

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## **BETWEEN NORMS AND PRACTICES: A CRITICAL-REFLEXIVE MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article addresses the challenge of implementing the new regulatory framework for Distance Education (DL) in Brazil, which demands institutional reorganization, qualified mediation, and the strengthening of student belonging. It analyzes how course and distance learning center coordinators can structure management processes that ensure meaningful interactions and adequate monitoring conditions. The objective was to understand these challenges and propose training paths. The methodology involved document analysis and theoretical-conceptual review. As a result, a critical-reflective training model for course and distance learning center coordinators is presented, focused on institutional alignment, mediation, and accessibility in distance learning.

**Keywords:** distance education, regulation, pedagogical mediation, belonging, accessibility.

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# ENTRE NORMAS E PRÁTICAS: UM MODELO CRÍTICO-REFLEXIVO PARA IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DO NOVO MARCO REGULATÓRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO A DISTÂNCIA

## RESUMO

O artigo aborda o desafio de implementar o novo marco regulatório da Educação a Distância (EaD) no Brasil, que demanda reorganização institucional, mediação qualificada e fortalecimento do pertencimento discente. Analisa-se como coordenações de curso e de polo EaD podem estruturar processos de gestão que assegurem interações significativas e condições adequadas de acompanhamento. O objetivo foi compreender esses desafios e propor caminhos formativos. A metodologia envolveu análise documental e revisão teórico-conceitual. Como resultado, apresenta-se um modelo de formação crítico-reflexiva destinado a coordenadores de curso e de polo EaD, voltado ao alinhamento institucional, à mediação e à acessibilidade na EaD.

**Palavras-chave:** educação a distância; regulação; mediação pedagógica; pertencimento; acessibilidade.

# ENTRE NORMAS Y PRÁCTICAS: UN MODELO CRÍTICO-REFLEXIVO PARA LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN DEL NUEVO MARCO REGULATORIO DE LA EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA

## RESUMEN

El artículo aborda el desafío de implementar el nuevo marco regulatorio de la Educación a Distancia (EaD) en Brasil, que exige reorganización institucional, mediación cualificada y fortalecimiento del sentido de pertenencia estudiantil. Se analiza cómo las coordinaciones de curso y de centro de EaD pueden estructurar procesos de gestión que aseguren interacciones significativas y condiciones adecuadas de acompañamiento. El objetivo fue comprender estos desafíos y proponer itinerarios formativos. La metodología incluyó análisis documental y revisión teórico-conceptual. Como resultado, se presenta un modelo de formación crítico-reflexiva dirigido a coordinadores de curso y de centro de EaD, orientado a la alineación institucional, la mediación y la accesibilidad en la EaD.

**Palabras clave:** educación a distancia; regulación; mediación pedagógica; pertenencia; accesibilidad.

## 1 Introduction

Distance Education has been expanding in Brazil. According to the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP), in 2020 there were 6,116 undergraduate programs offered at a distance; the number grew in the following years, and 11,297 programs were recorded in 2024 (INEP, 2025). Of the 23,664,880 openings in undergraduate programs, 18,590,273 (78.5%) are in the distance modality, with 161,583 (0.87%) openings offered in the public system and 18,428,690 (98.13%) in the private system (INEP, 2025). In view of the growth in the provision of distance programs, the Federal Government has been establishing regulations to ensure the quality of the programs offered.

From this perspective, Law No. 10,861, of April 14, 2004, was initially published, establishing the National Higher Education Evaluation System (Sinaes), which set out dimensions for educational quality and for compliance with the constitutional principle of guaranteeing a quality standard for the education provided (BRASIL, 1988; BRASIL, 2004). In 2017, the Instrument for External Institutional Evaluation of In-Person and Distance Education: Accreditation and the Instrument for External Institutional Evaluation of In-Person and Distance Education: Reaccreditation grouped the Sinaes dimensions into five axes: Institutional Planning and Evaluation, Institutional Development, Academic Policies, Management Policies, and Infrastructure for the evaluation of educational institutions (BRASIL, 2017a; BRASIL, 2017b).

