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PUBLIC SCHOOL: PATH, WEAKNESSES AND IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract: Education has always been subject to change through public policies over time. It brings with it themes such as public school, linked to actions and adversities, which require constant adaptations, when cases of endemics, epidemics or pandemics occur. The scenario caused by Covid-19 revealed economic, financial, cultural and social weaknesses in the lives of families, also affecting the educational system, which underwent transformations, especially in public schools, causing even more social inequality. This article aims to systematize aspects related to education, public schools and the consequences of the pandemic in the school network. The methodology applied in this investigation was based on bibliographical and documental research.

Keywords: Education, public school, pandemic, Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

School education in Brazil is a recurrent theme among scholars and researchers on the subject. It initially presented itself in the form of Jesuit teaching, serving a minority of the population. In the case of children and young people from poor families, they were referred by the State to religious entities (orphanages), where they received a strict disciplinary regime aimed at professionalization with a view to inserting them in the labor market. Thus, arbitrarily, the State intervened in people's lives.

In the historical context, public policies in education come from the 1930 reform, in the Provisional government, with provisions related to secondary, commercial and higher education. On that occasion, two groups began to pressure the government with different interests, one in the role of the church, the other as "educators" made up of the group "reformers" or "pioneers", who advocated new educational concepts. What stands out

in the clashes between these two groups were some claims made by the Catholic group, among which the "[...] tax exemption for private teaching establishments stands out [...]" which demonstrates the influence of this group on the State (SHIROMA, MORAES and EVANGELISTA, 2000, p. 25).

The guarantee of resources for primary education, which became mandatory, universal and free, was guaranteed by the 1946 Constitution, with rates never less than 10% by the Union and 20% under the responsibility of the States, the Federal District and of the Municipalities "[...] of the income resulting from taxes in the maintenance and development of education". Despite the free nature of primary education, it did not exclude "[...] the organization of school boxes that students' families contribute according to their resources" (BRASIL, 1946a; 1946b).

Currently, education resources are under the responsibility of the Fund for the Maintenance of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals (FUNDEB), regulated by legal provisions, such as Constitutional Amendment no. 108/2020 which included art. 212-A in the Federal Constitution/1988 and in the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN). The referred regulation establishes criteria for the distribution of resources for a complementation with minimum values of the Union, coming into force progressively from 2021 in the following order: 12% (twelve percent), in the first year; 15% (fifteen percent) in the second year; 17% (seventeen percent) in the third year; 19% (nineteen percent) in the fourth year; 21% (twenty-one percent) in the fifth year; 23% (twenty-three percent), in the sixth year (BRASIL, 1988; 1996).

With that, the New FUNDEB is based on the distribution of resources to Basic Education for public schools, which has been the subject of interest for scholars and researchers for

a long time, since Anísio Teixeira, Darcy Ribeiro, Paulo Freire, Milton Santos, Florestan Fernandes. In this trajectory, the interest in the subject by several scholars extends over time as a contribution to research.

PUBLIC SCHOOL IN BRAZIL

The school, whether public or private, has a social function. It is here that interpersonal relationships between members of the school community are established. As an institution “[...] installs a rhythm of timetables and calendars for the individual’s life” (ARCOVERDE, 2012, p. 85). In practice, this representation of time delimits the rhythm of the school’s working hours, the so-called schooling time, which involves the duration of each level of education, number of school days, daily school hours fixed in hours/class, evaluations.

All this dynamic is adequate to public policies aimed at a progressive construction plan and school equipment, demanding the implementation of educational public policies that allow: construction of a greater number of school units and their maintenance; hiring education professionals and providing children and adolescents with access to grades corresponding to their level of knowledge.

An aspect that deserves to be considered is the use of public schools to establish partnerships, among which the Health Department and the Transport Department with the Department of Education stand out, given the implementation of prevention programs and projects, making use of the infrastructure material, faculty and students. This is evident in campaigns to combat dengue and traffic accidents. The procedure integrates “teaching” into a new reality, making the process of educating more comprehensive.

Obviously, this demands more attributions to educators, but it shows that “[...] teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating

the possibilities for its own production or its construction” (FREIRE, 2008, p. 47). In this sense, it is possible to make a relationship between the words of Paulo Freire (2008) with the placement of Jean Piaget (1970), when he states that the teacher can go beyond the condition of being a mere transmitter of knowledge at the time when he starts to learn how to learn. become a researcher, leaving aside the works that condition him to restrict himself only to known results, becoming a collaborator in research and experiments.

It is a “doing teaching” proposed to new challenges, leaving aside “banking” teaching, which subjects the student to a repository of information, in which “deforms the necessary creativity of the student and educator”, without being awakened to “epistemological curiosity” in the student (FREIRE, 2008, p. 25). This makes them strong to overcome challenges such as facing the pandemic that devastated the country.

THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON BRAZILIAN EDUCATION

The pandemic changed a set of elements in people’s lives, relevant to social, economic, family and psychological issues. In this turmoil, children, teenagers and young people were the most affected, especially those who are on the poverty line, as they suffered the consequences of family maladjustments, generated by parents’ unemployment, which led them to a complete lack of everything, many remaining in the dependence on others to survive the situation.

With regard to education, the losses were incalculable in public schools and at the educational level, affecting teachers and students. Regarding the level of education, the routines of school days, workload and in-person classes were changed, following orders from the Ministry of Health and Education, under the aegis of the World

Health Organization (WHO), with a view to preserving human life .

Thus, there was a need to readjust the interdisciplinary planning, school calendar, curriculum plan, methodology, in order to achieve the proposed goals in a new situation, in view of the obstacles caused by the pandemic. Consequently, “[...] teaching, mostly on-site, had to be replaced by alternative forms, many of which with the use of new information and communication technologies, albeit unequally in terms of access and training” (PARENT ; RELATIVE, 2021).

