CRITICAL READING
NOVEMBER, 2017

BNCC VERSION 3: SIX ASPECTS FOR REVISION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPONENT

About this document

This document, produced in accordance with an invitation by the National Education Council (CNE) and aimed at shedding light at future policy making initiatives and the practice of educators in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), has been prepared by the British Council and offers a critical analysis of Version 3 of the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC), dealing solely with the English Language component. The study was coordinated by Cíntia Toth Gonçalves (British Council) and undertaken by three prominent specialists in English language teaching in Brazil: Prof. Andreia Cristina Alves de Oliveira Silva (Escola da Vila), Prof. Dr. Kyria Rebeca Finardi (Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo) and Prof. Lívia Pretto Mottin (Universidade do Vale do Taquari - Univates).

Introduction

This is a **critical reading** of the English Language (EL) component of version 3 of the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC). It is the outcome of discussions between English teaching specialists and the British Council in Brazil.

"Learning and teaching English in use and for use"

The publication of the final BNCC document will allow states and municipalities to start drafting or revising their curricula. In addition: (a) new policies will be introduced for teacher training throughout Brazil; (b) new or revised teaching material will be published; and (c) new benchmarks will be issued for internal and external assessment.

In the face of this challenge, the **aim** of this critical reading is to suggest changes to the EL component that are consistent with the objectives of the BNCC and will enable it to meet the expectations for a document of this nature, in the context of English teaching in Brazil. Our **premise** is therefore the learning/teaching of English in use and for use. Our aim is to give students the chance to experience the language in its proper context so as to be able to communicate effectively, to express themselves more adeptly and to interact with other people in English.

In short, the topics listed below have as their basis factors which we think are of importance for a document that is to be a reference throughout the country. Our **purpose** in making this critical analysis is that the BNCC should be a milestone in innovation in EL teaching in Brazil, breaking the mould of the current mechanical, inefficient and fragmented methods. It is important for the learning and development process that the final years of primary education should dovetail with both the earlier stages and the later ones. The set of knowledge and skills acquired will serve as a basis for further, more in-depth learning at secondary school. This study is in line with the analysis submitted by the British Council in January (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2017), in that it considers it to be of vital importance to obtain a structural overview of the language, but differs from it in its approach to the changes suggested.

About the British Council: with a presence in more than 100 countries, we are the United Kingdom's official representative. Our mission is to support the learning and teaching of the English language throughout the world, so as to build cultural and educational relationships between the UK and other countries. We therefore wish to make a contribution to the debate on the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC), focusing on the English language, at this crucial time for basic education in Brazil.

Summary

Six aspects for revision of version 3 of the BNCC

The BNCC is a document which will regulate education in Brazil, and it has great potential to create a fair educational system in the country. Its purpose is to define the essential skills which every student, throughout Brazil, will be expected to acquire during the years of basic education, and to promote fairness and equality by channelling "education in Brazil towards overall personal development, so as to build a just, democratic and inclusive society" (BNCC, version 3, p. 7). In addition to its educational aims, the BNCC will provide guidance for:

- drafting and implementing curricula and educational objectives at state and municipal level;
- reshaping policies for teacher training throughout the country;
- producing or revising school textbooks;
- setting new benchmarks for internal and external assessments.

Given the importance of the BNCC and the influence it will have on Brazil's educational system, our critical reading highlights six aspects that we consider essential for improving the English Language component included in Version 3, if every student is to be offered education of quality. They are:

1. Consistency between theoretical premises and content
2. Clarity in learning goals
3. Flexibility in the curriculum at regional/local level
4. Clear progression in learning over the years
5. Effectiveness of EL teaching
6. Proposals to meet the needs of the twenty-first century

This analysis addresses each of the six aspects and shows the extent to which they are covered in Version 3 of the BNCC.

> ### Drivers of the analysis
> 1. **Consistency** between theoretical premises and content
> 2. **Clarity** in learning goals
> 3. **Flexibility** in the curriculum at regional/local level
> 4. **Clear progression** in learning over the years
> 5. **Effectiveness** of EL teaching
> 6. Proposals to meet the **needs of the twenty-first century**

1

Consistency between theoretical premises and content

We know that drafting a document such as the BNCC, if its proposed content is to be coherent, involves wide-ranging debate and a sound basis in theory. We are aware that aligning theory and practice is always a challenge, and that there is a need to resolve this dichotomy if the quality of education is to be enhanced; and so we are proposing a revision of certain aspects of the document. Our aim is to ensure that classroom teaching, once the BNCC is published, is not just "more of the same".

> *"a need to resolve this dichotomy (between theory and practice) if the quality of education is to be enhanced"*

