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## Amazonian narratives: Stories of graduates with disabilities in times of pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction/Objective:** Faced with the sudden transformations that occurred in the educational environment resulting from COVID-19, the article proposes to analyze, through life story narratives, the academic trajectories experienced in times of pandemic by undergraduate<sup>1</sup> students with disabilities from a public university in the state of Amazonas and thus weave an analytical look at this formative path. **Method:** The study included 04 (four) undergraduate students with disabilities who are studying for their graduation at the public university in question. We opted for the methodology, for working with the life history of the researched subjects, to understand that this method allows a moment of listening to the collaborators/protagonist of the study. For data collection, open interviews were used. **Results/ Conclusion:** Given the academic experiences reported by Amazonian undergraduate students with disabilities, positive aspects were highlighted: the pedagogical assistance given by the tutors, access to technological tools that intensify the learning of these instruments, issues related to commuting between home and university, time management, and family participation. As negative points stand out in the narratives, the quality of the internet connection in the Amazon Rain Forrest, the traumatic experiences experienced in the “oxygen crisis” combined with the scarcity of actions by the university to mobilize mental health protection strategies, and the absence of networks of support, assistance and strategies to subsidize remote teaching in the Amazonian context, among others.

### KEYWORDS

Special education. College education. Covid-19 pandemic. Remote learning. Life history methodology.

<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate students.

## Narrativas amazônicas: histórias de licenciandos com deficiência em tempos de pandemia

### RESUMO

**Introdução/Objetivo:** Perante as repentinas transformações ocorridas no ambiente educacional decorrente da COVID-19, o artigo propõe analisar, por meio das narrativas de história de vida, trajetórias acadêmicas vivenciadas em tempos de pandemia por licenciandos<sup>2</sup> com deficiência, de uma universidade pública do estado do Amazonas, e, assim, tecer um olhar analítico sobre esse trajeto formativo. **Método:** Participaram do estudo 04 (quatro) licenciandos com deficiência que cursam suas graduações na universidade pública em questão. Optou-se por trabalhar com a história de vida dos sujeitos pesquisados, por compreender que esse método possibilita um momento de escuta aos colaboradores/protagonista do estudo. Para a coleta de dados, foram utilizadas as entrevistas abertas. **Resultados/Conclusões:** Diante das experiências acadêmicas relatadas pelos licenciandos amazônicos com deficiência, evidenciou-se como aspectos positivos: a assistência pedagógica dada pelos tutores, o acesso a ferramentas tecnológicas que intensificam o aprendizado desses instrumentos, questões relativas ao não deslocamento entre a casa e universidade, o manejo do tempo e a participação da família. Como pontos negativos sobressaem nas narrativas: a qualidade da conexão de internet no Amazonas, as experiências traumáticas vivenciadas na “crise do oxigênio” combinado com a escassez de ações por parte da universidade para mobilização de estratégias de proteção da saúde mental, ausência de redes de assistência e de estratégias para subsidiar o ensino remoto no contexto amazônico, dentre outros.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação especial. Educação superior. Pandemia da Covid-19. Ensino Remoto. Metodologia de história de vida.

## Narrativas amazónicas: relatos de egresados con discapacidad en tiempos de pandemia

### RESUMEN

**Introducción/Objetivos:** Teniendo presente los repentinos cambios provocados por el COVID-19, este artículo pretende por medio de las narraciones de historias de vida, analizar la trayectoria académica vivenciada por los licenciados con discapacidad pertenecientes a una universidad pública del estado del Amazonas en tiempo de la pandemia; lo que permite tener una mirada analítica del proceso de formación. **Método:** Se contó con la participación de 04 (cuatro) estudiantes con discapacidad del nivel de pregrado. La metodología trabajada fue con las historias de vida de las personas consultadas, la cual permite la escucha de los participantes del estudio. Los datos se recolectaron con entrevistas abiertas. **Resultados:** De las experiencias se evidencia como aspectos positivos la asistencia pedagógica prestada por los tutores, el acceso a herramientas tecnológicas que intensifican el aprendizaje de estos instrumentos, cuestiones relacionadas con el desplazamiento entre el hogar y la universidad, la gestión del tiempo y la participación de la familia. **Conclusión:** Como puntos negativos, se destacan en las narrativas, entre otros, la calidad de la conexión a internet en la Amazonia, las experiencias traumáticas vividas en la "crisis del oxígeno" combinadas con la falta de acciones por parte de la universidad para la movilización de estrategias de protección de la salud mental y la ausencia de redes de asistencia y estrategias para subsidiar la enseñanza a distancia en el contexto amazónico.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Educación Especial. Educación Superior. Pandemia del covid-19. Enseñanza remota. Metodología de historia de vida.

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<sup>2</sup> Alunos de cursos de licenciatura.

## Introduction

In december 2019, a disease called COVID-19 was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). Since then, the world has seen a gradual and exponential rise in the spread of the virus that would become the COVID-19 pandemic. As one of the measures to deal with the pandemic, social isolation was adopted to slow down the spread of the virus. This measure would affect different fields of life in society and, in particular, educational institutions, leading to the suspension of face-to-face activities in schools and universities around the world (Malta et al., 2020).

In light of this, the sudden transformations in the educational environment have had severe impacts on the most socially vulnerable population, significantly affecting people with disabilities (Mendes, 2020). Given this scenario, it was also observed that the recommendations for teaching students assisted by special education services differed little from the teaching proposal for other students. The alternative found was also teaching through remote classes, which are carried out online using digital tools (Rosa, 2020).

In this way, any pedagogical action aimed at the diversity of students with disabilities, which has always represented a major challenge (Fabri, 2021), would, in this new context, have to be reworked and strategies created to continue the pedagogical interventions, now mediated by emergency remote teaching.

Intrinsic to what was happening in the field of special education was the scenario of higher education. In this field, higher education institutions (HEIs), academic departments, and university course educators also had to adapt to reduce pedagogical damage and health risks for the student segment in question.

According to Gusso et al. (2020), it was up to the deliberative bodies of Higher Education Institutions to make fundamental decisions that supported professors' decisions on how to conduct their disciplines. Adjustments had to be made to institutional development plans, course pedagogical projects, and departmental management to deal with this emergency (Gusso et al., 2020). The HEIs also ended up following the general guidelines for education at the time and so, as authorized by the National Education Council (NEC), many universities resorted to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to hold their classes, setting up what has conventionally become known as remote teaching on an exceptional basis (Leite et. al., 2020).

In this scenario of tangled events, the disabled student was found, whose duties as a future educator go beyond the act of teaching. The emblematic figure of this subject, in addition to breaking with the invisibility to which people with disabilities are usually subjected, projects the representation of a citizen who struggles to have their rights respected and who, like everyone else, also has duties to fulfill.

The disabled student is the future professor with a disability, whose symbolism makes it possible to demonstrate that physical limitations do not represent an impediment to the acquisition and construction of knowledge. What's more, because this person is an Amazonian, they carry with them the responsibility of an Amazonian citizen, and this brings with it different challenges, realities that take on a new guise, local knowledge, and experiences that must be taken into account in this training process.

