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Emergency remote teaching observed from 2020 to 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, reverberates questions beyond this extraordinary time frame when seen from the perspective of students and educators of a state school and a private school in Porto Alegre/RS, and additional situated knowledge. The ethnographic research, conducted in two main stages – interviews with teaching teams and participant observations of synchronous classes –, identified factors that until the pandemic were not at the center of reflections on educational inequality (technological, family, emotional, and domestic infrastructure), together with different behaviors, personalities, languages, and cultural references depending on the student's social class and gender. From the point of view of educational professionals, the harsh reality of educators in public institutions (accumulation of subjects, extensive workload, and triple shifts) was compounded by discoveries concerning the teacher-student relationship and online methodological choices.

Education. Remote teaching. Pandemic. COVID-19.

O ensino remoto emergencial, observado de 2020 a 2021 durante a pandemia de Covid-19, sob a perspectiva de estudantes e educadores de uma escola pública e uma escola privada de Porto Alegre/RS, além de saberes situados, reverbera questionamentos para fora deste marco temporal extraordinário. A pesquisa etnográfica, realizada em duas etapas principais - entrevistas com equipes pedagógicas e observações participantes de aulas síncronas - identificou fatores que, até a pandemia, não estavam no centro das reflexões acerca da desigualdade educacional (tecnológicos, familiares, emocionais e de infraestrutura doméstica), além de comportamentos, personalidades, linguagens e referências culturais diferentes de acordo com a classe social e o gênero do estudante. Do ponto de vista dos profissionais educacionais, à realidade dura das educadoras da instituição pública (acúmulo de disciplinas, extensa carga horária de trabalho e triplas jornadas) se somaram descobertas sobre o relacionamento professor-aluno e escolhas metodológicas online.

Educação. Ensino remoto. Pandemia. Covid-19.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, the peak of which occurred in 2020 and 2021, required in-person educational practices to be interrupted and new forms of remote teaching had to be inserted into the daily lives of schools. Reports from the main news outlets stated that the chasm that already existed between state and private schools had worsened. According to these channels, the lack of access to equipment and the internet, together with precarious domestic structures, reflected in even more serious consequences for learning difficulties and dropping out of school (Oliveira 2021, Fechamento 2021, Borges and Silva 2020).

What did the existing disparities between public and private education look like in the context of the pandemic? Did they remain the same, increase or decrease? What factors influenced these movements? If change was observed, was the main explanation for this differentiation an issue of access to technologies and connectivity? Were there similarities among the difficulties reported by state and private school teachers, or only contrasts?

Faced with these questions, we used a comparative approach (Radcliffe-Brown 1951) to define the central objective of this research: identify the similarities and distinctions between a state school and a private school in Porto Alegre in the context of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic from two perspectives: that of the teachers and that of the students. Among the teachers, we planned to observe how online education was inserted into the schools, what the possibilities and difficulties faced by teachers were during this process, what methodological strategies they used and the effects of emergency remote teaching on their lives and their relationship with the students. From the students' point of view, we sought to verify how they participated in online classes at the institutions studied, while also identifying the factors that interfered with this participation. For this, we analyzed the interaction profiles of students at each school, examining how cultural capital[1] interferes with the quality of learning in remote education.

To achieve these objectives, the research involved two main forms of data collection: exploratory interviews and participant observation. The pandemic required a large body of research to be conducted in absentia, due to the context of social isolation. In this scenario, the anthropological field was forced to get familiar with an area that had been debated for at least 20 years (Miller and Slater 2004): conducting "digital" or "virtual" ethnographies. Cesarino, Walz and Balistieri (2023, 16) emphasize that

> digital ethnography is neither more nor less than ethnography. By this we mean […] that it is not any less than offline ethnography, that is, it is not "second-class" ethnographic work, a return to "armchair anthropology," merely because it privileges digitally mediated relationships and realities.

In addition to reiterating the capacity of ethnography for resignification and adaptability (Fonseca 1999), ethnography conducted in online environments is

1 Given the breadth of concepts developed by Bourdieu during his career, we define cultural capital as having that becomes being, as a property that becomes a body, whether through the material possession of cultural goods (economic capital) or through the symbolic appropriation of such objects. The concept delimits "cultural needs" or "taste" as forms of social distinction, linked to a form of social hierarchy, which function as privileged "markers of 'class'" (Bourdieu 1984).

based on the same basic principles of anthropological method, ethics and epistemology (Cesarino, Walz and Balistieri 2023). We view Magnani's (2009, 136) definition as central to this issue:

> we can postulate that ethnography is the working method of anthropology in a broad sense, not restricted (as a technique) or exclusionary (whether as a certain attitude, experience, field activity). Widely understood as a method, it encompasses the strategies of contact and insertion in the field, conditions for both the continued practice and ethnographic experience and which lead to the final writing. A necessary condition for its full exercise is the connection to theoretical choices, which implies that it cannot be highlighted as a set of techniques (participant observation, the application of interviews, etc.) used independently of a conceptual discussion (Magnani 2009, 136).