To this end, the theoretical basis for EL teaching should emphasise the comprehensive training of students, replacing fragmented and out-of-context tuition with meaningful learning; and English teachers should have the skills to nurture critical thinking and civic responsibility. In practice, this would mean an end to learning the names of verb tenses or clauses in English, for example, and instead learning to use the language in different social and formative contexts, "in use and for use".
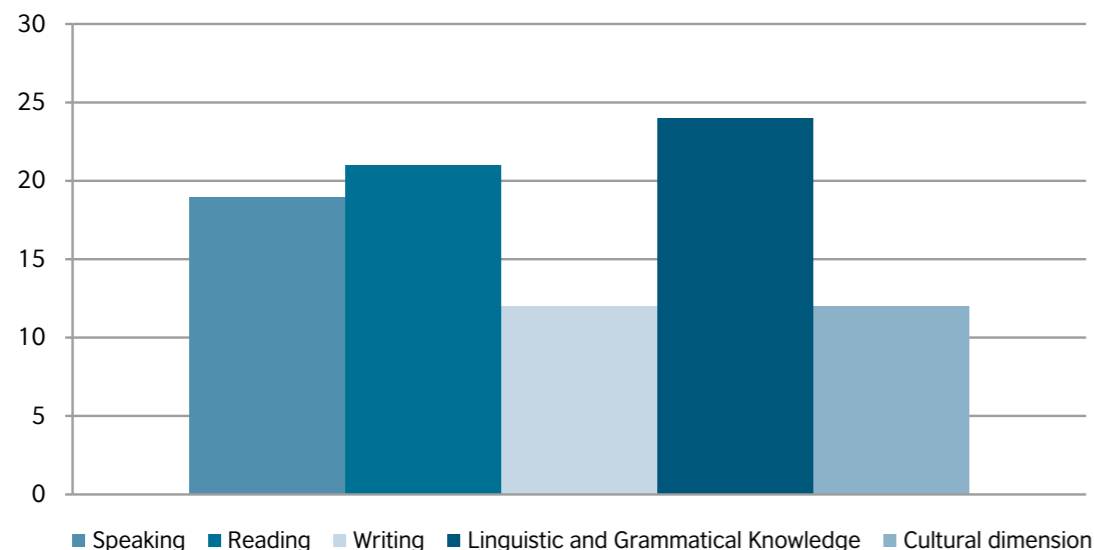
However, if we look at the tables of thematic units, the subject knowledge and the abilities defined for each year, we cannot see how the BNCC is going to guarantee this comprehensive training in practice, since the teaching guidelines presented are extremely fragmented and do not address the use of the language within a formative context. Our view is that the document should outline the skills necessary to live and learn in the twenty-first century, such as problem solving, decision making, collaboration, creative thinking and arguing a case. The document proposes an over-long list of required abilities, reinforcing the use of basic skills and systemic knowledge of the English language, but fails to establish a clear relationship, for example, with building a just, inclusive society. The following table gives an illustration of our argument.

Table 1 – Examples of abilities reinforcing the use of basic skills and systemic knowledge of the English language

Ability code	Description of the ability
(EF06LI23)	Using **possessive adjectives** correctly.
(EF07LI19)	*Differentiating between subject and object using the appropriate pronouns correctly.*
(EF08LI16)	Using **some**, **any**, **many**, **much** correctly.
(EF09LI15)	Using *conditional sentences types 1 and 2 (If-clauses)* correctly.

As this shows, the abilities defined in the document reflect the traditional approach to the language as a set of rules to be learned, when in fact it should act as an instrument for broadening horizons of communication and for cultural, scientific and academic exchanges. The same emphasis on the language as a system of rules can be seen in the following chart, which shows the distribution in Version 3 of 88 abilities in five segments.

What we see is a proposal for fragmented, out-of-context learning of the English language, presented in this BNCC document as an end in itself. So what we will get is a method of teaching which reinforces the well-worn mechanical and purely instrumental teaching of the language, giving priority to its structural aspects without providing the tools for teachers to break the mould of an emphasis on vocabulary and grammar. The result is that students will not be guaranteed comprehensive learning.

Here is what we suggest:

- eliminate abilities which focus only on grammatical rules in isolation, without placing them in the context of real-life use of the language.

- rename the segments in order to give the language value as a social function, rather than calling to mind fragmented linguistic skills.

Chart 1 – Distribution of abilities in the segments of the EL component

Source: National Council of Education Secretaries (Consed); National Union of Municipal Education Managers (Undime) - 2017.

Table 2 – Suggestions for renaming the segments of the EL component

Version 3	Suggestion
Speaking	Oral comprehension and communication practice
Reading	Written comprehension and communication practice
Writing	
Linguistic and Grammatical Knowledge	Linguistic awareness
Cultural dimension	Intercultural awareness

Table 3 – Summary of item 1:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Elimination of abilities focused on the rules of grammar	Consistency between theoretical premises and content
Renaming of the segments	Overcoming fragmented learning and out-of-context language

Just from looking at this chart, one can only deduce that *Linguistic and Grammatical Knowledge* is the most important segment. But the recommendation in the BNCC is that EL teaching should not focus unduly on this segment, and it also points out that the language should not be treated in isolation:

> *"It is the specific features of the language in use, a hybrid, polyphonic and multimodal language, that should be studied; and no single segment should be regarded as a primary requisite for this purpose - least of all the segment of linguistic and grammatical knowledge."* (BNCC, version 3, p. 202)

If we take a more in-depth look at all the segments (*Speaking, Reading, Writing, Linguistic and Grammatical Knowledge, Cultural Dimension*) we see that for the most part they are aimed at instilling skills that go beyond the traditional model: *reading, writing, speaking and listening*. So the theoretical principles outlined in the BNCC, version 3, - "[…] overcoming the radical fragmentation of knowledge, encouraging students to apply it to real life situations, prioritizing the student's learning process, and emphasizing the importance of context to make sense of what is learned […]" (p. 17) – are at odds with the tables which show the thematic units, subject knowledge and abilities defined for each year.

2

Clarity in learning goals

Learning goals, which are referred to in version 3 of the BNCC as abilities, are intended to list the basic knowledge to be acquired by students, and to serve as a reference for drafting and updating the regional, state and municipal curricula. The way in which they are described should imply the imperative "students will…" and should consist of two or three parts. These are: 1) the cognitive process (indicated by a verb); 2) the content (what is to be learned); and 3) a modifier (level of complexity or the context in which the learning in question should be placed).

