Brazil

Fredric Litto

The History and Past of Distance Education

One cannot fully understand the context in which formal learning began and developed in Brazil without considering its legacy of over three-hundred years as a colony of Portugal. Although Spain initiated higher learning in its colonies in the New World as early as the 16th century, establishing universities and granting the right to publish books (Mexico City in 1539, and Lima, Peru, in 1584) and newspapers (Mexico City, 1541), the Portuguese Crown prohibited all publications and advanced studies in its continental-sized colony until the nineteenth-century, when the Monarch of Portugal, Dom João VI, fleeing Napoleon, moved to Brazil with his court, his library and his printing press in 1808 (Moraes 2013).

Until then, Brazil had been entirely dependent on Portugal's only university, in Coimbra, for the higher learning of its citizens. But Dom João only permitted the creation of four specialized institutions in Brazil: a school for naval engineering in Rio de Janeiro (actually created earlier, in 1782), a medical school in Bahia, a mining school in Minas Gerais, and two law schools, one in Pernambuco, and the other in São Paulo—but no university, because, it was thought, in such institutions the inhabitants *think* and may come to unsettling ideas. Hence, it was only in 1934 that true, multi-school academic establishments came about in three different locations: the (State) University of São Paulo, the (now Federal) University of Paraná, and the (now Federal) University of Rio de Janeiro.

Portuguese conservatism in relation to education continues to this day in Brazil, making innovation and experimentation in pedagogy and curriculum at all levels of learning extremely difficult to carry-out. Even the genial ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921–1997), so highly recognized abroad, tend to remain confined to the

F. Litto (✉)
Brazilian Association of Distance Education, São Paulo, Brazil
e-mail: frmlitto@terra.com.br

A. Qayyum and O. Zawacki-Richter (eds.), *Open and Distance Education in Australia, Europe and the Americas*, SpringerBriefs in Open and Distance Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0298-5_4

halls of teacher-training institutions. And French-influenced educational strategies, placing highly-emphasized importance of abstract thinking on the part of students, and educational theories and ideologies among teachers, is dominant over North American pragmatism, with its inclusion of "hands-on" experience, real collaboration between students, *and* between teaching staff members. Consequently, the role of technology in learning has suffered from multiple obstacles: the low salaries paid to instructors do not attract the strongest and most independent minds to the profession; teacher-training institutions concentrate almost entirely on the theoretical aspects of teaching students, leaving the practical matters of the classroom to happenstance; in the first decades of computers in classrooms, teachers thought it beneath them to familiarize themselves with machines, wires and networks; the Portuguese language is a "minority-language," one spoken by 263 million persons around the world (but almost all of them residing in economically-undistinguished countries) and the amount of open educational resources on the web in the language is not abundant, while English as a working language is very badly taught in schools and not required for study in universities.

Public primary and secondary education was only introduced into Brazil in the first decades of the twentieth century, and even then it served principally the upper and upper-middle classes. Although recent legislation stipulates that primary and secondary school attendance is obligatory for all young people, this requirement is not rigorously observed outside large cities. The country's Constitution of 1988 designated municipal governments as responsible for the supervision and governance of primary education, state governments for secondary learning, and the federal government for tertiary studies. Consequently, it is not surprising that the introduction of distance education came to Brazil at a very late date; and open learning is still trying to find its proper place in the environment.

The Function and Position of Distance Education Within the National Higher Education System

Although there is precarious evidence of distance learning in Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century, with announcements of correspondence courses in subjects like shorthand and the study of languages, later including technical specialities, the use of radio for informal instruction began in 1936, and that of television in 1958 (Alves 2009). In the 1970s, Brazil was one of the world's most celebrated centers of distance-based, pre-university iniciatives, principally because of Project SACI (Advanced Interdisciplinary Communications Satellite) of the National Institute of Space Research (INPE), which had the objective of upgrading the competencies of school teachers of Brazil's Northeast, many of whom taught primary school without having, themselves, finished secondary school; and the Telecurso (initially dedicated to secondary education—later expanded to include primary education—and directed to adults who had missed earlier opportunities for such studies), organized by the

Roberto Marinho Foundation in partnership with large entities of civil society, transmitted by the Globo Television Network, and which continues to the present time (Litto 2011).

