



The importance of social inclusion of disadvantaged children and adults in distance education

La importancia de la inclusión social de niños y adultos desfavorecidos en la educación a distancia

A importância da inclusão social das crianças e adultos menos favorecidos à educação à distância

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Abstract

The aim is to discuss the importance of the social inclusion of children and adults belonging to less favored classes in distance education. In order to do so, it highlights the main characteristics observed in distance education, demonstrating through studies and analysis how this teaching modality has been growing in Brazil and showing the positive points in promoting the integration between technology and educational routines. In the process of elaboration of the work, a bibliographical research was carried out to present the main concepts, analyzes and observations regarding distance education and its application, highlighting that through this educational modality some people manage to promote their school development, although still It is necessary to look for alternatives so that needy students have access to distance education, since a large part of the most impoverished layer of the population does not have a computer or internet, which puts them in a condition of inequality in relation to other students who have access to the ICTs.

Descriptors: Education; Distance Education; Pandemic; Social Inclusion; Social Vulnerability.

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Resumén

El objetivo es discutir la importancia de la inclusión social de niños y adultos pertenecientes a clases menos favorecidas en la educación a distancia. Para ello, destaca las principales características observadas en la educación a distancia, demostrando a través de estudios y análisis cómo esta modalidad de enseñanza viene creciendo en Brasil y mostrando los puntos positivos en la promoción de la integración entre tecnología y rutinas educativas. En el proceso de elaboración del trabajo se realizó una investigación bibliográfica, con el fin de presentar los principales conceptos, análisis y observaciones respecto a la educación a distancia y su aplicación, destacando que a través de esta modalidad educativa algunas personas logran promover su desarrollo escolar, aunque aún es necesario buscar alternativas para que los estudiantes más necesitados tengan acceso a la educación a distancia, ya que gran parte de la capa más empobrecida de la población no cuenta con computadora ni internet, lo que los pone en una condición de desigualdad en relación con los demás. estudiantes que tienen acceso a las TIC.

Descriptor: Educación; Educación a Distancia; Pandemia; Inclusión Social; Vulnerabilidad Social.

Resumo

Objetiva-se discutir a importância da inclusão social das crianças e adultos pertencentes a classes menos favorecidas à educação à distância. Para tanto, evidencia as principais características observadas na educação à distância, demonstrando por meio de estudos e análises como essa modalidade de ensino vem crescendo dentro do Brasil e evidenciando quais os pontos positivos em promover a integração entre tecnologia e as rotinas educativas. No processo de elaboração do trabalho foi realizada uma pesquisa bibliográfica, a fim de apresentar os principais conceitos, análises e observações referente a educação a distância e sua aplicação, destacando que por meio dessa modalidade educativa algumas pessoas conseguem promover o seu desenvolvimento escolar, embora ainda seja necessário buscar-se por alternativas para que alunos carentes tenham acesso à EaD, já que grande parte da camada mais empobrecida da população não tem computador e nem internet, o que os coloca em condição de desigualdade com relação a outros alunos que têm acesso às TICs.

Descritores: Educação; Educação à Distância; Pandemias; Inclusão Social; Vulnerabilidade Social.

Introduction

The teaching of Distance Education (DE) is an educational practice that has gone through several periods in its history and aims to reach everyone, with the purpose of promoting learning in a different time and space through which the student can study at any time and place that enables their performance, with an essential teacher-student relationship, through institutional means and strategies to reach the expected results.

The present work seeks to highlight how the processes of distance education have given students an opportunity for educational development, as well as further expanding the reach of educational processes within the national territory. The motivation for this work arose from the following question linked to this new teaching reality: what are the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning in Brazil in the current pandemic period?

That said, the present work aims to discuss the importance of the social inclusion of children and adults belonging to less favored classes in distance education.

This is a relevant study, because, with the advent of the COVID-19 Pandemic, children, adolescents and teachers entered a process of social isolation, with no forecast for the return to face-to-face classes.

Schools needed to reinvent themselves and adopt the system of online classes in order to reduce the educational loss of students. This practice has been successful, however, it has also served as an instrument of

social exclusion, as people from a less affluent social class cannot follow online classes or send their schoolwork due to lack of computers, smartphones and Internet access¹.

