

CHALLENGE OF EDUCATORS IN TIMES OF REMOTE TEACHING

Ana Paula Teixeira da Silva
Diogenes José Gusmão Coutinho¹

RESUMO: O presente trabalho aborda os desafios enfrentados pelos educadores durante o período de ensino remoto, impulsionado pela pandemia do COVID-19. A rápida transição do ambiente presencial para o virtual trouxe inúmeras dificuldades para os profissionais da educação. Primeiramente, discutimos a adaptação tecnológica, uma vez que muitos educadores precisaram adquirir novas habilidades e competências para utilizar plataformas de ensino online e ferramentas digitais. A falta de treinamento adequado e a familiaridade com tecnologias educacionais foram questões cruciais nessa mudança. Além disso, abordamos as desigualdades sociais e as agravadas educacionais pelo ensino remoto. A falta de acesso à internet e a dispositivos adequados em comunidades menos favorecidas resultaram em um desequilíbrio no acesso à educação, criando um cenário preocupante para a inclusão educacional. Outro ponto relevante foi o desafio do engajamento dos alunos. A presença da interação presencial e as dificuldades de se estabelecer uma conexão significativa com os estudantes no ambiente virtual impactaram a motivação e o interesse nas atividades educacionais. O trabalho também destaca o aumento da carga de trabalho para os educadores. A transição para o ensino remoto segue uma dedicação extrema e um equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal. A necessidade de preparar aulas adaptadas ao ambiente digital e a comunicação constante com alunos e famílias conseguiram-se desafios adicionais.

1435

Palavras Chaves: Pandemia. Escola. Desafios. Educação. Docente. Discente.

ABSTRACTY: The present work addresses the challenges faced by educators during the remote teaching period, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid transition from the face-to-face to the virtual environment has brought numerous difficulties for education professionals. First, we discuss technological adaptation, since many educators needed to acquire new skills and competencies to use online teaching platforms and digital tools. Lack of adequate training and familiarity with educational technologies were crucial issues in this shift. In addition, we address social and educational inequalities aggravated by remote teaching. The lack of access to the internet and adequate devices in underprivileged communities resulted in an imbalance in access to education, creating a worrying scenario for educational inclusion. Another relevant point was the challenge of student engagement. The presence of face-to-face interaction and the difficulties in establishing a meaningful connection with students in the virtual environment impacted motivation and interest in educational activities. The work also highlights the increased workload for educators. The transition to remote learning follows extreme dedication and a balance between work and personal life. The need to prepare classes adapted to the digital environment and constant communication with students and families created additional challenges.

Keywords: Pandemic. School. Challenges. Education. Teacher. Student.

¹UFPE. PhD in biology From UFPE. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9230-3409>.

I – INTRODUCTION

Remote teaching is a great challenge today, because in addition to technological difficulties, it is also necessary to ensure interaction with students, keeping them attentive, to ensure learning. Even though it is pointed out as the main issue of inequality in education, technology is a great ally of educators.

The emergency situation has made educational institutions opt for a new teaching reality, which is emergency remote teaching (ERE); as Hodges et al. (2020) understand, this model is intended to promote for students at home, with all this change as an option for alternatives to socialize this teaching process even in the context of crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2019, presented a scenario of unprecedented challenges for several areas, and education was one of the most impacted. Educators around the world faced a number of unprecedented obstacles in their pedagogical practices during this time. In this research, I will explore the main challenges faced by these professionals and how they sought solutions to ensure the continuity of student learning during the pandemic.

The first and most evident challenge was the rapid transition to remote learning. Many educators, who were used to the physical environment of the classroom, had to adapt to virtual platforms and online communication tools. This influence technological skills, access to the internet and competent devices, which not all educators and students had, creating a balance in access to education.