"learning goals are intended to list the basic knowledge to be acquired"

For the BNCC to be introduced into schools and to be used for drafting a curriculum, it is essential that these goals should be clearly understood. This being the case, we have identified two factors which make it hard to understand exactly what is expected of the student. They are:

Combination of multiple objectives

The abilities listed in the table below serve to illustrate the combination of multiple objectives in a single item. To make this easier to grasp, we have shown the cognitive processes (the verbs) in bold type, and the content in italics.

The most telling example is the last ability in the following table (EF09LI10), which consists of seven verbs. This multiplicity of expectations, far from meeting its purpose, which is to give guidance, simply creates confusion as to what in fact it is expected that the student will be capable of doing.

Our suggestion is:

- to apply a single cognitive process (verb) to each ability.

Table 4 – Examples of abilities which combine multiple objectives

Ability code	Description of the ability
(EF06LI08)	**Identifying** *what a text is about,* **recognising** *its textual organisation and cognate words.*
(EF08LI01)	Making use of the English language to **resolve** misunderstandings, **issue** opinions and **clarify** information using paraphrases or justifications.
(EF09LI10)	**Proposing** possible arguments for **expounding** and **defending** a point of view in a written text, **reflecting** on the topic proposed and **researching** data, evidence and examples to **support** the arguments, **organising** them in logical sequence.

Table 5 – Summary of item 2:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Limitation to a single goal/verb for each ability	Clarity in learning goals

Update: the first version of this text suggested that the BNCC should list measurable learning goals. This suggestion was excluded in the March 2018 version, since it was held that the assessment of skills and competencies was beyond the remit of the BNCC.

3

Flexibility in the curriculum at regional/local level

While on the one hand it is fundamental that the school curriculum throughout Brazil should have a common base, on the other hand it is also essential that there should be the flexibility to allow for local variations in such a heterogeneous and diverse country. For this reason, 60% of the content of the curriculum will be determined by the BNCC and the remaining 40% defined regionally, in line with specific local conditions.

However, this flexibility – which was assured in version 2 of the BNCC, which lists a total of 32 abilities – seems to have been lost in version 3, which lists 88. This is a significant difference: the number of abilities has been increased by 175%.

Chart 2 – Comparison of the number of abilities in versions 2 and 3 of the BNCC
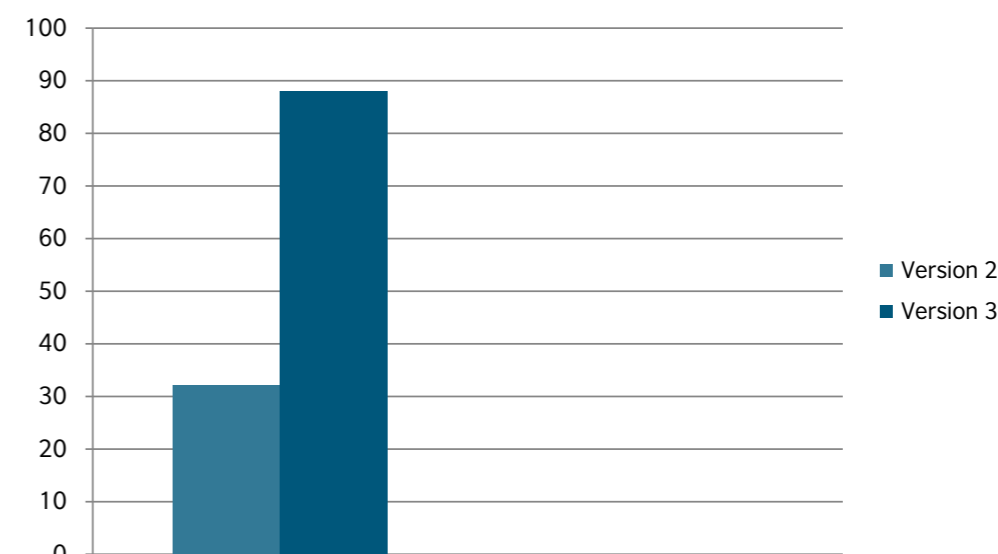
Legend: ■ Version 2　■ Version 3

Source: National Council of Education Secretaries (Consed); National Union of Municipal Education Managers (Undime) – 2017.

The reason given for this increase in the number of abilities is that the "Foreign Language" component of the curriculum, in version 2, was changed to "English Language" in version 3. However this increase does not seem to makes sense, since EL teaching need not be different from the teaching of any modern foreign language, except for minor adjustments in the case of English, such as its function as an international *lingua franca*.

> *"60% of the content of the curriculum will be determined by the BNCC and the remaining 40% defined regionally"*

The description of abilities in version 3 does not seem to us to relate to the specific nature of the English language. On the contrary: totally new objectives have been added, which channel learning expectations towards a view of the language and its teaching which is wholly opposed to that contained in the previous version. We feel that this is a matter for concern.

While the 32 abilities in version 2 took a discursive and comprehensive view of teaching, the 88 in version 3, in an attempt to define objectives, have the effect of promoting a mechanical, fragmented approach to the language; and they also account for the bulk of the content of the curriculum. In other words, this makes it more difficult to introduce flexibility in the curriculum at regional/local level.

As a way of resolving this imbalance, we suggest:

• reducing the number of abilities.