Like Oliveira (2018), we understand that ethnography enables a series of arrangements, possibilities and dialogues with the field of research in education, while also constituting an area of convergence between anthropology and education. Even though its planning and execution presented important differences given the pandemic, much like that conducted by Oliveira (2018), the ethnography from which this article originates had two stages: first, we conducted interviews with the teachers and, second, we conducted participant observation of the classes.

Based on the recommendations of friends who are trained in teaching undergraduate courses, in the first semester of 2021, we conducted six interviews: four with teachers responsible for subjects in the humanities (history, sociology and philosophy) and two with teachers responsible for subjects in the exact sciences (mathematics). The choice of subject areas was intentional, since we were curious as to whether there were differences between the accounts according to subject area. The dialogues constructed in the exploratory interviews were important for defining the research theme and object, in addition, naturally, to contributing to the establishment of certain contacts for future observation.

After many comings and goings, missed opportunities and lack of responses, the second stage of the research – participant observation of synchronous meetings – was conducted between March and August, 2021, in two schools located in Porto Alegre (RS), one of which was a school providing private education and another from the public education system. The observations centered on meetings of a second-year high school class (UK: year 11) from each of the educational institutions, held on the Google Meet platform. This research step occurred twice weekly in each school: one period was an exact sciences subject (mathematics), and the other was a human sciences subject (history), with the classes and teachers defined by the administration staff of each institution. The choice of subjects was based on the questions raised by the teachers in the exploratory interviews: in three conversations, the teachers explained doubts regarding a possible rela-

tionship between participation and handing in assignments by students according to the area of knowledge. They affirmed that students gave "more importance to exact sciences than to humanities."

To verify the influence of access to the internet and digital equipment on the presence and participation of students in online teaching, it was necessary to go beyond the view of technologies as mere mediators of communication, and training the way you observe "something that is otherwise unspoken" (Hine *et al.* 2015, 50). Observing the number of students in the classroom, when cameras are turned on or off, their facial expressions, surprise interruptions, conversations and silences, in our opinion, poses the need to integrate the platform, the screen, the keyboard, the mouse and the Wi-Fi network into the analysis. It is in this sense that we approach discussions by Latour (2007) and Rifiotis (2016) concerning the "agency of objects" and the attempt to overcome the human/non-human dichotomy:

> In addition to 'determining' and serving as a 'backdrop for human action', things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on. ANT [actor-network theory] is not the empty claim that objects do things 'instead' of human actors: it simply says that no science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call *non-humans* (Latour 2007, 72; emphasis in original).

The construction of the accounts produced by observing synchronous classes at the participating schools involved a constant commitment to ensuring respect for the *Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados* [General Data Protection Law] and the Brazilian Anthropological Association Code of Ethics. The central concern when describing the research interlocutors (students, teachers or members of the school administration) and the environments observed through the students' cameras was to maintain anonymity and respect for the individual's image rights. As argued by Fonseca (2008, 42), we agree that "the anonymity of the persons in the ethnographic text does not necessarily imply a politically silent attitude on the part of the researcher. Quite the opposite."

Concerning the schools observed

Despite the mere seven kilometers (four miles) of geographical distance between them, the schools that collaborated in this research seem to inhabit different worlds. Among several institutions contacted, observations were conducted in a private school located in the eastern region of Porto Alegre and in a state school located in the northwest region of the city.

The private school has numerous services in addition to the traditional classes required by the basic education curriculum. Located in an upscale neighborhood,

the monthly fee for secondary education cost almost R$3,000 in 2021, the equivalent of approximately US$ 500. It offers education for students from nursery to the completion of secondary education, the school has libraries, several recreation rooms, learning laboratories, art, dance and music rooms, auditoriums, sports courts, a football field and an athletics track. Though popularly known as "one of the best state schools in Porto Alegre" (in the words of the education coordinator), the public educational institution has a very different structure from the private school.

According to Gisele, the institution is located on a large plot of land, with a spacious patio and an outdoor sports court, which prevents its use on rainy days. It has a library with many books ("very rich", she said), but it has been closed due to a lack of staff since 2017 – the former librarian was removed by the Department of Education and since then no staff member has been appointed to fulfill the function. The cafeteria does not serve hot food due to a lack of furniture. Finally, the school has physics, chemistry, language and information technology (IT) laboratories; however, there is no staff member responsible for the IT laboratory, which has obsolete computers.

The teachers' perspective

During the research, we had substantial contact with two pedagogical coordinators (one from each school) and four teachers (two from each school). The coordinators were the initial contacts, who formed the bridge with the teachers and, up to the very end, they were the people with whom we clarified doubts and conducted negotiations. Things they had in common included accounts of "rushing around" and high workload. However, it was through these initial contacts that differences between the schools began to emerge.