In this way, this study meets the voices of these undergraduates. Voices that cry out from the interior of our Amazon, of future educators whose practice is based on the triad of teaching, culture, and representativeness. Teaching because it is the central commitment of this professional, culture because it is a determining factor in teaching-learning relationships and representativeness because of the symbolism exercised by these subjects about the school environment and society. Thus, investigating the narratives about the academic trajectory of these students in times of pandemic and the path taken in this formative process, allows, in addition to building a listening space for this subject, to weave an analytical look at this academic and formative path.

In addition, according to Filha (2017), it is necessary to consider that the inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education is still a major challenge for the entire university community. The inclusion of this public at this level occurs slowly and still without many mechanisms to support both access and permanence. The crux of the matter is not just the guarantee of places, but the organization, by the university, of strategies that collaborate with the academic success of these students (Filha, 2017).

Chauí (2003) points out that the university, as a social institution, should not react or act in an omissive way to the issues of an unequal society. The author believes that universities, as spaces for the production of knowledge and social intervention, should collaborate in overcoming the standards and labels that traditionally classify difference and inferiority as synonyms. The university therefore has a responsibility to foster the emergence of a situation that facilitates the personal development of students and promotes academic, social, and emotional insertion and adjustments for students with disabilities.

That said, this research aims to analyze, through life story narratives, the academic trajectories experienced in times of pandemic by undergraduate students with disabilities at a public university in the state of Amazonas, as well as their academic and professional life expectations.

The textual elements of the article are organized, starting with the introduction, as follows: method, results discussions, and final considerations.

## 1- Method

In this investigation, we chose to adopt a qualitative approach. In this way of thinking, the study is immersed in the complexity of the dynamics of socio-cultural relations, subjective meanings, perceptions, and feelings reported from the experience of university students with disabilities. Given this, Chizzotti (2014, p.82) points out that the researcher's actions must:

[...] First of all, it strips itself of prejudices and predispositions to adopt an open attitude to all the manifestations it observes, without advancing explanations or being led by immediate appearances, to achieve a global understanding of the phenomena.

Considering this perspective, among the categories of qualitative research, life history was adopted in this study. About this method, Glat and Antunes (2020) state that this genre of research, by favoring the spontaneous speech of the subjects as the primary source of data, has proven to be a useful way of getting to know and understand reality. By giving subjects a voice and letting them speak openly about their lives, the researcher establishes a relationship of horizontality and complicity with them, breaking with the traditional view that they are the holders of knowledge and produce knowledge about the experiences of a particular social group on their own, who passively collaborate, "subject" themselves to the study.

Life history as an investigative methodology for educational practices in the classroom is an investigative resource that has been gaining ground in the scientific sphere. Souza (2004) states that exploring questions based on narratives of the personal experiences of teachers and undergraduate students allows those being investigated to deepen their knowledge of themselves, as well as broaden the meanings of the teaching/learning process experienced through the individual experiences of the subject. In the practice of the future teacher, the life story is thus favorable to the production of questioning, analysis, evaluation, self-evaluation, and re-signification.

Concerning research into the teacher training process, Goodson (2000) highlights the lack of what would be the main ingredient of research: the voice of the future teacher. It follows that the undergraduate student's experience as part of an educational analysis is necessary to understand what was experienced and the options chosen by this subject, aspects that demarcate and will demarcate the exercise of teaching.

Thus, by historicizing, the narratives and experiences of undergraduate students allow for an analytical study of the thinking of those investigated, generating questions and meanings about what, why, and for what to teach. It is believed that thinking about the training process through the lived experiences of undergraduates with disabilities is to present the investigative movement, starting from the very subjects who are part of it.

It is also important to emphasize that by bringing the life story of the student and future professor with a disability to the fore, we are taking a decisive part not only in overcoming the stigmas attributed to people with disabilities but also in contributing to the re-signification of

teaching practice.

The study involved four (04) disabled undergraduates of Amazonian age, enrolled in the academic unit of campuses located in the capital of the state of Amazonas.

Open-ended interviews were used to collect the data. The researcher used active listening to establish a relationship of trust and create an open dialogic situation with the participant. According to Ferrarotti (2014), active listening is fundamental to allowing the interviewee the freedom to narrate and attribute meanings to their experiences in a relationship of dialog, since human beings are not data that we can know from the outside and objective view, "[...] humans 'are processes in becoming', beings anchored in space and time, 'unstable and uncertain subjects'" (Ferrarotti, 2014).

The interviews were based on a previously prepared script, with questions designed to provide support for the interviewer when conducting the interview.

About the questions contained in the script, "trigger" questions were used to encourage the student participants to begin their narratives. This strategy was adopted because, for the life story method, interviews are techniques for collecting narratives; they are not about answering specific questions, but about narrating something about a specific topic (Muylaert et al. 2014).

Based on the aim of the research, the scripts were designed to help with the following guiding questions: Did remote teaching on an exceptional basis meet the training needs of students with disabilities? How was accessibility for students who needed more support? What aspects related to institutional services for accessibility characterized this academic trajectory? What are the expectations of these students in the academic and professional spheres?

The interview script had four blocks: Block I - Personal background and schooling in basic education; Block II - Context of university classes before the pandemic; Block III - Context of remote classes at university; Block IV - Academic and professional expectations. Before data collection, the interview script was submitted to the evaluation of three (03) judges (researchers working in Special Education and Higher Education), to give greater scientific consistency to the interviewer's conduct during the interview. The script was used by the researcher as a kind of checklist. As the research participant moved on to the topic of a particular block, the researcher signaled and checked it off in the table set up in Word. This procedure helped to identify thematic categories that emerged in the narratives and that intersected with the points raised by the guiding questions of this study.

The interviews were recorded by Meet at the request of the participants and then transcribed in full<sup>3</sup>. The recording of the interviews made it possible to record all the oral and facial expressions of the participants<sup>4</sup>. Before the recordings, face-to-face meetings were held

<sup>3</sup> After transcribing the interviews, the elements that best met the research objectives were separated from the individual narratives and then grouped into thematic categories for analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Only one licensee did not authorize image recording.

with the participants at the university where the study was carried out. These meetings were held to clarify aspects such as the research topic and method.

At the time of the interview, the subjects were told that their identity would be preserved and that, during the interview, they were free to talk about whatever they wanted and could stop at any time. Depending on what the participants said, the interviewer asked a few questions on the spot to deepen or clarify a particular point brought up in the narrative. However, the direction of the conversation was always the spontaneous initiative of the participants. The interviews ended when the interviewer made it clear that he had nothing more to say.

To hear the students' voices, the "*trigger*" questions that were fundamental to our investigation began with the following requests: a- 'About the University, tell me about your admission and the period of classes before the pandemic; b- 'About the time that face-to-face classes were suspended due to the pandemic caused by COVID 19, tell me your memories of that moment'; c- 'Tell me about your academic and professional expectations'.

