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## THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AND HIS CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the essential role of the guidance counselor in contemporary schools, with an emphasis on the challenges faced in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. It highlights the need for an interdisciplinary approach and for welcoming the school community in the midst of social and technological changes. The pandemic has intensified the urgency of adaptation, promoting the use of technologies as indispensable tools in the educational process. In addition, the text addresses the importance of an inclusive and critical education that respects diversity and prepares students for a world in constant transformation. Historically, guidance counselors evolved from training in normal courses and philosophy faculties, initially working in primary and secondary education. After the military dictatorship of 1964, the pedagogy course was reformulated, creating qualifications and consolidating educational guidance as a profession. Laws such as 5.540/68 and the Education Guidelines and Bases Law No. 5692 of 1971 reinforced the importance of vocational guidance and the role of guidance counselors as facilitators of teaching and learning. Currently, the role of the guidance counselor is seen as fundamental to integrating different areas of knowledge and supporting the school community in overcoming new challenges. The article proposes that education should be a welcoming and innovative space, capable of responding to the demands of a rapidly evolving society, with guidance counselors playing a crucial role in this process.

**Keywords:** Guidance counselor, pandemic, technology, inclusion.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's educational scenario, the guidance counselor has emerged as an essential figure in promoting an inclusive and collaborative learning environment.

Acting as a link between students, teachers, managers and the community, the guidance counselor facilitates communication, conflict resolution and supports students' all-round development.

Their role transcends the mediation of problems, positioning them as agents of transformation who seek to integrate the diverse realities of students into the school curriculum, valuing cultural and social diversity. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges and opportunities for guidance counselors.

The closure of schools and the transition to remote teaching have highlighted the importance of digital technologies in education, with platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom and WhatsApp becoming vital to the continuity of teaching. In this context, guidance counselors have had to adapt quickly to support students and teachers, maintaining the link between the school and the community and minimizing the cognitive and emotional impacts of the pandemic.

In addition, the social and economic issues accentuated by the pandemic have made the work of counselors even more complex and necessary. This article discusses how counselors can adapt their practices to respond to these new demands, emphasizing welcome, inclusion and the conscious use of technology.

By exploring these issues, we seek to understand how education can evolve to meet the needs of an ever-changing world, preparing students for academic success and active, critical participation in society.

Historically, the evolution of the role of the guidance counselor in Brazil has been marked by adaptation and professionalization. From Lourenço Filho's initiatives in 1931 to the reformulations of the pedagogy course after the military dictatorship, the guidance counselor has become an essential facilitator in the school environment.

Legislation such as Law 5.540/68 and the Education Guidelines and Bases Law No. 5692 of 1971 reinforced its importance in vocational guidance and in supporting teaching and learning, highlighting its role in integrating the various areas of knowledge and in overcoming contemporary educational challenges.

### EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN BRAZIL

Some scholars claim that the first initiatives in the field of Educational Guidance in Brazil were led by Lourenço Filho, then director of the São Paulo State Department of Education.

In 1931, he established the Professional and Educational Guidance Service, with the aim of helping individuals with their professional decisions. Prior to this, until the 1920s, Brazil carried out isolated educational guidance activities, often associated with advice based on religious moral principles.

During this period, urban-industrial centers experienced remarkable progress, which generated a demand for new qualifications for workers. Educational guidance began the implementation of vocational education, employing a counseling-centered approach. The following is a historical summary of the evolution of educational guidance in Brazil.

1924	São Paulo - Brazil - Professional orientation and selection with Roberto Mange.
1939	Rio de Janeiro - Brazil - 1st Educational Guidance Service at school - Amaro Cavalcanti College with Aracy Muniz Freire and Maria Junqueira Shmidt
1942	Brazil - Decree - Law No. 4.073 (Capanema Law) formalizes Educational Guidance in Industrial Education
1957	1st Educational Guidance Symposium
1961	LDB of national education - Law No. 4.024/61
1966	Porto Alegre - Foundation of the National Federation of Educational Guidance Counselors (FENOE)
1968	Law 5.540/68 - Education counselor training at university level <sup>19</sup>
1971	Law. 5.692/71 - Confirms that guidance counselors are compulsory.
1980	Object of study: historical - critical and social subject
1988	FENOE's affiliation to the CUT
1990	Affiliation of FENOE to the CNTE and extinction of FENOE.
1996	LDB - article 64 - training of education professionals does not make School Guidance compulsory

Table 1

The first mentions of Educational Guidance appeared in the Organic Laws of 1942, which defined functions such as correcting and directing students with difficulties to appropriate care, ensuring that students were cared for by the school according to pedagogical norms, as well as helping and clarifying students' doubts. They were also responsible for guiding their studies so that they could independently seek professionalization.