Thus, it is important to know the current reality of distance education in Brazil and consider its positive and negative points in the current pandemic period.

As a methodology, to carry out this article, bibliographic research was used in books and articles that are dedicated to the study of distance education as an instrument of social inclusion and exclusion in Brazil.

Distance education in Brazil: the history of distance education in Brazil

Distance education in Brazil began in 1904. In Brazil, the well-known international schools, which were private schools, offered courses that were paid and by correspondence, aimed at qualifying people who wanted to work in the commerce and service sectors. Following the development of information and communications technology (ICT), the history of distance education in Brazil is divided into three moments: the first was defined by courses through correspondence and the use of radio, which constituted an innovative decision at the time. The first experience with the creation of Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro was on April 20, 1923, created by researchers Henrique Morize and Roque Pinto, with the aim of increasing access to education. Radio has a decades-long history of supporting education, through numerous programs



produced and broadcast by it. In 1936, the radio was donated to the Ministry of Health, and the following year, broadcasting was created by the federal government of the Ministry of Education. Thus begins a historic and revolutionary moment for EaD Education, giving the opportunity for a large part to participate in the courses and have the information in their spare time anywhere².

The highlights were the Escola Rádio Postal, with “A Voz da Profecia”, a program inaugurated by the Adventist Church in 1943, with the objective of providing Bible courses to listeners. In 1959, the Catholic Church, through the Diocese of Natal, in the State of Rio Grande do Norte, was born radio schools, starting the Basic Education Movement. In 1941, it was the second moment of experience in Brazil as two universal institutes that offered education in the distance education modality, using printed material through the mail with courses to train people for the job market. They were: Instituto Monitor and Instituto Universal Brasileiro, the latter is still in operation, offering vocational, supplementary, technical and preparatory courses to adapt to the new demands of the job market^{2,3}.

The third moment is determined by the creation of organizations to activate the practice and development of projects in Distance Education in all its modalities, guaranteeing the quality of the courses available, for example the Brazilian Association of Distance Education (ABED), and the Institute for Advanced Research in Education (IPAE). It is at this moment that television and the

Internet are used as the main tool for distance learning courses⁴.

Television, as well as radio, was a communication channel of great landmark in the history of Distance Education. The first Brazilian EaD television program was aired in 1961 through TV Tupi. In 1980, a course for young people and adults began to be broadcast, with telecourse for elementary and secondary education, which would soon be called telecurso 2000. These courses were offered to those who wished to attend elementary and high school. January 1978 and ended on November 28, 2014. As a result, television helped boost distance course offerings. “The possibility of transmitting image and sound through TV technology was, without a doubt, an innovation in the educational field”⁵.

The concepts of Garrison and Bates are used to demonstrate the organization of the history of distance education in three generations. For both, the first generation is determined as distance education, where printed material is the means of communication and students learn in isolation. The next generation has more than one means of communication, which makes telecommunications the highlight of today. The third generation is characterized by the use of computers that allow two-way communication and direct interaction between teacher-student-tutor⁶.

Authors⁷ reveal that the history of distance education should be divided into five generations, as shown in the chart below.

Chart 1. Five generations of distance education. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022

Five generations of Distance Education		
Generation	Period	Form, basic instructional and technological resources
First	1880	Correspondence teaching: emphasis on printed materials, such as books and handouts.
Second	1920	Education by radio and television.
Third	1960/1970	Open universities: these fundamentally use printed materials, TV Radio, telephone and cassette tapes.
Fourth	1980	Teleconferencing: the telephone and satellites.
Fifth	1990	Education through the Internet (web): this generation uses digital resources, with emphasis on virtual learning environments (VLE).

Source: Adapted from Moore and Kearsley^{7:26}.

The five generations proposed show the technological advances that have taken place over the years and their expansion and development at each stage of teaching, it also shows that previous experiences were not discarded, but served as a complete tool for future experiments, such as the printed matter that was used in the first generation and is still in use today, as it is an indispensable material⁷.

Distance education is organized learning that typically takes place at a location other than the teaching location that requires: special techniques to design the course and instruction; communication through various technologies; and special organized and administrative

arrangements. The authors also point out five characteristics considered essential to define Distance Education: Physical and geographical separation between teacher and students; Preparation and planning of teaching materials by an educational organization; In the teaching and learning process, supports that allow and promote students' autonomy are important to foster intention among them and contribute to learning; Learning is planned and not accidental; Communication takes place through different technologies and different media⁷.

