

Brief Report Self-Assessment for Teachers

The Pedagogical Competence Demands of English Language Teachers



Acknowledgements

British Council

Tom Birtwistle
director brazil

Diana Daste
director of cultural engagement

General coordination of research, analysis and content

Alessandra Moura
head of english programmes and schools

Research Coordination

Vanessa Pedebos
project manager english programmes

Communication coordinator, research assistance and English revisor

Emilio Abularach
project manager english programmes

Amanda Alves
project officer, cultural engagement

Research Project Review

Graham Stanley
english programmes lead, americas

Data Analysis Review

Liliana Carral
evidence and evaluation manager
- data, evidence and performance

Marketing and Communication

Fernanda Medeiros
regional marketing and communications director

Igor Arraval
regional senior marketing manager – cultural engagement

Sergio Parraga
regional marketing officer – cultural engagement

Johanna Bermudez
regional head of communications

Claudia Yamada
regional communications officer

External support

Editorial design, reporting and editing
MARCO - Douglas Meira, Camilla Ginesi, Julia Ferreira

Graphic design and layout
Júnior Rosa

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British Council Brasil
Rua Ferreira de Araújo, 741, Pinheiros, São Paulo · SP, Brazil
www.britishcouncil.org.br

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Executive Summary

The Self-Assessment for Teachers (SAT), conducted by the British Council, allows understanding the skills that need to be further developed based on the perceptions of more than 1,700 public school English teachers interviewed. The survey also seeks to aggregate new knowledge and improve the quality of English language teaching in Brazil.

The collected data served as the basis for creating a customized edition of the Teaching for Success program, dedicated to high-quality continuous professional development for English teachers. With the SAT diagnosis, the British Council intends to create new continuous professional development programs. The initiative also includes the awarding of 500 scholarships to teachers selected by the British Council.

The profiles of the professionals who responded to the survey reveal important characteristics about the English teachers in Brazil. The collected data show, among other insights, what English language educators desire most: to improve competencies related to knowledge of the language, management of resource and materials, and needed skills to better manage classes.

Important challenges were also mapped. A significant portion of the respondents may be dealing with work overload, as 41% teach more than 10 classes or groups. Additionally, the time spent on daily commutes by those who teach at more than one school demonstrates a harsh routine that can result in physical and mental exhaustion. This is a problem that can affect everything from the motivation to go to work to the availability for their own professional development.

The vast majority of teachers rate their level of proficiency in writing and listening comprehension as “intermediate”, followed by “advanced”. In this scenario, less than 20% of teachers consider themselves fluent in both skills. Regarding reading, most classify themselves at the advanced level (34.8%).

However, in 2023, the British Council identified that, on average, 50% of English teachers in Brazil have sufficient language skills to pursue continuous professional development with minimal support in Portuguese.

Regarding what they feel comfortable doing in the classroom, the interviewed teachers gave the highest ratings to pedagogical skills such as managing the lesson, planning, and using inclusive practices. The elements that were among the least selected, indicating the greatest challenges faced by teachers, were knowing the subject and promoting 21st-century skills.

Aware of this scenario, the Teaching for Success program gathered qualified continuous professional development content, facilitated by professionals certified by the British Council globally.

Based on the perceptions detected through the SAT diagnosis, the British Council also lists 11 recommendations at the end of this report aimed at helping teachers and trainers improve their teaching performance in the classroom, as well as helping students achieve better learning outcomes.

English teachers: getting to know their demands and challenges in depth

In October and November 2023, the British Council conducted the Self-Assessment for Teachers (SAT), which is part of the Teaching for Success framework, with the goal of mapping pedagogical demands for the continuous professional development of teachers. The use of this diagnostic tool aimed to prioritize continuous professional development demands based on 12 pedagogical competencies for language teaching, according to the perceptions of teachers working in classrooms across Brazil.

Perceptions were gathered from a significant sample (over 1,700 respondents) considering the universe of 172,000 English teachers working in different regions of Brazil, according to the 2021 Census (the last one to provide microdata identifying this group of teachers).

In the data analysis, the diagnosis allows understanding the skills that need to be further developed, as well as aggregating new knowledge and improving the quality of language teaching. The analysis prioritized the responses from those teaching in public networks, although the sample is sufficient to also draw correlations between the profiles and demands of teachers from both private and public schools.

