

English Language Learning in Brazil

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Introduction

Education and how schools are structured have been advancing over the past few years. International trends, such as globalization, the use of technology in schools, digitalization, and the increased importance of developing social and emotional competencies, have driven a transition movement in the educational model in recent decades. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has also contributed to the acceleration of some of these trends and shed light on the urgent need to modernize traditional education systems. In this context, the mastery of English as a global language capable of connecting people and cultures and a skill that is highly valued in the labor market makes high-quality instruction in the language crucial for education systems.

In the case of Brazil, English instruction has been gaining more importance in the last few years, especially with the inclusion of the subject as compulsory at the secondary (beginning in 6th grade) in all public and private schools. There is, then, a window of opportunity to improve English instruction in Brazilian education and a chance to modernize the way school is structured in the country. Significant reforms are underway in Brazil, such as the curriculum reform proposed by the new Common National Curricular Base (*BNCC*) and the New Upper Secondary School (*Novo Ensino Médio*), which have the potential to be the first steps to ensuring a more effective English instruction for Brazilian students.

The present report aims to present a panorama of English instruction in Brazil by examining the main national policies that regulate and inform English language learning and how they have been implemented. Furthermore, the study aims to exemplify how English instruction is carried from the national to the subnational level, analyzing the states of Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso particularly. The case studies in these two states examine the state policies related to English, with a particular focus on English teachers and their careers, from initial training to work routine and classroom pedagogical practices.

The report is divided into three main sections. The first section is about English policies and programs at the national level and evaluates what efforts have been made to support quality English instruction. The second section is about subnational policies, especially those relating to teachers, in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso. This section draws on the subnational policies and their implementation, as well as the analysis of survey results conducted with teacher training universities and teachers in both states.

Based on an in-depth analysis of these two Brazilian states and the results of the questionnaires conducted with universities and teachers, this report then offers a set of recommendations for improving English teaching in these two states, which could also be applicable in other states or federal entities in Brazil. The goal is to anchor these recommendations in feasible and meaningful propositions, keeping in mind the ultimate goal of improving English instruction in Brazil through a better-quality education led by qualified teachers.

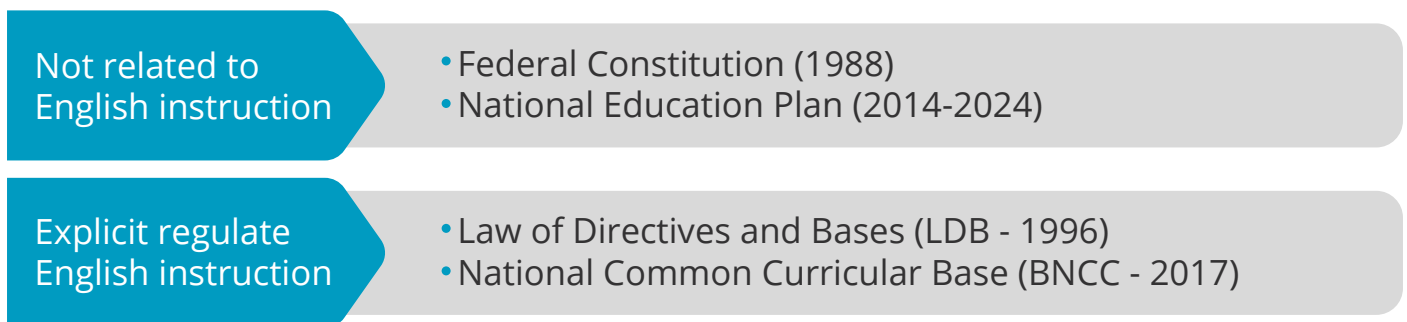
1. English language policies and programs: Efforts to support quality English instruction at the national level

1.1 The Legal foundation for English instruction in Brazil

The education system in Brazil follows a highly decentralized model in which national, state and municipal governments have a great deal of autonomy to set their education policies and programs. As a federal country, subnational education systems follow guidelines and instructions introduced by law and other regulations at the national level. Still, they can adapt, customize and design different approaches for their education programs. National English instruction in Brazil began to be regulated by law in 2017 after the National Common Curricular Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, BNCC) was approved.

To understand the legal framework that anchors English instruction in Brazil, it is necessary to detail the regulations that touch it directly and indirectly. The main national documents that regulate education in Brazil at the national level are the Federal Constitution (1988), the National Education Plan (2014 - 2024), the Law of Directives and Bases (LDB - 1996), and the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* - 2017). However, only the last two explicitly regulate English instruction, as indicated in the figure below.

Main education national legal framework in Brazil



The Federal Constitution (1988) states that every citizen has the right to access education, and primary education should be provided for all from 4 to 17 years old (Art. 205). However, the Constitution does not mention details on the provision of foreign language learning. In addition to the Brazilian Constitution, at the national level, the law of the National Education Plan (PNE) establishes the educational priorities of Brazil between 2014 and 2024. The PNE presents a set of objectives for the country, separated into twenty goals with specific strategies. Even though the PNE deals with cross-cutting issues, such as the improvement of teacher training, it does not establish any specific guidelines for English or any other discipline. Instead, it serves as a general plan that guides the actions of federal entities.

The Law of Directives and Bases regulates more specific elements related to education policies and practices (LDB), initially established in 1996, and modified several times subsequently according to new regulations approved in the country. The objective of the LDB is to define the roles of the federal government, states and municipalities and their responsibilities in

the provision of education in Brazil. Modifications in 2017 mandated English instruction as compulsory for the first time, beginning in 6th grade, the start of lower secondary education in Brazil, to 12th grade, when students complete their upper secondary school education. According to the LDB, the curriculum at all educational levels should use the BNCC as a guiding framework, which can be adapted to accommodate regional characteristics. The law also states that the curricula in upper secondary education must include English instruction as mandatory and other foreign languages optionally.

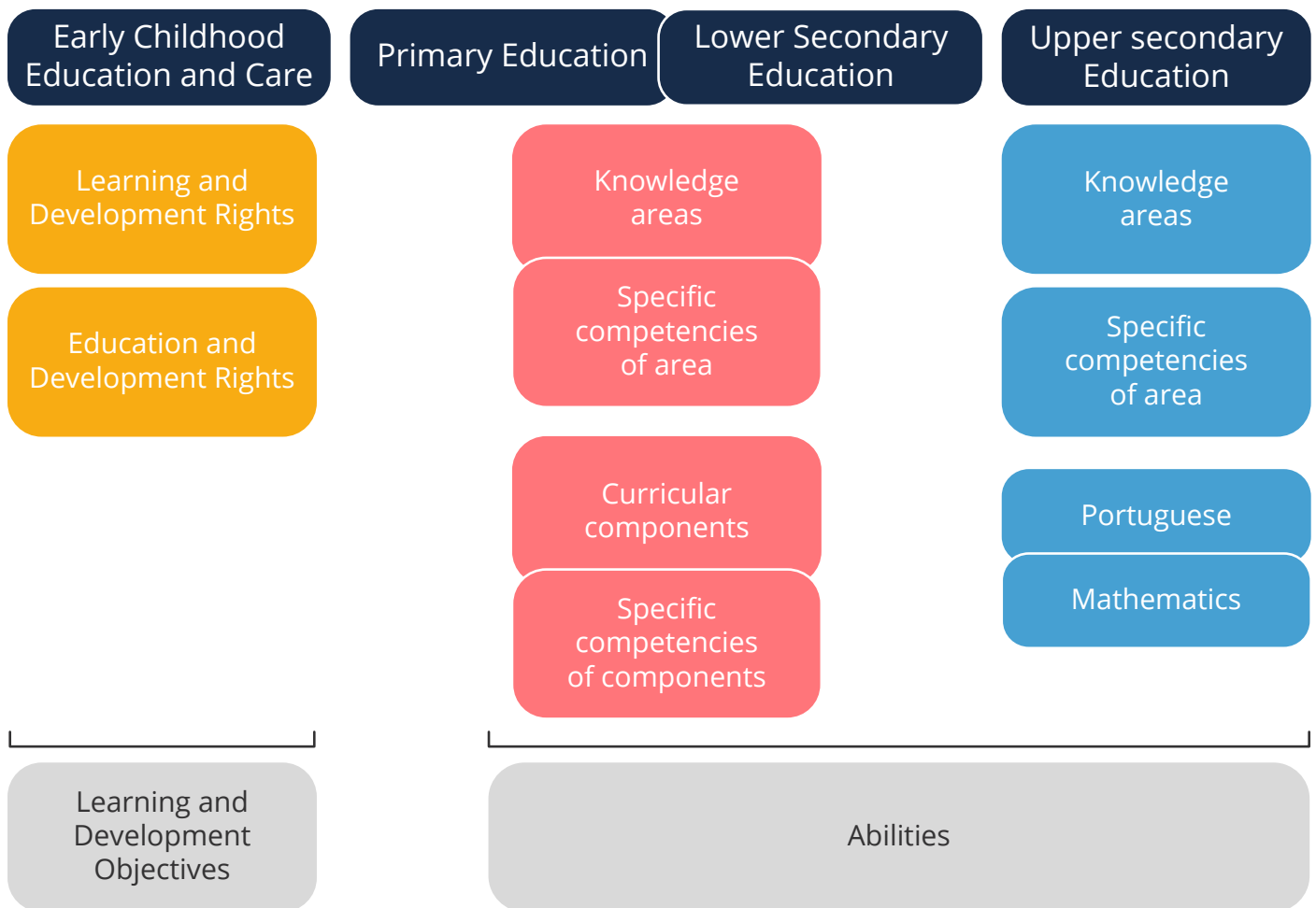
The most recent modifications to the LDB occurred with the approval of the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* - BNCC) in Brazil, initially adopted in 2017 for primary and lower secondary education and in 2018 for upper secondary education. The approval of the BNCC represents one of the most crucial recent education reforms in the country, as it supports equity by establishing universal minimum learning requirements for all students in basic education, regardless of their background or type of school.

The BNCC is the document that guides all the subnational curricula in Brazil and details for the first time the English language requirements from 6th grade through the end of secondary education. The process to approve the curricular reform began in 2013. After years of discussion and several reversions that included a participatory process from the educational community, the National Common Curricular Base was approved in 2017 for early childhood education and care through lower secondary (ages 0-14), and standards were subsequently approved for upper secondary (ages 14-17) in 2018.

The BNCC is the national reference document to which all subnational entities, including states and municipalities, must anchor their curricula and pedagogical programs. The curriculum framework brings together the abilities and competencies that all students should master at each educational level. For early childhood education and care, it details the child's right to learning and development, as well as the experiences that they should gain during their early years. Primary and secondary education details the knowledge areas and the curricular components, including their specific competencies.

Finally, for upper secondary education, the BNCC specifies the knowledge areas and their specific components. At this level, after completing the essential standard part of 1800 hours, established by the BNCC, schools have the flexibility to implement different "training pathways" (*itinerários formativos*), which are flexible courses that students can select based on their interests and professional goals. The only required subjects for all three years of upper secondary education that all students must study, regardless of their training pathway, are Portuguese and mathematics. However, schools have the possibility to build, for example, a complete training pathway that includes English and offers different types of approaches to learning the language. The figure below summarizes the pedagogical components of the BNCC.

Pedagogical organization of BNCC



With the curricular homologation proposed by the reforms of the BNCC, states and municipalities are required to align their teacher training programs (both initial and continuous training) and pedagogical materials and adapt assessments to measure abilities proposed by the BNCC. The Base intends to promote internal coherence between pedagogical policies across the national territory and improve the governance system within Brazil’s decentralised education model.

Given its importance in structuring the curriculum and aligning pedagogical programs in the country, many national and subnational efforts have been undertaken in Brazil since 2017 to guarantee the implementation of the standards in every school. States and municipalities have adapted their curricula and programs, including English instruction. Before the BNCC, there was no clarity at the national level regarding whether or how to teach a foreign language in Brazilian schools. Now, English is mandatory from the 6th grade up, and the BNCC’s approval represents the recognition of English as a requirement for the development of the country and the most important international language.

1.2 Standards and objectives for English proficiency

According to the BNCC, learning English enables students to engage and participate in a globalized and pluralistic world. It allows students to develop a critical mindset and exercise their citizenship rights while expanding the possibilities of interaction and mobility. In this sense, the BNCC outlines three critical implications for the English curriculum. The first is the globalized nature of English, in which the concepts of language, territory and culture are reconsidered since English speakers are no longer found only in countries where English is the official language. The second implication concerns broadening the definition of literacy, bringing the concept of “multi-literacies” to the Brazilian curriculum as students expand their linguistic knowledge, and English becomes a symbolic asset for Brazilians to express themselves in a different language. Finally, the third implication concerns different teaching approaches, which implies embracing the culture and traditions of the language, not only the formal grammatical standards, breaking with aspects related to “correctness”, “accuracy”, and “proficiency”.

Taking these implications as the backbone for the construction of BNCC related to English, the document defines five axes: speaking, reading, writing, listening and interculturality, which are intrinsically linked to learning situations and social practices. To translate these axes into concrete competencies, the BNCC lists the specific abilities that students should develop in English within each pillar. Those specific abilities are further defined and customized by states and municipalities, with detailed study plans for each grade, from 6th onwards, covering lower (6th to 9th grades) and upper (10th to 12th grades) secondary. The document for lower secondary is much more detailed than for upper secondary, in line with the reform of upper secondary in Brazil, which allows more flexibility on how students could develop different competencies and abilities. The figure below is an example of the competencies listed in the 9th grade on the writing dimension.

Example of abilities in writing, according to BNCC - Grade 9th

Details the practices text production in English related to the students' daily life.

Thematic Units	Knowledge objective	Abilities
Writing Strategies	Argument	(EF09LI10) Propose potential arguments to expose and defend a point of view in a written text, reflecting on the proposed theme and researching data, evidence and examples to support the arguments, organizing them in a logical sequence.
	Persuasion	(EF09LI11) Use verbal and non-verbal resources for the construction of persuasive texts, in a manner appropriate to the context of circulation (production and understanding).
Writing Practices	Production of written texts, with mediation of the teachers/ colleagues	(EF09LI12) Produce texts (infographics, online discussion forums, photo stories, campaigns, etc) on issues of local or global collective interest, revealing a critical sense.

For the upper secondary level, the BNCC includes English as a part of the language arts and technology curriculum guidelines, which also include Portuguese, Arts and Physical Education. Unlike the curriculum guidelines that the BNCC offers for lower secondary education, the upper secondary section does not detail specific abilities for each discipline. Instead, it describes seven general competencies and the abilities that students should master to gain those competencies for the language arts and technology section as a whole. The following figure shows an example of specific knowledge competency and descriptive tasks at the upper secondary level.

Specific competence 4 in language area - BNCC for Upper Secondary

Understand languages as a (geo)political, historical, cultural, social phenomenon, variable, heterogeneous and sensitive to the contexts of use, recognizing their varieties and experiencing them as forms of expression of identity, personal and collective, as well as acting against any kind of prejudice.

Abilities

(EM13LGG401) Critically analyze texts in order to understand and characterize the (geo)political, historical, social, cultural, variable, heterogeneous and sensitive to the contexts of use.

(EM13LGG402) Employ, in social interactions, the variety and style of language appropriate to the communicative situation, the interlocutor(s) and the genre of discourse respecting the language use by the interlocutor(s) and without linguistic prejudice.

(EM13LGG403) Make use of English as a language of global communication, taking into account the multiplicity and variety of uses, users and functions of the language in the contemporary world.

At the upper secondary level, it is important to consider that the BNCC is part of a broader reform that the Brazilian government has been undertaking since 2017. The New Upper Secondary reform (*Novo Ensino Médio*) aims to enhance education quality and student engagement. The reform emphasises labor market demands, linking education to the job market. As part of the reform, Brazil developed the BNCC for upper secondary with this focus in mind, which is also why it was approved one year later than the rest of the document in 2018. The main pillars of the reform are:

1. Curricular flexibility: A The BNCC is at the heart of the reform, and it aims to modernize the curriculum, which, with 13 different subject areas, was overloaded and heavily exam-focused. The new BNCC proposes flexible training pathways (*itinerários formativos*), reducing the mandatory subject areas only for Portuguese and mathematics to be taught during the three years of upper secondary education. The other disciplines, such as English, are mandatory for the standard part of the curriculum (a course load of 1,800 hours in total) and are not necessarily included in the flexible pathways (a course load of 1,200 hours total). In this sense, schools are free to include or not English in their offered pathways. In practical terms, English could be reduced to the common part of the BNCC or could have a great emphasis on certain schools. It will depend on their choice of offer regarding the flexible pathway.

