

Editorial

School Psychology and COVID-19

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The idea of running a special editorial addressing School Psychology and COVID-19 arises from the proposal of the School and Educational Psychology Work Group (SEP-WG), from the *Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-graduação em Psicologia* (National Association for Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology), which, in line with its active positioning in the face of the most diverse demands of society, considered the socialization of actions and reflections produced during the pandemic as very important, focusing on the work of SEP-WG members in different locations and of different natures. At the same time that this group of researchers advanced in creative ways of developing their work, given the lockdown of educational institutions at all levels, new challenges were also unveiled to the area: some already well-known, such as social inequality, and new ones, such as remote psychological practices and their effectiveness. It is on these issues that this text, which introduces the articles that make up the proposed theme, is about.

Approaching School Psychology focusing on COVID-19 as a special theme implies positioning it within today's social, political, legal, and economic context. COVID-19 was detected in Brazil in 2020, having emerged at the end of 2019 in China and, as it spread around the world, it gave rise to what was called the Coronavirus pandemic. Since then, much has evolved in the field of science, whether in understanding the behavior of the virus or in the production of vaccines, responsible for dramatically reducing the number of serious cases of the disease and, most importantly, death. In the field of psychology, in the areas of health, work, or education, progress has also been made in terms of public service practices, resulting in improvements in people's mental health through remote medical consultations taken as an alternative to the social isolation necessary due to the sanitary measures to prevent the spread of the virus, as demonstrated by the practices reported in the articles that make up this topic.

Currently, while the pandemic is still ongoing, as contamination by omicron, a variant of COVID-19, continues to affect a large number of people, the less harmful effects of contamination have allowed, since the end of 2021, people to return to daily activities, including face-to-face teaching. This situation has led

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researchers, educators, and psychologists to question the effects of school lockdown, which lasted for almost two years in Brazil, on children and adolescents (Novaes, 2020, Souza et al., 2022). Therefore, to talk about School Psychology and COVID-19, it is necessary to contextualize it in a movement that presents new demands and challenges.

What kind of world will emerge after the drastic passage of the first two years of the pandemic that, in Brazil alone, caused the death of more than 600,000 people, left millions unemployed, pushed millions more into misery?

These consequences herald the deleterious effects of the pandemic on the economy and the need for urgent investments in employment, housing, and food policies to serve the most needy.

Regarding school education, it is known, according to several studies conducted on remote teaching, that most students in public basic education were unable to access face-to-face classes, mainly due to lack of access to technology: equipment and internet access. There was also the inadequacy of appropriate places for studying in the students' homes, many with entire families in the same household as a result of social isolation (Novaes, 2020, Souza et al., 2022).

Upon returning to face-to-face classes, numerous problems were identified, such as the difficulty of students in appropriating curricular knowledge, relationship issues among students and between students and teachers, difficulties in adjusting activities to the behavioral dynamics of students, manifestations of students' anxiety and depressive behaviors, mood swings and certain emotional instability by school professionals, and self-injurious behaviors and suicidal ideation by students.

These manifestations have posed great challenges to the work of education, social assistance, and psychology professionals. In the scope of School Psychology, some of them had already been pointed out by researchers since the beginning of the pandemic (Facci et al., 2020; Guzzo et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2021; Souza et al., 2022; Verztman & Romão-Dias, 2020).

In other words, professionals who work in education, such as teachers or psychologists, are experiencing a moment of crisis resulting from a confluence of events that place students and professionals in a vulnerable situation, at the mercy of the uncertainty that has characterized their lives in all areas.

Students reap the results after two years out of school, some without any access to teaching and learning activities; professionals, in addition to having to deal with student learning issues and teaching adaptations, with the challenge of building new forms of relationship with students and among them, face reforms in the teaching career, involving loss of rights in a profession that already suffered from the precariousness of their material working conditions (Fundo das Nações Unidas para a Infância, 2021; Neri, 2020).

It seems that, given the context that is presented in schools today, a repositioning of professionals working in education is necessary, demanding that they look at the subjects, as well as their needs and interests, and have the commitment to face these new demands.

Knowing, broadening the mind, repositioning oneself in the face of old and new realities, looking beyond, and looking for the future and its possibilities for students is what is demanded from Psychology at this moment in which students are returning to face-to-face classes. Is our knowledge about development, education, psychology, epistemologies, and psychological practices sufficient for this repositioning? What challenges do we need to face?

Freire's ideas serve as inspiration: "It is not in silence that men are made, but in words, in work, in action-reflection" (1987, p. 78, my translation).

What is proposed with this special theme expressed in the texts that compose it is that the psychologist "dives" in the school dynamics and finds the opening points that allow them to reflect on possibilities of action, resisting and acting in the confrontation of the circumstances that cross the lives of people who go to school.

In this movement, which should be characterized as action-reflection, the psychologist needs to deconstruct their points of view to see the new, because, as stated by Guimarães Rosa (2001, p. 327, my translation): “Because the mind of people is one, and the things that are and that are to be are too many, much bigger, much different, and we have the need to turn our heads to the total”.

There are many advances and achievements of Educational Psychology as a discipline within psychological science in recent years, whether in the context of the production of theoretical-methodological knowledge or the development of professional practices. There is clarity regarding its object and theoretical-methodological contributions: it is a body of theoretical-practical knowledge that aims at the collective, focuses on relationships, and acts to promote the development of subjects in educational spaces. It sees the subject as constituted in and by the social, in its affective, cognitive, social, and political dimensions, which develop in an integrated way, giving them conditions to act and transform the world. A world that can be known and transformed only in the interactions in which humans participate, in their diversity and multiplicity of values and beliefs. A social environment that is a source of development (Dazzani & Souza, 2016; Souza et al., 2018, Souza et al, 2022).

With the approval of Law nº 13,935 of 2019, after years of struggle by professionals in the area, it is urgent that school psychologists change their perspective of action with schools: now they are professionals in and of the school and need to know about its processes from within, inserted into them with the school and its actors. Taking this perspective demands clarity on the challenges that, during the pandemic, with the lockdown of schools, take on new contours, deepen and expand.

If school psychology aims to promote the development of subjects, and if this development occurs in an imbricated way with the physical and social environment, it is worth thinking about who these subjects are, in which society they live and will live in their local and global dimensions, the questions that must permeate the educational process in order to form future generations able to build their future and overcome precarious living conditions.

A quick look around reveals a multitude of ongoing problems in the world we inhabit. The effects of climate changes, wildfires, Indigenous issues, hunger and misery, violence against children and women, racism, political conflicts, and territorial disputes, just to name a few.

And school psychology professionals cannot ignore these problems. The repositioning mentioned above demands to include these issues as objectives to be worked on in promoting the development of subjects in a collective and collaborative work, which should characterize the psychologist's action at school, because, as stated by Freire (2005, p. 112, my translation): “What is my neutrality if not the comfortable way, perhaps, but hypocritical, of hiding my choice or my fear of accusing injustice? Washing your hands in the face of oppression is reinforcing the power of the oppressor, it is opting for oppression”.

These challenges have become the objectives of the School and Educational Psychology SEP-WG, which has invested in the collective and collaborative work of its member researchers, to face the problems exacerbated by COVID-19 and develop theories, practices, and policies to advance theoretical-practical knowledge in the area. I hope that the articles presented in this editorial will contribute to this advance.

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