The data obtained during the interviews was analyzed continuously, in a non-linear but constant way, seeking to "identify dimensions, categories, trends, patterns, relationships, unveiling their meaning" (Alves-Mazzotti; Gewandsznajder, 1998). Given this, we chose to work with the analysis of thematic categories, which consists of "discovering the nuclei of meanings that make up the communication and whose frequency of communication can mean something for the chosen objective" (Bardin, 2010, p.131).

To guarantee the anonymity of the participants in the study and because this is an investigation in an Amazonian context, we decided to identify the students by the name of an Amazonian water phenomenon and different rivers that surround the capital of the state of Amazonas. The choice of students with disabilities who were studying for degrees was based on the understanding that the presence of human diversity in schools, including professors with disabilities, contributes to eliminating prejudices, develops a view of potential in the school community, and shows how important the representation of these subjects can be in the school environment and society.

The chart below shows the characterization of the students with disabilities who took part in this research.

**Chart 1.** Characterization of students with disabilities.

Student	Disability/Age	Period/Course	General Information
Rio Negro	Visual Impairment (VI) 25 years	8th Period - Degree in Pedagogy	The mother had rubella during pregnancy and the participant was born prematurely. These factors contributed to her loss of sight. The student indicates the pathology as congenital glaucoma.

Rio Amazonas	Physical disability (DF) 29 years old	8th Period - Languages Degree - Portuguese Language	The participant was born 6 months premature and her mother had complications during childbirth. Both factors caused the left hemiplegic cerebral palsy.
Rio Solimões	Hearing Impairment (HI)/Deafness 25 years	8th Period - Languages Degree - Portuguese Language	The participant was born deaf. Interview conducted with the intermediation of a Libras translator and interpreter.
Encontro das Águas	ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder 22 years old	6th Period - Mathematics Degree	The participant is diagnosed with ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Source: The authors, field research (2022)

It is worth highlighting the commitment of this investigation to promoting a study that takes into account research ethics, respect for human dignity, and due protection for the participants. The resolutions on ethical standards applicable to research in the humanities and social sciences were used as a reference for this study. The research was registered with the National Unified Database of Research Records, Plataforma Brasil, with CAAE<sup>5</sup> 61248222.9.0000.5504 and submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of São Carlos, with opinion no. 5.651.061 being favorable.

## 2 Discussion and Results

To better deepen the reflections on the narratives of Amazonian undergraduates with disabilities, the discussion of the results was based on the following thematic axes: I trajectory in basic education; II motivations for teaching and entering higher education; III suspension of face-to-face classes and emergency remote teaching; IV educational assistance offered during emergency remote teaching; V expectations in the academic and professional spheres.

### 2.1- What students with disabilities say about their experience in basic education

According to Grana and Glat (2022), in the open interview of the Life History method, the participants' narratives symbolize an anamnestic immersion. As the participant is freed up to express themselves, memories of their experiences gradually emerge like a piece of filmmaking, which takes up elements of their life story, with perspectives expressed, causing the voice and body to express different feelings, emotions, joy, sadness, suffering, indignation, resistance and motivation (Grana; Glat,2022).

<sup>5</sup> Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Appraisal.



Given this, although the focus of this investigation is on the life stories told about higher education in times of pandemic, when narrating their entry into higher education, most of the participants reported much of the trajectory experienced in basic education. In general, their school experiences, marked by a non-inclusive educational context, were representative of a daily life permeated by numerous barriers and challenges.

The following stories are excerpts from the narratives of two moments in these subjects' schooling: elementary school and secondary vocational school, respectively.

[...] I started school at (name of school)... a deaf-only school... at that time, it was forbidden to use signs, even though it was a deaf school... I started school very young, at the age of one... at the time I started elementary school at this school, the professors didn't teach Libras, it was all oral... it was a school run by nuns and you had to speak... the nuns would hit the deaf person on the hand if they saw that he was signaling, it was forbidden, they had to oralize, always speak. They always helped the professors, they always had two fairs in the classroom and if they saw that you were signaling, they would go and hit you on the hand... you couldn't signal, it was forbidden, we had to speak... they said that God forbade signaling [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

The experiences recounted by the Rio Solimões participant, which took place at the end of the 1990s, show that education was conducted under the aegis of the oralist approach. According to Vasconcelos (2018), the special schools aligned with this perspective were, for the most part, linked to religious orders and practically constituted the only place capable of serving deaf students, since public schools, responsible for offering schooling for the initial years of elementary school, almost always only served students who did not have disabilities. In this context, it is understood that deaf children and young people had few schooling options.

In an investigation into deaf education in the state of Amazonas, Sá (2011) warns that although Brazil has made great strides in terms of disseminating the Brazilian Sign Language, especially with the recognition of Libras as Brazil's second official language in 2002, the prioritization of the oral language in the education of deaf children and young people in the state of Amazonas until 2011 was a reality that insisted on remaining.

Among the narratives brought by Rio Amazonas about the experiences of this participant when he was still attending vocational high school, between 2014 and 2016, the following accounts stand out:

[...] I went back to Manaus to do secondary school and college... and I looked for a technical course, which is a vocational high school course... because it was what I wanted most, the radio and TV course, I like the area of voice-over, it's something that attracts me... and I looked for the technical course in radio and TV and there I felt a very strong impact on the issue of training... while I was in the radio area the problems weren't too many, but we had to go through both sectors, radio, and TV... during this period of technical education, there were many difficulties... people from within the course came up to me and told me that I wasn't in the right place... "Far be it from me to be prejudiced"... and when you hear that phrase, you already know that something is coming... "Far be it from me to be prejudiced, but why don't you go into

editing?"... which is something more hidden... "The chair doesn't look good on camera." ...and I've never forgotten those words [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

The voices of this participant indicate an understanding of his rights, however, this understanding was not enough to prevent him from experiencing discrimination in the school environment. The veiled discrimination described in this participant's narratives, currently called Capacitism, is, according to Dias (2013), a conception that is present in society and that reads people with disabilities as not equal, less able, or not able to manage their own lives". In the narratives brought by Rio Amazonas, it is possible to identify a mechanism that favors exclusive practices in the educational sphere.

About Capacitism, Andrade (2016) also says that these practices have found a place in the so-called hidden curriculum, which exists and is present in the day-to-day relations of the school, but not explicitly as occurs with the official curriculum. According to this author, the effects of the hidden curriculum often manifest themselves in a perverse way in the lives of students with disabilities, hence its close articulation with the concept of ableism.

In this way, although the narratives provided by the Rio Solimões and Rio Amazonas participants raise different aspects of their schooling, it can be seen that the barriers experienced, in terms of communication, attitudinal or pedagogical aspects, were a common point in the educational experiences narrated by these individuals.

