

Transition into Distance Education: Results of a Scoping Review

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Background

- Number of distance learners in higher education increasing worldwide
 - 2017: 10.6 million; 2024: 31.4 million; forecast 2028: 46.5 million^[1]
- Transition into higher education as transformative process that reshapes actions and self-perceptions^[2]
 - Unfamiliar academic tasks, new social networks, heightened academic competition
- Focus on transition important: the more positive the experience of this period, the more likely students are to remain enrolled and persist
 - Course and degree completion more likely when students meet critical requirements and develop important foundational competencies^[3, 4]
- Distance learners encounter particular challenges in adapting to studies and face elevated risk of not successfully navigating transition
 - Lower retention and success rates in first year compared to on-campus students^[5, 6]
- But little research on transition into distance education, leaving gaps in understanding student experiences, expectations, needs, and challenges

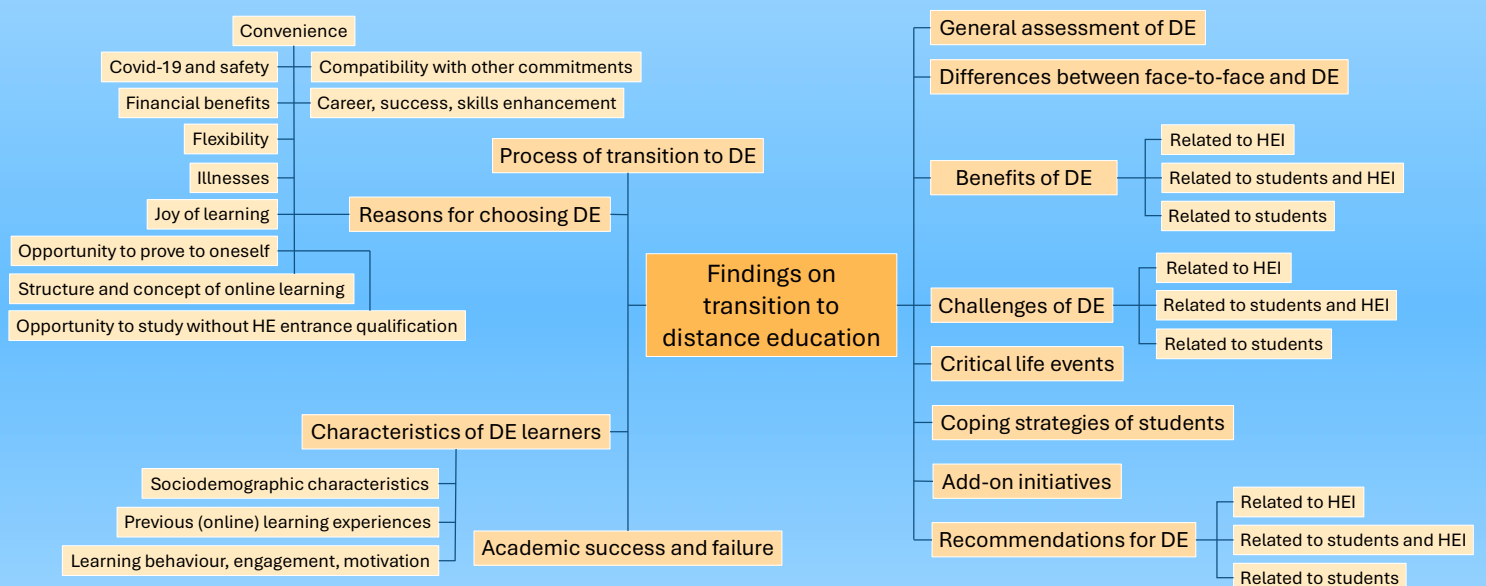
Objectives

- Research question: **“What is known about the transition into distance education in higher education settings?”**
 - Gain theoretical and empirical insights
 - Formulate practical implications to promote successful entry to distance learning

Methodology

- Scoping review following JBI guidelines^[7, 8]
 - Five databases: ERIC, PubMed, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, Scopus
 - 1534 potential sources, of which 60 included after screenings to answer research question
 - Qualitative content analysis following Kuckartz^[9]

Results



Conclusion

- Student transition into distance education is multifaceted and spans wide spectrum of positive and negative experiences
- Certain characteristics can make transition particularly daunting
 - E.g., lack of academic experience, or challenges of balancing family or work commitments with study demands
- Students can thrive if supported by well-designed, needs-oriented learning environment that offers robust support systems
 - Findings can be valuable during decision-making process, serving as useful resource for advisors and students to make informed decision about whether format suits needs

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