In the 1990s, with technological advances, EaD acquired new strategies offering courses for other purposes. It is at this stage that official and formal programs are



created in distance education, and are regulated under Law n.º 9.394/96, Law of Directives and Bases of Education (LDB). Distance education projects broadcast in print media, radio and television are added to projects carried out since the mid-eighties, aimed at the use of computer resources for the training and qualification of teachers, not only for the creation of technical groups for the development of courses face-to-face, but also remotely⁸.

This was one of the initiatives developed after the creation of the Ministry of Education of the Department of Distance Education (SEED) Department of Education and Sport, which is still in operation to this day. The same is ensured by Article 80 of the new Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB) of 1996⁹.

Distance learning

The book "Learning at a Distance" by Fredric M. Litto, launched in São Paulo in 2010, exposes the need and positive aspects of distance learning to society. Therefore, the renowned professor at the University of São Paulo and president of the Brazilian Association of Distance Education offers people who have not had the opportunity to improve themselves because they have special needs for access to knowledge and professional certification, or because they live far from major centers of studies, or for not being able to afford to study. Thus, having the opportunity, without leaving home, to study with outstanding professors from the most renowned academic institutions in the world, is one of the many advantages that distance education offers¹⁰.

In the past, education was restricted to the population with purchasing power (elite), with time the massification of education occurred. Thus, based on the desire to extend the opportunity for self-improvement to all who wanted to learn, distance education emerged. Well, when we remember that about one in ten people suffer from special needs (deafness, blindness, physical incapacity to get around, among other limitations), in addition to those who cannot leave the house due to the commitment to take care of their advanced elderly parents or children, the role of social inclusion through distance education is very clear, being extremely important for society. Distance education emerged around 1850 in several European countries, during the first fifty years distance education was done by correspondence, where the system of transmission of knowledge in education was printed material, brought to the learner by mail. The institution that taught the course received and returned the corrected academic exercises produced by the student. With the advent of cinema in the 20th century, communication began to use this technology for distance education, schools, universities and companies created comprehensive cinema courses. Soon after, in the third and fourth decades of the 20th century, radio began to be used for teaching throughout its territory and, in the 1950s, television¹⁰.

In the second half of the 20th century, audiocassettes and VCRs began to be used for learning. But, distance learning had its significant advance with the advent of computers, because it is a multimedia machine that allows to record words, images and sounds and also, it is a

communication machine that allows sending and receiving messages. Therefore, it is extremely important, as it is interactive and allows dialogue between the user and the program running on the computer, giving instructions and asking questions, as well as receiving and answering questions¹⁰.

Distance education has positive results in the acquisition of knowledge, as the entire course is always prepared by a team of specialists, where each one contributes with their experience and talent to produce a product organized in the smallest details to achieve the planned success. Meanwhile, face-to-face education relies only on the teacher and their imagination, energy and inspiration at class time. Another advantage of distance learning is to offer hybrid courses, that is, partially face-to-face and distance learning¹¹.

According to the author^{10:95}, "[...] in April 2006, the State Department of Education of one of the most populous US states made it mandatory for every high school student to take at least one subject online before graduating". The results were extremely satisfactory, about 7% of students took higher education at a distance, and in a Consortium Sloam survey of 500 companies that generate the most jobs for people in the US, 52% found that there was no significant difference between the two methods. .

In our country, distance education processes, both in basic education and in graduation, seek to make life easier for people who have some mobility difficulties or even due to time constraints. Considering that many undergraduate or graduate students have a very fickle and tiring routine, it is believed that distance education can be a way for them to achieve their educational development.

During the implementation of this educational practice, many people who previously did not have access or even an opportunity to carry out educational development ended up not only completing their basic education but also obtaining an academic degree, in general, the secretary of education seeks to promote this teaching practice for people who are in areas that are difficult to access and for people with some difficulty in finding a conventional education network.

Most of the distance students in the undergraduate part look for the educational procedure for the ease and convenience that it has, since the students only need to attend the teaching entities a few days a week, and all the evaluation processes and contents are obtained by sites or technological tools, something considered by many as one of the best implementations carried out by the Brazilian government.