However, not all the narratives about this period of schooling are limited to negative aspects. Some accounts reveal positive points, such as early stimulation and Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). The life story of the Rio Negro participant allows us to visualize the dimensions of this support, which took place during the first phase of schooling and the benefits extend to both academic and personal life.

[...] about school, I first underwent early stimulation at the age of three, but outside Amazonas, in a school in Goiás... I had my initial treatment outside... in the state of Goiás... just to make it clear that I'm from Manaus... so we went there for this treatment, to try to control the glaucoma, and then when I was four we returned to Manaus, that's when I went to school... The first few years were very important, because at that school I learned to read and write in the Braille system... I was literate using the Braille system... later, through that school, I acquired tools for my autonomy, in this case, orientation and mobility, activities of daily living... so the school provided the techniques, both for me and for my family [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

About the schooling of people with visual impairment in early childhood, Padula & Spungin (2000) explain that when the reduction or lack of visual capacity interferes with the child's normal performance, it becomes necessary to structure learning situations through early stimulation programs so that the child uses the remaining senses (vestibular, tactile-kinesthetic, auditory and proprioceptive) and the motor system, to minimize, through multisensory reinforcement, the difficulty in establishing a learning experience caused by visual impairment. Early stimulation therefore comprises a dynamic set of activities and stimulating resources designed to provide children with significant experiences in their first years of life to achieve

full development in their evolutionary process (Custódio, 2009).

The schooling of visually impaired students, according to Triñanes and Arruda (2014), also requires attention to the acquisition of knowledge and functional needs, in order to favor not only academic development but also autonomy and independence skills. In view of this, aspects of pedagogical action relating to the functional needs of these students make up the so-called functional curriculum, whose objective is based on the need to provide activities that favor the participation of visually impaired students in all social spheres and that allow these individuals to live as autonomously as possible. These activities are the so-called Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), defined by Arruda (2008) as the training of actions carried out daily such as cooking, choosing clothes, dressing, washing, handling money, and taking medication.

ADLs are also integrated with orientation and mobility (OM) activities, the aim of which is to encourage the acquisition of skills that allow visually impaired students to move from one space to another and recognize obstacles, which makes it easier for them to act with greater independence (Arruda, 2008).

Given the above, the participants' life stories about their initial schooling reveal accounts that end up denouncing the right to education that has been violated, insofar as the conditions for learning are denied by the system that should, by law, meet their needs. Another issue to highlight concerns the place where the experiences are built, i.e. discussing the education of people with disabilities in our country, and specifically in a state as extensive and diverse as Amazonas, means paying attention to very heterogeneous contexts and realities, which demand differentiated local attention and action (Grana, 2019).

## 2.2 What students with disabilities say about their motivations for teaching and entering higher education

Concerning the motivation to become a teacher, this category was significantly marked in the life story accounts of all the participants. The choice of undergraduate course emerged in the interviewees' narratives as their memories recorded experiences that involved this option.

[...] I had professors who had a great impact on my life, one of whom was a high school chemistry teacher who, even without the help of a resource room, adapted her lessons for me... she always did the carbon chains, the question of ionic bonds, the periodic table... she always tried to adapt, and made sure that I participated in class as much as possible. In eighth and ninth grade, I had Geography and History professors, who also always gave me support... they encouraged and inspired me to continue on the journey of pedagogy... so, I wanted to be everything that these professors were... I want to pass on all my experience to my future students... so I always thought, for me to change the school environment, I would have to be there, so I couldn't see myself working in another environment, and I chose pedagogy [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] It was exactly when I was studying at professor (name of professor)'s school that I started to want to be a math professor... There were times when I would play at

being a professor (name of the professor)... I would pretend that I was the math professor (name of professor)... I had even invented a name for myself as a math professor... Professor Pythagoras Einstein and I wanted to be a professor because of Professor (teacher's name)... he was a great teacher, and also because of Albert Einstein... they inspired me to want to be a professor... Professor (name of professor) and Albert Einstein... Albert Einstein's father wanted him to do engineering, but Einstein dreamed of being a professor, so I can say that it was Professor (name of professor), Einstein, Galileo, and Newton who motivated me to want to be a professor, but I also want to be a professor at a university, I want to teach at the university (name of university) and I also want to teach at the schools I studied at [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

[...] It's always been my desire to be a professor... so, even though I've had difficulties, I feel prepared to work as a teacher of deaf children... I'm worried about deaf people... that's why I did this training [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Deafness, Manaus).

[...] Today I've chosen to go down other paths, because of the impact I had during the technical course, because the prejudice there was blatant. Capacitism was something that got to me when I heard from professors that you wouldn't be able to be there, and I got it into my head that I was going to become a teacher and that I would never do that to my students, and that's when I decided to take a course in literature [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

The four excerpts from the narratives presented here show, from the participants' point of view, the direct influence of the professor's teaching practice on their career choices. These data indicate that, regardless of intrinsic conditions, teaching was a decisive factor in their career choice. Going further, the professor's attitude and his or her conviction about the possibilities or disbelief in the student's development potential largely determined their career path toward teaching. Finally, the voices of students with disabilities reveal that their choice of undergraduate course is motivated by experiences in the school environment. These accounts contribute to deconstructing a stigmatized view of disability, as the voices show protagonism, desire, and encouragement about their education.

About entry to higher education, the students did not report any major challenges. However, it is noteworthy that the four participants chose to apply to the Vestibular through the open competition and not through the quota<sup>6</sup> system reserved exclusively for candidates with disabilities.

[...] First, I passed the Federal University, but I had obstacles in the case of accessibility on campus... the distance from my home and the course schedule... so I discarded the possibility of studying there... when the result of the (name of university) came out and I was approved, I chose to enter this university... at the time the university (name of university) still had a quota system... At the time, the university (name of university) didn't yet have a quota system, which was 2015, my year of entry, so I entered through an open competition [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] I entered through the (form of entry) at the university (name of university) and also through the (form of entry), at the university (name of university) it was for both, I passed both, it wasn't through the quotas [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

<sup>6</sup> Affirmative action to guarantee the reservation of places for people with disabilities, regulated by Law No. 13,409/2016, thus constituting quotas for self-declared black and brown people, indigenous people, and people with disabilities.

[...] I didn't need a quota to get in, I got in through the (form of entry) at the university (name of university) [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

[...] I didn't get in through quotas, but I was questioned a lot about it... I didn't get in through quotas in either of my degrees [...]" (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

About this aspect, in a study carried out on autistic students entering university, Autism & Uni (2013) point to the preference of these students to enter via open competition, the justification being due to the option for anonymity since it is preferable not to be identified as disabled, due to the existence of a pejorative view of disability, which stigmatizes the individual's total abilities due to a prejudice generated about the limitation for educational training and professional performance of these subjects. There is no data on this, but perhaps this is one of the reasons why the students taking part in the study chose not to enter universities through the quota policies for the disabled.

### ***2.3 What students with disabilities say about the suspension of face-to-face classes and emergency remote teaching***

Regarding the remote teaching adopted by universities on an exceptional basis, the initial reports about the time that face-to-face classes were suspended due to the pandemic show the dissatisfaction of the participants.