In 2025, the new regulatory framework for Distance Education (DE), Decree No. 12,456, was published, reinforcing requirements for educational quality, such as “the adequacy of teaching and learning methodologies and processes and of the physical, technological, and personnel infrastructure, at the headquarters and at the DE Centers, to the activities provided for in the Institutional Development Plan and in the Course Pedagogical Project” (BRASIL, 2025a, p. 2). Also in 2025, the new Quality Benchmarks for Undergraduate Programs Offered at a Distance were published, which reinforce that course pedagogical projects must be linked to the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) and the Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI) of the educational institution offering the program, and must also comply with Brazilian educational legislation (BRASIL, 2025b).

Specifically regarding teaching and learning processes, the new legislation emphasized the importance of interaction and of the student assessment process during in-person and mediated synchronous sessions. In view of this, educational institutions need to promote training policies for faculty members and multidisciplinary teams in order to adapt current distance program offerings and ensure that future offerings comply with the new legislation. Thus, DE center coordinators and course coordinators, who play a relevant role in program management, must receive specific training to carry out collaborative work and ensure the quality of programs offered at a distance.

Thus, this study aimed to propose a theoretical model of critical-reflective training for higher education course coordinators and DE center coordinators, oriented toward reframing in-person meetings and mediated synchronous sessions as strategies for pedagogical mediation, the promotion of student belonging, and the assurance of accessibility, in accordance with the new Distance Education regulations.

## 2 Regulation of Distance Education in Brazil

In Brazilian formal education, Distance Education emerged in 1996 with the publication of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996. Article 80 of the LDB establishes:

§ 1 Distance education, organized under special access and administrative arrangements, shall be offered by institutions specifically accredited by the Federal Government.

§ 2 The Federal Government shall regulate the requirements for administering examinations and registering diplomas relating to distance education programs.

§ 3 The rules for the production, control, and evaluation of distance education programs and the authorization for their implementation shall be the responsibility of the respective education systems, with cooperation and integration among the different systems being permitted (BRASIL, 1996, p. 27841).

Initially, Article 80 of the LDB was regulated by Decree No. 2,494, of February 10, 1998, which was subsequently amended by Decree No. 2,561, of April 27, 1998, and revoked by Decree No. 5,622, of December 19, 2005; this was followed by the publication of Decree No. 9,057, of May 25, 2017. In 2025, that decree was revoked, and DE is currently regulated by Decree No. 12,456, of May 19, 2025.

Chapter III—Teaching and Learning Processes in Distance Education—of Decree No. 12,456/2025 establishes that learning assessments must be conducted in person and periodically, in compliance with the quality benchmarks for undergraduate programs offered at a distance; that they must carry the predominant weight in the final grade of each curricular unit; and that they must include elements that encourage the development of discursive analysis and synthesis skills. This Decree also defined three formats for undergraduate programs: in-person, with at least 70% of the total workload delivered through in-person activities; blended, with at least 30% of the total program workload delivered through in-person activities and 20% of the total program workload in in-person or mediated synchronous activities; and distance, with at least 10% of the total program workload delivered through in-person activities and 10% of the total program workload in in-person or mediated synchronous activities.

Also regarding learning assessment, MEC Ordinance No. 506, of July 10, 2025, which regulates Decree No. 12,456, of May 19, 2025, concerning the provision of DE by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in undergraduate programs, with respect to the academic qualifications and duties of faculty members, pedagogical mediators, tutors, and those responsible for DE centers; in-person activities and learning assessments; teaching materials and digital platforms; as well as the creation, operation, change of address, and closure of DE centers, provides:

The HEI shall specify, in the Course Pedagogical Project, the educational activities that must be offered in person, detailing any rules applicable to internships, professional practices, laboratory activities, assessments, tutorials, defenses of academic works, and other activities, in accordance with the guidelines of the National Curriculum Guidelines (BRASIL, 2025f, p. 35).

MEC Ordinance No. 378, of May 19, 2025, detailed the formats for offering undergraduate programs provided for in Decree No. 12,456/2025. Among the established definitions, the regulation set minimum percentages for in-person and mediated synchronous activities, which vary according to the field of study. Thus, bachelor's, teacher licensure, and technology programs in Education and in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics may be offered in the blended format, with at least 30% in-person activities and 20% in-person or mediated synchronous activities. In addition, bachelor's and technology programs in the following fields may be offered in the blended format, with at least 40% in-person activities and 20% in-person or mediated synchronous activities: Health and Well-Being; Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction; and Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary Medicine.

