

Academics with disabilities access to Remote Education: from policies to practices

*Acesso de acadêmicos/as com deficiência ao ensino remoto na pandemia:
das políticas às práticas*

*Acceso de académicos/as con discapacidad al Educación Remota:
de las políticas a las prácticas*

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze how the context of the pandemic affected students with disabilities, across different campuses of this Tertiary Education Institution. Initially, we have recovered the public policies and documents prepared on remote education on local, state and national levels. Data collection consisted of the stages of document analysis and field research with the responsible managers and academics with disabilities. For the analysis we adopted Cultural-Historical Psychology theoretical-methodological approach. It was concluded that few resources were produced to support people with disabilities during Remote Education, therefore the students had to develop skills and methods of study autonomously in order to overcome the adversities of the context.

Keywords: Special Education. Psychology. Pandemic. Tertiary education. Education.

Resumo: Esta pesquisa objetiva analisar como o contexto da pandemia afetou estudantes com deficiência em uma universidade pública do interior do Paraná. Para tanto, exploramos as políticas públicas e documentos elaborados sobre ensino remoto em nível local, estadual e nacional. Tomamos como referencial a perspectiva teórico-metodológica da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural. A coleta de dados deu-se nas etapas de levantamento de documentos e na pesquisa de campo, com entrevistas a acadêmicos/as com deficiência e a gestores/as responsáveis pelas políticas de inclusão da universidade. Conclui-se que se produziu poucos recursos para amparar as pessoas com deficiência durante o ensino remoto na pandemia, de maneira que os/as discentes precisaram, de forma autônoma, desenvolver estratégias de estudo a fim de superar as adversidades do contexto.

Palavras-chave: Educação Especial. Psicologia. Pandemia. Ensino Superior. Educação.

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Resumen: Esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar cómo el contexto de la pandemia afectó estudiantes con discapacidad, en diferentes campus de esta Institución de Educación Superior. Hemos recuperado las políticas públicas y los documentos elaborados sobre educación remota a nivel local, estatal y nacional. Tomamos como referencia la perspectiva teórico-metodológica de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural. La recolección de datos consistió en levantamiento de documentos e investigación de campo con gerentes responsables y académicos con discapacidades. Se concluyó que produjeron pocos recursos durante la Educación Remota, por consiguiente, los estudiantes con discapacidad tuvieron que desarrollar habilidades y modos de estudio de manera autónoma para superar las adversidades del contexto.

Palabras clave: Educación Especial. Psicología. Pandemia. Educación Superior. Educación.

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Introduction

This research is derived from the activities of six researchers from universities located in the North, Northeast, South, and Southeast regions, members of Working Group (WG) 59 Psychology and Educational Policies of National Association of Research and Graduate Studies on Psychology. WG 59 proposed extensive research entitled *Psychology, education and remote work in the pandemic context: public policies, social practices and resistance (2020-2022)*. Specifically in this paper, with a narrower scope, we analyzed how the pandemic context affected undergraduate students with disabilities at a public university in the countryside of Paraná. For the analysis, we adopted Cultural-Historical Psychology theoretical-methodological approach, which is based on the foundations of historical-dialectical materialism.

The Covid-19 pandemic context brought the urgency of studying strategies to deal with the global health crisis, which has affected physical and mental health, as well as life as a whole. Psychology, as a science and profession, engaged in overcoming this crisis by providing subsidies on the impact of the pandemic on educational processes.

Regarding formal education, the pandemic has further intensified inequality. In 2019, the Brazilian Social Indicators Synthesis (IBGE, 2020, p.64) presented already and extreme poverty situation of part of the Brazilian population, about 16.2 million people survived at the time with an income lower than R\$ 178.00 per month. Considering the international poverty line (US\$5.50 per day/R\$ 25.86 per day), a quarter of the Brazilian population (25.9%) was living below the poverty line. In addition, in the international ranking of social inequalities, which covers more than 150 countries, Brazil ranks sixth.

The UNESCO report (2020) alerts of an increase in social inequality in the context of the pandemic and the risk of exclusion related to poverty, destitution, and malnutrition. It is important to note that the logic of exclusion and inequality in Brazil is the result of a historical process in the country that has further exposed the necropolitics³ of a society made up of privileges, with the main privileges in the context of the Covid-19 crisis being the possibility of social isolation, hygiene, and food (MAGALHÃES, 2020).

