

Covid-19 Pandemic and Education: Challenges and Possibilities Passo Fundo, Brazil



Some realities, which destabilize our normality, may cause significant changes in people's lives and institutions. The Notre Dame Schools were not an exception regarding this reality over the past two years. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has been experienced worldwide, brought challenges and opportunities to the teaching and learning processes in a different perspective. Educators had to adjust themselves quickly and adapt to the new education scenario that was requiring innovative, reflective and assertive responses for the new and diverse learning environment. Assisted by technology, the educators kept social distancing which gave new meaning to their educational ministry, and developed new skills such as autonomy and initiative among Notre Dame students. Difficult feelings arose in all the participants in the educational process. At the same time, the challenges brought about significant pedagogical practices that changed the art of teaching and of learning.

This unique experience reveals the power of the Notre Dame values proposed by the Educational Network, which celebrates human life and, at the same time, provides opportunities in education for art and beauty to transcend the lives of people who can make our world a better place. The acquired knowledge and the cultivated values reveal the human capacity to corroborate to the maximum, that is, to notice the importance of teaching how to learn. Learn as much as possible from the experiences created at school. A school that wants to continue to grow in its teaching ministry, increase the students' learning, and the joy of children and youth through lived experiences, needs to adapt its methods. Internalized spirituality, reading circles, writing words and capturing the world, social reflection, critical thinking, all promote the originality of the human being and the systematization of formal education in the collective and collaborative work.

The pandemic has brought a unique look to the school environment. As Pope Francis says, "We need to implement a "culture of encounter" in our actions." May our ND Schools be places for the encounter with knowledge, with people, and with spirituality which nurtures us and impels us to go forward.