In addition to adapting to remote teaching, many teachers face a lack of adequate training in digital tools and methodologies. The transition to the online environment requires specific knowledge on how to use educational platforms, videoconferencing tools, distance learning resources, and remote assessment methods. Those who had no prior experience with these technologies faced an intense and challenging learning period.

Remote learning has presented a new set of challenges when it comes to student engagement. The lack of face-to-face interaction may have reduced the sense of community in the classroom and students' sense of responsibility for their academic tasks. The possibility of distractions at home, coupled with the fatigue caused by changes in routine, led to a decrease in interest and motivated students to participate in school activities.

Contrary to the perception that remote teaching could be simpler for educators, many professionals face a significant increase in their workload. The need to prepare lessons adapted to the digital environment, the constant evaluation of student progress, individualized support

for students with difficulties and constant communication with parents and required extreme dedication and a balance between professional and personal life.

Another crucial challenge faced by parents was the worsening social and educational inequalities during the pandemic. Students from economically disadvantaged families had less access to devices, quality internet, and adequate space for studying, which directly affected their learning. In addition, students with special needs or learning disabilities face additional barriers in adapting to remote learning.

2 - Challenges of Education in Times of Pandemic

The main challenges of education in times of pandemic are related to the transition to remote teaching and the impact of this change on the educational process and on student learning. Some of the key challenges include:

Access to Technology: The transition to remote teaching instructors give students and educated educators access to electronic devices, such as computers or tablets, and quality internet. However, many families and communities, especially in disadvantaged rural or economic areas, face difficulties in obtaining the technological resources needed for participation in distance learning.

Social and Educational Inequalities: The pandemic has exacerbated existing social and educational disparities. Students from low-income families or those with other vulnerabilities may have had limited access to educational resources such as books, study materials, and a suitable environment for learning at home. This inequality impacted the learning and engagement of these students.

Student Engagement: Remote teaching has brought new challenges to keep students engaged and motivated. The absence of the school environment and the interaction with classmates and teachers in person may have led to a decrease in interest in educational activities and a lack of active participation in online classes.

Educators' Adaptation: Teachers had to quickly adapt to new technologies and teaching methodologies to provide a meaningful virtual learning experience. The lack of proper training and limited time to become familiar with these tools may have hindered the transition to effective remote teaching.

Evaluation and Feedback: Evaluating students during remote learning can be challenging. Finding ways to measure student progress fairly and reliably, while ensuring the integrity of the assessment process, was an important point for parents.

Mental Health of Students and Educators: The pandemic causes widespread stress and anxiety for students and educators. Adapting to new routines, social isolation, and concentration on the future may have had an impact on mental health, affecting emotional well-being and learning capacity.

Planning for the Future: With the reflection regarding the safe return to face-to-face classes, the educators had to make flexible plans for teaching, considering different scenarios and preparing to deal with possible continuums in the future.

3 – What is the Biggest Challenge Faced by Teachers During the Pandemic

The main challenges pointed out by teachers during the pandemic were the disconnection and apathy of students, in addition to the lack of participation and interaction between the class. Some educators became discouraged in the face of situations and ended up dropping out of classes. Teachers say that the pandemic has left students indifferent and less committed to classes.

The biggest challenge faced by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic was the rapid transition to remote learning. The need to adapt to digital platforms, educational technologies and new teaching methodologies in a short period of time controlled by educators, rapid technological training and a drastic change in their pedagogical practices. In addition, the lack of access to technology by students and parents in some regions, as well as the social and educational inequalities aggravated during the period, failed to ensure the continuity of learning even more frustrated.

Student engagement in the virtual environment also proved to be an obstacle, since the lack of face-to-face interaction and the emotional fatigue generated by the pandemic impacted students' interest and motivation in educational activities.

