



**LEWIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO STUDY GROUP: A LEARNING CHALLENGE DURING COVID-19**

**CONTRIBUIÇÃO DE LEWIN PARA GRUPO DE ESTUDO: UM DESAFIO PARA APRENDIZAGEM DURANTE COVID-19**

**CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LEWIN AL GRUPO DE ESTUDIO: UN RETO PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DURANTE LA COVID-19**

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e351373

<https://doi.org/10.47820/recima21.v3i5.1373>

PUBLICADO: 05/2022

**ABSTRACT**

Significant changes are taking place in socioeconomic contexts around the world due to the covid-19 pandemic that started in 2019. Never in the history of Brazilian education there have been so many impactful moments. Schools closures were imposed due to the spread of the coronavirus. Teachers, staff, students and their respective families were perplexed by the duration of the quarantine. When it comes to public secondary education in the southeast region, pedagogical guidelines supported by remote technology were decisive for the rescue of teaching-learning processing this unusual context. Therefore, the hybrid system in basic education was adopted on a large scale. In face of it, efforts were proposed to explain the behavior of public high school youth during the implementation of study group activity, under the lens of Lewin's field theory, using the qualitative descriptive approach. As the variables in the vital space radically changed due to the pandemic circumstance, the negative valences did interfere with the group's behavioral response. The feelings of overload along with that of studying alone interfered with the group's willingness to study. Concurrently, as the valences became positive with the implementation of an active pedagogical strategy, the respondents pointed out that the study group activity acted as a reinforcement of learning, as a motivator through contact with colleagues, and helped with doubts, improving comprehension of the contents. To this day, the pioneering work of Lewin demonstrates the influence of several factors interfering in the learning process in different settings.

**KEYWORDS:** Public education. Study group. Active strategies. Lewin. Covid-19.

**RESUMO**

Mudanças significativas estão ocorrendo mundialmente em contextos socioeconômicos devido à pandemia iniciada em 2019. Nunca na história da educação brasileira houve tantos momentos impactantes. O fechamento das escolas foi imposto devido ao contágio do coronavírus. Professores, gestores, alunos e seus respectivos familiares ficaram perplexos com a duração da quarentena. Quando se trata de ensino médio público na região sudeste, as diretrizes pedagógicas apoiadas pela tecnologia remota foram decisivas para o resgate do processo ensino-aprendizagem neste contexto atípico. Por isso, o sistema híbrido na educação básica foi adotado em larga escala. Diante disso, foram propostos esforços que explicassem o comportamento de jovens do ensino médio público durante a implementação da atividade grupo de estudo, sob as lentes da teoria de campo de Lewin, utilizando a abordagem descritiva qualitativa. Como as variáveis no espaço vital mudaram radicalmente devido à circunstância da pandemia, as valências negativas interferiram na resposta comportamental dos respondentes. Os sentimentos de sobrecarga juntamente com o de estudar sozinho interferiram na vontade do grupo para estudar. Simultaneamente, à medida que as valências se tornaram positivas com a implementação de uma estratégia pedagógica ativa, os respondentes apontaram que a atividade do grupo de estudos atuou como um reforço da aprendizagem, como motivador por meio do contato com os colegas e auxiliou com dúvidas e na compreensão dos conteúdos. Até hoje, o trabalho pioneiro de Lewin demonstra a influência de vários fatores interferindo no processo de aprendizagem em diferentes contextos.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação pública. Grupo de estudo. Estratégias ativas. Lewin. Covid-19.