[...] we were left with no direction, we were completely uncertain... I was already doing my Capstone... the situation wasn't any worse, because I could use technological tools... I was able to continue my research, continue writing my paper... and my advisor agreed to continue with the research, at least with the theoretical part [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] About the remote classes, I believe that like everyone else, they were quite stressful... it was a very long time and I believe not just for me... I even lost classmates in the meantime and it was quite complicated [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

[...] it was a bit complicated because I had to enter the classroom on time, get the code, do the activities... each professor would give me activity and give me a time to hand it in... so I was like this, in a rush, back and forth to finish an activity, to scan it, send it to the professor, and then do the other activity and send it to another professor, so it was like this, very complicated and rushed [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

[...] 2020 c  
The Covid pandemic started here in Brazil and everything closed down... the university closed down... everything became remote... in Manaus, in Parintins, everything became remote... it got much worse!!! [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Deafness, Manaus).

Regarding the emotional discomfort caused by the pandemic, it is common for individuals to feel stressed and worried. According to Iasc (2020), the constant fear, worry, uncertainty, and stress of the population during the COVID-19 outbreak can have long-term consequences for communities, families, and individuals in vulnerable situations. Thus, for students with disabilities, the suspension of face-to-face school activities due to the pandemic

and the adaptation to new teaching-learning methodologies, although essential at the time, represented a moment of instability and uncertainty that triggered greater emotional discomfort.

In addition to the concern about the disruption to their routine and the uncertainties related to continuing their academic career, the narratives also show that the students had to deal with uncertainty about their future, the fear of dying, and losing loved ones, just like other university students.

The experiences recounted by the Rio Amazonas participants were very enlightening in this respect:

[...] the most complicated thing was not the content issues, so to speak... it was the psychological issues, because here in Manaus, we were losing a lot of people at the same time..., so it was extremely complicated to have to reconcile the demands of academic activities on the remote and the loss of people we lived with... two very difficult things... my family got Covid, I got Covid. ... and there was the issue of the lack of oxygen in Manaus, every day I knew I was going to lose between 2 and 3 acquaintances... it wasn't just my friends, but relatives of my friends and even relatives of ours, so we didn't know whether to study, take care of the family or cry... it was a very difficult period, in that sense, it was quite complicated to have to deal with this situation [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

The life stories told by Rio Amazonas refer to a dramatic moment experienced by the people of Amazonas at the height of the pandemic, the so-called "oxygen crisis"<sup>7</sup>. According to Ferreira and Júnior (2022), the lack of medical oxygen in Manaus, which caused the death of several COVID-19 patients and forced the removal of dozens to other states, shocked Brazil and other countries by showing people dying of asphyxiation in the middle of a forest, where one of the main characteristics is the abundant production of oxygen. The desperation of the local medical teams and relatives around the care centers, along with the desperate race for oxygen cylinders, were traumatic experiences for the Amazonian. The consequences of this episode were many: fear, anxiety, and worry (Ferreira; Júnior, 2022).

These experiences certainly generated significant stress in the participants in this investigation. According to Oliveira and Barros (2021), the immediate need for educational institutions to mobilize to promote strategies to protect students' mental health arises from situations such as those reported. According to these authors, this mobilization could occur through projects to identify students with problems adapting to the pandemic situation or by creating psychosocial assistance networks for these students.

However, despite the students' obvious need for educational initiatives to ensure the protection of their mental health, none of the life story narratives investigated found reports referring to this category of service.

Another aspect pointed out in the students' life story narratives concerns the need for face-to-face personal interaction. On this aspect, Rio Negro gives the following account:

<sup>7</sup> An expression coined to describe the collapse of the health system in the Amazon and the deaths from asphyxiation caused by the lack of medical oxygen in Manaus.

[...] what I missed was the classroom environment, the face-to-face environment, because interaction seems to flow better, in my view, in my perception, interaction flows better, it is, at least I feel more comfortable asking questions, answering questions, contributing in person, I feel more comfortable [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

Human beings need constant face-to-face interaction, they are social beings by nature, and this constant need for face-to-face interaction with others has certainly made the scenario of isolation even more frightening and heartbreaking. In view of this, Leitão et al. (2006) tell us that the issue of interpersonal relationships and their inherent emotional dimension is crucial to associated life since it is these interactive processes that form the set of systems that organize it, i.e. deterioration in interpersonal relationships results in deterioration in social relationships, inter- and intra-organizational relationships and makes the difference between suffering and well-being.

#### **2.4 What students with disabilities say about the educational assistance offered during emergency remote teaching**

About the educational assistance offered to undergraduates with disabilities and the institutional services for accessibility that characterized the academic trajectory of these students, during the period in which face-to-face classes were suspended, the narratives brought by the participants mention the use of software and applications that were used to carry out remote classes, such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, Google Drive, WhatsApp, CamScanner, Podcast, Audiobook, Interactive Sites. We have the following reports on these aspects:

[...] About the texts I worked on in class, they were uploaded to Google Classroom, I used the screen reader... the text was already in PDF format, so I didn't have much of a problem with them. And not even when it came to classes with Google Meet tools, the question of sharing screens... I've always found it very easy to use technological tools, I even helped the professor with this. As there were only the subjects of TCC and epistemology of research, classes were twice a week, we had classes two days a week, but the meetings didn't happen every week, it was an interspersed week, one week on and one week off... we had a week just for directed studies, and we used Google classroom... we did our activities and posted them there too [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] what I had to fall back on were, in fact, the audios of the recordings of the lessons made available in the classroom... because, as I said, the slides are very difficult for me because of my visual agnosia, a sequel of cerebral palsy... even the pdfs I use the text reader and listen to, it's the way I manage to save the information, it's by listening... so during this period, that was the most complicated thing, but a positive point was that I learned more about technology... I had no idea how to use podcasts, interactive sites, WhatsApp, audiobooks and I learned [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

[...] When classes went online, we had to hand in work, and assignments, and take tests via Google Classroom ... I had to adapt to writing things down in my notebook, turning them into PDFs, and sending them to the professor... It took me a while to adapt to the technologies... I would scan the activities on my cell phone, using an app

called Canscanner, make the PDF and put it on Google Classroom for the professor... and send it to him, and I used Meet on the computer... I learned to use Meet with the tutor I got in the middle of the period... I used Meet since we couldn't have any contact to do these things... I sent the activities to GoogleClass... but I think I ended up being disadvantaged... it was a rush and I had to know the timetable and things like that [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

[...] and the tutor who came to the house to revise... I practiced a lot with her for the written tests, group work, seminar presentations... I was always very nervous about the written tests because they assessed Portuguese... when I finished these tests I had to send the answers to the professors in the Classroom..... I ended up learning how to use the computer with the help of my brother, he helped me by teaching me how to use Meet and Classroom and also because, at my old school, I had a computer class... at the time of the remote classes I also used WhatsApp a lot, but I think that in the remote classes the professors teach, but the students don't understand much... I didn't understand very well and the tutor had to come to the house a lot, I was worried about Covid [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

There are not enough elements in the narratives to allow us to measure how these tools were adapted for students with disabilities. Only in the narratives of graduate Rio Solimões is it possible to identify elements that are configured as adaptive practices for hearing-impaired/deaf students. The action of the Libras Translator and Interpreter (TILS), in the synchronous online classes held on Google Meet, had this character: on this occasion, the deaf student received support via Meet from a TILS who translated and interpreted the classes held remotely via Meet.