Table 6 – Summary of item 3:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Reduction in the number of abilities	Flexibility in the curriculum at regional/local level

4

Clear progression in learning

Progressive learning is an aspect common to all curricular directives and guidelines, since it is normal to expect the level of complexity to increase over the years. We would like to stress the need for clarity in the construction of a curriculum about the way in which this progression should occur.

Version 3 of the BNCC states that progress in learning can relate to cognitive processes, to subject knowledge, or to the modifiers described in the abilities (p. 29). What we see, however, is a repetition of material over the years, and this is both inconsistent with the principle expressed and fails to give a sensation of progress. This argument is illustrated in the following table, with reference to abilities in the Reading segment (in bold type).

Table 7 – Examples of abilities which do not clearly show progressive learning

Ability code	Description of the ability
(EF06LI07)	**Formulating hypotheses** on the purpose of discursive styles in the English language, based on their structure, textual organisation and graphical clues.
(EF07LI06)	**Grasping the general meaning of texts** in English by inferences from a quick reading, noting titles, the first and last sentences of paragraphs and repeated key words.
(EF08LI05)	**Inferring information** and relationships which are not explicit in the text, in order to elicit meaning.
(EF09LI05)	**Identifying methods** of persuasion (choice of words, play on words, use of colours and images, size of letters) used in advertising and publicity texts in order to convince the reader.

Our analysis permits us to make two observations:

a. Formulating hypotheses, grasping the general meaning of texts, inferring information and identifying resources are, in fact, consistent strategies normally used in any EL reading context. We therefore suggest that progression should occur in the shape of increasing complexity of styles and texts. These would be selected according to topics indicated for each year. In other words, items with a more simple style could be selected in the initial years, such as reading cinema tickets, tweets or cooking recipes. In the later stages more complex styles would be selected, such as blogs, film reviews and news stories. This suggestion indicates progress and also gives the student a better idea of the practical use and purpose of communications in real life. Reading a cinema ticket enables the student to identify the name of the film, the time of showing and the seat number. A cooking recipe contains a list of ingredients, the method of preparation and the time it will take. Reading a film review, on the other hand, can help someone decide whether or not they should go and see it.

b. With the adoption of more complex styles and topics, so as to make progress not only in reading but in every aspect of the use of language (speaking, writing, linguistic forms), the learning of linguistic and discursive elements (pronouns, verbs, syntax, vocabulary etc.) would naturally evolve to a more substantive level, since these elements are related to the use one wants to make of them. More complex styles require more complex linguistic structures. What is more, if progress is measured by increasing the complexity of discursive styles

and thematic units, students will select the way in which they interact with the text (listening, reading, speaking or writing) on the basis of the social context. Students will interact with a recipe, for instance, by reading it, and at the same time they can be taught the imperative (because there are orders and procedures to be followed) as well as vocabulary from the concrete, familiar world.

The changes proposed below are also consistent with a view of language as part of a framework of various social practices (ways of being, describing and behaving in the world).

Our suggestion is:

• progressive learning by means of encountering increasingly complex texts.

In the table below, we show the way in which progress is shaped and thematic units organised over the years, since it is on this that our concrete suggestions for revision are based.

The table on the following page shows the thematic units proposed in version 3 of the BNCC. We have highlighted the repetition of the majority of them year after year. The only differences are shown in bold type. On the right are our suggestions for thematic units for each year, to serve as a guide for selecting texts and activities.

Table 8 – Suggestion for progressive learning

	Version 3	Suggestion
Progression	Related to the cognitive processes, subject knowledge and modifiers described in the abilities	Measured in terms of experience of increasingly complex texts selected from thematic units
Thematic units	Repeated in different years (without indicating the level of progress desired) and in a confusing way: are they grouped in topics or by teaching-learning strategies?	Ranging from a reflection of oneself and one's surrounding to topics of more general interest. They influence the selection of texts/styles

Source: GIMENEZ, 2017.

Table 9 – Suggestion for thematic units

Year	Version 3	Suggestion
Year 6	Discursive interaction Oral comprehension Oral communication Reading strategies Reading exercises and **construction of a repertoire of words** Attitude and willingness of the reader Writing strategies: **pre-writing** Writing exercises Study of the dictionary Grammar English in the world **English in daily life in Brazilian society / communities**	School and its surroundings Family and community Linguistic diversity
Year 7	Discursive interaction Oral comprehension Oral communication Reading strategies Reading exercises and **research** Attitude and willingness of the reader Writing strategies: **pre-writing and writing** Writing exercises Study of the dictionary Grammar English in the world Intercultural communication	Personal and collective stories The environment and nature The culture industry
Year 8	Discursive interaction Oral comprehension Oral communication Reading strategies Reading exercises and **enjoyment** Attitude and willingness of the reader Writing strategies: **writing and revising** Writing exercises Study of the dictionary Grammar Cultural manifestations Intercultural communication	Cultural diversity The digital world Human rights
Year 9	Discursive interaction Oral comprehension Oral communication Reading strategies Reading exercises and **new technology** Attitude and willingness of the reader Writing strategies Writing exercises Study of the dictionary Grammar English in the world Intercultural communication	Science and technology The consumer society Work and leisure

Table 10 – Summary of item 4:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Progressive learning by means of encountering increasingly complex texts.	Clear progression in learning over the years
Renaming thematic units	Putting the student in touch with ways of communicating in the real world

5

Effectiveness of EL teaching

Although Brazil has a state education system which guarantees EL teaching at every school level, it is not a country which achieves satisfactory indicators in terms of the quality of teaching of the language. A recent survey entitled *English Language Learning in Latin America*[1] found that public policy for teaching English in Brazil, in comparison with other Latin American countries, is notable only for the fact that it is guaranteed by law.

