

Research in Distance Education: Identification of the Most Explored and Neglected Themes in Papers Published from 2002 to 2021

Pesquisa em Educação a Distância: Identificação dos Temas Mais Explorados e Negligenciados em Artigos Publicados de 2002 a 2021

ISSN 2177-8310
 DOI: 10.18264/eadf.v12i2.1860

Leandro de Oliveira Silva^{1,*}
 Juliana Lopes Moraes¹
 Deise Ferreira Fernandes Paes¹

¹Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro. Avenida Alberto Lamego, 875 – Campos dos Goytacazes – RJ – Brasil.

*oliveiradasilvaleo@gmail.com

Abstract

With the enactment of the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education, distance education was regulated. Since then, the offer of courses in this modality has grown significantly. This growth is reflected in the articles published over the last twenty years, which discuss the most different aspects of distance education. Here we present the results of a quantitative research, which investigated publications of 13 specialized journals in distance education and 78 non-specialized journals, from 2002 to 2021. We identified 1266 articles from specialized journals and 100 articles from non-specialized journals with topics directly related to distance education, classified into 45 different categories. After categorizing the entire sample space, we decided to focus our attention on articles from specialized journals, since these journals are dedicated to publishing specific research in the area. Considering these journals, the ten categories with the most articles were: Course/Program; Tutor/Tutoring; Material/Instructional Design; Discipline; Subjects; Information and Communication Technologies; Digital tools; Revision; Distance Education x classroom, and Inclusion/Accessibility. The ten categories with the fewest published articles were: Feedback; Innovation in Distance Education; Student conception; Public Policies and Distance Education; Skills; Learning styles; Active methodologies in Distance Education; Flipped classroom; Motivation, and Virtual Silence. We hope that the results obtained will help researchers to take a new look at distance education, suggesting aspects that still need further investigation and, in this way, contributing to the development of future research.

Keywords: Distance education. DE. Integrative review.



Recebido: 28/06/2022
 Aceito: 08/09/2022
 Publicado: 09/09/2022

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

ABNT: SILVA, L. de O.; MORAES, L. J.; PAES, D. F. F. Pesquisa em Educação a Distância: Identificação dos Temas Mais Explorados e Negligenciados em Artigos Publicados de 2002 a 2021. *EaD em Foco*, v. 12, n. 2, e1860, 2022. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18264/eadf.v12i2.1860>

Pesquisa em Educação a Distância: Identificação dos Temas Mais Explorados e Negligenciados em Artigos Publicados de 2002 a 2021

Resumo

Com a promulgação da Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, a educação a distância foi regulamentada. Desde então, a oferta de cursos nesta modalidade cresceu de forma significativa. Esse crescimento se reflete nos artigos publicados ao longo dos últimos vinte anos, os quais discutem os mais diferentes aspectos da educação a distância. Aqui apresentamos os resultados de uma pesquisa quantitativa, que investigou publicações de 13 revistas especializadas em educação a distância e 78 revistas não especializadas, de 2002 a 2021. Nós identificamos 1266 artigos de revistas especializadas e 100 artigos de revistas não especializadas com temas diretamente ligados à educação a distância, classificados em 45 diferentes categorias. Após categorização de todo o espaço amostral, decidimos concentrar a atenção sobre os artigos das revistas especializadas, uma vez que estes periódicos se dedicam a publicar pesquisas específicas da área. Considerando estas revistas, as dez categorias com mais artigos foram: Curso/Programa; Tutor/Tutoria; Material/Design Instrucional; Disciplina; Sujeitos; Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação; Ferramentas digitais; Revisão; Educação a Distância x Presencial, e Inclusão/Acessibilidade. As dez categorias com menos artigos publicados foram: Feedback; Inovação em Educação a Distância; Concepção de aluno; Políticas Públicas e Educação a Distância; Competências; Estilos de aprendizagem; Metodologias ativas em Educação a Distância; Sala de aula invertida; Motivação, e Silêncio virtual. Esperamos que os resultados obtidos auxiliem pesquisadores em um novo olhar para a educação a distância, sugerindo aspectos que ainda necessitam de maiores investigações e, desta forma, contribuindo para o desenvolvimento de futuras pesquisas.

Palavras-chave: Educação a distância. EaD. Revisão integrativa.

1. Introduction

Distance Education (DE) can be defined as the educational modality in which teachers and students develop teaching-learning activities in “different places and times” (BRASIL, 2017). Its regulation is remote from the 1996 National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB 9394/96), when the possibility of offering distance courses, “at all levels and modalities of education”, was defined (BRASIL, 1996).

In 2005, Decree No. 5,622 was published, which regulates the offer of courses by interested institutions, later revoked by Decree No. 9,057, of 2017 (BRASIL, 2017). Decree No. 5,800, of June 8, 2006 (BRAZIL, 2006) prioritized the offer of licensure and teacher training courses for Basic Education. The following year, the publication of the “Quality References for Higher Distance Education” (BRASIL, 2007), an update of a 2003 document, sought to define guidelines for institutions that offer distance learning courses.

From the legal determination, there was an expansion of distance education courses, mainly by private higher education institutions, marked by educational mercantilism (ARAÚJO; JEZINE, 2021). Teacher training courses (licenciaturas) received special attention. From 2010 to 2018, enrollment in distance education

courses increased by 117% in private higher education institutions, while face-to-face teaching decreased by 33% (MENEGHEL; WESTPHAL, 2020). This increase, in itself, already shows a paradigm shift that distance education caused in the Brazilian educational scenario: more students started to look for distance education seeking professional qualification.

