Let us return to Paulo Freire once more with a virtuous heart; virtue is the best skill, way of being. It has to do with the function of our soul, which is to make people live well and “the function of virtue will be that of a good life and, as such, the perfect good: happiness; happiness is the best and the best ends and goods are in the soul” (ARISTÓTELES, 2011, p. 27-35, our translation³⁴). How urgent is this need for ever better goods lodged in our soul to achieve compassion? It is urgent to know how to live with the other, respecting nature and everything that inhabits the earth, as an awareness of human formation, generous, but also realizing the true ecosophical meaning of life.

In the midst of this imposed technologized education, in the absence of human contact, playful in looking in the eyes and in the recognition of ourselves, in which the quality of a liberating education is scarce. We must return to Freire's legacy and reveal that educating is critically knowing reality, in the sense that education is loaded with meanings from the actors in the educational process. Education must allow for the criticality of the crisis in which the student is immersed, after all “education is considered an act of knowledge, an awareness of reality, a reading of the world that precedes the reading of the word” (FREIRE, 1983, p. 51, our translation³⁵). This word that the pedagogue speaks about is sowing; the word not as sound, but as an act of being-being-constructing and, therefore, of knowing in the world. This fact is essential, because educating is not imposing other people's realities or submissively accepting our own reality, without becoming an agent of change.

Criticism returns to Freire's consciousness, which is inseparable from liberation; liberation as awareness occurs, which is “the most critical look possible at reality, and which reveals it to know it and to know the myths that deceive and help to maintain the reality of the

³³ Free translation of the Spanish version: “hace de los oprimidos objetos de su humanitarismo, y que por sí misma mantiene y representa la opresión. Es un instrumento de deshumanización”.

³⁴ Free translation of the Spanish version: “la función de la virtud será la de una vida buena y como tal el bien perfecto: la felicidad; la felicidad es lo mejor y los fines y bienes mejores están en el alma”.

³⁵ Free translation of the Spanish version: ““la educación es considerada como un acto de conocimiento, una toma de conciencia de la realidad, una lectura del mundo que precede a la lectura de la palabra”.





dominant structure” (FREIRE, 1973, p. 39, our translation³⁶). For Paulo Freire, it is classic to know how to educate as an act of imposition of what should be issued by the system, which makes the students submissive and full of guilt for not accepting their raw and unfair reality as necessary, because, then, the human being is inferior and it needs to be civilized according to the modernist project of society. Does what we say here look like some reality? Some Southern reality that educates to oppress? We leave these realities throbbing in body, mind, soul and spirit to ponder: What is life? And how to live being true human beings in solidarity with love? Considerations that bring to mind the question: What is educating based on Paulo Freire? (RODRÍGUEZ, 2021).

Finally, or some lessons from the pandemic for education

As if having to deal with the absolute exceptionality of a pandemic moment were not enough, this context imposed death, sadness, unmeasured sequelae of a disease still little known and met the demands of the capital project that eagerly took advantage of this moment to boost, in various areas, your project of profit above life. (FARAGE; COSTA; SILVA, 2021, p. 227, our translation³⁷).

This experience with social isolation shows that it is necessary to recognize that there is no pandemic that can impede the relationship between teachers and students, given the various positive experiences carried out in the context of Remote Education that demonstrate that, when teachers and students meet, there is no physical distance that can deter the discovery and construction of proximities. However, the distance also exposed the importance of face-to-face teaching, and not just virtual, as a context to support, accompany, see and feel, decipher looks and silences. It is important to emphasize that it is not the fact of being present that determines whether education is good or not, but putting education at the service of the true humanity of each person. For this reason, we seek to contradict the perspective of education centered on business-financial-neoliberal interests and “needs”.

Thus, it seems to become increasingly clear the importance of education in the present and for the construction of promising futures for humanity. This is because there are only prosperous futures for society if education is part of the present. Without education people do

³⁶ Free translation of the Spanish version: “es la mirada más crítica posible de la realidad, y que la desvela para conocerla y conocer los mitos que engañan y que ayudan a mantener la realidad de la estructura dominante”.

³⁷ Free translation of the original: “Como se não bastasse ter que lidar com a absoluta excepcionalidade de um momento de pandemia, esse contexto impôs morte, tristeza, sequelas ainda não mensuradas de uma doença ainda pouco conhecida e se encontrou com as demandas do projeto do capital que avidamente se aproveitou desse momento para impulsionar, em várias áreas, seu projeto do lucro acima da vida”.





not change and if people do not change, the status quo remains, as Paulo Freire had already warned

It is in this perspective that we also recognize that the pandemic has taught us the value and urgent need for education as a context that fosters universal solidarity. This lesson helps us to understand that education is, necessarily, a context to try to overcome indifference and help each person to feel much closer in otherness relations; or, in other words, striving for the existence of solidarity and a true serious and ethical commitment to a dignified life for all. Education is, therefore, the “place” where we learn and practice solidarity.

It is in this same context that the awareness emerged, among others, that a good education is one that helps each one to take an interest in others; know and help each other. By this we do not mean that we need to have an overly optimistic, or even naive view that does not recognize the implications of neoliberal logic and/or the interests of the labor market and industry on education. In making this argument, we cannot forget to say that “not all education is good”. It is, therefore, the denunciation of the use of public education, often to feed neoliberal ideals aimed at maintaining a status quo, and thus also the danger of “forming” a legion of subjects who are mere objects of the system. economic-political-social, unequal and excluding.

Therefore, what we need is to commit ourselves to the construction of an education that truly places at the center: the process of humanization of each person. With this, we want to draw attention to the fact that no professional in education can exempt themselves from the social and political responsibility of contrasting neoliberal assumptions and engaging in the construction of an education effectively in favor of knowledge and human emancipation. It is not an easy task, we know, but it is necessary. It is, therefore, the understanding of these professionals as subjects who, attracted by the interest in contributing to the common good, are participants in the construction of an education in service/and for the common good.

At the heart of the lessons learned in this period of pandemic is, therefore, the understanding that each person is not a solitary being and, therefore, cannot live in solitude, self-isolated; not even close in on themselves. On the contrary, the pandemic made us realize the need to meet each other; come together; helping oneself, taking an interest in the other with due respect for the person of the other, and their rights. With this, it is worth reiterating that a good education is one that promotes the encounter between the subjects and, at the same time, the contact of these same subjects with reality as it actually is. It is in this sense that face-to-face teaching, which necessarily encompasses seeing/feeling and deciphering, as stated above, gestures and expressions, silences and body language, cannot be put at risk; nor allow the naturalization trend of what is now provisional and exceptional, behind which there are, many





times, power interests to incline public education to the labor market and its neoliberal presuppositions.

That said, we can only agree with Farage, Costa e Silva (2021, p. 253, our translation³⁸): “resisting so that the provisional and exceptional does not become permanent will be our main task in the post-pandemic period”. From this perspective, only face-to-face teaching is capable of truly uniting humanity with the existing social-political reality, and this was, above all, what the pandemic also taught us.

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³⁸ Free translation of the original: “resistir para que o provisório e excepcional não se torne permanente será nossa principal tarefa no período pós-pandemia”.





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