In consonance with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), more than 150 countries have implemented the closure of school spaces as a strategy to control the pandemic. In Brazil, the Ministry of Education (MEC) indicated the possibility of using Emergency Remote Education (ERE) in Tertiary Education with the Government Ordinance No. 343 of March 17, 2020, and later with the Provisional Measure No. 934, which flexibilized the obligation to fulfillment of 200 school days for Basic Education.

Despite the advances achieved regarding education for people with disabilities, expressed in the National Policy for Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (BRASIL, 2008) and Law No. 13.146/2015 (BRASIL, 2015), which institutes the Person with Disabilities Statute, during the pandemic and use of ERE, there has occurred "a defunding allied with a tension for the expansion of privatization and philanthropy in the sector, which were explicit in the attempts to review this policy since 2018" (SOUZA; DAINÉZ, 2020, p.4). Such policy is evidenced by Decree No. 10.502 of September 30, 2020, which foresaw for the enrollment of children and adolescents with disabilities in specialized classes and institutions, based on a prior evaluation that would determine the possibility of attending regular education. This proposal goes against the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Brazil is a signatory to, which provides for an inclusive educational system. This decree was revoked in 2023 by Decree No. 11.370.

Regarding Tertiary Education, in early 2020, the National Council of Education and the Ministry of Education (MEC), approved guidelines⁴ to be adopted by Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs), among which are guidelines for Tertiary Education and Special Education. They address the provision of non-face-to-face activities in order to adopt accessibility measures and ensure the adequacy of materials, as well as providing guidance and partnership between specialized professionals and professors to ensure effective inclusion. It is important to highlight that, at the onset of the pandemic, federal universities

³ Term developed by the philosopher and historian Achille Mbembe to propose that contemporary forms of maximum sovereignty reside in power and the ability to dictate who can live and who should die (MBEMBE, 2016).

⁴Available in: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/busca-geral/12-noticias/acoes-programas-e-projetos-%20637152388/89051-cne-aprova-diretrizes-para-escolas-durante-a-pandemia>.

were experiencing an increase in the number of students with disabilities, as a result of Law No. 13.409, of December 28, 2016 (Brazil, 2016a), which established quotas policies for students with disabilities. The creation of the Include Program - Accessibility in Tertiary Education, with edictal starting in 2005 and institutionalization by ordinance in 2007 (Brazil, 2007) at the federal level, stimulated the creation and consolidation of support structures for students with disabilities within these institutions. However, there is little knowledge about the structure prepared in federal and state public TEIs regarding the support for students with disabilities, considering the scenario of remote learning, such as that which occurred due to social isolation in 2020 (FREIRE; PAIVA; FORTES, 2020, p.958, our translation).

With ERE and the aforementioned defunding, the teaching-learning process had to be reconfigured. If, prior to the pandemic, movement, body expressions, and questioning acted as a thermometer for teaching practice, the use of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT) combined with the crisis context caused by Covid-19 generated a social situation in which individuals had to mobilize their thinking, speech, memory, imagination, among other higher psychological functions, to understand and deal with the demands of remote teaching (POTT, 2020). Based on Historical-Cultural Psychology, we can understand this crisis moment as an indicator that the resources previously available to deal with concrete reality are no longer sufficient, and new ways of thinking and acting must be found. According to Pott (2020), the development of new perspectives for the teaching-learning process should not be detached from the collective, since in this perspective the development of higher psychological functions is only possible through human relations, which require intentionality in order to confer meaning and significance to actions. It is worth emphasizing according to Souza and Dainez,

while on the one hand, from the ideas of accessibility and the social model of disability, technologies are presented as support for pedagogical practices insofar as, in some cases, they enhance the individual's relationship with the environment, expanding strategies for inclusion in teaching and learning processes; on the other hand, when placed as the central axis in educational policy guidelines and investment priorities, it deprioritizes other essential fronts such as professor training and the reorganization of school structure and redefinition of its culture. There is an idea, both in educational policy guidelines and in daily school life, that technology alone is sufficient for educating people with disabilities (SOUZA; DAINEZ, 2020, p.4, our translation).