While in the public institution, educators reported a lack of information and guidance from the Department of Education, in the private institution, the organization and objectivity were surprising from the beginning. According to the state school coordinator, Gisele, during the first six months of the pandemic, there was no definition regarding platforms or pedagogical strategies for remote teaching. On their own initiative, "in April [2020], we already had groups on Whats[App] and Google [Drive]". From March 2020 onwards, communication via WhatsApp was the main form of interaction with students and their families.

Saraiva, Nonato and Braga (2021, 313) identified this time lapse in the onset of remote activities between state and private schools: "If, on the one hand, most private schools sought immediate adjustments, on the other, by September 2021, the majority of the public sector was unable to establish effective strategies." However, based on the authors' statements, questioning what these "effective learning strategies" might be remains tenable. We prefer to refer to the chronological difference in the insertion of schools in remote activities rather than initiating a discussion concerning the notions of "effectiveness" and "efficiency" in emergency remote teaching, which would require greater in-depth analysis. The profile of

the professionals was also different between the schools, particularly in terms of generation.[2] During online meetings in the state school, we noted the presence of several older teachers (apparently over 50 years of age), while in the private school, we did not note any teacher in this age group.

This was the main component responsible for the difficulty of some public school teachers to enter the "digital environment", according to Gisele's account. "So, it's not like from one moment to the next for teachers who are 60, 65, 70 years old, others who are extremely shy, still others who don't know how to use these things [...]." According to Arruda and Nascimento (2021) and Kirchner (2020), the shyness mentioned by Gisele may be related to issues of self-esteem and self-confidence involving the exposure of their own image. The difficulty of teachers in executing actions in the digital environment can be exemplified by a specific situation in a meeting with parents: Gisele and another teacher and the coordinator, Paula, tried to activate the presentation mode of their screens on Google Meet for several minutes and, after failing, they gave up sharing the content in this manner.

Even though they do not present this generational profile in their analysis of teachers experience during the pandemic, research like that conducted by Saraiva, Nonato and Braga (2021) and Carmo, Sales and Kohls-Santos (2021) provide a glimpse of the scenario of teachers' insertion in the universe of educational technologies. Saraiva, Nonato and Braga (2021) observed the relationship between the access to technological resources and the ability to use them. They found that among the group of teachers who had such resources, more than half did not feel ready for remote teaching. The 2021 *TIC Educação*[3] [ICT Education; Information and Communication Technologies] survey states that 68% of teachers of primary and secondary education in public and private institutions lack the skills to carry out educational activities through technology. According to the survey, the highest proportions for this indicator were observed among teachers who taught in state schools (74%).

This difficulty meant that some state school educators were unable to provide any type of online classes. Teachers who presented greater difficulty interacting with the tools used to hold synchronous meetings in state schools only prepared asynchronous teaching materials (handouts). Analyzes by Saraiva, Nonato and Braga (2021) illustrate this scenario, since they confirm that 38% of secondary education teachers in state schools only provided classes in an asynchronous format. Without doubt, this difference in insertion on platforms also contributed to the fact that, prior to the pandemic, many private institutions – including the one observed in this research – had previously presented interactive activities and projects, involving greater use of technological resources at school.

A lack of prior contact by teachers with education technologies is highlighted by the 2021 *TIC Educação* survey, and by Saraiva, Nonato and Braga (2021), as one of the obstacles to the use of such resources during the pandemic. According to the survey, "the lack of training is highlighted by most educators as an obstacle to the use of these resources in teaching and learning activities" (CGI.BR 2022, 83). The research also compares statistics between state and private schools: two

2 We follow the understanding of Mannheim (1952) when using the concept of "generation" in its analytical dimension. According to the author, use of the term from this perspective enables the study of the dynamics of social changes, of "styles of thought" of an era and of action. For the author, what forms a generation is not only the common date of birth (biographical time), but it is also part of the historical process that people of the same age and social class actually share (historical time).

3 Research conducted by the *Comitê Gestor da Internet* [Internet Steering Committee] in Brazil (CGI.BR 2022). Available at: https://cetic.br/media/analises/tic_educacao_2021_coletiva_imprensa.pdf. Accessed on Aug. 9, 2023.

out of every five teachers working in the state primary and secondary education system who participated in Saraiva, Nonato and Braga's (2021) research stated that they had not received any type of training and that the information they did have had been collected by themselves. The survey conducted by 2021 *TIC Educação* identified that a lack of training was reported by 64% of teachers who taught in state institutions, at the municipal, state and federal level, in contrast to 36% of teachers in private schools.