MEC Ordinance No. 381, of May 20, 2025, addresses the rules for the transition period and establishes that accredited HEIs "and their programs must fully comply with the provisions of Decree No. 12,456, of May 19, 2025, and other acts of the Minister of Education that regulate it, within a maximum period of two years from the date of publication of the Decree" (BRASIL, 2025e, p. 1).

MEC Ordinance No. 794, of November 25, 2025, amends MEC Ordinance No. 506/2025 and presents the limits on the number of DE centers for each type of educational institution, taking accreditation and reaccreditation evaluations into account. MEC Ordinance No. 795, of November 25, 2025, in turn, amends MEC Ordinance No. 381/2025 by establishing the 2025 regulatory action

calendar for programs in in-person, blended, and DE formats. It further establishes that, in accreditation and reaccreditation applications, the HEI must demonstrate satisfactory conditions and obtain authorization to offer at least one program compatible with each format it intends to offer, under penalty of denial of the application.

Although the new regulations establish clear criteria for the provision of DE, their implementation depends on institutional conditions that ensure qualified interactions, academic presence, and continuous monitoring. Thus, the legal framework becomes effective only when linked to mediation, accessibility, and belonging practices, dimensions that structure the discussion presented in the following section.

### **3 Mediation and Belonging as an Institutional Process**

Mediation, as conceived by historical-cultural psychology, represents a constitutive principle of human learning and involves symbolic and social mediation, through which students appropriate culturally produced signs, practices, and languages (VYGOTSKY, 2009). From this perspective, mediation is not limited to direct interaction but encompasses a set of institutional conditions that make learning possible.

Belloni (2005) and Moore and Kearsley (2013) argue that mediation requires intentionality, continuity of monitoring, responsiveness, and systematic guidance. However, such practices materialize only when there is institutional management that coordinates human, technological, pedagogical, and communication resources.

In this study, mediation is understood as a social and institutional process, and not merely a pedagogical one, and it is realized through management, understood as planning, monitoring, and institutional coordination. Together, course and DE center coordinators constitute a management structure for mediation, which creates the environment required for pedagogical mediation itself to occur with quality.

From this perspective, it is also proposed that pedagogical mediation be understood through the notion of mediation governance, defined as the set of institutional processes, communication flows, pedagogical guidelines, and monitoring mechanisms that support the educational experience in DE. DE governance involves integrated coordination among pedagogical, communication, technological, and organizational dimensions and requires permanent articulation between course coordination and DE center coordination, the institutionalization of student-monitoring practices, and the definition of guidelines that ensure coherence among pedagogical mediation, accessibility, and belonging.

The study by Lira and Domingo (2024) analyzes the Open University of Brazil System (UAB) from the perspective of academic and administrative governance and discusses how decentralized management can contribute to democratizing access and maintaining DE quality in the Brazilian context. The study also highlights course initiatives that help reduce dropout and serve people with different educational needs, such as knowledge-leveling initiatives in Portuguese, mathematics, and educational technologies. It concludes that this institutional support enables students who need academic reinforcement, welcoming support, and knowledge updating to continue their education, thereby reducing dropout. According to the authors, “a set of integrated administrative and academic actions may contribute to meeting new curriculum guidelines, updating course pedagogical projects, and fostering the creation and development of instruments for monitoring and assessing program quality” (LIRA; DOMINGO, 2024, p. 15).

Through mediation, belonging acquires meaning and, from sociological and psychological approaches, stands out for its importance to retention, engagement, and academic success. The Quality Benchmarks for Undergraduate Programs Offered at a Distance emphasize that “[...] belonging to a class can help build a sense of institutional belonging. It should be possible to create classes organized around centers and virtual environments so as to build a learning community of students and teachers” (BRASIL, 2025b, p. 9). In addition, this document emphasizes that the HEI must prepare students for the characteristics of the distance teaching and learning process and reinforces the importance of pedagogical mediation in “guiding the student by identifying their strengths and areas for development, providing structured support for their academic and professional growth” (BRASIL, 2025b, p. 11).