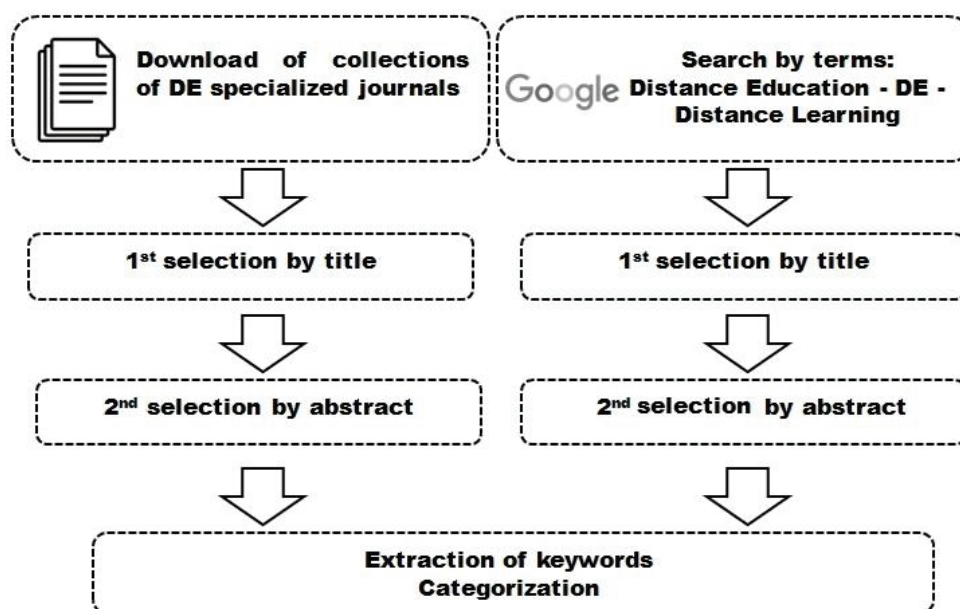
The growing expansion of distance education in recent years suggests a field of research still under construction, in which different aspects and approaches related to its organization, as well as its subjects, are in the process of being defined (ROCHA, J. G.; SMITH, 2019). Faced with the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, DE came to be considered as an option for the maintenance of educational activities. It is necessary, however, to differentiate distance education, which was already done before the pandemic, and remote emergency teaching, designed so that students could continue their studies without further damage (DE BRITO MARINHO et al., 2021).

Given the need to better understand the research scenario in distance education, this article aims to verify which aspects have been privileged or neglected by research on Distance Education, in journal publications from 2002 to 2021, considering only articles written in Portuguese language.

2. Methodology

This is a quantitative survey. Quantitative research “considers what can be quantified, which means translating opinions and information into numbers to classify and analyze them” (KAUARK; MANHÃES, MEDEIROS, 2010, p. 26-27). We are not interested, at first, in analyzing the quality of publications on distance education. A search was carried out following the basic flowchart shown in Figure 1. The search was limited to works published in Portuguese.

Figure 1: Basic research flowchart



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The problem-question that guided this research was: What themes have been privileged by research in distance education in the Brazilian educational scenario and which have been neglected? The following steps were followed: i) Download the full collection of 13 specialized DE magazines; ii) Search for the terms

“distance education”; “distance education” and “DE” on Google Scholar; iii) Removal of redundant or disconnected works from the topic; iv) Classification and categorization of works related to distance education.

“Journals specialized in distance education” were considered to be those whose scope indicated a predilection for research in this area. This information is usually found in the “About the journal” section of the journal’s website. Non-specialized journals, on the other hand, do not have a predilection for publishing articles addressing aspects of distance education, even if they accept them. Non-specialized journals were identified from the articles found during the research to write this review. Review articles were categorized simply as “review”. The first selection of works was based on the reading of titles and abstracts, where those that did not directly address a topic relevant to distance education were excluded. If a particular article addressed more than one topic within distance education, it was classified according to the predominant approach indicated by its title. If the title proved to be insufficient for classification, the abstract was read. Finally, if necessary, the reading of the results was used to classify the articles.

After the initial selection, a second curation took place, based on the reading of the abstracts of the articles. At this stage, some articles that were not properly related to distance education were discarded. A full reading and content analysis of 10 articles from journals specialized in distance education were also carried out, belonging to the 10 categories least explored by the researchers. These articles were selected based on the subjective criteria of the authors of this review, considering the most original themes in their understanding. The content analysis of these articles sought to highlight examples of research already carried out and encourage reflection on the themes. Articles considered to be very specific or difficult to classify were grouped into a category called “Different aspects”. This category houses articles that address, for example: graduation of distance education students; Catholicism and Distance Education; noopower; radio and distance education; academic garden. These are, therefore, articles whose theme does not seem to be broad enough to constitute an independent category.

3. Results AND Analysis

3.1 DE from the perspective of journal publications

After downloading complete editions of specialized DE magazines, a first selection was carried out by reading the title, and all those that were not directly related to DE were discarded (Table 1). 13 journals specialized in distance education were identified. The DE Magazine in Deb@te, known to us as a specialized DE magazine, could not be accessed, as its server was not online, therefore being excluded from the analyses.

Table 1: Characteristics of specialized journals analyzed in this review.

