



Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação

ISSN: 0104-4036

ISSN: 1809-4465

Fundação CESGRANRIO

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Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação,
vol. 26, no. 100, 2018, July-September, pp. 1084-1107
Fundação CESGRANRIO

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-40362018002601546>

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Graduates: an overview of the trajectory of graduates in education from the National Institute for the Deaf

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Abstract

This study focuses on the trajectory of graduates from the *Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos* (National Institute for the Education of the Deaf) – INES. It aims at analysing the career development and academic outcomes of students who followed Education degree courses at the INES. One of the objectives of our research was to assess the relationship between these students' degree courses and graduate follow-up. As a survey tool, we used a bilingual online questionnaire (BSL – Brazilian Sign Language – and Portuguese Language), comprising multiple choice and essay questions, designed for 41 graduates in Education, who obtained their degrees between 2009 and 2016. The majority of the participants were mixed-race women, with no hearing disability, average age of 37, and a monthly income of 3 to 4 minimum wages. The analysed data reveals that more than 90% of the graduates regarded their INES degree courses as good or excellent. In relation to the content of these degree courses, twelve categories were considered rather unsatisfactory, and the most criticised of all was the “curriculum”. Other topics frequently criticised were: the lack of BSL modules in the curriculum, the standard of teaching, lack of modules related to deafness, internship and materials available.

Keywords: Graduates. Education. Professional performance. Deaf. Career.

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Recebido em: 30 out. 2017

Aceito em: 05 jun. 2018

1 Introduction

In present days, Brazilian education is widely recognized for its set of parameters and tools geared towards evaluating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Within this context, the following indicator should be highlighted: HEIs should carefully monitor their graduates, particularly with regard to their professional career and knowledge gained through their degree courses.

Institutional Assessment is an invaluable diagnosis indicator (Ministry of Education parameter), particularly when analysing the information provided by graduates. According to the Higher Education Assessment Board, most HEIs possess no information concerning the follow-up of graduates, “that is, the major potential input that surveys could provide when assessing education methodology has not been taken into consideration” (BRASIL, 2015). Graduates can provide mature personal and professional insight, as well as an integrated overview of the higher education institution where they obtained their degree.

Several surveys show a strong relationship between graduates’ academic studies and their career trajectory (FOGAÇA, 1998; SAVIANI, 1994). Furthermore, it is equally relevant to highlight the relationship between graduates’ degree courses and the labour market. This apparent relation puts pressure on the HEIs to promote a policy to follow up graduates because

A graduates’ opinion is an important tool for monitoring their career trajectory, attained skills during their degree courses and overview of the labour market. It is also an essential tool for improving the institution as a whole (TEIXEIRA et al., 2015, p. 160).

Therefore, graduates’ input can help higher education institutions to determine which innovative changes could be implemented to ensure that their graduates are ready to transform the labour market. Despite that, only a few papers have recognised the importance of the graduates’ perception as an indicator for institutional assessment so far (MEIRA; KURCGANT, 2009).

Both private and state higher education institutions should take into consideration the level of professional insertion their graduates have. Secondary schools should also be aware of their students’ next steps after they finish secondary school.

This awareness could contribute to ensure that institutions offer courses that are more relevant so that students can further their studies or be better equipped to

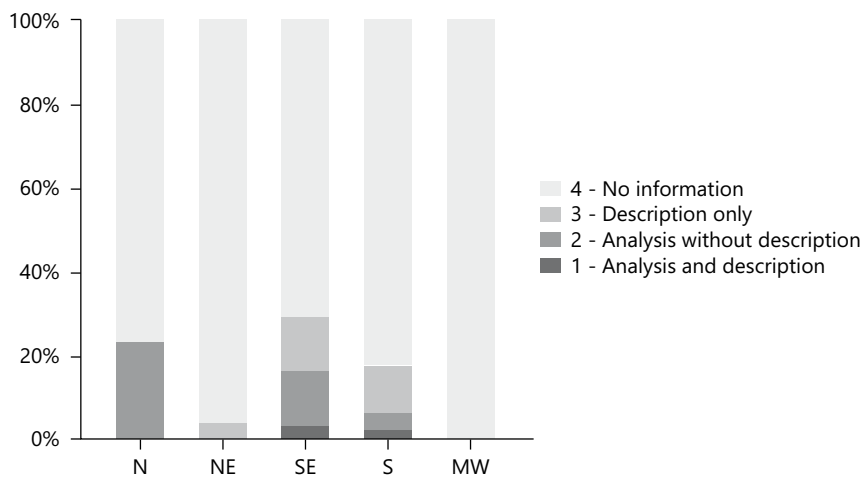
compete in the labour market, thus making sure that graduates have an ongoing interaction with the institution where they obtained their degree.

2 Graduates’ assessment as an indicator of the standard of the institution

According to the Institution/Graduate Assessment Reports produced by *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (INEP) (BRASIL, 2015) regarding higher education, “the lion’s share of HEIs makes little use of graduates as a source of information on their courses and as a performance indicator to improve the standard of their education”. This aspect is illustrated in Figure 1.