It is important to mention that schools need to build their pathways based on five areas

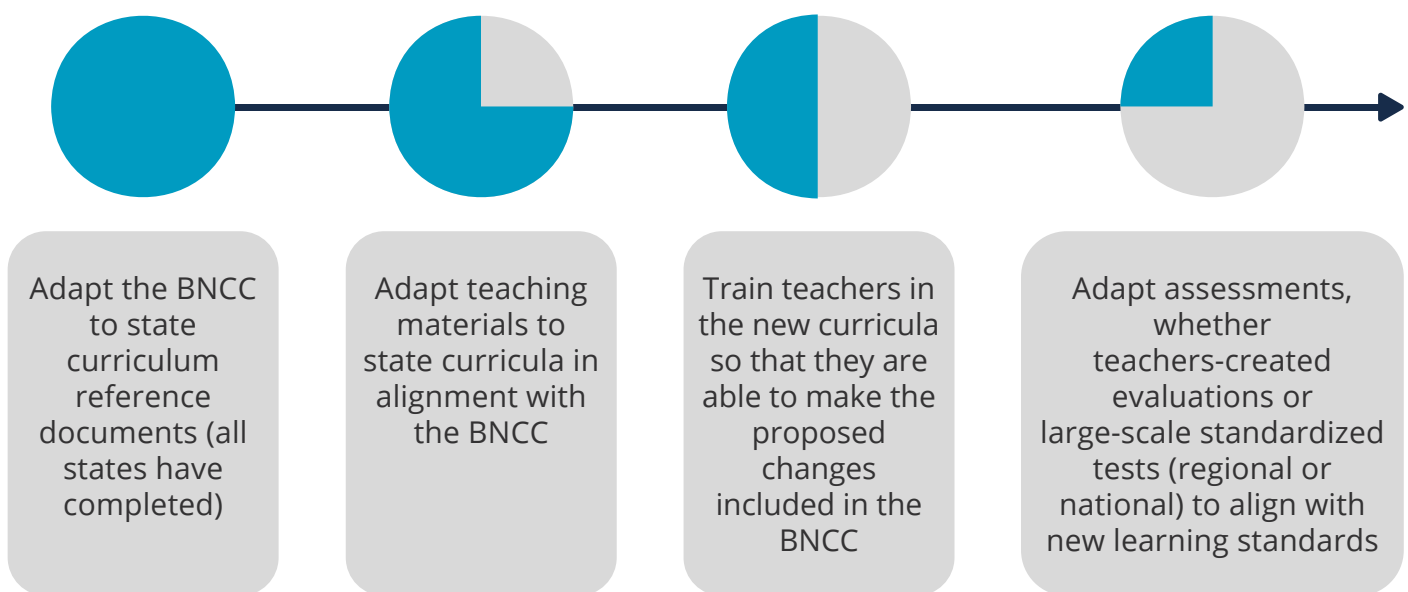
of knowledge: (1) languages and their technologies, (2) mathematics and its technologies, (3) natural sciences and their technologies, (4) applied human and social sciences, and (5) vocational education and training (VET). Therefore, states and municipalities are free to develop their pathways, either following the five classic areas of knowledge or combining them to create a new, hybrid pathway, which can include English as one of the core subjects. According to the availability of these pathways students may choose according to their preference.

2. Full-time schooling: Through the new upper secondary model, Brazil aims to universalize full-time schooling, moving from 800 hours per year in 2018 to at least 1,000 hours in 2022 and 1,400 hours in the coming years¹.

3. Cross-cutting approach: The new upper secondary model seeks to offer a holistic education for students, focused not only on content but also on the development of soft skills. For that, schools must offer curricular units focused on developing students’ “life projects” and cross-cutting skills to support employment, along with career counselling. In addition, all schools should offer at least one VET pathway.

Since 2018, subnational actors have been preparing to implement the new upper secondary model. States have led efforts through various programs and initiatives, both in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and also on their own. Among the necessary adaptations to fully implement this new school model, states must:

Steps to implement the New Upper Secondary model regarding the BNCC



States have been the protagonists of this reform and have led the necessary activities over the past several years to ensure the implementation of the BNCC within classrooms. Core curricula adaptations were concluded for all states in July 2022, and many states have started constructing the “training pathways” for implementation in 2022/23. States have been gradually increasing the length of the school day by adding new electives and the “life projects”

¹The specific timeline for reaching 1,400 hours varies state-by-state.

component of the BNCC to their curricula to begin the implementation of a cross-cutting academic approach.

The implementation has not been without challenges, mainly related to the Covid-19 pandemic, during which Brazilian schools were closed for almost two years, and remote learning was adopted throughout the country. This slowed down the adaptation process, in addition to introducing several logistical and pedagogical complications. Among other issues, there was limited access to equipment and connectivity in many low-resourced schools, teacher reassignments and contract adjustments, given that many educators only have short-term contracts and subject area designations are determined at the national level, without considering the particular needs of each state.

Even in a challenging context, it is clear that Brazil has made significant progress by approving a new and flexible curriculum for upper secondary schools and putting English mandatory in the standard part of the curriculum. However, major efforts are still required to ensure the smooth implementation of this reform, which the pandemic and the difficulties in coordination across the national and subnational levels have already hindered.

1.3 Measuring English proficiency in Brazil

Brazil has had a national assessment system in place since the 1990s, which was expanded and improved to create the current evaluation framework, called the Basic Education Evaluation System (Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica - SAEB). SAEB is a system of large-scale evaluations conducted every two years to measure the learning levels of Brazilian students in the 2nd, 5th, 9th and 12th grades. Early childhood education outcomes are also measured, but instead of focusing on learning outcomes, the evaluation looks at resource distribution, infrastructure and management.

The goal of the evaluation system is to provide a diagnosis of Brazilian basic education learning outcomes and identify factors that may impact students' learning performance. The results of the evaluations, together with other indicators such as student passing and dropout rates, are used to calculate the Basic Education Development Index (Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica - IDEB). Currently, SAEB evaluates mathematics, Portuguese, and human and natural sciences but does not evaluate English.

The Brazilian National Institute of Educational Studies and Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira - Inep) is gradually reviewing the evaluation framework for the SAEB tests in accordance with the BNCC. It has already adapted the 9th-grade tests for natural sciences and humanities and the 2nd-grade tests for Portuguese and mathematics. The remaining tests have not been updated yet, and the principal challenge is the adaptation of tests for upper secondary grades.

The last SAEB tests were administered in 2021. A series of changes are planned through 2026, which comprise: i) expanding coverage from only specific grades to all students from 2nd grade and above, ii) increasing frequency so that it is given annually, iii) broadening scope to include all private schools and all subjects and iv) changing the format to a digital, adaptive-response test that will be personalized for each student. However, despite the Ministry of

Education's ambitious plans, few actions have been taken. Although Inep has expressed its intention to expand the curricular content and coverage of the exam by 2026, there is no specific timeline or estimation for when (or if) English will be included.

Brazil's other large-scale national exam is the National Upper Secondary Exam (Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio - Enem), which evaluates the entire educational trajectory of students and is used by most universities as an admissions exam. Enem is administered yearly to all students completing upper secondary school and anyone else who has already completed basic education and wants to apply to a Brazilian university. Many Portuguese universities also accept it as a qualifying admissions exam. Enem is given over two days. Participants take tests in four knowledge areas: language arts and their technologies; humanities and their technologies; natural sciences and their technologies; and mathematics and their technologies, totalling 180 multiple-choice questions distributed equally across each section.

Participants also write an essay, which requires the development and argument of a thesis in response to a particular problem. For the language arts and their technologies section, Enem covers questions about the Portuguese language, literature, physical education, arts and a foreign language. Participants can choose between English or Spanish as a foreign language, and the questions are primarily focused on reading comprehension. The text samples in English usually include several formats, such as a song, a news article, a book excerpt, a comic strip, etc.² The following figure shows an example of an English question on the Enem 2021.

Exemple of ENEM English question 2021

We are now a nation obsessed with the cult of celebrity. Celebrities have replaced the classic notion of the hero. But instead of being respected for talent, courage or intelligence, it is money, style and image the deciding factors in what commands respect. Image is everything. Their image is painstakingly constructed by a multitude of different image consultants to carve out the most profitable celebrity they can. Then society is right behind them, believing in everything that celebrity believes in. Companies know that they now have some kind of connection with the celebrity and that some of their perceived happiness will now be passed onto the consumer. So to look at it one way, the cult of celebrity is really nothing more than a sophisticated marketing scheme. Celebrities though cannot be blamed for all negative aspects of society. In reality society is to blame. We are the people who seemed to have lost the ability to think for ourselves. I suppose it's easier to be told what to think, rather than challenging what we are told. The reason we are swamped by celebrity is because there is a demand for it.

The text, which addresses issues concerning the cult of celebrity, aims to

- A) highlighting the merits of celebrities.
- B) criticize the consumerism of celebrities.
- C) highlight the fans' need for reflection.
- D) blame the celebrities for the fans' obsession.
- E) value the personal marketing of celebrities.

²The ENEM English questions are not aligned to a specific competency level in the CEFR. Instead, the test evaluates foreign language competencies focused on understanding and interpreting texts and using those skills to expand access to knowledge and information.

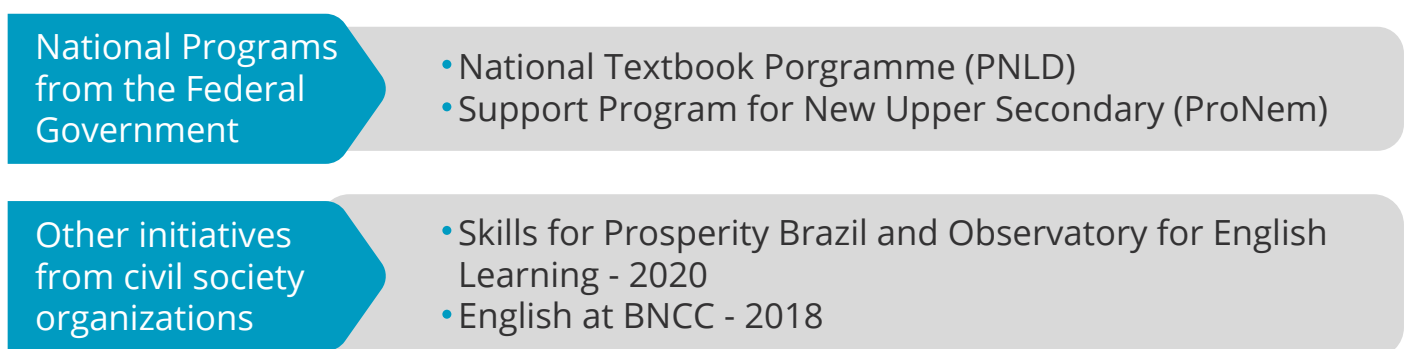
It is important to note that even though Brazil has stated that English instruction should be a priority, the discipline has never been included in national assessments (except for the optional English section in the Enem). Even if there are plans to include it in SAEB, there is no clear timeline for this to occur. At the sub-national level, large-scale state and municipal assessments follow the same structure: they only evaluate Portuguese and mathematics. In fact, 25 out of the 27 states of Brazil have evaluations to assess the student’s performance in these disciplines³. None of them evaluates English specifically. This means that the assessment of Brazilian students’ English proficiency is exclusively done at the school level through assessments often prepared and corrected by teachers.

There is no guidance or instructions to create school-level assessments at the national level. This means that teachers have total autonomy to prepare their tests, relying only on the instructions and guidance of school directors or supervisors. In this context, and considering the decentralized, federal nature of Brazil’s education system, it is hard to ensure a standardized quality level of English assessments in the country. This reinforces the urgency to develop, adapt, update and align evaluations following the competencies and skills expected for the different stages of basic education and include new areas of knowledge, such as English. This change opens up the possibility of modernizing the assessment system in Brazil and aligning it to international best practices and benchmarks (OECD, 2021).

1.4 National policies for English instruction in Brazil

Beyond the legal framework and reforms that support English instruction and evaluation in Brazil, some national policies and programs are worth mentioning. At the federal level, there is no specific policy for English instruction in Brazil, but broader programs that indirectly affect English teachers and the instructional materials used for teaching English. Thus, the absence of a specific program for teaching English creates a gap that is filled by non-governmental and civil society organizations, such as the British Council or other institutions that operate at the national level. The federal and non-governmental programs listed in the following figure all touch on English instruction in some form or another.

National policies related to English instruction



³The only states that do not have their own evaluations are Roraima and Santa Catarina.

The largest and most established program for developing and distributing instructional materials in Brazil is the National Textbook Program (*Programa Nacional do Livro Didático, PNLD*), which since 2011 has included English materials in its scope. The PNLD is regulated by the Ministry of Education and is responsible for supplying and distributing instructional materials nationally. It offers free access to textbooks to all public state- and municipal-run schools in the country. To participate, schools must select and officially request the books they want from a list of pre-approved titles. Currently, Brazil is in the process of adapting this program, but as the program works in alternating cycles, buying materials every four years for a different segment of basic education (i.e., PNLD 2022 is for early childhood, PNLD 2023 is for primary education, PNLD 2024 is for secondary education and PNLD 2025 is for upper secondary education), not all the materials have been adapted or updated to the BNCC yet.

As with the other disciplines, the list of English language textbooks is pre-selected by the Ministry of Education. Several publishers are selected for inclusion after a competitive bidding process. In this sense, the materials provided by the Ministry of Education are diverse since there are multiple pre-approved textbooks to choose from. Given that schools make their selections directly from the Ministry through the PNLD, there are often cases where schools in the same state may adopt different textbooks for teaching English to the same grade. One of the criticisms of the centralized distribution model for instructional materials in Brazil is the resulting incongruity between state and municipal autonomy in developing their education policies and adapting national curricula to local contexts when instructional materials are not similarly contextualized. This problem is particularly striking in upper secondary education since, with the curriculum reform, it has a more flexible design. There is a multiplicity of materials that could be adopted but which are not necessarily considered in the PNLD.

The program for the implementation of the new upper secondary (*Programa de Apoio ao Novo Ensino Médio - ProNem*), while not directly related to English instruction, offers technical and financial assistance to states for planning and piloting curriculum implementation and professional development for teachers and school leaders. Following guidance from the Ministry of Education, states needed to create their implementation plans to receive federal resources to support the new upper secondary curriculum. From 2019 on, states also identified and implemented the model in pilot schools and, since 2020, adapted their teacher training courses. The pandemic has hindered those activities, and the program is now delayed.

Although ProNem does not directly foster the improvement of English instruction in Brazil, it indirectly contributes to it by providing resources for teacher training and other activities that affect English teachers. Given this context, in which there is no national English policy in Brazil, there remains limited public sector support for English teachers and instruction. In this vacuum, civil society organizations play an essential role in trying to organize and help states and municipalities to implement the guidelines outlined in the BNCC and state or municipal English curriculums.

Two initiatives stand out nationally, *English in the BNCC* (2018), led by the British Council, and the Reference Center for Integrated English (*Centro de Referências em Educação Integral*) and Skills for Prosperity Program, both coordinated through the Observatory for English Learning (2020), led by the UK Government and the British Council in partnership with Brazilian civil society organizations.

The English in the BNCC initiative was developed to support technical teams and teachers in implementing the BNCC-aligned English curriculum. Consisting of seven articles and six videos, the material was created over two workshops, which brought together about 20 curriculum specialists from several Brazilian states. The platform aims to simplify the BNCC for English teachers by explaining key concepts used in the document and presenting a panorama of the diverse realities of English instruction in the country.

Inside the platform, the online book “Pathways for English in the BNCC” invites teachers to reflect and answer questions such as “How can English instruction contribute to the development of the ten main competencies listed in the BNCC?”. It also encourages school leaders and teachers to reflect and prepare to improve English instruction in schools while giving them guidance and tips to plan classes and use instructional materials. It also clarifies the role of supervisors and school leaders in English learning.

Complementing this initiative, there are the Skills for Prosperity Program in Brazil, a British government cooperation fund coordinated through the Observatory for English Learning. This online platform brings together content and data to contribute to English instruction. Using the platform, English teachers can participate in debates, share ideas and experiences, and disseminate good practices across the country.

The objective of the Observatory is also to support evidence-based public policy and decision-making by fostering the use of data and compiling and publishing the most important national statistics on English instruction. The Observatory is also developing a nationwide English proficiency course to allow teachers’ self-development and autonomy while improving their technical and pedagogical skills. Finally, the platform also shares pedagogical and reference materials that offer English teachers guidance on lesson activities and other learning resources to use in the classroom.

Initiatives from non-governmental players are important to boost English instruction in Brazil. The country still has no national English plan or policy for State Departments or schools regarding the improvement of teachers’ and students’ English proficiency. Initiatives at the federal level and incentives to develop policies at the state and municipal levels, for that are particularly important considering the modernization of the labor market and a new model of school, more oriented towards holistic development of citizens. Last but not least, it is important to recognize that Brazil has made significant steps, making English mandatory as stated in the BNCC. Unfortunately, these efforts are insufficient, considering that the adaptation of the national curriculum guidelines is not concluded yet and that there is no national English exam or standards to state students’ proficiency.

2. Bringing English into the classroom: State-led efforts to improve the quality of English in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso

This part of the report examines how English instruction is implemented in two Brazilian states, Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso. These states have been selected to represent the diversity of Brazil's education system because of their recent efforts to develop innovative practices in English instruction.

Minas Gerais is the fourth most extensive state of the Brazilian federation and the second most populated state, with more than 21 million inhabitants, equivalent to 10% of the total population⁴. Minas Gerais is the third largest economy in the country, with a GDP of 682 BLR billion in 2019⁵. However, it is a very diverse state, with very different socio-economic levels among its 853 municipalities. It ranked in the 9th place on the Human Development Index (HDI) among all states (with an index of 0.73)⁶. Minas Gerais' size and importance are also translated into education. The state counts 11.995 schools, more than 2.7 million students and 176 thousand teachers, of which 79 thousand are English teachers⁷.

Mato Grosso is the third biggest state in Brazil, but this is not translated into its population density. The state is among the least populated, the 21st out of 27, with 2,8 million inhabitants distributed into 141 municipalities⁸. Economically, Mato Grosso is the 13th economy among Brazilian states, with a GDP of 142 BLR billion in 2019⁹. It is also a very diverse state, in 11th position regarding its Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.72¹⁰. Mato Grosso's education system is much smaller than Minas Gerais, with 2.257 schools, 576 thousand students and 35,818 teachers, of which 19,267 are English teachers¹¹.

Given the context of the states, the first part of this session will provide a brief overview of the education system in each state; the second will analyze the central policies and programs to improve English instruction. Finally, the third part offers an analysis of the English teaching force and the initial training courses through the results of a survey administered to teachers and universities in both states (see methodological note for complete information on the research and survey process).