Teachers had to seek creative and innovative solutions to overcome these challenges and ensure the continuity of the educational process in the midst of a situation of constant shocks and changes

4 – What Are the Difficulties Faced by Teachers When Working from Home

During the pandemic, teachers faced several difficulties when working from home due to the abrupt shift to remote learning. Some of the main difficulties included:

4.1 Adaptation to Technology

Many teachers have had to learn how to use new distance learning platforms and tools, such as virtual classrooms, video conferences, and digital resources. The lack of familiarity with these technologies and the short duration of training made adaptation a challenge.

4.2 Internet Connectivity and Access

The quality of the internet connection varies depending on the location of the teachers, especially in rural areas or with poor internet infrastructure. The lack of reliable internet access may have affected effective participation in online classes and interaction with students.

4.3 Work Environment

The transition to remote learning entailed creating a proper workspace at home. At times, teachers may have struggled to find a quiet, distraction-free place, especially if they were sharing space with family members.

4.4 Work-Family Conciliations

Many teachers have had to balance working from home with family and household responsibilities. Caring for children, in addition to homework, may have affected the time available to prepare classes and give feedback to students.

4.5 Student Engagements

The lack of face-to-face interaction may have affected student engagement in virtual classes. Maintaining student interest and active participation may have been more challenging without the personal contact and atmosphere of the classroom.

4.6 Evaluation and Monitoring

Teachers faced challenges in assessing students in an online environment. Ensuring the integrity of the assessment process and monitoring students' progress without physical presence could have been a complex task.

4.7 Mental Health

The sudden shift to remote learning and the emotions generated by the pandemic may have affected teachers' mental health. The pressure for such an activity adapted quickly, and concerns for personal safety and that of their students may have contributed to the stress and anxiety.

5 – Work developed by managers during the Pandemic:

During a pandemic, managers played a crucial role in adapting and facing challenges to the educational environment. Her work was instrumental in ensuring the continuity of teaching and learning, the safety of the school community, and the promotion of an environment conducive to the academic and emotional development of students.

School managers had to make quick and strategic decisions to deal with the sudden transition to remote learning. They coordinated teams of caregivers, established effective communication protocols, and ensured access to the technology needed for distance learning.

One of the main challenges faced by managers was ensuring equal access to education during remote learning. They sought solutions to support students who did not have electronic devices or quality internet access, in order to avoid educational exclusion and reduce social inequalities.

In addition, the managers were responsible for maintaining communication with parents and guardians, clarifying doubts, providing relevant information and keeping them updated on educational activities and student progress.

The safety of students and school staff was also a constant concern for managers. They followed public health guidelines, implementing prevention and hygiene measures to ensure a safe environment within the school, as well as guiding the school community on best practices for protection against the virus.

Another crucial aspect of the work of managers during the pandemic was supporting the mental health of students, teachers, and other members of the school team. They promote

emotional wellness activities, offer emotional and psychological support, and create a welcoming environment for everyone to feel supported during this time of emotional shocks and challenges.

The work developed by managers during the pandemic was essential to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning, the safety of the school community, and the care of the emotional health of those involved. His strategic performance, leadership skills, and ability to make effective decisions were instrumental in addressing the unprecedented challenges and ensuring that education remained a priority even in difficult times.

6 – Positive and Negative Points of Remote Learning according to Educators:

Positive Points of Remote Teaching, according to educators:

Access to expanded education: Remote learning allows students from rural areas, with limited mobility, or with time constraints to access quality education, overcoming geographical and socioeconomic barriers.

Flexible schedules: Remote learning offers students the possibility to adapt their study schedules according to their needs and routines, allowing for a better balance between studies, work, and personal life.

Autonomy and self-regulation: Students have more responsibility for their learning in remote learning, which can encourage the development of autonomy, self-discipline, and self-regulation skills.

Use of technological resources: Remote teaching allows the exploration of different technological resources, such as educational platforms, videos, educational games, and simulators, which can make learning more interactive and stimulating.

Greater personalization of teaching: With the possibility of using adaptive digital resources and individualized monitoring of students, remote teaching can become more personalized, meeting the specific needs of each student.

