Encounters and dis-encounters between teachers and emergency remote education

Encontros e desencontros entre professores e o ensino remoto emergencial

Encuentros y desencuentros entre profesores y la enseñanza remota emergencial

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ABSTRACT

In mid-March 2020, classroom educational activities were suspended in public and private school systems due to the need for social distancing provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, educational institutions became adept at emergency remote education (ERE). Considering this situation, which is still in progress, this text: 1) presents studies conducted by researchers from various countries, in this brief space of time, to understand the suspension of classroom school activities and the continuity of the school calendar via emergency remote education; and 2) presents data from field research conducted with schoolteachers and university professors, in which 321 teachers participated from 14 Brazilian states. By issuing digital

questionnaires, the study sought to learn about the experiences, challenges, feelings, and reflections of these teachers and how they conducted remote teaching. Statements expressing discontent and impotence were found in relation to current teaching conditions, and tremendous anguish related to students' learning. There are also reports of individual and collective efforts to support pedagogical actions that made the best of Emergency Remote Education

Keywords: Emergency Remote Education; Covid-19; The Work of Teaching.

RESUMO

Em meados de março de 2020 ocorreu a suspensão das atividades educacionais presenciais nas redes de ensino pública e privada, em decorrência do afastamento social provocado pela pandemia de Covid-19, motivo pelo qual as instituições educacionais tornaram-se adeptas do ensino remoto emergencial (ERE). Considerando este cenário, ainda em movimento, este texto busca: 1) apresentar trabalhos desenvolvidos por pesquisadores de diferentes países neste curto espaço de tempo, no intuito de entender o que representou a suspensão das atividades escolares presenciais e a continuidade do calendário via ERE; e 2) apresentar dados de pesquisa de campo desenvolvida com professores da Educação Básica e Superior, na qual participaram 321 docentes de 14 Estados brasileiros. Por meio da aplicação de questionários digitais investigou-se, junto a esses professores, suas experiências, desafios, sentimentos, reflexões e como se objetivava a docência em formato remoto. Evidenciaram-se depoimentos de descontentamento e impotência frente às condições atuais do trabalho docente, grande angústia relacionada à aprendizagem dos estudantes e, também, relatos de esforços individuais e coletivos em prol de ações pedagógicas que desenvolvam o ERE do melhor modo possível.

Palavras-chave: Ensino Remoto Emergencial; Covid-19; Trabalho Docente.

RESUMEN

A mediados de marzo de 2020 se han suspendido las actividades educativas presenciales en las redes educativas públicas y privadas, debido al alejamiento social provocado por la pandemia del Covid-19, razón por la cual las instituciones educativas se volvieron adeptas a la Educación Remota de Emergencia (ERE). Considerando este escenario, aún en marcha, este texto busca: 1) presentar trabajos desarrollados por investigadores de diferentes países en este corto período de tiempo, con el fin de comprender en qué consistió la suspensión de las actividades del aula y la continuidad del calendario vía ERE; y 2) presentar datos de investigación de campo desarrollada con profesores de Educación Básica y Superior, en la que participaron 321 profesores de 14 estados brasileños. Mediante la aplicación de cuestionarios digitales, investigamos, junto a estos docentes, sus vivencias, desafíos, sentimientos, reflexiones y cómo se objetivaba la enseñanza remota. Hubo deposiciones de

descontento e impotencia ante las actuales condiciones de trabajo docente, gran angustia relacionada con el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, y también relatos de esfuerzos individuales y colectivos a favor de acciones pedagógicas que desarrollen la ERE de la mejor manera posible.

Palabras-clave: Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia; Covid-19; Trabajo Docente.

Introduction

As we write this article, the Covid-19 (Sars-Cov-2) pandemic has been a part of our lives for ten months. In the legal scope, this period has been marked by federal, state and municipal decrees. We have witnessed and participated, often feeling surprised and confused, in a constant opening and closing of economic activities, educational and leisure spaces, because of what we began to call social distancing, expression that was created by this atypical situation. In these ten months, there were 92 million cases of infection around the world (OPAS, 2020), and eight million, two hundred and sixty thousand of these were in Brazil (PAINEL CORONAVÍRUS, 2020).

In mid-March and early April, Brazilian Primary Education schools (PE) and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) suspended their on-site activities. At that time, the expectation was of a quarantine, that is, social distancing for a few months. However, the perspective of a fast resumption of on-site teaching activities was delayed by the increasing number of casualties caused by Covid-19. On January 13, 2021, Brazil had 206.063 casualties (PAINEL CORONAVÍRUS, 2020).

