PEDAGOGICAL COORDINATORS' PERFORMANCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES FACED BY THESE PROFESSIONALS IN FORTALEZA CITY/CE

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ABSTRACT: The coronavirus pandemic has transformed the role of pedagogical coordinators in public schools. This article aims to identify the perceptions of pedagogical coordinators from two schools in Fortaleza, Ceará, located in high vulnerability areas with good educational indicators, during the pandemic and the return to classes. Based on the conception of the right to education, the strategies used for instructional aspects and the connection with students, families, and teachers are analyzed. The study is qualitative, analyzing the content of interviews with seven coordinators. The results indicate that the beginning of the pandemic focused on ensuring food security for students and their families, maintaining the connection with the school, and supporting the development of teachers' digital technological skills. During the return to classes, the focus was on organizing in-person classes while respecting health protocols, providing emotional support to teachers and students, and addressing the return to previous levels of learning.


RESUMO: A pandemia do coronavírus transformou a atuação dos coordenadores pedagógicos das escolas públicas. Neste artigo, objetiva-se identificar a percepção de coordenadores pedagógicos de duas escolas de Fortaleza/CE localizadas em território de alta vulnerabilidade e com bons indicadores educacionais na pandemia e no retorno das aulas. A partir da concepção do direito à educação, são analisadas as estratégias utilizadas em relação aos aspectos instrucionais e de vínculo com estudantes, familiares e professores. O estudo é qualitativo, com análise do conteúdo de entrevistas com sete coordenadores. Os resultados apontam que, no início da pandemia, a preocupação voltou-se à segurança alimentar dos estudantes e suas famílias; à manutenção do vínculo com a escola; e apoio ao desenvolvimento de habilidades tecnológicas digitais dos professores. Na retomada das aulas, focou-se na organização das aulas presenciais, respeitando os protocolos sanitários; nos suportes afetivo e emocional a professores e estudantes; e retorno aos níveis anteriores de aprendizagem.


RESUMEN: La pandemia de coronavirus transformó la actuación de los coordinadores pedagógicos de las escuelas públicas. Este artículo tiene como objetivo identificar la percepción de los coordinadores pedagógicos de dos escuelas en Fortaleza ubicadas en un territorio de alta vulnerabilidad y con buenos indicadores educativos en la pandemia y en el retorno de clases. Desde la concepción del derecho a la educación, se analizan las estrategias utilizadas en relación con los aspectos institucionales y el vínculo con los estudiantes, familiares y maestros. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo con análisis de contenido de entrevistas con siete coordinadores. Los resultados indican que, al inicio de la pandemia, existía preocupación por la seguridad alimentaria de los estudiantes y sus familias; mantenimiento del vínculo con la escuela; y el apoyo al desarrollo de conocimientos de tecnología digital para los docentes. En la reanudación de clases, nos enfocamos en la organización de clases presenciales, respetando los protocolos sanitarios; en el apoyo afectivo y emocional a profesores y alumnos; y volver a los niveles de aprendizaje.

Introduction

Education is an essential human right to promote the inclusion and integral development of all Brazilian citizens, a request at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of public calamity and the establishment of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in the world in March 2020 forced many organizations to review and adapt to the imminent danger of contagion and health care for individuals (Opas, 2020).

Schools, which have always acted as a means of sociability and direct contact between teachers and students, were caught off guard by this scenario. The suspension of in-person classes, with no foreseeable return date, transformed social relationships and how educational management operated (Unesco, 2020). His situation necessitated reorganizing academic networks to resume the learning process worldwide throughout the pandemic.

The challenge was to maintain teaching and learning activities in an unprecedented scenario. Thus, many networks had to adapt and find ways to teach. One option was to adopt Emergency Remote Teaching, which required a new approach from central teams of municipal and state secretariats, school unit managers, teachers, students, and the entire school community. Some networks opted for synchronous systems, while others chose Distance Education (EaD).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) require teachers and students to learn the tools and highlight structural problems of inequalities in the country. A significant portion of teachers working in public educational institutions lacked training to work in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and were not prepared to adapt in-person classes to technology-mediated ones.