The successful initiation of the United Kingdom's Open University in 1970 inspired a group of Brazilian legislators to visit that institution in 1972, after which began a series of attempts to create a similar entity in Brazil, all defeated through discriminatory judgments at various levels: the Legislative Branch of government, the Ministry of Education and even the governance committees of the University of Brasília, the first Brazilian university whose rector actually signed a memorandum of agreement with the UKOU for technical support (Azevedo 2012). Perhaps it was the creation of the Open University of Portugal in 1988 which embarrassed the former colony into taking distance-based university learning more seriously, for in 1992 the Federal University of Mato Grosso began planning the first distance-based correspondence course in teacher-preparation, which actually began with 350 in-service teachers in 1995. By 2005, it was offering full undergraduate programs in Pedagogy at a distance for 2000 teachers, and in 2009 began offering this course to the many Brazilians living in Japan.

In the meantime, the Law of Policies and Bases (LDB) of 1996, which took ten years to elaborate and negotiate to approval through the National Congress, gave new status to distance learning, stating in Article 80 that academic degrees earned through distance means had exactly the same value as those earned through conventional approaches. It stipulated that full, distance-based, masters and doctoral degrees could be offered, and that commercial radio and television channels give specially-reduced costs for transmitting educational content—two measures still not yet completely implanted.

But it took until 2000 for other Federal institutions to receive approval from the Ministry of Education to begin distance learning: the Federal University of Pará for bachelor's degree and *licenciatura* (school teacher's license) in Mathematics and the Federal University of Ceará for *licenciatura* in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. By 2002, 25 institutions had been authorized (16 public and 9 private), and by 2012 150 (80 public and 70 private). In 2016, there were 331 institutions of higher education authorized for distance-based undergraduate learning: 74 public (22.4%) and 257 private (77.6%). They currently offer 1365 undergraduate courses. Institutions authorized to offer distance-based post-graduate programs are 177 in number, and they offer 3935 different courses to a vast continuing-education population. Of the total number of professors active in higher education in Brazil today (383,386), 13,083 (3.4%) are dedicated to distance-based studies. Other characteristics of the professionals who work in distance-based learning in the country can be found in the English-language version of the annual ABED CensoEAD.Br *Analytical Report of Distance Learning in Brazil* (ABED 2015, pp. 75–77).

The Ministry then created a Secretariat of Distance Education which centralized the rapidly expanding activities in this approach to learning from 2004 to 2010; its extinction constituting yet another example of discontinuity characteristic of the public sector in Brazil. In 2006, there finally was established an Open University of Brazil-UAB, the last one to be created among the nations with populations of

over one hundred million persons. To circumvent bureaucratic obstacles and academic prejudices, it was neither "open" (admission requires passing an entrance exam just as difficult as that required for entering into the highly competitive Federal campus-based institutions), nor a "university" (it is a "system" or grouping of public institutions of higher education so that it can be tuition-free). Participating institutions, financially supported by the Federal Government, produce the courses and issue the resulting diplomas. In 2013 it had 103 participating institutions, 667 student study-centers (called *polos* in Portuguese) distributed throughout the country (in "partnership" with local municipal governments, which are supposed to furnish "study-centers"—each one a room with ten computers, connected to the web, and a mini-library), and a total of 243,000 students enrolled. Through an agreement with the Ministry of Education of Mozambique, the content of UAB is shared with students in that language-related nation. Since less than one-half of Brazil's 5565 municipalities have any kind of institution of higher education, the UAB and the efforts of private institutions in distance-based learning, are of great strategic importance to Brazil.

The Regulatory Framework, Policies, Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Distance Education

There are over 70,000 laws concerning education at all levels in Brazil, a fact which, if it guaranteed high quality, would be truly significant; but that is not the case. The following paragraphs offer some general lines of development of the place of tertiary distance-based learning in the country. The most recent Federal Constitution dates from 1988 and affirms that education is a social right for all people, must be gratuitous when offered by public bodies, and is open to private initiative, subject to the "authorization, regulation, supervision and evaluation by public authorities." Distance-based learning is considered that which makes use of the resources and technologies of information and communication, offering flexibility in the organization of space and time (learners and instructors in different locations and times), and didactic-pedagogic mediation with regard to the teaching/learning process.