The element of gender[4] also raised questions in our analysis of the schools observed. In the public institution, a majority of the educators were women, while in the private institution, the proportion between men and women showed greater balance. Interestingly, the relationship between gender and subjects in both schools was the same: the two mathematics teachers were women and the two history teachers were men. The proportion, even though it is based on a limited, conditioned sampling (since the choice of subjects and teachers is made by the administration staff, and because this is configured as qualitative research), reflects a trend previously observed in the *Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica* [National Basic Education Assessment System], published in 2001.[5]

In this assessment, which was the last edition that incorporated statistics on "Percentage distribution of teachers by subject and grade, according to gender and geographical unit," the relatively high number of secondary education mathematics teachers who identified as women in the national scenario was already apparent. In the southern region, women teachers outnumbered men, with 39% of mathematics teachers identifying as men and 61% as women. The numbers follow a trend illustrated by the 2022 *Censo Escolar* [School Census][6] of a large number of female teachers in Brazilian primary and secondary education: of the more than 2.3 million teachers, 79.2% are female teachers. Regarding teacher age groups, in the subject of mathematics, the age difference among the teachers was greater: Maria (state school), was around 50 years old, and Silvana (private school), around 30 years old. In the case of the history teachers, there was no important difference, since they both appeared to be around 30 years old.

The fact that Gisele, Maria and Silvana are mothers introduced the variable of maternity in the observations and analysis. Silvana was in the final phase of her pregnancy, while Gisele and Maria had pre-adolescent children, both of whom were students in the state education system. The situation for the men was different: neither were fathers. This information reiterates the reality, present in the accounts of both the educators at the schools observed and the teachers with whom we conducted exploratory interviews: the double, triple, and sometimes quadruple working hours of many of them. Silva and Ciavatta (2022, 9) state that "the burden on women teachers and education professionals was greater, they had the task of being mothers, women, professionals, students, and family caregivers." In one of our contacts, a teacher told us: "Messages 24 hours a day, time for planning and home get mixed up. In the midst of all this, there's the issue of caring for your kids and also helping them with their activities. The result: overload and frustration!"

Conciliating teaching tasks with domestic tasks and, in many cases, with the

4 For this analysis, like Scott (1986), we consider the term "gender" as a "a way of denoting 'cultural constructions'—the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men. It is a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women. Gender is, in this definition, a social category imposed on a sexed body." (Scott 1986, 1056).

5 *Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica* [National Basic Education Assessment System] (Saeb/2001). Available at:https://download.inep.gov.br/publicacoes/institucionais/estatisticas_e_indicadores/estatisticas_dos_professores_no_brasil.pdf

6 Survey conducted annually by the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* [National Institute of Educational Studies and Research], an agency linked to the Ministry of Education. Available at: https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/areas-de-atuacao/pesquisas-estatisticas-e-indicadores/censo escolar/resultados/2022

routine care of children is responsible for the mental illness that is mainly reported by educators in the state education system. Most of the reports involved diagnoses of anxiety, depression and extreme stress, as observed in research by Coelho *et al.* (2021). These qualitative findings are in line with the data presented in the survey conducted by Nova Escola[7] in 2020. According to this survey, 72% of educators interviewed reported mental health problems during the pandemic. Reflexes caused by the extensive workload in front of the computer that include inflammatory processes, muscle strains (tendonitis, neck pain, etc.), headaches, and back pain can be added to these impacts on mental health.

The way remote teaching was elaborated in the state education system meant that the workload of these professionals was greater than that of private institutions. Unlike the latter, where the pedagogical axis was concentrated on synchronous meetings and online assessment activities, teachers at state schools reported the need to plan three different classes for each period taught: one for the students who attended the synchronous meeting, another for those who only accessed digital materials (videos, audios, PDF files), and another for those who sought printed handouts at school. Due to the number of contractors and the lack of a human resources sector in the institutions, as discussed by Gisele, many educators end up being responsible for subjects beyond their areas of training, generating an even more exhausting workload. Maria, a mathematics teacher, also taught arts subjects, while José, a history teacher, was also responsible for religious education.

Entering the digital environment also incurred financial consequences for state school teachers. The lack of equipment and infrastructure meant that teachers in state schools had to invest money out of their own pockets in notebooks, smartphones and expensive internet plans in order to work. One of the teachers interviewed in the exploratory stage described the financial crisis she was going through: her husband had been fired during the pandemic and her parents, who worked independently, were unable to work in social isolation. The teacher said that, in addition to having to "support the household all by herself", she was helping her parents financially. All of this added to an increase in her fixed monthly costs, due to needing to contract a higher capacity internet plan to work during the emergency remote teaching period. Financial difficulties – reported only by state school teachers – are yet another problem that worsened during the pandemic and attested to the inequality between state-run and private institutions, this time from the teachers' perspective.

Methodological strategies in remote teaching

The synchronous meetings in the schools observed also showed similarities and differences in terms of teaching methods. We begin by describing the frequency of meetings: the private school maintained the traditional schedule of face-to-face classes (five periods per day, in the morning, for five days a week), while the state school reduced the number of synchronous meetings and combined all

7 Available at: https://novaescola.org.br/conteudo/19401/ansiedade-medo-e-exaustao-como-a-quarentena-esta-abalando-a-saude-mental-dos-educadores

classes for 15-year-olds (US: 10th grade; UK: year 11), given the difficulty of access and low student adherence (three periods a day, in the afternoon, for five days a week). This frequency delayed progress in the curricular contents of the state school in relation to the private school.