Negative Points of Remote Teaching, according to educators:

Digital divide: The lack of internet access, skilled electronic devices, and technological skills can exclude students from underserved communities or rural areas, deepening educational inequalities.

Engagement difficulties: Students may face difficulties in maintaining interest and motivation in remote teaching, especially in situations of little interaction with classmates and teachers.

Lack of face-to-face interaction: Remote teaching can limit opportunities for social interaction and the development of social skills, which are important for students' personal and academic growth.

Dependence on technology: Any technical problems, internet instability or device failures can hinder the continuity of teaching and the learning process.

Overload and lack of delimitation between personal and school life: The flexibility of remote teaching can lead some students to face difficulties in establishing boundaries between study and leisure, generated in an overload of tasks and compromising quality of life.

Academic assessment and integrity: Applying estimates in a remote environment can be more challenging, and there are risks related to academic integrity, such as the possibility of cheating on exams or assignments.

7 – Public Policies to reduce school dropout in times of pandemic:

7.1 Online educational platforms and resources: Governments have invested in digital learning platforms, making educational content available online and resources so that students can continue studying from home.

7.2 Distribution of electronic devices and internet access: In some regions, governments provided electronic devices, such as tablets or laptops, and internet access to families who could not afford these resources, allowing students to follow remote classes.

7.3 Distance learning programs through TV and radio: In some countries, educational programs broadcast on television and radio were created to reach students who did not have access to the internet or electronic devices.

7.4 Encouraging the formation of public-private partnerships: Partnerships between government, businesses, and non-profit organizations have been encouraged to improve access to remote education and secure additional resources for students.

7.5 Monitoring and follow-up of students: Some public policies have emphasized the individual monitoring of students, identifying those at higher risk of dropping out of school and offering personalized support to keep them engaged in their studies.

7.6 Social assistance programs: In some regions, social assistance programs have been implemented targeting families in vulnerable situations, in order to help them cope with the social difficulties resulting from the pandemic, which can also affect school dropout.

7.7 Flexibility of estimates and promotion criteria: To mitigate the stress and pressure on students during the pandemic, some public policies made evaluation and promotion criteria more flexible, taking into account the challenging context in which they were studying.

8 – Impacts on early childhood education in remote learning:

Remote teaching has had several impacts on early childhood education, both positive and negative. The transition to distance learning for preschool and early primary children has brought unique challenges, as this age group requires more interactive, practical educational approaches that are tailored to children's cognitive and emotional development. Some of the main effects include:

8.1 Engagement difficulties: Young children may have difficulty engaging and staying focused in remote classes, especially when interaction with peers and teachers is limited.

8.2 Inequality of access: Not all families have access to electronic devices and quality internet connection, which creates inequalities in access to remote education, especially affecting those with fewer resources.

8.3 Lack of social interaction: Early childhood education is critical for children's social development, and remote learning can limit opportunities for interaction with peers, impacting the security of their social and emotional skills.

8.4 Need for parental support: Younger children may require more parental support and supervision during remote learning, which can be challenging for families with multiple demands and responsibilities.

8.5 Fewer hands-on activities: Remote teaching can restrict hands-on and experiential learning activities that are critical to a child's development.

8.6 Challenges in language development: Language and reading learning is essential in early childhood education, and remote learning may not offer the same opportunities for adventure and practice as the mother tongue.

8.7 Impact on mental health: Social distancing and changes in routine can affect children's emotional well-being, with potential consequences for their mental health.

8.8 Creativity and innovation: On the other hand, some educators have sought creative and innovative approaches to remote teaching in early childhood education, using digital resources, educational games, and interactive activities.

8.9 Family involvement: Remote learning can also allow for greater participation by family members in the educational process, creating opportunities to involve the family in children's learning activities.

8.10 Digital skills: The use of technology from an early age can help children become familiar with digital resources, ensuring the development of important digital skills for the future.