The Law of Policies and Bases (LDB) of 1996 gave the initial authorization for the beginning of distance education programs at the post-secondary level, but when its operational questions were finally published nine years later, it included clauses of both salutary and dubious natures: (a) the academic credits earned through its courses could be transferred to other institutions (implemented); (b) "full" masters and doctoral degrees (*stricto* sensu) could be offered (never implemented appropriately—see more below); (c) partnerships could be established between universities abroad in order to enrich course offerings, subject to Ministry approval (now a rarity after several unsuccessful attempts); and (d) distance-based courses had to have the same duration as campus-based ones (an obvious interference in institutional autonomy). This grudging or reluctant approval of the new entrant into the country's educational environment continues to today.

The National Council of Education (Conselho Nacional da Educação) is Brazil's highest body responsible for the major issues governing the realization of educational matters (Conselho Nacional da Educação 2014). Composed of representatives of Brazilian society chosen by the Minister of Education, it has two principal "chambers," one for policy-making in primary and secondary school studies, and another for that in higher education. The former has its operational arms in the SAEB-National System of Evaluation of Basic Education, and the latter, the SINAES-National System of Evaluation of Higher Education. CONAES-National Commission for Evaluation of Higher Education is the highest collegiate body of SINAES, and its function is to oversee the monitoring of quality in higher education, through the elaboration of measures to guarantee good practices on the part of institutions.

Students concluding secondary school must take the ENEM-National Examination of Secondary Education, a measure of recent date, and which now serves not only as a benchmarking tool for policy-makers, but as well for identifying candidates for entry into the highly-selective public institutions of post-secondary education (almost six million students sat for the test in 2015, in 2000 municipalities throughout the country). Students concluding higher education studies normally sit for the ENADE-National Exam of Student Performance, prepared by the INEP-National Institute of Studies and Research in Education "Anísio Teixeira", which annually carries out tests throughout the national territory in selected academic subjects with about half a million individuals participating in each iteration of the study (Instituto Nacional De Estudos E Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira 2014a, b). It is a special pleasure to report that every year since 2007, students who studied through distance-based programs consistently showed "better performance than those who studied conventionally."

The Ministry of Education makes available to private institutions funds which can be lent to students in need of loans to be able to continue their studies under the following programs: ProUni-University for All Program, and FIES-Fund of Student Financing (distance-based students cannot avail themselves of this benefit, perhaps because government fears that since most students who seek such loans are majoring in school teaching careers, the law stipulates that in that case, the loan need not be repaid).

Institutions seeking to offer distance-based courses approved by the Ministry of Education must submit vast documentation, including a Plan of Institutional Development, an Institutional Pedagogical Project, and a Pedagogical Project of Courses. From these documents, there is derived a profile including an evaluation of the proposal: curriculum, student admission numbers and selection policy, continued student evaluation, attendance control, qualifications of the teaching staff, library and laboratory facilities, and partnerships with other entities. The renovation, every five years, of approved status requires similar documentation efforts.

In 2016, a new set of rules (Marco Regulatório) governing distance-based programs was approved, having several positive corrective features: elimination of the earlier requirement of an institution to be approved for campus-based learning before it could solicit authorization for distance-based programs; permission for institutions to share remote study-centers for distance learners for logistic and economic

motives (it is estimated to cost about US$25,000.00 to equip each center); the evaluation of distance-based and campus-based programs will hereafter be carried out simultaneously; the long-standing rule limiting to only 20% the distance-based part of those courses *approved as distance-based courses* can now be "flexibilized" if appropriately justified in the documentation submitted for authorization and renewal; INEP and CAPES (the Ministry's agency coordinating post-graduate studies as well as the UAB-Brazilian Open University), will have 120 days to prepare and disseminate the parameters of "quality" for evaluating distance-based programs and for revising the instruments for measurement.

An Overview of Major Distance Education Teaching and Research Institutions

The principal Brazilian source of research concerning distance-based learning are the top-tier universities, public and private, which offer masters and doctoral degrees requiring the elaboration and public defense of a thesis. Almost exclusively of a "qualitative research" nature (as opposed to a "quantitative" approach which measures and analyses practices, attitudes and actions evolved in the offering of open and distance-based learning), these theses sometimes find their way into learned journals and scholarly books (Litto et al. 2005). Listed below are the fifty most important institutions, public and private, authorized to offer distance-based undergraduate programs and to grant traditional academic degrees. They are ranked in order of student enrollments, but the reader should be aware that some private institutions, although listed separately here, are sometimes part of a single corporate holding entity, and hence able to share resources and make use of other collaborative actions. The UAB Open University of Brazil is not listed below because it chooses to be included through the identities and numbers of its component institutions.

