



## Teacher training and distance education in the state of São Paulo, Brazil: an analysis of production (2000-2010)

José Rubens Lima Jardimino\* and Marcelo Donizete da Silva

Departamento de Educação, Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto, Rua do Seminário, s/n, Centro, Mariana, Minas Gerais, Brazil. \*Author for correspondence. E-mail: jrjardilino@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT.** This article analyzes the theses and dissertations produced at the three public universities of the state of São Paulo: USP, UNICAMP and UNESP, from 2000 to 2010. It focuses on the theme of teacher training in the production on Distance Education. Since the policies of the State for distance higher education have been primarily aimed at undergraduate courses, the manner how theses and dissertations have addressed this issue is discussed. The methodology used in this sampling consists of the same state-of-the-art or knowledge of the field of educational research. Results indicated a strong presence of the theme of Teacher Training in the analyzed production, with a redirection of focus to other peculiarities of formation that are neither centered on the teacher nor directed to his or her practice and career.

**Keywords:** teacher training, distance education, education policy.

### Formação de professores e educação à distância no Estado de São Paulo, Brasil: uma análise da produção (2000 - 2010)

**RESUMO.** Neste artigo, analisamos as teses e dissertações produzidas nas três universidades do Estado de São Paulo; USP, UNESP e UNICAMP, no período de 2000 a 2010. O foco da pesquisa é a presença da temática da formação de professores na produção da Educação a Distância. Considerando que as políticas de Estado para o ensino superior, na educação a distância, têm se dirigido prioritariamente às licenciaturas, indagamo-nos de que maneira nas teses e dissertações essa temática têm sido abordada. Utilizamos nessa amostragem a mesma metodologia empregada nos estudos da arte ou do conhecimento realizados no campo da pesquisa educacional. Os achados da pesquisa indicam a presença forte do tema da Formação do Professor na produção analisada, entretanto, há um redirecionamento de foco para outras particularidades da formação que não estão centradas no professor, sua prática e sua carreira.

**Palavras-chave:** formação de professores, educação à distância, política educacional.

### Formación de profesores y educación a distancia en el Estado de São Paulo, Brasil: un análisis de la producción (2000 – 2010)

**RESUMEN.** En este artículo analizamos las tesis y disertaciones producidas en las tres universidades del Estado de São Paulo; USP, UNESP y UNICAMP, en el período de 2000 a 2010. El enfoque de la investigación es la presencia de la temática de la formación de profesores en la producción de la Educación a Distancia. Considerando que las políticas de Estado para la enseñanza superior, en la educación a distancia, se han dirigido prioritariamente a las licenciaturas, nos indagamos de qué manera en las tesis y disertaciones esa temática ha sido abarcada. Utilizamos en ese muestreo la misma metodología empleada en los estados del arte o del conocimiento realizados en el campo de la investigación educacional. Los hallazgos de la investigación indican la fuerte presencia del tema de la Formación del Profesorado en la producción analizada, sin embargo, hay un cambio del enfoque para otras particularidades de la formación que no están centradas en el profesor, su práctica y su carrera.

**Palabras clave:** formación de profesores, educación a distancia, política educacional.

#### Introduction

After almost two decades since the promulgation of the LDBEN no. 9,394-96 (BRASIL, 1996a), Distance Education has been rising as an important theme in educational debates, mainly in academic contexts. The discussions have as starting point the

strong recurrence of this formation modality in the different areas of knowledge and at higher education institutions in Brazil, considering, especially, incentive policies formulated by the Brazilian government for the expansion of the model to all school levels. According to the Brazilian Statistical

Yearbook of Open and Distance Education of 2008 (BRASIL, 2008), the easy access to media, including for the teaching-learning process in formal education, has made the distance modality one of the main tools for the equalization and democratization of teaching in Brazil<sup>1</sup>. Recent studies have been showing this emphasis on the education policy of the country. Bernardete Gatti, among other researchers, shows this expressiveness, preferably directed to the formation of teachers. Based on data of a 2011 investigation, Gatti et al. (2011, p. 50) inform the size of this vein in the Brazilian policy program concerning teacher training:

Among the measures of the federal government developed in this direction, one of the most important, for the dimensions it reaches, is the creation of the Open University of Brazil (OU), through Decree No. 5,800/2006, under the responsibility of the Distance Education Direction Board, linked to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), in partnership with the Secretariat of Distance Education of MEC. Its goal is to promote the initial and continuing formation of teachers, using distance education methodologies (GATTI et al., 2011, p. 50).

The Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) has been fostering and creating public policies guided by the goal of developing strategies for the expansion of the Distance Education (DE) modality. As a background question, the promulgation of a parallel legislation can be mentioned: Decree no. 2,494/98, which amends article 80 of the LDB no. 9,394 (Brasil 1996a), and regulates the offer of distance courses in Brazil (BRASIL, 1998); Ordinance no. 4,361/04 (BRASIL, 2004a) of MEC, which regulates accreditation and re-accreditation processes of higher education institutions for the offer of distance university education BRASIL,; Ordinance MEC no. 4,059 (BRASIL, 2004b), which regulates the offer of 20% of the workload of higher education blended courses; Decree no. 1,917/96 (BRASIL, 1996b), which creates the Secretariat of Distance Education – SEED; Decree no. 7,480/2011 (BRASIL, 2011), which extinguishes the SEED, transferring to the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion – SECADI – all of its

programs and actions. The historical milestone of the regulation of decrees for DE and its profusion on the various levels of education in Brazil happened with the creation of the OU, which goes beyond the formation of teachers. According to Motta (2007, p. 17-18):

The OU was born with the compromise of expanding and interiorizing the offer of higher education courses and programs in the country, with the following main goals: to offer, primarily, college courses in order to qualify heads, managers and workers for basic education of states and cities; 'to offer college courses in the different areas of knowledge, expanding the access to public higher education; to reduce inequalities in the offer of higher education between the different regions of the country; to establish a wide national system of distance higher education and to foment the institutional development of the distance education modality', as well as the research in innovative methodologies of higher education supported on information and communication technologies (Our italics)

In the education area, especially in research, the theme of DE is marked, throughout its implementation and increment, by two moments. In the first one, the choice was not to effectively enter the discussion, but rather observe it and verify how the public policy for the sector made its interferences. A real avalanche of actions could be seen in the country, especially adopted by private higher education institutions, encouraged by the easy access discourse – popularly called democratization of the higher education. This picture was set, to some extent, on the large demand for higher education in the 1990's. It was obvious, however, that institutions had the possibility of operating at a low cost, which corresponded to the profit expectations of education businesspersons, as well as to the taste of the market logics. The second moment is marked by the slackening of the redemption discourse of the DE as a resolution for access issues, and by a clearer definition of public policies, when, moderately, federal and state public institutions joined the debate about this teaching modality and started actions in this field. It is possible to identify this moment through data listed in this text, in the region studied, when the theme begins to appear strongly in the production of theses on the matter.

This article seeks to comprehend the theme, based on a survey of theses and dissertations developed at three public institutions of the state of São Paulo (USP, UNESP and UNICAMP), and defended in the period of 2000 to 2010. The work is inserted, therefore, in the epistemological research, whose object is the survey and/or state-of-the-art of

<sup>1</sup>Some data prove the growth of the throughout the country: for the third consecutive year, since the first edition, in 2004, of the Brazilian Statistical Yearbook of Open and Distance Education (Abra-EaD), the number of institutions authorized to carry out EaD and of their students grew way above the average of the national economy (MOTA, 2007).

the field, seeking to comprehend the place of Distance Education in the formation process of teachers.

In the analysis, there is a reflection about the issue evidenced today in the formation of teachers, currently considered one of the fundamental themes of the research on education and of DE policies. Although this is an emerging subject, the researches point towards a contradiction: the proposal of the DE has been silencing the debate about the formation of teachers or redirecting it to a more pragmatic perspective. Based on the criticism of the silencing of the debate, we present the data analysis and what the production on DE at the three major institutions of the state of São Paulo reveals to the research in Brazil. Finally, considering that the state policies for higher education, through distance learning, have been primarily directed to licentiate's degrees, we wonder how the theses and dissertations about DE have been addressing the formation of teachers.

#### Distance education: the field and the map

Urgent voices announce that the insertion of new technologies has been demystifying concepts, proposing interactivity, inclusion (VIANNEY et al., 2003) and new horizons for education. In Brazil, there has been a considerable increase in the number of experiences in distance education, formal or not, at public and private educational institutions<sup>2</sup>, by means of diversified Programs and Courses (BARRETO et al., 1999). In higher or basic education, the scenario is already quite significant, considering the growing interest in this learning modality. MEC/INEP data of 2010 indicates an exponential growth of programs and courses throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Data of the 2010 Census about the distribution of the number of enrollments by academic level, in on-site and distance modalities, reveal the importance of DE in teacher training courses. It is possible to observe that, in 2010, on-site courses reached the figure of 3,958,544 enrollments in bachelor's degree courses, 928,748 in licentiate's degree courses and 545,844 in technological courses. Distance education reached the figure of 930,179 enrollments, 426,241 of which correspond to enrollments in licentiate's degree courses, 268,173 in

bachelor's degree courses and 235,765 in college technological courses (BRASIL, 2010, p. 11). Out of the numbers referring to enrollments in the distance modality (930,179), 46% accounts for licentiate's degrees. That is, the state policies for the expansion of higher education, in this modality, have strongly affected the formation of teachers, which shows the reaffirmation of a trend. Whether this represents gains or losses, only time will tell.