The information presented in these reports reveals that, despite the increase in the number of graduates, there is very little information on what happens to these graduates after they finish their degrees. This fact points to a lack of clear objectives to determine public policies regarding the distribution of resources for education.

In general, it is evident that institutions have limited their studies to the knowledge of the number of students that graduate from their courses. However, despite the efforts of Brazil’s Ministry of Education (MEC), there is a lack of studies on the academic standard of these institutions or regarding graduates’ career progression and the labour market.



Source: Adapted from BRASIL (2015).

Figure 1. Institution/Graduates Assessment Reports.

According to the data provided by the 2015 Higher Education Census, 8,033,574 students are currently enrolled in higher education. There are 2,364 institutions offering 33,000 courses, with 6.1 million new places for studying in state or private education institutions, of which only 42% are filled and 13% remain unfilled. (BRASIL, 2016)

Due to a boom in Distance Learning Education (DLE), there has been a growing number of higher education institutions offering new undergraduate and graduate courses. However, even before 1996 (BRASIL, 1996), these institutions collected little information to establish an apparent relation between the courses they offer and students' career development, such as employability, change of salary range and academic productivity in general.

Based on changes in evaluation procedures carried out by MEC, not only regarding higher education institutions, but also other courses, a number of requirements have been put in place, such as making the institution accountable for obtaining information regarding their graduates. This recent demand from MEC is based on various perspectives, particularly the following:

Graduates face complex situations in their daily work environment, forcing them to deal with skills they have learnt while doing their degrees, as required to perform their jobs. Based on this, it is possible to evaluate the teaching structure of the courses as experienced by the graduates, as well as the aspects that intervene in their academic education (MEIRA, KURCGANT, 2009, p. 478).

Taking into account other similar perspectives, MEC advises higher education institutions to have a Graduate Assessment Policy as one of the most important aspects to be considered by each institution's Own Assessment Commission (OAC), when assessing the standard of degrees and post-graduate courses in the light of their graduates' experience of these institutions. Since 2004, through Law N° 10,861/2004 (BRASIL, 2004), MEC has included the evaluation of courses in its guidelines and created the National System of Higher Education Assessment (*Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Superior* – SINAES) – and the OAC. To promote this policy, graduates' opinion is a vital tool for monitoring their career trajectories, skills obtained through their degree course and the panorama of these graduates in the labour market. Furthermore, this is also an essential tool for improving the standard of these institutions.

MEC's corporification for legislative demand has always been based on its assessment tools. Regarding the law mentioned above, SINAES has developed

assessment indicators for the institutions offering higher education courses. For example, in the External Institutional Assessment Tool, which subsidises the accreditation and reaccreditation and transformation of an academic organisation, there is an indicator that verifies the existence of an institutional policy to monitor graduates, as presented in Table 1.

Taking into consideration these relevant aspects, it is essential that all HEIs are aware of the fate of their graduates, thus having the necessary data to improve their higher education courses.

With that in mind, the *Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos* (INES) created a research group called “Graduates of INES”, comprised of the teaching staff from the *Departamento de Ensino Superior* – DESU (Higher Education Department) and *Núcleo de Educação Online* – NEO (Online Education Nucleus) that was put in charge of conducting a research project whose outcome we have presented in this paper.

3 Study objectives

Based on the findings regarding graduates, the aim of this study was to analyze a survey of the career trajectories of graduates from the *Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos* (INES), and to investigate the professional and academic impact of these degree courses. One of the objectives of this exploratory investigation, conducted by the “INES Graduates” research team, was to fill the existing gap of information regarding such group. Therefore, our main goal was to investigate the effects/results of the INES degree courses on their graduate students, particularly with regards to the labour market.

Table 1. Tools for External Institutional Assessment.

3.11 Policies and Action Plans to monitor graduates.	1	When the institution has no policy to monitor graduates.
	2	When foreseen/implemented action plans/institutional plans do not satisfactorily meet the policy for monitoring graduates.
	3	When foreseen/implemented action plans/institutional plans satisfactorily meet the policy for monitoring graduates.
	4	When foreseen/implemented action plans/institutional plans successfully meet the policy for monitoring graduates.
	5	When foreseen/implemented action plans/institutional plans to monitor graduates are regarded as excellent.

Source: BRASIL (2015).

The INES Department of Higher Education offers one non-distance degree course: Education. For many years, the degree in Education has been one of the top ten most popular degree courses in both state and private universities in Brazil. In 2010, for instance, there were 1,897 degree courses in Education. The most recent Higher Education Census, held in 2015, revealed that Education maintained third place in the ranking of most sought-after degree courses, with approximately 656,000 students enrolled countrywide.

The INES Education degree is a bilingual course (BSL and Portuguese language) and, therefore, a complex one in providing educational training. The major goal of the programme is to train educators to perform across different educational environments, particularly with regard to Brazil's deaf population, either as a primary school or a secondary teacher, or as a member of the education management school staff.

This research aimed to draw up a profile of graduates in terms of their economic background and insertion in the labour market, as well as the hurdles they face and their aspirations throughout the course, taking into account a number of intrinsic differences, such as gender, race and economic backgrounds.

