

## Standard Policy Brief Template

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### **The Challenges and Lessons Learned from Digital Education in Higher Education Institutions in Portugal and Brazil from the breakup of COVID-19**

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#### **Abstract**

This Communication aims to promote a reflection on the challenges and lessons learned with Digital Education in higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil from the breakup of COVID-19, in view of its implementation. Being considered the period of implementation of remote emergency education, adopted during the social isolation imposed by the pandemic of the new corona virus.

From the analyses of these challenges, as well as from the various lessons learned, it is believed in a greater exchange of experiences in relation to the methodological proposals used. So that one can understand such a period as a great positive differential of resilience. Especially if we take into account the 2030 agenda of the UN, United Nations, in its SDDs – Sustainable Development Goals, for a more inclusive world.

These challenges need to be overcome. And because we are not yet in a controlled situation, in relation to the virus, nor in technological conditions, nor psychological or comelhor evaluate the lessons learned. Having, as one of the main, cooperation between the institutions. Being considered the most valuable legacy of this unprecedented context. Fundamental to a future of more inclusion.

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## Acronyms

UM - United Nations

SDDs – Sustainable Development Goals

UL – Lisbon University

IE – Education Institute

## **Introduction**

This research refers to the postdoctoral internship, provided for in Order No. 26/2011 – Institute of Education (IE) of the University of Lisbon (UL), and aims to reflect on the challenges and lessons learned from the breakup of COVID-19.

It is essential to explain here that the possibility of attending the post-Doctoral internship at the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon was, for me, a unique opportunity for my growth, improvement, deepening in the themes worked, as well as a real update in the area of Education.

Mainly for the added value, in my case of professor who work in two universities in Rio de Janeiro - Brazil. Namely, Estácio de Sá University and Veiga de Almeida University, both private.

It is also important to highlight the enrichment in relation to my continuous formation as a person, because I had the opportunity to experience various aspects of different cultures, throughout this work, especially in relation to the various interviews conducted. Having been an added value, at the time of them, because it is a true route throughout the Portuguese territory, in search of the experiences of these interviewees.

This fact, which, both culturally and historically, added in my training as a teacher and reinforcement i, as a person.

## **Heading 1**

### **Contextualization**

This research was carried out in the Post-Doctoral Internship at the IE – Education Institute of UL - University of Lisbon and shows us the possibility of a better analysis of the challenges, as well as the lessons learned on the occasion of the implementation of Digital Education in higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil, from the breakup of COVID-19, in the context of remote emergency education, on the occasion of the social isolation imposed by the pandemic.

In particular, it is evident here, the valuable contribution of the interviews conducted with the teachers of the various institutions of higher education, in Portugal and Brazil. Configuring a true understanding of such challenges, as well as the lessons learned since the implementation of this Digital Education itself.

In the case of Brazil, it was a real immersion in the different realities brought by teachers from public and private institutions, revealing to us how they could deal with the context of Higher Education in the covid-19 eruption. As well as the partnerships suggested in the various lessons learned.

In the case of Portugal, a unique opportunity to conduct face-to-face visits in the different institutions of higher education, promoting the strengthening of professional-academic ties, fundamental for a future cooperation of knowledge in favor of the advancement of education. Key objective for the 2030 AGENDA of the UN - United Nations Organization, in its SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals.

The research was carried out in 10 teachers from different higher education institutions, public and private, from Portugal and Brazil.

From the analyses of these interviews, one can perceive the interest of the agents involved, researched, in promoting the evolution of higher education, as well as the digital inclusion of their students, their teaching peers in different areas. Through an inclusive, quality higher education that goes beyond remote emergency education, because of the disupage of COVID-19, promoting a new pedagogical action, a new look at new and different forms of teaching-learning.

In this way, we will be aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Especially SDG 1 - Eradication of poverty. For, from a higher education where one can have more conditions of evolution, it is believed to be more aligned with the eradication of poverty in the world.

The SDG 3 – Health and well-being, to the extent that, with a higher education that can favor the achievement of the needs of individuals, as well as organizations, the integral health of the human being, as well as their well-being, can be conquered.