It is emphasized that distance education is an extremely important resource to meet the high demands of students more effectively than other modalities and without the risk of reducing the quality of education. However, in some situations, distance learning is used for profit, which creates prejudices about this teaching method¹⁰.

It is concluded that the political and social vision related to the implementation of distance education concerns mainly the number of people that can be reached by such a procedure, thus bringing the country to increase



its literacy rate and grant a better opportunity to people with certain difficulties for a conventional education.

The laws that regulate distance education

In Brazil, distance education began in the 20th century, with the appeal of rural workers, considering that this form of teaching would allow them to not travel to urban centers to carry out professional training courses¹². In our country, distance education processes both in basic education and in graduation seek to facilitate the lives of people who have some difficulty in locomotion or even because of time. Considering that many undergraduate or graduate students have a very fickle and tiring routine, it is believed that distance education can be a way for them to achieve their educational development.

It can be considered that in distance education practices some primordial procedures were carried out for the development of education. In the same way where some adjustments were promoted and developed within the methods adopted by teachers and educational institutions to promote their educational activities, some scholars consider that with the emergence of new technologies and a certain relationship between some social areas and the same, the vision of the development of educational activities was expanded and it became clear how to promote an interaction between technology and education, something that is becoming increasingly common and gaining more and more space¹³.

The Brazilian dimensions, the enormous demands in terms of training the national workforce, in particular basic education teachers, and the potential of new technologies have made it possible to consider the distance education modality as a methodological contribution to face the challenges of accelerating education. Technical process. As in classes, although the distance modality allows an autonomous organization of the students, we cannot forget that the contents are selected there, the continuation of the studies is guided and the students are offered activities to solve the most complex or interesting problems. Therefore, distance education programs contain a didactic proposition that highlights the need to build exchange and disseminate knowledge today¹⁴.

The Ministry of Education, through the Department of Distance Education (SEED), has acted as an agent of technological innovation in teaching and learning processes, promoting the integration of information and communication technologies and educational techniques to distance pedagogical-pedagogical methods. In addition, it has promoted research and development, aiming at the introduction of new concepts and practices in Brazilian public schools¹⁵.

In Brazil, the legal basis for the distance education modality was established by the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9.394, of December 20, 1996), which was regulated by Decree No. 5.622, published in the DOU, of December 20, 2005 (which revoked Decree No. 2.494, of February 10, 1998, and Decree No. 2.561, of April 27, 1998) with standardization defined in Ministerial Decree no. 4,361 of 2004 (which revoked Ministerial Order

No. 301 of April 7, 1998). On April 3, 2001, Resolution No. 1 of the National Education Council established the rules for the lato and stricto sensu degree diploma^{9,15-17}.

Decree No. 5,622 of 2005, in its Art. 1, characterizes distance education, as:

“Educational modality in which the didactic-pedagogical mediation in the teaching and learning processes occurs with the use of communication and information media and technologies, with students and teachers developing educational activities in different places or times”¹⁵.

This decree proves that distance education seeks to provide a direct interaction between technologies and teaching procedures applied within educational environments, observing the most effective ways and methods with regard to the alignment of technology and education. Something that has been presented as a very efficient and productive relationship, both for educational institutions and students.

The reality of distance learning in Brazil, more closely, according to information pointed out by the Analytical Report on distance learning in Brazil from the Census EaD.BR, 2019, all regions of the country had an increase in distance education. In the North region, it had an increase of 8.13%, in the Northeast region it had 21.08%, in the Southeast region it had 44.71%, in the South region it had 16.75% and in the Midwest it had a 9.32% increase¹⁴.

Technological advances in education and professionalization

Brazil has achieved technological changes with the use of the Internet, as it has been contributing qualitatively to methodological and social changes. In the educational and professionalizing area, university centers, colleges, private schools and even companies increasingly seek to improve knowledge, bringing opportunities to people who did not have the time, resources or even for living far from university and technological centers and who do not I had to dedicate myself to my studies.

The Internet has brought everyone the opportunity to study without leaving home with highly qualified professionals, with learning focused on the apprentice, being able to have interactivity with study groups to acquire new knowledge in their studies or at work, intensifying individual capacity. This modality has become important because it brings together a single technology, the media used previously separated, such as texts, sounds and images, and can still change the time and space for their use in a synchronous way, allowing to cross borders in question. seconds, because whoever chooses where to study is the student and everything is established in real time.