4 Methodology

With regard to its objectives, this study could be classified as exploratory research, aiming at establishing the relationship between graduates and the labour market, an unfamiliar field for the DESU/INES. With that in mind, we have focused on identifying the professional outcomes of the degree course in Education. Regarding the collection of data, this is a survey research project using qualitative and quantitative methods. This methodology can be summed up in the words of Minayo (2001 p. 22): “the sets of qualitative and quantitative data, however, do not oppose each other. On the contrary, they complement each other because their results interact dynamically, free from any kind of dichotomy”.

The people taking part in the survey were students who graduated in Education at the DESU/INES between 2009, the first group to graduate in this course, and 2016.

To collect the data for this research, we developed a digital bilingual app (BSL/ Portuguese Language) in a questionnaire format and available online (Figure 2). The questionnaire included straightforward multiple choice and essay questions.

In summary, the questionnaire includes the following: (1) personal details; (2) professional details; (3) course assessment.

NEO
NÚCLEO DE EDUCAÇÃO ONLINE

INES
Fundado em 1857

Alunos Egressos do Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos - INES

0% 100%

Questionário Progressão 03

Você se considera:

Escolha uma das seguintes respostas:

- ☐ A Surdo(a)
- ☐ B Ouvinte
- ☐ C Surdocego(a)
- ☐ Outros:

0:00 / 0:17

Próximo

Sair e apagar o questionário

Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 2. Digital bilingual app (Brazilian Sign Language/Portuguese Language) with an online questionnaire.

Firstly, we contacted all graduates by telephone or email, inviting them to take part in the project. At this stage, we also informed them of our confidentiality policy regarding their identity and personal details, ensuring that participants remain completely anonymous, thus allowing graduates to answer the questions truthfully, without being afraid of any potential retaliation or dissatisfaction from the institution towards them.

Data was collected at the end of 2016, when 107 graduates were emailed a link to the questionnaire. This method of collecting data can be advantageous, as mentioned by Rossi and Slongo (1998) in their study. According to these two authors, when you wish to conduct a survey but your target participants are spread out, the best course of action is to send them a questionnaire via email.

The questionnaire used for collecting data was presented in a video format, using Brazilian Sign Language – BSL – and in a written format in Portuguese, thus ensuring that all questions had been understood, respecting the linguistic diversity of the target group taking part in the survey.

Data was collected through essay questions, whose content was analysed from quantitative and qualitative viewpoints as proposed by Bardin (2009). This method consists of identifying the most relevant responses provided by the respondents. Next, we calculated the frequency of these qualitative responses, in both absolute and relative terms. This paradigm's quantitative investigation is based on the frequency with which certain elements appear in the responses. We only took into account the comments that were mentioned more than once.

5 What is the content of the survey?

The survey data was collected at the end of 2016. The analysed data mainly included the following questions:

- a) Why did the graduates choose to do a degree course at the DESU?
- b) What were the main obstacles faced by the graduates while doing their degree course? And after they finished their degree course?
- c) To what extent do different gender or race or socio-economic backgrounds correlate with more or fewer opportunities for graduates after they finish their degree at the DESU?

6 Who are the DESU/INES graduates?

Out of 107 alumni in Education at the INES, 41 graduates took part in the survey. Of this total, 10 stated that they were deaf and 30, non-deaf. One participant chose the option 'other', but did not elaborate.

According to the data obtained, this degree course was the first degree for the majority of the participants – 83%, comprising all the deaf graduates. Another important aspect is that the majority of the graduates are female – 73%. The average age of the graduates is 37 years old, spanning an age range from 23 to 58.

Of all the participants in the survey, 24% have deaf relatives. However, this fact did not influence students' interest in choosing a degree in Education at the INES. None of the graduates cited their having a deaf relative as a reason for their choice of academic institution. In fact, their reasons for choosing to study Education at the INES were mainly as follows:

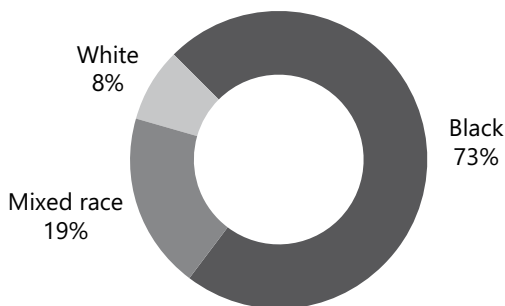
(1) because of the high standard of teaching – 39% in total and 50% of deaf graduates;
(2) because the course is free – 24%; and
(3) because the graduates were not able to enter other universities (22%). Even though this last point represents a small percentage, just the thought of a student choosing a particular degree course in a particular institution because he/she did not have access to other institutions puts pressure on the institution in question, which has the hard task of engaging this student. To be academically successful, students should enjoy their degree courses.

