

OnLIFE Education in Higher Education: Epistemological Limits and the Central Role of Teaching in Hybrid Contexts



Márcio Silveira Nascimentoⁱ 

Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Amazonas, Manaus, AM, Brazil

Aline Santos Mossetteⁱⁱ 

Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Bahia, Salvador, BA, Brazil

Rita Márcia Andrade Vaz de Melloⁱⁱⁱ 

Federal University of Viçosa, Viçosa, MG, Brazil

Abstract

Introduction. Contemporary higher education is undergoing transformations driven by the incorporation of emerging digital technologies, challenging traditional conceptions of educational innovation and pedagogical mediation. This study aims to critically analyze how educational innovation mediated by digital technologies has been constructed and problematized in the literature on higher education. **Methodology.** A qualitative study of an analytical-interpretive nature was conducted, grounded in the perspective of critical research in education and focused on interpreting discourses on OnLIFE Education, educational innovation, and digital technologies. **Results.** The analysis revealed the predominance of instrumental approaches to innovation, the weakening of teaching mediation, and superficiality in the appropriation of the epistemological implications of OnLIFE Education. **Discussion.** The findings indicate the need to move beyond technical interpretations of educational innovation, understanding it as a process of critical pedagogical reconfiguration, guided by the centrality of teaching, ethical responsibility, and the promotion of meaningful learning in hybrid contexts.

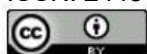
Keywords

educational epistemology; digital culture; pedagogical practices; teacher education.

Educação OnLIFE no ensino superior: limites epistemológicos e centralidade da docência em contextos híbridos

Resumo

Introdução. O ensino superior contemporâneo atravessa transformações impulsionadas pela incorporação de tecnologias digitais emergentes, tensionando concepções tradicionais de inovação educacional e de mediação pedagógica. O estudo objetiva analisar criticamente como a inovação educacional mediada por tecnologias digitais vem sendo construída e problematizada na literatura sobre o ensino superior. **Metodologia.** Desenvolveu-se uma pesquisa qualitativa de natureza analítico-interpretativa, fundamentada na perspectiva da pesquisa crítica em educação e voltada à interpretação de discursos sobre Educação OnLIFE, inovação educacional e tecnologias digitais. **Resultados.** A análise evidenciou a predominância de abordagens instrumentais de inovação, a fragilização das mediações docentes e a superficialidade na apropriação das implicações epistemológicas da Educação OnLIFE. **Discussão.** Os achados indicam a



necessidade de superar leituras tecnicistas da inovação educacional, compreendendo-a como processo de reconfiguração pedagógica crítica, orientado pela centralidade da docência, pela responsabilidade ética e pela promoção de aprendizagens significativas em contextos híbridos.

Palavras-chave

epistemologia educacional; cultura digital; práticas pedagógicas; formação docente.

Educación OnLIFE en la educación superior: límites epistemológicos y centralidad de la enseñanza en contextos híbridos**Resumen**

Introducción. La educación superior contemporánea está experimentando transformaciones impulsadas por la incorporación de tecnologías digitales emergentes, desafiando las concepciones tradicionales de innovación educativa y mediación pedagógica. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar críticamente cómo se ha construido y problematizado la innovación educativa mediada por tecnologías digitales en la literatura sobre educación superior. **Metodología.** Se desarrolló una investigación cualitativa, analítica e interpretativa, fundamentada en la perspectiva de la investigación crítica en educación y centrada en la interpretación de discursos sobre educación OnLIFE, innovación educativa y tecnologías digitales. **Resultados.** El análisis reveló el predominio de enfoques instrumentales de la innovación, el debilitamiento de las mediaciones docentes y la superficialidad en la apropiación de las implicaciones epistemológicas de la educación OnLIFE. **Discusión.** Los hallazgos indican la necesidad de superar las lecturas tecnocráticas de la innovación educativa, entendiéndola como un proceso de reconfiguración pedagógica crítica, guiado por la centralidad de la enseñanza, la responsabilidad ética y la promoción del aprendizaje significativo en contextos híbridos.

Palabras clave

epistemología educativa; cultura digital; prácticas pedagógicas; formación docente.