Fortunately, this increment does not come without a relevant criticism of the theme in the area. There is a special effort in the analysis of some ideas and actions that profile state and government policies. Founded on the hypothesis that the formation of teachers in this modality is guided by social changes promoted by external agencies and actors, there is a concern about the theoretical, practical and political-ideological implications of this process to the Brazilian education. It cannot be forgotten that the teaching activity is a social practice expressed in the potential of the social being, the teacher, who acts in a context of changes, within a defined social structure (Brazilian). Therefore, a policy that privileges formation in this modality has the political intention of a reform-oriented program. Silva Junior (2010, p. 39), when analyzing the lines of action of the DE and of the formation of teachers in Brazil, finishes his considerations with the following conclusion:

Such lines of action seem to show the guiding criterion of the choices of teacher training and qualification policies: the intensive use of the educational technologies and, perhaps, the cost/benefit relation, as the definer of the type of exercise of these formation activities. Therefore, this is an institutional system in which the private predominates, concerning that which is not the state's purview, and the economic sphere of the mercantile rationality. It constitutes power, a teacher-training field guided by the market rationality to produce a political sphere in which the professional field becomes the center (SILVA JUNIOR, 2010, p. 39).

Some critical voices, such as that of Pinto Silva (2010), of Fétizon and Minto (2010), of Silva Junior (2003), of Silva Junior et al. (2010) and of Duarte (2001; 2008), stress the loss of formation intentionality under the perspective of constitution of a social being, of the historical practice and substance of these educational actors, called teachers, in this formation process. It seems that there is a retrocession towards the rationality of the very same theoretical, ideological and political matrix that oriented the State Reform of peripheral countries in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup>The University of Brasília (UnB) and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) were the first federal institutions of higher education (FIHE) to introduce DE in Brazil, followed by the Federal Universities of Pará, Ceará and Paraná, among others, now accredited by MEC to carry out distance undergraduate courses. Currently, nearly all FIHE, whether in the interior of the state or in the capital, have a department, an institute, a laboratory, a coordination board or equivalent organ, to offer a distance higher education program (undergraduate and graduate courses).

In this line of analysis, different questions have been presented over the years. The quality of high school has been the most frequent approach. However, other themes stand out: the regulations concerning the matter of quality (MOTA, 2007); the differentiated digital learning environments that are developed (BARRETO, 2006; TORI, 2010), each one claimed to be more efficient than the other, presenting diversified resources and (re)signifying the concepts of distance learning in the Brazilian educational tradition.

Consequently, it is noticeable the increasing interest in research in studies centered on this education modality, spanning the multiplicity of approaches and interface areas that it allows. They are studies that indicate divergences and convergences among researchers about DE in Brazil.

The analysis developed will be the survey type<sup>3</sup>, which follows the same methodology that has been used in the area<sup>4</sup> in several moments and in a variety of fields of the Brazilian educational research. The choice for this path is initially justified by the relevance of the case, with the aim of providing an overview on the production in this field of knowledge at a national level. It has been noticed, in this sense, that the Southeast region, particularly São Paulo, concentrates a good portion of the national production in science and technology, data largely known in evaluations, especially in these ranking times<sup>5</sup>. It is also taken into consideration the importance of state institutions, object of this analysis, for the scientific and technological development of the country and its respective contributions to the education area nationwide.

For the analysis of the object, the first step was a descriptive and analytical survey, of bibliographic nature, which consisted of the examination of all published material found in the digital collection of theses and dissertations of the focused universities<sup>6</sup>. The objective is to present the materiality of what has been produced about the theme, herein characterized as the research document. In the first phase, data was collected through keywords used in the productions. The intention was, thus, to

distinguish and to find the empirical material for the analysis – Distance Education and Distance Learning –, and there was no temporal limitation for the study. Only such databases have been chosen because they allow for, with their regular publications, the analysis of the production on the theme in study at each of the institutions. Likewise, the period of this survey was defined: the first decade of the new century.

In the second stage, for the preparation of analytical summaries, the entire material was digitally compiled, separated by year of publication. The abstracts of the works were subjected to careful reading and arranged in spreadsheets, based on a protocol elaborated to identify aspects considered relevant for the research. Finally, an examination was carried out from descriptors defined *a priori* for the analysis of the corpus, taking into account, as explained in item 3: a) areas privileged by the research about DE; b) period of greater concentration of researches; c) presence of the teacher training theme in the documents of the education area and the like.

#### **Teacher training in Distance Education – elements of the context**

With the transformations of information systems, of science and of new technologies, the debate that has been materializing, from contemporary educational theories, refers to the idea that the foundations of on-site education do not meet the formation demands of our time. For this reason, the proposal of (re)signification of educative knowledge gains strength in the production of research, as education projects should be open to the ‘new’ forms of organization of knowledge, emphasizing the principle of ‘autonomy’. These themes, autonomy and knowledge, are cut off from the conceptions that address authors like Freire (1996) and Charlot (2000; 2001).