The degree course in Education at the DESU can be completed in a maximum of seven years and a minimum of four. Regarding the length it took students to complete their courses, the responses were as follows:

- a) 4 years – 59%
- b) 5 years – 19%
- c) 6 years – 10%
- d) 7 years – 12%

Therefore, one can conclude that the average length for students to complete their degree is good – most students completed their course in the minimum duration established by the institution, including 50% of the deaf graduates. Furthermore, most graduates taking part in this survey – 93% – would be happy to recommend this course. However, 22% would recommend it with reservation. Details about these reservations have not been included in the survey.

With regard to the graduates' ethnic background, according to the IBGE parameters, the results are presented in Figure 3.



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 3. Graduates' Ethnic Background.

Out of the group of students who graduated in Education between 2009 and 2016, more than half – 28 graduates – attended secondary state schools. Based on this information regarding the graduates' schooling, we also wanted to investigate the main reasons why these graduates chose a degree in Education, as well as these individuals' rapport with their degree course. Here is what we found.

7 Graduates and DESU/INES BA in education

There were several main reasons for graduates to choose their degree courses, which we deemed sufficiently significant to include in this study.

The survey shows that out of 41 participants, 27% had already been working in education before starting their degree. The rest of the group replied as follows:

- a) 20% à wished to do a degree course; and
- b) 17% à just wished to expand their knowledge; 50% of the deaf graduates chose this option.

Only one graduate said the labour market was promising, which reflects the graduates' pessimistic view regarding job opportunities after finishing their degrees. Only three graduates had already been working as BSL interpreters before they started their degree courses. Furthermore, 20% selected the option "other", but when stating why they chose this option they responded: "there wasn't another option available".

With respect to the labour market, the survey responses show that 83% had already been working and little more than 41% had already been working in Education before they started their degree. The other graduates had been working in a different field.

At the end of the degree course, what would be the relationship between graduates and the labour market? This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Insertion in the labour market before and after the course.

Graduates	Participation in the Labour Market	
	Before the course	After the course
In the same field	41%	39%
In another field	41%	24%
Unemployed	17%	37%

Source: Field research (2017).

This data shows that the number of unemployed graduates has sharply risen, and curiously there has been a decrease in the number of graduates working in the field of education – from 42% to 39%.

In that respect, there seems to be an inconsistency in graduates' responses concerning who is active in the labour market and who is not. All graduates responded to this question, including those who are not currently working. However, most importantly, when asked if they had chosen to pursue a post-graduate course after finishing their degree in Education, 49% of graduates responded positively, out of which 37% were in the field of Education and 12% in another field.

When asked about their career prospects in Education, nearly half of these graduates (49%) responded "good" and 27%, "excellent", whereas 24% opted for "reasonable". None of the respondents responded "bad" or "terrible". This fact shows a bias towards optimism regarding their academic education at the DESU. This optimism is also reflected in the number of graduates who consider themselves well prepared to work in the labour market (61%), only a small number of which (7%) disagrees. However, as shown in Table 2, there is no apparent relation between the graduates' academic backgrounds and their insertion in the labour market.

When asked if they had ever applied for a job in the public sector during or after they had finished their degrees, 17 of 41 graduates said that they were successful in securing a position, which represents an average of 41%. In Brazil, candidates need to sit competitive exams if they wish to secure a job in the public sector. To have any hope of passing these exams, candidates need a sound academic background, so these graduates' survey responses reflect a positive academic experience. A total of 10 of these graduates had never applied for a job in the public sector.

Labour market issues inevitably give rise to questions regarding monthly income.

8 What is your income?

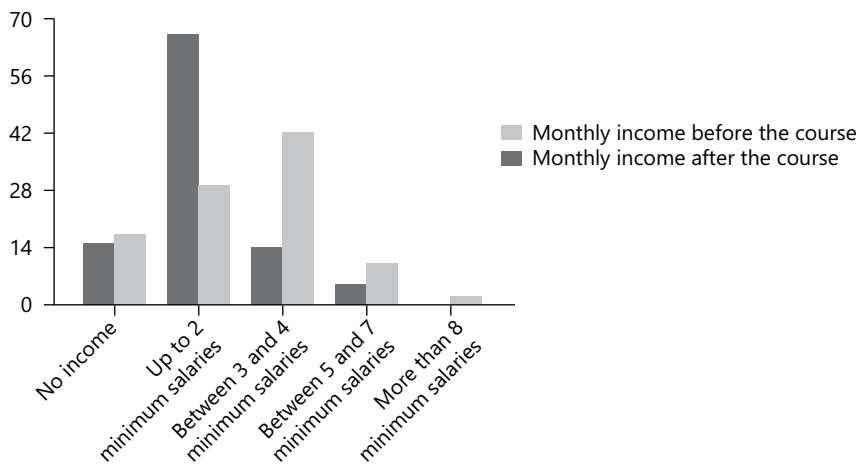
According to the Brazilian Census Department (IBGE), Brazil's income brackets are divided as follows (Table 3).

In general, individuals pursue a degree course hoping to improve their financial situation. Therefore, we asked the respondents about this topic and asked them to disclose their economic situation before and after their degrees. At the time we collected the data, the minimum monthly wage was BRL 880.00 – eight hundred and eighty reais (approximately USD 276 or GBP 210). The comparative outcomes are shown in Figure 4.