1 Introduction

The intensification of hyperconnected society, driven by the development of networked digital technologies, has brought about profound transformations in the ways we live and interact, affecting different dimensions of social, cultural, and educational life (Schlemmer; Moreira, 2020). In this context, communication dynamics, knowledge production processes, and forms of human interaction are being reorganized around increasingly complex and integrated digital ecosystems.

In the realm of higher education, these transformations take on particularly significant contours. The expansion of constant connectivity, the consolidation of educational platforms, and the incorporation of intelligent systems have reshaped the ways of teaching and learning, challenging traditional conceptions of higher education teaching and the organization of educational processes (Coppi *et al.*, 2022). As Pacheco, Santos, and Wahrhaftig (2020) point out, as they enter the third decade of the 21st century, universities face growing challenges within contemporary digital society, being pressured to reorganize pedagogical practices, institutional structures, and forms of knowledge mediation.

This scenario was intensified by the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought unprecedented prominence to educational debates in Brazil. The year 2020 marked a turning point for the reorganization of pedagogical practices, as the educational community had to respond abruptly to the restrictions imposed on in-person instruction. This situation highlighted the need for training programs focused on equipping teachers to work in teaching modalities mediated by digital technologies, initially conceived as emergency solutions but later incorporated more permanently into educational practices (Pinheiro; Sena; Serra, 2022).

In recent educational discourse, these transformations have frequently been associated with the notion of educational innovation; however, as Demo (2021) warns, when appropriated uncritically, innovation tends to be reduced to technical updates or the incorporation of pedagogical fads, thereby emptying it of its epistemological depth and obscuring its formative implications. It is therefore essential to critically examine how educational innovation has been discursively constructed, what rationales underpin it, and which pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological dimensions remain marginalized in this process.

It is within this framework that the concept of OnLIFE Education, formulated by Floridi (2015), emerges to designate a socio-technical condition in which the boundaries between the *online* and the *offline* become progressively inseparable. From this perspective, individuals come to inhabit multiple spaces, times, technologies, and forms of presence simultaneously, shaping a mode of existence marked by the hybridity between the physical and the digital.

In the field of education, this understanding challenges dichotomous readings and demands new interpretations of pedagogical mediations in higher education, especially in contexts permeated by algorithms, digital platforms, and continuous information flows.

Despite the growing circulation of the concept, it is observed that OnLIFE Education is still frequently mobilized in an abstract or instrumental manner in educational literature, without due exploration of its epistemological implications for teaching and learning processes. Given this context, the research question guiding this study is to understand how educational innovation mediated by emerging digital technologies has been constructed, contested, or silenced in the literature on higher education, from the perspective of OnLIFE Education.

Thus, the objective of this article is to critically analyze, through an epistemological analytical-interpretive procedure, the discourses and approaches that underpin educational innovation, highlighting theoretical gaps and conceptual limitations that justify the proposed investigation. In doing so, we seek to contribute to the contemporary debate on innovation in higher education, shifting it from technical interpretations toward a critical, pedagogical, and epistemologically grounded understanding.

2 Methodology

This study is characterized as qualitative research, developed through an epistemological analytical-interpretive procedure grounded in the perspective of critical research in education (Charlot, 2000; Demo, 2001; Severino, 2016). This approach recognizes that educational phenomena do not present themselves as natural or neutral data, but as historical, social, and discursive constructions, traversed by theoretical, political, and epistemological disputes.

The focus is not on the description or quantification of academic output, but on the critical interpretation of the meanings, assumptions, and silences present in discourses on educational innovation mediated by digital technologies in higher education. From this perspective, the research is guided by an understanding of how

certain problems are formulated, legitimized, or marginalized in the educational field (Campos, 2013).

The research was conducted through an interpretive analysis of theoretical works and contemporary studies addressing OnLIFE Education, emerging digital technologies, and educational innovation in the context of higher education. The selection of texts considered their conceptual relevance, recurrence in academic debate, and contribution to understanding pedagogical transformations in digital contexts. The reading was conducted in a systematic and relational manner, seeking to critically reconstruct the arguments presented by the authors.