Educational Guidance professionals had to be certified through specific courses. Between 1942 and 1946, according to the organic laws of the time, Educational Guidance prioritized professional qualification, in line with the economic policy in force. According to Santos (1986), Educational Guidance began to play an important role during this period. The Brazilian Education Association (ABE) began offering extension courses on Educational Guidance at its institutions, reflecting a growing social demand for educational guidance.

Economic diversity and different forms of work required the creation of institutions such as SENAI and SENAC. Educational Guidance became compulsory in secondary education, with an increasing focus on Vocational Guidance.

The first Educational Guidance courses were implemented in technical education to train a specialized workforce. These courses were also therapeutic and preventive in nature, using a psychometric approach to identify individuals' aptitudes and talents.

The organic laws of 1942 to 1946 were fundamental to the development of Educational Guidance, with an emphasis on professional qualifications that redefined economic policy in various sectors. As Pimenta says (1981, p. 65):

"During the Estado Novo, Decree-Law 4048 of January 22, 1942 created the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) and, after the Estado Novo, Decree-Laws 8621 and 8622 of January 10, 1946 created the National Service for Commercial Training (SENAC)... These two services were created with the primary purpose of rapidly preparing the workforce, as the educational system did not have the necessary infrastructure to implement vocational education on a large scale."

With the creation of SENAI and SENAC, Educational Guidance gained visibility and legitimacy, becoming compulsory in secondary education, with a strong focus on Vocational Guidance.

The main objective of Educational Guidance was technical education for the training of specialized labor, as well as having a therapeutic and preventive character, qualifying the aptitudes and inclinations of each individual, as established in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education No. 4024 of 1961.

The first educational advisors were trained in normal courses and initially worked in primary education. Philosophy faculties, on the

other hand, prepared professionals to work with secondary school students. According to the aforementioned legislation, the aim of Educational Guidance was to contribute to the integral formation of students' personalities and their adjustment to society.

The areas of activity included school, psychological, professional, health, recreational and family guidance.

After the military dictatorship of 1964, the pedagogy course underwent reformulations to adapt to the new demands of the time, with the creation of new qualifications for technicians in the field of education.

Specific subjects in pedagogy were introduced, such as Supervision, Guidance and Administration, as well as pedagogical subjects. These divisions in technical school work contributed to Educational Guidance becoming consolidated as a profession.

With Law 5.540/68 and Opinion 252/69, degrees were established in different qualifications and the training of education specialists, such as supervisors, educational advisors, administrators and school inspectors, which increased the responsibilities of these professionals and required an urgent reformulation of pedagogy courses and degrees.

In 1970, associations were created for supervisors and guidance counselors, who came to be seen as educational technologists. Schools began to carry out bureaucratic activities more safely and efficiently.

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education No. 5692 of 1971 reinforced the fundamental role of Educational Guidance, favoring Vocational Guidance in care and educational objectives.

In the 1980s, guidance counselors stopped focusing only on students with problems and began to act as facilitators of teaching and learning, gradually assuming a more political commitment to the school.

Academic production on Educational Guidance began to expand in a critical and questioning way. Guidance counselors adopted a political stance and committed to social causes, discussing the role of this profession in education more widely.

### **GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THEIR CHALLENGES.**

Today, the guidance counselor has his or her own space with the other school players to develop integrated pedagogical work, critically understanding the relationships that are established in the educational process. More than ever, the guidance counselor is attentive to the collective work of the school, working harmoniously with the other education professionals. The work is interdisciplinary.

Even today, there are few guidance counselors in schools, and sometimes they are diverted from their duties to take care of students during recess, due to the lack of some professionals in the school, such as principals, secretaries and often teachers.

When the guidance counselor replaces any professional within the school, the institutional image can become confused.

Within the critical reality in which we live, the guidance counselor tries to help students by taking their life stories into account. They are considered educators and their work is important in the educational institution. Together with the teachers, they work with the curriculum, teaching and learning, adjusting the relationships that surround these processes.

As Paulo Freire (1996) points out:

“Teaching requires understanding that education is a form of intervention in the world. Teaching requires freedom and authority. Teaching requires awareness of unfinished business. Teaching requires the recognition of being conditioned. Teaching requires respect for the autonomy of the student’s being. Teaching requires common sense. Teaching

requires humility, tolerance and fighting to defend the rights of educators. Teaching requires a grasp of reality. Teaching requires joy and hope. Teaching requires the conviction that change is possible. Teaching requires curiosity. Teaching requires security and competence.”