[...] there was the interpreter responsible for interpreting the classes on Meet, as the classes took place the interpreter would interpret the classes in a specific window on Meet, in this window I would follow the class [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

It is important to note that, in addition to the aspect of adapting technological resources in synchronous online classes, knowledge of the tools needed to take part in these activities was essential, since teaching and learning are not written in a formula that can be applied without having to prepare for it. In this respect, it is worth remembering that the support of the family was fundamental, often contributing and subsidizing knowledge that supported these undergraduates in accessing these tools. The narratives provided show the participation of family members in almost all of the students' life stories; without this support, the situation would certainly have been much more difficult for these students.

[...] I ended up learning how to use the computer with the help of my brother, he helped me by teaching me how to use Meet and Classroom and also because, at my old school, I had a computer class [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

[...] about tutoring, I didn't have a tutor at the beginning of the remote classes, so my mother got worried and paid a professor to help me with the computer, so he helped me use the technological tools [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

[...] The remote classes were easy because I had the support of my family and mastery of the technological tools (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).



Regarding this support, Silva and Maio (2021) state that during the period when face-to-face classes were suspended due to the pandemic, the flexibility and difficulties faced with the inclusive demands of Special Education, with a view to its particularities and adaptive specificities, were even more challenging and relied on the direct collaborative actions of family members. However, on this same aspect, the authors point to the importance of remembering that not all students with disabilities had this support at their disposal, since a considerable number of these family members did not have digital technological resources, let alone knowledge of how to use these tools to help these students.

Another point that emerged in the students' life story narratives about educational assistance and institutional services for accessibility concerns the tutoring provided by the higher education institution for students with disabilities. On this aspect, the voices of the participants give the following accounts:

[...] The difference at the university (name of university) is this issue of the student tutor, we have this support during the pandemic... so, I started to get in touch with my tutor in this case, but only for her to help me with typing and formatting... we talked a lot on the phone and WhatsApp, but it was more about alignment [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] it was the tutor who interpreted the classes for me, but she was just a tutor and I was worried because they didn't have a good command of Libras and sometimes I had classes in the afternoon and at night via Meet, there were a lot of classes... the professors always asked for my opinion on the classes and when there was a test, an activity, they sent it on Drive. ...the tutor helped me a lot with my Portuguese because the work had to be structured ...even with the pandemic, the tutor always came to my house to help [...] she came to my house to revise... I practiced a lot with her for the written tests, group work, and seminar presentations (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

[...] I learned to use Meet with the tutor I got in the middle of the term ... I used Meet since we couldn't have any contact to do these things [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

According to item VI of the National Policy for Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education:

In higher education, special education is mainstreamed through actions that promote access, permanence, and student participation. These actions involve planning and organizing resources and services to promote architectural accessibility, communications, information systems, and teaching and learning materials (BRASIL, 2008, p.17).

Brazilian higher education institutions have therefore been called upon to respond to the specific needs of these students, and tutoring is an intervention developed by universities to offer pedagogical assistance to students with disabilities who are regularly enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Tutoring programs generally seek to provide an inclusive experience for the tutors responsible for these students who, in their role, must help students with disabilities with pedagogical and scientific tasks, as well as practical and experimental work, as well as guiding them in their theoretical and practical studies (Ramalho, 2016).

Although the accounts of the Rio Negro, Rio Solimões, and Encontro das Águas undergraduates show positive aspects of tutoring, it is necessary to point out the extent of the responsibility of this support, in the sense that this service is directed at the specific educational needs of each student with a disability who is tutored. There is evidence in the narratives of the tutors' prior knowledge of the use of digital tools and Libras, and this knowledge favored the tutoring process. One example is the tutor from Rio Solimões, whose knowledge of Libras and digital tools was essential to support the activities carried out during the period when face-to-face classes were suspended due to COVID-19.

Having said that, the criteria for analyzing the choice of tutors should be compatibility between the amount of knowledge already brought by the candidate for tutoring and the specific educational needs of students with disabilities. Minimum knowledge of the disabilities with which the tutor will be in contact and, in the pandemic scenario, knowledge of the technological tools that are essential for the tutoring to be successful.

Still, on the subject of tutoring, we have the following narrative:

[...] I didn't have any tutoring help at any time, the person disappeared, difficult to deal with!... in the classroom nobody wanted to accept tutoring because they were afraid of dealing with the wheelchair and the spasms... but, during the remote classes, the university provided a tutor and she was supposed to help me, but she disappeared... in other words, she was receiving the tutoring grant, but not helping me! [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

The participant's accounts highlight the importance of HEIs monitoring tutoring at all stages. Even during the pandemic, this monitoring could have occurred and would have avoided situations such as those brought up in the accounts of the Rio Amazonas undergraduate student who was left without this service during a crucial period of the pandemic.

At the university investigated, where the participants are studying, the existing tutoring program aims to provide academic support to students with special needs. To this end, it adopts the student scholarship modality called "Bolsa Tutoria" (Tutoring Scholarship), through the accompaniment of a student enrolled in the same class, period, and course. The general selection criteria for students to receive the Tutoring Scholarship are an academic coefficient above 7.0 (seven), the ability to work as part of a team, and personal and time availability.

Other points that emerged from the narratives are external interference and the unsuitable environment for studying, the internet connection and the excess of academic activities, the support of the teachers and the flexibility of the timetable for studying, and the fact of not having to travel to the university. Regarding external interference and the unsuitable study environment, it is important to consider that neither the professors nor the students were prepared for the change from the face-to-face classroom to remote teaching at home.

The fact that academics need to have an organized and conducive environment for studying at home, a common condition for all students, is an unquestionable premise for meeting the demands of face-to-face teaching and, even more so, remote teaching, which

depends directly on this space to become effective as a teaching modality. For many, this reality has not been possible, since external interference is almost inevitable and directly influences the learning process (Ribeiro; Cavalcanti; Pimentel, 2021). This aspect is evident in the narrative provided by participant Rio Negro:

[...] so one negative point is the question of interruptions, there's always some noise, a dog, a cat, a family member, a small child, in this case, I have small siblings who interrupt my concentration in class [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

Regarding the internet connection, the excerpts from the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões life history narratives report the following:

[...] a negative point of the remote classes was also the internet signal that always went down... here in our region, the signal is terrible... I know because I've traveled to other states... and it's not like that [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] even with the pandemic, the tutor always came to my house to help, because sometimes the Internet would fail and it would be very difficult... it rains a lot here, then there would be problems with the Internet and I would end up missing part of the lesson [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Deafness, Manaus).