Regarding students and their families, inequality in access to connectivity, digital devices, and proficiency in using ICTs for this format of classes was observe (Fundação Carlos Chagas, 2020). The situation worsened due to the financial and social crises that affected family...
income and daily life during the pandemic. Thus, everyone needed to learn in this new context to address learning gaps, even with unequal access to resources.

Despite the importance of understanding the experiences of various educational stakeholders during the pandemic and the return to classes, this article focuses on Pedagogical Coordinators (CPs). As Pereira (2017) points out, the CP (Continuing Professional Development) is the entity responsible for the ongoing training of teachers, tasked with bringing together the collective of educators around the objectives stated in the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) of the schools. In another study, the same author asserts that:

The pedagogical coordinator is a management team member, but their role does not replace, overlap, or oppose that of directors and assistant directors. However, the division of labor among the management team, which is not simple or evident (Pereira, 2017), indicates that Brazilian pedagogical coordinators still have as one of their primary agendas the understanding of the scope of their work, which is a condition for experiencing it internally so that, collectively, they can conquer their (more than legitimate) space (Pereira, 2021, p. 172, our translation).

This article aims to identify the perception of pedagogical coordinators from two schools in Fortaleza, Ceará, located in areas of high vulnerability but with good educational indicators during the pandemic and the return of classes. Based on the conception of the right to education, as provided in the 1988 Federal Constitution, the strategies used for instructional aspects and connection with students and their families, teachers, and other actors of the school community are analyzed.

The research, which has a qualitative nature, was conducted from November 2022 to May 2023 and is part of the project “Implementação de Políticas Educacionais e Desigualdades frente a Contextos de Pandemia pelo Covid-19”, funded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), Process 2021/08719-0. Interviews were conducted with various agents from the Municipal Department of Education (SME) of Fortaleza, Ceará; the educational districts to which the schools are linked; and with actors from the community of the two visited schools - directors, coordinators, teachers, mothers, and students. The perceptions of seven pedagogical coordinators from the two municipal schools visited will be highlighted here.

This article is organized into six sections, including this introduction and the final considerations. The second section presents the context of Ceará and the city of Fortaleza. The third section includes the adopted methodological procedures. The fourth section covers the theoretical framework, and the fifth section presents the results.
Context of Ceará and the City of Fortaleza

Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará, has a population of 2,428,678 inhabitants (Ibge, 2022), and 36.9% of the population has a nominal monthly per capita income of up to half a minimum wage (Ibge, 2010). The state has been highlighted for its educational performance achieved through the Program for Learning at the Right Age (Mais Paic), which employs various strategies continuously restructured to promote its continuous improvement (Carnoy et al., 2017; Costa; Carnoy, 2015; Cruz; Farah; Ribeiro, 2020; Kasmuski; Gusmão; Ribeiro, 2017; Mamede et al., 2021; Padilha et al., 2013; Vieira; Plank; Vidal, 2019). The Mais Paic is conceived by the Education Department of Ceará (SEDUC) and aims to support student learning so that they progress successfully, achieve good results, and enter high school well-prepared. It operates through technical and financial cooperation with the 184 municipalities of Ceará.

Despite adopting the Program in 2007, Fortaleza only fully incorporated its actions and strategies in 2013. However, as an autonomous entity of the federation, it has also developed its approach to guarantee the right to learning for all children (Program for Full-Time Schools, Program Aprender Mais, Active Search for Dropout Students, among others).

The Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) of the municipal network for the initial years (1st to 5th grade) of Elementary School (EF1) in 2021 was 5.8, and for the final years (EF2), it was 5.2. Both surpassed the target the Ministry of Education (MEC) projected, which was 5.5. In 2019, the values were 6.2 for the initial and 5.2 for the final years. This decrease also occurred at the national level in Brazil and is a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this decrease, the municipality ranks fifth among capitals with the best average scores for the initial years, maintaining the same position as in 2019 and third place for the final years, one position above that of 2019 (Fortaleza, 2023).

Fortaleza has 306 municipal schools, with 239,158 students enrolled in Basic Education, representing 44% of the city's total enrollments, as shown in Table 1 (Inep, 2022; Qedu, 2022;). All registrations are in urban areas.
Table 1 - Number of enrollments in Basic Education in Fortaleza/CE by administrative dependence (2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>541.794</td>
<td>3.145</td>
<td>107.821</td>
<td>239.158</td>
<td>191.670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Inep (2022).