In April, the National Education Council (CNE) issued Report n. 5/2020, which was favorable to online teaching activities in order to fulfill the minimum annual school hours. The institution emphasized that the activities could be performed through digital means (video classes, contents organized in virtual teaching and learning platforms, social network, electronic mail, among others), through television or radio programs, the use of printed didactic materials containing pedagogical orientations distributed to the students, and through the recommendation of readings, projects, research, activities and exercises indicated in the didactic materials (BRASIL, 2020b). In June, Ordinance n. 544 (BRASIL, 2020a) established the replacement of on-site classes for

Emergency Remote Education (ERE) for as long as the Covid-19 pandemic would last.

The suspension of on-site classes and the adoption of ERE are global phenomena that aimed at preventing the worsening of the pandemic, as well as the losses resulting from the suspension of on-site classes; this measure ended up lasting longer than initially expected. Despite its global dimension, in Brazil, this action has been generating worrisome developments when we consider social inequalities – approximately 10% of the Brazilian families do not have access to the internet, and more than 13% do not have access to computers (IBGE, 2018). Besides, we need to factor in the difficulties found by working families to help students in remote tasks, as well as the lack of infrastructure or a minimally adequate environment to study, among other issues that express an extremely heterogeneous social context and composes the acute social inequality in the country.

This scenario has placed educational institutions "in the eye of the storm", requiring new plans for content, new teaching and learning processes and the revision of evaluation strategies. In order to try and understand and think about this phenomenon, we developed a study with teachers from Primary and Higher Education that became adept at ERE. Through digital questionnaires, we asked them about their experiences, challenges, feelings and reflections related to school activities performed in conditions that are very different than the usual ones. In this article, we present manifestations of teachers, articulated with recent contributions from educational theorists who tried to, based on research carried out in a very short period of time, reflect upon the current moment of education in the countries affected by the pandemic, especially Brazil.

Emergency Remote Education: what are we talking about?

ERE was unknown to the general population until the end of 2019, but it became a part of our vocabulary and of the activities of teachers, managers, students and parents in the school year of 2020. Hodges et al. (2020) define ERE as a change in education caused by the sanitary crisis, involving remote solutions for on-site or hybrid courses, which should return to its original formats as soon as this emergency situation

improves or ends. "The objective is not to recreate a robust educational system, but to provide temporary access to educational support and content in a fast, easy to configure and reliable manner during an emergency or a crisis" (HODGES et al, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, ERE is a strategy used in an emergency situation, whose objective is to fulfill the school year schedule, which could not take place on-site, as usual, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Also according to Hodges et al. (2020, p. 10), classes are often "live, when teachers and students are online on the same day and time of on-site classes, being usually performed in videoconference platforms or applications instead of learning environments". In an attempt to compensate for the lack of physical interaction, teachers provide contents and answer questions using videoconference tools, e-mails and virtual messages. For the authors, even when planning creative solutions to meet the demands of ERE, "many teachers will find this whole process to be very stressful", since "no professional who transitions to online teaching under these circumstances, in a hurry, can enjoy the best of virtual resources and possibilities" (HODGES et al, 2020, p. 03).

ERE has been intensely debated by the academic community, both in "webinars" or in the scientific literature. Considering the results of Academic Google for 2020, we found 367 results connected to the descriptor "emergency remote education", showing the studies produced throughout this year in order to capture the movements, challenges and innovations required by the context. A non-systematic analysis of titles and abstracts enabled us to realize that a significant number of papers focused on the level of adaptation of teachers and professors to the remote category, their personal satisfaction, training for the use of digital platforms and tools and/or work overload; some carried out exploratory analyses about the transition from the on-site to the digital model; others investigated the perception of students and teachers about ERE; we found reports of adaptations (or difficulties) found by some disciplines or stages for the new format; studies on the use of active and interactive methodologies; and others about the Special Education audience and the right to education. It is also important to consider the expressive material produced as e-books, lives, stories and interviews, which aimed at contributing with the analysis of the movement in question.

Here, we will describe some of these contributions.

Based on experiences from Universidade Aberta de Portugal, Moreira, Henriques and Barros (2020) investigated the sudden changes brought by the pandemic for educational institutions, and how, in this context, "teachers were forced to adopt distance learning and emergency remote education practices, which are very different from the practices of digital education in a qualified network" (MOREIRA; HENRIQUES; BARROS, 2020, p. 351). The authors analyzed the "basic principles for the design of a virtual environment, related to the organization, selection of resources, preparation and evaluation of e-learning activities" (MOREIRA; HENRIQUES; BARROS, 2020, p. 352).

Stanger (2020) also analyzed practical issues, observing the evaluation of students in ERE. Harvard University, where this author teaches a seminar, chose to change the evaluation of its courses, and graduate students received the approved or not approved status added to an asterisk in the transcription of their academic history – referring to the pandemic. The author evaluated that this solution minimized problems with fairness, and, at the same time, allowed students and professors to focus on the creation of a significant learning experience at this time of anxiety. "Students were forced to leave the campus in a short period of time, and are now spread around the world" (STANGER, 2020, p. 1). They will possibly access online classes in different time zones, or experience situations of unstable connection. The author added that measures to reduce stress would be necessary, because "students are not having a real college experience. We should not pretend that they are" (STANGER, 2020, p. 2).