### RESUMEN

En todo el mundo se están produciendo cambios significativos en los contextos socioeconómicos debido a la pandemia que comenzó en 2019. Nunca en la historia de la educación brasileña ha habido tantos momentos de impacto. El cierre de las escuelas se impuso debido al contagio del coronavirus. Profesores, directivos, alumnos y sus respectivas familias se mostraron perplejos por la duración de la cuarentena. En el caso de la escuela secundaria pública de la región sureste, las orientaciones pedagógicas apoyadas por la tecnología a distancia fueron decisivas para el rescate del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en este contexto atípico. Por ello, se adoptó a gran escala el sistema híbrido en la educación básica. En vista de ello, se propuso explicar el comportamiento de los jóvenes de la escuela secundaria pública durante la realización de la actividad del grupo de estudio, bajo los lentes de la teoría del campo de Lewin, utilizando el enfoque cualitativo descriptivo. Como las variables del espacio vital cambiaron radicalmente debido a la circunstancia de la pandemia, las valencias negativas interfirieron en la respuesta conductual de los encuestados. La sensación de agobio junto con la de estar estudiando solo interfirió en la voluntad de estudiar del grupo. Simultáneamente, al volverse positivas las valencias con la implementación de una estrategia pedagógica activa, los encuestados señalaron que la actividad del grupo de estudio actuó como refuerzo del aprendizaje, como motivador a través del contacto con los compañeros y ayudó con las dudas y la comprensión de los contenidos. Hasta hoy, el trabajo pionero de Lewin demuestra la influencia de varios factores que interfieren en el proceso de aprendizaje en diferentes contextos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Educación pública. Grupo de estudio. Estrategias activas. Lewin. Covid-19.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Significant transformations are being undergone in the socioeconomic contexts in the world due to the coronavirus pandemic that started at the end of 2019. Schools' closures were imposed to many countries around the world due to the spread of covid-19, challenging the educational system nationwide. Never in the history of Brazilian education have there been so many difficulties and impacting moments as in the actual context. The schools were forced to shut down; teachers, staff, administrators, students and their respective families were perplexed by the duration of the quarantine. By November 2020, the vertiginous growth of statistics on contaminated and deaths characterized the emergence of the pandemic's second wave throughout the country. Tougher moments were registered in the first quarter of 2021. In parallel, the real need to maintain continuous education, generated struggles from the beginning to the end of 2021.

A more encouraging but trampled scenario for 2021 had been on health care by political impasses in Brazil, mostly related to priority groups for immunization against coronavirus. The professionals from the educational system were not included in these groups, leaving the schools with face-to-face activities cancelled since the beginning of the school year. Therefore, the hybrid system of teaching and learning in basic education was adopted on a large scale, offering both face-to-face and remote teaching, the former being conditioned to the risk of contamination.

In the past, distance learning in basic education in Brazil was offered for professional training courses, complementing teaching practices or for emergency situations, according to the Board of



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Education (BRAZIL, 1996). The pandemic scenario had led the framing of basic education as an emergency moment. Thus, the National Education Council (CNE) approved the guidelines for educational institutions, considering distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic. With regard to basic education, the CNE recommended that planning remote support could be conducted under the supervision of an adult to carry out study activities (BRAZIL, 2020).

When it comes to public secondary education in the southeast region, pedagogical guidelines supported by remote teaching technology were decisive for the rescue of teaching and learning process. The Rio de Janeiro State Education Department presented a Syllabus for Students 2021 to be applied by March 3<sup>rd</sup>. At the end of the document, a list of tips to succeed in remote learning was included, going from motivational activities to the organization of study and time management (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021a). Following this line of reasoning, studies have investigated the benefits of active strategies in the teaching and learning process in basic and academic education. The results pointed out to the benefits of these tasks for motivation skills and commitment (FONSECA; VERNI, 2021; OLIVEIRA et al, 2020; SILVA, 2011; SIMONETTI, 1996, 2021; VERDIANA; DOS SANTOS, 2018).

Hence, accepting the recommendation of the CNE (BRAZIL, 2020) for secondary education related to adult supervision planning remote study activities and the recommendation of the Rio de Janeiro State Education Department (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021a) for the use of study group activity during these essential pandemic times, we envisioned the possibility of sharing academic knowledge with senior students enrolled in public high school, coming from personal contact, and who were interested in participating in a research design.

During our approach with the adolescents, we observed that the understanding of the study group activity permeated their lack of knowledge regarding the definition, planning and application of this activity. Thus, there had been an interest in sharing our professional experience voluntarily, in a larger scope, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application through scientific lens.

Within this framework, we followed Kurt Lewin's contribution to the field theory analysis in which the learning process is seen as the interaction between individuals and their environment. As we believe that knowledge is socially constructed, this study intends to stimulate insights in participants and other people to reflect and reconstruct their practices, leading to the epistemology of the particular, as highlighted by Dezin and Lincoln (1994); it intends to have a holistic approach to education, considering social and emotional needs of students and their families. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explain the behavior of public high school youth during the implementation of study group activity, under the lens of Lewin's field theory, at covid-19 pandemic.

This study followed a qualitative methodology based on Dezin and Lincoln (1994), describing the historical content, through the authentic experience of each participant, during the study group. Afterwards it attempted to demonstrate the respondents' perspective of this activity, describing their psychological factors. The data collection methods were hermeneutical, seeking understanding of the context through the lens of Kurt Lewin who assertively emphasized "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" (WEISBORD, 1987, p. 70).