The anonymous, free, and 100% online survey was open to teachers who teach English in private networks and federal, state, and municipal basic education schools across Brazil. The survey included 28 questions, 12 of which related to specific skills. The themes included the mastery of pedagogical competencies for English language teaching and the profile for grouping by affinity (levels, geography, school network and time availability).



The data collected served as the basis for the creation of a personalized edition of the Teaching for Success program for public school teachers in Brazil. This is a global British Council program for high-quality continuing education aimed exclusively at English teachers. For the training course, held between February and April 2024, the British Council awarded 500 full scholarships to selected public school teachers, upon registration.

The selection of candidates who awarded the scholarships followed the criteria described in the notice published on the program's website, including a balanced division by geographic regions. The selection considered four evaluation criteria with different weights:

1

Work in public schools



2

Years of experience with English language teaching, with a weight of 25%



3

Analytical capacity to describe classroom challenges and relate them to mitigation initiatives and continuing education, with a weight of 35%



4

English level, with intermediate as being a minimum requirement, with a weight of 10%

Of the 502 participants enrolled in the program, 374 successfully completed all the course modules, which represented a 74.5% completion rate. This number has the potential to indirectly impact 106,2 million students studying in the public education network. The results were communicated directly to the selected teachers.

It is worth emphasizing that the SAT diagnosis was very well received by teachers. They responded massively to a relatively extensive self-assessment—which required four times more dedication than the average response time in market research surveys, for example.

172K

English Language Teachers in Brazil

1,7K

Answers collected in the SAT diagnosis

500

Full scholarships for Teaching for Success

Profile: who teaches English in Brazil

The profiles of the teachers who responded to the survey reveal important characteristics about the English teachers in Brazil. Considering the averages by Brazilian region, most professionals have extensive experience, as 74% have been teaching English for over 10 years.

Additionally, three-quarters (75%) are women, and 60% work in public schools. Racial diversity is another characteristic factor, with 43% self-identifying as Black or Brown. However, a significant portion of all respondents may be dealing with work overload, as 41% teach more than 10 classes or groups.

Among the 12 pedagogical competencies mapped in the survey, those that are nationally prioritized were identified. What English language educators desire most is to improve competencies related primarily to knowing the subject, followed by managing resources. In third place are skills related to managing the lesson. In response, the Teaching for Success program included specific modules on these and other competencies.

State and municipal education departments throughout Brazil can

ask the British Council for a kit containing all the survey questions, so that they can be analysed by teachers. In the future, the results of the survey will be grouped into national and regional cutouts, as well as by state and municipality. These reports can also be made available by the British organization on demand from education secretaries.

The British Council also wants the SAT diagnosis to support the creation of new continuing professional development programs, according to the needs pointed out by teachers.

"With the collaboration of English language teachers from all over Brazil, this mapping allowed us to prepare projects with greater adherence to their interests, needs and challenges. Thus, with the support of the broad community of language teachers in public and private education, we seek to solve challenges and expand the quality of English teaching in the country."

Alessandra Moura
Head of English Programmes and Schools at the British Council

74% have been teaching English for over 10 years

60% work in public schools

75% are women

43% self-declared themselves black or brown

41% teach more than 10 classes or classrooms



English Connects

In parallel to the SAT, the British Council conducted a marketing survey as part of the global English Connect program. The objective was to identify personas who, among the English teachers interviewed, represent more reliably the main challenges faced by teachers who lecture in the public school system in Brazil – including professionals who already have a relationship or not with the organisation.

The survey identified four personas who shared their relationship with work and continuing education, as well as their behavior as users of social networks. The description of these profiles, presented below, helps the British Council, the public authorities and other stakeholders to develop joint actions that aim to expand the scope and adherence to continuing professional training programs for Brazilian English-speaking teachers.