Some authors made considerations about the training of teachers for the online education activity. Oliveira, Correia and Morés (2020) analyzed the need for institutions to provide digital areas for the interaction between teachers, and to qualify them for ERE. According to the authors, a digital repository to share contents "would represent a reduction in the workload" (OLIVEIRA; CORREIA; MORÉS, 2020, p. 10).

The study "School education in times of the pandemic from the point of view of Elementary School teachers" (FCC, 2020), performed in the peak of the first wave of the pandemic, aimed at verifying how teachers from public and private networks

developed their activities, how they harmonized their professional and personal lives, and what their expectations were for the return of on-site classes. The research questionnaire, applied from April 30 to May 10, 2020, was answered by 14,285 teachers from all of the 27 Federation Units, with emphasis on the state of São Paulo (74% of the participants). The analyzed data showed that, for 65% of the respondents, the pedagogical work changed and increased, especially for activities involving the digital interface; at the same time, they revealed that 49.3% of the respondents believed that only part of the students were able to perform their activities and learn the contents in ERE.

A group of researchers from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) pointed at some limitations and difficulties regarding the use of digital platforms, televised courses and distribution of printed material to students and their families, reflecting on the "main alternatives in the public debate and the paths taken by teaching networks that worked with some sort of emergency protocol" (NASCIMENTO et al, 2020, p. 1). The researchers provided estimations for a policy to distribute digital technology for students during the time they spent away from the school environment. Therefore, they tried to answer, based on the consulted data: a) how many students did not have access to good internet in the household for remote teaching-learning activities?; b) would the distribution of cell phones or tablets with 4G technology be an effective and viable policy to overcome the problem of lack of access to the technologies that are necessary for ERE?; and c) which initiatives could be adopted for students who still had no access, even after the distribution of cell phones or tablets with 4G technology? The authors discussed the necessary investment to implement this policy, as well as the logistics to distribute the equipment. The conclusion was that, even if implemented, there would still be 250 to 300 thousand students "without access and without the possibility of being impacted by this policy, so other forms of ensuring the permanence of these students in the school year would be necessary" (NASCIMENTO et al, 2020, p. 18).

It is also important to mention the authors who had critical concepts regarding ERE and contributed with the analysis of this education phenomenon in a way that is not disconnected from totality, that is, they tried to investigate how the remote aspect

has presented "solutions" related to the private educational capital for the crisis of education, thus building a consensus about the need for innovation in education after the pandemic. Therefore, if ERE is analyzed without judgment by the more pragmatic authors, who try to reflect upon its viability and objectives, on the other hand, it is seen with distrust by another group of teachers, intellectuals and several associations.

For those who criticize this model, the idea of ensuring lives, health and learning through ERE is the core of Distance Learning (DL), defending the interests of great education clusters and technology platforms. According to Soares (2020, p. 7):

> The issue is that DL, far from being a solution that is restricted to times of pandemic, will possibly be a heritage for posterior moments. The new tendencies of informational capitalism and, consequently, the new demands of the work place, have been pressuring the education system towards "innovation".

Fieira, Evangelista and Flores (2020) analyzed the debates promoted in April, 2020, by the movement "Todos pela Educação", in partnership with CNE. The authors pointed out to the "technological fetishism" that made ERE appear as the "salvation" for all of the teaching problems. According to the authors:

> Magical solutions, which the teacher seems to be a mere instrument of, exploded: classes through the local TV; video classes using the social network; online classes; online platforms; digital materials for the teacher and the student; use of social network; online mentorship; tasks by WhatsApp; podcast; kits; blogs; lesson databases; applications; psychological support through messages. In the half-opened door of the debate, the "partners" were excited: TV and telephone channels, community organizations, private technology sector, radio broadcast, consultants and their digital or printed learning packages. (FIEIRA, EVANGELISTA e FLORES, 2020, p. 27).