For Soares and Henz (2023), to belong is synonymous with being and feeling part of a place, a group, a history; it is to perceive the marks one has left or continues to leave along the way and that profoundly mark the place and the people who live there. This explains the association between belonging and retention. Soso, Kampff, and Machado (2024) corroborate the relationship of reciprocity and belonging to a social group and to a place-time-space of experiences and learning.

In this regard, the studies by Soares and Henz (2023) must be considered; for them, belonging should be promoted from an institutional perspective by creating an environment among students and building the feeling that they are being welcomed and recognized by the institution and by the people with whom they intend to proceed through their teaching-learning process.

Tinto's (1975) Student Integration Theory, which is more focused on dropout studies, begins with the premise that student retention results from the interaction between individual characteristics and institutional processes and understands that students tend to persist when they experience academic and social integration, that is, when they establish meaningful ties with the program, with their peers, and with the institutional culture. Thus, retention is associated with belonging, which depends on the institution's ability to promote welcoming environments, regulatory coherence, monitoring, and participation by coordinating practices that strengthen the sense of belonging. In the DE context, these premises become even more relevant because physical distance can weaken social ties and compromise student integration, requiring intentional actions, such as in-person and mediated synchronous sessions, that reduce isolation and expand opportunities for meaningful interaction.

Tinto (1975) states that belonging is a concrete effect of institutional policies that structure relationships of recognition, participation, and academic identity. Therefore, retention is not understood only as the student's responsibility or as a result of their adaptation to the program; rather, the focus expands to the HEI's capacity to structure policies for welcoming, communication, academic monitoring, accessibility, and pedagogical mediation. Retention and belonging become interdependent dimensions produced by organizational practices and institutional conditions that foster academic integration, recognition, and active student participation in educational processes.

DE management plays a strategic role in creating educational environments that reduce isolation, strengthen academic ties, and expand the conditions for student retention. This understanding is reinforced by Neves (2024), who states that student retention depends on institutional DE management policies, regarded as a central element in the quality of the educational experience and in reducing dropout. The same author emphasizes that the tutor's strategic role, as a link between student and institution, is to promote the strengthening of academic and communication ties.

In this regard, both course coordination and DE center coordination can act in organizing pedagogical and communication guidelines that foster interaction and engagement, as well as in providing in-person welcoming, an appropriate environment, accessibility, and day-to-day student monitoring.

Soso, Kampff, and Machado (2024) discuss retention as an institutional responsibility and an articulation among management, monitoring, and academic integration. They analyzed institutional actions aimed at student retention in distance Pedagogy programs linked to UAB and identified weaknesses related to the absence of structured protocols for welcoming, academic monitoring, and student support for DE students. Based on these findings, the authors proposed guidelines for strengthening student retention, including improving the information provided to incoming students, creating reception and welcoming protocols, systematically monitoring academic trajectories with tutors taking a leading role, expanding social and academic integration, monitoring dropout, offering student assistance, and conducting institutional evaluations specific to DE. According to Soso, Kampff, and Machado (2024, p. 18), "The promotion of social and academic integration actions for students is a foundational element of their personal and professional education. Activities with this purpose need to be frequently encouraged in virtual environments, at centers, at the institution's headquarters, or even outside them." The study reinforces the perspective of this article and the understanding that student retention depends on coordinated institutional policies for management, mediation, and monitoring in the distance modality.

The new DE regulations reconfigure the organization of higher education programs in the modality, emphasizing the quality of the interactions that support teaching and learning processes. This is materialized especially in the emphasis placed on in-person and mediated synchronous sessions, understood as central elements of the educational experience that need to be qualified by coordinated management practices that transform them into experiences of recognition, interaction, and community. Tinto (1975) argues that academic identity is strengthened in environments of coexistence, participation, and recognition.