Table 3. Brazil's income brackets.

Class	Minimum Monthly Wage (MS) in BRL
A	Above 20 MW
B	10 to 20 MW
C	4 to 10 MW
D	2 to 4 MW
E	Below 2 MW

Source: IBGE (2015).



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 4. Monthly income before and after the course.

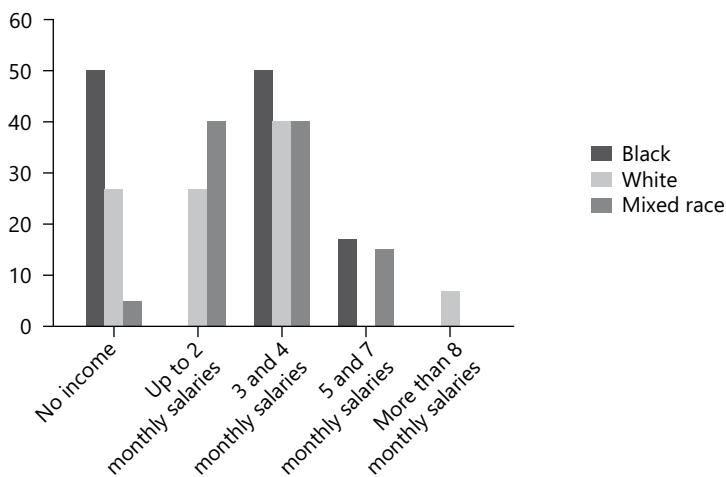
When comparing the two graphs, which include all the graduates taking part in the survey, it is possible to see a significant improvement in these graduates' financial situation after finishing their degree courses – from a range of 3 to 4 minimum monthly wages to 5 to 7 minimum monthly wages. Furthermore, there was the insertion of a new monthly wage range – above 8 minimum wages, and there was also a significant reduction in the range of up to 2 minimum wages. However, there was a small increase in the number of people with the same income range; that is, those who were not working after having completed a degree, but that did not necessarily mean that those families had not been earning enough to survive. With regard to deaf graduates, a worrying piece of data is that 30% of this group have no income and 70% earn up to 2 minimum wages. That data suggests the results that Silva and Speller (2008) and Gomes and Palazzo (2017) researched.

They surveyed graduates in Pedagogy and discovered that the students choice for Pedagogy was based on the ease of getting a job after qualifying.

It is possible to conduct further analyses by breaking down the group according to different criteria. When focusing on the graduates’ ethnic backgrounds, for instance, the monthly income changes according to the classification of the Brazilian Census Department (IBGE), as shown in Figure 5.

Even though some people dispute the apparent relation between purchasing power and ethnic background, it is important to state that any anti-poverty public policy should be based on socio-economic opportunity. Opportunities among Brazil’s various races have never been equal.

In this study, the highest concentration of income of these three races is in the range of 3 to 4 minimum wages, whereas all ethnic backgrounds have a no income range, which is a concerning piece of data, because it suggests that these graduates are outside the labour market. Furthermore, the wider the gaps between wage ranges, the greater the inequality among those with the same ethnic background. This fact is more evident among the “black” race, which presents the greatest spread in wage ranges. The most balanced race is the “mixed-race” one, but this also represents the lion’s share of participants in the study. Another important aspect is that the “white” race, with the smallest number of participants, was the



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 5. Monthly income according to ethnic background.

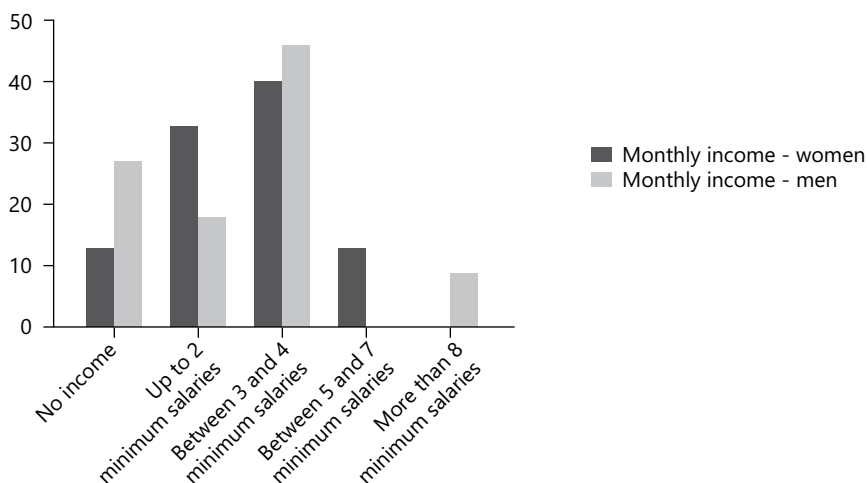
only group to earn more than 8 minimum monthly wages, which illustrates the divergence in access of some races to higher income in Brazilian society: it is dominated by a small number of “white” people with higher incomes.

The analysis of graduates’ income mirrors the lion’s share of the Brazilian economic class pursuing a degree in Education: the D class.