Teachers had to discover new alternatives with pedagogical recreating, using hybrid teaching and applying active methodologies, using technology in new practices. In this scenario, teachers and students advanced in the process of experiences armed with technological knowledge, enabling the understanding of the words of Paulo Freire (2008, p. 23) “Those who teach learn by teaching and those who learn teach by learning”, providing opportunities for respect for the knowledge of learners, related to their experience with technology.

The moment required resilience and the proper teaching competence of teachers centered on digital resources to carry out collaborative learning, in the use of technology to offer hybrid teaching in synchronous and asynchronous classes with the use of models such as: inverted classroom, rotational laboratory, rotation by stations to offer teaching and learning, accompanied by feedback to learners’ questions. Allied to this, at the time, there was a lack of training related to the use of technology for teachers, who were taken by surprise and had little experience in using digital technologies to identify the difficulties of students, as well as develop research projects, debates and interventions that would favor opportunities for a “[...] critical teaching practice [...]” and

listening to their students (FREIRE, 2008, p. 38).

In addition, it became essential to properly monitor the follow-up of school activities and to propose formative and summative assessment strategies. All of this required the active and creative engagement of educators individually and collectively, providing opportunities for reflective practice and continuous digital professional development, considering the student as the center of the teaching and learning process.

With the closing of schools and online teaching, in an unusual way, it was possible to highlight problems that had not been publicized before or until then neglected, such as the lack of more public policies for internet access. It is notorious that many schools had computer labs, however, these, most of the time, did not work, remaining unused for months, jeopardizing the work of the teaching staff, which could offer the opportunity to bring the student closer to the outside world.

The vulnerable school population was the most affected, as students were confined at home, in cramped environments, where there was no internet access, and often, not even a cell phone with which they could approach a place with access, leaving them only the school, which also did not offer the ideal conditions for this purpose.

Notwithstanding the efforts of educators, the pandemic had impacts on the teaching and learning process in the school life of students, considering the drop in proficiency when they entered the 3rd year of high school, related to less ten points in mathematics and less nine in Portuguese, according to data presented by Agência Senado, based on the Basic Education Assessment System (Saeb), despite the synchronous and asynchronous classes offered during the school year. This resulted in a high rate of enrollment cancellation due to dropout from 28% in 2020, rising in 2021 to

43%, generated for various reasons, according to the National Youth Council (Conjuve) Agência Senado¹ This panorama further highlights social inequality.

Another point to consider was the distance between students and the new information and communication technologies, due to the lack of equipment and its poor maintenance in public schools, unlike private schools that have been using teaching platforms for a long time, of digital blackboard, the continuous training of its teaching staff focused on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This highlights “[...] the radical difference between public and private schools and, more generally, between public and private education [...]” (KOHAN, 2020, p. 5).

However, new times are approaching, which requires measures to be taken by public bodies in order to offer a dignified education to the vulnerable population, with adequate facilities, science and technology laboratories for research, which enable the approximation with other cultures . This is essential, as “The child is by no means alone in the face of the world around him. Their relationships with the world are always through man’s relationship with other human beings [...]” (LEONTIEV, 2004, p. 290). In fact, “[...] the element interpreted by the child’s experience that can determine its influence in the course of its future development” (VIGOTSKI, 2010, p. 684).

In reality, these relationships are established in social and collective coexistence. In this context, verbal or even mental communication takes place. No place is more suitable than the school to offer this social and cultural interaction, where the child appropriates the possibilities of cultural development with the articulation of words and also the learning of sign language (libras). It is the communication process between the child and other people in

the experiences of living in the world around them, influencing the development of their personality. According to Augusto (2019, p. 12) “The school has become a place for socializing where people study, enjoy leisure and decide things in life among the local inhabitants”, driven by the set of forces in the search for training befitting, according to what the world demands.

A proposal offered by some Brazilian states is full-time or part-time full-time education, which can provide various opportunities for students in the age of technology, perhaps preparing good researchers who can discover, in the future, methods, vaccines, medicines that fight everything. and any pathogen that can cause endemics, epidemics or pandemics. On the other hand, the trend going forward is to continue with hybrid education, which requires public educational policies, which make computers with advanced technology available in the computer labs of public schools, with due monitoring of the maintenance of the material maintained by the Departments of Education.

In this context, it is important to consider that only laboratories are not enough, it is necessary to exercise students in the use of electronic equipment, which would help them to become familiar with the technology. This would require a large number of devices (tablets), which would require partnerships through agreements between the government and the private sector to grant the material to those students who cannot afford it. Allied to this, the ongoing training of teachers in the area of advanced technology in public schools is highlighted, in order to use pedagogical strategies that enable a quality teaching and learning process, even in times of pandemics or other adversities.

It is important to highlight that there is now a closer relationship between the family

1. <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/infomaterias/2021/07/pandemia-acentua-deficit-educacional-e-exige-aco-es-do-poder-publico#gallery-7>

and the school, in addition to the appreciation of teachers. Those who favored the education of children by their own parents became aware that they cannot replace the teachers of their sons and daughters. Although there is a clear provision in Brazilian legislation on the State's responsibility for providing education, there was a wing in favor of this attribution to parents. However, with the arrival of the pandemic, many of them realized their fragility without the participation of teachers in the teaching and learning process of their children.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is essential to keep in mind that education is everyone's right, although this is not always exercised by the entire Brazilian population. However, we are convinced that this must be a constant struggle in all social media, deserving the attention of political agents inserted in government bodies, in addition to the constant vigilance of the people. It is what makes possible the reduction of fragilities and social inequality.

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