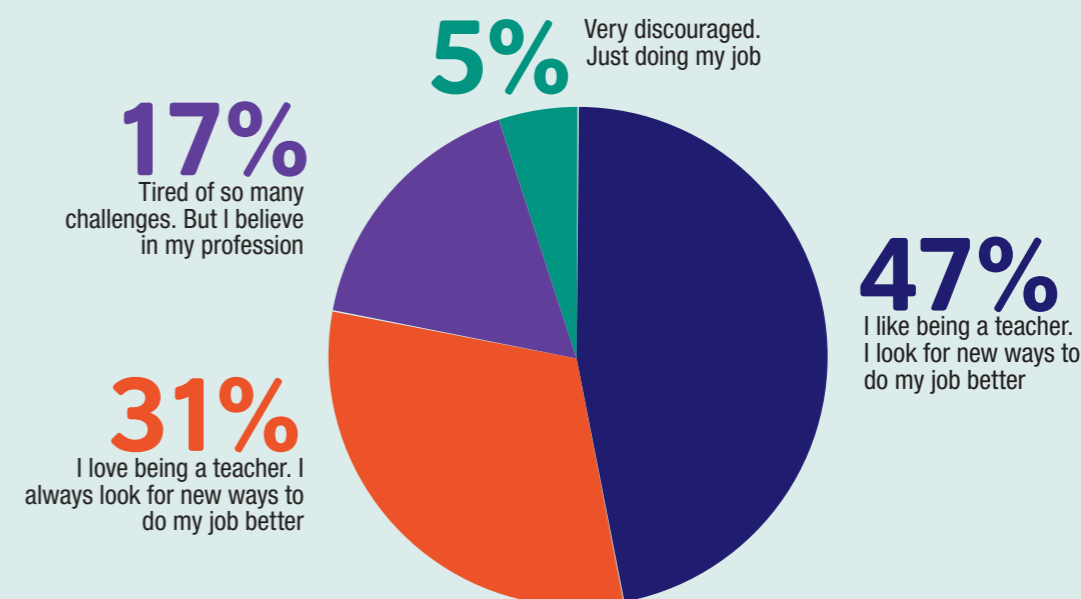
Another common challenge faced by public English teachers is the time spent commuting daily for those who teach at more than one school. This demanding routine can lead to physical and mental exhaustion, affecting everything from motivation to go to work to availability for one's own professional development. Studies show that if a low-income worker spends more than 1,5 hours a day commuting, the likelihood of quitting their job increases exponentially.

In an interview with the G1 news portal in August 2023, Claudia Costin, a professor at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV) and Harvard University, emphasized the importance of promoting comprehensive education. "When teachers work at two or three schools, they spend time commuting. We need to move towards ensuring they can have a well-paid 40-hour workweek, working in one place," she says.

Furthermore, transportation expenses today weigh more heavily on Brazilian families than food expenses. According to a study by the ANTP (National Association of Public Transport) based on 2016 data, the socioeconomic cost of urban mobility was estimated at R\$ 483.3 billion annually—7% higher than the previous year. The survey considered data from 533 cities with more than 60,000 inhabitants, where 133.5 million people live (65% of the population) and where 39 million vehicles circulate.

Relationship with the English teacher career

More than 20% of public English teachers in Brazil feel tired or discouraged





Mariana, 55 years old

Education: Literature (Portuguese and English)
Level at which she teaches: Elementary school
Residence: Nova Iguaçu (RJ)

Context

- Works in a school with precarious condition
- Inadequate teaching material
- Overloaded number of classes and students
- Only 1 weekly English lesson per class

How she feels about work

- She is the only English teacher at the school and feels she has no support not even from the management
- She does not find the time or structure to work properly and realizes that students do not see the meaning in his course
- Do the best she can at work and are just waiting to retire

How she deals with continuing education

- Sometimes, she takes courses offered by the municipality
- Has little knowledge about the courses and does not see the point in taking them, because there is little room to adapt teaching for students. In addition the courses do not seem adequate to the reality of the classroom in public education
- She doesn't know the British Council

Calhandra, 42 years old

Education: Literature (Portuguese and English)
Level at which he teaches: Elementary school
Residence: Porto Alegre (RS)

Context

- Works in schools with reasonable conditions
- Teaching material inappropriate for the level of the students
- Excessive number of students per class
- **Difficulty to manage time between two schools**

How she feels about work

- Despite scarce resources, the excess of students and the lack of time, remains committed to the profession
- Recognizes the need to bond with learners
- **Try to motivate them by showing how English appears in everyday life**