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### 2 PEDAGOGICAL PLANS OF THE RIO DE JANEIRO STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

When the Brazilian schools were shutdown during the end of the first quarter of 2020, in an attempt to contain the spread of coronavirus, the school system was not ready to manager Educational Technology to the entire nation, as the regular teaching-learning process was personal and in the classroom. Therefore, the schools postpone the beginning of online activities, to have time to organize the pedagogical resources to remote process.

Within this scenario, the authorities in education developed a pedagogical plan organized and assigned by highly qualified lectures from the state of Rio de Janeiro. Later on it was presented to students at a face-to-face meeting in school units, in the first half of March, 2021. The curricular contents were being introduced in a staggered manner. The learning evaluation was bimonthly and consisted of participation in online classes, messages exchanged with teachers, attendance and performance of proposed activities and delivered on time (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021a).

All schools curricular were freely accessible by an educational application that offered multiple ways as pedagogical resources. The high school subjects were made available in alphabetical order and organized by study guidelines, video classes and podcasts. In addition to these pedagogical resources, teachers could also include additional information on readings, exercises, links for consultations and live meetings.

### 3 STUDY GROUP ACTIVITY

The first contact of students with curriculum material is individual; the reading and exercise practice included in this material encourage personal perspective but lacks intellectual irrigation. The active pedagogical strategies, such as study group, fulfill this need for cognitive stimulation, as each student develops their own means of study through exchange of knowledge. The gaps in certain topics can be filled with explanations from classmates and teachers. However, individual learning is influenced by writing down teachers' lectures, along with the dispersive elements found in the classroom or outside it, resulting in passivity and disinterest from the students. Schoenherr (2006) commented that the effectiveness of learning provided by study group is greater than that of individual basis, due to the dynamic context in which it takes place.

The study group activity allows students to accelerate learning by reading, reflecting and exercising together on the subjects. In addition, the activity eliminates procrastination, as the study with other colleagues allows the experience to be more motivating and less tedious. The organization of a schedule with dates and contents to be prepared in advance encourages prior study; focus on stipulated subject matter and on commitment to the group.

In this regard, we can mention the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center (PLTC), located in Massachussets, United States of America, that helps educators with different teaching techniques and pedagogical innovations and helps students to maximize their educational opportunities and academic potentials. Those responsible for the PLTC stated that with the study



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group, students develop skills to discuss topics, to put their ideas, to notice gaps in their learning, to learn from each other and to socialize with their peers (SCHOTKA, 2020).

The bond of friendship between the participants is not a *sine qua non* aspect for the formation of the group. The interest in studying is the most important, along with availability and dedication. A member of the group must play the role of leader to convey to everyone the rules and objectives to be followed and what is initially planned. During the study, the leader is the one who discourages parallel conversations in favor of promoting knowledge sharing. The member, who has more confidence in a given topic, leads the explanation. Meanwhile, the participants must keep respect and an open mind to what their peers are saying.

Slaymaker (2020) presented the 4Ws (Who, When, Where and What) to build an effective study group. She described *who*, a choice of 3-6 group members that needs to take into account the intention of the participation: to study and not for leisure. In deciding *when* and *where* to meet, a constant and mutual agreement of day/time/place is important, variations are possible when applied to the situation. In *what* to study, a syllabus must be distributed considering the frequency of the meetings. Finally, Slaymaker highlighted two factors for the group's success: developing an agenda and distributing content for each stipulated meeting. This planning allowed each participant to prepare the material in advance.

#### 4 THE FIELD THEORY OF KURT LEWIN

Kurt Lewin has been an influential classical scholar in the field of psychology and social science with the studies of field theory. Lewin was concerned with the scientific base of psychology. Therefore, focusing on formal principles that would account for human behavior, he used a mathematical system based on geometry called Topological Map that would serve as a foundation applied to every class of human problem, delineating a force field analysis, which would allow a look on problems that could not be measured in ordinary ways. He continued explaining life in a *vital space* where the forces would hold or push the individual to a certain tension situation, originating the source of energy for action. Marx & Hill (1978) added that vital space can be described as the sum of effective psychological factors at a particular time for a given person. The force field analysis was Lewin's unique problem-solving tool which pushed the individual toward solutions or away from them; achieving a goal would balance the forces.