It is important to better understand the extent to which race salary inequalities are linked to the standards of education and professional performance. Collective poverty inequalities in different races partially result in inequality among social classes that the official economic system perpetuates.

Regarding the monthly income in relation to gender, the results are presented in Figure 6.

Despite the fact that men outnumber women, the wage range of 3 to 4 minimum wages is very similar for both groups, whereas the gaps are higher for the other ranges: (1) the female group are not included in the 8-minimum-wage range; (2) the number of women in the range of up to 2 minimum wages is twice as much as men; the opposite occurs in relation to (3) the no income range, in which the number of women with no income is lower than men.



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 6. Monthly income – women and men.

The data can also be analysed according to the marital status of the respondents.

With regard to the respondents' marital status, the majority of graduates share their household with other people and, therefore, are able to share expenses if necessary. We should not exclude the possibility, however, that the breadwinners of the families are responsible for all the household expenses in the case of graduates earning up to 2 minimum wages, which would illustrate the precariousness of the financial situation of these respondents, particularly those who have children.

In relation to the graduates' overall financial conditions, out of 41 participants, 37 stated that they had a computer at home throughout their degree course.

Regarding furthering their studies, more than half of the graduates (51%) did not do a post-graduate course. However, of the other half of the respondents, nearly all of them (49% of the total group) decided to pursue an academic specialisation, and 12% opted for a field outside education. As 'furthering one's studies' could also mean applying for a new degree course, we decided to investigate this issue. The outcomes show that an overwhelming majority of the graduates (90%) opted for not doing another degree course, while four graduates, who had begun a new degree, opted for studying BSL/Languages.

9 Obstacles experienced by the graduates during their degrees

One of the goals of this survey was to identify any obstacles experienced by the graduates during their degree courses.

When asked if they had thought of dropping out from the degree course, a significant number of students (36.59%) said yes, whereas 70% of deaf graduates said no.

Some of the obstacles related to students' dropping out were as follows:

- a) as these graduates were the first class to pursue a degree in Education at the INES, not everything was in place at the commencement of the programme;
- b) modules in Brazilian Sign Language had not been included in the curriculum of this first group of graduates;
- c) there was a lack of teaching materials, such as subtitled DVDs (videos);
- d) expository lessons, with few images, made it difficult for deaf students to follow the teaching;
- e) there were instances of teachers' rude behaviour towards students;

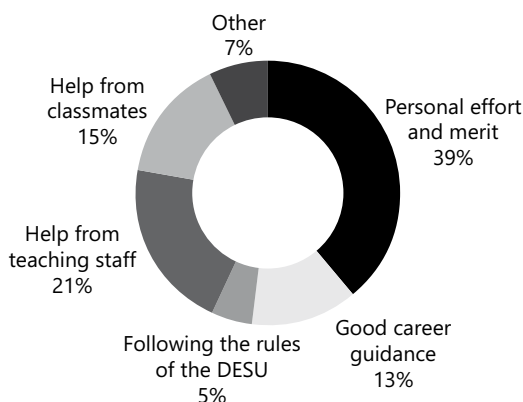
- f) comparing the degree courses in Education available in other institutions, students concluded that these were more comprehensive than the DESU degree course;
- g) there were few deaf teaching staff members on the degree course.

Approximately 40% of the graduates considered dropping out of their degree courses, which is an alarming statistic for any higher education institution. The idea of dropping out mainly represents graduates giving up their dreams and aspirations, and at the same time having to face disillusion and look for resources to salvage their aspired life chances.

In relation to the resources for academic success obtained by the graduates who managed to finish their degree courses, we offered several multiple-choice answers; that is, students could tick more than one answer. Figure 7 shows the outcomes and their respective percentages.

Regarding why the graduates were successful in finishing their degrees, 7% chose “other”, but not all of them elaborated on their choice. The essay answers were as follows:

- a) “My own personal effort and a close-knit class, helping one another.”
- b) “Perseverance, because this was the first class to graduate, we had several obstacles.”
- c) “I asked God to give me strength to finish my course.”



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 7. To what do you attribute the ability to finish your degree?

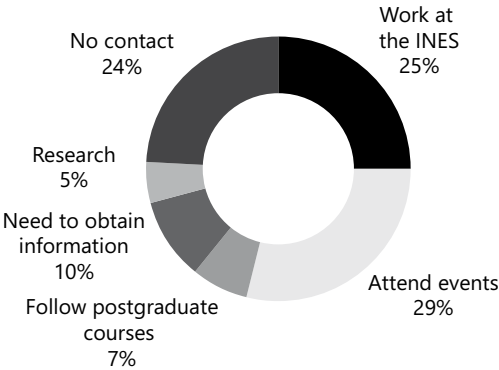
Based on these responses, it was possible to see that the graduates did not attribute their success to the institution; that is, their responses were of a personal nature concerning their career. Therefore, they did not perceive the institution as playing a decisive role. Thus, the options “personal effort and own merit” and “help from the teaching staff” reflect a strong peer bond, not an institutional one.