The Fortaleza Municipal Education (SME) team has structured three lines of action to address the pandemic: (1) Support and assistance to teachers and students for the use of technology; (2) Monitoring the situation and its impacts on students and educators; (3) Initiatives to support students in facing the pandemic. These guidelines were designed to be implemented in schools with the support of the management team and teachers.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, SMEs have provided support to enrolled students in the network, regardless of grade level or age, to minimize the effects caused by COVID-19 and ensure students' learning and retention in school units. In this context, the municipal administration adopted the remote teaching system, provided food through the distribution of kits, and encouraged and strengthened distance learning activities by providing students and teachers with chips, tablets, and Chromebooks. Additionally, directed activities were produced, delivered, and returned to schools.

Methodological Procedures

As indicated by Stake (2011), qualitative and exploratory research was conducted from November 2022 to May 2023 in Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará. A bibliographic survey was performed using the Scientific Electronic Library Online (Scielo Brasil) and Google Scholar databases in June 2023 to guide the study. The descriptors "school management" and "COVID-19," "pedagogical coordinator," and "pandemic" were used. For the production of this article, research reports, articles, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations published between 2019 and 2023 were selected. A total of 11 works relevant to this research were chosen.

In general, the studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight that the Pedagogical Coordinator (CP) role in Brazil has undergone significant transformation. Some authors (FCC, 2020; Príncipe; Pereira; Rigolon, 2022; Rosa, Pereira, 2019) indicate that CPs had to adapt rapidly to emergency remote teaching. These professionals played a crucial role in facilitating the transition of various teaching practices for students with and without internet.
access and other technological resources. They also developed technology training for teachers, supported the planning of pedagogical activities, and offered pedagogical assistance (Ferraz; Ferreira; Ferraz, 2023).

Challenges reported included access to connectivity, maintaining student engagement in remote learning, and managing teachers' workload (Faustino; Silva, 2020; Pâdua, França-Carvalho, 2020; Silva, Gomes, Silva, 2023). The CP also played a fundamental role in the emotional well-being (Oliveira, 2023), of both students and teachers during an incredibly stressful and uncertain time. Mental health, well-being, and food security for students and educators became priorities (Silva; Gomes; Silva, 2023).

Moreover, the pandemic required schools to review and modify their curricula, and CPs played a vital role in this task, ensuring that the curriculum was suitable and relevant in the context of the pandemic (Príncipe; Pereira; Rigolon, 2022). Studies like those by Rosa and Pereira (2020) also demonstrated that CPs played an essential role in maintaining communication among students, teachers, and parents or guardians, primarily through virtual platforms and technological communication applications.

In addition to this bibliographic survey, a documentary analysis of normative acts published since the pandemic until the return to classes was conducted. Two municipal elementary schools, Escolas Sol and Estrela, were visited. They were chosen for being located in high vulnerability areas - Bairros Bom Jardim and Prefeito José Walter - and for their excellent educational performance in Portuguese language learning in EF1. The researchers have been following Escola Sol since 2017, as it was considered the most equitable school in the municipality (Ribeiro, 2020).

In 2022, at Sol School, there were 1,820 students, out of which 208 (11%) were in the Elementary School Level 1 (EF1), 1,064 (59%) were in the Elementary School Level 2 (EF2), 206 (11%) were in preschool; 277 (15%) were in the Youth and Adult Education (EJA); and 65 (4%) were in Special Education. At Estrela School, there were 826 enrolled students, with 62 (7%) in the nursery; 197 (24%) in Elementary School Level 1 (EF1); 509 (62%) in Elementary School Level 2 (EF2); and 58 (7%) in Special Education.

Throughout the research, classroom observations and interviews were conducted with the school management team, teachers, parents, and students. This article focuses on the content analysis of the interviews with seven Pedagogical Coordinators (CPs), whose profiles are listed in Table 2. Most CPs are female, three works in EF1, three in EF2, and one in Youth and Adult Education (EJA). It should be noted that one of the interviewees was a coordinator during the
pandemic period but is no longer in that role currently. Four of the CPs have more than 20 years of experience in education, four have nine or more years of experience as CPs at the school and five hold permanent positions in the municipal education system.