In the vast majority of cases, the synchronous meetings at the private school were held as expository classes by the teachers. In history classes, Roberto presented the content to students through Power Point slides, mixing texts and images. José also centered state school history classes on expository presentations, though, in his case, the resources used were simpler than Roberto's. Most of the time, the content was presented in a Microsoft Word document, with occasional images, though in one of the synchronous classes, the teacher played a brief documentary on the topic at the end.

Mathematics classes in both schools presented similar dynamics, mixing expository periods with exercises solving calculations. Silvana, a teacher at the private institution, spent more time in her classes doing exercises, while Maria, from the public school, divided her class time more evenly between explaining content and working on calculations. Unlike history, in the case of mathematics, the observations were reversed: Silvana (private school) presented the content with simpler teaching materials, without colors and other graphic elements, while Maria (public school) invested time in creating slides that were more detailed and colorful.

To solve questions, Silvana only used the "Jamboard" tool, also offered by the Google for Education system. Maria used the Microsoft Word program for the same task. The wide access to quality internet connection and sophisticated electronic equipment for students at the private institution enabled Silvana to propose various forms of interactivity, such as the "Kahoot" tool, a game-based learning platform. Even if she knew about this program, Maria made it clear that she could not include it in the classroom dynamics due to the difficulties her students had in accessing the internet and technological equipment.

Even within these limitations, according to her account, the state school mathematics teacher was extremely concerned about the "quality" of the materials she produced. Given this, she decided to invest in different equipment, such as a digitizing tablet, using her own resources. This device, which can cost from R$200 to R$2,500 (US$ 40-510), enables freehand drawings and writing to be instantly recognized by a computer.

These accounts reiterate the practice of teachers adapting their methodological strategies based on the reality of their students and the technology they have at their disposal. Maria's initiatives are proof that, in public institutions, there are professionals trained and motivated to institute new practices, with the intention of facilitating their students' understanding of subject content – what is missing is the financial support.

The (non)interference of gender, age and area of activity in the teacher-student relationship

During the observations, it was simple to perceive the teachers who had the

greatest ability for interacting with students. Maria, a mathematics teacher at the public school, had an open relationship with her students and was always willing to answer any questions – even those that were not related to the subject. She established certain boundaries, when necessary, but accepted all interruptions made by students via microphone. We witnessed conversations on entrance exams, travel, football, technology, and even gossip by students about other teachers. Furthermore, she always valued informal communication that was easy to understand.

In contrast, Silvana did not have the same familiarity with her private school math students. Even though she encouraged them to interact in class, the teacher did not cross the boundaries of an "institutional" relationship. She did not talk much about her personal life or issues other than teaching content, something which Maria and Roberto, for example, did a lot. The students always treated her with respect and politeness, but their relationship with her was certainly less intense than with Roberto, a history professor at the same institution.

In completely contrast to Silvana, Roberto had a relationship with students that was "anything but institutional." In an extremely relaxed manner, the teacher mixed the subject content with his personal stories. To our surprise, in one of the classes, we learned that Roberto had a habit of playing an online game together with some students in the class. When a teacher shares the tastes and cultural practices (games, TV series and films) with his students, does this guarantee greater ease in establishing interpersonal relationships? Whether it is a coincidence or not, the group of students who played online with the teacher were also those who most participated in his classes.

The relationship between José, a public school history teacher, and his students was completely different from Roberto. During the initial observations, at certain points, we observed a hostile atmosphere among the students towards him. On several occasions, the teacher established links with content like women's rights and the LGBTQIA+ community, with questions about the democratic state and fake news. When the subject approached these themes, student participation was greater. On the other hand, at other times, we observed a certain harshness on the part of José in his treatment of the students, especially when he did not provide opportunities for dialogue with them.

The observations reported here weaken explanations that issues like gender, generation, or even area of knowledge may be the main determinants in the student-teacher relationship. The educators with the closest relationship with the students were Maria (a woman around 50 years old, teaching math) and Roberto (a man around 30 years old, teaching history), who differ in all the markers mentioned. Based on the points discussed, apparently the personalities of the professionals, as well as how interested they are in establishing a closer relationship with their students, have more influence on this dynamic.

The students' perspective

One of the principal objectives of this research refers to observing student attendance and participation in online classes at the institutions studied. At the

private institution, it was mandatory for students to use cameras, establishing these as a requirement for participation in synchronous meetings – and for counting attendance at the class roll call. In one of the classes, Silvana commented that all 30 students in the class had the equipment for online transmissions, and that this obligation was agreed with parents and guardians. Even so, in most classes, an average of six or seven students had their cameras turned off.

With an average of 20 students with imaging devices connected per meeting, the participation of many of them during private school periods was limited to this presence. Much of the time, the classes were silent, and the "ceremony" was respected – the teacher spoke and, at the end, the students carried out their interventions. On a number of occasions, the silence continued for several minutes, and with no sign of participation from the adolescents, the teachers asked "Is anyone there, guys?". Participation was monopolized: of the almost 30 students present at the synchronous meetings, we only heard the voices of around six or seven.