Periodic	Qualis CAPES 2021	Analysis time interval (years)	Number of publications analyzed	Included articles	Excluded articles	% of articles considered
EaD em Foco	A3	12	21	351	8	97
RBAAD	A3	20	21	186	44	80
Paidéi@	B3	15	27	150	64	70
Tics & Ead Em Foco	B4	7	15	138	3	97
EDaPECI	B4	13	37	85	301	22

EmRede	B4	8	16	148	92	61
Revista Aprendizagem em EAD	B4	8	8	38	6	86
InFor	B5	6	9	15	47	24
Ead& Tecnologias Digitais na Educação	C	9	11	68	56	54
Pesquisa & Educação a Distância	C	9	27	13	391	3
Revista Educação a Distância	C	11	18	105	37	73
EducEaD	-	1	1	4	2	66
RE@D	-	4	7	12	35	25
Total			218	1313	1086	54

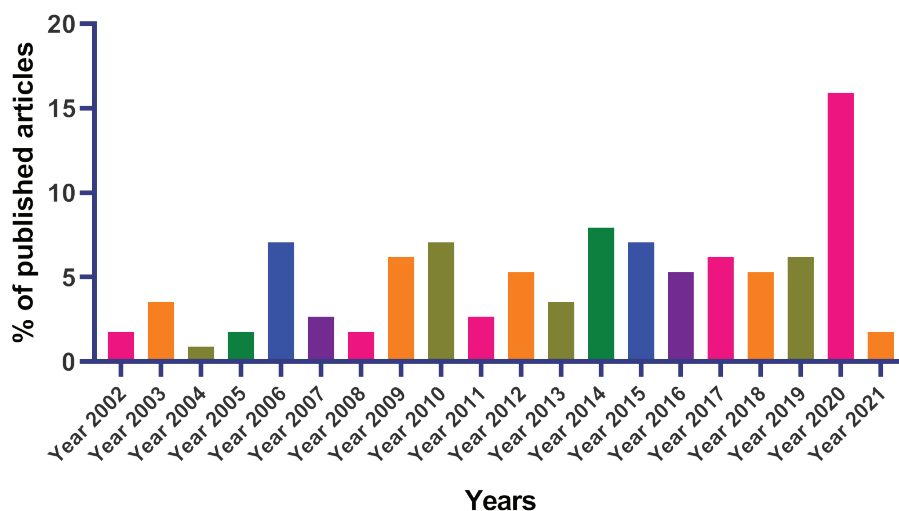
Observing Table 1, it can be seen that 54% of the articles found were retained for analysis. In a second selection, the articles were analyzed and classified based on the reading of the abstracts, and those considered inappropriate were discarded. After this second analysis, 1266 articles from specialized journals and 100 articles from non-specialized journals (listed in Supplementary Table 1) were considered in this review.

The classification of articles resulted in 45 categories: 1-Affectivity; 2-Autonomy; 3-Assessment; 4-VLE/Moodle; 5- DE Scenarios; 6-Competences; 7-Communication; 8- Conception of student; 9-Pandemic/ Covid-19; 10-Course/Program; 11-Discipline DE; 12- DE Teaching; 13-E-learning; 14- DE x On-site; 15-Styles of learning; 16-Evasion; 17- DE Extension; 18-Feedback; 19-Digital tools; 20- Continuing Distance Education; 21- DE teacher training; 22-Gamefication; 23-Management; 24-Inclusion/Accessibility; 25-Innovation in distance education; 26-Material/Instructional Design; 27- Pedagogical mediation; 28-Active Distance Learning Methodologies; 29-Theories/Teaching Models; 30-MOOC; 31-Motivation; 32-Public Policies and Distance Learning; 33-Support Pole; 34-Revision; 35-Inverted classroom; 36-Hybrid teaching; 37-Virtual silence; 38- DE subjects; 39-ICTs/NICTs; 40-Tutor/Tutorship; 41-UAB; 42-Democratization of education; 43-Precariousness of work; 44-Quality of distance education and 45-Time and space. Articles from specialized journals belong to 41 categories, while articles from non-specialized journals were classified into 28 different categories.

Considering the articles from specialized DE journals, we noticed that they were published from 2002 to 2006 by a single journal (RBAAD) (data not shown). In 2007, the magazine *Paidéi@* began to be published, followed by *EDaPECI*, in 2009 and, from 2010, by the magazine with the highest number of articles analyzed: *Revista DE em Foco*. Considering only the publications of these specialized DE journals, we realize how young is the DE research published in Portuguese.

On the other hand, articles published in non-specialized distance education journals (Figure 2) cover the time interval from 2002 to 2021, with the highest percentage of these articles published in the year 2020.

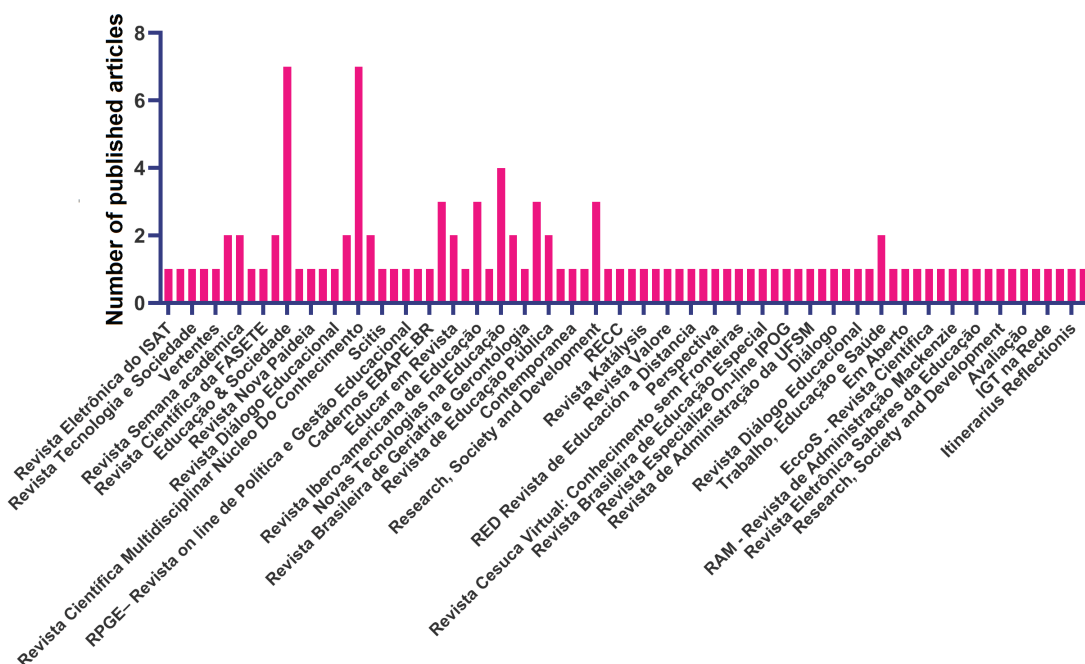
Figure 2: Articles from journals not specialized in distance education, by year of publication.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

Considering journals not specialized in distance education, most published only one article (Figure 3, not all journals are shown). There were 78 journals considered. Sixteen non-specialized journals published more than one article related to distance education.