The SDG 4 – Education and quality, fundamental for an evolution competes with people, in order to promote and provoke in these individuals, the best interest in their own evolution. For this, education is now considered as a vector capable of leading a society to have more quality.

SDG 5 – Gender equality, as there should be no distinctions in relation to gender, since everyone should be considered equal and therefore with rights equal to a good education.

SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, which can certainly be achieved through quality, inclusive education that is aligned with the growth and development needs of its agents as well as society.

The SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure, based on the great value of higher education institutions, in training professionals capable of making industries, real spaces for innovation, improving their infrastructure, as well as their institutional partners.

SDG 10 – Reducing inequalities, as, through better education, it is believed that people can perceive themselves in a world where inequalities no longer have room to coexist, since inclusion and cooperation become the key words of the evolution and development of a fairer society.

SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities, where the role of higher education tends to be more valued as it promotes the sustainability necessary so that cities and communities, regardless of their size or commercial importance, can evolve sustainably.

SDG 16 – Peace, justice and effective institutions, which is certainly what we want now and for the future. Higher education can be the space where discussions, discussions, exchanges of best practices, understanding of the challenges encountered and lessons learned can be the space where there can be debates, discussions, exchanges of best practices, understanding of the challenges encountered and lessons learned, in order to contribute to the true evolution of the human being, of society.

Furthermore, SDG 17 – Partnerships and means of implementation, being a reference for higher education institutions to seek the partnerships and co-operations most appropriate to their needs, as well as the needs of their agents. That is, students, teachers and managers of higher education.

## **Heading 2**

### **The research**

During the postdoctoral internship, studies and interviews were conducted in the field of "Digital Education (Digital Transformation) in the context of higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil, and their challenges in the face of their implementation". In accordance with the provisions of the work plan.

The choice of the theme was due to the urgent need for reflection on Digital Education (Digital Transformation) in Education, mainly occurred in the last two years, on the occasion of the isolation imposed by the pandemic of the New Corona Virus – Covid 19.

As well as to analyze possible paths to be followed through greater cooperation between schools, universities, institutions and countries, in order to go through this moment in the best possible way, having, in the "baggage", more and better conditions, tools, reflections, which favor education itself, as well as the most varied teaching-learning processes that so much need, people, companies and society in general.

Believing that, from these exchanges of experiences, countries such as Portugal and Brazil can, each in their own way, indicate future paths so that we can have a more inclusive Digital Education, "not allowing anyone to be left behind!", living up to "a school for all".

In this context, we note that from the year 2020, more precisely in March of that year, more precisely, on a Friday 13 March to a Monday, March 16, Higher Education will have many stories to tell. Mainly due to the urgent change that needed to make to provide the remote classes, in digital format, to meet the orientation of social isolation, imposed on the occasion of the pandemic of the New Corona Virus – Covid 19.

Thus, in addition to the obligation to close higher education institutions, they had to promote distance learning and teaching, increasing the challenges previously existing in many Portuguese-speaking countries and regions, such as Portugal and Brazil, more specifically demonstrated here.

This quarantine situation in this pandemic further increased the challenges encountered in these countries, because, regardless of the social-academic-economic structure of each of them, both suffered some consequence in relation to this adaptation, mainly due to the novelty of the situation.

It was necessary, therefore, an attitude of resilience, in view of the needs of pedagogical innovation, or even more, of pedagogical adaptation in order to face the challenges and changes imposed by social isolation.

Carvalho (2007, p.54), shows us that resilience, which is the ability to assimilate changes, can be learned. This fact has been evidenced by higher education institutions, since it has sought new forms of pedagogical and technological support, in order to meet their current academic demands.

. And, according to the report of several teachers interviewed, they demonstrate that, as the phase of remote emergency education passes, many have already declared their intention to adopt hybrid education, that is, teaching that allows combining face-to-face education with digital education. Being considered by many of these interviewees, as an asset, a true legacy, left as an experience of the period lived in the respective institutions.

From an emergency situation, it was evidenced the need, already perceived previously, to have a teaching that could meet, remotely and in person, a B-learning format, where active methodologies could be applied in order to expand the teaching-learning process. Evidencing the ability to resilience of educational institutions, thus promoting their own process of Digital Transformation through a Pedagogical Innovation.