The authors mentioned a crucial issue for the inclusion of people with disabilities, as often technologies support teaching, but by themselves they are insufficient to handle the teaching-learning process. In this process, according to Historical-Cultural Psychology, the mediation of a more experienced other, in this case primarily the teacher, is necessary, as well as interaction with other students in university activities. For Vygotsky (2010), "the process

of development does not coincide with the learning, the process of development follows the learning, which creates the area of potential development" (p.116, our translation), in other words, for learning to take place, mediation through the social environment, teachers, and interaction with peers is necessary. If there is no equitable access for students with disabilities to classes and activities at university, there is also no equitable possibility of implementing the learning process and expanding their development area.

In this sense, the objectives of this research are to analyze the forms of organization of Special Education produced in the context of the pandemic in the different campuses of the university, as well as to recover public policies on ERE implemented in the institution; identify how institution managers promoted ERE, as well as the actions developed to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities; understand how students with disabilities evaluate the experience of ERE and analyze the impact on the organization of disabled students' studies at the university.

In a brief literature review, it was possible to observe rare academic productions focused on people with disabilities in Tertiary Education in the context of the pandemic. The descriptors "person with disability", "tertiary education", and "pandemic" were used for the specific period from 2020 to 2021, and only review articles were selected for this search. A total of only 11 results were found, which justifies the realization of this research.

Methodological procedures

The research involved two stages. First, we conducted a survey on documents produced at the national, state, and local levels. We searched for documents on the websites of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Tertiary Education Institution (TEI) in question, as well as with the university sectors responsible for inclusion in tertiary education. We analyzed, at the national and state levels, the guidelines of the National Council of Education in conjunction with MEC, opinions from the Superior Education Chamber of the Paraná State Council of Education, the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education of 2008, and the Brazilian Inclusion Law of 2015. At the local level, we analyzed the Resolution No. 45 of the Teaching, Research, and Extension Commission of the university, Normative Instruction No. 1 of the Pro-Rector of Teaching (*Pró-Reitoria de Ensino - PROEN*), the document "Accessibility Guidelines for Deaf Students and Professors at Unicentro during Social Isolation" produced by the Sign Language/Portuguese Language Translators and Interpreters and the Inclusion and Accessibility Program (IAP) in April 2020, and Circular Memorandum No. 06/2021-PROEN of December 20, 2021. The second stage consisted of field research conducted with undergraduate students self-declared as having disabilities and the university educational managers. In all procedures, we

observed the guidelines of the Brazilian National Health Council No. 466/12/CNS and 510/2016/CNS in accordance with Circular Letter No. 2/2021/CONEP/SECNS/MS and Communication SEI/MS - 0014765796 - for the pandemic period, through the signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF) by the participants, approved with Opinion No. 4.467.004 from the university's Research Ethics Committee.

Initially, we disclosed the invitation for undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities at the university to participate in this research through institutional communication channels and social networks, by providing an electronic form via Google Forms to collect initial data on the students' experience with remote learning and their practices with this study mode. We also asked, as one of the questionnaire items, if the students would agree to participate in a semi-directed remote interview. For the interviews, we took into account the specific needs presented by the student, ensuring accessibility conditions for all who agreed to participate. After dissemination on social networks, emails, and WhatsApp groups, we obtained ten responses in total. Four responses were excluded from the research as they were from non-disabled individuals. We identified that the other six were physically or visually disabled individuals, three women and three men, who self-identified as black, white, and Asian, with ages ranging from 19 to 41 years. The questionnaire responses were systematized into three groups based on content: identification questions of the participants, questions about the platforms used for remote learning, and finally, questions about the quality of access to classes. The interview was conducted with three visually impaired undergraduate students from one of the campuses via Google Meet.

Table I - characterization of the participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Type of disability	Knowledge Sector	Period
A	Female	19 years old	visual/sensory disability	Health Sciences	Third year
B	Male	22 years old	Visual disability	Health Sciences	Fifth year
C	Female	20 years old	visual disability	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	Second year
D	Male	33 years old	Physical disability	Applied Social Science	Not informed
E	Female	35 years old	Physical disability	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	Fourth year
F	Male	41 years old	Physical disability	Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	Not informed

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The research with (co)responsible managers for inclusion began with initial contact with the head of the sector responsible for the inclusion at this university, two managers were indicated to respond to semi-directed remote interviews as an instrument for the survey/report of actions implemented or to be carried out in the institution, considering the current legislation, as well as the actions developed to meet the demands of students with disabilities, and how they evaluate the experience of the ERE.