10 Forget or return?

MEC’s Graduate Assessment Policy raises the following questions: “Do graduates take part in the life of the institution? How?” (BRASIL, 2015). The goal of these questions is to bring graduates back to the institution where they studied and obtained their professional skills, either furthering their studies or taking part in academic activities. Graduates’ experiences can positively impact the career of new professionals because it provides important information regarding the degree course and the graduates’ trajectory. It is an opportunity for graduates to point out what was positive or negative or missing in their professional-academic education and rather important to their future career.

Therefore, we tried to investigate the graduates’ contact or lack of contact with the INES. At first, the result seemed rather positive, because approximately 70% of the graduates maintain contact with the institution. However, we also had to investigate the kind of contact. In light of that, the conclusion was somewhat different. The results are presented in Figure 8.

The data shows that the INES needs to review its policy regarding its graduates. It is vital to promote the return of these graduates to the institution, in particular, to increase their participation in postgraduate courses and research groups.



Source: Field research (2017).

Figure 8. Graduates who maintain contact with the INES.

Some graduates maintain contact with the INES because they are members of the teaching staff – including 30% of the deaf graduates.

11 Content analysis

Once the participants of the survey had given their views on their respective experiences in pursuing the INES degree course in Education, we analysed their responses. It is important to highlight that instead of simply analysing their discourse, we opted for a content analysis. With that in mind, we organised the responses into categories based on a semantic criterion – the themes that the participants presented.

The following essay question was included in the graduates’ questionnaire: “Are there any aspects of your degree course that you would change?” All graduates taking part in the survey (N = 41) answered this question. The six most commented categories were: “Curriculum”, “lack of BSL modules in the curriculum” and “Standard of teaching”, “Lack of modules related to deafness”, “Internship” and “Course materials available” – amounting to 67% of the responses. The outcomes of the graduates’ responses regarding the Content Analysis and their respective examples are shown in the table below.

The most commented of all categories was the “Curriculum.” Several participants stated that they were rather unsatisfied with the Education degree curriculum. In fact, in the past five years, the curriculum has undergone three changes. Whereas

Table 4. What are the main aspects that could be changed in your degree courses?

Are there any other aspects in your Degree Course that you think should be changed?	Total	%
Curriculum	10	19
Inclusion of BSL in the Curriculum	6	11
Standard of teaching	6	11
Modules related to deafness	6	11
Internship	5	9
Teaching materials available	5	9
Standard of interpretation	3	6
Delay in delivering students’ degrees	3	6
Administration	3	6
Coordination	3	6
Infrastructure	2	4
Learning assessment	2	4

Source: Field research (2017).

this fact could be seen as an ongoing attempt from the institution to improve its course, a considerable number of graduates perceived this as a mistake, as indicated in their responses below:

The degree course was similar to a language degree rather than a degree in Education (Graduate 19)

Design new curriculums that prepare students to face diversity and different realities. Instead of removing one subject and replacing it with a new one, the entire curriculum should be redesigned (Graduate 7)

Other graduates pointed to a perceived lack of depth in certain modules (Management, Teaching, Special Needs Education) and a lack of optional modules available in the curriculum. However, some graduates were less harsh, suggesting that changes could be positive in restructuring the course, as illustrated in the following response: “[...] as the curriculum underwent some changes, I think that this may no longer be a problem” (Graduate 13).

Regarding the category inclusion of BSL lessons in the curriculum, some graduates (11.1%) stated that it was hard to follow a bilingual degree course without modules in BSL. This observation was included in one of the responses:

It is important to point out that there were no BSL lessons available in the curriculum, which I deemed essential. Many of my classmates obtained a bilingual degree in Education without having grasped some basic communication skills in BSL, without even being able to communicate with their deaf classmate (Graduate 33).

The inclusion of BSL modules in the course timetable should be done in the same way and proportionally to the number of Portuguese modules, because like written Portuguese, BSL was also a pre-requisite to enter the degree course. I’m not aware if this has changed, but this was one of the main aspects that made me unhappy and DISAPPOINTED with the course (Graduate 02).

From 2005 onwards, with the inclusion of 36 staff members dedicated to the Education degree course, the curriculum has been offering BSL modules. Since then, this module has been run by deaf teachers – a minority in the DESU teaching staff.

Regarding the category standard of teaching, graduates pointed out that the teaching staff had little experience in working with deaf people. Furthermore, they did not know how to communicate in BSL, and there were no deaf tutors.

[...] the module was rather loose, and the teaching staff was ready to discuss different topics, except education for deaf people, such as how the body is perceived by the Brazilian media (Graduate 33).

It is important to improve the dialogue between the teaching staff and the students, particularly concerning the deaf students (Graduate 34).

With regard to subjects related to deafness, several graduates missed having a deeper understanding of theory in the field of deafness, which is rather necessary for a bilingual degree course.

we had no teacher training lessons, nothing related to Special Needs Education (Graduate 19).

[...] there were no furthering modules in Inclusive Special Needs Education or regarding other disabilities and teaching method or even simple guidelines concerning the AEE (Special Education Assistance) (Graduate 10).