Brazil, for example, until the urgency imposed by social isolation, in the digital format, practiced more the well-known Distance Education (Distance Education) in higher education, E-Learning, hybrid or totally distance. Although the prospects were for an expansion in the adopted model, it was necessary this emergency situation for the processes to be streamlined, in relation to the implementation and development of New Technologies, Active Methodologies and Digital Tools that facilitated the care of students so that they could maintain their academic calendar.

Thus, the search for active methodologies that favor the participation of teachers and students, in the current context, promotes and provokes a change in the role of both, even valuing the experiences of these "actors". Current protagonists in a process that seeks the intervention of active methodologies in hybrid teaching. (Macedo; Petti, i.E.; PASSOS, 2007; Moran, 20 Also in Moran (2018), we observed that such active methodologies evidence this role,

especially in the context of student participation and their autonomy in the learning process, under the guidance of the teacher. Where, such Active Methodologies, through their hybrid models, can favor the current scenario of Higher Education, it is independent of which format will be adopted.18).

Certainly, the solutions found by higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil present distinctions among themselves, also evidenced also in the public and private sectors of Education.

Certainly, the solutions found by higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil present distinctions among themselves, also evidenced also in the public and private sectors of Education.

In this Post-Doctoral Internship, we sought to address some topics that involved and still involve Digital Education, the Digital Transformation necessary, not only for the delivery of remote classes in emergency periods, but, an asset from all that Higher Education has lived in recent years.

Which, from what we have observed, converges with a once demonstrated need, of a transformation in the methodologies themselves in classrooms, whether remote or face-to-face.

And, through the analysis of the challenges of Digital Education in Higher Education in the countries surveyed, namely Portugal and Brazil, it is believed in the possibility of true sharing, so that one can have an added value, in the face of all the wear and suffering, experienced by the tireless actors of this context. Namely, teachers and students, true protagonists.

The main objective of this research was to conduct a study on Digital Education (Digital Transformation) in the context of higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil. More specifically, the challenges facing its implementation.

This work was possible through interviews with higher education teachers in these two countries. Ten interviews have been conducted. Five in Portugal and five in Brazil. With professors from private universities, public and polytechnic institutes of these countries. To whom I thank you very much for your valuable contribution.

It is believed that, from this study, both the exchange of experiences in terms of methodological proposals vis-à-vis Digital Education, as well as the different ways of facing the various challenges to which both educational institutions were and are being submitted, can be considered as an asset in terms of future cooperation, especially among the countries involved. In addition, of course, the Portuguese-speaking countries and regions.

## The investigation

The realization of the Postdoctoral Internship at the Institute of Education at the University of Lisbon made it possible to understand how higher education institutions in Portugal and Brazil, although with their distinct characteristics, have similarities that allow us to draw a profile that favors the very evolution of these institutions, especially in the field of Digital Education, digital transformation once planned and currently necessary so that students and teachers, educational institutions in general, can have their academic calendars assured, not "leaving anyone behind!".

Digital Education, moreover, the Digital Transformation necessary for a Pedagogical Innovation that makes sense for teachers, students, institutions, not only in times of crisis or emergency, as we have lived, needs to be the target of intense debates, so that one can, through analyses of the challenges encountered and exceeded by different institutions, can serve as a basis for an evolution of education itself. Where, students can return to their institutions, given the great exodus that we have seen over several years, regardless of the situation imposed by the pandemic.

In other words, we have witnessed in recent years, even more, in recent decades, an emptying of and higher education, demonstrating the need to have a transformation that goes beyond digital, remote, e-learning or b-learning, but rather a transformation in methodologies that strengthen teaching-learning relationships, as well as bring to the classrooms, the true meaning of the process of this teaching-learning process.

In our Postdoctoral Internship, a qualitative and exploratory research was carried out using ten structured interviews, as well as content analysis, involving Professors of Higher Education Institutions in Portugal and Brazil.

For in this way, we will be able to see the exit of educational institutions, real citizens, regardless of their country of origin.