By establishing that learning assessments must be administered in person, that mediated synchronous sessions form part of the mandatory workload, and that professional practices, laboratories, tutorials, and monitoring mechanisms must occur through physical presence or organized synchronous mediation, the legislation creates a regulatory environment in which the institution is also evaluated on the effective coordination of pedagogical, communication, and management processes. The regulation makes it clear that DE quality is not defined exclusively by faculty work or by the effectiveness of virtual learning environments, but also by the institutional governance capacity to structure guidelines, processes, and safeguards that support pedagogical mediation, student belonging, and accessibility.

In this regard, implementing the decree requires management reorganization, revision of Course Pedagogical Projects (PPCs), mediation guidelines, accessibility protocols, welcoming procedures, articulation between the course and the center, and continuous monitoring. Course coordination assumes the managerial role of guiding teams and structuring guidelines; DE center coordination is responsible for territorial accessibility, welcoming, and student monitoring.

## 4 Methodological Approach

The methodological path adopted in this study reflects the theoretical-propositional nature of the investigation and is structured around: (a) documentary analysis of legislation and regulatory benchmarks for Distance Education in Brazil; (b) conceptual construction linked to the fields of pedagogical mediation, accessibility, and student belonging; and (c) formulation of a critical-reflective training proposal for course coordinators and DE center coordinators. The methodology thus reflects the commitment to linking theory, policy, and institutional practice through an approach intended to contribute to the implementation of the new DE regulatory framework.

The first methodological stage was a detailed analysis of national regulations governing the provision of distance programs, with special attention to Decree No. 12,456/2025 and MEC Ordinances No. 378/2025, 381/2025, 506/2025, 794/2025, and 795/2025, as well as the Quality Benchmarks for Undergraduate Programs Offered at a Distance (BRASIL, 2025a; BRASIL, 2025b; BRASIL, 2025d; BRASIL, 2025e; BRASIL, 2025f; BRASIL, 2025g; BRASIL, 2025h). This analysis sought to identify the constituent principles of the new regulatory framework, the requirements relating to teaching and learning processes, the institutional duties of course coordinators and DE center coordinators, and the practical impacts on provision, retention, and student monitoring. The documentary analysis was guided by an interpretive approach, focusing on understanding the managerial and pedagogical implications of the regulations, especially with regard to mediation, accessibility, and belonging.

The second methodological stage then took place, involving the development of a theoretical-propositional model of critical-reflective training grounded in historical-cultural psychology, such as Vygotsky (2009), Tinto's (1975) student integration theory, and accessibility frameworks such as the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the Brazilian Inclusion Law for Persons with Disabilities (LBI), Law No. 13,146, of July 6, 2015, and the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education (PNEEI), established by Decree No. 12,686, of October 20, 2025 (BRASIL, 2015; BRASIL, 2025c; CAST, 2024). At this stage, a conceptual matrix was structured that integrates mediation, accessibility, and belonging as mutually dependent dimensions anchored in the institutional role of the coordinating bodies. Thus, the training proposal emerged as a response to regulatory demands and as a quality-management mechanism.

The third methodological stage consisted of constructing the training proposal, taken as the main result of this study. The training was organized on the principles that management is the body that organizes the conditions for pedagogical mediation by coordinating guidelines, processes, and infrastructure; accessibility is regarded as a condition for learning and is present at all stages of the training process; and belonging is understood as an institutional responsibility shared between courses and centers.