An important element of the production of research on distance learning is the Brazilian Association of Distance Education-ABED (www.abed.org.br), a not-for-profit learned society founded in 1995 and including individual and institutional members from the major educational segments of the country (schools, universities, government and corporate continuing education), both public and private. Its annual International Congress of Distance Education attracts about two-thousand participants, and the submission of about 400 research papers (from which some 220 are selected, to be presented orally, for their relevance and significance). Each year, ABED conducts a detailed *Census* of all distance-based learning in the country, both academic and corporative, publishing its results in Portuguese and English, in printed form and digitally on its site. It also publishes a scholarly journal, *Revista Brasileira de Aprendizagem Aberta e a Distância/Brazilian Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, which carries articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese, and can be found on the Association's site. As a catalyst forming a large and diversified community of professionals, ABED actively supports the creation and development

of similar national learned societies dedicated to distance learning in countries in both Latin America and Africa (Table 1).

Some Statistics About Student Enrollments in Distance Education Programs and the Funding of Distance Education

The total number of students enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Brazil is 50,545,050 (Pre-Primary 7,295,512; Primary 29,702,498; Secondary 8,376,852; Education of the Young and Adults (primary and secondary-level studies for those beyond the appropriate classroom age) 3,906,877; Vocational Education 1,063,655; Special Needs Education 820,433). The administrative-financial responsibility for this basic level of learning is as follows: Federal 1%; State 37%; Municipal 46%; Private 16%. The responsibility for Vocational Education is: Federal 16%; State 36%; Municipal 2% and Private 46%. The last grouping (Private) is principally represented by the highly-respected systems sustained by obligatory contributions from enterprises in society (although collected by government, it is *not* public money): SENAI/SESI (industry), SENAC/SESC (commerce), SENAR (agriculture), and SENAT (transportation) (MEC/INEP/DEED *Censo de Educação Básica* 2012).

The total number of post-secondary institutions in 2014 was 2386, distributed as follows: Federal 107 (4.5%), State 118 (5.0%), Municipal 73 (3.1%) and Private 2070 (87.4%). There are four basic categories of institutions: universities—multi-school entities (111 public institutions, with a formidable degree of autonomy over their governance, curriculum and long-range strategies; and 84 private institutions, with reduced autonomy over curriculum, ability to grant degrees, and geographic expansion); university centers—multi-department entities with little autonomy (11 public; 136 private); faculties—smaller institutions either dedicated to a reduced curricular scope (medicine, or law, or administration, or teacher-training, among other subjects) and with very reduced autonomy; and federal institutes/centers for technological education (40 public; no private).

The Ministry of Education has to date authorized 177 institutions to offer distance-based, tertiary-level programs. Although 95.8% of the total number of undergraduate courses are campus-based, and distance-based programs are only 4.0% of these, the latter had a growth factor, from 2013 to 2014, of 41.2%, while the former advanced only by 7%. The regional distribution of campus-based and distance-based tertiary institutions is as follows (Fig. 1).

The total number of students enrolled in post-secondary studies at the undergraduate level in 2014 was 7,828,013 (6.486.171 campus-based (82.5%); 1.341.842 distance learners (17.1%). From 2003 to 2014, the overall *growth* of student numbers was as follows: campus-based 66.9%; distance-based 2.588%. In 2014, 190,000 students graduated from distance-based undergraduate programs authorized by the Ministry (Table 2).