Afterward, the interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for approval. Subsequently, data were interpreted in light of Historical-Dialectical Materialism. The categories of analysis specific to Historical-Dialectical Materialism, identifying the contradictions and multiple determinations involved, the process and the recognition of historicity. Based on the analysis of the questionnaire responses, the material collected in the interviews, and the documents, we created *a posteriori* three categories of analysis that emerged from the interlocution between policies (whole) and social practices (part), namely, the structural challenges for the work of the Inclusion and Accessibility Program; access and permanence in the university as a person with disabilities in times of pandemic; the place of disability in the learning process.

The structural challenges for the work of the Inclusion and Accessibility Program

According to the website of the studied university, which contains a brief history of educational inclusion at the institution, the first movement towards ensuring inclusion and accessibility was "moved by a community consultation on the conditions that the university held to receive a high school student with hearing disability who aspired to attend university." Furthermore, there was a movement by educators in the fields of Education and Health who promoted initiatives to enable people with disabilities to access the university. In 1997, seven years after the founding of the university, the 1st Forum on Debates on "The Issue of People with Special Educational Needs - Ethical, Social and Political Aspects" was held, and in subsequent years there were four more editions. In 2001, this Forum was held with the objective of structuring the pedagogical practice relationship and the conditions of students with disabilities at the university. In 2002, the Program for Support to People with Special Needs was regulated, renamed in 2007 to the Program for Pedagogical Support to Students with Special Educational Needs, and in 2011, it became denominated as the Inclusion and Accessibility Program (IAP).

Currently, the IAP is composed of a Coordinator of Support for the Division of Service for People with Special Needs at the Rectorate Unit, a Head of the Division of Student Support

and Service for People with Special Needs on another campus, seven Sign Language Interpreters, and an intern at each campus. The positions are remunerated, and there is no requirement to be from the area of Special Education; furthermore, the position is granted by the recommendation of the Pro-Rector's Office. The program aims to guide, support and implement policies that ensure accessibility in the university environment; assist in the access, permanence, and performance of students, professors, and university agents with special, transitory or permanent needs; and, finally, coordinate the support activities to the academic community to be executed for the guarantee of inclusion.

According to managers' report, it is possible to understand that the work of the IAP is centered in the pedagogical field, through the fight for guaranteeing decent working conditions to sign language interpreters, in the service of people with hearing disabilities who need support, and in the translation of events at the university; in the expansion of texts and reading, transcription of texts in the braille system, and student tutoring; and other demands for curricular adaptation. However, according to the aforementioned regulation, the IAP also competes in

- IV - Keep a permanently updated database regarding the internal community of the [university] that presents some type of special need, in order to guide the inclusive actions to be taken;
- VIII - Conduct courses and workshops on assistive methodologies, LIBRAS, and Braille for the entire [university] community;
- IX - Stimulate and support the development of permanent research on advances related to technologies that can facilitate the inclusion of students in the [university];
- XI - Assist in the involvement of the academic community with issues related to inclusion and accessibility (UNICENTRO, 2011, p.2, our translation).

Regarding the database, the survey is only conducted during the university's entrance exam and is not disclosed to the Knowledge Areas and Departments. At one of the campuses, the survey is conducted through a specialized professor in the area of Special Education responsible for the IAP, as a way to supply the lack of data and ensure direct contact of students with special needs (with disability or disorder) to the program. The manager, from whom assistance is requested to conduct the entrance exam, identifies possible students and subsequently analyzes the list of approved candidates in order to provide the necessary support upon the student's admission to the university. It is also reported that this manager also seeks direct contact with the departments of this campus to present the program to students, however, there is no formalization of this work, which allows gaps in the dissemination of the IAP, as will be demonstrated by the students' reports. In the campus where the Rectorate is located, according to the

report, students must request support at the time of enrollment and are then referred to file the request for assistance. This protocol is sent to the Student Support Coordination Office and, consequently, to the IAP of that campus.

Regarding the courses and workshops on Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) and Braille for the entire academic community, it was evidenced during the interviews with the managers, the difficulty in hiring adequate personnel for the curricular classes of undergraduate programs. For instance, the Department of Psychology of this university has never offered, in its 20 years of existence, the teaching of LIBRAS, despite this discipline being offered as an elective course.

