

Introduction

The topic of this thesis is the issues surrounding distance learning. It focuses on the period when this teaching was introduced in the Czech Republic due to the closure of all school levels on the basis of a resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic, which declared a state of emergency due to the Covid-19 disease (Covid) caused by the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

On 11th March 2020, the Ministry of Health issued an emergency measure prohibiting the personal presence of pupils and students in primary, secondary and higher vocational schools, including pre-schools, and distance learning was introduced. On 12th March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid a pandemic due to the high increase in the number of people infected with the disease, and 49 countries around the world closed their schools at the same time (UNESCO). The official return to in-class learning was occurred in June 2021.

Beginning with successive government and ministerial regulations, it was frustrated for children, parents, but also for teachers, because no one was prepared for this new situation.

This included also the grasp of the distance education model.

I have experienced distance learning myself in the first year of combined studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, department of Pedagogy. Our teaching was conducted on-line according to the given timetable in the Microsoft Teams environment. Personally, I had no problem with this way of teaching, yet the problems around me occurred to a large extent, and this made me focus on them in this thesis.

I chose the topic at a time when distance learning was on the decline. I finished my thesis when school teaching was again in full-time form, three years after the official end of distance education. Covid cases continued to occur in the Czech Republic, but their severity, which would require subsequent hospitalization, was negligible.

I also had the opportunity to observe distance education in primary and secondary school from the perspective of a mother of three sons. Two of them were attending primary school at the time (2nd and 8th grade), the third was in the 1st year of secondary school.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and practical parts. In the theoretical part, I introduce the basic concepts related to distance education, I discuss the origins of distance education in the world and in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, I point out the anchoring of this form in the School Act. The time periods since the beginning of the pandemic, when distance education was introduced in schools, are marked.

I gathered information about the research already conducted, from the perspective of teachers, parents and pupils. I have highlighted some of the issues associated with distance learning. At the end of the theoretical part, I presented the preventive measures that are in place in school settings and what crisis intervention is possible if there are serious cases when a pupil needs support and help together with their parents.

For the practical part I chose a qualitative research concerning distance learning, its research problem focused on the current situation in schools and the search for points of contact, whether distance learning is an indicator of the problems that students are currently facing in schools.