The field theory emphasizes the importance of considering the situation as a whole, which includes matters past, present and future, concrete and abstract, actual and imaginary-will interpreted as simultaneous aspects of a situation (BIGGE, 1964). Therefore, learning is a dynamic process as it refers to a multitude of different phenomena. As used here, learning involves at least cognitive structure, motivation and group belonging. The field theory underlines the importance of the individual and democratic values in a vital space where people exchange views, norms and actions. No matter how decisions are taken, they are a function of shared norms. Lewin's core thinking contributed with



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an orderly method for dealing with human issues. Consequently, Lewin strove to free the world from prejudice and self-hate through social science (WEISBORD, 1987).

Lewin (1951) presented a formula which could explain any kind of situation:  $B = f(p, e)$ ; where  $B$  stands for behavior,  $p$  means person and  $e$  environment. That is, behavior is a function of person and environment. The state of the person and the time he/she is on the environment influences any psychological event, notwithstanding their relative importance be different in different cases. Actually, a well-motivated person can learn how to learn from everyday practice. Based upon this context, the learning process depends on the interaction between person and his/her environment.

A cooperative social problem was built by Kurt Lewin's solving methodology, underlying full participation of research subjects, by doing to learn. Therefore, Lewin's valuable contributions must be updated in recent practice, making breaks through in theory and practice. This is the scope of this study, concerning on perception of reality, running meetings, team development, sense of self-worth and commitment; as much as motivation skills, participative work design and environment change, investigating the effects of an active pedagogical strategy on senior students' vital space during a pandemic.

### 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was based on descriptive qualitative approach, presenting the historical content through the authentic experience of each participant during the study group, seeking its understanding through the lens of Kurt Lewin (1951). The goal was to explain the behavior of public high school youth during the implementation of the study group activity at covid-19 pandemic. The sampling plan and procedures were introduced throughout the implementation of the activity, following the 4ws presented by Slaymaker (2020).

The data gathered was hermeneutical, using the methods of observation, face-to-face group interviews and questionnaires (DEZIN; LINCOLN, 1994). The observed facts were recorded through field notes, during and after each meeting. The interviews were conducted in-person and registered later on in order to avoid shyness and discomfort (FONTANA; FREY, 1994). The three questions were semi-structured, starting with open ones and leaving spaces for comments. Soon after, the main points raised were noted, along with our impressions of the facts. The questionnaire was structured, with 14 closed items in the form of statements for the respondents to assign, on a 3-point agree-disagree scale (*agree*, *sometimes* and *disagree*), how well each item fits their individual experience. These methods were selected for providing guidance and capturing the perspective of the participants, individually and collectively. Each respondent was presented with procedures explaining how to answer the instruments and assurance of strict confidentiality.



## **6 THE STUDY GROUP AS A LEARNING ACTIVITY**

The planning of the learning activities followed the 4Ws (Who, Where, When and What) proposed by Slaymaker (2020) to build an effective study group, as shown below.

### **6.1 Planning Who**

At first, the participants were nine senior students officially enrolled in 2021 at the same public-school year, located in Maricá, a city in the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro. Since the first contact, the number of interested senior students decreased until the group reached five members: four seniors and the researcher. Those who left the group had personal issues that would prevent them from attending the meetings.

Since the first contact for the selection of participants, it was explained that we would be conducting a study to register the correct implementation of the study group and contribute with the records derived from its practice. All of them received this information with enthusiasm and agreed to participate. It was noticed that at our first meeting, the participants seemed shy at first, but they became more outgoing with the construction of each group member's responsibility upon consensus. What follows, is a description of the ten guidelines:

1. All the participants should have to follow covid-19 health prevention protocols;
2. The researcher should be responsible for planning and organizing the curriculum content through a Study Schedule;
3. Group members should have to really want to study and wish a good result in the national school exam (known as ENEM, the SAT of Brazil);
4. Each member should attend the meetings with readings and exercises done;
5. Each member should bring their own notes;
6. The leader should be responsible for defining in advance, together with the group, the time and meeting place;
7. The leader should be responsible for reminding the contents to be studied and for keeping everyone focused during the meetings;
8. All members should maintain discipline;
9. Each meeting should be 60-90 minutes long, with 15 minutes for breaks between subjects;
10. Each member should be assiduous and punctual to meetings.