"a recent survey found that public policy for teaching English in Brazil, in comparison with other Latin American countries, is notable only for the fact that it is guaranteed by law"

Of course educational indicators have to be taken in context, but this study of Latin America illustrates how far Brazil still has to go in terms of factors intrinsically related to the quality of teaching, such as learning targets, learning systems and, above all, teacher training.

Chart 3 – English teaching policy in Latin America

	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Mexico	Panama	Peru	Uruguay
Legal foundation										
English teaching mandatory by law	◆	√	√	◆	√	√	√	√	◆	◆
National plan or strategy	X	X	√	√	X	√	√	◆	√	◆
Learning standards										
Learning standards and objectives	◆	◆	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teaching supports, including curricula and programs of study	X	X	√	√	√	◆	√	√	◆	◆
Student achievement										
Standard of measurement	X	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Proficiency goals	X	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Proficiency assessment	X	◆	√	√	√	◆	◆	X	X	√
Teacher qualifications										
Standard teacher training	√	X	√	√	◆	√	X	◆	√	√
Proficiency goals	X	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Proficiency assessment	X	X	√	◆	◆	√	√	X	X	X

√ Yes, this issue has been successfully addressed
◆ There has been some progress in the right direction, but it is not yet sufficient
X The adequate conditions do not yet exist for this topic

The survey also shows that, although Brazil has low marks in English proficiency, it is better than.

[1]CRONQUIST and FISZBEIN, 2017.

The survey also shows that, although Brazil has low marks in English proficiency, it is better than some other Latin American countries. Nevertheless, its findings raise concerns, as can be seen in the following table:

Chart 4 – English proficiency in Latin America

English proficiency in Latin America (2014-2015)
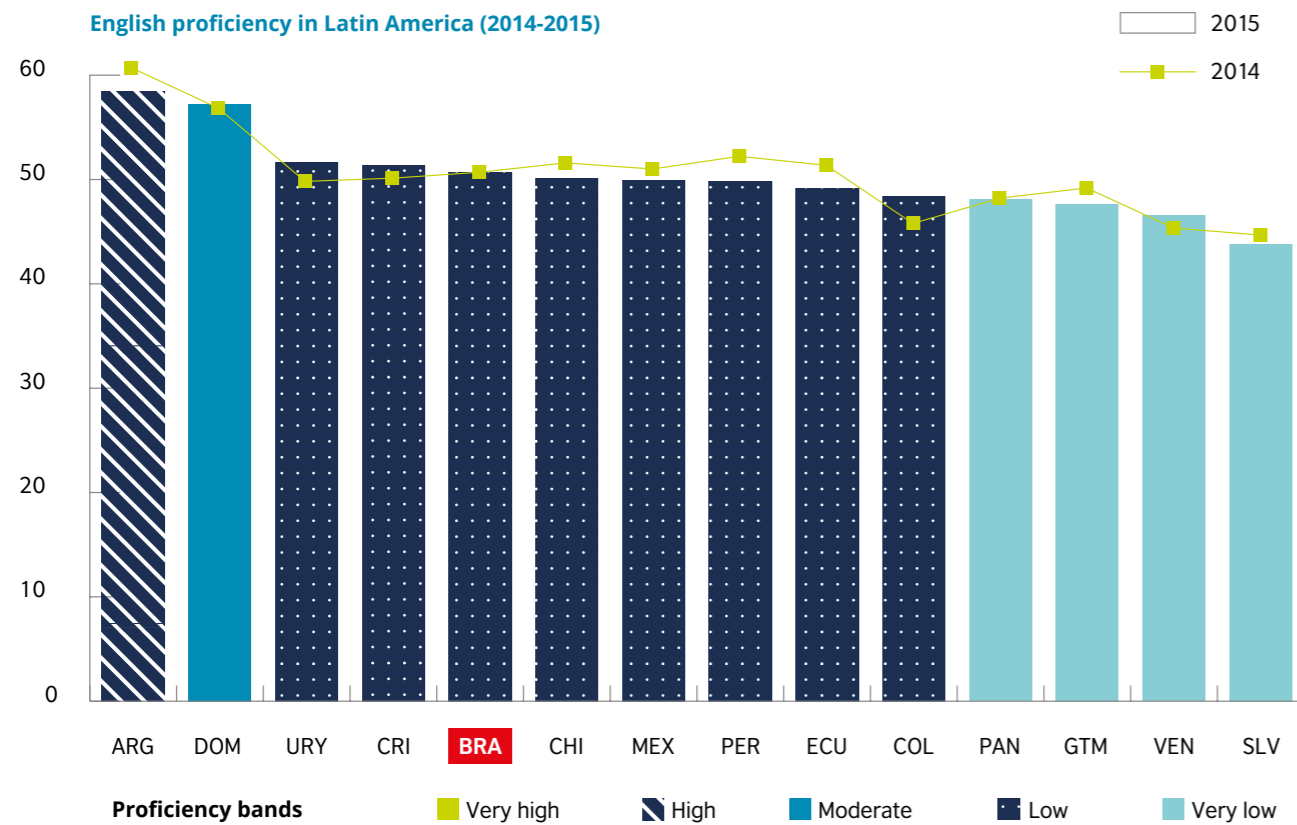
Source: CRONQUIST and FISZBEIN. *English Language Learning in Latin America, 2017. p.13.*

In the absence of public policy to guarantee the quality of teaching in schools, where and how are Brazilians learning the language?

