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## HIGHER EDUCATION IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC: LEAD OR EMERGENCY REMOTE EDUCATION?

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**Abstract:** The present work is the result of the concerns of the authors, who, during their doctoral training in a postgraduate program in education, had face-to-face classes suspended, and observed an escalation of replacement of face-to-face classes with other training actions mediated by digital technologies. information and communication (TDIC), perceive limits and possibilities for reflection on current practices in this area. Thus, the text presented here is an inflection to the objects and objectives of the studies for the doctoral thesis, but it is justified by the urgency of this process in view of facing educational issues in a period of pandemic due to Covid-19, an infectious disease that led us to everyone to a forced and necessary quarantine, making weaknesses emerge in higher education in Brazil regarding the uses of TDIC. We see this exploratory study as necessary, and we understand it to be a report of our participation at that time, contrasting distance learning and its characteristics with the model adopted, in pandemic times, which we can call emergency remote teaching.

**Keywords:** Distance Education, Emergency Remote Learning, Public Policies for Distance Learning, Planning and Management for Distance Learning.

## INTRODUCTION

This text arises from the concern of the authors, who, in their doctoral training in a postgraduate program in education, had face-to-face classes suspended, and noted an escalation of replacement of face-to-face classes with other training actions mediated by digital information technologies. and communication (TDIC), perceive limits and possibilities for reflection on ongoing practices in this area. It is worth noting that the authors develop research and work in the area that involves distance education (DL) as a point of observation.

Thus, the text presented here is an inflection to the objects and objectives of our studies for the doctoral thesis, but it is justified by the urgency of this process in the face of facing educational issues in a period of pandemic due to Covid-19, an infectious disease that led us to everyone to a forced and necessary quarantine. We consider this exploratory study necessary, as the authors, in addition to being basic education professionals in the São Paulo state public network, are higher education professionals.

This article will feature a theoretical-historical presentation about EaD, its origin in Brazil and its development, including legal aspects. Furthermore, a conceptual discussion is presented about what has been done in terms of distance learning in actions to replace face-to-face classes, in higher education, as a path of possibilities and limits of teaching practice.

## THE EMERGENCE OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN BRAZIL

The emergence of distance education is intertwined with globalization processes that cause changes in the field of economics, but beyond this it interferes in culture and consequently in the educational field. Even though EaD was created in past centuries, we can say that it has the potential to transform the future. This transformation takes place through teaching capable of centering itself on the student, as well as favoring the teacher to assume his role as facilitator, guide of training actions, of the learning paths that will be made available to the student, and the student assuming his/her self-education process, as the protagonist, as you will have the flexibility of study time and space allocated to your self-management, seeking autonomy. (FREITAS, 2002).

Studies and research on the history of distance learning subdivide its path into 5 moments, or 5 generations. In these studies,

we can find some differences in the years of transition between one generation and another and/or in the media used. In the work presented here, we will use as a basis the organization carried out by authors MOORE and KEARSLEY (2013). Table 01 presents a summary of these generations.

Generation	Media(s)
1 <sup>a</sup>	Paper material sent by post
2 <sup>a</sup>	Radio and TV broadcast
3 <sup>a</sup>	Open universities (telecommunication technologies)
4 <sup>a</sup>	Teleconferences (computer and internet)
5 <sup>th</sup> (Current)	Virtual classes using computers and internet / digital information and communication technologies - TDIC

Table 01. Generations of Distance Education

Source: Adapted by the authors based on MOORE and KEARSLEY (2013)

The first generation of EaD began in the 18th century with the announcement of a correspondence shorthand course in the city of Boston. For decades, many people became professionals through printed material, delivered by postmen, to their homes. In Brazil, we highlight the courses offered by the Instituto Universal Brasileiro, which began its activities in 1941 in the city of São Paulo offering professional courses.

The second generation began to gain prominence in the 1930s, through radio broadcasts and years later on TV. Radio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro, created by Edgard Roquete Pinto, was the first to offer educational programs in Brazil. The Third generation begins with the creation and expansion of open universities and began in the late 1960s with `` Universidade Aberta Britânica``. The fourth generation begins with offering courses through teleconferences and synchronous interaction, requiring the use of computers and an internet connection.

The fifth generation - the current moment

- is marked by the use of computers, tablets and cell phones and internet connection, in addition to digital information and communication technologies.

In this context, the modality has grown exponentially in recent years. The Digital Census, carried out by the Brazilian Association of Distance Education - ABED in 2018, highlights this growth. In image 01, we can see the number of enrollments in distance learning, in the period between 2009 and 2014, and in image 02, the evolution in total enrollments in the period 2009 - 2018.

Enrollments in the distance learning modality, which had been on an increasing trajectory since 2009, experienced a "boom" from 2016 onwards. In this scenario, specific legislation for the sector emerged. Table 02 presents a summary of the legislation that regulates the modality from 1996 onwards, the year in which the Law on Guidelines and Bases of National Education, in its article 80, began to recognize distance education as a teaching modality.

The summary of the legislation presented here proves that the modality has been structured over the years, bringing a series of requirements and prerequisites that need to be taken into consideration, when offering it. Among them, teaching methodology, infrastructure and adequate training for the professionals involved. If these requirements are absent, we cannot configure the offer as distance education, for the simple reason that students and teachers are in different spaces. Which brings us to the concept of remote teaching, or as we are seeing in this unique moment, as a consequence of social distancing due to the prevention of Covid 19, emergency remote teaching, a concept that we will discuss below.