With regard to the development of technologies aimed at facilitating inclusion, managers and students pointed out the absence of these in the ERE. The university has not developed any technological resource to guarantee access for students with disabilities beyond those already available, nor have they been instructed on the use of platforms. There was only a general instruction at the beginning of Remote Education exclusively for the use of Moodle. Furthermore, in one of the manager's reports, it was possible to understand the greatest challenge, that is the integration. In the analysis of the public of IAP in both administrations, there was no reference to the advanced campuses. However, in the data collection of this research's form, one of the advanced campuses responded, indicating that, since there are no reference people in the advanced campuses, there is an even larger contingent of people who would benefit from the program but do not have access to it.

The Regulation also indicates that the Pro-Rector of Teaching (PROEN) has, among its competencies, the systematic monitoring of the IAP, as well as being responsible for the Memorandum sent annually to the sectors and departments that instructs on the distribution of classes. We analyzed Circular Memorandum No. 06/2021-PROEN of December 20, 2021, regarding Article 11 of the IAP Regulation, which provides for "an increase of up to 50% in the Individual Teaching Activity Plan for those hours designated for class preparation for classes with students with special needs." The memorandum does not mention the possibility of this increase that could benefit students with disabilities who need the prior availability of materials and/or adaptation of the curriculum. We requested information from the nine Knowledge Sectors that house the Departments asking if they use the increase in Individual Teaching Activity Plan hours, as provided by the legislation. We obtained two responses, both negative.

The involvement of the academic community regarding inclusion and accessibility is deficient due to the lack of institutional discussion related to the issue. There is no involvement of students themselves in the elaboration of documents and strategies to

confront the structural ableism that permeates the university and the external community. It is important to people with disabilities occupy the university's space and overcome the stigma that also permeates educational inclusion, since their admission to the university.

Access and permanence at the university for a person with disabilities in times of pandemic

According to the IAP management, access to tertiary education is achieved through: the entrance exam, the Continuous Assessment Program (CAP) and the Unified Selection System (*Sistema de Seleção Unificada - Sisu*). People with disabilities can identify themselves through these systems to receive the necessary assistance in taking the exams on equal terms with non-disabled individuals. At the university, the IAP provides support during the university insertion tests (entrance exam and CAP) and also accompanies these students when they enter the institution, providing guidance on the need to request specialized assistance during enrollment. This request is generated and forwarded to the Student Support Coordinator, which includes the IAP. However, the management explicitly states that this support is mainly provided to people with hearing impairments who require a Sign Language/Portuguese Interpreter. In the interviews with the students, only one of the participants required assistance in taking the university entrance exam. She reports that

"During the enrollment process, you have to indicate that you require special assistance and then specify everything you need. I marked everything I needed, and they offered me everything. When I went to enroll, I mentioned that I needed help, and they directed me to the IAP. The professor talked to me for a long time. They took my phone number and everything. On the first day of class, she called me before to ask what time I would arrive, so she could be there to help, and that's what happened. They gave us a lot of attention in this regard" (Student C).

This shows that, when they receiving information about the needs of students, the university, through its teams, organizes and provides adequate support in many cases. However, despite this, from other reports it was possible to observe how students with disabilities often do not know about the IAP's work. When were asked about the existence of any specialized services at the institution, the answers were:

"[...] there isn't, they didn't even ask about it. They didn't do this mapping. In fact, I feel like there is erasure of people with disabilities within the university" (Student A).

"So, since I arrived at the university, they referred me to PIA. Last year, the professor who works at PIA sent me a message, made this contact to see if I needed anything,

but it was in June. We were not having classes, you know? And then I didn't have that follow-up in September/October when remote learning was getting a bit harder" (Student B).

It's possible to see that students with disabilities often become aware of the IAP when referred to the service by their professors. However, due to the lack of widespread promotion of the program within the university, there is a weakness in the institution's ability to respond to the demands of students who require assistance without the need for referral by other university agents. This gap becomes even more evident when considering that

the PIA program provides support to students, professors, staff, and interns with special needs, including intellectual, sensory, physical or multiple disabilities, mental disorders as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-IV, high abilities, health disorders that lead to some type of disability, and global disorders (UNICENTRO, 2011, p.1, our translation).

Although, the focus of this research is on individuals with permanent disabilities, it is clear that the IAP serves a broad range of individuals with both permanent and temporary needs, including those without disabilities. Nevertheless, students with disabilities complete their studies without being aware of the program. It is evident that this gap is prejudicial to the entire academic community that may require the service or recognize it as a universal right to access tertiary education.