As Lather (2004) points out, critical research requires going beyond conceptual reproduction, demanding a process of interpretive reconstruction of the object of study. Thus, the analyzed texts were compared with one another, allowing for the identification of convergences, contradictions, and silences in discourses on educational innovation and pedagogical mediations.

Data analysis was guided by three previously defined analytical axes: (I) the conception of educational innovation mobilized in the literature; (II) the role attributed to pedagogical mediations in digital contexts; and (III) the epistemological and ethical implications of the use of emerging digital technologies in higher education.

These axes constituted the analytical categories that structured the organization and interpretation of the study's findings. Based on this framework, the following section presents the results of the critical-interpretive analysis, highlighting convergences, tensions, and theoretical gaps present in the *corpus* of works analyzed.

3 Results

In critical-interpretive research, results express analytical findings rather than measurable empirical data. The analysis of *the* investigated *corpus* allowed to identify three central axes of inquiry related to educational innovation mediated by digital technologies in higher education. The following section presents the main results of the analysis, organized according to the analytical categories constructed throughout the investigation.

3.1 Predominance of an instrumental conception of innovation

The first finding shows that, in the context of higher education, educational innovation has been predominantly understood through an instrumental lens, in which innovation is conflated with the incorporation of digital technologies, educational platforms, and data-driven systems. From this perspective, innovation is frequently associated with discourses of efficiency, modernization, and institutional competitiveness, shifting the debate from pedagogical and epistemological dimensions to a technical-operational logic.

Recent studies indicate that this instrumental reading of innovation is directly related to the processes of *platformization* and *datafication* of education. As Decuyper, Grimaldi, and Landri (2021) argue, educational platforms no longer function merely as support for pedagogical practices but instead structure the very modes of teaching, learning, and assessment, introducing algorithmic rationalities that guide educational decisions.

In this scenario, innovation tends to be legitimized based on performance indicators, scalability, and the measurement of results, to the detriment of reflection on the formative meanings of the educational experience.

Furthermore, research such as that by Teräs *et al.* (2020) warns of the strengthening of a solutionist logic, in which complex educational problems come to be treated as technical issues solvable by digital tools. This perspective reduces innovation to functional adjustments in teaching processes, undermining discussions about knowledge, learning, and teaching. As a result, pedagogical practices are often evaluated for their operational efficiency rather than their capacity to foster critical and socially situated formative experiences.

In the context of higher education, this rationale is also linked to contemporary agendas of digital transformation. Rahm (2023) demonstrates that such agendas incorporate logics of management, the market, and *performativity*, in which innovation comes to operate as a strategy for academic governance and institutional positioning. In this shift, pedagogical work tends to be subordinated to technological architectures,

undermining faculty autonomy and reorganizing educational mediations based on parameters external to the pedagogical field.

From an epistemological perspective, a significant shift is observed in the debate on educational innovation. Instead of questioning how digital technologies reconfigure relationships to knowledge, learning processes, and teaching practices, much of the literature focuses on the effectiveness of tools and the optimization of educational processes. Sefton-Green and Pangrazio (2022) argue that this dynamic reinforces a metrics- and data-driven educational culture, in which the complexity of learning tends to be reduced to quantifiable variables.

From the perspective of OnLIFE Education, this conception proves limited, since the hybridization of educational experiences demands reconfigurations that are not only technical but also pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological. Thus, the predominance of an instrumental view of innovation highlights a central gap in the contemporary debate: the difficulty of understanding educational innovation as a critical, situated, and relational process, in which emerging digital technologies are examined in terms of their effects on teaching practices, the meanings of learning, and the educational goals of higher education.

3.2 Weakening of Teaching Mediation

The second finding highlights that the role of the teacher in higher education has been progressively reconfigured in a functional manner, often subordinated to the potentialities attributed to digital technologies.

In this context, pedagogical mediation tends to be understood as a technical operation focused on managing content, interactions, and information flows, shifting the focus away from teaching as a relational, interpretive, and epistemologically situated practice (Selwyn, 2020). This shift reveals a conception of educational innovation centered on devices and technical solutions, to the detriment of pedagogical and formative reflection.