Research[2] on English teaching in standard Brazilian schools indicates that the language is mainly learned in optional courses[3]. This is confirmed by figures indicating that 87% of the middle class in Brazil say that they have attended an optional language course. This was already apparent in 1998, when the National Curricular Parameters report was issued:

Although society holds foreign languages in high regard, as subjects of learning **they are regarded as an extra-curricular activity**. The proliferation of private courses is clear evidence of this. The teaching of foreign languages, as of other subjects, is a function of the school, and it is here that it should take place. (National Curricular Parameters: third and fourth cycles of primary education: foreign language, 1998, p. 19. Our bold print).

These findings go to show that people in Brazil do not regard school as the place to learn a foreign language, with the result that a great many of them enrol in private language schools. It is important to note, as observed by Finardi (2014), that the existence of private language courses increases the social divide, since only the more privileged classes can afford them. But why is it that students do not learn English at school, when for some years now there has been legal guarantee that it will be included in the curriculum?

"people in Brazil do not regard school as the place to learn a foreign language"

The answer to this question has various facets, but it boils down to two interrelated historical factors which have been widely discussed by specialists and universities and in official documents (PCN, PCN+, OCEM), namely: inadequate teaching methods, poorly trained teachers and little contact with the English language during school years. These factors combine to form a vicious circle that perpetuates the low ratings and problems with teaching English mentioned in this study.

We have in Brazil a large number of English teachers who do not speak the language fluently and who therefore limit their teaching to what they are sure of. In general their repertoire consists of grammar and vocabulary. So grammatical rules are often taught in isolation, without a requirement for more elaborate skills or experience of the language. A study carried out by the British Council and the consultants Plano CDE in 2015 found that only 39% of these English teachers are properly trained. At the same time, government schools offer few English classes (two classes a week in 79% of the schools run by the states and in 75% of the municipal network), and this contributes to the low level of learning by students[4].

Basing foreign language teaching on grammar and vocabulary has long been a feature of Brazilian schoos[5]. It was in 1931 that the authorities in Brazil first started to be concerned about the method of teaching English. Since then countless papers have been produced with a view to attaining an effective, practical system of foreign language teaching as an integral part of the overall process of educating children.

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[2]BAGHIN-SPINELLI, 2002; UECHI, 2006; SILVA, 2010.
[3]British Council, 2015.
[4]British Council, Plano CDE, 2015.
[5]SILVA, 2010.

Table 11 – Extracts from reference documents presenting practical ideas for the teaching of English

Document	Extract
National Curricular Parameters: secondary education	"What we found was a method of teaching that was out of context, compartmentalised and based on an accumulation of information. In contrast to this, we want to make school learning meaningful by putting it into context; to avoid compartmentalisation through cross-curricular initiatives; and to encourage reasoning and the capacity to learn." (p. 4)
Guidelines for Secondary Education Curricula (2006)	"In the face of this new concept of the heterogeneity of language and culture, it is difficult to continue to support a teaching method based on 'the four skills', or to argue that grammar should be taught in isolation. The reason for this difficulty is that the concept and importance of grammar are linked to the idea that language is something homogeneous, fixed and abstract, which can be described, taught and learned by means of an abstract system consisting of abstract rules – far removed from any specific social and cultural context, from any real community and from any specific group of users." (p. 107)
State of São Paulo proposed curriculum: English (2008)	"It is fair to say that emphasizing structure and communication was inconsistent with ideas and concepts. On the other hand, guidelines based on literacy find support in the relationship that exists between principles – knowing and doing - in a wide range of languages and discursive styles, helping to construct a vision of language teaching that can promote intellectual independence and a high capacity for reflection among students, contributing decisively to their training as citizens." (p. 42)
Common National Curricular Base (version 3, 2017)	"It is essential to realise that these segments, although treated separately in the BNCC, are intrinsically linked in the social context of use of the English language and must be treated as such in proposals for teaching in schools. In other words, it is the language in use, a hybrid, polyphonic and multimodal language, that should be studied for its specific features; and none of the segments should be regarded as a primary requisite for this purpose - least of all the segment of linguistic and grammatical knowledge." (p. 201)

Our conclusion, then, is that the BNCC ought not to reinforce the view that the language can be taught out of context, and end up being just one more document proposing theoretical ideals for English teaching. Such ideals are not realistic when we consider the quality of teachers and schools in Brazil. What is needed is effective teaching, while at the same time efforts must be made to overcome the challenges to introducing teaching of quality.

Accordingly we suggest:

• investing in policies for teacher development and qualification.

Table 12 – Summary of item 5:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Investing in policies for teacher training and qualification.	To attain the proposed goals for teaching and learning

6

# Proposals to meet the needs of the twenty-first century

Technical advances over the last 20 years or so have transformed our society and given rise to a generation that communicates and thinks differently from its predecessors. This new generation also acquires knowledge in a different way. After all, today's world offers quick, attractive options for learning that are no longer centred on classrooms, textbooks or teachers. Bearing in mind, then, that our students think, learn and communicate "digitally", we can no longer insist on teaching them in the same way as before. Schools and curricula must reinvent themselves to adapt to this new era.

"our students are of a generation that learns and thinks 'digitally', and we can no longer insist on teaching them in the same way as before. Schools and curricula must reinvent themselves to adapt to this new era"

The document[6] comparing versions 2 and 3 of the BNCC – produced by the National Council of Education Secretariats (Consed) and the National Union of Municipal Education Managers (Undime) – includes an analysis of cognitive processes expressed by verbs in the descriptions of abilities. It should be noted that this comparison does not cover the full complexity of abilities, since there is no analysis of the complements of the verbs or of the modifiers, which indicate the subject knowledge and the context and specify what level of learning is expected.