How she deals with continuing education

- Seeks courses in active methodologies that consider reality of public education
- **She started researching CPD courses when she realized that her speech in class "was no longer having an effect"**
- Considers the municipal courses inadequate for the school reality
- **Know the British Council website, but has never used the materials available**



Rafael, 39 years old

Education: Literature (Portuguese and English)
Level at which he teaches: Technical education (full-time)
Residence: Sorocaba (SP)

Context

- Works at a technical school with good conditions
- **Teaching material is inappropriate for students' level**
- **Lack of professionals in the area:** There is no one to exchange experiences with about English in public schools
- **Has incentives and infrastructure to carry out projects**

How he feels about work

- The number of students and the increase in cases of mental health problems are challenging
- **Management support and a well-equipped school allow him to teach interactive lessons and pique students' interest**

How he deals with continuing education

- Prefers courses that include pedagogical methodologies and practices, **preferably taught in English**
- Really liked the BRITE course because it has brought together teachers with the same level and interest
- Due to the shortage of teachers in his region, **he is also thinking of studying to train new professionals in the area**
- **Knows the British Council website and have used its materials**

Juliana, 45 years old

Education: Literature (Portuguese and English)
Level at which she teaches: Language Centre (English course)
Residence: Nova Venécia (ES)

Context

- Works in a language centre with excellent conditions
- Has incentives and infrastructure for carrying out projects
- **Adequate workload and number of students**
- Develops projects with technical education
- **Has already managed to place students in exchange program scholarships**

How she feels about work

- She considers herself privileged to work in an English school, where students are most interested in learning English
- **She believes in her ability to transform the lives of public-school students through mastery of the English language**

How she deals with continuing education


- She takes all the improvement courses offered by the public administration, but considers them outdated for their level
- **Extensive experience in courses, seminars and conferences of international institutions, such as the American Embassy, British Council, Cambridge, Oxford MacMillan**
- **She is familiar with and use the materials available in the British Council website**




Brazil: pedagogical skills needed

Geolocated map with registered teachers


From the weakest to the strongest competence



1st Knowing the subject



2nd Managing resources



3rd Managing the lesson

Demands of English teachers by region

From the weakest to the strongest skills

Northeast

67.836
(39,43%)

1. Knowing the subject
2. Managing resources
3. Managing the lesson
4. Planning lessons and courses
5. Understanding your learners
6. Assessing learning
7. Using inclusive practices
8. Promoting 21st century skills
9. Integrating ICT

Southeast

52.116
(30,29%)

1. Knowing the subject
2. Managing resources
3. Planning lessons and courses
4. Managing the lesson
5. Assessing learning
6. Promoting 21st century skills
7. Using inclusive practices
8. Understanding your learners
9. Integrating ICT

South

21.280
(12,37%)

1. Knowing the subject
2. Managing resources
3. Managing the lesson
4. Planning lessons and courses
5. Assessing learning
6. Promoting 21st century skills
7. Understanding your learners
8. Using inclusive practices
9. Integrating ICT

North

16.125
(9,37%)

1. Managing resources
2. Knowing the subject
3. Planning lessons and courses
4. Understanding your learners
5. Managing the lesson
6. Using inclusive practices
7. Promoting 21st century skills
8. Assessing learning
9. Integrating ICT

Midwest

14.674
(8,53%)

1. Knowing the subject
2. Managing resources
3. Managing the lesson
4. Planning lessons and courses
5. Understanding your learners
6. Promoting 21st century skills
7. Assessing learning
8. Integrating ICT
9. Using inclusive practicesSW