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The four group members had mobile digital equipments and no connectivity problems. They had reliable internet access, as well as personal computers and cell phones to work on. The age group was 16 to 18 years old, two females and two males. After the first meeting, the only 18 years old male participant left the group for personal reasons, when we continued with three underage seniors until the end of the activity.

### 6.2 Planning Where

The place for the meetings was alternated between two homes of the participants, always in an outdoor area where tables and chairs were previously sterilized. The other sanitary protocols against the coronavirus were hands hygiene, use of face mask, social distancing and individual use of equipments and materials.

### 6.3 Planning When

The study group activity could be conducted in-personal or remote mode. As the participants in this study came from families that strictly followed the sanitary protocols against the coronavirus, we decided that the meetings would be in-person, always on Saturdays, preferably in the afternoon.

### 6.4 Planning What

The study began along with the official school calendar in early March 2021. The four participants (including the researcher) discussed their individual study habits and how they would include this new modality in their self-routines. The senior students chose to follow the order of the contents presented by the educational application, podcasts and reading material.

The researcher was responsible for preparing, supervising and solving doubts regarding the applicability of the study group activity. Once the work began, the researcher left as a direct participant, in order to make room for the group's initiatives and responsibilities during the studies.

### 6.5 The data collection methods

The agenda for data gathering followed the places and dates for the group meetings according to the Study Schedule. All seniors answered the same questions and in the same order. The records included field notes from the observation method, reports from face-to-face group interviews and questionnaire responses. The interview and the questionnaire methods were applied in an empathetic way, without interfering or influencing each participant's response, as it should be according to Fontana and Frey (1994), as we shall see below.

#### a) Observation

The beginning of each study group meeting was always about friendly conversations, focused on daily life issues. Later the seniors started their studies with attention and participation, as they



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attended the meetings with their syllabus done. It was observed that the educational application platform was consulted during the study, when they felt the need for further research. The active participation allowed them to contrast their ideas and expand their knowledge. The speech of one of the participants was highlighted: "I'm feeling more motivated to study. It was difficult to have discipline before the study group".

### b) Group Interview

The group interview was face-to-face mode, when three open questions were applied during the first and second meetings. A summary of the participants' comments is presented, following the order of the questions:

#### 1. *How are you feeling with the beginning of the study group?*

They answered that they felt well and one senior said that he was worried about not being able to keep up with it as he had been having a hard time studying since the lock down. The other participants commented that they would help him.

#### 2. *Could you comment on the Study Schedule guidelines for the meetings?*

All the respondents indicated that they did the tasks and that they were motivated with the initial content of the senior year, although they found it easy. They concluded that it should be a revision of early years.

#### 3. *How was your adaptation with the educational app?*

The respondents commented that it was different from last year's application and that they had difficulty finding the written material until they received help from the study group leader - the researcher accessed the educational application to guide the leader in this specific doubt.

#### 4. *At the end of the questions, the moment was free for comments.*

They mentioned that they felt ignored by the school management and that they had no one to look for with questions. The regular phone number provided did not answer. They emphasized that they felt discredited with their efforts, after having carried out all the teachers' demands during the first year of the pandemic. Their concern with the low quality of teaching for ENEM was also mentioned.

### c) Questionnaire

Within the third meeting, the questionnaires were handed out to each respondent while the researcher stayed away from the delivery location, however close enough in case they had any questions about the items. The completed questionnaires were placed in the same return envelope by each participant, without the need for identification. Afterwards, they began their studies. In order to present an overview mapping of these responses, the items were



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organized into categories, according to the highest frequency received. The respondents ranked the items favoring about their participation in the study group activity:

- ✓ It served as reinforcement of learning, as a motivator through contact with colleagues and helped with doubts and understanding of the contents;
- ✓ The meetings on Saturdays and the predetermined time between 60-90 minutes were favorable for learning. It was a form of organization and motivation for studies;
- ✓ The activity brought back the socialization with their peers. They benefited from the collective exchange of knowledge.

The respondents also ranked the items unfavoring their participation in the study group activity:

- ✓ They could not go further with their studies and that they felt overwhelmed;
- ✓ The pandemic situation also sometimes interfered with the willingness to participate in the group.

Following this statement, one can visualize that any social environment is maintained through processes. A list presenting ten guidelines was established, through consensus, during the process of implementation, as seen earlier in the formation of the group. The study group formation was built on norms since the beginning, as norms and groups decisions are related. A list of study group's guidelines, presented in earlier study by Simonetti (2021), was vital to the performance of the activity.