Table 1 Leading institutions of undergraduate distance learning in Brazil ranked by size of student enrollments in 2014

Size	Institutions	Private	Public
1	Universidade Norte Do Paraná	310,855	
2	Universidade Anhanguera—Uniderp	150,631	
3	Centro Universitário Internacional	109,385	
4	Universidade Paulista	100,799	
5	Centro Universitário Leonardo Da Vinci	92,484	
6	Universidade Estácio De Sá	68,766	
7	Centro Universitário Uniseb	43,410	
8	Centro Universitário De Maringá—Unicesumar	39,038	
9	Universidade Metropolitana De Santos	32,688	
10	Universidade De Uberaba	19,352	
11	Centro Universitário Claretiano	18,263	
12	Universidade De Santo Amaro	16,882	
13	Universidade Nove De Julho	13,870	
14	Faculdade Educacional Da Lapa	12,674	
15	Universidade Cidade De São Paulo	12,588	
16	Universidade Luterana Do Brasil	12,244	
17	Faculdade De Tecnologia E Ciências	11,941	
18	Universidade Do Sul De Santa Catarina	10,753	
19	Centro Universitário Da Grande Dourados	9595	
20	Universidade De Franca	9516	
21	Universidade Federal Do Piauí		9110
22	Universidade Anhembi Morumbi	8675	
23	Universidade Metodista De São Paulo	8350	
24	Universidade Braz Cubas	7947	
25	Universidade Do Tocantins	7831	
26	Universidade Tiradentes	7672	
27	Universidade Federal Fluminense		7442
28	Universidade Salvador	6227	
29	Universidade Estadual Do Maranhão		5509
30	Universidade Federal Da Paraíba		5332
31	Universidade Federal Do Estado Do Rio De Janeiro		5206
32	Centro Universitário Herminio Ometto	5068	
33	Universidade Federal De Sergipe		4707
34	Universidade Do Estado Da Bahia		4634
35	Universidade Federal Rural Do Rio De Janeiro		4387
36	Universidade Potiguar	4271	
37	Universidade Cruzeiro Do Sul	3756	
38	Universidade Estadual De Maringá		3339
39	Universidade Federal Do Ceará		3315

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Size	Institutions	Private	Public
40	Universidade Federal De Alagoas		3083
41	Universidade Federal De Ouro Preto		3074
42	Centro Universitário Jorge Amado	2881	
43	Universidade Federal Do Rio De Janeiro		2871
44	Universidade Do Vale Do Rio Dos Sinos	2746	
45	Universidade Estadual Do Ceará		2627
46	Centro Universitário Tupy	2565	
47	Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Norte		2502
48	Universidade Salgado De Oliveira	2485	
49	Universidade Federal De Pelotas		2443
50	Universidade Federal De Juiz De Fora		2374
Total		1,173,399	71,955

Table 2 Undergraduate enrollments in distance education

Institution type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Public	172,394	181,318	177,924	181,624	154,553	139,373
Private	665,037	749,318	815,138	932,334	999,087	1,202,503
Total	837,431	930,636	993,062	1,113,958	1,153,640	1,341,876

Table 3 Degree programs of distance education and campus-based students

Campus-based		Distanced-based	
Bachelor	73.1%	Bachelor	28.8%
Licenciatura[a]	12.4%	Licenciatura[a]	37.4%
Technological[b]	13.6%	Technological[b]	33.9%
Not applicable	0.8%	Not applicable	0.0%

[a]While a Bachelor degree program generally offers a broader intellectual preparation for the teaching profession (as well as many others), the *licenciatura*, or course to prepare individuals for teaching specific subjects of the curriculum in schools, while shorter in content connected to the specific subject, adds on useful components such as educational psychology and pedagogy

[b]Courses grouped together under the title "Technological Courses" usually have nothing whatever to do with technology. Rather, they are post-secondary courses of shorter duration, generally from 2 to 3 years, much like those in community colleges in the United States, and do not qualify the degree-holder for admission into conventional post-graduate programs

The degree-programs chosen by newly-enrolled tertiary students in 2014 was as follows (Table 3).