In light of the foregoing, with the advance of the pandemic, and in line with the guidelines of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, in April 2020, the Pro-Rector of Teaching issued Normative Instruction No. 1, which outlines the procedures to be adopted for non-face-to-face activities in face-to-face undergraduate courses while social distancing measures are in place due to the pandemic. This document does not mention any specifics about the measures to be taken for accessibility to education and explicitly states in Article 6 that "Moodle [the university's online learning platform] is the official platform for the insertion, dissemination, and registration of non-face-to-face activities." However, this platform only has two accessibility adaptations, namely the change of background color and the regulation of font size. During both interviews, the difficulty of accessing the Online Student (online platform used by the university) and Moodle (virtual learning environment used for classes) was evident.

As previously explained, remote education has brought even more obstacles to accessibility for people with disabilities. Therefore, a document titled "Accessibility guidelines for deaf students and professors at Unicentro during the period of social isolation" was developed. In this document, the team of sign language/Portuguese interpreters and the IAP

team provide information on the necessary communication and adaptation means to ensure accessibility in remote education. They also highlighted the responsibility of departments and professors to communicate closely with the IAP to ensure accessibility and effective inclusion (UNICENTRO, 2020). Despite these guidelines, we noticed significant failures in providing equitable access to remote education for people with disabilities at the university, leading to some cases of course locking, according to interviewees.

All participants reported that the main platform used to make course materials available was Moodle, with email and WhatsApp also being mentioned in some responses. Four respondents stated said the platforms used during remote education partially ensured their accessibility, while three stated that the platforms had the necessary accessibility for their individual use. During the interview, some participants reported significant difficulties in using the Moodle platform and keeping up with the discussion forums. About the platform used for their classes, all participants selected Google Meet and reported that the university provided the classes recording. In addition, the participants indicated that they were coursing four or more classes in ERE.

The third and final set of questions was focused on the quality of access to the ERE and the main difficulties encountered by the participants. In relation to the human and material resources that students needed for accessibility to classes, the vast majority answered internet access. We also obtained some responses related to font enlargement, screen reading software, appropriate electronic equipment, adaptation of activities requested by professors, also, some participants responded that they did not need any extra resources for remote class access. The last question on the form asked participants to report gaps in effective accessibility in classes. We list some of the responses found:

"The availability of previously used materials. When I zoom in on Google Meet, the class becomes too heavy and it crashes. I can't follow the teacher with the camera open and zoom on the slide" (Student B).

"Slides/materials presented with larger fonts" (Student A).

"Many exercises to do with the left hand" (Student D).

"I need more knowledge about technologies, and I believe that if the university used another platform, I would have more accessibility, and my difficulties would be reduced" (Student C).

From the above reports, it is possible to perceive specificities for each student with a disability. However, it is evident in every report the difficulty of access to the rights of people with disabilities advocated by public policies already in place at the university, contributing, therefore, to exclusionary practices.

The Place of Disability in the Learning

According to Vygotsky (2000), we understand disability as part of human diversity, and that its teaching-learning process is mediated by culture. This conception directly opposes the traditional notion that treats disability as a flaw or imperfection in development that limits and restricts learning. The author provides a new understanding of the developmental and learning process, stating that disability has a double influence on human development. On one hand, disability brings difficulties in the adaptation process; on the other, these difficulties and obstacles allow for the stimulation of alternative adaptation routes to compensate for the disability and enable the development of higher psychological functions. Therefore, cultural development is the most important sphere for Historical-Cultural Psychology, "where organic development is impossible, there are infinite possibilities for cultural development" (VIGOTSKI, 2000, p. 313, our translation).

Taking culture as a fundamental part of understanding how disability is structured in 21st century capitalist society and how access to education is achieved for people with disabilities, we examine how current conceptions of disability are configured. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), two current models of disability coexist, the medical model and the social model, along with three classification systems. The medical model follows the traditional conception elucidated by Vygotsky (2000) that disability is an incapacity, "a problem of the person, caused directly by a disease, trauma, or other health problem, that requires medical assistance in the form of individual treatment by professionals" (WHO, 2004, p.21). In contrast, the social model understands disability as an incapacity created by the social environment, not linked to the individual.