Table 2 – Characterization of the Interviewed CPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Experience in Education (years)</th>
<th>Time in the Position of Pedagogical Coordinator at the School (years)</th>
<th>Educational Stage/Segment</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP 1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>EF1</td>
<td>Permanent/Public servant Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>EF1</td>
<td>Permanent/Public servant Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>EF2</td>
<td>Permanent/Public servant Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>EF2</td>
<td>Contracted Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>EJA</td>
<td>Permanent/Public servant Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>EF1</td>
<td>Contracted Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP 7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>EF2</td>
<td>Permanent/Public servant Employee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

The interviews aimed to understand: a) life and professional trajectories; b) strategies adopted during the pandemic; c) strategies implemented during the resumption of classes; challenges faced; and d) lessons learned.

The research followed ethical procedures and was approved by a National Ethics and Research Committee, with the support of Fortaleza's SME (Municipal Education Secretariat). The interviewees willingly participated in the study and signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF), and the interviews were previously scheduled and conducted in person at the school units. They lasted approximately 1 hour and were later transcribed and analyzed. The process of analyzing the interviews proceeded as follows: [1] floating reading of the discussions; [2] identification of recurring themes; [3] organization of pre-established categories; [4] treatment of results, inferences, and interpretations.
Theoretical Framework

This work is based on scientific studies on educational coordination and educational approaches, as explained by Pereira (2021) and Almeida and Placco (2010), which were published in the 1980s. These studies increased significantly from the 1990s onwards:

It can be observed that studies on educational coordination follow the movements of educational policies that were shaped after the country's re-democratization in the context of the most recent educational legislation: the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, and the LDBEN 9.394/1996, the law 11.738/2008, which established the National Minimum Wage for Teachers, brought about fundamental changes in the reorganization of primary education, including the inclusion of Early Childhood Education and the mandatory inclusion of High School as a stage of education, as well as the right to continuous professional development for teachers. In the context of state and municipal networks, these phenomena have been structuring their teacher career plans and implementing educational coordination, either under this name or similar designations, as a function or position filled through public competition (in this situation, in a minimal number of cases) (Pereira, 2021, p. 169, our translation).

As a component of the management team in Basic Education schools, the literature on Educational Coordination (Almeida, Placco, 2001, 2006, 2010, 2016, 2018; Pereira, 2017; Placco, Almeida, 2003, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019) points out that the central role of this professional is to be responsible for the continuous professional development of teachers, in line with the schools’ Educational Project (PPP) and the learning of all students.

In alignment with this approach, this text analyzed the interviews conducted to understand how the pandemic impacted the work of Educational Coordinators acting as trainers in municipal schools in Fortaleza/CE. Therefore, it was assumed that understanding how they faced the concrete challenges experienced by management teams affected how schools were administered and, in the case of Educational Coordinators, how they effectively fulfilled their role.

Results

The analyzed data were organized into four categories: [1] Task overlap; [2] Adaptation to emergency remote teaching; [3] Management of teachers' continuous professional development; and [4] Priority actions for the resumption of classes. The inferences and interpretations made for each category are presented below. The selected testimonies to
Task Overlap

It was observed that Educational Coordinators (CPs) worked systematically throughout the entire pandemic, even when it was established that students and teachers should stay at home: "Everyone stopped, but we (CPs) did not stop our work" (CP 1, 2022, our translation). This statement was chosen to open this section as it highlights that suspending in-person school activities did not imply a cessation of work by education professionals, contradicting common belief.

However, CPs experienced experiences marked by task overlap, mainly because, due to the food insecurity of students and their families, the school became a focal point for distributing food baskets, providing tasks for students without connectivity, supporting teachers, and sharing various information, as illustrated by the following testimonies:

The school always provided food baskets, which they had. Most of them were domestic workers whose employers did not want them to enter their houses, and others were cleaners, so everyone stopped these services because they couldn't have other people inside their homes. They were afraid even if they wore masks, and it didn't guarantee that there was no contamination. It was chaos for everyone, but imagine a person needing to work to survive and unable to…(CP 5, 2022, our translation).