According to data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) (apud Saflate, 2022), in Brazil the percentage of households with broadband internet is 77.9%, in the region the figure is 58.5%. The same happens when it comes to access to 3G and 4G in urban areas: in Brazil, the percentage is 70.7%, and in the Amazon 68.7%. In addition to the low coverage, the Amazonian population also suffers from the precariousness of the signal, which is often slow and unstable.

According to Vasconcelo, Andrade, and Negrão (2020), the Internet should be part of everyone's daily life in the 21st century, since contemporary social demands require its use. However, in Amazonas, this was not the case during the period when face-to-face classes were suspended due to Covid-19. According to Souza et al. (2021, p. 3771), "many Amazonian groups have remained on the margins of these rights, historically living in quarantines in their daily lives".

Faced with this scenario, emergency remote education has ended up revealing even more of the social inequalities of internet access in Brazil, especially in Amazonas. In this way, it is possible to assume that, in terms of internet access, emergency remote teaching at universities in the state of Amazonas has been exclusionary for a large proportion of Amazonian students, both disabled and non-disabled. This factor emerged in the narratives of the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões undergraduates and was indicated as a negative point that hindered access to remote classes.

Regarding the excess of academic activities, we have the following narrative:

[...] The period when classes were held remotely was quite complicated, the content wasn't taught as it was in face-to-face classes, little by little. The professors would put PDF books on Google Classroom and say that this was the content and I had to deal with it, and I even believe that this period was when my grades suffered the most.

We didn't have a moment to rest, in terms of content, What hurt the most was that... it was put down very quickly, without the professors explaining it more carefully [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

About this dimension, an important point to be discussed is the preparation of teachers and the assessment models applied, as remote teaching requires a change in the professor's attitude, who needs to act dynamically, reinforcing student participation and, often, because they do not have the necessary apparatus to assess more objectively, they use group work, reviews, analysis of materials, etc., which end up generating greater demands on students to meet deadlines and deliver the materials produced (Fernandes et al, 2018).

About the professor's support, we have the following report:

[...] Several professors during this period became my friends, like professor (name of professor), professor of calculus I... the other case... I've forgotten his name now, professor of algebra... I managed to pass the two subjects I took with him... and another who was the professor I took two subjects with, his name was (professor's name)... so, they became my friends during the period when the classes were online, but the professor who was closest to me was (professor's name). ...they would talk to me at the end of classes on Meet...they would ask if they could help me in class and how they could do that...they even asked me some questions that I would never have expected a professor to ask me...they asked a lot of things...even about my personal life...I didn't understand why they wanted to know, but they and I became very good friends during this period when classes were online [...] (Encontro das Águas/TEA, Manaus).

[...] also the question of dialog with the professors, because in this case I always had a lot of dialog and that was very good, they would approach me and ask how they could help me in the remote classes... this closeness helped me a lot at this time [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

Despite all the barriers experienced at the time of the pandemic, there are elements in the participants' narratives that make us measure the teachers' efforts to meet the educational specificities of these students and provide a more favorable space for learning. The professors' efforts to get closer to the undergraduates, even when mediated by technology, is a good example of this. It wasn't enough for the teachers described in the narratives to apply the methodological and didactic resources available at the time to remote classes, but there was a closeness that made it possible to get to know the student's situation and certainly favored the teaching and learning process at that time.

As for the flexibility of study time, Silva et al. (2020) argue that the two largest platforms used to hold synchronous classes during the pandemic, Meet and Zoom, allow classes to be recorded, which favors flexibility of study time and allows students to manage their time to study at the moment that is most feasible for them. This fact may justify the students' narratives about flexibility of schedule since the participants point to this aspect as being a positive point during the emergency remote classes.

[...] I think one of the good things about remote learning was that I could manage my study time... Sometimes I had an appointment in the morning, so I would study in the evening or afternoon... that was better [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

[...] I was better able to organize my time... when it's a face-to-face class, you have to be at the university at the same time every day, in remote learning it's easier to manage your time, you can even watch the classes again because the professor posts the recording [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

In addition to flexible study hours, another positive point brought up in the narratives was the fact that students didn't have to travel to the university, which makes us reflect on the difficulties of getting around for students with disabilities in the city of Manaus. On these aspects, Rio Amazonas gives the following account:

[...] A positive point was also that I didn't have to go to university... which is very difficult here in the city because of the lack of facilities for us disabled people and I got very tired... There was no question of commuting, and I also didn't spend the whole day sitting in a wheelchair as I did in face-to-face classes at university... at home, I could move around, lie down, stretch my spine [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

The seventh most populous city in the country, Manaus is an urban center in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. According to previous IBGE data from 2022, the capital of Amazonas has a population of around 2,255,903 inhabitants, of which around 461,414 have a disability. This brings up the need for urban projects that serve the entire population and generate social inclusion for all. Given this, it is necessary to consider that public offices, private institutions, parks, schools, universities, and means of transportation, among others, make available to people with disabilities the means to move around freely. This is called accessibility, which is not just about easy access to places for a certain social group, but mainly about the possibility of entering and moving around these places, purchasing products, and making use of them in an equal manner, without specifying physical or psychological conditions and without being interrupted by any barrier that hinders this access (Guerreiro, 2015). However, for Facco (2017), accessibility in Manaus in public spaces of common use is for the few, especially on the outskirts of the city, and there is no need for grandiose and costly studies to be sure of this statement.

Because Manaus is a city "for the few", it is possible to measure the difficulties that the Rio Amazonas undergraduate goes through to travel with a wheelchair from her home to the university, and, understandably, the participant narrates as a positive point of the remote classes the fact that she does not have to travel to the university, which would cost her time lost in traveling due to the poor conditions of the roads and public transport and greater physical and mental strain.

## 2.5 What students with disabilities say about their academic and professional expectations

Regarding the expectations of these undergraduates in the academic and professional spheres and in the face of the training offered in pandemic times, we have the following Life History narratives:

[...] During the pandemic process we had a lot of difficulties, for example, during the first stage of elementary school. I wasn't able to experience this moment in the classroom due to the pandemic, I believe that this fact and others have affected my training, but my expectation is, despite everything I've experienced, to be able to apply what I've learned both in person and remote classes, combining it with technological issues to bring the best methodologies to my students, I think that's it and I followed my training by studying, taking courses and specializations [...] (Rio Amazonas, DF, Manaus).

[...] Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, I'm going to be a professor and help students like me... I'm going to keep studying, I want to do a master's degree too [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

[...] the training was divided... face-to-face classes and remote classes... I'm worried about my training... as a Deaf person, I worry about my Deaf students, if I'm going to be able to cope... I'm afraid of failing as a professor, but I think I'm prepared... I think I have to study a bit more, seek out a bit more knowledge, but still acquire considerable knowledge... so when I go to teach, I'm going to hope that I can do it... study more and more, pass the exam, and being a professor is my greatest desire [...] (Rio Solimões, DA/Surdez, Manaus).