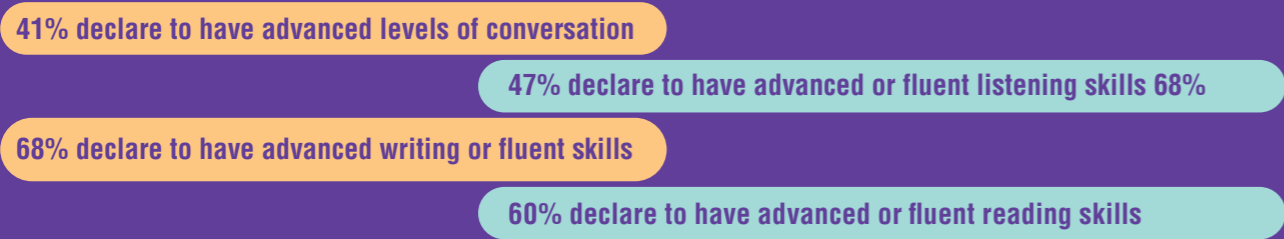
Proficiency: intermediate level and low fluency predominate



In general, the level of proficiency among English teachers in public schools is higher in reading than in writing, especially among those who classify themselves at the advanced and fluent levels, with listening comprehension positioned between the two other indicators. The vast majority of teachers rate their level of proficiency in writing and listening comprehension as "intermediate", followed by "advanced". In this scenario, less than 20% of teachers consider themselves fluent in both areas

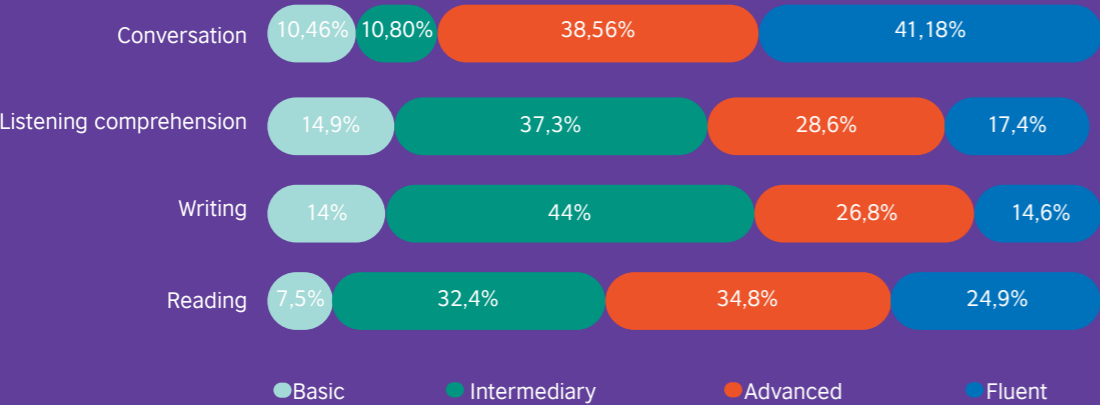
Regarding reading, most classify themselves at the advanced level (34.8%), a proportion close to the intermediate level (32.4%). At the same time, less than 25% consider themselves fluent in this area. There are slight variations, though not statistically significant, when comparing English teachers who work only in municipal or state schools.

In 2023, the British Council identified that, on average, 50% of English teachers in Brazil have sufficient language skills to undertake professional development with minimal support in Portuguese:



It is important to note that the profile of the teachers who responded to the SAT survey are those who are engaged and interested in CPD, such as the personas Calhandra, Rafael and Juliana mentioned above.

Proficiency of English teachers in the public school system



> Reading: How would you describe your level in English?

34,8% have an advanced level

24,9% are fluent

Workplace	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Fluent	Interviews
Yes, in one or more municipal and state schools.	6.7	39.0	30.5	23.8	164
Yes, in one or more municipal schools.	9.3	32.9	34.9	22.5	258
Yes, in a state school.	6.7	29.7	36.3	26.7	435
Total	7.5	32.4	34.8	24.9	857

> Writing: How would you describe your level in English?

44% have an advanced level

14,6% are fluent

Workplace	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Fluent	Interviews
Yes, in one or more municipal and state schools.	14.6	47.6	23.2	14.6	164
Yes, in one or more municipal schools.	17.1	41.9	28.3	12.0	258
Yes, in a state school.	12.0	43.9	27.4	16.1	435
Total	14.0	44.0	26.8	14.6	857

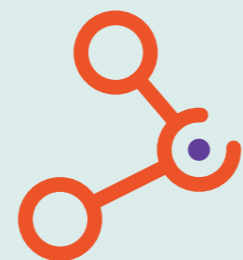
> Listening: how would you describe your level in English?