The food basket was almost like a currency because they never stopped coming to get it. That's when we took the opportunity to provide access to activities and gather information about the students. If it weren't for the food baskets, it would have been much more complicated because we managed to reach over 90% of the students, mainly thanks to the delivery of the food baskets. We had no dropouts here (CP3, 2022, our translation).

With the issue of hunger and needs came the decision by the municipality to deliver food kits. There were always people at the school; we took turns for this. It was a way for us to ask when we gave them the food: 'Are you in the WhatsApp group? If not, give me your number. Do you have internet?' Then we added them to the group, which was a way to catch up with the past activities. 'You come to school, we'll print the past activities, and from now on, you'll follow the activities in the group.' That's how we tried to reach out to the students (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

The three testimonies, which illustrate what Educational Coordinators (CPs) experienced in the two investigated schools, highlight their concern for the food security of students and their families and the maintenance of the connection with the school. Despite
distributing food baskets as an emergency assistance action, these professionals did not lose sight of the school's purpose and right to education. The moments of food basket distribution also served as opportunities for managing the sending and receiving of activities so that all students – both with and without connectivity – could have their right to education ensured.

However, it is worth noting that CPs became overwhelmed because they needed to guide and support teachers during emergency remote teaching besides distributing food baskets and materials to students. Many teachers required assistance as teaching in that format was new to everyone, this aspect will be addressed in the subsequent category.

Adaptation to Emergency Remote Teaching

When classes were suspended, the difficulties faced by teachers with connectivity and pedagogical mediation through digital technologies required CPs to be available to welcome and support teachers during their adaptation to emergency remote teaching.

In year X, there was teacher Y, and I was with her all the time because she had a lot of difficulty using the phone, and the internet kept dropping. I couldn't bring her to the school because she is over 60 years old, one of the oldest teachers here, so we had to be careful (CP 1, 2020, our translation). [...] Initially, it was tough; teachers didn't know how to teach online. I tried to teach what I knew and gave suggestions for making videos. I taught them how to create links, put the students in the virtual classroom, and so on... (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

The testimony illustrates a problem identified in the research field: some teachers also faced connectivity issues and were unfamiliar with digital instructional tools and how to handle them. The connectivity problem was resolved approximately two months after the start of social distancing when the municipal administration distributed chips to the teachers. However, developing technological competencies also required CPs to receive training from the Municipal Education Secretariat (SME):

When [CP4] and I learned how to use the resources and teach online classes, we conducted a workshop for teachers who didn't know how. We held the workshop with some teachers; in some cases, the teacher needed just me and them in the class; it was just me and them testing the resources to see if they worked (CP 3, 2022, our translation).

Providing individual support to teachers who needed it was a recurring activity by CPs.
A teacher said she didn't know how to work online. I stayed with her all the time until she learned the technique. [...] There was a teacher [...] from X [that I] stayed there [in the virtual classroom of the Google Meet platform] with him, and we took the first steps to give classes in this online format (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

Despite the efforts to assist teachers in developing remote activities on an emergency basis, CPs realized that the lack of connectivity among students was a significant challenge.

Many families didn't even have a cellphone, others had one, but the cellphone couldn't handle it, and there were large families with only one cellphone, so better assistance would have helped the school and families in online classes. Offering technology to those without means would have helped a lot; some children had to attend classes at their neighbor's house (CP 4, 2022, our translation).

Regarding student connectivity, the testimony of CP 4 exemplifies to what extent CPs generally assumed the responsibility for reaching out to students. Keeping them engaged in the schooling process was a concern shared by the interviewees, who, in addition to their regular activities, took it upon themselves to encourage student participation in classes. To achieve this, they instructed teachers to prepare activities that would be printed and distributed with the food baskets, as mentioned in the previous category.

Thus, they needed to support and guide teachers in planning remote activities, both virtual and printed, to be developed synchronously and asynchronously, which increased the pedagogical complexity of CPs' and teachers' work. Providing tablets to 5th and 9th-grade students helped alleviate this problem for those students.

In adapting to remote teaching, one can also highlight the work of CPs in communicating with students. To maintain connections, the professionals worked to engage students in their learning process. Recurrently, CPs stayed in touch with students through WhatsApp groups to encourage their participation in school activities.