Regarding classification systems, the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems - ICD 11 (WHO, 2022), the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - DSM V (APA, 2014), and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health - ICF (WHO, 2004) are used. According to Dias and Oliveira (2013), in Brazil, there is a prevalence of the medical model since medical reports are used for acquiring the Continuous Benefit Provision, quotas use, and complementing and/or defining psychopedagogical evaluations. Furthermore, the authors state that "what is still commonly observed is the simple requirement of a medical report specifying the disability which, many times, is only represented by the ICD number, without evidence of the subjective and developmental

characteristics of the evaluated person" (op. cit, p.174, our translation). During the interviews with the students, it was found the process of discovering itself as a person with disability differs from a simple medical diagnostic assessment.

"[...] before, I didn't consider myself visually disabled. This was also a process of acceptance, you know? I have low vision, there is an ICD number, it is 18.4. Anyway, there is a whole table there, but I didn't accept it" (Student B).

"[...] since I was 3 years old, I have been a person with a disability, and my recognition as this person was only a year ago" (Student A).

In these two reports, the participants also mentioned that it was in the university that they recognized and accepted that they are people with disabilities. From these interviews, we also understand the difficulty of accessing the target audience of this research, whether due to the (in)accessibility of social networks, the pandemic context and ERE, or the lack of recognition as a person with a disability. This lack of recognition also brought obstacles in the learning process, as exemplified by Student A:

"[...] even knowing all the difficulties I encountered because of how I am, you know? What I carry, it wasn't something that I thought was because I am a person with a disability. I always thought they were difficulties that everyone has, and then when I looked back, it made sense. So, my recognition was within the university in the second year."

During the interviews, the transition process from in-person to remote teaching was investigated. Three distinct contexts were observed: that of a student who recognized itself as a person with a disability and was recognized as such and studied for some years in the in-person modality (Student B); a student who began to recognize itself as a person with a disability during the pandemic and with ERE and, therefore, was not recognized by peers as a person with a disability (Student A); and finally, a student who recognized itself as a person with a disability since childhood and was recognized by peers, but had only a few months of in-person activity and started studying remotely due to the pandemic (Student C).

In these three distinct contexts, it was found the obstacles presented by ERE were overcome through adaptations that the students themselves developed. There was the insertion of Assistive Technology (AT) (Dosvox⁵) for daily use, which, despite not ceasing the adversities, allowed for the monitoring of classes and modes of study organization in order to

⁵ Voice synthesizer developed by the Computer Center of UFRJ, designed to assist people with visual disabilities to use the computer.

reduce the overload caused by the computer. However, these obstacles, allied with a lack of knowledge about AT instruments, accessibility gaps and support by IAP, as well as the absence of discussions on the subject, had both pedagogical and physical impacts on people with disabilities participating in the research.

According to Vygotsky (2018), human development occurs through language mediation, whether through verbal speech, sign language, or other forms of communication. As this language becomes more complex it provides possibilities for conceptualization and generalization, higher human psychological functions are developed. "Man is a social being and, outside of society, he would never develop the qualities, characteristics that are the result of the methodical development of all humanity" (Vygotsky, 2018, p.90, our translation). Therefore, it is the right of people with or without disabilities to have access to language in a complex and integral way. However, it is possible to verify from the reports of the students that there were significant aggravations in this equitable access, such as difficulty accessing discussion forums on the Moodle platform and slides in inappropriate layout, as we can see in the interview fragments:

"[...] now with the pandemic, yes, it has worsened. I changed my glasses seven months ago and I'll have to change them again because I can't stand it anymore. By the third class of the day, I can't anymore because, despite having this protection against blue light, my glasses don't help [...] and then my migraines came back a lot. I hadn't had them for years, but now I have to take medication three times a day, for example. I think that's what I find most difficult; it's with my headaches, due to the blue light from the notebook and the slides, and also because we have to always be doing activities, always writing, always on the computer" (Student A).

"[...] at first it was really hard [...]. I couldn't use the computer properly, I used Dosvox at the time, but I couldn't use the internet, I couldn't post things on the platform, I still can't do it today. So, I had to write the assignments and have made a recording of my audio, do a reading of the assignments to send to the teachers for correction. Then it got better" (Student C).