Also according to the authors, there is a resource from the Federal Government approved for the acquisition of technological solutions for public schools, which would lead to possibilities for the establishment of technology-mediated education in the post-pandemic school curriculum. In the same line of thought, Leher (2020) indicates that most education platforms used by public networks are run by five major corporations (*Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Apple, Alphabet/Google*), which have strategic goals

to build a global education market. In this sense, the pandemic has triggered the amplification of markets. Pichetti (2020, p. 1) states: "remote education is not actually an emergency, but instead, emerging". According to the author, hybrid education, which combines both on and off-site practices, had been announced as a model to be pursued by universities. The author questions:

> [...] if remote teaching is an "emergency", what is the emergency we are going through? It seems that the most optimistic answer is that emergency lies on "rescuing" the semester or the academic calendar. However, if that is the new optimistic response, it means there is an actual "worse" response than the already unacceptable subordination of formation to certification. It seems that the real emergency of Remote Education is in preparing the bases, both objective and subjective, for a systematic and permanent implementation of the remote logic of a pedagogical organization in public universities. (PICHETTI, 2020, p. 1, author's note)

The mercantilization of remote education is in the center of this discussion. Hodges et al (2020, p. 10) point to the "[...] movement of administrators in search of robust, complete and complex solutions for DL", as well as "companies and suppliers who use these moments of weakness of the system to penetrate through the walls of the schools with platforms, services and overly complex solutions that should be immediately and urgently used".

Williamson, Eynon and Potter (2020, p. 106) bring up issues about the simplistic and opportunist statements claiming that technologies are the remedy for the educational crisis. The authors declare the need for the development of studies that can "examine, in detail, the effects and consequences of the expansion and incorporation of digital technologies and media in education systems, institutions and practices around the world". These are not new subjects, nor are they exclusive of the pandemic, but they are "being experienced in a more intense and effective manner by teachers, students and parents all around the globe, from the early years of schooling until higher education" (WILLIAMSON; EYNON; POTTER, 2020, p. 107).

To quote *Global Education Coalition* – international partnership destined to raise funds and implement innovative solutions expand online education in a global level –, the authors highlight the formation of coalitions and networks that aim at promoting a "short term response to the pandemic and a long term ambition for entire educational systems" (WILLIAMSON; EYNON; POTTER, 2020, p. 108). The partnerships bring

together companies such as Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Zoom and international organizations, such as the OCDE and the World Bank. It is important to mention that these organizations, as representatives of the collective intelligence of the capital, are responsible for the production of materials, diagnoses and orientations in order to promote consensus regarding the viability of privatization and the deepening of educational differentiation. Williamson, Eynon and Potter (2020) mention that the World Bank works with governments all over the world aiming at establishing online education, whereas OCDE has associated Covid-19 to a crisis in "human capital" development. For the authors, these organizations have influenced the elaboration of policies for decades, making room for private platforms to extend their reach to previously unreachable territories, for instance, Childhood Education.

Cunha, Silva, A and Silva, A (2020) discussed the results of documental research on the quality and right to access to education based on the organization of school work by the state secretariats of education in the pandemic context. The authors presented the organization of school work in each federation unit of Brazil, based on CNE Report n. 5/2020, and critically "discussed the obstacles of this educational format, considering the socioeconomic reality(ies) of the country, and, with that in mind, the real conditions of teaching (for the teacher) and learning (for the students)" (CUNHA; SILVA, A; SILVA, A; 2020, p. 28). Based on these data, the authors conclude that ERE is exclusionary, aggravates the quality of public education, leads to educational inequality, and does not guarantee the learning process, the quality and the right and/or equal access to education for all students. Also about the aggravation of educational inequalities, Leher (2020, p. 1) states that this format presupposes

> [...] leaving behind the students in the most explored and expropriated fractions, who entered via racial or public school quotas, and who are worthy of the best hopes to increase democracy in the country. Not less relevant, thousands of servers would have difficulties to work with remote lessons due to the impossibility of transforming their household in working spaces and of harmonizing the routine, troubled by the pandemic, with virtual teaching activities. These problems are especially hard on students, female teachers, substitute teachers and others who were hired for a pre-established period of time.

It is important to mention the articles approaching the intensification of the

teaching activity. Saraiva, Traversini and Lockmann (2020) indicated that ERE has become an opportunity to innovate in traditional teaching methods; however, it aggravated exclusion in its different aspects. For the authors, the "accountability of teachers tends to strengthen the intensification and the self-intensification of work, thus increasing teachers' exhaustion" (SARAIVA; TRAVERSINI; LOCKMANN, 2020, p.18) at a time that is already surrounded by a great amount of stress and anxiety. For Lara (2020), the increment of "ubiquitous work" has been growing: teaching in remote contexts has become related to the deployment of frontiers (between the public and the private, work and nonwork), simultaneity and omnipresence.

It is important to consider the gender category to perform deep analyses. According to the School Census, women are the majority among teachers (INEP, 2019), and the pandemic has hit them in a more profound manner. The study "*Sem parar: o trabalho e a vida das mulheres na pandemia*" (Nonstop: the work and life of women in the pandemic) (SEMPREVIVA, 2020) raises awareness to the fact that 50% of Brazilian women became responsible for caring for someone in this period, and, among the ones who continued to receive payment, 41% reported the intensification of work, "[...] with overlapping responsibilities of paid work, household tasks and care; a reality that, according to 61.5% of the women, complicates the paid work status" (SEMPREVIVA, 2020, p. 27). To investigate the work of female teachers who were dedicated to ERE, this reality must be taken into account.