[...] The training I'm getting has been difficult, but it won't hinder my practice as a professor... I can already see myself teaching students like me... and I'm going to keep studying... I want to do a master's degree and a doctorate in Mathematics [...] (Encontro das águas/TEA, Manaus).

Two points stand out in these reports: firstly, Rio Amazonas' concern about the fact that, because of Covid, she was unable to do the supervised internship, which certainly prevented her from getting closer to the reality in which she was going to work, getting to know the different spaces in the school, the environmental, human, behavioral, administrative, pedagogical and political aspects of the school institution, as well as observing the professor's pedagogical practice in the educational space in primary and secondary education in the different modalities. About this aspect of her training, Rio Amazonas is aware of the importance of the supervised internship.

According to Amestoy and Possebon (2016), the curricular internship is usually the first moment when students on degree courses enter the school environment, no longer in the role of students, but as professors. This transition between the theory acquired at university and the application of knowledge takes place in a formative process in which students have the chance to analyze, investigate, and interpret their praxis. Given this, the Supervised Internship, which is one of the requirements of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) No. 9394/96 in teacher training courses, but which is not just a mere formal obligation, also serves to build the professional identity of the future teacher, constituting one of the most

important stages in the academic life of undergraduate students (Tardiff, 2002).

Considering the dimension of the supervised internship in the training process of the participants in this research, it would be important for the university to take the initiative to adapt the supervised internship to the context of the pandemic and remote teaching, which would certainly provide these undergraduates with moments of information and reflection on teaching practice, also making them realize the importance of professors being ready to reinvent themselves.

About the second point, which we won't go into here, we have the fact that all the undergraduates recognize the existence of aspects of emergency teaching that have weakened their training and, even so, voluntarily assume the commitment to teaching. There are dimensions in the participants' reports that make us aware of the echoes of social responsibility that these individuals carry with them, of the implicit need to become protagonists in the face of the changes they are aiming for.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the voices and listening of undergraduates with disabilities needed to be present in the construction and implementation of proposals for actions that would make the university, at the time of the pandemic, a more inclusive space. Rio Negro's narrative reveals the university's search to promote this moment.

[...] it was during the pandemic that the actions intensified a lot... it was when the university woke up... woke up to listen to us, to listen to us... allowed us to play a leading role, not just to go through the university, but to experience the university in its entirety... that's what happened when the university opened up a listening space for students with disabilities to talk about their needs during the pandemic... there in those meetings was when I felt that the pandemic also helped us... the relationship with the university changed... they opened up spaces for us [...] (Rio Negro/DV, Manaus).

Thus, in addition to the issues that have hampered the teaching and learning process in times of pandemic, the university's initiative to listen to the students themselves in the analysis of their educational reality stands out. It was an opportunity to break with the pattern of invisibility and get closer to the motto of the movement in defense of people with disabilities: "Nothing about us, without us".

Even in the face of all the problems faced due to COVID-19, the university in question sought to make room for students with disabilities to be heard and their educational needs understood. This decision certainly helped to identify characteristics of the teaching and learning process of these students during the pandemic.

## Final considerations

The construction of this article was based on an analysis that allowed us to take an analytical and critical look at the formative path of undergraduates with disabilities at a public university in the state of Amazonas through life story narratives. Given this, the investigation materialized from the voices of these Amazonian undergraduates who narrated their life stories with a focus on their experiences in Higher Education in the context of the pandemic. Feelings, emotions, perceptions, difficulties, and motivations emerged from the stories.

The students' narratives about their trajectory in basic education reveal positive points, such as early stimulation and Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), but there are also indications that the right to education has been violated, insofar as learning conditions are denied or non-existent. The motivations for teaching and entering higher education are also marked in the voices of these students and reveal that the choices of undergraduate courses were directly influenced by the performance of teachers who had passed through their school life.

Another important point in the students' narratives concerns the reports about the time that face-to-face classes were suspended due to Covid-19. The participants' voices showed dissatisfaction and emotional discomfort caused by the pandemic, as well as concern about the disruption to their routines and uncertainties related to the continuity of their academic careers. The fact that students had to deal with uncertainty about the future, fear of dying, and losing loved ones contributed significantly to this chart. The narratives about the educational assistance offered to students with disabilities and the institutional services for accessibility also mention the use of software and applications for remote classes, such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, Google Drive, WhatsApp, CamScanner, Podcast, Audiobook, Interactive Sites. However, there is only one element in the reports that allowed us to measure how these tools were adapted for students with disabilities: the action of the Libras Translator and Interpreter (LTI) in the synchronous online classes held on Google Meet.

The narratives also highlight the participation of family members in almost all of the undergraduates' life stories and show the work carried out by the tutoring provided by the higher education institution for undergraduates with disabilities. In addition to these aspects, other points that emerged from the narratives were external interference and the unsuitable environment for studying, the internet connection and the excess of academic activities, the support of the teachers and the flexibility of the timetable for studying, and the fact of not having to travel to the university.

The reports also highlighted the expectations of these undergraduates in the academic and professional spheres. Two points stand out in these narratives: firstly, the undergraduate's concern at not having been able to do the supervised internship because of Covid, and the fact that all the participants recognized the existence of aspects of emergency teaching that weakened their training and, even so, voluntarily committed to teaching.



It can be concluded that, even in the face of the positive aspects that emerged from the narratives, the students with disabilities were negatively affected. The participants' life story reports showed a lack of action on the part of the university to identify students with disabilities who had problems adapting to the pandemic situation, the absence of assistance networks and strategies to support remote teaching considering the Amazonian scenario, and the lack of a mental health protection program aimed at students in this group.

Another issue to highlight concerns the place where experiences are built, i.e. discussing the education of people with disabilities in our country and, specifically, in a state as extensive and diverse as Amazonas, means paying attention to very heterogeneous contexts and realities, which demand differentiated local attention and action (Grana, 2019).

In summary, the points reported here represent just some of the signs of the impact of the pandemic on undergraduate students with disabilities in the state of Amazonas. It is necessary to recover and systematize quantitative and qualitative information, through educational research approaches, to get a real sense of the true impact of the pandemic on the training of these subjects. It is also important to consider that the training of professors with disabilities in the state of Amazonas contributes both to breaking the invisibility to which people with disabilities are usually subjected and to projecting the representation that disability does not impede the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. In this way, the experiences of the participants' lives in the field of higher education during the pandemic represent an opportunity to rethink educational policies, strategies, and actions aimed at the Amazonian population with disabilities.

Because of the aspects pointed out by the participants, it is recommended that higher education institutions in the state of Amazonas create a protocol for emergencies consisting of a technical committee to monitor mental health indicators, plan and implement actions to respond to local institutional needs and permanent psychosocial support services for students with disabilities at university.

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