### 6.6 Emergency stop against covid-19

In late March 2021, the study group members would meet for the fourth time regarding content review. Within the three senior students, only one would participate. The other two claimed that it was impossible to participate that day for personal reasons. It is worth mentioning that this meeting was the first time that the majority signaled an impediment to attend. The fact that the assignment was a content review, added to the new restrictive protocols against the coronavirus might have reduced their motivation, affected their interest and their concern about the level of health security.

Unfortunately, the pandemic registered dynamic numbers by April, proving to be the biggest pandemic ever in the nation. By the end of this month, Brazil beat its own monthly record for the number of deaths in this pandemic, reaching almost 81,000 (O GLOBO, 2021; WHO, 2021). A new stop had been set by the authorities in several regions of the country, including the state of Rio de Janeiro. The sanitary protocols were extended to the public area, reducing once more the number of social contacts in Maricá city (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021b). With this, the in-person meetings of the study group activity were interrupted. As the pandemic panorama showed no improvement in short term, the participants decided to cancel the study group activity.



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### 7 RESULTS

The free access to digital learning in a virtual environment, in addition to the guidelines of the National Education Council (BRAZIL, 2020) and of the Rio de Janeiro State Education Department (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021a) were vital for our initial reflections regarding on how to make a difference in the community and for the implementation of the methodological practice of the study group activity described here. Unfortunately, the hands-on practice period, which would be from March to June 2021, could not be completed due to compliance of the sanitary protocols against the coronavirus.

Three consecutive meetings were held on March of that year. The meetings began with the researcher direct participation with the senior students to collect information and help in methodological practice. The data collected consisted of field notes from the observation method, reports of the face-to-face group interview and questionnaire responses. Subsequently, the study started with active participation of all group members, consulting the educational application. The respondents' rapid adaptation and possibility of overcoming while learning this activity were observed. The respondents were able to follow the Study Schedule as proposed. The group completed the two first months of the syllabus by the end of March.

As the pandemic situation took over and the application of sanitary protocols became a daily routine, reflecting on schooling, these senior students faced a change in their force field which is also related to social change. As Lewin's behavior formula  $f(B) = p.e$  indicates, the sudden change from face-to-face teaching to remote one modified the elements present in their vital space: from classroom to homeschooling, from classmates to studying literally alone and from printing material to digital one. The effects of quarantine would certainly be felt.

The implementation of the study group made it possible to approach each group member in-person, in compliance with health safety protocols, and took them away from their discouragement and procrastination to study, due to the absence of the school environment. All seniors agreed that the study group activity acted as a reinforcement of learning, as a motivator through contact with colleagues and helped with doubts and improved understanding of the contents. They reported that they felt good at the group meetings. Most agreed that the activity was a form of organization and motivation for studies. They stated that the meetings on Saturdays and the predetermined time between 60-90 minutes were favorable for learning. Concurrently, they felt ignored by the school management and discredited in their efforts during the pandemic chaos last year. These facts further increased their concern facing the quality of education offered for national exam.

Nevertheless, the majority indicated that sometimes, even participating in the study group, they could not go on with the studies and they felt overwhelmed. These statements are the reflection of the pandemic context, acting on the group's routine and willingness to study; a situation that Brazilian society never lived before. As Lewin (1951) suggested, the forces in the senior students' vital space were being affected by outside stimulus which were causing a psychic tension interfering on their state of readiness. These forces were pushing them away from their studies.



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It was possible to note other pandemic implications in the daily lives of these young participants, such as the long duration of school closures. One of the seniors highlighted that she could not understand the opening of several commercial and service establishments, such as gyms and private schools, while public schools remained closed. She also did not understand why the hybrid learning system was not put into practice. Another respondent agreed with her. It was informed that this decision was to mitigate the effects of the new coronavirus pandemic, given that education professionals *were not included* in the priority groups for immunization in our country.

Several aspects affect the formation of attitudes and their changes, such as experiences with other people. Any human behavior seeks to find consistency in terms of social situations features. The pandemic led to this experience which made many people question their attitudes at individual and social levels. The participants' behaviors during the study group activity were also due to the characteristics of these individuals and the pandemic context they were immersed in. Hence, the learning process could only take place, as the senior students could adjust to this unique reality; when their attitudes changed, transformation could be perceived through praxis.