37,3% have an advanced level

17,4% are fluent

Workplace	Basic	Intermediary	Advanced	Fluent	Interviews
Yes, in one or more municipal and state schools.	12.8	42.1	28.7	15.9	164
Yes, in one or more municipal schools.	17.4	36.4	27.5	16.3	258
Yes, in a state school.	14.3	36.1	29.2	18.6	435
Total	14.9	37.3	28.6	17.4	857

Impact of context on continuous development



1. Commuting time

Among those interviewed for the SAT diagnosis, about 40% of public sector English teachers teach in only one school, while the majority (around 60%) teach in two or more different locations and on the same days of the week. The need to travel many times between one teaching unit and another imposes challenges on the routine of these teachers, especially those who need to travel long distances.

In practice, commuting increases time constraints and workloads, which hinders availability for continuing professional development (CPD) courses.

The study makes it possible to segment public school teachers according to the time they dedicate to these programs. The group that individually benefits the most from CPD courses is precisely that of teachers who do not travel – the 40% already mentioned. Professionals in this group are able to allocate more hours to improvement courses compared to those who need to travel between different teaching units on a daily basis.

On the other hand, among those who need to move from one school to another, each group, segmented according to the commuting time, has a lower number of English teachers who dedicate themselves to their own professional development. They are only 21.2% of those who travel for up to 20 minutes; 19.9% from 20 to 45 minutes; 9.2% from 45 to 60 minutes; 5% from 60 to 90 minutes; 3.2% from 90 minutes to 2 hours; and 1.1% over 2 hours.

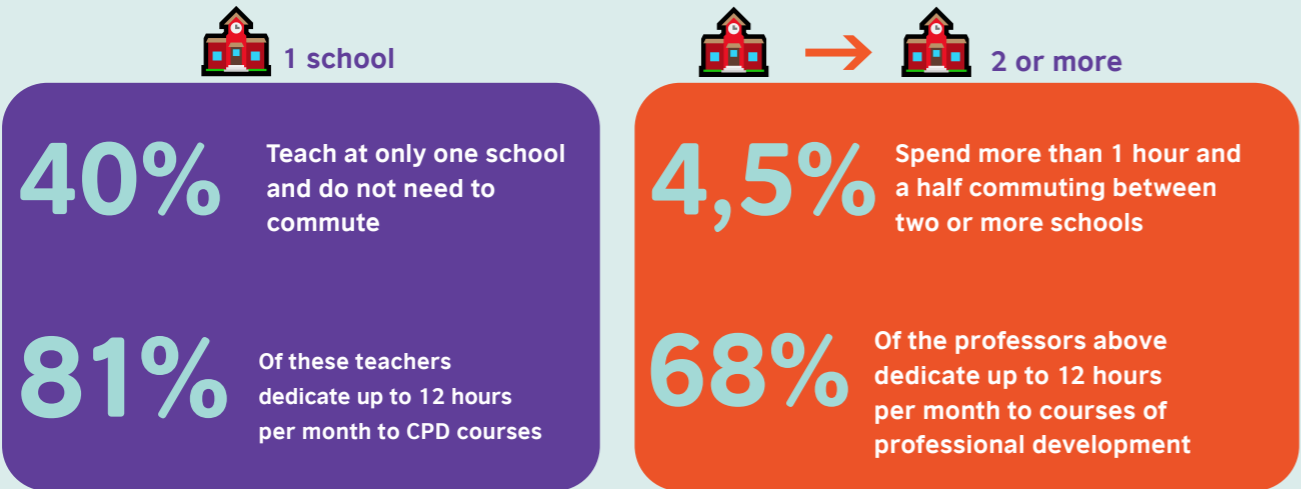
In other words, the longer the commuting time, the smaller the number of teachers who are available to take advantage of CPD initiatives.

The longer the locomotion, the smaller the number of English teachers who dedicate themselves to one's own professional development



Workload vs Time Constraint

English teachers in the public school system



2. Infrastructure conditions

The “English Connects – Brazil’s Marketing Research 2023” survey, carried out by the British Council to map the different profiles of English teachers in the country, shows the influence that working conditions – whether good or bad – have on the time dedicated and interest of each professional in continuing professional development courses.