Figure 3: Number of articles published by journals not specialized in distance education.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The keywords of the articles classified by the present research were counted, as a way to help in the characterization of the works. We considered 4533 keywords from articles from specialized journals, and 351 keywords from articles from non-specialized journals. In Table 2, we see the main keywords found in the articles. We noticed that the first three keywords (education, distance and teaching) are the most common, both in articles published in specialized distance education magazines and in other magazines. In

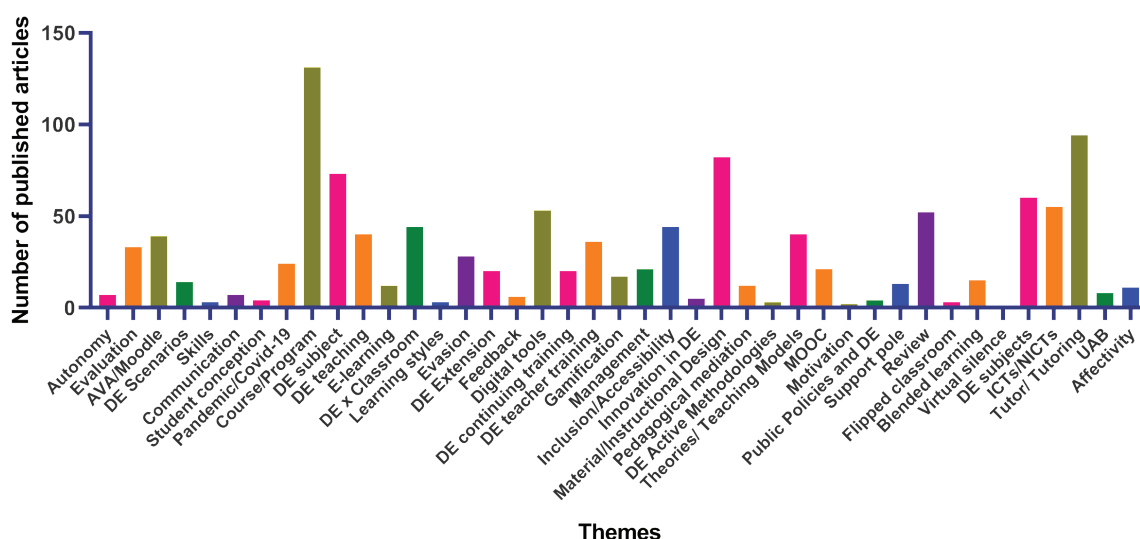
the articles of specialized magazines, “DE”, “tutoring” and “tutor” stand out. In the other articles, “politics”, “superior” and “technology” are keywords that stand out.

Table 2: Number of occurrences of the 10 most frequent keywords of the articles identified in this research.

Periodics specialized in distance education		Non-specialized periodics	
Keywords	occurrences	Keywords	occurrences
Educação	891	Educação	107
Distância	745	Distância	92
Ensino	340	Ensino	33
Aprendizagem	261	Tecnologia	20
Formação	219	Ead	17
Tecnologia	184	Superior	17
Ead	151	Comunicação	14
Professor	131	Professor	12
Superior	93	Aprendizagem	12
Ambiente	78	Formação	11

We identified 106 articles from specialized distance education magazines classified as “Different aspects”, and 27 from non-specialized magazines. This category was created to house inaccurately classified articles. The other articles were distributed among the 45 categories. As a result, we identified the main categories covered by articles published by magazines specialized in distance education, from 2002 to 2021 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Articles published by specialized EaD magazines.

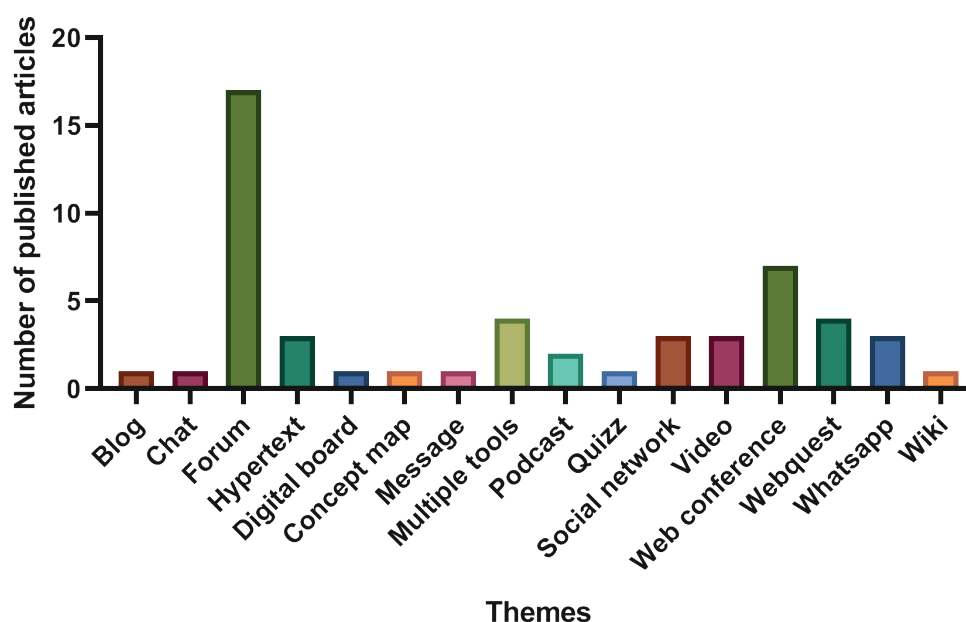


Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

The 10 categories with the highest number of articles were, in descending order: Course/Program; Tutor/Tutorship; Material/Instructional Design; DE discipline; DE subjects; ICTs/NICTs; Digital tools; Revision; DE x On-site and Inclusion/Accessibility.