2.1. Overview of the education systems in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso

Brazil is a federal system, and given its decentralized structure, subnational actors have a great deal of power and autonomy to decide their education policies. According to the legal framework (already mentioned before), education provision is the responsibility of states and municipalities. At the same time, the federal government has the responsibility to coordinate the provision and quality of education. The laws do not establish a rigid model for subnational entities. Still, they describe that preferably early childhood, preschool and primary education

⁴Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Cidades e Estados 2022.

⁵Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Produto Interno Bruto - PIB.

⁶Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Cidades e Estados 2022.

⁷QEdu, based on Brazilian Basic Education Census in 2021.

⁸Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Cidades e Estados 2022.

⁹Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Produto Interno Bruto - PIB.

¹⁰Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Cidades e Estados 2022.

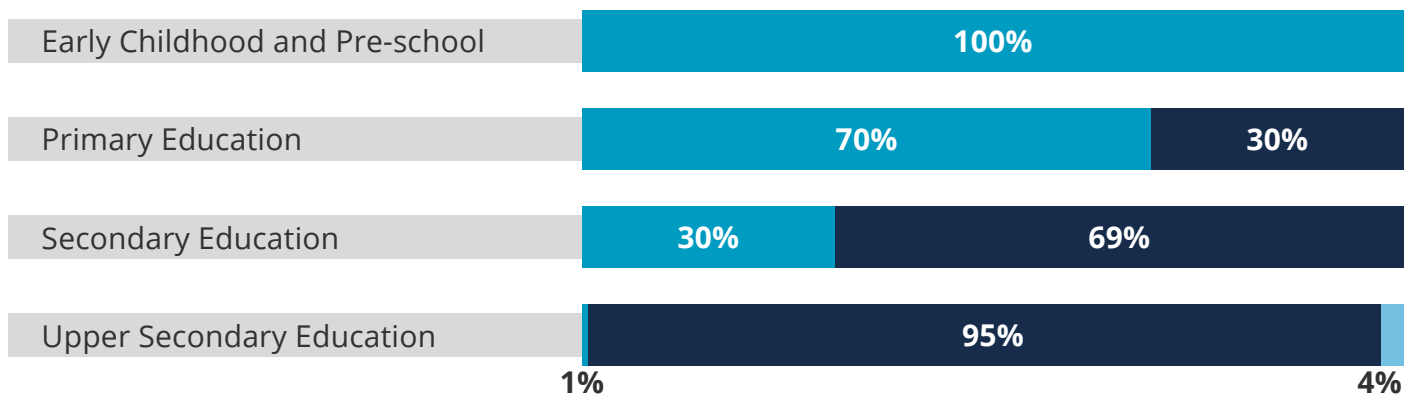
¹¹QEdu, based on Brazilian Basic Education Census in 2021.

should be the responsibility of municipalities, while secondary and upper secondary education should ideally be the responsibility of states.

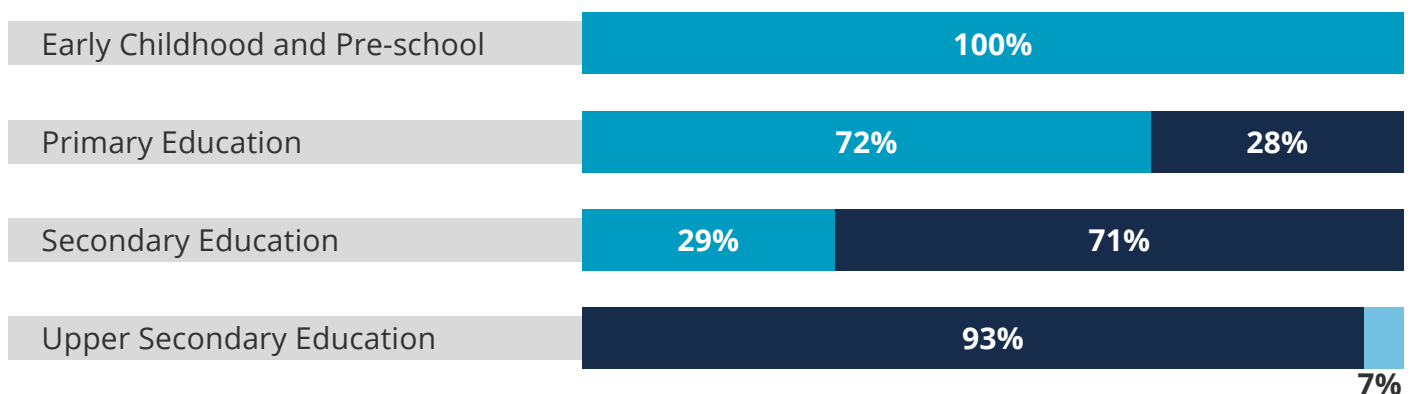
Despite recent efforts to clarify the roles and responsibilities of municipal, state and federal actors, there is still a grey area regarding the division of education levels across different subnational actors¹². Therefore, each state has the prerogative to decide if it will offer only lower and upper secondary education (in other words, leaving all preprimary and primary education to municipalities) or if it will offer other education levels¹³. In Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, both states concentrate their education provision on lower and upper secondary levels. However, one-third of state-run schools offer primary education, even if this level is mainly the responsibility of municipalities. The following figure shows the distribution of education levels in both states based on managing entities.

Distribution of enrollment rates in the public schools

MINAS GERAIS



MATO GROSSO



■ Municipalities
 ■ States
 ■ Federal Government

¹²In March 2022, Brazil's legislature approved a draft law on the National Education System (*Sistema Nacional de Educação - SNE*), that seeks to clarify the responsibilities of subnational entities in the education systems.

¹³Even when states do manage some schools outside of the secondary level, they do not offer universal coverage, and municipalities are still responsible for some preprimary and primary coverage.

Students in state schools across all education levels represent less than half of the total enrollment population. In Minas Gerais, there are 1.9 million students matriculated in state-run schools, equivalent to 42.8% of all students. In Mato Grosso, there are 361.5 thousand students enrolled in state schools or 42.5% of total student enrollment. Teachers working in state schools are also representative considering all teachers that work in all educational institutions from the states. In Minas Gerais, there are 86.1 thousand teachers (equivalent to 39.1% of the total), while in Mato Grosso, there are 18.3 thousand (equivalent to 46.6%)¹⁴ (see table below). Often teachers work in more than one school, such as in municipal and state schools at the same time or in private and state schools.

Teacher and student participation in state-run schools

	MATO GROSSO		MINAS GERAIS	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Students	361,500	42,5%	1,900	42,8%
Teachers	18,300	46,6%	86,100	39,1%
Schools	767	28,4%	3,600	22,5%

Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso are states with high levels of socioeconomic inequality. Minas Gerais has a larger population than Mato Grosso and, consequently, more municipalities, regional education directorates and schools, which increases the complexity of managing the education system. However, Mato Grosso has a more racially diverse population, including several indigenous ethnic groups living in highly remote and in rural locations and which have differentiated schools, such as the so-called rural schools (*escolas do campo*).

Despite these unique complexities, both states have made significant efforts to expand educational coverage by enrolling and keeping students in school, as well as working to improve the quality of education. This is reflected in the improvement of indicators such as school attendance, enrollment and completion rates, and the learning results measured at the national level. In the Basic Education Development Index (*Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica - IDEB*)¹⁵, which synthesizes the results of the large-scale national assessment, SAEB, both states have improved their results in lower and upper secondary education in recent years. Unfortunately, the IDEB only evaluates student achievement in Portuguese and Math but does not include information on other subjects, such as English.

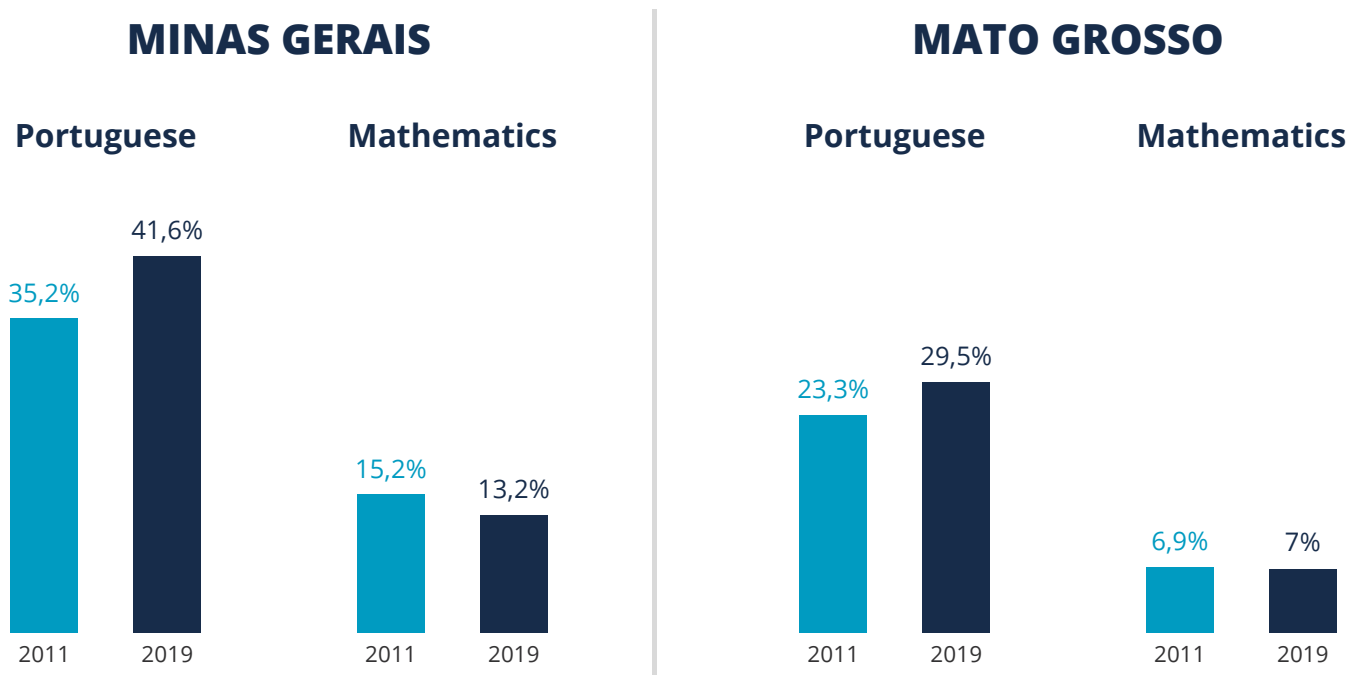
Even though learning outcomes have improved, and both states have increased their performance on IDEB, when student performance is measured against expected learning levels, there is still a big gap, with the most considerable discrepancies in upper secondary education.

¹⁴Source: Todos Pela Educação - based on Censo Escolar da Educação Básica, 2021 (Inep).

¹⁵The IDEB is calculated by multiplying the pass rate (expressed as a percentage) on the SAEB by the average score on the SAEB (standardized on a scale of 1-10). For example, if 90% of students in a state passed the SAEB, and their average score (on a scale of 1-10) was 7, the IDEB would be calculated as $0.9 \times 7 = 6.3$.

As stated in the previous sessions, SAEB does not yet evaluate English, but Portuguese and Math performance results illustrate the urgent need to invest in public policies to improve student’s learning outcomes. The following figure shows the percentage of upper-secondary students who demonstrated grade-appropriate learning levels in SAEB tests for Portuguese and Mathematics, comparing 2011 and 2019. In both subject areas, less than half of students reach the performance benchmark, and in Mathematics, the pass rates are particularly concerning. Furthermore, in both states, student scores in the Mathematics section of the SAEB have remained stagnant over the past decade, a critical challenge for both states.

% of students with appropriate learning levels in upper secondary education



Given this reality, there is still much work required to improve learning results and boost equity in both systems. Implementing the BNCC is one of the most important measures to address these gaps, in which English instruction has gained more importance. At the sub-national level, states have made efforts to develop policies related to the implementation of BNCC and to improve English instruction. The following section will detail those policies and how they have been implemented.

2.2 Main policies and programs in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso focused on English instruction.

As previously stated, the BNCC is the most important document for guiding state-level efforts to provide English instruction and improve learning outcomes and Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso have been working to successfully adapt and adopt the new curricular guidelines to the states’ context. Although this transition is happening in all states of the Brazilian federation and across all grade levels and subject areas, important policies developed by the state are related to English instruction.

Although implementing those policies faces difficulties, there are already some indications that English is gaining more attention from the state-level perspective. The coming months and years will be an important test of the extent to which state-level authorities, in coordination with the Federal Ministry of Education and municipal leaders, can effectively implement these ambitious changes. To understand how Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso have been working to promote English instruction, in the first place, it is necessary to examine the regulations about that. As is the national level, both states do not yet have a specific law that regulates English instruction. Instead, English policy in the states is mainly limited to adapting to national guidelines and reforms, such as the BNCC and the new model for upper secondary schools.

Adapting BNCC to state curriculum

In all Brazilian states, the adaptation of the new curricula based on the BNCC has followed the same overall steps: (1) A commission of curricula experts was formed to adapt the BNCC at the state level; (2) the adapted curriculum document was then submitted to a public consultation process where the education community can share comments and feedback; (3) finally, the updated document was approved by the state education council.

In Minas Gerais, the state curriculum for early childhood, preschool, and primary and lower secondary education was approved in 2020. As per the BNCC, the regional curriculum applies to all public schools (municipal and state ones) and private schools. The state education council approved the Minas Gerais' Reference Curriculum (*Currículo Referência de Minas Gerais*), which includes an introduction to the rights of education, the concepts used to develop the curriculum, as well as a separate section on early childhood education and pre-school. Primary and secondary education is divided into knowledge areas, including languages, mathematics, natural sciences, humanities and religious education.

English abilities and competencies are set out in the 6th to 9th-grade languages section, as required in the BNCC. The abilities that students are expected to acquire are aligned with the BNCC. For English, they are organized into the following categories: speaking, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge and the intercultural dimension. Along with the areas, the document details thematic units, key concepts and learning standards (the specific knowledge and skills students should master by the end of a particular unit). The following figure shows an example of the learning standards that 6th-grade students are expected to master within the intercultural area over a school year.

Abilities in English - Minas Gerais Reference Curriculum - Grade 6th

Anchor Standard	Thematic Units	Key concept	Abilities
Intercultural Dimension	English in the World	Countries that have English as mother and/or official language	(EF06LI24) Investigate the range of English language in the world: as a mother and/or official language (first or second language).
	English language in daily life society/ community	Presence of English in everyday life	(EF06LI25) Identify the presence of the English language in Brazilian society/ community (universal words, expressions, media and spheres of circulation and consumption) and their meaning.
			(EF06LI26) Evaluate and problematize cultural elements/products from English-speaking countries by the Brazilian society/community.

As in Minas Gerais, the state of Mato Grosso also adapted the BNCC guidelines to create an aligned regional curriculum. In Mato Grosso, the process also passed through a commission of experts who worked on the adaptations of competencies and abilities, the public consultation to allow feedback from the education community and then the approval of the state council of education in 2018. The Curriculum Reference Document for Mato Grosso (*Documento de Referência Curricular para Mato Grosso*) applies to early childhood, preschool, primary and secondary education.

During the development of the Reference Curriculum, the state of Mato Grosso produced the “Implementation Process of the BNCC in Mato Grosso” (*Processo de Implementação da Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC nas Redes de Ensino em Mato Grosso*), detailing the implementation process and the concepts introduced by the BNCC and, afterwards, hosted an event in March of 2019, where participants had the opportunity to discuss the necessary changes in the regional curriculum and the adaptation of evaluations. After months of discussion and the approval of the Reference Curriculum, Mato Grosso established a specific online platform called “BNCC in Mato Grosso” (*BNCC em Mato Grosso*) to host all the related documents and give guidance to schools. The website is divided into two sections; the first focuses on early childhood to secondary education, and the second is dedicated exclusively to upper secondary education.

For secondary education, when English instruction is first included in the curriculum, the reference document is divided into the four core knowledge areas: languages, mathematics, natural sciences, and humanities. In Mato Grosso, however, in addition to English, Spanish is also included as a foreign language in the state curriculum.

Even though the curriculum document includes a common section on foreign languages, the specific knowledge and abilities students are expected to learn in English and Spanish are treated separately. They are then described in tables for each grade, from the 6th to the 9th, and divided by thematic units, abilities and key concepts. The structure is the same for all grades, and the following figure shows some examples of the abilities expected from students in 7th grade.

Example of abilities in English - Mato Grosso Reference Curriculum - Grade 7th

Thematic Units	Abilities	Key concept
Discursive Interaction	(EF07LI01) Interact in oral exchanges carry out in classroom activities, in a respectful and collaborative manner, exchanging ideas and engaging in games and other activities.	Functions and uses of the English: coexistence and collaboration in the classroom.
Grammar	(EF07LI18) Use the simple past and the past continuous to produce oral and written texts, showing sequence and causality relations.	Simple past and past continuous (affirmative, negative and interrogative forms)
	(EF07LI19) Discriminate subject from object using related pronouns.	Right and oblique pronouns
	(EF07LI20.1MT) Use the modal verb can to describe abilities (present and past) of people in different parts of the world.	Modal verb “can” (present and past tense).

As in Minas Gerais, the new, BNCC-aligned curriculum in Mato Grosso also details some methodological ideas for foreign language teachers, such as the use of technologies and content that students are familiar with, for example, songs in English or brands that are well-known to explore further subjects. Lastly, it details the importance of frequent evaluations to help teachers assess students’ learning levels using methods such as self-assessment or peer correction. In addition to the Reference Curriculum, as part of the larger curricular transformation, the state of Mato Grosso also provided teachers with “pedagogical booklets” (*cadernos pedagógicos*), which include comments and suggestions of activities to introduce new content and develop students’ abilities. The following figure is an example of pedagogical suggestions offered in the booklets focused on foreign languages, specifically English and Spanish.