In this point, the ‘society of knowledge’ and ‘information’ proposals are announced as the revolutionary ways towards education and towards teacher training. That is, everything is then determined by the access to information, and the problems of reality are inserted into the context of the new media. In this sense, many are the questions that have been imposed when discussing DE, whether it is in the sphere of research, whether it is circumscribed to teaching. In the analysis of the issue, two important questions to our view on the data emerged: 1) what constitutes the debate about the formation of teachers in the production of research on DE and its relationship with schoolwork?; 2) to what extent does

<sup>3</sup>We adopted the term survey rather than State-of-the-Art as we found in the area (ANDRE et al., 1999), because it refers to the context of this research that is based on the abstracts of theses and dissertations. It is a data collection technique that can leave gaps in case of a more careful analysis about aspects like methodology and theoretical foundation. However, these surveys in the education area have been a great contribution to *stricto sensu* State-of-the-Art studies.

<sup>4</sup>See: Gouveia (1971); Andre (1999, 2002, 2009); Brzezinski (2001, 2002, 2006) Romanowski (2002, 2006, 2012).

<sup>5</sup>According to the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities (WRC, 2010), the universities of the state of São Paulo were in the following positions: USP [53<sup>rd</sup>], UNICAMP [143<sup>rd</sup>], UNESP [340<sup>th</sup>]. In 2013, they came in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 177<sup>th</sup> and 294<sup>th</sup> positions, respectively.

<sup>6</sup>The databases used were: Usp Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, Unicamp Digital Library and Unesp Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations.

the result of the corpus of the research indicate that technologies assist in the continuing training process of teachers?

Every form of work consists of transforming nature toward guaranteeing the survival of man. This transformation process has a clear meaning when constituted in the human identity itself and in the formation of its consciousness. By losing the humanization value, work becomes alien to man, fact that causes him not to recognize himself as a subject of his own historical condition. Speaking of teacher training consists exactly of this condition: if the process does not aim at the formation of the human condition, its foundation, then, loses the social value.

In the context of contemporary education, the flexibilization of school management systems, given its insertion into the so-called emerging paradigms of education occurred after the educational reform of the 1990's, has changed the organization of the pedagogical work. In this sense, with vital importance, the discussion about a new subject of the process appeared: 'tutoring', which, connected with teacher training, began to be understood as the catalyzing axis of the teaching activity and of the propagation mechanisms of the Distance Education.

Another element that emerges, in this 'esoteric mystique' scenario of the DE, is the theme of continuing formation, largely debated in researches of the area (GATTI, 2008; GATTI; BARRETO, 2009; GATTI et. al., 2010; DAVIS et. al., 2011). The mystique referred herein, for being linked to the principles of globalization, despises the human condition as essential factor to life, reducing work to the foundations of the reproduction of information systems, fact that intensifies the discourse of the 'new' educational paradigms. It brings, thus, to the inside of the school reality the practice of conciliation in relation to the productive systems. So that this practice became the basis of the educational reality, the proposals of public policies for education, especially those started in the 1990's, took on the principles of the conservative education systematized by international organs, searching for resources with financial agencies, and participating in international forums, in order to tune the discourse of the proposal of modernization of education.

In the last decade, the concern about the formation of teachers was brought to the world agenda through the conjunction of two movements: on one side, the pressures of the labor world, which has been structured on new conditions, on a computerized model and with value acquired by means of knowledge; on the other side, the verification, by government systems, of the extension reached by the

poor academic performance of a big portion of the population. A contradiction and a standstill. Public policies and political actions move, then, towards curricular reforms and changes in the formation of teachers, the builders of the new generations (GATTI, 2008, p. 62).

The legitimacy of reformist discourses about teacher training is grounded on the pseudo-fact that educators are not prepared to face the challenges of contemporary education. Better, given market demands, the school needs to instrumentalize itself in order to meet that demand. Hence the need for the management of formation proposals by MEC that, according to Freitas (2007), have a continuing and compensatory character<sup>7</sup>.

This need for innovation of pedagogical practices, connected with the reality of new technologies and of the hindrance of the teaching activity, motivates, largely, the lack of interest in licentiate's degree courses (GATTI et al., 2010).