That is, five professors from private universities, three professors from public universities and two professors from polytechnic institutes. who acted remotely, at the time of the isolation imposed by the pandemic of the New Corona-Virus – Covid19, in addition to books and articles on this theme.

Where we can verify the need for more sharing on the challenges faced, as well as the methodologies used by those involved, so that such exchange of experiences can be considered as an added value in relation to what we have all experienced in this current context.

It is believed that, based on these exchanges, both tools and active methodologies used and even developed by certain higher education institutions, we can contribute to the implementation of a Digital Education that makes sense for all, within their educational institutions and that, may be the beginning of a Pedagogical Transformation, which review and rethink the pedagogical practices once adopted, in view of the need for new practices, remote or face-to-face, that allow the inclusion of all involved.

### **Heading 3**

#### **Final considerations**

The realization of the Post-Doctoral Internship brought the possibility of a more effective evolution in my academic-professional career, from a true immersion with regard to the challenges encountered by teachers, as well as by managers in the field of Digital Education (Digital Transformation), as a result of the need for remote emergency education, on the occasion of the isolation experienced by the pandemic of the New Corona Virus – Covid 19. In particular, I highlight here, the valuable contribution of interviews to teachers of the various higher education institutions, both in Brazil and in Portugal.

Especially in the case of Portugal, due to the opportunity of visits to different higher education institutions, which allowed a strengthening of professional-academic ties, which are fundamental for a true sharing of knowledge for the advancement of education, in order to promote the digital inclusion of students and teachers in different areas, through a quality education, which permeates the remote teaching of urgency and a new pedagogical action is installed, that is, a new look at the various forms of teaching- learning. Whether it's EAD - Distance Education, or remote-digital education. Finally, we all aim for a more qualitative education, which allows everyone to enjoy their methods and tools.

At the time of the interviews, it can be observed that, despite the differences between the institutions whose teachers were interviewed, the process of Digital Education (Digital Transformation), in these aforementioned higher education institutions, has been similar, that is, it has been implemented gradually, according to the needs and tools that such institutions have been able to develop with their departments/laboratories of information technology.

Another point observed concerns the training/training of students and teachers, and in some institutions, because they are already more adept to remote education, there was more ease, more agility regarding the implementation process.

It is important to make it clear that, in most interviews, the positivity in relation to the period lived was evident, however, one of the interviewees, due to the nature of their subjects, considered this period as negative, despite declaring that he believes that, in the near future, there may be more understanding and more appropriate tools.

Another relevant point was the fact that, in all interviews, the need for a more institutional look at training needs, as well as equipment, for both students and teachers, was evidenced.

A characteristic observed in all interviews was the fact that the need for institutions to offer support more focused on the peculiarities of students and teachers, including in relation to the mental health of both, given the challenges that this period caused in all those involved.

Another factor that raised the need for greater appropriation and better adequacy of digital tools for a more appropriate digital transformation was in relation to the use of cameras by students during classes. This fact demonstrated, in all interviewees, the need for greater clarity and definition regarding the rules and objectives of classes and the use of cameras, so that one can have a more inclusive remote-digital teaching, with the possibility of more and better interactions, even through screens/screens. Making classes more dynamic and attractive for students and teachers.

Nevertheless, this post-doctoral internship also allowed knowledge about the various higher education institutions, whose teachers participated in the interviews, promoting a true immersion in their different education systems, as well as their different forms of management, which certainly gave an added value in the said stage.

I also note that, based on the experiences experienced and the strengthened and established professional ties, it will be possible to think of future partnerships, in this case, international between the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon, in Portugal and the Estácio de Sá and Veiga de Almeida Universities, in Brazil.

Finally, I would like to see here, in capital letters, the VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY to work alongside professional teachers committed to the education and quality of their students, who are teachers, Profa. Dr. Luísa Cerdeira, and Prof. Dr. Tomás Patrocínio, both, reference in the area of Education and Training Policies. To which I thank you very much, also the conviviality, in the most varied forms, what I will take with me forever and also what makes me reflect on new ways of mobilizing my students, so as to go far beyond the classrooms. For, as the poet Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen says, "of all that I see, I add myself."

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