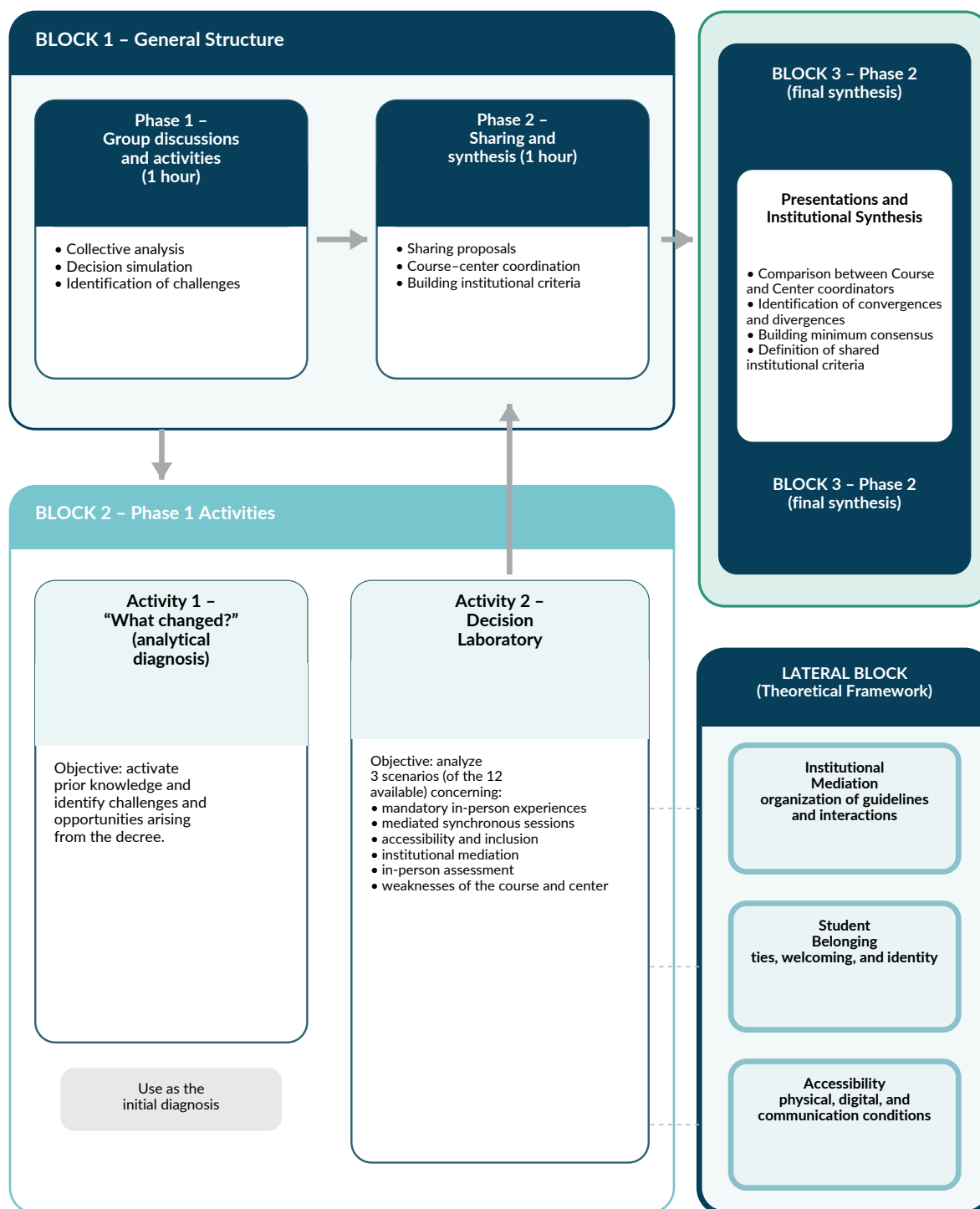
The workshop format was chosen for its dialogic and collaborative potential, allowing coordinators to reflect critically on the regulatory framework and build concrete alternatives for implementation. The workshop structure was planned around five moments: the thematic icebreaker, the decree impact map, the decision laboratory, the construction of adaptation proposals, and the synthesis plenary.

## 5 Results and Discussion

The results of this study take the form of a critical-reflective training model for course and DE center coordinators, aligned with the new Distance Education regulatory framework. The proposal emerges from the articulation among the theoretical frameworks discussed—mediation as a social and institutional process (VYGOTSKY, 2009; BELLONI, 2005; MOORE; KEARSLEY, 2013), belonging as an organizational construction (SOARES; HENZ, 2023; SIGNOR, 2021; TINTO, 1975), and accessibility as a foundation for full participation (BRASIL, 2015; BRASIL, 2025c; CAST, 2024)—and the regulatory requirements of Decree No. 12,456/2025 and related Ordinances. Thus, the workshop is presented as part of management and governance, modeling institutional practices that enable in-person and mediated synchronous sessions to be improved.