“Course/Programme” houses studies focused on specific postgraduate courses or programs. The articles in this category are important because they highlight what is most interesting in the analyzed courses, making it possible to know the structure and organization of distance education in different institutions. “Tutor/tutoring” contains articles that deal with aspects related to the work of these important elements of distance education, whose performance is more direct with the students. “Instructional Material/Design” houses articles that analyze this important aspect of distance education: the didactic material and the architecture of the virtual environment. Both are very important for the success of the courses, as they constitute supports that can facilitate or hinder learning. “DE Discipline” is a category that houses articles that analyze specific aspects of disciplines offered at a distance. In the “DE Subjects” category, articles that analyze questions about the different components of distance education were included: students, managers, content-teachers, etc. “ICTs/NICTs” includes articles that discuss the issue of Information and Communication Technologies in the context of distance education. “Digital tools” is a category that houses articles that discuss the use of different tools commonly used in distance education, including communication tools (such as chat and forum) and knowledge production (such as wiki) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Published articles on digital tools.



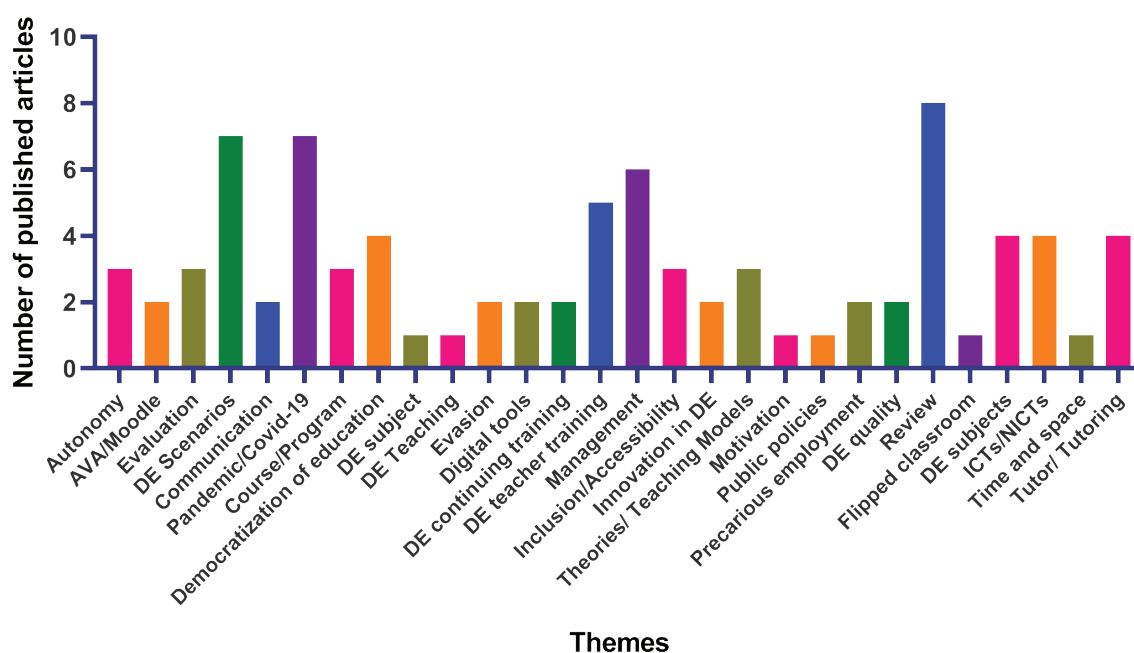
Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

According to the figure above, the forum is the most approached tool in the surveys, followed by web conferencing, webquest and Whatsapp. The forum is an asynchronous communication tool, that is, it allows users to communicate at different times, unlike chat, which requires users to be all connected during the same time interval. Web conferencing and Whatsapp have become more widespread due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has required new forms of communication.

The “Review” category houses review articles on the most different aspects of distance education. “DE x Presence” is a category that includes articles that compare aspects of face-to-face teaching with distance education. Finally, “Inclusion/Accessibility” houses articles that discuss issues related to inclusion, both for students with special educational needs in distance education and social inclusion, as well as accessibility issues.

Considering non-specialized journals, the most discussed topics were: Review; Distance Learning Scenarios; Pandemic/Covid-19; Management; DE teacher training; Democratization of teaching; DE subjects; ICTs/NICTs; Tutor/Tutorship and Autonomy (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Articles published by journals not specialized in distance education.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

Observing the categories that differ from specialized magazines, we have that “DE Scenarios” contains articles that propose to analyze aspects related to the insertion of distance education, and its impacts on society. “Pandemic/Covid-19” includes articles that sought to analyze the impact of the pandemic (WERNECK; CARVALHO, 2020) on distance education. The category “Management” refers to articles that analyzed organizational aspects of distance education. “DE teacher training” includes articles that analyzed courses or programs aimed at training teachers through distance education. “Democratization” of education includes articles that discuss distance education as a modality that expands access to higher education. Finally, “Autonomy” includes articles that discuss autonomy and its development in students of distance education courses.

3.2 A look at the topics less explored by magazines specialized in distance education

Chart 1 presents the less explored themes in distance education. Considering these themes, we selected an article corresponding to each of them for full reading and comments.