9 – Final Considerations:

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a number of unprecedented challenges to educators around the world. The rapid transition to monitored remote teaching of teachers provided an unprecedented ability to adapt, while facing technological issues, social inequalities, work-life balance, among other obstacles.

Adapting to technology was one of the main difficulties faced by educators, who had to learn how to use new platforms and tools to make distance learning viable. The lack of quality internet access and adequate devices in some regions has exacerbated the educational disparity, creating a worrying scenario for equal access to education.

In addition, student engagement in the virtual environment proved to be a constant challenge. The presence of face-to-face interaction and the emotional overload generated by the pandemic impacted students' interest and motivation in educational activities.

Work-life balance was also a significant obstacle for educators. The need to balance professional responsibilities with childcare and household chores gives an extra dose of resilience and organization.

Another relevant point was the evaluation and monitoring of students. Finding fair and encouraging ways to meditate on students' progress without physical presence in the classroom was a complex issue that required creative and careful care.

In addition, a pandemic impacted the mental health of educators, generating stress and anxiety in the face of the confrontations and additional demands imposed by this new educational scenario.

In this context, overcoming these motor difficulties is a resilient, creative and collaborative posture. Many were a remarkable ability to adapt, seeking innovative solutions to ensure the continuity of their students' learning. Collaboration with colleagues, families, and communities was key to collectively addressing challenges and seeking inclusive and equitable solutions.

Although the pandemic presented unprecedented obstacles, it is important to note that this period also learned valuable learnings to improve the educational process in the future. The effective use of technology, more flexible and personalized teaching strategies, as well as greater awareness of the importance of the mental health of educators and students, are aspects that can guide the development of more resilient educational policies prepared to face adverse situations.

In summary, educators faced numerous difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the dedication, creativity, and commitment demonstrated during this period reinforce the importance of the role of these professionals in building a more inclusive education prepared to face future challenges.

REFERENCES

1445

UNDERSTANDING Teachers' Challenges During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Importance of Professional Learning Communities

Authors: Murillo, FJ, Martínez-Garrido, C. Journal: European Journal of Teacher Education
Year: 2021 DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2021.1876923

TEACHER anxiety and professional identity during the emergency transition of the COVID-19 pandemic to remote teaching: an Australian perspective

Authors: Henderson, M., Selwyn, N., Aston, R. Journal: Journal of Education for Teaching
Year: 2021 DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2020.1857468

CHALLENGES faced by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan: a qualitative study

Authors: Siddiq, S., Chaudhry, AH, Fazal, SA Journal: International Journal of Educational Research
Opening year: 2021 DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedro .2020.100016

"I NEVER Signed Up for This": The Professional Development Needs of In-Service Teachers During Emergency Remote Teaching

Authors: Hobbs-Johnson, A., Adu-Gyamfi, K., Rodriguez, CC Journal: Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Training
Year: 2021 DOI: 10.1080/21532974.2021.1879704

SUPPORTING teachers' emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: recommendations and considerations

Authors: Zembylas, M., Bellocchi, A., Quinlan, KM Journal: Journal of Teacher Education
Year: 2021 DOI: 10.1177/00224871211021332

THE Impact of COVID-19 on Teacher Beliefs and Professional Identity

Authors: Moore, T., Hunt, E., McDonald, L. Journal: Educational Psychology Year: 2021 DOI:
10.1080/01443410.2021.1912241

REMOTE teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19: evidence of increasing socioeconomic inequalities in Canada

Authors: Lang, C., Sidhu, R., Dachner, N. Journal: Canadian Public Policy Year: 2021 DOI:
10.3138/cpp .2021-001

REMOTE Learning During COVID-19: Examining Classroom Instructional Practices and Student Learning

Authors: Allensworth, E.M., Gwynne, JA, Pan, S., et al. Journal: Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness Year: 2020 DOI: 10.1080/19345747.2020.1823535