The manpower question arises here: the majority of new tertiary students choose professions *not* identified as badly needed by Brazilian society; instead of opting for needed, and well-remunerated, specializations in, for example, chemistry and physics

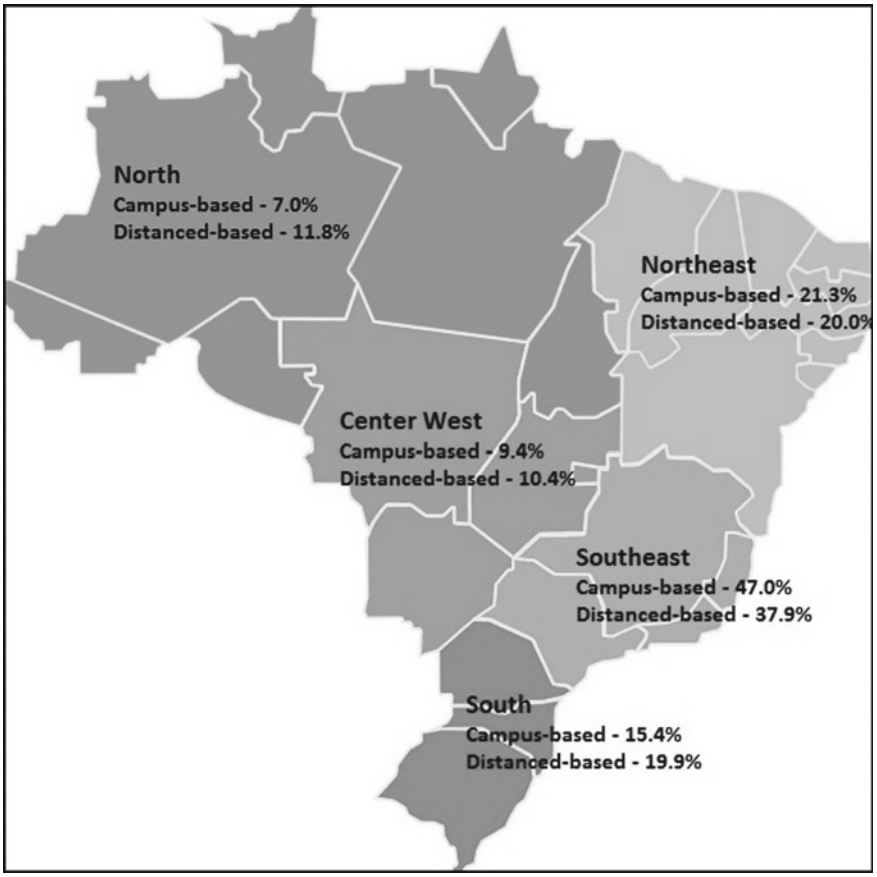

Fig. 1 Regional distribution of tertiary institutions

(only 1.5% of new entrants choose these fields), they opt, instead, for administration and law (which, like medicine, veterinary science and journalism, are undergraduate degrees in Brazil) and pedagogy and *licenciatura* (teaching in schools of language and literature, history, and mathematics). Of those choosing pedagogy and history, 60% choose to study through on-line programs. Many also select social work and nursing, only to later discover that the professional societies in these areas discriminate against those who studied in distance-based programs, even the ones evaluated and approved by the Ministry of Education.

Despite sometimes horrendous working conditions and "undistinguished" remuneration, the profession of school teacher still attracts many new students. The Ministry of Education has approved 4282 different courses in pedagogy and *licenciatura*, 11.9% of which are so new that they have not yet been evaluated; of the 169 programs of this area approved for distance delivery, 10.4% are considered "insufficient," perhaps for lack of an adequate evaluation.

An important consideration in all education is the phenomenon of student dropout, that is, when learners abandon a course or an institution, and the motives and consequences for the student, and for the institution. It is a subject which often comes up when campus-based and distance-based modalities are compared, and generally is provoked by personal or contextual factors related to the student, as well as by elements of the nature or operation of the course. The Syndicate of Chief Executives of Private Institutions of Higher Education of the State of São Paulo (SEMESP) has collected and published relevant and interesting data on evasion, the graphic illustrates comparative results of public and private institutions of the abandoning students (Table 4).

Post-graduate studies that are distance-based normally would be considered less-difficult to operate (because of the greater maturity and autonomy of the learners) and less of a challenge to the vested professional interests in society, but they nevertheless have grown with worrisome slowness. Almost all of the post-graduate programs approved by the Ministry are those giving "professional masters degrees" (such as an MBA, i.e., not requiring the elaboration and public defense of a research-based thesis, and hence having less prestige, especially in the academic world). Following local customs, the Ministry generally waives rigorous supervision of public institutions, and applies sometimes excessive scrutiny to the activities of private institutions. Curiously enough, in the case of distance-based post-graduate studies, it has given high-prestige "*stricto* sensu" status to the above-mentioned distance-based "professional masters degrees" for public school teachers of mathematics, physics, history and literature (UAB 2014) (Table 5).