You are wonderful, you will be able to learn, and those who don't know will be able to do it [...]. Even outside the pandemic, children need to hear positive words that boost their self-esteem. Many already hear bad things, so here they need to hear good things (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

Additionally, interviews with CPs revealed that, from their perspective, during the pandemic, their relationship with families and the community strengthened. During the distribution of food baskets, there was a listening process to understand the experiences and
needs of the families, which helped reinforce a bond that contributed to preventing dropouts and ensured that students stayed connected to their schooling process.

[...] In addition to carrying out all this work with remote teaching, families came to pick up the food baskets and activities. We delivered the baskets (management staff, employees, and security). We created a delivery schedule based on the school year, dates, and times, and for those who missed the scheduled date, there was another day to come and collect (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

There was no dropout, even in the EJA (Youth and Adult Education), and the food baskets made a big difference. I, who work primarily at night, can say that with the food basket, I could have that personal contact with them because, as they are adults, for the most part, they came to pick them up. During the day, it was mostly the parents or guardians of the students who came – father, uncle, grandfather, godmother. If it were just about activities, I don't know if we would have achieved the results we did because, with the food basket, they kept coming, asking when it would arrive. Throughout the entire pandemic, food baskets were delivered; I believe it was a total of 17 or 18 months of continuous delivery without interruption. If the transport company couldn't bring the products in one month, the next month, they would come very close. One would arrive at the end of the month, and another would arrive at the beginning; the delivery was always carried out, allowing this exchange between the school and the community (CP 5, 2022, our translation).

There was a meeting where many people didn't even have a spot to participate in the online room, so we asked some teachers to leave the meeting to hear the parents (CP 4, 2022, our translation).

To maintain contact, WhatsApp groups were created to facilitate communication between the schools and the parents. Class schedules, materials, audio, and videos were shared to keep the schools and families in contact. Additionally, it was evident that CPs attended to parents when the community needed assistance, which often extended beyond their regular working hours.

[...] Sometimes, it was eight in the evening, and a mother would call, asking for help, and I would help step by step. Some mothers would say they didn't know, so since there were no in-person classes, I made many video calls to help these families (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

[...] There were those mothers who were more dedicated, those who couldn't dedicate as much, and we would call those to try to help (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

[...] Sometimes, it was 11 pm, and they would ask us questions: '[...] teacher, I couldn't complete this assignment. Now, I will send it in the morning. I had no internet.' If it weren't in the middle of the night, they would send messages early in the morning. Our working hours were from 7 am to 11 am and from 1 pm to 5 pm, but we worked all the time (CP 6, 2022, our translation).
As evident, CPs went beyond the scope of their functions, which, as indicated by the literature, is primarily focused on the continuous professional development of teachers, a topic that will be addressed in the following analytical category.

Management of Teachers’ Continuous Professional Development

Conducting teachers' continuous professional development during the pandemic posed a challenge for CPs because, as previously stated, the novelty of emergency remote teaching added other dimensions to the didactic-pedagogical process that went beyond the use of digital teaching and learning tools. The questions that arose included how to ensure engagement and participation in remote classes, how to design activity instructions, which criteria to use to prioritize curriculum content, and how to assess and monitor students doing remote activities while also having to consider similar issues for those students working with printed materials. Moreover, they had to implement pedagogical mediation strategies from the usual face-to-face setting in different spaces and learning times.

These aspects, which, in theory, should have been at the center of the formative work carried out by the CPs, were not always deeply explored due to the more urgent issues highlighted in the previous categories of analysis. Therefore, our investigation observed that, to a large extent, the formative action of CPs in the first year of emergency remote teaching was limited to supporting teachers in developing basic digital technological skills.

It was very frustrating for the teacher to try to give a class, and, at the time, it didn't work. We tested the resources with the teachers, slides, images, and tools, which worked, and which didn't. How to put content and basic things, but that we needed to make the class flow appropriately. As we learned, we provided this training and guidance to the teachers. We had some guidance from the people at the SME (Education Department), they had these moments with us, with the coordinators, we had many online meetings, and that's where we saw and tried to adapt to our reality (CP 2, 2022, our translation).