Taking the six levels of cognitive processes in Bloom's Taxonomy[7], a classification used to set learning objectives (1. remember; 2. understand; 3. apply; 4. analyse; 5. evaluate and 6. create), the comparative study found that 80% of the abilities in version 3 are described by verbs with lower order cognitive demands. They are: remembering, understanding and applying, as can be seen in the chart below.

Chart 5 – Abilities in version three according to Bloom's taxonomy

- ▲ Apply
- Understand
- Remember
- Create
- Evaluate
- Analyses
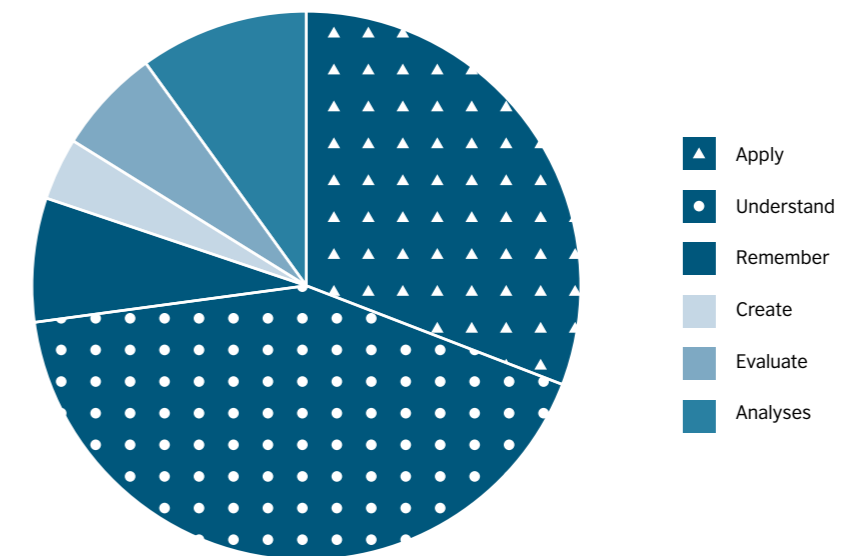
Source: National Council of Education Secretariats (Consed); National Union of Municipal Education Managers (Undime) – 2017

[6]Retrieved from: <http://cnebncc.mec.gov.br/docs/BNCC_Estudo_Comparativo.pdf>. Accessed on December 12, 2017.
[7]For more information about Bloom's Taxonomy: FERRAZ and BELHOT. *Taxonomia de Bloom: revisão teórica e apresentação das adequações do instrumento para definição de objetivos instrucionais*, 2010. Available at: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/gp/v17n2/a15v17n2.pdf>. Accessed on December 12, 2017 *apud Estudo Comparativo entre a Versão 2 e a Versão Final*, published by Consed and Undime jointly with the Pro-Base Movement.

The chart also shows that only 20% of the abilities require higher order cognitive processes (analyse, evaluate and create). So we would reiterate the findings of the comparative study, that the greater part of the abilities demanded by version 3 of the BNCC are in the lower orders of cognitive processes according to Bloom's Taxonomy. And we would emphasise that this is not consistent with the commitment for a comprehensive education or with the new ways of living, acting and learning in the twenty-first century; and that it negates the right to:

> *"Learn how to learn, to know how to deal with increasingly available information, to act with discernment and responsibility in the area of digital culture, to apply knowledge in solving problems, to be able to take decisions independently, to be proactive in analysing a situation and finding a solution – these are all competencies which go against the concept of disinterested and erudite learning seen as an end in itself".* (BNCC, version 3, p. 17)

Of the higher order cognitive processes, the great majority are to be found in the Intercultural Dimension segment. This segment is also the only one which departs from the linguistic proposals of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and it leads one to expect that the EL component will be aligned with the commitment to provide comprehensive education for the student.

A reading of this segment leads one to understand that the purpose is to make students reflect "on aspects of interaction between cultures in a way that will encourage fraternisation, respect, the resolution of conflicts and mutual appreciation between peoples." (BNCC, version 3, p. 206). A closer look at the abilities listed, however, reveals major gaps in fulfilling this purpose. There are propositions which are quite unrelated to reflection, where the cognitive process involved is identifying. This can be seen from the following table.

Table 13 – Example of an ability in the Intercultural Dimension segment which does not resemble reflection

Ability code	Description of the ability
(EF06LI25)	**Identifying** the presence of the English language in Brazilian society/the community (words, expressions, supports and usage in traffic and consumer contexts) and its meaning.

We would emphasise that this segment still contains tasks that are overly complex. It is also not clear how teachers are expected to actually use them in the classroom. Are these interdisciplinary activities? Will there be technical resources? Are they to be presented in stages: forming hypotheses, research, confirmation (or otherwise) of the initial ideas?

Table 14 – Examples of unclear abilities in the Intercultural Dimension segment

Ability code	Description of the ability
(EF07LI21)	**Investigating** the approximate number of people using English as a foreign language in the world, in order to analyse the extent to which the language is used.
(EF08LI20)	**Examining** factors that could make understanding difficult between people of different cultures who use English as their mother tongue or as a second language.
(EF09LI18)	**Analysing** the importance of English in scientific development (the making, publication and discussion of new discoveries), and in economic and political activity worldwide.