Example of pedagogical suggestions in English for Grade 6th- Pedagogical booklet for foreign languages - secondary school Mato Grosso

Key concept

To Be verb; This-These/ That-Those; Adjectives, Like and dislike; sports. Professions.

Suggestion of activities

Presentation: show a video of a family, for example from a TV series; then present the vocabulary “Family members”. **Practice:** Explore information related to the video through questions and answers such as “Who is...?”. Introduce the “To Be Verb”. Use a “Match activity”, relating pictures of the family members with the relevant vocabulary. Work in a playful way through memory games. The conjugation of the verb to be will be practiced by filling out a “worksheet” relating the verb with vocabulary.

Carry out a “Work in Pairs” activity, with questions about names, favorite sports, and profession. Students must orally interview their pair and write down the answers. **Production:** Produce a “Family Tree”, combining with an oral production. Incentivize students to present their families, explaining preferences and profession. At the end, the students will have to do a digital literacy activity: produce a video presenting their family. You will see your name, age, country of origin and nationality. The presentation of the cultural aspects can be done by using the Portuguese language.

Pedagogical comment

Providing varied activities allows the various intelligences in learners to be triggered. The use of games in LEM allows the manifestation of the imaginary, through symbolic objects intentionally arranged in organized spaces that, with the partnership of the teacher, serve as a mechanism for carrying out educational activities. Games suggested: Hot Potato, Pass the Banana, Board Game, Riddle, Tic-Tac-Toe.

Although English instruction is only included as a mandatory subject area in secondary education (beginning in 6th grade), in 2022, Mato Grosso made an important decision to include English instruction for primary students, reaching approximately 70,000 students enrolled in state primary schools. The requirement is mandatory for all state-run primary schools, except for indigenous schools, which can choose whether to follow this guideline¹⁶. Thus, the state is incentivizing efforts that allow students to have contact early with the language by promoting English lessons once a week in primary schools. In contrast, in lower secondary schools, English lessons happen twice a week.

¹⁶Indigenous schools are able to choose, because they do not have Portuguese as the mother language, which is already considered as a foreign language for them.

Adapting to the New model of Upper Secondary School

In Minas Gerais, an additional curricular document was developed for upper secondary education, which follows the guidelines of the Upper Secondary Reform. The structure of the Minas Gerais' Reference Curriculum for Upper Secondary School (*Currículo Referência de Minas Gerais - Ensino Médio*), which was only recently approved in 2021, is different from the curriculum used in other education levels. It details the specific competencies students should acquire in upper secondary education, divided between the core education subject areas (including Portuguese, English, Physical Education and Arts) and the elective training pathways that students choose, including vocational training courses. It is adapted to be relevant for non-traditional education contexts, such as rural and/or indigenous schools and adult education (known as "education of youth and adults" or EJA). Finally, it provides guidance on teacher training to implement the new curriculum and evaluation methods and measure student performance.

Specifically for English, it states that the areas (speaking, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge and the intercultural dimension) should no longer be taught separately but integrated. The document also gives some instructions on the pedagogical approach English teachers should take, such as incorporating multimedia content and technology within their lessons, for example, by having students search for English content on the internet. The following figure is an example of a particular competence (the second of seven competencies included in the curriculum for languages, which includes Portuguese and English)¹⁷.

Ability in English - Minas Gerais Reference Curriculum for Upper Secondary - Common Part

Competence 2: Understand the identity processes, conflicts and power relations that permeate the social practices of language, respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas and positions, and act socially based on principles and values of democracy, equality, and human rights, exercising self-knowledge, empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation, and fighting against any type of prejudice.

Abilities	Thematic Unit	Key concept
(EM13LGG201) Use of various languages (artistic, corporal and verbal) in different contexts, valuing them as social, cultural and historical phenomena, sensitive to the contexts of use.	Conditions of productions, dissemination and reception of discourses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English and Portuguese: • Analysis of written and oral texts. • Study of language and its modifications throughout history. • Varieties of language. • Relationship between discourse choices (lexical, level of formality, posture), the groups that use, and the social, cultural, historical, and political aspects involved.

¹⁷It is important to mention that not all competencies are related to English and Portuguese at the same time. Some are more focused-oriented to English than others, as in the case of the example.

The assessment section gives general guidelines and suggestions for best practices that apply to all knowledge areas, including English. Those include project-based assessments, such as research and cross-disciplinary projects in the school, or through self-evaluation reflections or activities, oral and written tests, problem-solving, persuasive oral presentations, digital projects, or individual and collective performances.

These state-level Reference Curricula are the most important documents for schools to follow when creating their pedagogical plans. Although there are clear and explicit learning objectives for English in the upper secondary general education curricula, the Reference Curricula do not include any particular guidance on English instruction for the training pathways. Since states can create as many pathways as they wish, either focused on one specific subject area (for example, languages) or by mixing different areas (for example, a VET pathway in English), there are a potentially infinite number of combinations that states could offer.

Minas Gerais is currently developing a new training pathway dedicated specifically to English instruction, which indicates that the state is taking foreign language learning seriously as it goes through this reform process. It is planned to be launched at the end of 2022. Even though it is not yet offered in any school, this effort to create a specific English elective learning pathway represents the increased importance of English.

For the implementation, Minas Gerais prepared a set of Curricular Guidelines for the Implementation of the New Upper Secondary for 10th grade in 2022 (*Diretrizes Curriculares para Implementação do Novo Ensino Médio nas turmas de 1º Ano em 2022*), which offers instructions and summarize the most critical information in the new curriculum. Even though the document is an important first step to support teachers and school leaders as they become more familiar with the new curriculum, the framework design does not specify any precise instructions on working with the disciplines, including English.

In Mato Grosso, adapting to the new model of upper secondary education followed the same steps as in Minas Gerais. The state developed a separate curriculum document approved by the State Education Council in 2021. The Upper Secondary Curriculum Reference Document structure for Mato Grosso (*Documento de Referência Curricular para Mato Grosso - Ensino Médio*) differs from specific education levels. The document is divided into knowledge areas in alignment with the BNCC. And in addition to the BNCC common subject areas, the state has included specific curricular content for rural, *quilombola*, and indigenous schools and how to approach inclusive education. For each knowledge area, the document then details the abilities according to the seven specific competencies for the languages area. Some are related to foreign languages (English or Spanish), as detailed in the example in the following figure.

Example of abilities for Competence 4 - Mato Grosso Reference Curriculum for Upper Secondary - Common Part

Competence 4: Understand languages as a (geo)political, historical, cultural, social phenomena, which is variable, heterogeneous and sensitive to the contexts of use, recognizing their varieties and experiencing them as forms of expressions of identity, personal and collective, as well as acting against prejudice of any kind.

Ability	Key concepts/words
(EM13LGG401) Critically analyze texts in order to understand languages as a (geo)political, historical, cultural, social phenomena, which is variable, heterogeneous and sensitive to the contexts of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialects • Non-official languages • Linguistic manifestations • Foreignness • Urban tribes and their manifestations • Multisemiotic texts
(EM13LGG403) Make use of English as a language of global communication, considering the multiplicity and variety of uses, users and functions of this language in the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, comprehension, analysis and interpretation • Strategies for reading and understanding texts • Discursive genres • Analysis, interpretation and production of multimodal texts • Information in the globalized world • Intertextuality and Cinema • Professions of the 21st century • Production of written and oral texts.

The Mato Grosso upper secondary curriculum details the training pathways that students can choose, including elective courses already approved for schools to offer (5 in total) and some possible pathways based on the knowledge areas (9 in total). None of them is related explicitly to English instruction, but three of them mention English competencies within their curriculum guidelines:

- The elective course on “Digital Market and Communications”, in which students should be able, for example, to identify “the presence of English in advertisements, such as propaganda, pop-ups, delivery etc.”
- The integrated pathway between the areas of applied human and social sciences and languages, called “Empowering Identities”, in which students should be able, for example, to recognize “the influence of English, Spanish and Creole languages and dialects in the culture and the society”.
- The pathway of the language area, called “I make my own story”, in which students should be able to identify, for example, “textual and discourse genres in English or Spanish, and their lexical and morphosyntactic resources”.

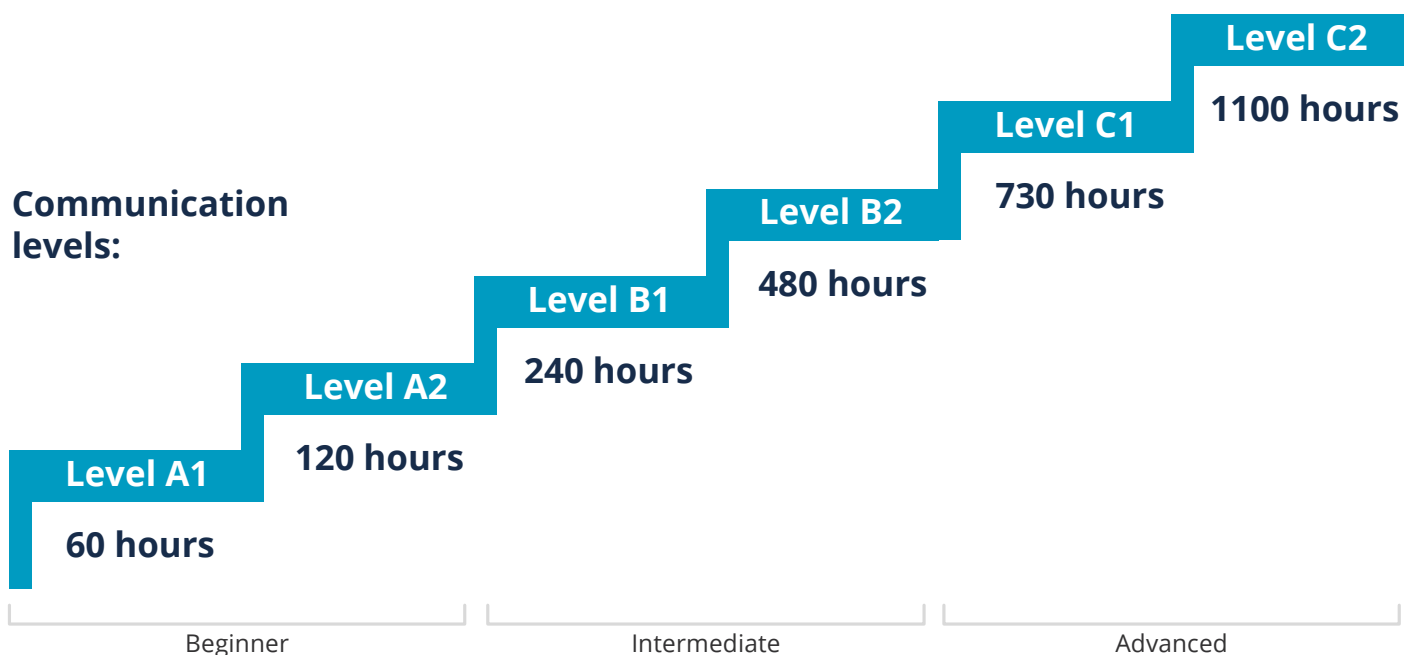
This level of detail in the Reference Curriculum for Upper Secondary in Mato Grosso is positive for ensuring its successful adoption in schools, as they rely on this document to guide the implementation of the reform. Mato Grosso first began piloting the new upper secondary

model in 2021 and, after receiving feedback on challenges and potential improvements from participating schools, expanded implementation of the first year of upper secondary (10th grade) to all schools across the state in 2022. Despite the efforts the state has been making to value and improve English language instruction, upper-secondary students still only receive English classes once a week, and lower-secondary students have it twice a week.

The same is true in Minas Gerais. The state enacted a resolution in 2022 (SEE N° 4.657/2021) to regulate and specify the curricular frameworks that should be used during the first year of implementation of the new upper secondary model. To meet the English language requirements of the core curriculum, schools should offer one 50-minute English class per week, totalling 40 classes per year, or 33 hours and 20 minutes of instructional time. Even if it applies to most disciplines, this limited exposure to the English language is insufficient for students to develop all of the knowledge and skills required.

This is particularly worrisome considering the number of hours required for a student to achieve different proficiency levels in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the case of Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, with only 33 hours and 20 minutes of instructional time per year, it would take almost two years for students to achieve level A1, more than three and a half years to achieve level A2 and more than seven years to achieve the level B1, which is the first intermediate level. Therefore, the course load dedicated to English is incompatible with the standard established by BNCC. Students will not be able to develop the minimum level of proficiency required at the intermediate level. The following figure shows the necessity of studying hours to achieve the different levels.

Time of study to achieve different learning levels (CEFR)



Source: Inter-American Dialogue, 2020.

Specific initiatives to improve English

In addition to the efforts to implement the new upper secondary model, Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso also led other initiatives to improve English instruction related to teacher training and giving more opportunities to students to practice. Minas Gerais, for example, has recently launched the 2022 program Pathways for Future Educators (*Trilhas de Futuro Educadores*) through State Resolution SEE n° 4.697. The program was conceived to incentivize continuous professional development for all teachers and has the following objectives:

- train educators in topics aligned with the general education agenda set by the State Education Department of Minas Gerais;
- provide professional training courses, undergraduate courses and post-graduate courses;
- recognize and appreciate public servants by offering permanent training opportunities;
- improve the competencies and skills of public servants;
- invest in more effective training;
- contribute to the promotion of public servants in their respective careers;
- improve the quality of the education offered in public schools of Minas Gerais.

The program is offered to all public servants (teachers with a temporary contract are omitted), who can then access professional training courses (specializations) to improve their pedagogical practices or undergraduate or masters-level courses through partnerships with several public and private higher education institutions. More than one hundred courses are offered to all teachers, in a variety of topics, from a master's in "Management and Evaluation in Public Education" to a specialization in "Neurosciences Applied to Education". Among the courses offered, seven are specialized in English, either focused on foreign language instruction in basic education or on methodologies to teach English. All of them are distance courses offered by private institutions, where the state covers the enrollment cost. The courses in English are open to all educators that wish to participate. However, English teachers have priority registration if spots are limited.

To participate, teachers must meet a minimum criterion defined by the State Education Department: obtaining a score equal to or greater than 70% on their Individual Performance Evaluation. In return, the participating teachers must also continue in their public service role for a minimum period of three years after the end of the course and develop a final research project in an area or theme related to the priority topics of the State Education Department. The application period ran from May to July, and the first cohorts started in August 2022 across different partner higher education institutions.

In addition to the program “Pathways for Future Educators”, the state also offers other in-service training for teachers through the “Teacher Training School” (*Escola de Formação de Professores*). The Teacher Training School operates as a department within the State Education Department and is responsible for developing courses to improve teachers’ professional training. The courses sometimes happen in partnership with experts or institutions and are usually offered through online platforms such as Google for Education. Their main objective is always to improve teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and practice.

Specifically for English, the Teacher Training School has developed a course to explain the implementation of the new state English curriculum, called “The English language component in the Reference Curriculum of Minas Gerais”. The course is online and has a workload of 40 hours. The course enrollment can go up to 5,000 teachers (there are 79 thousand English teachers in total), and to receive the certificate, teachers should have a minimum grade of 70% in the course. The course classes began in August 2022, and according to the curriculum outline, the following topics are considered: introduction, planning, classroom management and assessments. In addition to this course, the State Secretariat of Minas Gerais also provides some in-person activities and workshops related to the language components of the Reference Curriculum, including English teachers’ participation.

On the other hand, Mato Grosso is also implementing a specific program to improve English instruction in the state. The “More English Program” (*Programa Mais Inglês*) was launched in 2022, in partnership with private companies, with contracts awarded through a public bidding contest. The program aims to improve English language instruction in-state public schools of Mato Grosso and established four main objectives:

1. Develop reading competencies and abilities in English
2. Offer English in primary schools
3. Provide a platform for English teachers to access content and develop their practice
4. Provide a platform for upper secondary students to expand and deepen their English knowledge

To achieve these four objectives, the State Education Department created an online platform to explain the More English Program through resources developed by private contractors, allowing students and teachers to access different pedagogical materials and exercises. The platform has content and exercises divided by educational levels, from primary to upper secondary education, and for teachers and students. In addition, the platform provides e-books in English, instructional videos, games and examples of assessments that could be used with students. Teachers may also take courses on the platform to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and practices. As part of the Program, Mato Grosso also sends English-language books to school libraries to incentivize students to read more in English and to encourage teachers to use the materials during classes.

As the program has recently been launched (at the beginning of 2022), Mato Grosso still faces difficulties in engaging teachers and students to use the platform. To overcome these challenges, the State Education Department has recently assigned a full-time staff member to be responsible for English activities in each Regional Department (there are 15 in total), including encouraging teachers to engage with the More English Program and coach them through difficulties that they might encounter in using the platform or preparing classes or exams. This dedication of time and resources represents a substantial effort from the state to boost English instruction and should continue, along with robust monitoring of the program.

In addition to the More English Program, Mato Grosso also offers in-service teacher training courses to all teachers to develop their pedagogical practices and encourage the adoption of innovative teaching methods. However, there are no specific English-related courses, and the state hopes to fill this gap with the courses promoted through the More English Program. It is important to evaluate if this strategy is sufficient to meet demand and determine whether having a specific state program for English teachers is possible. Mato Grosso also expects to develop a state policy for English, which could help to institutionalize the efforts and achievements of the More English Program and indicate the state's commitment to English teachers.