Chart 1: Publications selected by the authors of this article for full reading.

Themes	Article title	Reference
Feedback	Feedback as an Integral Part of Formative Assessment in a Postgraduate Distance Learning Course: Conceptions of the Multidisciplinary Team	PASSOS (2020)
Innovation in distance education	The Art of Innovating in Distance Education	RIBEIRO e CARVALHO(2017)
Student conception	Distance Education in the Perception of Pedagogy Academics in the City of Lábrea/AM	LIMA e LACERDA JÚNIOR (2021)

Public Policies and DE	Manifestos do Esud: Tool for the elaboration of Public Policies in distance education	FORNARI e SILVA (2016)
Skills	Multiple Approaches to Competencies in Distance Education: A Necessary Problematization	RICARDO (2018)
learning styles	Learning Styles in Distance Education: A case study in the Public Administration undergraduate course at UFF	SIMÃO; ABREU e ABDALLA (2015)
Active Distance Learning Methodologies	Distance Higher Education: Active methodologies using digital technologies	BORGES et al. (2021)
Flipped classroom	Technology as a link between design and education: the example of the “flipped classroom”	VENÂNCIO (2020)
Motivation	Student Motivation in Distance Learning in Public Management From the Perspective of Self-Determination	COSTA et al. (2020)
virtual silence	Silence and Evasion in Distance Education: An Experience in the Virtual Environment Schoology	SILVA; SANTOS; ALVES (2020)

The “Feedback” category has six articles. The article “Feedback as an Integral Part of Formative Assessment in a Distance Postgraduate Course: Conceptions of the Multidisciplinary Team”, by Passos (2020), presents an analysis of the importance of feedback in formative assessment in a broad postgraduate course. *sensu*, from the perspective of the multidisciplinary team and analysis of virtual rooms. The author concluded that the multidisciplinary team of the course recognizes the importance of feedback for student training. Feedback is extremely important for distance education, as it helps to regulate the teaching-learning process, since face-to-face communication is reduced or non-existent. In this way, understanding not only how the students see the feedback, but also the team of DE managers, can help to improve the quality of communication between the subjects. In distance education, feedback should privilege dialogue, as it is one of the bases that support this modality (GANDRA, 2015). In this conversation, a culture of suspension of silence is built, seeking greater involvement of the subjects.

The category “Innovation in distance education” has five articles. The article “The Art of Innovating in Distance Education”, by Ribeiro and Carvalho (2017), presents a case study that used the Inventive Problem Solving Theory (TRIZ). The use of TRIZ as a methodology for innovation is interesting because it allows to rethink situations and propose new solutions, being little used in the area of education. In distance education, TRIZ can help with innovation, so necessary to this modality, which cannot be satisfied with reusing what is already done in classroom teaching. Articles that contemplate innovation are of fundamental importance for distance education, as this is a teaching modality that cannot simply appropriate face-to-face practices, but develop its own identity and, more importantly, manage to renew itself and seek solutions for the problems detected. Innovation seeks to meet both current needs and those that will emerge over time (SCHLÜNZEN JUNIOR et al., 2017), and is not limited to pedagogical issues, but can constitute administrative, political and other processes (CAZARINI et al. 2012).). Innovating, therefore, is essential in view of the technological and social changes that affect distance education.

The category “Student conceptions” has four articles. In this category, articles were included that seek to understand who are the subjects of distance education, raising different aspects about the course participants. The article “Distance Education in the Perception of Pedagogy Academics in the City of Lábrea/AM”, by Lima and Lacerda Júnior (2021), presents the results of interviews with 14 students of a degree course. The article highlights the benefits and difficulties of distance education. Among the benefits, the authors highlight the didactic material and interactions, and among the difficulties, access to the internet. In the case of the researched course, many students were already professors, and had the opportunity to interact with technological resources. It is needless to say that research that seeks to understand the stu-

dent profile is of fundamental importance for distance education, since it is necessary to know the public served in order to formulate public policies and implement actions, seeking to improve courses.

In the “Public policies” category, there are four articles. The article “Manifestos do Esud: Tool for the elaboration of Public Policies in distance education”, by Fornari e Silva (2016), analyzes the manifesto of the ESUD, from UniRede, prepared annually and directed to the government, seeking to obtain specific public policies for distance education. Considering the demands of the letters published between 2010 and 2016, in descending order, the main requests were: policies; promotion; planning; research and development, and control/evaluation. The authors highlight the importance of elaborating the requirements in a more specific way, seeking objectivity in the writing of letters/manifests. The development of public policies aimed at distance education is an urgent demand, especially when we consider the high dropout rate of courses (LIRA; LIMA, 2014). This requires new ways of managing and dealing with problems.

The “Skills” category has three articles. The article “Multiple Focuses on Competencies in Distance Education: a Necessary Problematization”, by Ricardo (2018), presents the necessary competencies for students and tutors of distance education, as a way of developing student-centered work. The author concludes that it is necessary to think about a teaching formation that encourages the development of students’ competences, mainly: autonomy; communication and interpersonal relationships. When it comes to distance education, autonomy is an essential skill, since most of the work is developed autonomously. Even in courses where there are tutors accompanying the students, it is the student who is responsible for organizing himself to fulfill the requirements of the course. However, as the work highlights, it is necessary for teachers to encourage the development of student autonomy.

In the “Learning Styles” category are three articles. The article “Learning Styles in Distance Education: A case study in the undergraduate course of Public Administration at UFF”, by Simão, Abreu and Abdalla (2015), analyzed the impact of learning styles on assessment in distance education. Understanding how student learning takes place can help organize the VLE. The authors concluded that learning style is not related to students’ academic performance. The result of this article is interesting because it shows that different learning styles are supported by distance education, suggesting that this educational modality has the potential to meet different student profiles. In other words, the analyzed study did not identify a single ideal profile for distance education. However, as the authors state, the sample size may not have allowed the identification of a predominant style, which opens space for further research on the topic.