Among these, there were two or three students who actually participated in all the classes, while the others spoke occasionally. Through the chat, participation was a little higher, but this also did not reach half of the class. It is interesting to note that the majority of participation occurred on the part of boys; the two main contributors were Rafael and Luan. Natália and Júlia also used the voice equipment to interact in classes, but to a lesser extent than the boys mentioned. Specifically in the history classes, coincidentally (or not) Rafael and Luan formed part of the group of adolescents who participated in online games together with the teacher, as mentioned in the previous item.

The state school was opposite of the private institution. The average was two cameras turned on per meeting, in a universe that ranged between 20 and 40 students. The largest number of cameras turned on simultaneously in a class was four students. Boys activated their cameras more than girls, and for a longer period of time – Giovanni, for example, kept the device connected during all his classes, even though he was the only one in the class. Even following explicit requests from the teachers, the situation remained the same. However, the participation of students via microphone was much greater than that of students at the private institution. At certain times, there was a congestion of voices, with students speaking at the same time, interrupting their classmates and the teacher.

The logic of talking occurred differently according to the subject. The history teacher, for example, demanded that certain moments of explanation be respected and any interruptions that occurred were promptly addressed at the end of the class. Conversely, Maria encouraged students to talk as much as they wanted, whenever they wanted: "if you have any questions, interrupt me, and I'll explain better". This position sometimes caused a confusion of voices and interruptions that ended up being quickly organized by the teacher, in an attempt to ensure that all the students were heard and their doubts were clarified.

Even though there was a good deal of talking during the meetings, the interventions were restricted to a few students – Giovanni and Rodrigo were the main "hosts" of the classes. Besides them, interactions from another five or six boys and

three or four girls were frequent. In numerous moments, these two monopolized the conversations and even talked over the girls, who ended up being silenced. Repeating the trend in the private school, the number of active participants was small, considering that the total number of participants in the synchronous meetings reached 40 students in one class. Again, there were those who only participated via chat.

While participation in private schools is more intense when viewing cameras, in public schools, the almost non-existence of synchronous images of students increases the potential for using microphone audio as an interactive resource. Thus, we question whether or how often cameras should be the main method of certifying student presence and attention in class. We understand and, at certain times, felt the teacher's sense of loneliness in teaching to a visually "empty" classroom; however, we extrapolate these two parameters and question which of the following situations represents greater student participation: a silent, contained, organized classroom, with visualization of synchronous images of students, or a participatory classroom, which is full of interaction and, at times, disorderly, with no cameras connected?

The impacts of access to technology on student participation

Observation in schools confirms the discrepancy between the technological infrastructure of private and state school students. While all students at private institutions have full access to the internet, according to Gisele, almost two thirds of the adolescents who attend state schools needed to go to the school to collect materials in person because they did not have even the most basic internet access.

Even though it differs from student to student, the technological structure that we observe in private school classes is generally sophisticated and counts on several pieces of equipment. It was possible to identify cutting-edge devices, such as headphones, game consoles and chairs that cost between R$700 and R$3,000 (US$ 140-600). Among the students who owned a gamer kit was the group of boys who played online games with professor Roberto. Apparently, the majority of students followed classes on a computer, given the position of the cameras (horizontal) and the movements of their hands on the keyboard. In general, the girls' environments and the equipment that appeared in their transmissions were simpler than that used by the boys.

Within the filmed environment, none of the state school students who transmitted their image in class had equipment that was common to the reality of private school students. The headphones and office chairs used by all of them were not even close to those owned by adolescents from the private school. The majority of the students followed classes exclusively via cell phones. Surveys conducted with teachers, such as the 2021 *TIC Educação*, included comments from them concerning the students' situations – for teachers, this was one of the main difficulties experienced during the pandemic. According to the survey,

> the lack of devices, such as computers or cell phones, and internet access in students' homes was mentioned by 86% of teachers whose schools offered remote or hybrid activities, a percentage that reached 91% among teachers at state-run schools (municipal, state and federal) (CGI.BR 2022, 25).

Based purely on financial status, we were able to confirm the advantage that access to technologies provides to the children of the elite, showing a direct relationship with Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital. Our perspective aligns with that of Silva (2021), also based on Bourdieusian concepts, in which she understands "digital access as an unequally distributed cultural capital, which generates privileges in a situation where teaching modality is imposed remotely" (Silva 2021, 274). From this perspective, for technology to be configured as a competitive differentiator or a privilege, not only the ownership of the equipment must be taken into consideration, but also control over it – a reflection made by Bourdieu (1984) based on the notions of incorporated and objectified state of property.