Based on the implementation of the reforms in both states and the state policies developed, it is possible to see a shift in how English instruction has been treated in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso. Now, English has become mandatory from 6th grade on, there are plans to include English in the training pathways, and teacher training is evolving to contemplate the specific needs of English teachers. Although those represent essential first steps, critical policy mechanisms are still missing to ensure high-quality English instruction for all students. Most notably, there is not (nor has there been) an evaluation at the national or state level to determine student proficiency levels. Likewise, national and subnational guidelines and requirements to become an English teacher are scarce. So far, state policies have generally been ad hoc and lack both diagnostic information and institutional durability. It is then difficult to state to what extent they are responding directly to existing challenges and helping to improve English instruction.

To better understand teachers' perceptions towards these state policies and efforts to improve English instruction, the following section examines the results of a survey conducted with teachers in both states and a survey of universities that offer initial training courses focused on English.

2.3 Improving Teacher Training, Quality and Support at the State Level

This section focuses on the responses from a survey conducted with universities and teachers in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso. An overview of teachers' perspectives on their initial and continuous professional development will be provided, as well as an analysis of the pedagogical resources and methods they use in their classes. A survey with course coordinators at universities that offer initial teacher training programs has also been conducted to complement the teacher perspective.

Here, it is essential to clarify that initial teacher training courses to become an English teacher in Brazil could have different characteristics. Some of them are only focused on English,

equivalent to “Literature with emphasis on English”. Others could be focused on more than one language at a time, equivalent to “Literature with emphasis on Portuguese and English”. Therefore, depending on the choice, future teachers might be apt to teach only English or both Portuguese and English.

There are a total of 18 university campuses in Mato Grosso (8) and Minas Gerais (10) that offer a degree in Letters with a specialization in English and which prepare graduates to enter the classroom as English teachers. Of the 18 courses, 13 (72%) responded to the survey. The results from that survey examine the main strengths and weaknesses of English teachers’ initial training courses.

For teachers, the questionnaire was sent to all English teachers of both states, to which 1,370 replied (574 in Minas Gerais and 796 in Mato Grosso). In total, 83% of the respondents were women, and most have post-graduate degrees, either specializations or masters. Most of them (59%) carry an undergraduate degree in Literature with an emphasis in English, and 24% in Literature but focused on other specialities, such as Portuguese or Spanish.

Analysis of the results: the universities’ perspective

Future English teachers are rarely required to demonstrate language proficiency, and their initial training is heavily theoretical.

Regarding the general characteristics of the thirteen courses analyzed during this study, most are in-person degree programs, and only two are hybrid, with in-person and online components. They last, on average, four years, although some require up to five years of study. Accordingly, the course load varies depending on the design of the course, from 3200 to 4800 hours. The average number of students is 185, but this varies greatly depending on the university, its location and when the course was established. The newest course, for example, was created in 2020 (while the oldest was established in 1960) and currently has 24 students enrolled, while others in more prominent universities can reach 780 enrolled students. Minas Gerais generally has more experience and a long history in initial training courses focused on English than Mato Grosso.

The main entry mechanism used by the universities is the Enem, which is accepted by 92% of the institutions, followed by their exams (or vestibulares) in 15% of them¹⁸. More than half of the universities (58%) that responded to the survey have a minimum score as a requirement for admission to the course. However, none require students to have previous knowledge or demonstrate a specific English proficiency to be accepted into the program. This is a controversial aspect since most courses (85%) have disciplines taught in English and are designed to form English specialists rather than train pedagogues¹⁹. One of the most commonly-cited challenges described by universities is that incoming students are not proficient in English,

¹⁸Some universities may accept results from either the Enem or a vestibular, which is why the percentages exceed 100%.

¹⁹In Brazil, university students who study “pedagogy” train to be primary school teachers (until 5th grade), while secondary teachers specialize in the specific subject area that they will teach. Since English instruction is only required in the secondary curriculum (starting in 6th grade), English teachers are subject specialists, not education specialists.

and it is hard to develop their language proficiency during the undergraduate period entirely. As stated by one of the respondents:

“It is a challenge to develop the linguistic [abilities] of the students so that they have a good command of English, as well as [being] a critical educator who can interact in different teaching-learning contexts.”

The lack of minimum English proficiency requirements for incoming university students is not unique to Brazil. Many other countries in Latin America also lack these standards, and coordinators of teacher training programs have expressed similar frustrations (Stanton & Fiszbein, 2019). Indeed, these challenges speak to a broader, regional challenge regarding the recruitment and preparation of English teachers, precisely the tension between recruiting and training enough teachers to meet current and future demand and ensuring quality standards to improve English instruction in schools.

The study also examined the curricula and pedagogical projects of the courses to understand their focus and analyze the type of training that future English teachers are receiving. In that regard, on average, 25% of the courses' subjects are focused on techniques/practices in English. Some examples of disciplines taught are:

- English Literature
- Methodology of English Language Teaching
- Reading and Text Production
- Linguistic Studies (which encompasses phonetics, phonology, language acquisition, morphosyntax and text processing)

Courses focus heavily on English literature and reading competencies, emphasising different types of English texts and classical and modern literature from English-speaking countries. Disciplines dedicated to pedagogical methods and classroom-focused disciplines do not typically appear in the universities' curricula. The classes tend to have a very theoretical structure, focused more on theory than on methodologies to teach English. One of the few practical components of the courses is the final internships, in which students usually go to schools, learning from and assisting a current English teacher. However, these internships are not compulsory at all universities, nor are they included as a graduation requirement. Although 92% of the initial training courses offer extracurricular practical learning opportunities at schools, only 67% require students to complete a professional internship as a mandatory component to receive the diploma. In other words, although almost all students can have the opportunity to be at schools and gain hands-on experience, only two in three students will be required to participate.

Another aspect analyzed was the extent to which pre-service training programs for English teachers have adapted to keep up and align with national education reforms in Brazil,

especially the BNCC. In this case, more than half of the courses already have curricula and offerings aligned with the BNCC. The main issues in this adaptation are related to several recent changes to federal legislation that have made it hard to adapt quickly, along with delays due to the pandemic and the need to preserve institutional autonomy in designing courses. As one respondent wrote:

Although the basic education curriculum has been improved with the BNCC and there is pressure for undergraduate courses to conform to it, it must be said that the BNCC, even making English language teaching compulsory, decreased the number of hours of English language teaching in basic education. This reduces the opportunities for students from public schools to study and practice the language. This also has an impact on the students in the initial training courses. Students arrive at university with little or no knowledge of the English language. This may become even more serious in the new scenario.

Universities offer limited opportunities for students to strengthen their English skills via foreign exchange and study abroad programs, despite recognizing their value

One way to address the challenge of rapidly increasing students’ English proficiency skills over their degree program is by increasing opportunities to participate in study abroad and academic exchange programs. By travelling to English-speaking countries, students can gain real-world experience, practice their language skills and engage in cultural exchange. Unfortunately, in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, these opportunities are still very limited. Most of the institutions (61%) do not offer international exchange opportunities for students to English-speaking countries, and this is particularly critical in Mato Grosso, where only one institution (out of five) offers this type of opportunity.

Where they exist, most international exchanges are regulated by specific institutional policies (editais), and students are usually evaluated and interviewed to pass the process to travel abroad. This type of experience, while expensive, has the potential to be transformative for students who are genuinely committed to teaching English since the contact with the language and the experience in another university abroad could enrich their background and knowledge. The universities themselves recognize the importance of strengthening this kind of opportunity:

“

The main challenge is to make it clear to the student that there is a double degree in Portuguese and English and their respective literature because most students enter the course only to become Portuguese teachers. In addition to that, it is a challenge to make students live the English language through practices outside the university walls. In general, students still believe in the myth that English is only used outside the country. Therefore, universities should foster internationalization practices, both by receiving foreign [English-speaking] students and by sending students for exchange programs in English-speaking countries. In this sense, it would be important to strengthen ties with institutions in other countries, such as the United States, England, South Africa, India, and Australia, among others.

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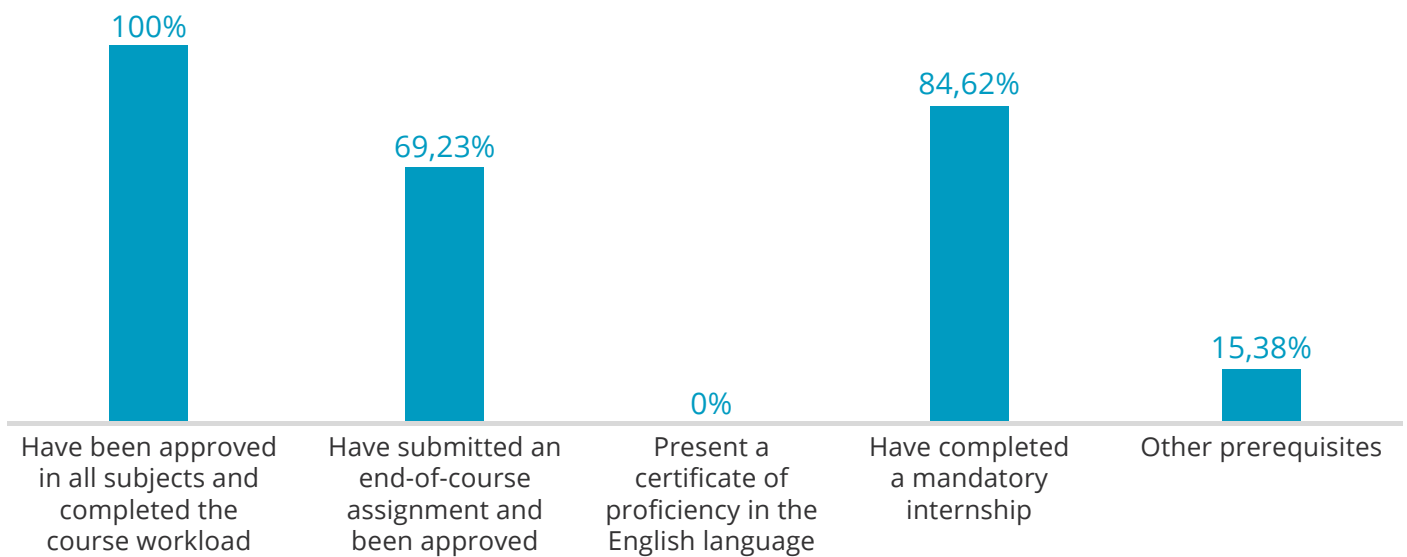
In addition, to foreign exchanges, the survey also asked about opportunities for students to practice English daily to improve fluency in the language. According to the institutions, the main spaces for practising English fluency are:

- Interaction with other students and teachers (for example, using audiovisual materials during classes, classes taught in English, group discussions, etc.)
- Extension projects in partnerships with other institutions (such as the Fulbright scholarship to study abroad)
- Language courses offered by partner institutions or language centres at the universities
- Development of extracurricular activities such as internships, English fairs, cultural events, etc.

Although universities set graduation requirements for English degree programs, they do not include proficiency certifications.

Even if students have the opportunity to practice English during their studies, either formally as part of their coursework or through extracurricular activities and experiences, their English proficiency is not measured at the end of their course. None of the 13 universities that responded to the survey requires English proficiency certification as a graduation requirement. Instead, they all require students to complete and pass the required course load. Other requirements, such as submitting an end-of-course assignment or thesis, are frequent as well, as shown in the following figure.

What are the minimum requirements to graduate with a degree in literature (English emphasis)?



The lack of English proficiency requirements for graduation is particularly concerning when coupled with the fact that there are also limited proficiency requirements to enrol in the courses. In other words, students can study an English specialization for four or five years but graduate without ever certifying their ability level in the language.

Some universities have begun to establish proficiency requirements for English professors, an important step to ensuring quality instruction

Although universities do not require students to present any English proficiency certification to graduate, they usually have proficiency tests for faculty members before they can begin teaching, either as part of the open, competitive selection process or through a knowledge expertise test. In all the public universities that participated in the survey, faculty members are selected through an open, competitive selection process²⁰, and most include English tests.

The faculty is composed mainly of instructors with PhDs or at least Master’s degrees. The faculty size averages 23 professors (about an 8:1 student-teacher ratio). All institutions regularly evaluate their faculty members through a combination of mechanisms: evaluation committees, student evaluations, English language evaluations and/or specific pedagogical projects.

Since the Ministry of Education regulates universities in Brazil, and public institutions receive their annual budget from the federal government, the survey also sought to understand better their relationship with the Ministry and their respective State Education Departments. Course coordinators generally said they have few direct interactions with the National Ministry of Education. The guidelines and projects for English courses are established at a higher level, usually through the office of the university dean. As one of the participants described:

²⁰Called “concurso” in Portuguese, which is a selection process to fill a job position that is awarded in view of the merits on a test of the applicants. Teachers who passed “concurso” usually have stability and are considered federal civil servants

“There is no fluid communication. Only through the research projects. The communication is mostly concentrated in the Department of Undergraduate Studies, which takes care of all courses.”

When it comes to the relationship with State Education Departments, it varies according to the university. Some universities have a very close relationship with the Departments, including frequent and fluid communication to exchange information and best practices and organize internships and extension programs. Other universities do not have the same close relationship. Instead, communication is mainly limited to exchanging necessary information and organising internships when schools receive students. The universities with the closest relationships tend to be state institutions; in other words, they operate under the same administrative umbrella, leading to more interaction and collaboration opportunities. There is still room to strengthen this relationship with state education officials for other universities, whether public federal institutions or private ones.

Finally, the survey considered to what extent universities followed their graduates' employment outcomes, mainly if they worked as English teachers after completing their studies. None of the universities has formal mechanisms to evaluate their graduates' employability. A few have sent surveys to graduates or are in the process of implementing a system that will track their career paths, but there is currently no clear picture of whether graduates pursue careers as English teachers. Even without quantitative evidence, most institutions pointed out that graduates often do not feel confident teaching English right after graduation. They usually choose to teach Portuguese (as many courses give a double licensing to teach Portuguese or English) or to teach other languages closer to their native tongue, such as Spanish. However, universities shared the belief that these challenges are not related to the courses themselves, which they consider to be high-quality²¹. The graduates who decide to become English teachers usually find a job quickly. As stated by a respondent:

“Many students choose not to pursue the teaching profession, but for those who do, employability is reasonable. There is a growing number of language schools, bilingual schools, and there are few English teachers in the market.”

Given the points mentioned in the analysis, universities usually perceive a high level of commitment of their faculty members to conduct the course activities and believe in offering important disciplines focused on practical components that will allow students to become English teachers.

²¹Since the survey was completed by course coordinators at each university, they are obvious bias issues to consider in their evaluation of course quality.

Moreover, a positive aspect is that many offer extracurricular opportunities for students to practice English and improve their proficiency, such as fairs, external courses, exchange programs, scholarships, etc. However, this is not the reality for all institutions and needs to be boosted if they want to help students to achieve English proficiency.

On the other hand, universities feel affected by the devaluation and discredit of teaching careers, which prevents many students from entering initial training courses and remaining on them. Many of them drop out, either because they do not see a future as English teachers or because they must work and conciliate studies and other jobs. This is also related to their perception that many graduates do not follow teachers' career paths and seek other opportunities.

Course coordinators have also highlighted the difficulty in increasing student proficiency in English during the course of study since they do not have the initial requirements to set a baseline language competency level. For them, it is very unlikely that students will be able to be fully proficient in the language, even if they offer them external opportunities to practice. This is also related to the fact that universities consider it more judicious to maintain a small number of faculty instead of exploring the possibilities to develop new and innovative disciplines to be incorporated into the existing pedagogical projects.

Therefore, even if initial training institutions have made important efforts, there is still room for improvement and to adjust many details on the curricula. It is particularly important to strengthen the dialogue between courses and the reality of English teachers in schools, to diagnose the lever points that need to be improved first. The following figure summarizes the main findings and perceptions of university courses evaluated in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, highlighting their main strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- High level of engagement and commitment from the faculty staff.
- Disciplines focused on English language, with practical components.
- External activities and projects, such as fairs, courses, exchange, scholarships, etc.
- Partnerships with other organizations to offer more opportunities that allow students to deepen their knowledge and proficiency in English.

Weaknesses

- Devaluation and discredit of the teaching career in the context of Brazilian education does not contribute to attract students to the career.
- Students' low proficiency in English, which cannot be achieved only with the practice during the courses.
- Small size of the faculty staff vis-a-vis the possibility of offering more optional and innovative disciplines.
- High dropout rate of students, who often need to conciliate work and studies and do not dedicate full time to the degree.

Analysis of the results: the teachers' perspective

In addition to the universities' survey, another survey was sent to public-school English teachers in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso to understand their experience and perspective on different aspects of teaching English, from the initial teacher training to their classroom practices and use of learning tools and experiences, such as technology.

Most English teachers in both states are female, have at least an undergraduate degree or a specialization, and teach lower and upper secondary levels. The majority of teachers have a heavy workload and frequently work in more than one school, combining English with teaching other disciplines, which is a potential issue to the extent that it is harder to improve one's pedagogical practice when teaching more than one subject in more than one school.

Most of those teachers carry more than ten years of experience in the classroom; however, they consider themselves only partially qualified to teach. This aspect is particularly tied to the fact that teachers feel that their initial training did not prepare them well for the challenges they face in the classroom, especially their ability to manage class activities and use effective teaching methodologies.

In addition, teachers seem unsatisfied with the continuous training received by the State Education Departments, as a third of them affirm that the training did not help improve their pedagogical practice. It is also notable that most teachers use Portuguese to communicate with their students. Perhaps relatedly, most of them consider their students to have only a basic proficiency level and difficulties keeping up with the curriculum due to the lack of a strong language foundation in previous grade levels.