The guidance counselor is a paradigm and a link between the school community, students and teachers, creating possibilities for global education.

Education professionals change along with society at any given time. The curriculum and guidelines seek to adapt to the reality of each educational institution. For this to happen, the school team - managers, educational advisors, school supervisors and teachers - must study and adapt to the reality of their students

Faced with these new approaches, guidance counselors’ practice is geared towards understanding the student as a citizen in transformation. This professional seeks to understand their students in their questions, which are interconnected with affectivity, sexuality and family.

The Guidance Counselor works in various sectors, guiding and leading reflections on authority and freedom in a close way. They respect the norms in the formation of citizens in the disciplines, contributing to the construction of knowledge and the development of criticality.

When dealing with multiple situations in the educational institution, especially in the face of conflicts, it seeks to promote the autonomy of critical thinking in problem solving, choosing the best paths for the individual it accompanies, always within the contemporary context.



## **THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN SCHOOLS**

The guidance counselor is essential for dialoguing with the community in today's context. Faced with different points of view in the school environment, they play a crucial role in dealing with learning difficulties and conflicts between students, teachers and the school.

"The role of the guidance counselor is to work with students' potential and difficulties, mediating relationships between students, teachers and management. They act as a link between all segments of the school, seeking to identify the potential and difficulties present and, together, find ways to better meet everyone's needs." (Silva, 2020, p. 45)

The school is a space of great plurality, and the guidance counselor, due to his training, moves through all these spaces, serving as a link. They collaborate with all the players involved to point out ways of achieving success for the students, which is the ultimate goal.

In the process of student development and learning, trying to get to know the student's reality, trying to bring the student's reality into the school curriculum, in order to enhance it. Aiming, above all, for this student's all-round education. Not just the cognitive aspect of learning,

"Not only the cognitive aspect of learning, but in the development as a person, as an individual, as a subject and as a citizen, this is the objective of educational guidance at school." (Oliveira, 2021, p. 58)

It's difficult to measure the work of the guidance counselor in a concrete way. When we see students who had problems, both with learning and behavior, and the student manages to overcome these difficulties at the end of the year thanks to the concrete intervention of the guidance counselor, the daily monitoring of this student.

Guidance counselors strive to ensure that students are not only present at school, but also learn in a meaningful way and advance in their development and learning. This is undoubtedly the guidance counselor's main role: to promote the student's progress, taking into account their reality and social context in order to make meaningful interventions that contribute to their success at school and in life. The school not only trains cognitively, but also prepares the individual to consciously intervene in society as a citizen.

In day-to-day conflicts between students, the guidance counselor is the one who talks to find out the cause, whether it's a quieter student, a more talkative one or one with inappropriate behavior. Their job is to carry out this initial investigation and, from there, involve the families so that they are aware and can receive support from the school.

## **EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC**

Education, in general, went through a period of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the transmission and lethality of the disease. Daily life and society underwent major changes with the closure of educational institutions. During this time, the learning process for students and teachers has been transformed by the use of technology.

Platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Facebook, WhatsApp and email were widely used. Some educators resorted to printed materials, which were made available to students. Each school created alternatives according to its reality. In this context, managers had to organize themselves in various ways. Technology was extremely important, with staggered shifts at the school and phone calls.

The guidance counselor has been fundamental in this process, working with educators, students, families and the community on a daily basis. The use of technology has created a foundation to help guidance counselors, allowing them to continue their practice.

“Technological resources in this period helped to minimize the cognitive and affective impacts on educational institutions.” (Santos, 2021, p. 112)

The use of technology in education is not something new in the work of educational guidance. These issues have been discussed since the 1980s and continue to spark debate, which has been strengthened during COVID-19. Regardless of the moments experienced, its use within educational institutions is no longer a choice and is legalized in the BNCC, which highlights the importance of technologies and must be done in a reflective, critical and responsible manner.

Technologies make the connection between school and society. It's clear that technology occupies a place in people's lives and daily lives, including education. However, it doesn't just help us with teaching, but also with shopping, social networks, medicine and leisure.

Technology must be used in schools with the intention of promoting the protagonism of the subjects in relation to its use. Technologies need to be based on pedagogical practices that consider epistemological issues and the role of students. The inclusion of technology in education must be combined with active learning methodologies, valuing interactions between peers.

“Digital culture transforms the means of communication and information. Access is instantaneous, with different formats such as hyperlinks, images and videos integrated into texts.” (Ferreira, 2020, p. 87)

The inclusion of technology in school curricula was necessary to ensure proper alignment, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, when it became an indispensable factor for the functioning of schools. Education is going through a complex period, still experiencing a pandemic, which in a way has shown us the importance of preparing individuals for new demands.