Finally, besides being intensified, the speech about the teaching activity would have been simplified in some manner. As states Pichetti (2020), the teacher would no longer be responsible for teaching, but instead, for following-up the learning processes. It s a

> [...] logic of transformation from the live teaching work to dead work (the class becomes a "video class"; the teaching process becomes an "asynchronous activity"); and the logic of reducing formative goals and expectations (reduction of content, reading load and, especially, of the possibility to deepen the management of knowledge). (PICHETTI, 2020, p.1)

Some examples of this logic: the reduction in the duration of classes, number of readings and contents, teachers' expectations about the learning process of students

and the search for "solutions" for problems that will possibly come up after the pandemic (especially in a scenario of less funding and autonomy). The author mentions that these are "sensible points" to think about "more than just ourselves" (PICHETTI, 2020, p.1).

Emergency remote education in teachers' reports

In this section, we discuss the data from the exploratory research "*O novo "Normal"? Sentidos atribuídos ao ensino remoto por professores/as da Educação Básica e Superior*" (The new normal? Senses attributed to remote education by teachers from Primary and Higher Education), approved by the Research Ethics Committee of UFSC/31218620.6.0000.0121, performed with teachers who work in public and private teaching networks in Brazil. Our objective with this study was to understand the meanings attributed to ERE and to identify the conditions – both material and symbolic – in which online activities are performed. We divided the section in two items: in the first one, we presented the methodology and described the study's participants. In the second one, we discussed the data referring to feelings, standing and practices of the respondent teachers in order to face this new challenge: remote education.

The research construction

This study was developed in a short period of time, and under very specific conditions. The observation that the period of suspension of on-site classes would be longer than that imagined at the beginning of the pandemic became mandatory for the discussion about the objectivity of ERE, and how it was being signified by the teachers. In this scenario, we carried out an exploratory research with teachers from Primary and Higher Education in order to learn how they were experiencing remote education proposals in their institutions. The questionnaire was chosen as an instrument to collect data and, due to the pandemic, the urgency to collect the data and the costs associated to a probability sample, we chose to use a non-probability sample by convenience.

After the approval of the study by the Human Research Ethics Committee, the questionnaire was published in the researchers' social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), as well as in their WhatsApp, and sent to their e-mail contacts. The dynamics of their network and the act of sharing potentialized the access to the instrument to people other than their direct contacts, and reached teachers in 14 States; the study included a total of 321 participants. In a decreasing order, there were 204 teachers from Santa Catarina, 30 from Espírito Santo, 23 from São Paulo, 15 from Bahia, 13 from Rio Grande do Sul, 08 from Minas Gerais, 08 from Paraná, 06 from Rio de Janeiro, 04 from Mato Grosso, 03 from Mato Grosso do Sul, 02 from the Federal District, 02 from Paraíba, 02 from Piauí, and 01 from Maranhão. The questionnaire was available from July 6 to 31, 2020.

We performed a pilot experiment of the questionnaire and the necessary adjustments were made. It was organized in four sections: in the first one, participants had access to the Informed Consent Form, defining whether or not they wanted to participate in the study; in the second one, their identification data were requested: sex, age, education, time of profession, level and education institution of work, State of residence, number of institutions where the person has worked and their nature, form of hiring, and whether or not they were performing remote education activities with their classes. All questions of the two first sessions were close-ended. The third section aimed at knowing how teachers were conducting ERE. In this section, the participants had two groups of questions: close-ended ones, which investigated their working conditions and their perceptions about remote activities and used media; and open-ended ones, requesting information about the planning and execution of remote activities. The fourth and last section of the questionnaire had two open-ended questions, aiming at obtaining data about how teachers felt about remote education, searching for reflections brought by this model and how it would frame the relationship between teachers and students when on-site education returned. It is worth to mention that the statements of teachers were generously granted, and were mostly rich in detail about their daily lives, reflections and concerns.