The category “Active methodologies in distance education” contains three articles. The article “Higher Distance Learning: Active methodologies using digital technologies”, by Borges et al. (2021), analyzed articles published between 2014 and 2019, related to digital technologies and active methodologies in distance education undergraduate courses. The authors point out the need to reformulate courses and provide adequate teacher training so that active methodologies are implemented in a way that truly contributes to the development of students’ skills. In distance education, the teaching-learning process is usually mediated by technological resources, but this does not guarantee that the methodology promotes the active participation of the student, as there may be a simple transposition of contents and techniques from the face-to-face to the virtual environment. That is why it is important to investigate the application of methodologies in distance education.

The category “Flipped Classroom” has three articles. The article “Technology as a link between design and education: the example of the ‘inverted classroom’”, by Venâncio (2020), presents a reflection on Education and Design, bringing the inverted classroom as the resource that connects technology to the educational process. The author points out the need to deeply study the flipped classroom, seeking to discover in which educational scenarios it is viable. It also points out the need to consider the different learning styles of students, seeking methodologies that meet different profiles. The flipped classroom is interesting because it takes the student out of the role of a simple receiver of knowledge, transforming the class into a space for discussion and carrying out activities based on previous studies (SCHNEIDERS, 2018).

Therefore, depending on the distance education course, this methodology can be tested, however, further studies are still needed regarding the applicability and the results achieved.

The “Motivation” category has two articles. The article “Student Motivation in Distance Learning in Public Management Under the Optics of Self-Determination”, by Costa et al. (2020), analyzes the factors that influence the motivation of students in a distance education public management course. The authors state that there are two types of factors acting on student motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. The pleasure of discovery (intrinsic) and the increase in professional competence (extrinsic) were identified as the factors that most motivate what, according to the authors, differs from the factors of students in face-to-face education. In distance education, as well as in face-to-face teaching, it is important to be motivated. Interestingly, by showing that the motivation of distance education students is the result of different factors than those that motivate students in face-to-face teaching, we find another category that can be investigated. In addition, the internal factors of each need to be considered so that the learning process becomes more efficient (KÜLL; KASSEBOEHMER, 2006).

Finally, the category “Virtual silence” has only one article. The article “Silence and Evasion in Distance Education: an Experience in the Virtual Schoology Environment”, by Silva, Santos and Alves (2020), seeks to analyze virtual silence in a free course aimed at undergraduates in Biological Sciences. Despite the availability of communication tools and attempts to contact the organizers, most students remained silent and evaded. Understanding the DE student’s silence is extremely important for the development of quality work. The research showed that breaking the virtual silence does not depend only on the availability of communication tools, but also on the student’s interest in establishing communication. This suggests the need for a new culture in distance education, in which the student is equipped to seek help, rather than keeping silent and, potentially, evading.

A deeper analysis of the topics less explored by DE research offers clues about which aspects need more attention, pointing to the need for a new look at this educational modality, which represents an interesting and productive field of study.

4. Conclusion

DE arrived late in Brazil. In other parts of the world, since 1880, alternatives to the physical presence of the student in the classroom were already being tried out as a way of taking knowledge to those who needed it. In Brazil, only from the LDB/1996 onwards, we could envision the possibility of offering undergraduate and graduate courses in distance education format. This represented a true paradigm shift and inaugurated a new area of research.

Twenty-six years after the publication of the LDB/1996, which regulates distance education, what has been done in this field? What aspects are privileged by research? What aspects still need more attention and delineation? This article sought to reveal the scenario of more than two decades of research in distance education, showing which topics are most addressed by researchers and which still need more attention.

The objective of this work was to obtain an overview of DE research, considering articles published in the last two decades, both by specialized and non-specialized DE magazines. A total of 1266 articles from specialized journals and 100 articles from non-specialized journals were analyzed. From this analysis, we realized that certain aspects are prioritized by research, while others are neglected. The topics less addressed by research in distance education, such as competences; learning styles; active methodologies; Flipped classroom; motivation, and virtual silence may constitute fertile and interesting fields for future research, signaling the need to explore new aspects related to distance education.