Taking a leading role in their learning requires a critical and reflective view of a world that is constantly changing, including technology that has become necessary in the various roles within society.

The use of technology has been raising questions since before the pandemic, considering that its use boosted new practices, collaborating to make schools more humane and going beyond the walls of educational institutions in the formation of citizens.

Educational guidance has a fundamental role to play as a link between these elements.

Educational Guidance has brought considerable aspects in relation to the proper use of technologies and their intensification during the pandemic period. The work of this professional has had an impact on schools, based on their practices with students, teachers, managers, families and communities, promoting alternatives to the impasses created by Covid-19.

The guidance counselors made important contributions to the pedagogical process in the institutions where they worked. When COVID-19 began to be controlled, the educators had to put their nostalgia aside and rethink their pedagogical approaches, considering what it would be like to return to the educational institutions.

The two years of the pandemic have changed many things in society, in families and in every citizen, making it essential to reflect on the role of educators at this time.

## POST-PANDEMIC EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The guidance counselors had to rethink their return to school after the pandemic. The first step was to welcome our students into this new scenario. This involves not only the children and teenagers, but the entire school community.

“As Paulo Freire said, the school is not an isolated island; it is surrounded by people on all sides. If a teacher isn’t doing well, they won’t be able to teach a good lesson. In the same way, if the students aren’t doing well, the teacher, no matter how qualified, will find it difficult to teach.” (Freire, 1996, p. 67)

It is therefore essential that we, as guidance counselors, look after everyone’s well-being to ensure an effective learning environment. The first question that arises is one of identity. We need to look at our role, but not from afar; we need to look from the inside out. Who am I as a guidance counselor? What is my role in this context? How hard do I work to fulfill this role? There’s no point in having rules if we don’t look inwards and ask ourselves if we’re doing our best with the resources we have.

Today, we have many more children and young people who have spent a long time in isolation. There is a devastating economic issue that has impacted families all over the world, with parents unemployed and families broken up during the pandemic.

“We can’t ignore this scenario when planning for the future. Many are concerned about the issue of learning, and I am too, but it’s not the only factor.” (Silva, 2021, p. 45)

Until 2019, we had a lot of certainties. We used to say that students knew more about technology than teachers. However, we need to re-evaluate these certainties in light of the changes that have taken place. All students have access to technology, even in remote properties, because they usually have a cell phone and an internet connection.

“During the pandemic, we saw that in many homes there were five people sharing just two devices. This brought pedagogical and methodological challenges.” (Oliveira, 2022, p. 88)

Our role needs to be from the inside out, recognizing that we won’t solve all the problems on our own. School teams need to reflect on our role and accept that we’ve never been perfect, and that’s a good thing. School has always been a building space for imperfect people, and that didn’t start with the pandemic.

We should avoid nostalgia and look back only to learn from the past. Throughout history, we have built meaningful careers and roles as guidance counselors. Although we may not always be valued externally, this appreciation must begin internally.

“We need to position ourselves and recognize our value, regardless of salary issues. We chose to be here and we must do our best with what we have, bringing our experiences and past experiences.” (Costa, 2023, p. 102)

The pandemic has brought immense challenges. The children were isolated and, when they returned, faced emotional and educational difficulties. Our role is to welcome and guide them, knowing that we can’t solve everything. We need to do the best we can within our capabilities.

As educators, we must help to enlighten minds that still believe it is necessary to discuss gender, race or religion in a prejudiced way.

We must discuss how to create a better society and form emotionally healthy people. The pandemic has shown us the importance of the school as an irreplaceable space for learning and living together.

It is essential that educators are qualified and prepared to deal with today’s challenges. We can’t put untrained people in positions of responsibility. Competence must be the basis for choosing professionals in education.



We must reflect on our role and the importance of adapting to change. Education is an essential pillar of society, and educators play a crucial role in shaping future generations. We need to be resilient and hopeful, knowing that together we can face the challenges.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The guidance counselor plays a vital role in promoting an inclusive and effective school environment, especially in a post-pandemic scenario. The challenges faced during this period have highlighted the need for an

educational approach that values emotional well-being, diversity and the critical use of technologies. By recognizing the importance of their role, guidance counselors can help build an education that not only overcomes current difficulties, but also prepares students for an uncertain and ever-changing future. Collaboration between educators, managers and the community is essential to meet the challenges and ensure that education remains a fundamental pillar in the formation of aware and prepared citizens.

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