Among the 321 study participants, 242 (75.4%) were female teachers, and 77 (24%), male, which exemplifies the issue of gender that was previously mentioned. As

to age group, most respondents were aged between 39 and 49 years old – 112 teachers –, but in general they were well distributed among the presented options, which ranged from 26 to more than 55 years of age. Regarding their formation, 81.9% of the teachers had concluded a graduation course, most worked in a single education institution, mainly public, and the largest group (67%) was composed of public servers, working for more than 11 years as a teacher (60.4%). Among these teachers, 184 worked in Primary Education – most in Elementary School –, and 137 in Higher Education. We also observed that 77% answered that their institutions adhered to ERE. In the following section, we present and discuss the practices, strategies and reflections about the remote experience based on these 247 participants who answered the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

Encounters and Dis-encounters of remote education proposals in pandemic times: teachers under strain

The statements were collected in July, 2020, moment when a close horizon for the maintenance of school activities through ERE was unveiled. Even though the need for social distancing went on for almost the entire first school semester, there was an expectation that on-site classes could be reinstated in the second semester, with safety protocols for the school environment, as it was happening in other economic sectors. We consider it is important to highlight this aspect, since the reading of statements does not show reflections about the possible continuity of ERE for a long period of time: the emergency status, at least initially, seems to have been experienced as it would end at any moment. This hope, in a certain manner, surpassed and addressed the choices and the organization of teaching activities by the teachers.

Among the 247 teachers who were working in ERE, 104 (42.10%) described their routines as "*tiring*"[1], "*tense*", "*frustrating*", "*distressful*". In these statements, we observe the feelings of helplessness, stress, wear, deception and uncertainty. Work overload was described, as being extended to "*20 hours a day*", "*doubled*", immerse in demands, "*busy and unsupervised*", experienced with "*many doubts and concerns*". In this group, we observed dissatisfaction and a sense of incapacity towards the

conditions of education work. In the words of a female teacher: "*I feel abandoned by the school management and overloaded by so many platforms to work with, and cannot focus on teaching, which is essential*". Many teachers emphasized the increasing workload, especially due to the need for including constant contacts with the families to enable the performance of school activities proposed to the students. A teacher wrote that it was necessary to "establish new routines and search for new means to keep close relationships with students and families".

In a smaller group – 48 teachers, 19.4% of the total –, we found reports that casted difficulties and frustrations, but that also showed the search for qualification or support to develop ERE, indicating good results. We highlight the statement of a teacher who described her daily experience in detail. This report is representative because it brings together emerging elements from other statements: the feeling of lack of preparation facing the unknown, the support she found, the received formation, the tools of remote work, the intense routine, the learning processes, frustrations and concerns. Due to its representative content, no edition was made.

A major challenge. During this time I made several mistakes. Actually, we did. I work with the third grade, elementary school. In the school where I work, my other colleagues of the third grade and I decided to get together, create a group and work on planning, together. As soon as digital learning was instituted, in April, we created WhatsApp groups of the classes, recorded videos and explained how things would happen. We used Classroom and WhatsApp. The families were very resistant to the use of the platform. We explained to them that WhatsApp is an informal mean, and that the platform officialized the sending of materials. However, we cannot forget about those families who do not own a computer, and this application ends up making things easier. Some families pick up the published material at School, do the activities and send them to us as pictures. During this time, we tried, above all, to embrace them. When I say we made mistakes, I mean that, in the beginning, we sent many activities and content. Now we try to balance it, because we know the child will not learn from quantity, but instead, quality. Now we are learning, recording videos, using the meet tool for video classes and even calls, if necessary. The State provided webinars [online, live seminars about a specific topic], and through them we learned about the Google applications. I often feel frustrated. I see that students are not learning as well as they should be… I receive poorly done tasks, and notice a regression. On the other hand, mothers tell us that their children do not want to do the tasks, and they cannot explain how they should be done. Sometimes we call them as an encouragement. The question is always the same: "teacher, when are classes coming back?" And so we move on… we have been trying our

best. I confess I do not feel as prepared as I should! The forms of evaluation brings me great concern… This is a year for much learning, of leaving the comfort zone and rethinking our practices! Nothing will go back to the way it was …

Also in this group, it is important to highlight the collective work and the help provided by the fellow teachers, shown in the report of an Elementary School teacher: "*my colleagues have been my single emotional support to overcome the uncertainties of the moment, encouraging me to continue to offer education proposals with quality*". Another teacher wrote: "*it is always a rush, many questions, but also partnerships with our colleagues, all committed to making things happen*". A teacher that works with Higher Education mentioned the importance of the group in pedagogical processes: "*it is a learning process carried out with the students and the colleagues […] exchanging experiences between the graduation and postgraduate faculty, among the several courses in both levels […] searching for the improvement of conditions for all*".

We also highlight the concern about the little feedback of students regarding the activities, allied with the perception of lack of learning – a matter that is recurrent in the statements of teachers who work both in Higher Education and in Primary School. As described by an Elementary School teacher: "*30% of the students in School access the activities, 5% send them back to us*". This perception is shared by an expressive number of teachers – 156 (63.15%) –, who describe "*little feedback*" and the feeling that the pedagogical proposals "*reach a very small number of students*". A teacher emphasized that "*many students can barely access their e-mail, but there is a group of teachers who insist on calling them 'digital natives'*". Generally, teachers observed that "*schools are impacting only a few students*".