This reconfiguration becomes even more significant when linked to the processes of continuing teacher education. Silva and Ghedin (2021) identify a crisis in the pedagogical

mediations of this field, marked by the recurrent adoption of extreme approaches: on the one hand, excessively theoretical proposals distant from teaching practices; on the other, pragmatic initiatives lacking conceptual grounding.

In both cases, a weakening of the link between theory and practice is observed, limiting the formative potential of these experiences. Although such approaches may generate immediate responses to the demands of the digital context, they contribute little to the critical and reflective professional development of teaching.

In light of this issue, Teixeira and Oliveira (2024) highlight that teachers have sought to expand competencies related to the use of digital technologies, reorganize pedagogical practices, strengthen collaborative processes, and incorporate innovative methodologies into their teaching activities. The authors emphasize, however, that continuing education must take on a dynamic and comprehensive character, integrating critical reflection, the integration of theory and practice, professional collaboration, and pedagogical innovation, in order to foster the consolidation of digital culture in the practice of teaching. This understanding reinforces that teacher training in digital contexts cannot be restricted to the operational mastery of technologies, but must address the pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological dimensions that underpin educational innovation.

From the perspective of OnLIFE Education, this crisis takes on even more complex dimensions. The convergence of digital and physical environments requires pedagogical mediations capable of integrating technologies, knowledge, and experiences in a critical and contextualized manner. However, most innovation initiatives remain limited to technical updates or the offering of operational workshops, relegating reflection on the meanings of teaching and teacher training to the background. This reductionism highlights significant limitations to the consolidation of training practices consistent with the complexity of hybrid environments.

Furthermore, recent research indicates that the growing centrality of digital platforms and algorithmic systems has redefined the conditions under which teaching is practiced in higher education. As Decuypere, Grimaldi, and Landri (2021) argue, platforms no longer function merely as support for pedagogical practices but instead structure rhythms, formats, and criteria for participation, influencing teaching and

assessment decisions. In this scenario, faculty work tends to be reorganized by technological architectures that delimit possibilities for action and reduce the teacher's pedagogical autonomy.

As a consequence, teaching becomes progressively associated with the execution of predefined procedures, reinforcing logics of standardization, control, and *performativity*. Teräs *et al.* (2020) observe that, in this context, educational innovation is often framed in terms of operational efficiency and process optimization, obscuring the relational nature of teaching and undermining the understanding of learning as a social, cultural, and situated phenomenon.

From a pedagogical perspective, such a reconfiguration challenges conceptions that view teaching as a practice guided by educational goals, involving ethical decisions, professional judgments, and meaningful relationships with knowledge and with students. The reduction of teacher mediation to operational functions undermines not only the formative meaning of the educational experience but also the very processes of teacher education, replacing pedagogical dialogue with interactions mediated by digital protocols and performance metrics (Libâneo; Santos; Marques, 2023; Nóvoa, 2022).

In this vein, Floridi (2015, 2021) argues that, in contexts marked by the inseparability of the digital and the in-person, human mediation becomes even more necessary. Educational innovation does not rely solely on technological infrastructure but depends on the ability to critically integrate technologies, knowledge, and values; however, the intensification of educational practices guided by data and metrics tends to obscure the complexity of learning and pedagogical mediation, fostering an educational culture marked by continuous measurement and *performativity* (Sefton-Green; Pangrazio, 2022).

Thus, the weakening of teaching mediation is not limited to a functional reconfiguration of pedagogical work. It is a process associated with epistemological assumptions that shift the centrality of teaching practice to platforms, devices, and metrics, undermining reflection on knowledge, learning, and educational responsibility. This shift leads to the need to deepen the analysis of the epistemological limits present in the contemporary appropriation of OnLIFE Education.

3.3 *Epistemological Limits in the Appropriation of OnLIFE Education*

The third finding indicates that OnLIFE Education has frequently been mobilized as a descriptive marker of context or as a metaphor to designate the integration between digital and in-person experiences, without its epistemological implications being examined with the necessary depth.