In the internship category, nearly 10% of the graduates stated there was a lack of interaction between the university (DESU) and the INES school: “[...] I graduated from an institution that also has a school, and I have no idea how it works. I was never offered an internship in the school, and the schoolteachers do not take on many trainees” (Graduate 18).

With regard to the category of teaching materials available, students stated that there was a lack of materials suitable for deaf students: “Portuguese texts should also provide a video with translation in BSL so that deaf students can understand and have more teaching practice” (Graduate 20).

It is important to highlight that Brazilian Sign Language is the first language of deaf students. Unlike Portuguese, it is visually structured. Therefore, deaf students need to have bilingual materials as learning aids.

The other categories mentioned by the graduates regarding changes in the course had smaller representation. The most significant of these (5.6%) were

the standard of the interpreters, delay in delivering their degrees, administrative and coordination issues.

According to the graduates, other topics that should be changed were the infrastructure and learning assessment, which was mentioned twice. On the other hand, the categories that were only mentioned once were not included in this study.

12 Final considerations

The data collected provides a first glimpse at the trajectory of graduates from the INES higher education institute. Some perspectives seem to point to the urgency to implement an effective and long-lasting graduates' follow-up policy. This project should be turned into effective public policies.

Overall, the survey data shows that the Education course is well rated by most graduates and this is made clear by their responses to whether the course contributes to the graduates' social and cultural development – 70% responded in the affirmative. When assessing the course, this positive view is evident – 40% of the graduates regarded the course as excellent and 50% as good; that is, a total of 90% of graduates thought the Education course contributed positively to their lives, despite the difficulties they faced during their long academic journey.

Bearing in mind that the INES is a landmark institution in providing education to deaf people, it could also be equally important to develop and conduct policies to open the doors of other institutions to graduates. Not only are these policies important because they are legally endorsed by MEC, but also because they reflect the inclusiveness of an institution that has been successfully fighting for overlooked minority groups.

We hope that the data presented in this study will be appropriated not only by the INES current and former teaching staff, but also by other third parties interested in the field of education methodology. Even though this field of research is regarded as essential in assessing standards of education, to date it has not been satisfactorily used as raw data by most higher education institutions.

Egressos: um olhar sobre as trajetórias de graduados em Pedagogia do Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos

Resumo

O presente estudo trata do percurso de egressos(as) do curso de graduação do Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos (INES). O estudo procurou analisar o tipo de resultado profissional e acadêmico que o curso em tela produz. Nesse sentido, um dos objetivos da pesquisa foi o de relacionar o curso e a vida acadêmica com a empregabilidade no mercado de trabalho. O instrumento de pesquisa utilizado foi um questionário online (Libras e Português), composto por perguntas multiopcionais e dissertativas, direcionado a 41 egressos graduados em Pedagogia, titulados no período entre 2009 e 2016. Os resultados mostraram a predominância de ouvintes, mulheres, de cor parda e idade média de 37 anos, com renda mensal de 3 a 4 salários mínimos. A análise dos dados evidencia que mais de 90% dos(as) egressos(as) atribuíram conceito bom ou ótimo ao curso de graduação concluído no INES. Na análise de conteúdo, foram consideradas 12 categorias de maior insatisfação dos egressos e, dentre elas, a mais comentada foi “currículo”. Outros aspectos igualmente comentados, mas com menor frequência, foram: inclusão de disciplinas de Libras, qualidade docente, disciplina da área da surdez, estágio e produção de materiais didáticos.

Palavras-chave: Egressos. Formação educacional. Atuação profissional. Surdo. Carreira.

Egresados: una visión general de la trayectoria de graduados en Educación del Instituto Nacional para Sordos

Resumen

Este estudio se centra en la trayectoria de los egresados del Instituto Nacional de Educación de Sordos (INES). Su objetivo es analizar el desarrollo profesional y los resultados académicos de los estudiantes que siguieron cursos de Educación en el INES. Uno de los objetivos de nuestra investigación fue evaluar la relación entre estos cursos de grado de los estudiantes y el seguimiento de posgrado. Como herramienta de encuesta, utilizamos un cuestionario en línea bilingüe (BSL - Lenguaje de Señas Brasileño - y Lengua Portuguesa), que comprende preguntas de opción múltiple y de ensayo, diseñado para 41 graduados en Educación, que obtuvieron sus títulos entre 2009 y 2016. La mayoría de los participantes era de origen étnico mixto, mujeres, de color pardo, con una edad promedio de 37 años, y un ingreso mensual de 3 a 4 salarios mínimos mensuales, y sin discapacidad auditiva. Los datos analizados revelan que más del 90% de los graduados considera que sus cursos de INES son buenos o excelentes. En relación con el contenido de estos cursos de grado, doce categorías se consideraron bastante insatisfactorias, y la más criticada de todas fue el “plan de estudios”. Otros temas frecuentemente criticados fueron: la falta de módulos de BSL en el plan de estudios, el estándar de enseñanza, la falta de módulos relacionados con la sordera, pasantías y materiales disponibles.

Palabras clave: Egresos. Formación educative. Actuación professional. Sordez. Carrera.

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