"[...] sometimes the computer couldn't handle it, because of the technology. Then everything would freeze. Then I would get annoyed, so to speak, and then I would get distracted and the Meet screen would freeze [...] They [the PIA] would enlarge the texts for me, often they would print them, and this is something I also lost with remote learning because there [at university], when I wanted to print a text, I would go to the PIA that would print it for me, and here I had to manage on my own. When I wanted to read a text, I would just read it on the computer, which I don't like. I learn more by writing, scribbling" (Student B).

In situations where disability was addressed in the classroom, during discussions with peers and professors, there was more effective inclusion and the learning process occurred more profusely. In these reports, it was possible to identify that the exchange of experiences and learning with other colleagues provided a space for education beyond

the professor-student dynamic, and peers helped to ensure accessibility at the university, even though it occurred virtually during remote education.

According to Vygotsky (2000), disability as an incapacity is a result of the preeminence of the secondary defect over the primary defect, that is, when the social context expresses the consequences arising from organic limitations and overlays them on the defect itself. Therefore, the structure of culture, values system, and meanings that a social context elaborates about disability make it a matter of greater or lesser importance. Thus, the need arises for universities to engage in discussions about ableism, think of coping strategies, and enable educational inclusion.

Final Considerations

This research aimed to analyze the modes of organization of Special Education produced in the context of the pandemic at a public university in the interior of Paraná. Data collection was carried out through the survey of documents produced at the national, state, and local levels, as well as field research. An electronic form was disseminated to collect initial data, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with self-declared students with disabilities and educational managers.

We observed that the Inclusion and Accessibility Program has the function of serving the entire academic community who needs specific attention in the teaching-learning process. In general, the program has provided pedagogical support to students with disabilities at the institution, but it faces various structural difficulties in implementing its other competencies. For example, the program's dissemination to the academic community is limited, and there is weak integration between the management of the Inclusion and Accessibility Program, the lack of local support in certain campuses due to the shortage of human resources, as well as other difficulties related to hiring professors for teaching LIBRAS, working conditions for Libras/Portuguese Language Translators/Interpreters, and limited Braille materials related to the specific contents of different classes offered.

The first movement towards inclusion at the university in question occurred through a public consultation with the community and, institutionally, in 1997, through discussion forums on the theme. In 2002, the program was regulated with a focus on accessibility and inclusion, and it is currently named the Inclusion and Accessibility Program (IAP), linked to the Student Support Coordination (COORAE). Its last reformulation occurred in 2011.

From the interviews with the managers, it was possible to perceive a concentration of action in the pedagogical field. Some important gaps appear in the structural and collective scope and were evidenced by the participating students with disabilities in the research through the online form and interviews. It was possible to analyze that inclusion and accessibility in the institution occurs similarly to Specialized Educational Assistance, as discussed by Oliveira and Silva (2021), that is, due to structural difficulties, it maintains a concept of disability centered on the student, acts to compensate for atypical biological development, thus, even unintentionally, "reinforcing the hegemony of a traditional school culture and organization and based on the isolated work of AEE [Special Education Assistance] in resource rooms, far from teachers in regular classes and other school professionals," reproducing at the university something that has been built throughout this student's educational journey and that, in a naturalized way, does not modify the excluding structure (op. cit, 2021, p. 265, our translation).

Regarding Emergency Remote Teaching, the crisis context brought significant impacts to teaching due to inaccessibility, lack of appropriate materials, and aggravation of health caused by excessive screen use. According to the interviews with the students, there was a distancing that affected the contact of PIA management with the students. In accordance with the interviewees, the university did not provide AT to subsidize the teaching-learning process, leaving it up to the student to find ways to overcome the access difficulties. From the reports, it can be concluded that ERE intensified the invisibility of students with disabilities. It is noteworthy that only one document was prepared during this period that addressed teaching for people with disabilities, in this case, only with hearing disabilities. Furthermore, the IAP's action occurred in an individualized and specialized manner for those who were already being served.

During the course of this work, it was possible to disseminate the IAP's competencies to the participating students in the interviews, as well as to provide a space for listening in the meeting with the managers and students. This space demonstrated the need to rethink the structure of Special Education in the university, so that effective inclusion of people with disabilities can occur. Based on this research, it is hoped to contribute to the IAP's action, as well as to insert people with disabilities into discussions of the topic at the university, through the dissemination of research results to the academic community and, specifically, to the managers and participating students. It is important to emphasize the need to expand researches in this field beyond the context of the pandemic, so that progress can be made in ensuring inclusive education.

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