In many studies, the notion appears associated with hybrid teaching or digital culture, but without explicitly addressing what actually changes in the conceptions of knowledge, learning, teaching, and pedagogical mediation when the convergence between digital and face-to-face experiences proposed by Floridi (2015) is accepted.

This limitation becomes even more evident when one considers that the original formulation of the concept was not designed to describe a simple coexistence of environments, but to reconfigure central categories of social life in a hyperconnected condition, in which information technologies cease to operate as external instruments and come to constitute the informational habitat itself.

When this perspective is incorporated into the educational debate without undertaking such a conceptual reconfiguration, the concept loses analytical depth and is reduced to a label accompanying the adoption of technologies. As a consequence, its appropriation tends to legitimize instrumental changes, rather than promoting an epistemological problematization of educational purposes and the status of knowledge in higher education.

Evidence of this process can be observed in recent work dedicated to proposing pedagogical models, digital ecosystems, and technology-mediated practices. Although such studies contribute to broadening the debate on educational innovation, they do not always make explicit the conceptions of knowledge and learning that underpin their proposals. As Steyer, Bassani, and Behar (2023) highlight, many of these approaches prioritize organizational, methodological, and technological dimensions, while discussions on the validation of learning, pedagogical authority, and the production of knowledge remain less developed.

Furthermore, critical literature on *the platformization* and *datafication* of education contributes to understanding the weakening of this epistemological problematization. As

digital platforms come to structure rhythms, interactions, and criteria for participation, they also influence what is recognized as evidence of learning and as the quality of the educational process.

In this sense, Decuyper, Grimaldi, and Landri (2021) argue that researching educational platforms requires attention to the infrastructures and data regimes that reorganize educational practices, recognizing that the very production of educational knowledge can be guided by logics of measurement, traceability, and *performativity*.

In the same vein, Sefton-Green and Pangrazio (2022) highlight that debates on the futures of digital education demand critical perspectives capable of challenging the reduction of learning to what can be quantified. Without this level of critical analysis, there is a risk of replacing pedagogical interpretations with metrics and indicators, reinforcing instrumental rationalities already entrenched in the educational field.

The problem, therefore, does not lie in the circulation of the notion, but in its use as a solution without theory. When mobilized solely to describe connectivity, the possibility of interrogating educational innovation as a transformation of the very regime of knowledge is lost.

In contrast, some recent scholarship that engages with this condition from a philosophical perspective suggests that hyperconnected life implies reconsidering dimensions such as identity, agency, and modes of signification, producing direct impacts on educational processes. Sánchez-Rojo *et al.* (2022), for example, demonstrate that technological mediation alters the modes of constitution of the subject and, consequently, the ways in which education participates in these formative processes.

It is also observed that this perspective has been linked to agendas of citizenship and digital culture, expanding its scope beyond the strictly technical dimension. Menezes, Schlemmer, and Di Felice (2024) highlight efforts to relate this approach to formative processes and the development of critical digital citizenship. Nevertheless, there remains a need to more rigorously articulate the epistemological foundations underpinning such linkages, so that the concept operates not merely as a catch-all label but as an analytical category capable of guiding pedagogical decisions and critical reflections on educational innovation in higher education.

Finally, recent debates on education in the digital society highlight the centrality of the epistemological dimension in this field. By conceiving of education as proficiency in information languages, Floridi (2025) places the question of what it means to understand, produce, and use knowledge in complex informational ecosystems back at the center of reflection.

This perspective reinforces the central argument of this study: without an explicit articulation of its epistemological foundations, OnLIFE Education tends to be appropriated merely as a justification for technological adoption, to the detriment of a consistent critique of the instrumental rationalities that reshape educational innovation in higher education.

4 Discussion

The analysis of the results shows that educational innovation in higher education constitutes a field marked by epistemological tensions. On the one hand, a technocratic rationality predominates; on the other, critical-pedagogical perspectives—still in the minority—are emerging. Although the discourse of innovation is widely disseminated in institutional policies and educational literature, its materialization occurs primarily through the incorporation of digital technologies and platforms, often dissociated from a consistent reflection on their pedagogical, ethical, and epistemological foundations.