The best evidence for the general retardation of tertiary distance-based studies in Brazil can be found in the all-important PNE-National Plans for Education, strategic documents orienting formal learning at all levels for ten-year periods, prepared by elements in the Ministry of Education, together with contributions from society in general (such as professors from the faculties of teacher-preparation, syndicates (unions) of teachers and professors, and organizations closely tied to political parties) and, after several public hearings, they are approved, as laws, by the National Congress. The first PNE was issued in 1962, and the most recent one, treating the period 2014–2024, approved only in 2016. Eighty-six pages in length, it mentions distance-based learning only four or five times, and then, only in passing. The document extensively refers to the importance of fulfilling the educational needs of indigenous, isolated and itinerant populations in the country, but never makes the

Table 4 Dropout rates of undergraduate students

Institution type and mode	2012	2013
Private and community institutions—face to face	27.7	27.4
Private institutions—DE	27.4	29.2
Public HEIs—face to face	17.2	17.8
Public HEIs—DE	22.6	25.6

link between them and the possibility of the contribution of distance-based learning. Although 14% of Brazilians have "special needs" (33,377 of them study in tertiary institutions, 13,723 in public ones and 19,664 in private ones) there is no mention of the desirability of connecting this important segment of the population to distance-based studies (MEC/INEP "Sinopse" 2014a).

The Relationship Between Distance Education and More Established and Older Campus-Based, Residential Institutions

There are very few "residential" institutions in Brazil's higher education, notably to be found in universities dedicated to agricultural and veterinary sciences and located in distinctively rural areas, and a handful of small, distinguished specialized institutions, like the Institute of Aeronautical Technology. Almost all tertiary students are gainfully employed when not in class, do not participate in the sparse offerings of on-campus extra-curricular activities, and have no interest in forming or joining alumni associations. In a word, to use a North American term, campus-based students and professors in Brazil are essentially, "streetcar riders," going to and from the campus each day (or only several times a week) for classes, while distance-based learners, required by law to participate in campus-based learning activities, simply are somewhat less-frequent streetcar riders.

Table 5 Academic areas covered by the post-graduate courses

Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences	29	0.7
Social Science, Administration, Law	1549	39.3
Science, Mathematics, Computation	173	4.4
Education	1307	33.2
Engineering, Construction	110	2.8
Humanities and Arts	250	6.4
Health, Social Welfare	477	12.1
Services (Tourism, Hospitality, Sports, etc.)	41	1.0
Total	3935	100

The Relationship Between the Public and Private Sector Distance Education

There is, in fact, practically no relationship between the two universes, either in campus-based learning or in that which is distanced-based. The private sector is composed of three types of institution: "confessional," which are linked to the major religious sects (Catholicism, Methodism, Presbyterian, Baptist, among others), are not-for-profit, maintain respectable research activities, and enjoy high regard in the community; "community faculties," some of which are, in part, connected to local municipal governments but nevertheless charge tuition fees to students, while others are called "philanthropic" because they are entirely owned by important local families but offer a large number of tuition-waivers to needy students and hence are exempt from taxes, even though they are profit-making—they are not known for having research traditions, but in some cases practice free community-service activities, such as legal and dental support, an extension of their professional courses; and conglomerates of institutions entirely owned by large, profit-seeking, corporate organizations, some with headquarters in other countries—they have highly-professional managers, skillful student-recruiting marketing, take advantage of the opportunities that scalable online distance education can offer, make no attempt at maintaining research activities or contributing to the academic community at large with a university press—one of them is the world's largest educational services corporation based on its student enrollments of over one million.

Future Developments of Distance Education in Brazil

In the short-range future it is expected that campus-based learning will see a significant reduction in student numbers, attributable to the economic recession currently in progress and the prominence of the income-dependent private sector in the offering of undergraduate studies. Distance-based studies, however, will continue to grow because of their greater convenience for working students and their lower tuition costs. Brazilians in general have an extremely high adoption rate of things audio-visual and communicative, which makes possible the prediction that online learning, with its time-shifting possibilities and the increasing use of locally-produced, technology-supported animations, simulations and personal-learning-environment strategies substituting the tedious conventional classroom, has a very bright future. That is, if government bureaucrats and anachronistic academic decision-makers reduce their excessively suspicious treatment of experimentation and creativity in the operation and development of distance-based studies. The 63 million speakers of Portuguese in Europe, Africa and Asia (when added to the 200 million in Brazil) also represent a non-trivial extended market for Brazilian-produced distance-based learning.