For the individual to have control over something, they need to have access so that control can be developed. The comparative analysis of the observations made enabled the identification of students with greater mastery of the use of technologies in private schools. In addition to not having problems joining and leaving classes, performing online activities and creating graphic materials, some students demonstrated other forms of digital knowledge. In the case of the public institution, there were frequent reports concerning difficulties in joining the online classroom and using the basic Google Meet tools.

The examples from state schools are in line with data collected by the survey Índice *de Habilidades Digitais* [Digital Skills Index].[8] According to the survey, "despite starting from a significantly higher level than older adults", the generation known as "digital natives" (16-24 years old) "is still not more qualified than that of young adults, demonstrating that skills linked to work are significant" (Mc Kinsey 2019, 7). What is more, it illustrates how social issues that impact the access of low-income populations to technological equipment and services influence the mastery of basic tools often required by the formal job market.

8 Research conducted by McKinsey & Company Brasil. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com.br/our-insights/Habilidades%20Digitais%20no%20Brasil. Accessed on Aug. 11, 2023.

The impacts of home infrastructure on student learning

Before initiating any field research, in addition to access to digital equipment, we wondered whether other factors could affect student participation and learning, such as home infrastructure. Santomé (2003) indicates that "the condition of the homes" of students represents one of the most important contextual variables that are not taken into account in government indices. On the one hand, decoration and furniture, which can make the environment cozier for studying, and on the other, the number of people per room (or m^2/sq. ft), which can result in a chaotic environment that affects students' concentration, are examples of issues involving domestic infrastructure that interfere with student learning.

In the context of the pandemic and home-based remote teaching, Barros *et al.*

(2022) indicate that the lack of adequate space at home can have marked and lasting effects on students. From our initial observations of the private school classes, we were surprised and sometimes enchanted by the decoration of some of the environments that framed their images. From the simplest to the most sophisticated rooms, they all presented certain features in common: plastered walls, painted in sober colors (neutral, light tones: white, ice, light gray), large windows and a few decorative elements. Wall-mounted lights, pendant lamps and spotlights, visible elements in numerous students' environments, are lighting fixtures widely used by architects and decorators to create what they consider "modern," "refined" environments. A specific item appeared in the majority of the environments: air conditioning.

In contrast, the configurations of domestic spaces that we observed in the rooms transmitted by state school students were quite different. It is important to highlight, once again, that the number of environments observed was much lower than that of the private school students, considering that the majority of state school students did not even turn on the camera during the synchronous classes. For this reason, the considerations regarding this section are limited compared with reports concerning the private school students. Proportionally, there were a greater number of students who attended the classes in other areas of their homes: mainly the kitchen and the living room. The exception was Giovanni, who attended some classes in his room and others at his workplace. His room was one of the environments we observed that had a structure more similar to – yet still distant from – the rooms in the background of private school students.

The environment that could be seen in the background of Larissa's space was, without a doubt, the furthest from the standard of adolescents at the private school. The brick wall construction, with no plaster or paint, framed the living room-kitchen environment that the student moved around in during classes. Sometimes she sat on a red sofa, sometimes on a wooden chair, Larissa's frame was filled with a four-burner stove with different overlapping pans, a curtain printed with colorful flowers, a tangle of wires in two sockets, a clay water filter, and kitchen utensils hung on the bricks. The explosion of colors and shapes in the environment transmitted by Larissa represents the antagonism to elitist decoration trends.

Domestic infrastructure, particularly in terms of the number of rooms and individuals residing in the environment, interferes with the quality of student learning. According to the most recent *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua* (PNAD) [National Household Sample Survey], published in 2018,[9] 11.5 million Brazilians live in overcrowded homes, which house more than three people per bedroom.

9 Available at: https://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/educacao/17270-pnad-continua.html?edicao=24437&t=resultados

Even though there was a smaller universe of images transmitted by camera, the occurrences of intrusions and interruptions were greater in our observations of state school online classes than those for the private school. In Fernanda's room, in addition to two children running in front of the camera at a given moment, another young woman, apparently close to her in age, was playing with her

cell phone in the background. During the school periods in which he was working, Giovanni presented the most chaotic context in terms of the movement of people and noise. In one of the meetings, behind the student, there was a bench which three men were sitting on, talking and laughing, while he appeared to try to concentrate on the academic period.

According to Eniz (2004), the presence of a child or adolescent in a noisy environment during classes can alter their concentration, cause disinterest, changes in behavior, a decrease in work capacity and stress reactions. Unlike the private school students, who did not experience situations of this type, among those from state school, it was more common than we imagined, even among those who did not transmit via camera. This was the case for Luciano and Lucas: in different classes, when the students activated their microphones, suddenly we were able to hear female screams in the background while they were talking.

These reports demonstrate that, in addition to the evident differences in access to technology and digital equipment, other factors influenced participation in classes and the quality of student learning. In addition to internet access, Santos and Zaboroski (2020, 47) identified the lack of "a room, a daily moment or someone who can help them study, concentrate and assimilate content" in the residential environment of state school students as another specific impact factor on the quality of learning.