In this scenario, most English teachers who show frustration with the profession have in common the fact that they deal with precarious infrastructure conditions in the educational establishments in which they work – especially in public schools. This group is also the one that most feels the weight of contempt for the category on the part of the government, the families themselves, the students and, sometimes, even the academic environment.

On the other hand, among English teachers who feel satisfied with their profession, most are proud to have a complete teaching infrastructure at their disposal, including resources such as televisions, interactive screens and Chromebooks. In general, those teachers who have reason to show greater appreciation for their work also face fewer difficulties in devoting more time and attention to professional development programs.

In general, English teachers with greater availability for CPD courses tend to work in places that offer better infrastructure conditions



SAT Survey: the top-rated elements by region

The 1,700 English teachers in the five Brazilian regions who responded to the SAT survey were asked to reflect on what they feel comfortable doing in the classroom. Thus, the answers should consider only what they can do in their respective conditions – and not what would be considered ideal. In this sense, the topics that received the best evaluations involve pedagogical skills such as class management, lesson planning, and the use of inclusive practices.

In lesson planning, the majority of respondents (with percentages close to 80% in all regions) indicated that they were able to select activities that help achieve the lesson objectives. The ability to write lesson objectives that describe the intended learning outcomes for a class had a regional average of 69%.

However, in the same competency, they recorded median scores (with averages ranging between 56% and 64%) questions related to the ability to describe how the evaluation and feedback of students will be, in addition to anticipating and responding to problems that may arise during classes.

In class management, aspects such as the creation of a positive learning environment, the presentation of comprehensible explanations for students and the ability to offer effective instructions were well evaluated (always above 80%). They also had positive perceptions, but with lower percentages (between 71% and 80%), the verification of students' understanding in class and the monitoring of class involvement.

Regarding the use of inclusive practices, questions very well evaluated by the teachers themselves, most of them with percentages above 90%, included the treatment of students with equality and respect, the development of positive attitudes towards diversity within the classroom and self-understanding of one's own prejudices and beliefs – reflecting on the possible impact that this can have on the school environment.

However, helping students identify individual learning goals has proven to be a challenge for a significant portion of teachers. Evaluations on this issue were around 60% in all regions of the country.

81% Select activities that help achieve the objectives of the lesson

69% set objectives that predict the intended learning outcomes

81% can create a positive learning environment

89% can give explanations that students are able to understand

90% develop positive attitudes towards diversity in the classroom

92% reflect on their own prejudices and beliefs and the impact this has

Average ratings covering the five Brazilian regions

SAT Survey: the worst-rated elements by region

On the other hand, the SAT diagnosis also made it possible to identify the elements that were among the least selected by the English teachers interviewed – indicating which items represent the greatest challenges to be overcome to improve the quality of language teaching in the five regions. This scenario predominates in pedagogical competencies such as language knowledge and promoting 21st century skills.

Most of the questions related to language knowledge concentrated some of the lowest evaluations based on the teachers' notes, with percentages ranging from 43% to 54%. This is in the use of a variety of engaging techniques to teach pronunciation (regional average of 49%), English speaking (50%), listening skills (51%) and writing skills (48%).

On the other hand, three other elements of this competence received better evaluations, two of them with almost all items around 60% and one of them above 50%. The use of a variety of engaging techniques to introduce a new grammar topic averaged 62 percent, while the application of this practice to teach vocabulary averaged 65 percent. On the other hand, the teaching of reading skills stood at 55%.

Regarding the skills required for the 21st century, the least mentioned by teachers and those with the lowest percentages were critical thinking and problem solving (regional average of 54%), student leadership and personal development (50%) and digital literacy (47%). However, three elements scored better: collaboration and communication (65%), creativity and imagination (64%) and citizenship (61%).

Although the use of inclusive practices was mostly well evaluated by English teachers, an important item concentrated the lowest percentages of this competence, ranging from 45% to 51% by region. This is the involvement of parents, students, and any other relevant people in pursuit of an inclusive learning environment, which recorded a regional average of 48%.