The reasons related to the little participation of students involved, as a rule, two aspects: restricted access to the internet and equipment for the online activities, as well as the little participation of the family. There were reports about the difficulties faced by mothers and fathers to accompany their children in the proposed activities, both for not having the available time due to work, and because of the lack of knowledge to help them. One teacher mentioned that "*parents do not help as much as they should. Simple activities are not done, and they don't answer when I ask*

questions. In the video calls I make with the class, a maximum of eight children participate, but there are 20 of them. The others don't even tell me why they do not participate". However, some teachers had not been able to understand the low student engagement in ERE. A teacher from Elementary School pointed out to "the restricted access to students, the poor pedagogical follow-up and the little knowledge about the socioeconomic conditions of the students and their study routines".

There was some consensus around the fact that the lack of financial conditions of many families prevented the good evolution of remote school activities. "*Parents report difficulties to help the children, they have limited access to equipment*", according to a teacher from Primary Education. Another teacher was more emphatic and analyzed there was "*a massive evasion of students because of poverty*". Some teachers questioned the use of their work in this format: "*if I could, I would stop it, because there is a very clear separation of classes; some students could not access classes even once; for others, the access is intermittent. I see that ERE cannot reach all of them, so what is being done is unfair and insufficient*". A smaller group mentioned that children from Elementary School are not actually learning: "*I don't believe that distance learning is being positive for children*".

The professors who work in Higher Education also declared living in a worrisome scenario regarding the participation and learning of students. As one teacher mentioned, "*the responsibility of students to access the activities and execute them in an online platform is below our expectations*". When thinking about the causes for such a difficulty, a teacher reported that the graduate student did not see him/herself as the "*leading figure of his/her learning process*". With this level of teaching also came the understanding that students have difficulties to access the internet and digital equipment, thus preventing them from participating, as observed by a teacher: "*I am apt to perform the activities; however, there is a giant asymmetry between the situation of effective university professors and the universe of the students*". Another professor analyzed the students' participation as follows: "*I observe that students get too tired to spend a whole shift in front of a computer. Most of them keep their audio and video off, so it is difficult to know how they are following the content*".

It is also important to mention the perception of teachers about the imbalance between the needs of schools and those of the Secretariat of Education (SED) to which the institutions are connected. There were complaints about the lack of infrastructure provided by the teaching network, as observed in the declaration of a teacher: "*we do not have the support from the government. I had to improve my access to the internet, fix my notebook; my expenses with electric bills and others increased*". Teachers noticed that the concerns of the SEDs, in many cases, are different from those of schools and teachers. One teacher mentioned: "*I realize that school directors are being forced, by some of the state representatives, to show a good implementation of 'remote education'*". One teacher mentioned her concern that "*the municipal government is indirectly forcing the implementation of Remote Education, thus turning the teaching work, with the new demands, into something replicable and disposable*". For other teachers, the imbalance between the orientations from the SED and the school needs became clear in specific aspects of the teaching practice, as mentioned by a Primary Education teacher: "*the City Hall where I work in requested me to post five proposals a week in the Educarweb website. But in Children Education we cannot always have five different proposals a week in on-site classes*".

Among the statements related to institutional management, something that came up was the feeling of frustration from the teachers for not having been consulted or heard about the actions carried out for the remote classes to take place. They described they did not have any power of decision and were pressured to obtain good results in other people's choices. About that, a teacher from Primary Education wrote: "*I don't feel supported by the City hall, which did not discuss the conditions of digital accessibility of the students (nor that of the teachers), but has been asking for results without providing safety to the workers*". Another one mentioned: "*the main proposals have been addressed to instrumentalize the teachers to use a specific digital platform*". These difficulties have an impact on students' participation, as reported by a teacher: "*of course I give my best, even knowing that only 8% or 10% of the class will try [to access / make the activity], because I know that it is my duty, I know the students are not to be blamed, but I see that the SED is entirely responsible, and that this situation should be handled differently*".

Finally, it is important to observe that the teachers' statements showed a new work routine, one that is troubled, which demanded the creation of rules and practices as the movement was being executed, thus generating many doubts and anxiety. In parallel, as the population in general, teachers lived with the limits imposed by the pandemic in their personal lives: losses, fear, sadness, unexpected and unwanted changes. It was not strange that a teacher would bring up how much she missed the on-site classes: "*it is very hard to plan because I miss 'teaching'*". Another one summarized her feelings: "*the experience has been distressful in all senses due to the scenario of uncertainties regarding the return to on-site activities*". The feeling of "not fitting in" and the need to regain control/position was strong in the statements, generating the encounters and dis-encounters proposed in the title of this article. As one teacher described it, when commenting on the virtual staff meetings in her school: "*the efforts are focused on debating the return to the previous model, or normality*". That context was not associated with "normal", and the return to on-site activities was, at that moment, mostly associated to the dream of normality.