References

- ARAÚJO, R. S. de .; JEZINE, E. A expansão da educação a distância no Brasil e as contradições entre capital e trabalho. **Revista Internacional de Educação Superior**, Campinas, v. 7, p. e021041, 2021. Available at: <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/riesup/article/view/8659964>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- BORGES, R. A. S. et al. Ensino Superior a Distância: Metodologias ativas com uso de tecnologias digitais. **EmRede**, v. 8, n. 1, p. 1-22, 2021. Available at: <https://www.aunirede.org.br/revista/index.php/emrede/article/view/648/633>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- BRASIL. **Decreto n. 5.800**, de 8 de junho de 2006. Dispõe sobre o Sistema Universidade Aberta do Brasil – UAB. Available at http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2004-2006/2006/Decreto/D5800.htm. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- BRASIL. **Decreto n. 9057**, de 25 de Maio de 2017. Regulamenta o art. 80 da Lei nº 9.394, de 20 de dezembro de 1996, que estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. Available at http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2015-2018/2017/Decreto/D9057.htm. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- BRASIL, **Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional**. LDB/9.394 de 20 de dezembro de 1996. Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. Available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br/seesp/arquivos/pdf/lei9394_ldbn1.pdf. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- BRASIL, **Referenciais de Qualidade para Educação Superior a Distância**, Brasília, 2007. Available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seed/arquivos/pdf/legislacao/refead1.pdf>. Access in: apr. 2022.
- CAZARINI, E. W. et al. Reflexões sobre a inovação na Educação a Distância: o caso brasileiro. **EaD em Foco**, v. 2, n. 1, 2011. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/91/30>. Access in: Aug. 2022.. 2022.
- COSTA, J. R. M. et al. Motivação Discente no Ensino a Distância em Gestão Pública sob a Óptica da Auto-determinação. **EaD em Foco**, v. 10, n. 2, e1022, 2020. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/1022/557>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- DE BRITO MARINHO, D. M. et al. Pandemia, ensino remoto emergencial e a angústia docente. **EmRede**, v. 8, n. 2, p. 1-13, 2021. Available at: <https://www.aunirede.org.br/revista/index.php/emrede/article/view/767/669>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- FORNARI, A.; SILVA, H. O. da. Manifestos do Esud: Ferramenta para elaboração de Políticas Públicas na EaD. **EmRede**, v. 3, n. 2, p. 184-196, 2016. Available at: <https://www.aunirede.org.br/revista/index.php/emrede/article/view/120/145>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- GANDRA, S. C. A Importância do Feedback na Educação a Distância. **Revista Aprendizagem em EaD**, vol. 4, n. 1, p. 1-7, 2015. Available at: <https://portalrevistas.ucb.br/index.php/raead/article/view/6042/4640>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- KAUARK, F. da S.; MANHÃES, F. C., MEDEIROS, C. H. **Metodologia da pesquisa: Um guia prático**. 1ª ed. Bahia. Via Litterarum: 2010
- KÜLL, C. R.; KASSEBOEHMER, A. C. Estudo da contribuição de problematização como fonte de estímulo ao acesso e interação de alunos do 9º ano em EaD. **Revista Infor**, São Paulo, v. 2, n. 1, p. 310-327, 2016 <https://ojs.ead.unesp.br/index.php/nead/article/viewFile/InFor2120165/pdf>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- LIMA, E. T.; LACERDA JUNIOR, J. C. A Educação a Distância na Percepção dos Acadêmicos de Pedagogia na Cidade de Lábrea/AM. **EaD em Foco**, v. 11, n. 2, e1545, 2021. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/1545/697>. Access in: Apr. 2022.

- LIRA, L. A. R.; LIMA, B. F. Z. Desafios da gestão de políticas públicas educacionais para formação de professores no âmbito do Sistema Universidade Aberta do Brasil. **EmRede - Revista de Educação a Distância**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 137-151, 2014. Available at: <https://www.aunirede.org.br/revista/index.php/emrede/article/view/14/26>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- MENEGHEL, S. M.; WESTPHAL, L. Vieira. Expansão dos Cursos de Licenciaturas no Brasil Período de 2010 a 2018. In: **VII Congresso Nacional de Educação – CONEDU**, 2020. Maceió, Alagoas
- PASSOS, M. L. S. Feedback como Parte Integrante da Avaliação Formativa em um Curso de Pós-graduação a Distância: Concepções da Equipe Multidisciplinar. **Revista Brasileira de Aprendizagem Aberta e a Distância**, v. 19, n. 1, e351, 2020. Available at: <http://seer.abed.net.br/index.php/RBAAD/article/view/351/322>. Access in: Apr. 2022
- RIBEIRO, A.; CARVALHO, Z. A Arte de Inovar na Educação a Distância. **EaD em Foco**, v. 7, n. 3, p. 08–17, 2017. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/604/264>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- RICARDO, J. S. Múltiplos Enfoques sobre as Competências na Educação a Distância: Uma Problemática Necessária. **EaD em Foco**, 2019, v. 9, n. 1, e731. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/731/346>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- ROCHA, J. G; SMITH, M. S. J. Cultura organizacional: motivando ou coibindo a inovação e a qualidade do EaD. **Educação a Distância**, v. 9, n. 1, p. 53-66, 2019. Available at: <https://claretiano.edu.br/revista/educacao-a-distancia/605b41303a94ed8a25334f5e>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- SCHLÜNZEN JUNIOR, K. et al. Inovação no processo de formação na docência universitária: estratégias formativas da Universidade Estadual Paulista. **TICs & EaD em Foco**, São Luís, v. 3, n. 2, p. 129-145, 2017. Available at: <https://www.uemanet.uema.br/revista/index.php/ticseadfoco/article/view/222/254>. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- SCHNEIDERS, L. A. O método da sala de aula invertida (flipped classroom). Available at: https://www.univates.br/editora-univates/media/publicacoes/256/pdf_256.pdf. Access in: Aug. 2022.
- SIMÃO, A. dos S.; ABREU, J. C. de A.; ABDALLA, M. M. Estilos de Aprendizagem na Educação a distância: Um estudo de caso no curso de graduação de Administração Pública da UFF. **Revista EDaPECI**, v. 15, n. 2, p. 370-392, 2015. Available at: <https://seer.ufs.br/index.php/edapeci/article/view/3706/pdf>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- SILVA, L. de O.; SANTOS, D. A. dos; ALVES, H. C. Silêncio e Evasão na Educação a Distância: uma Experiência no Ambiente Virtual Schoology. **EaD em Foco**, v. 10, n. 2, e1083, 2020. Available at: <https://eademfoco.cecierj.edu.br/index.php/Revista/article/view/1083/576>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- VENÂNCIO, G. A. A tecnologia como elo entre o design e a educação: o exemplo da “sala de aula invertida”. **TICs & EaD em Foco**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 1-13, 2020. Available at: <https://www.uemanet.uema.br/revista/index.php/ticseadfoco/article/view/494/382>. Access in: Apr. 2022.
- WERNECK, G. L.; CARVALHO, M. S. A pandemia de COVID-19 no Brasil: crônica de uma crise sanitária anunciada. **Cadernos de Saúde Pública**, vol. 36, n. 5, e00068820, 2020. Available at: <http://cadernos.ensp.fiocruz.br/static/arquivo/1678-4464-csp-36-05-e00068820.pdf>. Access in: Aug. 2022.