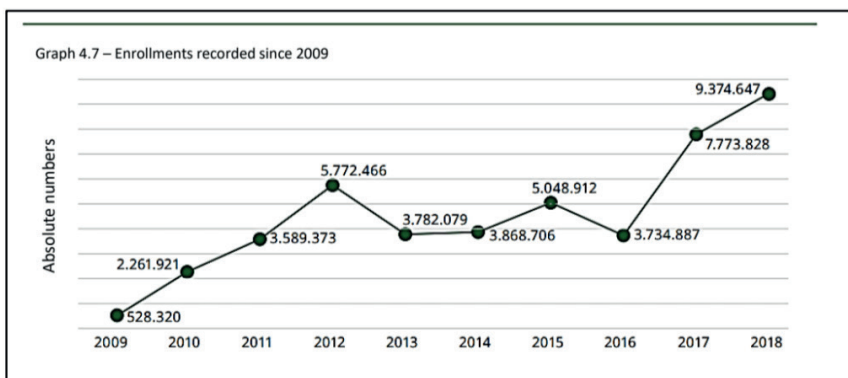


Image 01. Number of enrollments in distance learning (2009 to 2018)

Source: Brazilian Distance Education Association - ABED (Digital Census 2018)

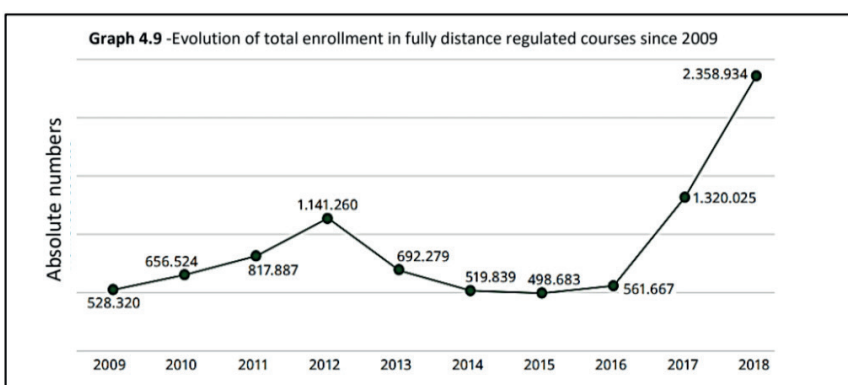


Image 02: Evolution of Total enrollments in distance learning - Period 2009 to 2018

Source: Brazilian Distance Education Association - ABED (Digital Census 2018)

Legislation	Synthesis
LAW Number: 9,394 of December 20, 1996 LDB – National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (article 80)	Distance learning is now recognized as a teaching modality at all levels: undergraduate, basic education and technical education
Decree Number: 5,622/2005	Regulates art. 80 of Law Number: 9,394, establishes general guidelines: methodology, evaluation of student performance, accreditation of institutions, among others.
Decree 5,773/2006	Regulate, supervise and evaluate higher education institutions and sequential courses in the federal education system.
Decree 6,303/2007	Accreditation with SINAES (National Higher Education Assessment System)
Decree Number: 9,057/2017:	- Updates the legislation that regulates distance education - It also defines that the offer of postgraduate courses lato sensu EAD does not require specific accreditation, that is, institutions that already have EAD accreditation are authorized to offer this modality.
ORDINANCE number: 2,117, OF DECEMBER 6, 2019	Art. 2. Universities may introduce the offer of distance learning hours in the pedagogical and curricular organization of their in-person undergraduate courses, up to a limit of 40% of the total course load.

Table 02: Summary of Legislation for EaD

Source: Prepared by the authors based on current legislation.

## **IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC: EAD OR EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING**

We have reached a point where the paths of distance education cross paths with the foundations that support it as a teaching modality capable of altering time and space, in order to favor training practice in times of uncertainty, and in this current moment, the world is facing a pandemic and, here in Brazil, this situation has manifested itself strongly, and according to health sciences in the voice of international organizations and national health authorities, the only effective strategy is isolation and social distancing, as it is an infectious disease. Even though there are dissenting voices in Brazil regarding this strategy for preserving the health of the community, the national authorities have legislated on the state of public calamity so that other devices can be activated to combat the pandemic.

Regarding isolation and social distancing, many places in Brazil complied with this recommendation and the educational area was quickly affected by the legal<sup>1</sup> provision for the suspension of in-person classes at all levels of education, replacing them with classes in digital media for the duration. the pandemic situation.

A great effort was undertaken to establish a process that would be able to transport to the digital environment what, until then, had happened in person in classrooms. But would this be what we call EaD? If we return to the definition of Moore and Kearsley (2013, p.2): “distance education is planned learning that normally occurs in a place other than teaching, which requires communication through technologies and a special organization”. We will see not. Because dealing with EaD means paying attention to its characteristics, such as having a plan, with training actions for the actors involved, as well as knowledge of the tools to be used, as well as prior knowledge of

the target audience of the training action.

In this context, what we have in Higher Education is an avalanche of attempts to transfer the actions carried out in person to a platform that can handle multiple accesses by students, in order to attend classes. The lack of planning is evident. Therefore, it is best to call this action remote teaching mediated by technology, and not distance learning.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Although Higher Education institutions already have the technological apparatus to respond more quickly to the educational emergency caused by the pandemic, the planning for such implementation did not exist.

Methodological mistakes became latent and the lack of continuous training of teachers for the use of TDIC emerged. Without, however, belittling such emergency actions, we note that the theme of planning, implementation and management of distance learning will become the agenda of post-pandemic training actions. This can bring a qualitative increase to Higher Education in Brazil, including causing advances in public policies.

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