In this context, the OnLIFE Education perspective offers a relevant analytical framework for critically reinterpreting such processes. As Floridi (2015, 2021) argues, the contemporary hyperconnected condition does not eliminate human mediations, but rather makes them more complex.

The inseparability of *online* and *offline* redefines the conditions of knowledge production and learning, requiring pedagogical mediations capable of giving meaning to educational experiences in dense informational ecosystems (Schlemmer; Oliveira; Menezes, 2021). The results indicate, however, that this requirement has been obscured by approaches that treat innovation as a technical response to complex educational problems.

The predominance of an instrumental conception of innovation shifts the debate from the pedagogical field to operational efficiency, the measurement of results, and institutional competitiveness. This shift reinforces Demo's (2021) warning about the risks of an education that incorporates discourses of modernization without questioning their epistemological assumptions. In this context, innovation tends to function more as a strategy for academic management and governance than as a critical educational process.

This rationale directly impacts the role of teaching in higher education. As evidenced by the results, the growing centrality of digital platforms, algorithmic systems, and educational metrics reposition the teacher as an operator of devices and an executor of predefined procedures.

This logic contrasts with conceptions that understand teaching as a relational, symbolic, and ethical practice. As Charlot (2000) warns, the educational act involves a relationship with knowledge that is social, subjective, and historically situated—a dimension that is undermined when pedagogical mediation is reduced to technical functions.

In the field of teacher education, this reconfiguration takes on even more critical contours. The replacement of pedagogical dialogue with excessively pragmatic training models compromises teachers' professional development and weakens the articulation between theory, practice, and critical reflection (Santos; Silva; Vieira, 2025). The analyses conducted indicate that, even when innovation is presented as an update or modernization, it contributes little to the construction of reflective, autonomous, and epistemologically situated teaching.

The discussion of epistemological limits in the appropriation of OnLIFE Education deepens this analysis. Although the concept is widely invoked, its incorporation occurs, in many cases, in a descriptive or metaphorical manner. Reducing the notion to a synonym for hybrid teaching or digital culture undermines its critical potential and prevents it from functioning as an analytical category capable of questioning regimes of knowledge, criteria for validating learning, and educational goals in higher education.

The absence of epistemological problematization favors the naturalization of technocratic rationalities, in which platforms, data, and algorithms come to define not only

the means but also the criteria for recognizing learning. As studies on *platformization* and *datafication* indicate, digital infrastructures reorganize educational practices based on logics of measurement and *performativity*, shifting the focus from pedagogical understanding to the management of indicators.

In this sense, OnLIFE Education, when adopted in an epistemologically grounded manner, allows the debate on innovation to shift from the instrumental plane to the pedagogical, ethical, and formative plane. By understanding education as proficiency in information languages, as proposed by Floridi (2025), the question of what it means to understand, produce, and use knowledge in complex informational ecosystems is placed back at the center of reflection.

Thus, the discussion of the results reinforces that the centrality of teaching and pedagogical mediation constitutes an indispensable condition for critical educational innovation in higher education. In contexts marked by the inseparability of the digital and the face-to-face, innovation only acquires formative meaning when guided by clear epistemological foundations, explicit educational purposes, and an ethic of pedagogical responsibility.

5 Final Considerations

This study aimed to critically analyze how educational innovation mediated by emerging digital technologies has been constructed, legitimized, and problematized in the literature on higher education, in light of the OnLIFE Education perspective. The research problem stemmed from the observation that, although the discourse on innovation is widely disseminated, its pedagogical and epistemological foundations are not always made explicit, which motivated an analytical-interpretive investigation grounded in critical research in education.

The results allowed us to address the proposed research problem by highlighting three central findings. The first refers to the predominance of an instrumental conception of educational innovation, frequently associated with the incorporation of digital technologies, platforms, and data-driven systems, to the detriment of reflection on their formative meanings. The second finding points to the weakening of teaching mediation,

resulting from the centrality attributed to technological architectures and educational metrics, which tends to reduce teaching to operational functions and compromise its relational, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions. The third result highlights the epistemological limits in the appropriation of OnLIFE Education, which is often mobilized in a descriptive or metaphorical manner, without undertaking the conceptual reconfiguration necessary to interrogate regimes of knowledge, forms of learning validation, and educational purposes in higher education.