With professors and tutors who prepare the teaching plan with the prevention of each error in the future that may occur throughout the semester. The student learns through readings made with the printed support material and video class, in addition, online learning has the participation of a degree of interactivity, students and encouragement for those who want to have a successful training. Before starting distance learning, research the



institution in which you are interested in order to become an excellent professional, who is always in search of knowledge.

For this type of teaching, it is understood that the ability and knowledge of different natures require a greater effort on the part of the student, because in situations of doubt at the time of classes and reading in their development process, they will not immediately receive the necessary support, therefore, the students do not occupy the same physical place as the educators, making the mediation interrupted at the moment when the doubt occurred and perhaps it will not be satisfied. Therefore, the student needs to organize a way in which he will carry out his study schedule and speeches with other students to obtain the expected result.

The advantages and disadvantages of DE

Distance learning brings together typical learning characteristics with greater chances of obtaining positive results in knowledge than face-to-face learning, as in this modality the subjects are prepared by a specialized team that teaches the classes, they must think about the smallest details, specify as much as possible the contents, making exodus, in advance, because the student will not have the educator at the same time to satisfy his doubt. and place that allows its performance¹⁰.

The concept of a semester at distance education is carried out differently, giving the student the option to enroll in any month of the year as long as he obtains the number of students to close the class, thus being able to serve any part of Brazil, the greater the number of people enrolled for any course, minus the cost for those courses. Other positive aspects of distance education is the structure of online courses, offering many opportunities for educational social activities, such as reinforcing good communication behaviors and practicing constructive criticism in evaluating a colleague's work, such as being receptive to peer criticism in relation to your work. Thus, we realize that the benefits of distance education are multiple.

Regarding the disadvantages of the distance methodology, it can be highlighted a difficulty in verifying the students are really using their knowledge to perform certain activities, as well as a low observation of the effective evolution of knowledge. Students who use distance education can use certain resources to obtain a higher score or carry out their activities, something that cannot be closely observed by teachers.

Analyzing the institutions that use distance resources in Brazil, it can be observed that most of the evaluation instruments consist of works or research, these methods can be considered of low quality in the search for a verification of effective knowledge, since some resources can be used, not being completely done by the students. Still pointing out the disadvantages related to distance education, we can highlight: lack of coexistence or interaction between students and teachers, low level of evaluation procedure, commitment to the exact verification of student performance. These points are the ones that draw the most attention on the part of professionals and educational managers, since all the processes applied in

education routines are based on the efficient development of the student.

Distance education for people with special needs and laws that regulate teaching

Accessibility is a new topic in Brazil. According to research, since 1988 the law has been ensuring people with special needs, but this law was regulated in stages, they were passed by the Federal Decree in the year of December 2, 2004 until it became concrete in Law n.º 13.146, of July 6, 2015, called the Brazilian Law of Inclusion known as LBI, which ensures that all people with disabilities have access to education, health, leisure and work, among other rights. In Arts. 28 to 30, details the measures to be taken for inclusion to be effective and points out the most important points in education in a concrete way. The 2018 EaD.BR Census carried out several analyzes in the educational institutions that offer the course in the distance modality, observing if they have structures and aptitude to offer these courses with quality and integrity to people with disabilities, so that there is an effective and effective guarantee to access^{4,18,19}.

The results obtained from this survey were that 18.5% do not put into practice the actions that promote inclusion in distance education, and 20.7% offer assistance from Libras interpreters in online classes. The results will show that the level of acceptance and inclusion of these students in the distance education modality is very low⁴.

Even with all this regulatory support by law, we see that institutions are not 100% adapted to receive these students, according to research carried out by the Census EaD.BR 2018 the level of adaptation coming from activities, classes, resources, or any activity that includes for training and completion of the courses offered, and very insignificant by the percentage of students acquired, 0.21% of students enrolled totally at a distance were calculated²⁰.

With the officially published order of accessibility by the LDB, on December 19, 2000, the same search throughout its topics grant greater accessibility to individuals who have special needs in educational environments. This measure was extremely important for the development of inclusive education in society, giving people with some limitations an opportunity for educational development²¹.