The workshop is organized into two interdependent phases designed to express, in practice, the interweaving of the theoretical dimensions discussed: Phase 1—Group discussions and activities (1 hour) and Phase 2—Sharing and synthesis (1 hour), as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** - Workshop Structure on the Distance Education Regulatory Framework in Brazil



**Source:** Authors, 2025, prepared with AI support.

Phase 1 was structured to promote collective analysis, decision simulation, and the identification of management challenges arising from implementation of the decree. It begins with a presentation of the new DE regulations delivered by a professional with expertise in the subject. In theoretical terms, it incorporates the understanding that pedagogical mediation depends on institutional mediation, which involves planning, guidance, guidelines, and continuous monitoring. It is inspired by the Vygotskian notion that learning is constituted in social contexts mediated by signs and instruments,

with management being responsible for creating the conditions for such mediation to occur with quality.

In addition, by mobilizing the recognition of problems and opportunities, this phase operates directly on the construction of institutional belonging, as described by Soares and Henz (2023) and by Tinto's (1975) Student Integration Theory, by allowing coordinators to recognize weaknesses, perceive themselves as institutional agents, and identify the impacts of regulatory guidelines on the student experience. The participatory diagnosis that opens the workshop makes it possible to reveal accessibility barriers, consistent with UDL and with the understanding of accessibility as a prerequisite for full participation.

Phase 2 is a space for institutional integration. By sharing proposals and decisions developed by the groups, course and DE center coordinators build shared meanings, negotiate interpretations, and produce common guidelines, approaching what Tinto (1975) describes as social and academic integration, a determining condition for student retention. From the standpoint of mediation, this stage reinforces Moore and Kearsley's (2013) idea that mediation is accompanied by responsiveness, continuity, and collective synthesis. The synthesis built in the plenary materializes institutional mediation as a governance practice. In terms of accessibility, the synthesis phase allows managerial decisions to consider student diversity and integrate elements provided for in the LBI, UDL, and the Quality Benchmarks, ensuring that institutional adaptation proposals address architectural, technological, communication, and pedagogical dimensions.

Regarding its structure, the workshop begins with the activity "What changed?", a participatory diagnosis that activates prior knowledge and enables coordinators to identify challenges, opportunities, governance gaps, accessibility barriers, and aspects of student belonging affected by the new regulations. Next comes the Decision Laboratory, in which groups analyze scenarios involving in-person experiences, mediated synchronous sessions, accessibility, institutional mediation, and assessment, practicing regulatory interpretation in problem situations and understanding their role in organizing the conditions for mediation, belonging, and participation. This stage constitutes the methodological core of the training because it transforms the decree into concrete managerial decisions.

Finally, sharing the proposals makes it possible to perceive the different emphases adopted by course and DE center coordinators regarding the new regulations, identify convergences and divergences, and produce institutional consensus that can guide the academic and operational management of DE. Table 1 summarizes the structure of the training on the DE regulatory framework.

**Table 1** - Summary of the training structure on the DE regulatory framework in Brazil

| Training Structure | Description of the Training Structure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target audience    | Coordinators of distance undergraduate and specialization programs and DE center coordinators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Objectives         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the structuring points of Decree No. 12,456/2025.</li> <li>- Discuss the practical implications of the regulatory framework for managing distance programs and DE centers.</li> <li>- Build collective proposals for institutional adaptation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Methodology        | <p>Moment 1: presentation on the new DE regulations, delivered by a professional with expertise in the subject.</p> <p>Moment 2: activity "What changed?", in which participants share challenges and opportunities relating to current DE regulations.</p> <p>Moment 3: Decision Laboratory activity, which consists of simulating real situations arising from the new DE legislation and presenting practical proposals for adaptation.</p> <p>Moment 4: Sharing and plenary debate.</p> |

**Source:** Prepared by the authors (2025).

The proposed training arises in response to the finding that both course and DE center coordinating bodies are responsible for articulating the guidelines, flows, and structural conditions that make pedagogical mediation possible. For Vygotsky (2009), learning depends on social and institutional conditions that organize instruments, signs, and interactions, so that mediation is not only a teaching action but also an effect of an institutional architecture that supports it. Belloni (2005) and Moore and Kearsley (2013) reinforce this understanding by stating that mediation requires organizational intentionality, responsiveness, and systematic monitoring.