The articulation of these findings sheds light on a central issue in the contemporary debate: educational innovation, when guided by technocratic rationalities, runs the risk of reinforcing impoverished educational models, even if they are technologically sophisticated.

In contrast, the OnLIFE Education perspective, when adopted in a critical and epistemologically grounded manner, allows the debate to shift from the instrumental plane to the pedagogical, ethical, and formative plane, reaffirming the centrality of teaching and pedagogical mediations in the construction of meaningful learning in hybrid contexts.

From the perspective of contributions to the field of education, this study advances by offering a critical reading of innovation in higher education that goes beyond descriptive or normative approaches. By highlighting the tensions between technology, teaching, and epistemology, the article contributes to broadening the debate on educational innovation, emphasizing the need to understand digital technologies not as ends in themselves, but as elements that reconfigure pedagogical practices, knowledge, and responsibilities. Furthermore, by problematizing the uncritical use of the OnLIFE Education, the study reinforces its potential as an analytical category capable of guiding more in-depth reflections on education in a hyperconnected society.

Among the study's limitations, its theoretical and interpretive nature stands out, centered on a critical analysis of the literature, which does not allow for empirical generalizations about concrete practices in higher education. This limitation, however, stems from the methodological choice itself and does not compromise the consistency of the findings, since the objective was to problematize discourses, rationalities, and epistemological assumptions. As a possibility for further exploration, it is suggested that

future research combine this critical analysis with empirical investigations, exploring how faculty and institutions have experienced, negotiated, or resisted the dynamics of innovation mediated by digital technologies in OnLIFE contexts.

Finally, it is concluded that educational innovation in higher education demands more than technological updating. It requires conscious pedagogical and epistemological choices, guided by clear educational goals and an ethic of formative responsibility. Reaffirming the centrality of teaching and pedagogical mediation in hybrid contexts is thus an indispensable condition for innovation to effectively contribute to the construction of a critical, meaningful, and socially committed education.

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Márcio Silveira Nascimento, Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Amazonas (IFAM)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8963-3140>

Ph.D. candidate and Master’s degree in Technology Education from IFAM, specialist in Teaching for Professional and Technological Education from the Federal Institute of Mato Grosso (IFMT), and Bachelor’s degree in Geography from the State University of Amazonas (UEA). Researcher with the research groups of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq): Use of Amazonian Natural Resources in the Teaching and Learning Process (Urnae/IFAM) and Study and Research Group on Public Policies and Training of Education Professionals (Geppfor), affiliated with the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV). Elementary school teacher in the Amazonas State School System.

Author’s contribution: Conceptualization, data curation, writing (first draft), writing (revision and editing), research, methodology, and supervision.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8031168879901616>

Email: marciosn.geo@gmail.com

Aline Santos Mossette, Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Bahia (IFBA)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0271-2522>

Ph.D. candidate in Knowledge Dissemination at IFBA, holds a master’s degree in State, Government, and Public Policy from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), a bachelor’s degree in Law from the Catholic University of Salvador (UCSal), and a bachelor’s degree in History from Faculdade Cearense (FAC). Researcher at the Study and Research Group on Public Policy and Training of Education Professionals (Geppfor/UFV). Professor at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP). Internal control analyst at the Comptroller General’s Office of Camaçari, Bahia. Author’s contribution: Conceptualization, writing (revision and editing), methodology, supervision, validation, and visualization.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/7745974922291165>

Email: alinemossette1@gmail.com

Rita Márcia Andrade Vaz de Mello, Federal University of Viçosa (UFV)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5575-5900>

Ph.D. in Education from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). Full professor at UFV. Postdoctoral fellow at the Université Paris Descartes (Sorbonne). Coordinator of the Study and Research Group on Public Policies and Training of Education Professionals (Geppfor/UFV).

Author’s contribution: Conceptualization, writing (revision and editing), methodology, supervision, validation, and visualization.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6268124799372996>

Email: rmello@ufv.br

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