Over the nearly 20 years since the milestone, according to the 2018 School Census, these numbers have increased to 33.2% of students regularly enrolled in the distance learning modality in the last 5 years, considering the regular school universe. The physical or virtual learning spaces to receive students with special needs have intensified, but the data from this Census reveal that this service still needs to be greatly improved. Regarding the resources offered entirely at a distance by the institutions, the student with special needs follows below a table that defines the percentage of each of technological accessibility resources. Finally, it was found that 20% of the institutions stated that they do not offer any accessibility feature⁴.

The impacts caused by the pandemic on school routine

It can be considered that the pandemic caused profound impacts within the social environment and its



routines, especially in education. Due to the security measures adopted by government officials, schools together with teaching professionals needed to align teaching methodologies and promote some adjustments regarding routines, financial part and workload applied in the school environment.

One of the most changed bases in the pandemic period with professionals and educational organizations is the methodology, since with the procedures seeking to maintain a distance between individuals, both teachers and school institutions needed to verify the best way to promote to students the necessary study. It is worth mentioning that many psychological aspects need to be observed or measured in order to stabilize the students' learning points or procedures. The application of distance education in some situations was very positive for the development of this method by some institutions, thus seeking to provide students with all the conditions and all the necessary means for continuous learning^{22,23}.

Another very evident impact promoted by the pandemic is the salaries and workload of education professionals, some schools promote adjustments as to the amounts that must be paid to teachers, noting that some parents or guardians promoted the cancellation or requested the freezing of tuition values, noting that the amounts paid in tuition referred to their children going to schools and the expenses they would have to promote their activities, something that did not occur in their view during the period of social isolation²⁴.

One of the biggest concerns on the part of educational professionals and managers refers to the evaluation of the knowledge acquired by students regarding the contents presented, since students no longer have direct supervision by teachers regarding the answers and the way in which they are presented they were obtained.

In the view of some professionals, the evaluation process during the pandemic and social isolation is the most fragile, since teachers have no control over students' actions as to how to obtain the answers. As well, the internet can be something extremely contrary to the teaching and learning process if used incorrectly. Because of this, some educational institutions have developed evaluation processes with a deadline for responding, or even instituting a maximum time for students to present the answers of the evaluations²⁵.

Still with regard to the impacts caused by the situation experienced in the country and in the world, the need for understanding and use of digital resources by teaching professionals can be highlighted. They had to learn how to make explanatory videos, as well as how to use electronic platforms to present their content, something that some had never done before²⁶.

It is worth mentioning that the knowledge of the use of applications, platforms and other devices aimed at teaching are not widely used by professionals, something that highlights the importance of educational bodies and institutions to promote this specialization.

However, the lack that became more evident was the social exclusion of children belonging to the most impoverished classes with the advent of distance education, because despite this teaching modality being in evidence with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the number was also large of children who could not follow online classes or do their homework because they did not have a computer and Internet access.

Final Considerations

In view of the contents presented, it can be seen that distance education consists of a procedure carried out in order to give individuals a better opportunity for educational development; it has come to be considered a very positive and efficient method within the educational context in order to consolidate educational inclusion.

The reflections discussed in this article sought to present issues highlighted in public distance education that make it different from face-to-face education. That is, distance education, although it does not offer face-to-face education, its assumptions of equality and accessibility to all are recommended in the Federal Constitution.

The offer of distance education in higher education, based on parameters of offer, financing and differentiated pedagogical practices, means the construction of a new perspective of teaching and learning, reflecting on an alternative for the lower classes. Educational procedures should always seek to stabilize or consolidate the most accessible and efficient education processes for efficient student learning.

In view of the contents presented, it can be seen that distance education is currently one of the main measures adopted by the government and education bodies to provide individuals with an opportunity for training or schooling within their reality, considering that many have a complex routine and often, have difficulties in carrying out normal or standard education. The development and implementation of distance education is something very positive for students, giving them a good opportunity for educational development through the interaction between education and technology.

However, it is still necessary to look for alternatives so that needy students have access to distance education, since a large part of the poorest layer of the population does not have a computer or internet, which puts them in a condition of inequality in relation to other students who have access to ICTs.

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