Body movements and inattention

It is in the analysis of forms of bodily expression that the state institution most closely approximates the private institution – again, we reiterate the difference in the number of cameras observed for each school. When seated in the same position, movements like "stretching," stretching their back, "scratching their head," yawning and changing position in their chair illustrate how tiredness and muscle fatigue from prolonged exposure to a computer or cell phone affect students at both schools.

In addition to these movements, which are easy to identify, the perception of some other issues we detected requires attention and a certain sensitivity to details. After weeks of observation, certain details eventually gained visibility in our view. Analysis of eye movements, mainly through the "wandering pupils" of students who followed classes on a computer, indicated that these adolescents were consuming other content in other navigation windows in addition to the Google Meet call – such as additional study materials, numerous web pages, and even chat applications, like WhatsApp. The prescription glasses of students with vision problems also betrayed the change in navigation windows. Giovanni, the only student at the state school who reportedly attended classes on a computer, showed a lack of attention that was revealed by his prescription glasses: the glasses reflected the light from the computer screen and the difference in background tones between the Google Meet windows (dark) and other online browsing pages (light). The same was observed in the glasses of Augusto, a private school student.

The freedom for the students and the lack of control for teachers in the remote teaching format, particularly with regard to basic and secondary education, represents an important obstacle to concentration and, consequently, to student learning. The glances, laughing, gestures and side conversations on their part can also reveal something very common in the face-to-face school routine, which takes on new nuances in remote teaching: a lack of discipline. The wide range of possibilities for distraction, combined with the increase in reports of hyperactivity, anxiety, and depression in young people of school age during the pandemic period (Almeida and Silva Júnior 2021) raises even more questions concerning learning in the remote model.

Final considerations

Emergency remote teaching presented itself as a challenge for both educators and students participating in this research. According to our observations, the truth is that everyone lost something in relation to what would have been a "normal" in-person school year – albeit with similarities and distinctions.

From the teachers' point of view, we identified the differences between these institutions regarding the insertion of schools into online teaching, together with the aptitude and training of educators for this format. In parallel with gender and age groups, we perceive the reflexes (financial and emotional) of the pandemic on the lives of these teachers, and we identified the pedagogical strategies used and their impact and other factors on the relationship between teachers and students.

Observation of the teaching techniques used and choices made by teachers enabled us to reflect that being in a private institution may not be synonymous with technology and interactivity, just as being a state school is not necessarily synonymous with obsolescence. It is clear that the definition of teachers responsible for the classes we followed (made by each institution's administration staff) influences this issue, but it does not rule out reflection on the existence of teachers in public schools who strive to build interactive and innovative teaching methodologies.

These pedagogical choices also made it possible to analyze teacher-student relationships in the institutions studied. The sharing of these situations, tastes and cultural practices, on the part of the teachers, and opening up dialogue with the students facilitate the establishment of interpersonal relationships. The observations made, thus weaken the explanations that issues like gender, generation or even area of knowledge may be the principal determining factors in the student-teacher relationship.

From the students' perspective, we were able to perform comparative analyzes between those who attend classes in state and private schools. The greatest approximation between them occurs in the issue of concentration, or lack thereof, as well as digital transits and apparent parallel conversations online. The distinctions include the forms of participation in synchronous meetings, their home structure and digital equipment and the ease or difficulty they have in using technological resources.

In our opinion, such completely different forms of presence and interaction between the two schools reveal one of the main contributions of this research: the questioning and relativization of the notion of "participation." Ultimately, what constitutes "participation" in a synchronous class? Is it remaining lifeless, silenced and frozen in an image being transmitted in real time, or invisible, but with good interaction in the form of talking? We therefore reflect on how much cameras should be the main indicator of students' presence and attention in classes.

In addition to this discrepancy in access to technological equipment and internet connectivity, the observations included other factors with the potential to influence students' participation and attendance in class. The main one refers to domestic infrastructure, especially regarding the number of rooms and individuals residing in the environment, which seemed to interfere with the students' quality of learning. This question also includes the conversations, movements and noises that shared environments present and that can contribute to the students' inattention – which is directly related to the number of people living in the home.

The research findings also allow us to identify that being young is not necessarily synonymous with fluency in digital equipment, platforms and applications, as demonstrated by the research conducted by McKinsey & Company Brasil, mentioned above. Participant observation of the synchronous meetings also enabled us to observe that unequal access to technology equipment influences mastery in these basic tools, often required by the job market, especially among students at public institutions.

It is our understanding that we were able to address the similarities and distinctions between the experiences of state and private schools regarding emergency remote teaching – intersecting our observations with reflections by other authors. In addition to consolidating a large body of records from a historical point of view, it is worth highlighting that this work, and other research conducted within the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, enable us to extrapolate the particularities of this specific context and establish reflections on the work of teachers, the use of digital technologies in the classroom, the feasibility of remote teaching tools in basic and secondary education and, more broadly, the educational inequalities and access to technologies in Brazil.[10]

10 Translation: Philip Badiz

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