As seen in the testimony of CP 7, for CPs to be able to perform their work as trainers, the appropriate initiatives developed by the SME were essential, but the feeling of fear and insecurity that marked social relationships in recent years also added a new layer of complexity to the coordinators' work.

We could meet with the teachers weekly through Zoom or Meet. I would talk with the other coordinator; we would organize the agenda, divide the tasks,
and have moments to meet, work on the emotional aspect, to motivate ourselves. Because, besides the families who are experiencing all this suffering, we were also living it and had to console each other to cope with what we were trying to do, painfully and arduously, which was the students’ learning (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

Thus, it is evident that CPs needed to use collective moments of teacher training to provide emotional support to teachers, even though they did not have the professional knowledge or training to perform such a task.

Participants mentioned that, although they did not consider that the monitoring and discussion of teachers' pedagogical practices occurred in the best way, everyone made an effort to fulfill this role by observing the remote classes.

We did make these observations, yes, because sometimes the teacher would ask: 'Please, I am going to give a class to this group...' The teacher sometimes felt insecure because it was a tool he had not mastered yet. In the case of an activity that he wanted to present but couldn't, I would present it if necessary. So, we participated this way; I was there for support and help. Initially, there were many doubts; people were unsure (CP 3, 2022, our translation).

As stated in the testimony of CP 7, despite all efforts to improve remote pedagogical practice, student participation in synchronous classes was limited.

I tried a few times, English classes and history classes three or four times, and I could see the joy of the students being in visual contact, but they were few, and not everyone could connect (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

And so that all teachers had pedagogical support, the CPs relied on the assistance of teachers with more developed digital technological knowledge. According to CP 7, strategies such as self-training and shared training were essential to help overcome the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher W. and Teacher Y., who were the ones who mastered the technologies the most, provided a lot of support. People would say in the group, 'I'm not able to do this,' and someone would reply, 'Try this'... and as there were many questions, they asked me if they could offer training to the staff. I said: 'It's great, and I'll participate too.' So, at such time, we'll launch a link here, and I'll guide you on how to use Google Meet,' or other platforms. And that's how it went, self-training and shared training (CP 7, 2022, our translation).
The collective and collaborative sense of teachers, therefore, was an aspect that strengthened the managerial action of the CPs and also played a central role in the moment of resuming face-to-face classes.

**Priority actions for resuming classes**

For the partial return to classes, the management teams had to organize the environment, following the health protocols established by the Health Department in partnership with Education. In the first instance, classrooms were reduced, classes were separated into groups, and social distancing had to be respected, which brought new pedagogical challenges for education professionals. Once again, the managerial action of CPs proved essential in organizing the return to classes from March to September 2021.

The coordination had dialogues with parents to ensure a safe return with the necessary precautions: wearing masks and using alcohol; hand sanitization at the entrance; social distancing; among other measures. The staff and cafeteria workers also received training on hygiene protocols to prevent contagion and avoid crowding.

The teachers were also instructed on managing the classroom regarding the health protocols. After the classes ended, the school was cleaned, and some CPs also helped with the cleaning to support the team: "[...] it was not easy, it was challenging, but I think we overcame this difficult time. It was a great learning experience for us" (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

CP 1 (2022) states that the Sol School was among the first to resume classes because they strictly followed the protocols. The 100% in-person return was at the beginning of 2022, and according to CP 1 (2022), this process was smoother since students and parents were already familiar with the hygiene protocols: "The students would enter and immediately sanitize their hands with alcohol. It was great to return, things went well" (CP 1, 2022, our translation).

At the Estrela School, according to CP 7 (2002), despite the rigorous health protocols, some families still had a fear of sending their children to face-to-face classes:

> We followed all the care recommended by the WHO, acquiring all the equipment, from the sanitizing doormat at the entrance... and we didn't stop delivering and receiving materials (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

The pedagogical work became even more complex as teachers continued to develop classes in virtual learning environments, continued to prepare and correct printed activities for
students without connectivity, and had to plan and create activities for students who returned to school in staggered groups. Despite efforts to maintain contact with families, not all students remained motivated to learn without being physically present in school.