Based upon this context, one can reflect that the learning process depends on the interaction between the person and the environment. The respondents could only change the passive image of themselves because the environment changed for good with group study participation, offering a different perspective to knowledge. Therefore, we postulated the Lewin's theory could explain how the environment could propagate the fluid of language. With this group activity, the learning process could be constructed by the students gathering all the necessary information and motivation from the environment. The relationship maintained with objects and people around them certainly had an enormous impact on their perception of the world, as it enhanced analytical thought. This active pedagogical strategy was able to contribute to perception of reality, running meetings, team development, sense of self-worth and commitment, motivation skills, participative work design and environment change.

Overall, one can notice that observing the study group implementation through force field analysis, as suggested by Lewin (1951), each member's vital space had valences that would hold or push him/her to a certain tension situation. The positive valences would push the individual in the direction of accomplishing the tasks, while the negative valences would hold or pull the individual away from them. Each successful study group meeting stimulated each member to exchange views and actions, balancing forces at the end. To this day, the pioneering work of Lewin demonstrates the influence of several factors interfering in different learning settings.

### 8 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Significant changes are taking place in socioeconomic contexts around the world due to the covid-19 pandemic that started in 2019. Questions have been raised and responses shared to meet such a challenge around the world. It could not be different in Brazil, where the sanitary crisis has led to investments in education technology which has never been seen before. This situation has urged



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the possibility of hybrid learning which combines traditional classroom and remote teaching at all educational levels (LIMA; MOTA, 2021; PASINI et al., 2020).

The need to think more about pedagogical guidelines, which would involve high school teachers and students at Rio de Janeiro state, stimulated important technological advances: expressive improvements in access to digital culture and differentiated attendance to students with restricted access to it. Still, among the latter, those who did not have digital tools or connectivity were assisted with printed material and face-to-face pedagogical mediation at their school unit, taking into consideration the sanitary protocols.

This study provided an opportunity for senior high school students to participate in another study activity with organization and discipline. Participants left the comfort zone of the passive learning process and launched themselves into the development of a face-to-face modality. This emancipator experience was possible due to their common interest, availability and dedication of each member to participate in the research. The knowledge shared allowed critical and reflective development of the contents and on-site experience of the activity.

From another perspective, the Syllabus for Students 2021 (RIO DE JANEIRO, 2021a) was perceived as imposing by the respondents who felt subdued in the pedagogical process regarding the planning of remote education. Paulo Freire (1996) reported that these actions come from a model of banking education when knowledge is entered by the learner in a non-critical way, castrating the action-reflection relationship of learning. Besides the motivational tips presented in the Syllabus, there was a lack of minimum guidance regarding the application of the study group activity, due to the excessive rationality of the technological context which it was immersed. In spite of the benefits of technological remote teaching, especially in this historical context, cognizable gaps lack space in the educational context.

What is clear is that the pioneering work of Kurt Lewin in social psychology gives us until nowadays the understanding of the influence of several factors in the learning process in different settings. This pandemic situation also indicated that the students' families need to be offered online interactive session and one-to-one support to be able to build confidence to confront the new challenges of distance learning. Family members have struggled to figure out technology language going from internet access to the use of computers and/or cellular phones as "classroom"; to understand that if their kids are using online educational resources, they are not playing games or talking to friends, they are accessing digital learning.

With this study developed in Brazilian culture and during the covid-19 pandemic, we hope to have stimulated new knowledge through this practical alternative for school learning and for life; having collaborated with the specific problems of daily school life or for other similar contexts, stimulating the tacit knowledge of each one, with the purpose of generating new meanings, contributing to the real life of teachers and students through a heuristic look, leading to naturalistic generalization of the results presented. Horton and Freire (1990) already warned: we have to be inserted in a permanent search process, because without it, we would die in life. As a result of our



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experience, we hope we have also contributed to the praxis of active pedagogical strategies which provides a critical view in the teaching-learning process. The coronavirus pandemic has made it clear that the Brazilian public school system needs the participation of the families to fulfill its mission.

Meanwhile, the pandemic led also to multiplying crisis as loss of work, and lack of food and home, challenges to overcome, as the consequences by covid-19 will persist and must be addressed. Through this crisis, political impasses in the field of health in Brazil significantly aggravated the situation of education throughout the nation, especially with regard to the opening of public schools and the resumption of activities during such a catastrophic period. Clearly, basic education needs to be the center of government attention, in order to be included in the list of essential activities. Finally, the covid-19 era education compels government, educators and families to confront the new challenges of distance learning beyond the current crisis.

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