Teachers evaluate themselves as less prepared in speaking and listening and feel more confident in their written abilities. This might reflect how teachers prepare their students for evaluations that only focus on reading comprehension skills, such as Enem. Or it may also reflect the difficulties teachers face in leading a class of more than 30 students on average, with a highly heterogeneous composition regarding students' English levels. Whatever the reason, it is clear that English teachers have been struggling to deliver quality classes, with a high workload, significant and heterogeneous classes, and feeling unprepared for their function.

This study has presented many actions by national and subnational governments to improve the quality of English instruction in Brazil and Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso more specifically. However, from teachers' perspective, it is clear that there is still a long way to go to guarantee that students complete their school trajectory proficient in the English language. Current efforts are essential and necessary but not sufficient to improve the quality of English teachers in general. Teacher quality is a critical factor in improving students' English learning outcomes, and true transformation will likely require significant reform efforts.

English teachers usually have a heavy workload, sometimes teaching other subject areas to fulfil their contracted hours.

Even though most teachers have graduated with Literature degrees specifically focused on English, two challenges related to inadequate and/or inefficient allocation occur in the state school systems. The first relates to instructors who are not certified English teachers and have not received training for that role but are teaching English to fulfil the necessary hours for their contracted workload. The second issue concerns English teachers who teach other subject areas for the same reason (fulfilling contracted hours). Both situations are undesirable since teachers are assigned to teach disciplines other than those they have adequate training and knowledge to teach.

Our survey results showed that 5% of the respondents are not formally English teachers but are teaching English to complete their schedule. These teachers usually are trained to teach Portuguese, Social Sciences or History. While not ideal, the survey results indicate that this is not a critical or widespread issue²². The second situation is more concerning since 47% of the English teachers responded that they also teach other disciplines, even though English is the main subject in terms of workload for most of them (77%). Other disciplines taught by English teachers vary a lot and include Portuguese, art, electives (such as life projects, communication, etc.), geography, history, and religious education.

This inefficient assignment of teaching roles and responsibilities is worrying from a pedagogical point of view, as well as its potential impact on the workload and motivation of teachers, who often use this alternative to complete their schedules, and thus ensure that they can meet their contractual obligations. The following testimonial of a survey respondent who is not a contracted English teacher, but teaches English classes, helps to illuminate the impact that this situation could have on students:

I have not mastered the English language, in fact I just like it very much, and as my schedule is not fully completed by all classes of my discipline, I also take English classes to complement it.

Another detail that merits attention is that most teachers who answered the survey have temporary contracts with the State Education Departments. This is particularly true for Mato Grosso (75% of the respondents have this type of contract). Temporary contracts for teachers in Brazil last no longer than two years, and usually, the career paths established for state public employees are not valid for this type of contract.

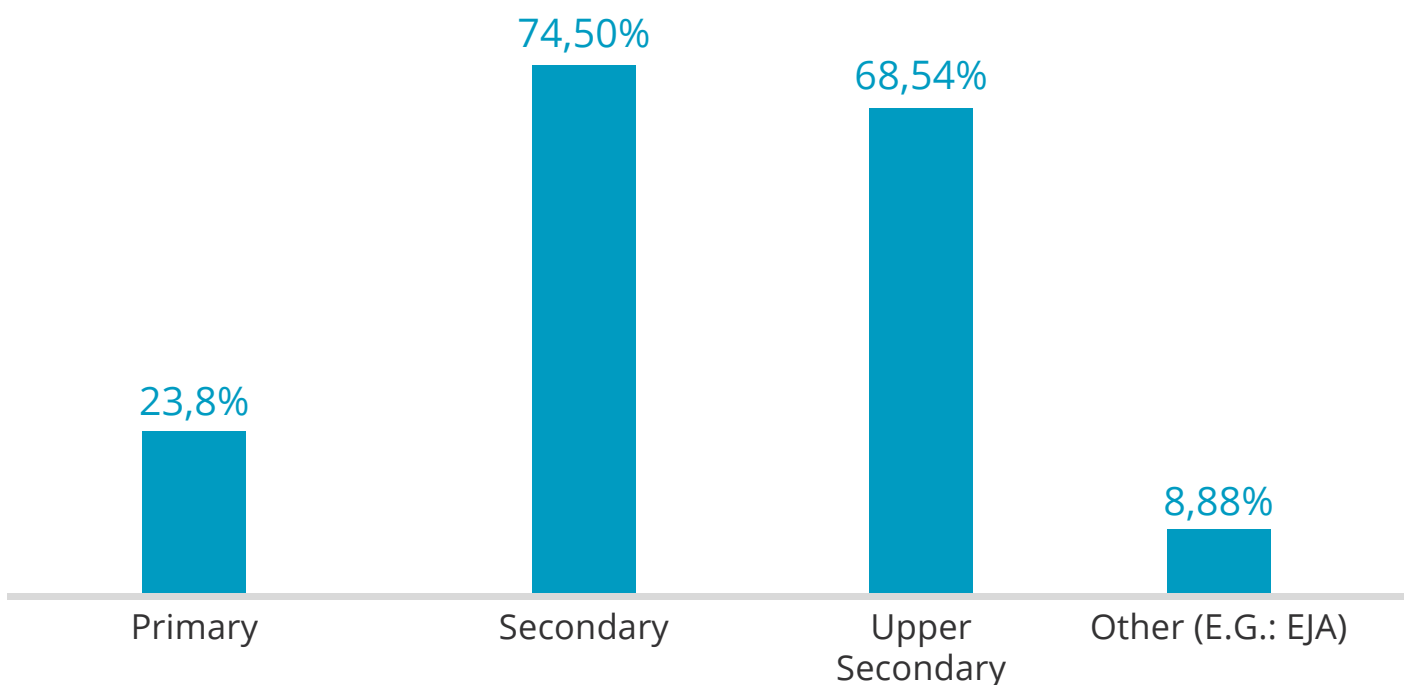
²²These figures do not necessarily mean that there is not a larger issue with teachers who are certified in other subject areas teaching English. Because the survey was designed to be sent to “English teachers,” there is a possibility that instructors who do in fact teach English classes, but are not certified in English, did not receive it.

Because of this, these contracts are often considered more precarious than fixed contracts. Another argument against the large contingent of teachers on temporary contracts is related to the link between teachers and the school (or schools) in which they teach. With a relatively short-term contract, it is more difficult for teachers to establish lasting ties with the school and the students. Of course, the temporary contract can be renewed, but there is no guarantee that the teacher will be reassigned to the same school. The following testimonial helps to illustrate this concern:

I believe that the turnover of professionals and the change due to temporary contracts prevents the creation of short-, medium- and long-term teaching plans. It also makes it impossible to reflect on the evolution of teaching and learning practice due to the instability of most teachers.

Regarding the education level in which these teachers work, most teach in secondary and upper secondary classes, often simultaneously. The minority that teaches in primary education is exclusively in Mato Grosso since the state recently adopted the policy of including English in the curriculum from primary grades onwards. The following figure shows the distribution of teachers between educational levels²³.

To what grade levels do you teach English? Check all the boxes that correspond to your answer.

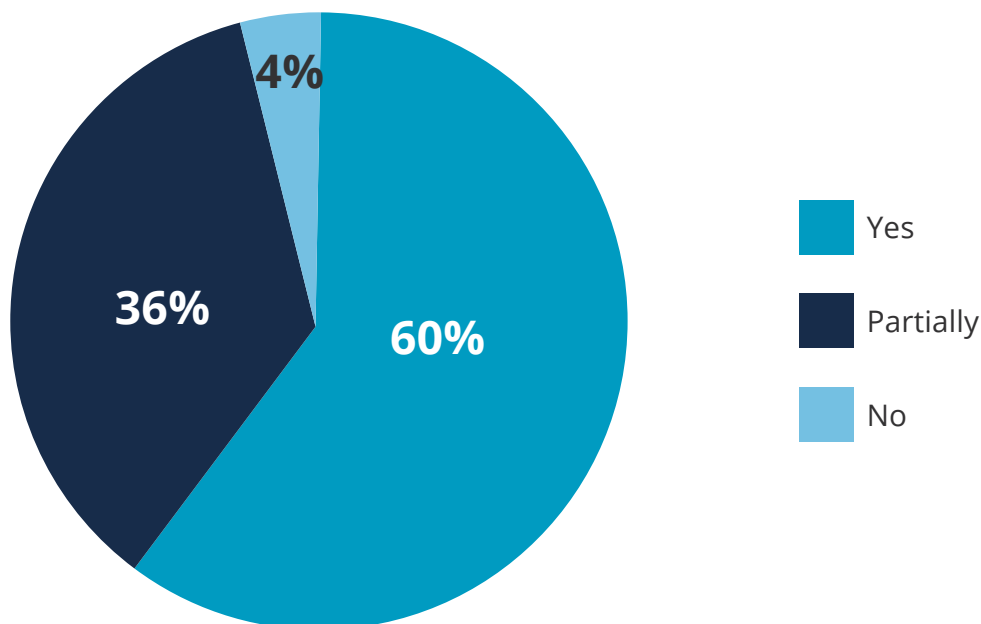


²³Note that in figure, the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers can teach at more than one educational level at the same time. EJA corresponds to adult education (“educação de jovens e adultos” in Portuguese).

Although they have years of experience, many teachers consider themselves only partially prepared to teach English and face classroom challenges.

In both Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais, English teachers tend to have several years of classroom experience. Almost half of the survey respondents have more than ten years of experience teaching English. In comparison, the remaining half is equally distributed across the following experience ranges: less than two years, 2 to 5 years and 5 to 10 years. With ten years of experience, teachers are expected to have already consolidated their teaching practice and can help or mentor colleagues with less experience. However, even with many years of experience, more than one-third of teacher respondents believe their professional knowledge to be only partially for the level they teach, as shown in the figure below.

Do you consider that your knowledge in the English language is appropriate for the level you teach?



The analysis of this figure brings to light a worrisome situation for the education secretaries of both states. When more than one-third of the responding teachers believe they lack some of the necessary knowledge to teach, and 4% believe they do not have appropriate knowledge of English, a warning must be sounded. Knowledge and mastery of the English language are essential for teachers to do their job in the classroom. Without knowledge of the language, it is difficult for the teacher to master classroom practices and methodologies to teach the students. Related to this fact, 60% of the respondent teachers claimed they had never taken an English language certification test. When asked about their proficiency self-assessment, most (59%) believe they have an intermediate level (B1 or B2).

Teachers' knowledge of the content is often closely tied to their initial training. In this case, when asked if their initial training was sufficient to provide the necessary English proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, about half the respondents considered it only partially sufficient (49%). In comparison, 32% believed it was sufficient, and 19% did not. Considering this situation, the teachers then pointed out the main bottlenecks of the initial training they received.

According to the following table²⁴, most respondents believe that the initial training fell short in teaching specific pedagogical practices related to English, followed by a lack of foundations and methods of teaching English and theories of learning or student knowledge acquisition. Assessing the learning progress of students is also an aspect that teachers highlighted as weak in their initial training. Overall, these findings align with our analysis of the English teacher training curricula at universities, which have a course load highly focused on theoretical subjects at the expense of more practical subjects or subjects focused on pedagogical practices/teaching methodologies.

Areas where initial training was not sufficient

Specific didactics to teach English	60,56%
Foundations and methods of teaching English	43,19%
Theories of learning / how the student learns	41,16%
Methods of assessing student learning in English	30,23%
Classroom management	24,44%
Planning a lesson	18,22%

Teachers usually teach many classes in a week, and the low course load dedicated to English instruction prevents students from developing adequate proficiency in the language.

Regarding their routine, most teachers have at least ten classes per week. Therefore, considering the average time of 50 minutes per class taught, the workload of most of these teachers is equal to or greater than 8.4 hours of class per week. For 25% of them, this workload is even more significant, with at least 20 classes per week, or 16.6 hours. According to our survey results, the distribution of English teachers' workload in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso is the following:

- 20% of teachers have 1 to 5 classes per week
- 15% of teachers have 5 to 10 classes per week
- 41% of teachers have 10 to 20 classes per week
- 25% of teachers have more than 20 classes per week

²⁴Note that in the table the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers could choose more than one option for this question.

However, the most important fact to pay attention to is the number of classes those teachers might have. Knowing that in both states, English instruction is assigned two class periods per week in secondary and one class period a week in upper secondary, having 8.4 hours of instruction per week means that teachers could have from 4 to 8 different classes to teach on average. The class schedule in many schools and the limited instructional time seem to be teachers' major concerns. A considerable number of them commented on this tension in the survey results, as illustrated in the following testimonials:

We need to increase the course load dedicated to English instruction and match the classes better, so teachers have more time in a few schools. Personally, I have worked in six schools at a time, then I decreased to four, and now I'm in three at the same time. It is very hard to coordinate it all.

I wish the English language was more valued and that the number of weekly classes was not reduced so much as it is now. With one class a week, we have a marginal contribution to the student's learning.

The reduction of English instruction hours to comply with the Upper Secondary Reform has made teaching and learning English more difficult. Classrooms in state schools are always crowded, with 35 to 40 students. It is very difficult to give individual attention to all the students.

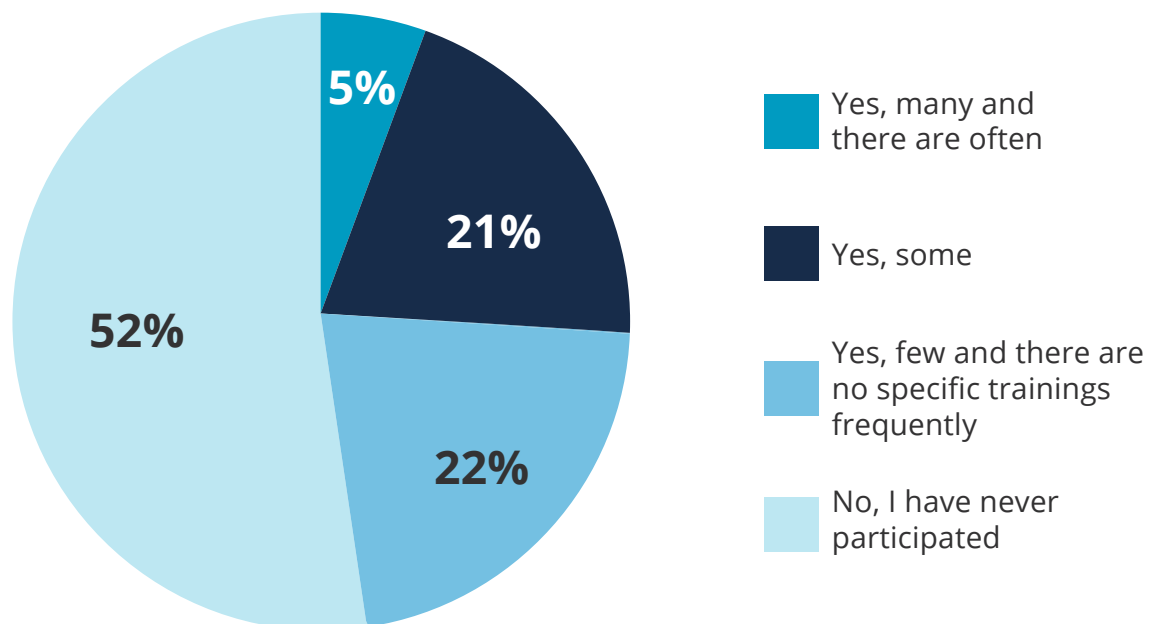
There are still several things missing for the students to actually leave upper secondary with good proficiency in English. Classroom time is restricted to work only on the most basic skills with the students, and that is why we should increase the workload dedicated to English instruction.

Most teachers (66% of respondents) work full-time for the State Education Departments. Still, a third of respondents have other contracts, either with the Municipal Education Departments in private schools or other professional occupations. Teachers' schedules are a dimension that must be considered when planning public policies, especially those related to continuous teacher training, so training courses can happen when teachers are available.

More than half of teachers have never participated in continuous professional development courses specific to English but are highly interested in receiving more training to strengthen their practices.

The survey also examined aspects of continuous professional development for teachers, such as if teachers have participated in training and if those sessions were helpful. Notably, 52% of teachers have never participated in any training related explicitly to English instruction (53% of them in Mato Grosso and 46% in Minas Gerais), either because they have never been offered or because teachers were not available to participate. Whichever the reason, this data point reflects a concerning fact since teachers' pedagogical practice in English has not been reinforced through professional development opportunities.

Have you participated in trainings offered by the Education Departments specific related to English instruction?



The teachers who have participated in training related to English instruction offered by the State Education Departments shared that the most frequent topics in the sessions were:

- Teaching methodologies and pedagogical practices for English
- Adaptation of English curricula to the National Common Core Curriculum
- Use of specific materials and technologies for English
- Specific classroom practices and learning theories for English

According to those teachers who have participated in continuous training sessions focused on English instruction, 66% of them consider that the training was in some helpful way to improving their knowledge and pedagogical practices. Equally, the same percentage of

teachers responded that they have participated in additional training courses not offered by the State Education Departments to deepen their teaching knowledge. Teachers seem interested in receiving continuous training courses to improve their practices. The following statements exemplify their interest and willingness to receive more training opportunities.