Such neglect justifies the interests of the market in relation to education and reiterates the scrapping process of pedagogy. It is evident, thus, the political-curricular issue of teacher training courses. This picture justifies the analysis by Alves (2008, p. 103) about the manufacturing conception of education and of the problem of policies for formation and discussion of the educative process:

[...] it is possible to observe the large number of research groups centered on the theme of teacher training in Brazil, and to verify that the production of knowledge basically reiterates the form of carrying out education inside schools. Thereby, it contributes, above all, to the reproduction of the anachronistic organization of the dominant didactical work and not to its transformation. This is made evident, also, in the conception of teacher-training and qualification courses, adverse to the production of a new educational institution that meets the social needs of our time (ALVES, 2008, p. 103).

In the context of the society of information, the analysis about the paradigms that span educational discourses presents itself as a foundation of education, as far as the use of technology starts to be understood as the structuring axis of the production of the school pedagogical project. In this point, when the technological discourse is sustained as a basis to the pedagogical analysis, the teaching activity is deprived from its social condition. With the advent of the DE,

<sup>7</sup>Within this perspective, there is a variety of programs linked to the National Network of Continuing Teacher Training, which comprises the Center of Research and Development of Education – the *Pró-Formação*, managed by the Secretariat of Distance Education (SEED), the *Pró-Infantil*, the *Pró-Letramento*, and others.

there was the transposition of this activity to tutoring, understood as an enabler instance of the teaching-learning relationship. The 'tutor' in the teaching area is becoming, day after day, a professional subcategory in education, although the analysis about this theme remains absent or little studied in the production of research in the area. Most of the production is concerned about studying either particular experiences of a specific course, or pragmatic questions of tools. Some works with a more critical inclination, which investigate the relationship of this subject with the job, the construction of a teacher's identity and other themes that allow us to better learn about this new actor of the educational process, are appearing in Brazil already (ZUIN, 2006; OLIVEIRA et al., 2004; PRETI; OLIVEIRA, 2004; SILVA, 2008).

In addition to the technological innovations for education, the transformations of educational theories, supported on the discourse of competences and skills, began to be the main object of analysis of teacher training (GATTI, 2008, p. 63). According to the author, with the implementation of teacher qualification policies, the issue of formation and of the Brazilian education ceased to be analyzed from the historical perspective to be comprehended in the light of the pragmatism that strongly characterizes the foundations of educational theories and the structuring axes of Distance Education. Thus, the problem of formation is grounded on the failure of educators in expanding their skills and competences necessary to the pedagogical practice. Therefore, it is noticeable the disregard about the analysis of social-historical questions that span the educational reality. For this reason, according to Silva (2012), there is the emergence of,

[...] fads which, currently, present themselves as fomenters of the pedagogical practice and accentuate the ideological propagation of excluding discourses that materializes in the reality of the school. The proposal of formation of a reflexive teacher, the flexibilization of subject contents, the transversal discourse, the idea of the subject's autonomy in relation to his or her formation, the decentralization of the school organogram, the rupture movement from the educative conception to the instructional conception of subject contents, the idea of *construction* of knowledge and formation of competences, the transdisciplinary reading of education, in short, a web of concepts that enter the school context and change the material and objective conditions in which education is found (SILVA, 2012, p. 114).

This criticism about the teaching activity makes clear the distancing of this work from human relations, which means to say that the problem has been silenced

in the context of the school. In this way, the methodological question of the teaching/learning relationship is deemed as the center of the education problem. The criticism of the historical conditions in which the Brazilian education had been produced, in turn, is silenced. The crisis of the school, in this sense, grows stronger, because the institution has not incorporated yet in the routine practice of the pedagogical activity the fostering instruments of educational technologies. On the other hand, the teacher qualification carried out through DE makes it possible to foresee the paths the school will take toward adapting to the demands of the contemporary world.

In this context of reorganization of educational processes, what comes to discussion is the sense given to the education of the present time. From the viewpoint of public policies, the problem that spans the school reality focuses on its process of adequacy to the principles of the global market and of the information technological systems. In the words by Silva Junior (2003):

Distance education stands as an instructional practice among different individuals, mediated by information and communication technologies with focus on the teaching-learning process, in a context within which social objectivity presents a horizon of possibilities oriented by the mercantile rationality produced by a change in the social structures, result of the process of reforms witnessed in the country in the second half of the 1990's, especially those of the state and those of education. In addition, the mediation carried out through the "easy and accessible technological system", when used as instrument of this educational modality, reduces the possibilities for the subjects of the educative practice with focus on the cognitive to develop it under the same social conditions. It turns distance instructional actions into instruments for the subjects to adapt to their own reality, without providing them the opportunity to build themselves up not with knowledge alone (cognitive), in the exchange established in the social practice referring to desires, feelings and values (SILVA JUNIOR, 2003, p. 92).