Final considerations

In contexts of uncertainty and change, a single statement can be considered as accurate: it is not yet possible to draw conclusions about the tension between teachers and ERE. In this context, we try to aggregate value to the studies and researchers who have been trying to understand this moving phenomenon, which has substantially changed the teaching work, the teaching-learning process, family routines, the organization of education spaces, the production of materials and the expectation of quality of teaching itself. Add to that the challenges imposed to school administrators and teaching systems.

Not less important, we need to consider the matters of gender that involve this field. The data obtained in this study are in accordance with the analyses that show the feminization of the teaching craft, especially in Primary Education. A research report about the work in the pandemic (ZANONI; BEZERRA; BRIDI, 2020) points out to remarkable differences in the objectification of remote work between the genders,

since labor relationships and unpaid activities (especially related to household chores and care) overlapped for women, thus leading to "overly long working hours" (ZANONI; BEZERRA; BRIDI, 2020, p. 86).

Facing all these elements, a significant portion of the interviewed female and male teachers described their routines as tense, overwhelming, frustrating, distressful, discouraging, little productive, among other negative observations. Well, this lexical choice cannot be reduced in relevance concerning the objective of identifying/understanding the meaning attributed to ERE, once our discursive practices are not neutral; on the contrary, they require ideological and political choices, crossed by relations of power.

However, we observed that the response of the teachers to that distressful feeling of being out of place was not lack of mobility or apathy. It was possible to notice, in the statements, that teachers looked for training, elaborated individual or collective strategies, talked with their peers and organized themselves to understand and handle the fronts and traps that underly remote work. In the organization of these "mobile" fronts, there are, without a doubt, differences between the objective possibilities of Primary and Higher Education instructors, as well as those from the private and public sectors, public servants and temporary teachers, considering that the different labor insertions affect the different power relations.

We can synthetize that, at first, remote education was "shoved down everyone's throats", that is, it was improvised, mandatory and without any debate between the faculty and the teaching institutions or the SED, especially for teachers from Primary Education who adhered to ERE in a few weeks. Gradually, they organized themselves, individually or as a group, and worked on new planning and remote activities. Similarly, most private Higher Education Institutions also organized themselves. Most federal higher education institutions began with remote activities in the second semester of 2020, after long periods of debate in their academic communities.

According to a story published in G1, based on the Follow-up Panel of the Ministry of Education (MEC), in May 2020 only six institutions maintained part of their activities in the remote format – Universidade Federal do ABC (UFABC), Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC), Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul (UFFS), Universidade

Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM) e a Universidade Federal de Itajubá (UNIFEI) (PAIXÃO, 2020). A story in the same website, published in August, 2020 (OLIVEIRA, 2020), shows that only 15 of the 169 federal higher education institutions had not adhered to ERE. That was possibly owed to Ordinance n. 544, which extended the remote education period until December 31 (BRASIL, 2020a), and also to the frustration of the expectations about the control of the pandemic in the first semester, bringing a sensation of "powerlessness". The adherence of federal higher education institutions to the remote model can be placed in a second moment, when most Brazilian students were already using ERE. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that at the time when the questionnaires of this study were answered, many Higher Education teachers were not teaching in this modality (remote teaching) – otherwise, we would certainly have other elements for analysis.

Returning to the elements that we analyzed in this text, it is worth to mention that the point of concern found in the statements for both teaching levels is focused on the little attendance and the lack of learning among students, as well as doubts in the processes of evaluation. Such problems are related to a large set of issues: the relationship between the teacher and the technologies; the lack of training for remote teaching; access to the internet for teachers and students; sudden change in the routine; little autonomy of the students (including university attendees) in relation to their process of formation; the working hours or the difficulties in family environment that prevented or made the teaching-learning process more difficult – in the case of Primary Education, the follow-up of this process by the parents and the lack of adequate spaces for studying, the need for taking over other responsibilities with the family, the virus lethality, government mismanagement, among others. In the more critical literature about ERE, these concerns were also present; in the more "pragmatic" literature, the most urgent matters were related to "what to do" and "how to do it" considering the impositions of the SEDs and institutions, in some cases isolating the relation between education and technology from their social, cultural and economic determinants.

The pandemic and the challenges of ERE undoubtedly showed a set of social and education problems that we have been facing for a long time – besides some new ones. Several encounters and dis-encounters are present in this scenario. On the other hand, we must mention that naturalizing the dynamics that was forged early in this model tends to rapidly withdraw the "emergency" complement from "remote education", and, with it, maybe the notions of university, school and teaching as we know them.

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Note

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¹The sentences between double quotation marks were taken from the questionnaires sent to the teachers.