We had some critical cases, not because we didn't have contact with them, but because they would come home and not do the activities. Then, on the next Friday, they would come without the activities. We tried to work with them on the same Friday. We would agree on everything again; they would take the activities, then disappear for two weeks or a month. We would ask if the student was coming to get the food basket, and there was a record that someone came to get the basket, but where is the student? He didn't talk to me, didn't turn in the activity. So, we had some critical cases like that, even after receiving the activity, it didn't progress (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

It is worth noting, therefore, that the monitoring of learning was carried out based on different pedagogical support models, depending on each student's level, and access to education happened "in drops," causing the CPs to be concerned about the situation they would encounter when classes were fully resumed, but this concern was also overcome by the emotional insecurities expressed by teachers and students during the resumption of classes.

 [...] the return was very confusing, not in the organization within the classroom, but in the reaction of the students, the teachers, and us. We gathered the parents and said, 'Besides the content, we must pay attention to the students' emotions because everything is new. We need to be very patient with them. These anxiety crises, crying, and trembling are not nonsense or whims.' Many of them lost family members and friends. This was also part of our curriculum and still is this socio-emotional issue. 'Teachers deal with the content, but beyond that, focus on the student's balance, reinforcement, encouragement, joy, even though they couldn't touch each other as they would to feel better and welcomed here at school?' We took care of that (CP 7, 2022, our translation).

Issues related to mental health and emotional well-being were also prioritized, so the pedagogical monitoring, although carried out, was affected due to the complexity underlying the various pedagogical support models that were concurrently in place.

We did monitor the students, but minimally, compared to the need. In a class with 35 students, sometimes, there were only 20 attending the class, and those were the students from whom the teacher gave us feedback. The teacher would do the activities in the form, and they would pass it on to us, and from each class, they would tell us how many students responded, let's say 16 students responded, then the teacher would tell us how many of that total did well or not. We didn't monitor those 35 students due to the number of students participating, but it happened in the way I described to you (CP 3, 2022, our translation).
It is essential to highlight that, during the resumption of classes, the CPs were concerned about ensuring that all students returned to school. The SME guided processes of active search for missing students, and this action gained centrality in decisions, in addition to the recomposition of learning.

Despite the many challenges faced, it is concluded that, despite so many unforeseen events, various changes, and adaptations that the pandemic imposed on school work, in contexts where students live in conditions of social vulnerability, the CPs made numerous efforts to ensure the right to education, which can be summarized by the statement of CP 4 (2022): “We managed to make the school function without students and teachers, here, in person. Very strange! But, considering what could have happened, it was interesting!”

Final Considerations

The data indicates that the CPs working in the investigated schools, despite the numerous challenges faced at the beginning of the pandemic and during the resumption of face-to-face classes, made efforts to fulfill their role of providing continuous training for teachers.

However, considering the social vulnerability of the students and the socio-demographic characteristics of the populations served, the scope of schoolwork expanded, and they had to perform tasks that often overlapped with social assistance actions – such as distributing food baskets and listening to families in vulnerable situations – or offering emotional support to students and teachers – which coincides with the roles of educational counselors and school psychologists.

In general, this accumulation of tasks can be attributed to some national issues, such as the dismantling of social assistance policies, which have worsened since 2016, and the absence of educational counselors and school psychologists in municipal education networks. In this regard, future studies need to examine the implementation of Law 13.935/2019, which establishes school social assistance and school psychology services, to ascertain to what extent it will reduce the workload of CPs – and other school management team members.

From the perspective of the formative nature of the CP's work, it is worth highlighting that, in the Sol and Estrela schools, it became evident that the collective work of CPs with each other, in collaboration with the principals and teachers, was a crucial aspect for the development of their work.
An important lesson learned from the dialogue with CPs is that, in crises, from the perspective of educational policies, two essential points need to be prioritized: democratizing connectivity and training teachers to develop digital technological competencies. The difficulties imposed by the lack of connectivity and limited mastery of specialized knowledge by teachers hindered the deepening of understanding in didactic-pedagogical mediation in a crisis context – without neglecting students' food and emotional insecurity during the health crisis.

Finally, the commitment and dedication of the participating CPs must be highlighted, as with the support received from the SME, they maintained their role as trainers of teachers and made every effort to ensure the connection and retention of students in school, as well as initiatives to recover learning during the resumption of classes.

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