For this reason, the current qualification of teachers has as guiding question the (re)signification of their job, since the traditional forms of teaching-learning do not allow the subject to seek for autonomy in the process of knowledge construction. From this perspective, it is clear that the objectives proposed for education are attached to the structuring axes of the hegemony of productive systems that legitimate the actual social order. Therefore, the ontological questions of analysis of the social being is left aside, because (re)signification began to be understood as a form of

overcome to the subject of the learning processes. It is in this point that there is the silencing of the criticism of the foundations of education and of the teaching activity, which have been going through this readjustment process, sustained by educational theories presented as the frontline of the educative question for the new century.

The pedagogical proposal for a teacher's practice is being increasingly aligned with the idea of a tutor and is characterized by the mediation process, whose objective is grounded on the foundations of the (re)signification, that is, the job of a tutor is limited to the act of supervising proposed activities. Linked to the objectives of educational theories about 'learn how to learn', which support the ideals of constructivism, of systemic logics, of complexity, of competences and skills as principles of the pedagogical action, tutoring is presented as the legitimating matrix of this pedagogical activity, limiting the teaching practice to the process of reproduction of activities. In this sense, the DE is characterized by the principles of flexible management of educational foundations, whose bases consubstantiate the logics of contemporary production systems.

The discussions about teacher training and teaching activity presented so far reveal unpostponable questions that the research in education should stress. Although teacher training is the 'apple of the eye' of the research in the area, there is, in the corpus of this investigation, themes related to the formation proposal and connected with the DE proposals. This understanding emerged from the analyzed data itself, as exposed below.

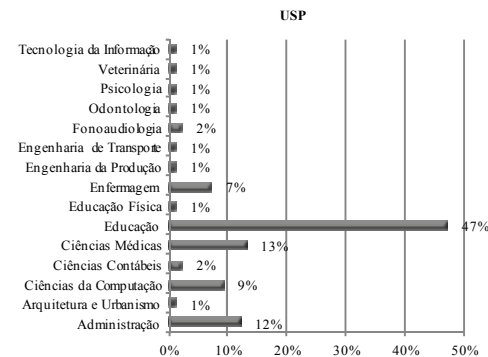
**What does the production reveal? Data points trends and reveal nuances about Teacher Training in DE<sup>8</sup>**

a) What does data from the three of the institutions of São Paulo show about the areas privileged by the research in DE?

The production developed at the University of São Paulo totaled 119 works, among theses and dissertations. However, 95 of them composed this study (54% of dissertations, 44% of doctoral theses and 2% of habilitation theses), because those exclusively turned to videoconferences and games were excluded.

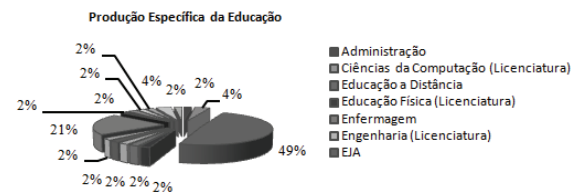
The concentration areas varied largely; the education area was the one with more productions (See Figure 1). This data of the research seems to indicate a paradox, because, throughout the decade, the area strongly opposed DE as a possibility of formation. However, as the corpus of the research

shows, the production reveals the largest number of theses and dissertations in the education area. It is necessary, thus, to find out the keynote of these works.



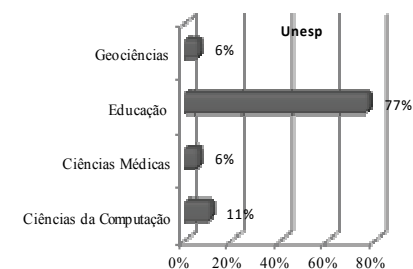
**Figure 1.** Categorization of the areas of the theses or dissertations.

Among the considerable production in the area (See Figure 2), there is a variety of themes. Of the total production in education, it is worth highlighting that 21% accounts for the Teacher Training theme, although there are researches about licentiate's degrees, which are in the sphere of the Initial Formation as well, but do not properly discuss formation, being concentrated on themes referring to structures, methodologies and systems. Another relevant data is that 49% is dedicated to other themes involving Distance Education.



**Figure 2.** Specific production on the Education área.

At the State University of São Paulo, 18 studies were found, within the period defined, (See Figure 3); 61% of dissertations and 39% of theses, which compose part of the corpus of the research. Education is the area with more publications (77%).



**Figure 3.** Categorization of the areas of theses or dissertations.

<sup>8</sup>We thank Eduarda Gimenes Correa, professor at the College Marechal Rondon, São Paulo State, who helped us with the data survey for this research.

Figure 4 displays specific data of the production in the education area, and what it represents in terms of Teacher Training. It is worth observing that 36% refers to the theme of Teacher Training in DE, and 29% to Math Education. Unesp production presents other relevant points, such as works about Adult and Youth Education (EJA) in the research on DE, and 14% about education public policies. Among the Institutions researched, it is that which shows the greatest heterogeneity of themes, and all of them have a strong concentration and resonance in the area.