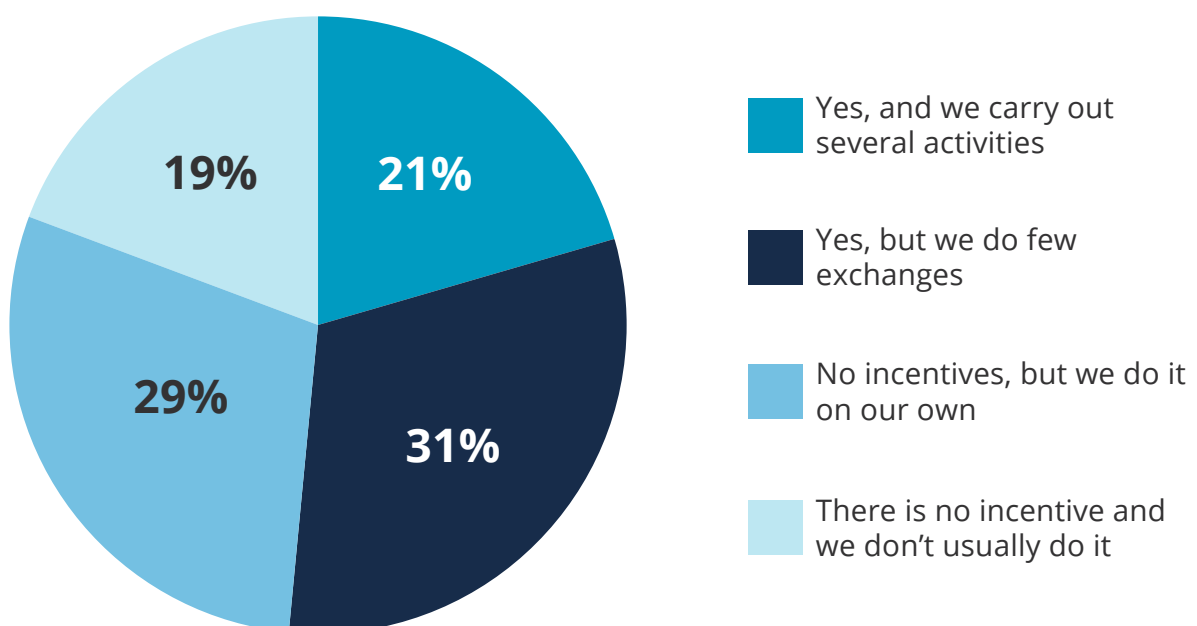
I am taking private English classes throughout the year to help me to become a better teacher. I have not yet had access to opportunities to participate in courses or training projects to improve my skills.

I really enjoy being an English teacher. However, the state needs to give more visibility to those teachers and support them to bring innovation to the classrooms. I see a lot of unpreparedness in the English area.

Pedagogical practices of English teachers are very focused on working with reading and interpretation skills with students, and they could be more diversified.

To analyze teachers' current classroom practices, the survey asked them about the exchange of best practices with peers and collaboration among teachers. The results indicated that it is not yet a consolidated practice in either Minas Gerais or Mato Grosso. Even though half of the teachers affirmed that there are official incentives to do so, another half either do this by themselves or do not exchange with other teachers. The following graph shows the responses of teachers in this matter.

Incentives for exchange of best practices among peers



To understand English teachers' most used pedagogical practices in both states, teachers ranked different activities and the frequency with which they do those activities with students. The most common activities performed weekly by teachers in the classroom are:

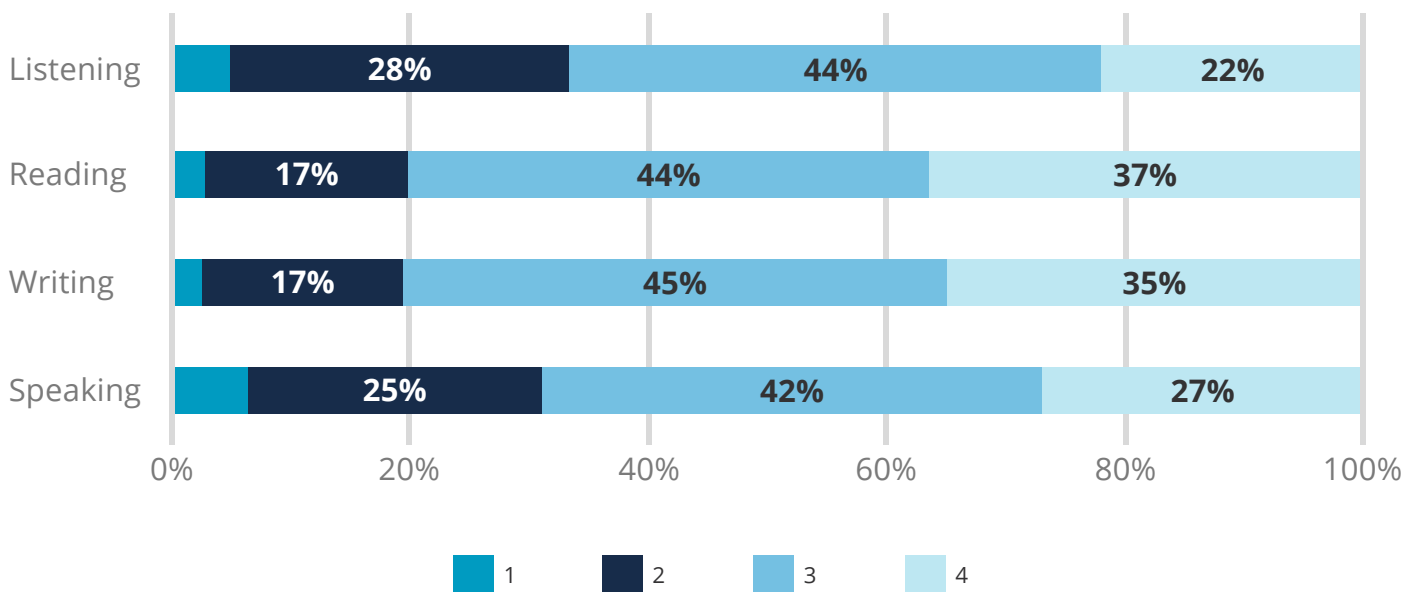
- Explain or re-explain academic content until the students understand
- Review content from the previous class or areas which students have not yet mastered
- Check if students have done their homework and correct it
- Review test corrections and answer questions
- Assign English homework

These activities indicate the regular classroom routines that teachers have established, and most teachers (60% of respondents) indicated that they assign homework to students at least once a week. In addition to those routine tasks, teachers listed different activities done with less frequency, either monthly or a few times a semester:

- Work in pairs, groups or interdisciplinary teams
- Listening activities, such as songs or movies
- Writing activities, such as texts or articles
- Speaking activities among the students, such as role-play
- Reading activities, such as books or magazines

It should be noted that teachers themselves have pointed out the difficulties that they have with the vast differences in students' writing, reading, listening and speaking abilities. The following table shows that teachers feel less prepared to teach listening and speaking skills, while they are more comfortable teaching reading and writing.

Indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 means “I don’t feel prepared” and 4 means “I feel very well prepared”) how prepared you consider yourself to teach the following skills:



This data point could reflect that national examinations (Enem) only evaluate reading and comprehension skills. With heterogeneous and crowded classes, it is hard to find time to have all students practice speaking or conversation abilities, for example. Teachers themselves claim that it is hard to work with speaking and listening abilities in the classrooms, as the following testimonials illustrate:

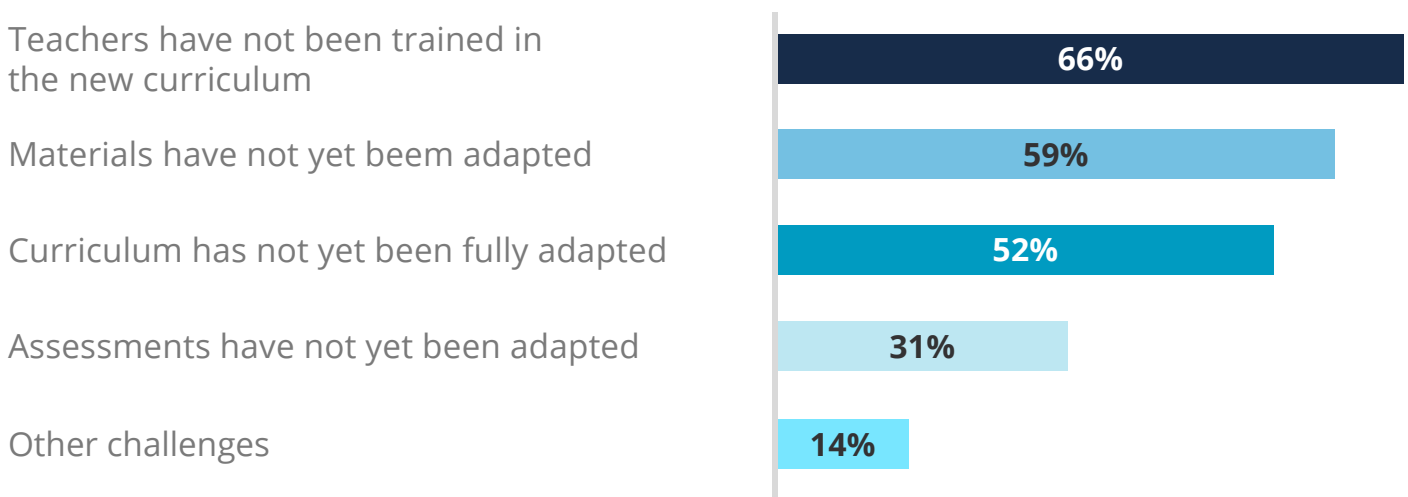
I try very hard to be a good teacher, but I think the lack of fluency in speaking hinders me a little. About the training, it would be interesting to have a conversation group to improve our skills.

Universities don't prepare us to be able to work as English teachers, mostly when it comes to speaking and writing. We have a lot of difficulties when it comes to speaking in English. I particularly look for sites and paid online courses to improve myself, but even so, it is not easy.

Teachers believe that the curriculum reform brought by BNCC is important. However, their perceptions highlight the necessity of a coordinated implementation to improve students' low proficiency levels.

Of course, better pedagogical practices are at the centre of the curriculum reform that Brazil has been developing with the BNCC. However, the reality is that its implementation is still an ongoing process that needs some adjustments and attention from the State Education Departments to ensure success. According to teachers in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, the BNCC and the required adaptations to learning materials, training and evaluation have been partially implemented. Currently, according to teachers, the most significant challenges related to the BNCC are the adaptation of the curricula, teacher training and adaptation of materials, as shown in the graph below²⁵.

Main challenges to adapt to the BNCC



Teachers’ opinions regarding the reforms are mostly positive. However, they are concerned about the required adaptations and challenges that they bring, as shown in the following testimonials:

I think it is very valid to get the vision of English teachers because we are living in a transition time in many aspects of education. I am very optimistic about the new perspectives put forth by the new curriculum for our students. However, it is not possible to make an in-depth evaluation of the implementation yet, but we will keep working to change the reality.

The curriculum reform has been made, but textbooks are still the same now. The classes were overcrowded, and with the Upper Secondary Reform, the number of English classes was reduced from two per week to one hour. I cannot develop my students and make them fluent in this context.

²⁵Note that in the table the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers could choose more than one option for this question.

In addition to and predating the challenges of the curriculum reform are other previous barriers to improving students' English language proficiency, such as the lack of content knowledge from lower grades and the difficulties, even in Portuguese language skills, which are carried over into English classes. Teachers also reported that students do not feel confident enough to speak English or, in their understanding, are not simply interested in learning the language. The following table shows the greatest challenges to increasing English proficiency, in teachers' views²⁶:

Students do not have sufficient level due to language deficiency from previous years	76%
Students have a gap in their native language or literacy problems	67%
Students are embarrassed to express themselves in English or afraid of making mistakes	55%
Students are not interested in learning English	45%
Other reasons	7%

Whichever challenge is chosen by teachers, the following statement illustrates well the reality in the classrooms:

It would also be very important for students to improve their Portuguese because this reflects on their learning of English. How can we learn a foreign language if our mother tongue has a huge gap? This is my biggest challenge in the classroom: having to teach Portuguese first in my English class and then teach English. Students have a strong necessity to translate everything because given the reduced time for lessons, which is how they feel more comfortable.

Given that reality, it was unsurprising that most teachers communicate in Portuguese with students during English lessons. 69% of them claimed to do so, and consequently, almost all students (94%) also communicate in Portuguese during English classes. Therefore, teachers believe that almost all students (91%) have only a basic level (A1 or A2) of English knowledge, regardless of their grade level. Many teachers reported this reality with a sense of demotivation and perceived their mission as "too big" given the actual conditions.

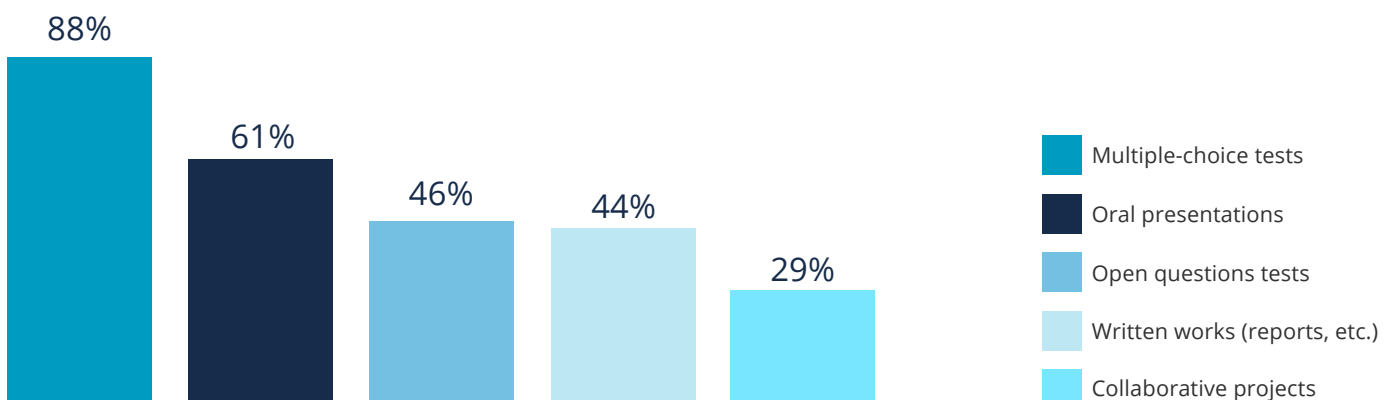
²⁶Note that in the table the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers could choose more than one option for this question.

I think it is extremely important that English teaching improves because the current situation is sad. What the state is doing to invest more in English is great, but it ends up giving us an almost impossible mission when we only have one hour of class per week. I think it would be important to increase the number of English classes so that students have more contact with the language.

The reality of public school is still far from helping students to be fluent in English. If we have some great students, it is because they take extra private courses. With crowded classrooms, oral evaluations, which require much time spent working with each student individually, are impossible. The only thing left to do is to work more on grammar and text interpretation. The students also have a very poor vocabulary, which makes it difficult to work on the written part with the creation of texts. These are the biggest difficulties encountered by public school teachers.

The challenge of working in crowded classrooms and focusing primarily on grammar and text interpretation is, of course, reflected in how students are evaluated. When asked about the most common evaluation methods, teachers indicated that they rely on multiple-choice tests instead of open-ended questions or oral evaluations. The following graph shows the most used evaluation methods²⁷.

Most used evaluation methods



Teachers are willing to use more technology in their classes and interested in mastering digital tools, but many times infrastructure problems prevent their access to these resources.

The final part of the survey asked teachers about their use of technology during classes. In response, 31% of the teachers said that they do not even have access to the internet in their schools, which is a basic hindrance to the use of various technologies. The lack of internet in

²⁷Note that in the graph the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers could choose more than one option for this question.

schools is more frequent in Mato Grosso (two-thirds of the 31%) than in Minas Gerais (one-third of the 31%). School infrastructure should not be a factor that prevents teachers from using technology to support their lessons, and State Education Departments should provide adequate learning conditions. The following statements illustrate the current situation:

The use of technologies is highly relevant; however, the school is not prepared to meet these demands. One of the first things that prevent us is the lack of internet connection, and when it works, it is very unstable.

Although I feel prepared to teach English, I feel deprived of resources at school. I would love to have more videos, songs, and more interactive activities during my classes. However, it is complicated to take the students to a separate room. It would be much more cost-effective to have everything more accessible. I know many resources to make classes very dynamic and interactive, but I cannot use them all when I'm teaching in the public schools.

The structured material does not match the learning reality of our students. The courses that propose the use of technologies are wonderful, but we are barred by the structure in terms of access to digital tools and schools' infrastructure.

In addition to the infrastructure conditions that would enable the use of technologies, teachers were also asked about the frequency with which they bring technological tools and resources into the classroom. Most respondents (74%) said they use technologies weekly or a few times a month during lessons. The most used technological resources are searching for materials in English on the internet and using cell phones with students during classes. The following table presents the resources that teachers use most frequently²⁸.

²⁸Note that in the table the sum of the percentages is higher than 100%. This happens because teachers could choose more than one option for this question.

Search for English materials on the Internet (movies, series, music, articles, etc.)	76,88%
Use of cell phones with students	63,01%
Use of interactive games or applications	36,22%
Other interactive materials	35,19%
Other resources (such as laptops, presentations, online translators, etc)	8,90%

Teachers' perceptions about technology use show that states need to invest more in this matter. Either improving the infrastructure of schools to have a stable internet connection and equipping classrooms with computers and other materials or training teachers to use technologies, including properly operating technological devices to support learning objectives.

In summary, the perception and the answers of the teachers bring exciting insights about the current state of public policies related to English teaching in the two states. It is clear that few policies touch directly on English and that they are relatively recent. In this sense, we must recognize the effort that has been made. This was also a positive point reinforced by the teachers themselves, especially related to the "Pathways for Educators" program in Minas Gerais and the program "More English" in Mato Grosso. Particularly for Mato Grosso, teachers have highly appreciated the inclusion of English in primary schools.

I am sure we will see students with better proficiency in secondary and upper secondary school in a few years. They will develop a better foundation due to the implementation of English in primary schools. I'm particularly happy to be part of this.