49% use a variety of engaging techniques to teach English pronunciation

50% use a variety of engaging techniques to encourage students to speak in English

51% use a variety of engaging techniques to practice listening in English

48% use a variety of engaging techniques to practice writing in English

47% have digital literacy among the skills required for the 21st century

48% involve parents, students and other actors aiming at an inclusive environment

Average ratings covering the five Brazilian regions

Teaching for Success: improving didactics and results

The Teaching for Success program gathered qualified content for continuous professional development, with facilitation by professionals certified by the British Council globally. The goal was to help teachers and trainers improve their teaching performance in the classroom and help students achieve better learning outcomes.

The course aimed to develop teachers on a large scale and in challenging circumstances, integrating technology into teaching and learning. Its approach allowed the development of continuous training systems for sustainable development of English language teachers. The methodology included instructional videos, interviews with experts, suggested readings, online mentoring with British Council moderators, a WhatsApp interest group, and case studies, among other resources.

Teaching for Success was held from February 19 to April 29, 2024, in a remote and hybrid format, with 80% asynchronous activities (which could be done at any time chosen by the participants) and 20% synchronous (at a predetermined time, including live meetings on Zoom). In total, there were six modules on various topics, distributed over a total of 22 hours across 10 weeks.

The six modules focused on expanding understanding of key elements that support English language teaching and learning. They were:

1. Speaking fluency
2. Vocabulary
3. Listening skills
4. Motivation in the learning context
5. Pedagogical resources
6. Resilience and creativity with minimal resources to teach and learn

All the tutors who conducted Teaching for Success are Brazilian and have an international certificate of excellence granted by the British Council after 160 hours of professional training. The involvement of these experts gave course participants the chance to experience a top-notch online training experience.

Each tutor, under the supervision of highly experienced international mentors from the British organization, facilitated the course for groups of 20 participants, having established with each of these teams the best day and time for synchronous activities. These classes were distributed in regional groups, according to the professional development demands mapped in each geographic area.

"Teaching for Success was tailor-made for English teachers working in public schools, fully adhering to their interests, needs, and challenges. We strive to overcome barriers that still block the learning of the English language among Brazilians, continuously enhancing the quality of teaching a subject from the National Common Curricular Base. We know that it creates opportunities for students to act as global citizens, contributing to the promotion of human and sustainable development not only in Brazil but also around the world."

Alessandra Moura
Head of English Programmes
and Schools at the British Council





Recommendations from the British Council

- 1. Infrastructure:** It is important to increase investments in the infrastructure inside and outside public schools, addressing challenges such as the lack of technology and adequate classroom space, as well as the lack of security around the school premises.
- 2. Engagement:** It is necessary to overcome the lack of student engagement in school, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic and has widened the gap between students in the same grade. English is among the subjects most affected in this scenario.
- 3. Psychological issue:** It is essential to increase the presence of psychologists and pedagogues in schools, as many students are affected by psychological issues that require teachers to provide support beyond teaching – a role that does not belong to them.
- 4. Teaching materials:** There is a need to adapt or create new teaching materials for English language instruction. Among public school teachers, it is unanimous that current textbooks and workbooks are inadequate.
- 5. Online resources:** Public school teachers resort to sites like Google Images to apply new exercises in class. It is imperative to expand the availability of continuing education to update teachers on new methods and trends.
- 6. Technological tools:** There is a demand for tools that can address with daily challenges, especially among those already engaged in continuing education. Promoting access to technology for teachers is crucial.
- 7. Increased motivation:** Teachers who do not engage in continuing education due to lack of time and financial resources have little perspective. Expanding professional development opportunities helps combat discouragement and increase motivation.
- 8. New knowledge:** To meet teachers' demand for new knowledge applicable in the classroom, it is important to offer active methodologies, conversation practice, new technologies, psych pedagogy, neuroscience, and more.
- 9. Hybrid classes:** It is necessary to mix in-person classes with recorded content to meet students' needs. However, it is important to recognize that teachers still value meetings and the exchange of experiences.
- 10. Content channels:** Teachers use Instagram, Facebook, newsletters, and WhatsApp for work, entertainment, and news. Finding the most productive way to incorporate these channels into lessons helps increase engagement among teachers and students.
- 11. Individual strategies:** It is important to thoroughly understand students' needs to create personas and specific strategies. As personas indicate different communication and content paths, it is necessary to consider them individually.

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