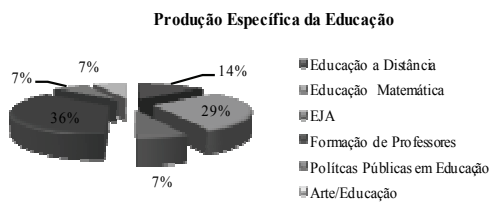


Figure 4. Specific Production on Education.

A total of 35 works produced at the State University of Campinas were analyzed (see Figure 5): 25 dissertations (71%) and 10 theses (29%). The areas of Computer Science and Education presented the greatest concentration of production. The data of this institution is more concentrated on the creation of learning environments and on the teaching method itself.

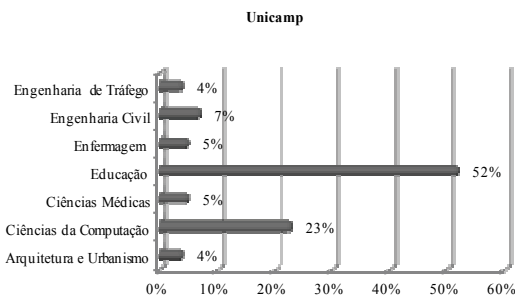


Figure 5. Categorization of the areas – theses or dissertations.

Regarding the production by Unicamp, it is important to highlight specific data about Teacher Training. It is also worth pointing out, herein, that 42% refers to the theme Teacher Training, and that 36% of the production on Distance Education is destined to other themes (See Figure 6). There is a specific data about this institution: the production of research on DE concentrates on the subarea Philosophy of Education as well.

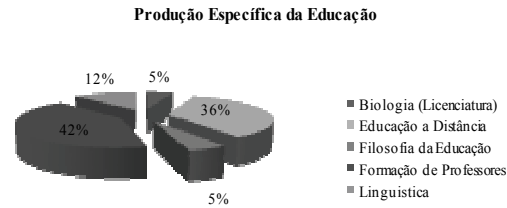


Figure 6. Specific production on education.

b) Period of higher growth in the number of researches on DE at institutions in the state of São Paulo.

Concerning the period of greater prominence, at USP, is noticeable the increasing growth in the volume of researches from 2005: 9% (See Figure 7). Expressive figures are found in 2007 (13%), 2008 (17%), 2009 and 2010 (15%), totaling 69% of all works analyzed. This data reveals the moment when the area was already redirecting or endowing with more flexibility the analysis about DE as a given political phenomenon, with little room for reverting the situation, in face of a ‘mystique’ carried inside the ‘suitcase’ of its ideologist, missionaries of the sacred pedagogical mission for a new world. We are referring to UNESCO, the World Bank, Bird, the WTO, among other institutions.

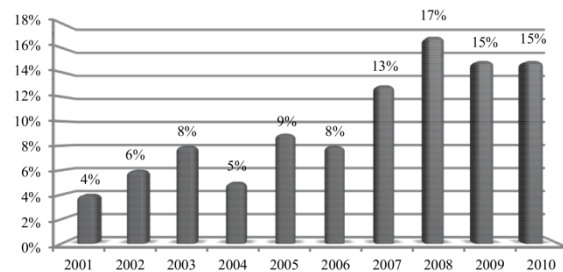


Figure 7. Production on DE over the decade – USP.

About the years of publication, Unesp also presents continuous growth in the years of 2003, 2009 and 2010 (See Figure 8). However, extemporaneously, in relation to the other institutions, it shows a production peak in 2003, data that is out of tune with all of that strong resistance to DE in the area.

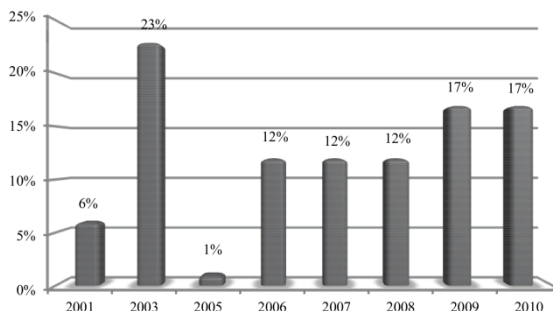


Figure 8. Production on DE over the decade – Unesp.



At Unicamp, the production of research on DE maintains some regularity throughout the decade. The peak of its growth occurs in 2004 and 2007. Said regularity is justified, possibly, by the attitude and nature of this institution that is more linked to science and technology than the other universities in the state of São Paulo are. The period with more production on the theme refers to the years of 2004 to 2007, and 2010 (See Figure 9). An intriguing data is the drastic reduction in researches in 2008.