In general, the level of engagement of the English teachers in the two education systems is perceptible. They want more training and courses and to improve their pedagogical practice. However, if, on the one hand, there is an apparent demand, on the other, there should be careful consideration to ensure that training is effective and align with what teachers need to improve their classroom pedagogy while recognizing natural limitations on their time since there are many teachers whose weekly workload is heavy and divided among many schools.

Teachers are also motivated to use more technologies in their classes, and a window of opportunity has opened up because of the pandemic, where many teachers have started using technology more frequently and consistently, which could support this desire and willingness to incorporate technologies into their pedagogical practice. However, for this to happen, the infrastructure must be available, and teachers must be adequately trained.

According to teachers, the most important point for both states is that the amount of time allocated for English classes is extremely low. In fact, with 33 hours per year, it is highly unlikely that students will develop any fluency in English. Student exposure time is minimal,

and this is a chance for states to review the course load for English and build focused training pathways emphasizing English, especially for upper secondary school.

This point is the most crucial, and undoubtedly also the most cited by the teachers in both states, along with large class sizes, leading to occasional overcrowding. Suppose more attention is not given to increasing the course load and reducing the number of students in classes. In that case, we can expect that Brazilian students will continue to leave school with low (or extremely low) proficiency in English. Therefore, they will not be prepared for the many positions in the job market and other challenges of the globalized world that demand English proficiency.

On top of these important adjustments, other challenges merit attention, such as the low proficiency of English teachers themselves, which is related to the initial training they receive and the limited courses offered by the State Education Departments so that they may improve their knowledge of the language. In that regard, continuous training courses should have a tailored focus and prioritize addressing the gaps in teachers' pedagogical practices and knowledge.

Regardless of the challenges, it is important to recognize that both states are giving English a prominent position. Much needs to be done yet, but teachers' perceptions can be seen as a significant turning point to boost ongoing actions and develop further policies focused on strengthening the relationship with teaching training universities, boosting the knowledge and pedagogical practice of English teachers and, ultimately, improving students' language proficiency. The table below summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of English teachers based on the analysis conducted.

Strengths

- High level of teachers' engagement: they want more training courses, are willing to learn and improve their pedagogical practice.
- Appreciation of the courses and new initiatives offered by the states (Program "Mais Inglês" in MT and "Trilhas" in MG).
- Appreciation of the insertion of English in primary school (specifically for MT).
- Willingness to use more technologies, boosted by practices developed during the pandemic.

Weaknesses

- Low workload with 1 or 2 hours per week.
- Classes overcrowded, with more than 30 students on average.
- Low English proficiency of teachers themselves.
- Adaptations to the BNCC is not completed (training courses, materials and evaluations).
- Continuous training courses are insufficient and not related to the gaps teachers' have.
- Insufficient infrastructure in some schools (internet connection and tools).

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Given the panorama of English instruction in Brazil, particularly in the states of Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, and considering the results of the surveys conducted with universities and teachers in both states, some conclusions and recommendations could be drawn.

Nationally, English instruction has been gaining importance and visibility through curriculum reform and the new model of upper secondary school. It is an enormously significant achievement that, for the first time, English has become mandatory in all public and private schools from 6th grade onward. The BNCC offers clarity on the competencies and abilities that students should develop at each education level. However, if, on the one hand, making English compulsory was an important step, on the other hand, the implementation of this policy is still incomplete. The main issue is the limited amount of instructional time in English in the national curriculum guidelines. As the cases of Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais illustrate, the result is that students have insufficient exposure to the language, with only two classes per week in secondary schools and one class per week in upper secondary. Under these conditions, it is unlikely that learners will develop full proficiency in the language, and teachers will have the instructional time to focus on all the necessary competencies and abilities required by the BNCC.

Another important consideration is the link between initial training for English teachers and how it interacts with the routines and challenges of the classroom. There is room for improvement when considering the mismatch between the programs of study at universities and the pedagogical practice required of English teachers and strengthened ties and communication between State Education Departments and the teacher training programs at universities.

Universities face additional challenges, such as the low English proficiency of students in the initial training courses. Initial training institutions face difficulties in thoroughly preparing future teachers regarding language proficiency and the pedagogical elements related to being an effective teacher. In this sense, the situation can create a vicious cycle; students leave schools with a low proficiency level in English, and those who decide to take the initial training courses to become English teachers and enter universities cannot fully develop proficiency as pedagogical competencies. Therefore, they enter schools not fully prepared to be teachers and face all the challenges of a classroom.

Another critical challenge is class size and the heterogeneity of students' ability levels, which could limit teachers' ability to implement some pedagogical practices, such as working with practising speaking. This is not only a challenge faced by English teachers, but all teachers and that policymakers need to keep in mind. In addition, teachers commonly work in more than one school at a time and sometimes teach other subjects to meet the required hours of instructional time stipulated in their contracts.

The surveys with teachers demonstrated that many have never participated in a professional development session specifically designed for English teachers. For those who have, not all considered the helpful training to improve their knowledge and practice. This points to the fact that more attention needs to be paid to the continuous training courses offered to English teachers. These training courses should be frequent and address specific

challenges, taking into account the pedagogical issues and areas that English teachers identify as most critical.

Briefly, it is important to highlight the windows of opportunity that have been opened in Brazil with the BNCC and the new upper secondary model. Through their education ministries, state governments have made significant efforts to adapt their regional curricula to the competencies and abilities listed on the BNCC and implement the first pilots and designed pathways for upper secondary schools. It remains a question of how the rest of those two processes will be implemented, but there are positive signs that English may gain more importance at a national level. At least in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, there is already a movement to increase the importance of the discipline.

While Minas Gerais has developed a few specific training courses for English teachers focused on improving their pedagogical knowledge through the program “Pathways for Educators” and intends to create a training pathway for upper secondary students focused in English, Mato Grosso has implemented English in all primary schools in the state and launched the program “More English,” with resources to help teachers and students. Those efforts are aligned with the national reforms and illustrate the political willingness of states to promote more actions to improve teachers’ and students’ proficiency in English.

In these states and, to some extent, at the national level, the foundations have been set to put English instruction in the spotlight as a crucial discipline to the integral development of students. However, much work and resources are still needed to realize this goal. Therefore, the following recommendations are intended to advise decision-makers at universities and State Education Departments.

Recommendations for pre-service teacher training universities:

1. Promote more opportunities for future teachers to develop full proficiency in English and certify their abilities at the end of the course.

The results of this research process make clear that there is currently no systematic process in Brazil by which universities can know the English abilities of students whom they admit to studying to be English teachers. Furthermore, survey results suggest that the students who enter have very low language proficiency. Teacher training universities have important work cut out for them to strengthen these abilities through their curricula and should also promote programs and activities that would encourage language proficiency development, such as exchange partnerships with universities in English-speaking countries, effective extension projects, and, where necessary, partnerships with private English courses.

Perhaps even more important than the English abilities that students have when they enter their initial teacher training are the skills that they have developed over the course of their training. Here, too, there remains a significant challenge. Given the lack of national-level policies regulating English teacher training, universities should work to

create precise exit profiles or graduation requirements, such as proficiency certificates, to obtain a diploma and certify their mastery of the language.

2. Update course programs to provide future teachers with broader opportunities to develop pedagogical and instructional skills focused on English.

Current study programs often focus heavily on English theory and literature courses, perhaps partly because many students who aspire to be English teachers enrol with limited language skills and need to spend much of their time building these language competencies. On the other hand, it would be valuable to develop curricula and pedagogical projects that focus more directly on key elements of teachers' practice, such as methodologies, use of technologies to teach English, techniques on how to teach in heterogeneous classes, etc. With a greater focus on these elements, future English teachers would be better prepared for their instructional internships and, eventually, entering the educational system as teachers.

3. Strengthen ties with State and Municipal Education Departments and schools, improving communication and exchanging information to align priorities.

Strengthening this critical relationship should be a top priority for all parties. Universities would benefit from a close partnership with their students' future employers to ensure that their graduates are prepared for the reality of school systems and, if necessary, so that teacher training programs can adjust or reform classes, curricula or programs of study to meet the needs of schools and students. Schools and State Education Departments would also benefit from closer ties with universities to offer clear, relevant guidance about the type of English teachers that they need and to maximize learning experiences such as school internships to ensure that future teachers are highly qualified when they graduate.

Recommendations for State Education Departments and the Ministry of Education:

1. Set English proficiency benchmarks for students, evaluate their progress, and increase the amount and quality of instructional time based on these goals.

Without clearly defined, measurable proficiency goals for students, it is difficult to track progress, and without regular evaluations, whether or not that progress is being achieved. These are both large-scale, ambitious policy goals which require significant effort and commitment from educational leaders, but there are many models throughout the region which could serve as examples.

Once goals are in place and consistently measured, state education departments and the Ministry of Education should focus on making the necessary instructional adjustments to reach those goals. For example, this may require increasing the hours of English

instruction from 10th grade onwards in the new upper secondary school model to at least three classes per week so that students have enough class time to master the required material. In the same vein, it is also necessary to increase the instructional time for lower secondary schools so that teachers can teach students all the competencies and abilities required by the BNCC. A further step would be to follow the model of Mato Grosso and introduce English classes beginning in primary education. Hence, students have the chance to become familiar with the language from an early age.

2. Expand the offer of continuous training courses specifically focused on English teachers in response to identified gaps and priorities.

Survey results from this paper clearly show that English teachers in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso are asking for more in-service training specifically designed to address the challenges they face and the competencies and abilities for where they feel least prepared. Specific continuous professional development courses for English teachers could help in two ways: (1) to improve the proficiency of English teachers in terms of linguistic knowledge and fluency and (2) to improve their pedagogical practices related to the discipline. It is important that there is an ample array of in-service training courses offered by state education departments focused on the gaps and needs identified by teachers and which are useful to them and based on their specific needs.

3. Continue the implementation of the BNCC and new upper secondary model, focusing on the importance of English instruction within those reforms and prioritizing it in the policies related to the implementation of the reforms.

For the next steps of the implementation of the BNCC, it will be important to review the current English teaching materials complementary to those of the national textbook program (PNLD), adapting them to the local realities of students and consulting teachers about their relevance. Equally, teachers should be trained to implement the curriculum in English and adapt their evaluations to measure the abilities and competencies of students better.

For the new upper secondary school model, states should give more weight to English instruction by integrating English into most training pathways. In addition, English should be seen as a cross-cutting discipline that is mandatory in all grades, the same as Portuguese and Mathematics.

4. Improve school infrastructure by providing tools, resources and spaces, so English teachers can use technology and learning innovations to improve classroom outcomes.

Dado que a infraestrutura de algumas escolas ainda impede que os professores de inglês usem a tecnologia em suas salas de aula, os estados devem dedicar recursos e atenção a essa questão e trabalhar para equipar todas as escolas com conectividade à Internet,

Given that the infrastructure in some schools still prevents English teachers from using technology in their classrooms, states must devote resources and attention to this issue and work to equip all schools with internet connectivity, computers and other digital tools to enable teachers to use technologies in their classrooms. External spaces, such as computer labs, should be built in schools to give teachers more flexibility and tools to work with students. This action should be aligned with the continuous training courses offered to teachers, so they can be trained to use technologies in their classes.

With these recommendations, we hope that decision-makers can place English teaching and learning at the centre of proposed educational reforms in Brazil and thus improve the proficiency of teachers and students. The prioritization of English in the education system represents more than just students being prepared to communicate in a globalized world or being more prepared for the labor market. It is one of the pillars of an integral education that prepares better citizens to live in a complex and constantly changing society.

4. Methodological notes and surveys conducted

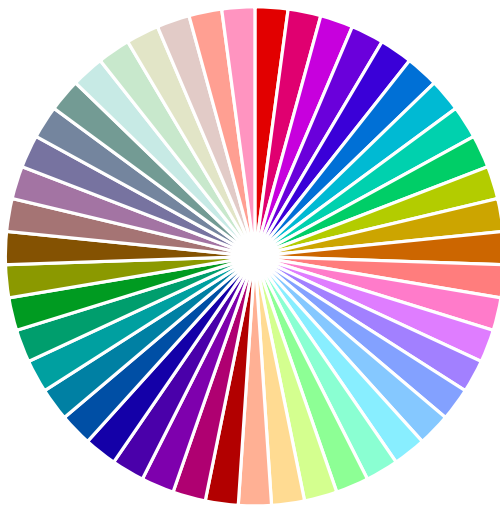
The surveys conducted in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso were elaborated to evaluate the perceptions of course coordinators and staff regarding initial training courses focused on English and to collect English teachers' opinions about their careers. The surveys were done online, and the data collection period occurred from May 17th to July 17th, 2022.

To analyze the initial training courses, all universities from both states that offer the course "*Letras - ênfase em inglês*" (here translated as Literature - emphasis in English) were invited to answer the questionnaires. In total, ten courses were invited to participate in Minas Gerais, in which the response rate was 80%, and eight were invited to Mato Grosso, in which the response rate was 63%. The main topics covered in the questionnaires were admission requirements, the pedagogical projects and curriculum, the alignment with the BNCC, and the practices fostered by the university, such as classes in English, internships and extracurricular practices, etc. The survey also encompassed questions about graduation requirements, faculty members, relationships with the State Education Departments and with the Ministry, as well as the employability of graduates. The survey (in Portuguese) can be found in the Annex of this report.

The surveys sent to English teachers counted with the partnership of the State Education Departments from Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso, who validated the surveys and were responsible for sharing them among teachers. Surveys were sent to all English teachers in both states, and the total number of responses was 579 in Minas Gerais and 818 in Mato Grosso. Teachers from all education levels participated in the questionnaires, from primary to upper secondary education, in addition to the ones that teach courses for adults. The main topics covered in the questionnaires were the profile of teachers and information from their initial training courses, their auto-evaluation of English proficiency, their appreciation of the continuous training programs, the pedagogical practices and evaluation methodologies they use, and finally on, their use of technologies. The survey (in Portuguese) can be found in the Annex of this report.

The questionnaire was applied to 1,370 English teachers (574 in Minas Gerais and 796 in Mato Grosso). All the regions of both states were represented in this study, and the teachers who responded were distributed according to the following education regional offices, as in the following figures.

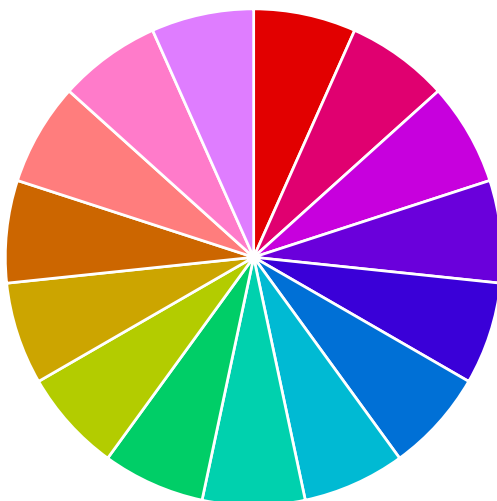
Minas Gerais Education Regional Offices



Total of Regional Offices: 47
Total respondents: 574

- S R E - CURVELO
- S R E - GOV. VALADARES
- S R E - ITUIUTABA
- S R E - LEOPOLDINA
- S R E - MONTES CLAROS
- S R E - OURO PRETO
- S R E - PATOS DE MINAS
- S R E - PIRAPORÃ
- S R E - PONTE NOVA
- S R E - SETE LAGOAS
- S R E - UBERABA
- S R E - VARGINHA
- S R E - PARÁ DE MINAS
- S R E - CARANGOLA
- S R E - CONSELHEIRO LAFAIETE
- METROPOLITANA B - BELO HORIZONTE
- S R E - DIAMANTINA
- S R E - GUANHAES
- S R E - JANUARIA
- S R E - MANHUACU
- S R E - MURIAE
- S R E - PARACATU
- S R E - PATROCINIO
- S R E - POÇOS DE CALDA
- S R E - SÃO JOÃO DEL REI
- S R E - TEÓFILO OTONI
- S R E - BARBACENA
- S R E - ARAÇUAÍ
- S R E - UNAI
- S R E - CARATINGA
- S R E - CORONEL FABRICIANO
- METROPOLITANA C - BELO HORIZONTE
- S R E - DIVINÓPOLIS
- S R E - ITAJUBA
- S R E - JÚZ DE FORA
- S R E - ALMENARA
- S R E - MONTE CARMELO
- S R E - NOVA ERA
- S R E - PASSOS
- S R E - UBERLÂNDIA
- S R E - POUSO ALEGRE
- S R E - SÃO SEBASTIÃO DO PARAÍSO
- S R E - UBA
- S R E - METROPOLITANA A - BELO HORIZONTE
- S R E - JANAÚBA
- S R E - CAMPO BELO
- S R E - CAXAMBU

Mato Grosso Education Regional Offices



Total of Regional Offices: 15
Total respondents: 796

- ALTA FLORESTA
- DIAMANTINO
- MATUPÁ
- VÁRZEA GRANDE
- BARRA DOS GARÇAS
- JUÍNA
- PRIMAVERA DO LESTE
- CONFRESA
- CÁCERES
- PONTES E LACERDA
- RONDONÓPOLIS
- TANGARÁ DA SERRA
- CUIABÁ
- SINOP
- QUERÊNCIA

After collecting the answers from universities and teachers, an analysis of the responses was made. For the proposal of the study, data from both questionnaires were analyzed together, and a few clippings were highlighted regarding the particularities of each state and/or university. The purpose of this study is to draw a broader panorama based on the two case studies, which may portray a global vision of English teachers and also influence policies in the most different contexts of the federation. Thus, the following sections jointly evaluate the responses collected and outline the main conclusions, trends, strengths and weaknesses in light of the questions posed in the questionnaires.

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