The fact that the total number of tertiary students in Brazil represents just under 20% of the country's cohort group of young people, 18–24 years of age, while neighboring countries like Argentina and Chile have over 30% of their young people enrolled in higher education (and North American and European nations enjoy numbers reaching and even exceeding 60%), should be an indicator of needed growth in this sector. Similarly, only 11% of the working-age population of Brazil holds a higher education diploma. But the conservative vision held by many individuals and organizations involved in education, and regarding new approaches to learning in Brazil, is not encouraging. In a recent interview, one official admitted that "there's need for planned expansion, but there's also a risk of advancing in the dark." The scenario of distance-based learning in Brazil is still far from consolidated; the modality is not yet duly institutionalized in the structure of the country's higher education. Nevertheless, many hearts and minds are at work in the task of gaining acceptance for this "solution," so widely-accepted in other countries, to become a major tool to advance Brazil's social and economic development.

Acknowledgements I wish to thank the following colleagues who generously assisted me in organizing the data presented here and made suggestions for improvement of the final draft: Marcia Figueiredo, Luciano Sathler, Renato Bulcão, Marcos Formiga, and Beatriz Roma Marthos.

References

Alves, J. R. M. (2009). A história de EAD no Brasil. In F. M. Litto & M. Formiga (Eds.), *Educação a Distância-o estado da arte* (Vol. 1, pp. 9–13). Pearson and ABED: São Paulo.

Associação Brasileira de Educação a Distância-ABED. (2015). *Analytic report of distance learning in Brazil*. São Paulo: ABED and Uninter. www.abed.org.br/censoead2014/CensoEAD2014_ingles.pdf.

Azevedo, J. C. (2012). Os primórdios da EAD na educação superior brasileira. In F. M. Litto & M. Formiga (Eds.), *Educação a Distância-o estado da arte* (Vol. 2, pp. 2–5). Pearson and ABED: São Paulo.

Conselho Nacional da Educação. (2014). *National policies and norms for the offering of programs and courses of higher education in the distance modality*. http://portal.mec.gov.br/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=31361-parecer-cne-ces-564-15-pdf&Itemid=30192.

Instituto Nacional De Estudos E Pesquisas. (2012). Diretoria de Estatísticas Educacionais. *Censo de Educação Básica 2012*.

Instituto Nacional De Estudos E Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira. (2014a). Censo da educação superior: Sinopse estatística da educação superior 2014. Brasília, DF. http://download.inep.gov.br/informacoes_estatisticas/sinopses_estatisticas/sinopses_educacao_superior/sinopse_educacao_superior_2014.zip.

Instituto Nacional De Estudos E Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira. (2014b). Censo da educação superior 2014. Brasília, DF. http://download.inep.gov.br/educacao_superior/censo_superior/documentos/2015/censo_da_educacao_superior_2014_principais_resultados.xls.

Litto, F., Filatro, A., & André, C. (2005). Brazilian research on distance learning, 1999–2003: A state-of-the-art study. *Open Praxis—The Electronic Journal of the International Council for Open & Distance Education*. http://www.abed.org.br/congresso2004/por/pdf/180-TC-D4.pdf.

Litto, F. M. (2011). Escolas Abertas e a Aprendizagem. *Revista FGV Online, 1*(1), 38–49 (Accompanies translation: "Open Schools and Learning"). http://sv.www5.fgv.br/fgvonline/revista/eds/ed1/paginas/pdf/Revista_Completa_ing.pdf.

Moraes, R. B. D. (2013). *Bibliografia Brasiliana* (pp. 239–240). Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Kosmos. http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/exhibitions/CB/cunha.htm.

Universidade Aberta do Brasil. (2014). Quais são os cursos pós-graduação stricto sensu a distância? www.uab.capes.gov.br/index.php/leis/29-a-UAB-possui-cursos-de-mestrado-ou-doutorado.