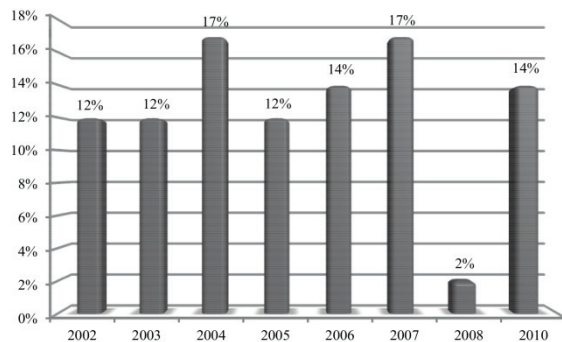


Figure 9. Production on DE over the decade – Unicamp.

c) General considerations and analysis of the data set: the presence of theme teacher training.

The overall analysis allows noticing that the theme of teacher training is constantly present in the production of the three of the institutions. This fact reveals the concern about analyzing the issue in relation to the use of new means and mediations for the (re)signification of the pedagogical work. The works have fundamental elements through which the researchers sought to analyze the theme within the context of the teaching activity. This, to some extent, answers one of the questions of the research, about the debate on teacher training in the production on DE and its relation with schoolwork. The material points much more towards a formation in accordance with the technical rationality model.

The analysis of the production, through the categorization by year, allows observing that, in a general way, studies on Teacher Training intensified from 2005. This is probably due to the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture, by means of Decree No. 5,622/2005, for the accreditation of institutions regarding the offer of education courses and programs in the distance modality.

After careful data review, we observed that the focus of most of the researches about DE is on the development of tools, on the use of technologies as support, on the role of the Internet, on the discussion of concepts, and on the implementation of this learning modality in several subjects. Overall, it is almost impossible to find a discussion on

technologies as an indispensable element in present days, in the continuing formation process of teachers. The examination of the data collected from the corpus of the production in the teacher training area, conducted from the keywords of the researches, is an indication that, although their theme is formation, the researches keep their focus on learning tools and environments. The institutions presented a very low percentage of keywords that revealed the teacher as the emphasis of the research. In numbers, USP had 11%, Unesp, 33%, and Unicamp, 20%, considering the total amount of theses and dissertations analyzed. We guided ourselves by terms such as Teacher, Professional Development, Teaching Activity, and others.

### Final considerations

All in all, the achievement of the objective initially proposed in this work allowed building an overview of the researches developed about DE, throughout the last decade, in the state of São Paulo. It was possible to observe an expansion of the development of this knowledge within the period studied, particularly from 2005, and that Teacher Training has been a recurrent theme in researchers about DE.

In the quantitative analysis, it was identified that, though not directly related to the education area, other big areas also act in the production of knowledge related to this teaching modality.

The dissemination of Distance Education and the reconfiguration of teaching-learning forms have been transforming the way to deal with information and to transmit it.

Concerning the importance and the volume of production on DE in the field of Teacher Training, a small number of works focused on the questions of educational policies for the sector was found, and there was not even one that discussed the teacher/teaching activity relation; in short, just a few approached the view of the teacher involved in the process, which makes room for some inquietudes:

What is the profile of the teachers who act in this teaching modality? What do they think? What do they do? What do they long for? On what conceptions and values do they base their work? How do they organize their actions? How do they evaluate it?

Regarding the critical reflection on Distance Education in the area, we observed that the works had little interest in this aspect. In this sense, what are the progresses and retrocessions they could present in the field of learning, of practices, and

about the philosophical conceptions of the formation of the individual?

As Gatti (2011, p. 101) alerts, the offer of DE courses for initial formation is an emphasis of educational policies. Therefore, researches that unveil this formation process should be developed, especially in the private higher education sector, which absorbs more than 60% of all enrollments in teacher training courses. There is an urgent need for investigations that seek to comprehend the phenomenon of Teacher Training in DE, looking at a broader spectrum of public and private sectors, since the policies, at a fast pace, emphasize this teaching modality in licentiate's degree courses.

The expectation is that researches in the area turn their attention to the teacher as a subject of the process and not only as a passive instrument of new pedagogical devices. Consequently, it is also expected that the implications of these emphases impact his or her job and career.

In this regard, the theme 'tutor' in Distance Education should be studied within the Teacher Training dimension, because this new educational actor has been left in a 'limbo', with his identity and functions unknown. A result of this indifference by researchers may be the underutilization of this professional by the higher education market and the depreciation of his or her knowledge by his or her peers. This situation can revive a long-fought conception in the area: the separation between the producers of knowledge and those who reproduce them in the classroom.

To conclude, it is worth remembering the purposes of this study that sought to comprehend, based on a survey of the production of three major Brazilian universities, how the research on DE in the field of Teacher Training was consubstantiated. The results we presented indicate a constant presence of the theme in the researches, but reveal a directing of focus to other particularities of formation other than the teacher, his or her practice and career. We hope that this survey allows for new perspectives to Teacher Training in the research on Distance Education.

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