In this sense, the legislation recognizes the institutional role by assigning HEIs responsibility for ensuring conditions for teaching, monitoring, accessibility, and assessment. However, although it expands institutional obligations, the regulatory framework does not explain how these duties should be operationalized in day-to-day management. The critical-reflective training proposed here serves as a bridge between the regulatory text and the institutions' real conditions by proposing moments of analysis, scenario simulation, collaborative study, and the production of proposals that develop coordinators' interpretive and decision-making capacity.

The analysis of the legislation demonstrates that in-person and mediated synchronous sessions are becoming structuring elements of the educational experience and assuming a central role in pedagogical interaction and student monitoring. These prescriptions echo Tinto's (1975) understanding that retention and belonging depend on academic and social interactions and that these ties do not emerge spontaneously but are produced by the institution.

The proposed training model emphasizes that although pedagogical mediation is carried out directly by faculty members and mediators, its viability and quality depend on the coordinating bodies, which organize guidelines, infrastructure, communication flows, and student support. This interpretation dialogues with Soares and Henz (2023) and Signor (2021), who understand belonging as an institutional production involving welcoming, recognition, and environment.

Thus, DE center coordinators, through territorial proximity and management of in-person spaces, and course coordinators, through the conduct of pedagogical and communication guidelines, constitute complementary levels of action. Building student belonging therefore requires alignment between the two, making the training not only a learning space but also a concrete exercise in integrated governance, which is necessary for mediation, accessibility, and belonging to be consolidated as structuring dimensions of the DE envisaged in the new regulatory framework.

Thus, the workshop functions as a space for dialogue and integration, modeling the course-center articulation required by the decree. It has the potential to activate prior knowledge, promote critical analysis, integrate theory and practice, and stimulate collaborative construction that fosters a systemic view of DE, articulates the course and the center, and structures institutional guidelines aligned with the new regulatory framework.

The development of the training proposal made it possible to identify, still on a preliminary basis, some institutional impacts relevant to the context of the programs involved in the debate on implementing the new DE regulatory framework. These include the need for greater articulation between course and DE center coordinating bodies, the expansion of institutional discussions on belonging and accessibility, and recognition that in-person and mediated synchronous sessions require pedagogical, communication, and managerial reorganization. In addition, the collective construction of the workshop highlighted the potential of critical-reflective training to foster institutional alignment, interpretive reading of the legislation, and the development of more integrated decision-making processes among the different sectors responsible for providing DE. The results indicate that the proposal has the potential to contribute to institutional processes of regulatory adaptation, strengthen pedagogical mediation, and improve academic management practices in the modality.

## 6 Conclusion

This study presents a theoretical-propositional model of critical-reflective training for course coordinators and DE center coordinators, in accordance with the demands established by Decree No. 12,456/2025 and the accompanying regulatory documents. Analysis of the new DE regulations showed that improving the quality of the modality depends on the institution's capacity to organize in-person and mediated synchronous sessions as effective spaces for pedagogical mediation, accessibility, and student belonging.

The discussion demonstrated that mediation, as a social and institutional process, requires intentionality, planning, and organization—elements that extend beyond the teaching sphere and fall within management. Similarly, student belonging emerged as an institutional construction dependent on coordinated policies between course and center that ensure welcoming, coherent communication, and opportunities for interaction. Accessibility, in turn, proved to be a condition for full student participation and therefore a structuring element of mediation and retention.

In this context, the coordinating bodies occupy a central place in DE governance. Course coordination must guide mediation, monitoring, and communication policies, while DE center coordination must ensure welcoming, accessibility, and material conditions for institutional presence.

In addition to constituting a theoretical training proposal aligned with the requirements of the new regulatory framework, the model presented already makes it possible to identify, on a preliminary basis, potentialities related to strengthening the institutional governance of DE, expanding dialogue between course and center coordinating bodies, and reorganizing practices aimed at pedagogical mediation, accessibility, and student belonging.

The training developed offers managers a space for critical analysis, scenario simulation, and collective construction of proposals. Finally, it should be emphasized that this study represents the inaugural stage of a broader proposal for institutional research and intervention.

In this sense, the study opens possibilities for future applied research and institutional monitoring of the implementation of regulatory guidelines in different DE provision contexts.

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