We would once again stress the importance of the Intercultural Dimension segment, but would point out that the way in which it is presented does not explain how these proposals will contribute to offering the comprehensive, integrated education described in the introduction to the text.

We therefore suggest:

- including more cognitive requirements in all the abilities in the EL component.
- revising the abilities proposed for the Intercultural Dimension segment.

Table 15 – Summary of item 6:

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Inclusion of higher order Bloom's Taxonomy levels among the abilities	Guarantee of comprehensive education and the right to live, act and learn in the twenty-first century
Revision of the abilities proposed for the Intercultural Dimension segment.	Guarantee of comprehensive education and intercultural awareness

Conclusion

From a critical reading of version 3 of the BNCC and the analysis contained in this report, we conclude that this important document needs to be revised in terms of the six aspects outlined above, if it is to meet its objectives.

A full table showing the changes proposed[8] is attached. We are suggesting thematic units, subject knowledge and abilities for each school year. The abilities proposed are limited to one objective per segment/thematic unit, and they should be supplemented by the local curriculum.

We foresee the following **challenges** with the approval of the BNCC:

- initial/continued teacher education policies.
- upgrading textbooks to the requirements of the BNCC.
- integrating essential learning at primary and secondary school level.

Suggestions for discussion and future action:

- parameters for the teaching of English in the early years of primary education.
- establishment of knowledge and proficiency goals to be achieved in the English language, both for teachers and for students.

Table 16 – Summary of suggestions presented

Suggestion	Importance/Justification
Elimination of abilities focused on the rules of grammar	Consistency between theoretical premises and content
Renaming of the segments	Overcoming fragmented learning and out-of-context language
Limitation to a single goal/verb for each ability	Clarity in learning goals
Reduction in the number of abilities	Flexibility in the curriculum at regional/local level
Progressive learning by means of encountering increasingly complex texts.	Clear progression in learning over the years
Renaming thematic units	Putting the student in touch with ways of communicating in the real world
Investing in policies for teacher education and qualification.	Attainment of the proposed goals for teaching and learning
Inclusion of higher order Bloom's Taxonomy levels among the abilities	Guarantee of comprehensive education and the right to live, act and learn in the twenty-first century
Revision of the abilities proposed for the Intercultural Dimension segment.	Guarantee of comprehensive education and intercultural awareness

Attachments

Table 1 – Complete revision proposal

Year 6		
Thematic units	**Subject knowledge**	**Abilities**
SCHOOL AND ITS SURROUNDINGS	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Participating in conversations about daily activities (e.g.: greetings, saying hello, saying goodbye, asking for information) face-to-face or online.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing texts about organising daily activities (e.g.: diaries, calendars, invitations, house rules).
	Linguistic awareness	Understanding the consequences of linguistic choices for the required purposes of communication, with intelligibility as top priority.
	Intercultural awareness	Comparing different methods of organising education in Brazil and in other countries.
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in conversations about the place where students live, family and community life, groups they belong to and ideas they identify with.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing (auto) biographical notes and descriptions, identifying and expressing personal information.
	Linguistic awareness	Understanding how people identify themselves when they are introduced and ways in which social groups communicate.
	Intercultural awareness	Recognising that different communities express themselves in different ways to establish their identity.
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in conversations which illustrate different English accents.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing texts showing how the same thing can be represented in different ways (verbally, visually, or a combination of the two).
	Linguistic awareness	Recognising the existence of different languages in the world and becoming aware of the diversity of English in its use as lingua franca.
	Intercultural awareness	Understanding the relationship between linguistic diversity and cultural diversity, and how this affects the way people see themselves and others.

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[8]Proposal for revision suggested in a previous submission by the British Council (GIMENEZ, 2017).

Year 7		
Thematic units	**Subject knowledge**	**Abilities**
PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE STORIES	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Telling and being told stories, to learn about other ways of life and other ways of looking at the world.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading, writing and communicating narrative texts from personal experience or otherwise, through different media.
	Linguistic awareness	Understanding the elements that comprise the textual structure of narrative and its importance for social relations, tradition and identity.
	Intercultural awareness	Comparing traditional oral and written texts (legends, myths, cartoons) and their conventions with the equivalent styles in Portuguese.
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in conversations about changes throughout history in the relationship between mankind and nature.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and relating experiences about the preservation of the environment.
	Linguistic awareness	Reflecting on the different ways of referring to changes in the environment and possible actions to reverse them.
	Intercultural awareness	Finding out how different communities relate to nature and comparing them with local customs.
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Listening to and expressing opinions on different examples of cultural items (e.g.: music, films, plays) or famous people.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing appreciations of cultural items and descriptions of famous people.
	Linguistic awareness	Reflecting on how different types of language contribute to constructing an image of people or cultural items.
	Intercultural awareness	Comparing different aesthetic manifestations and how they are appreciated in different communities.

Year 8		
Thematic units	**Subject knowledge**	**Abilities**
CULTURAL DIVERSITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Telling and being told stories, to learn about other ways of life and other ways of looking at the world.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading, writing and communicating narrative texts from personal experience or otherwise, through different media.
	Linguistic awareness	Understanding the elements that comprise the textual structure of narrative and its importance for social relations, tradition and identity.
	Intercultural awareness	Comparing traditional oral and written texts (legends, myths, cartoons) and their conventions with the equivalent styles in Portuguese.
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in conversations about changes throughout history in the relationship between mankind and nature.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and relating experiences about the preservation of the environment.
	Linguistic awareness	Reflecting on the different ways of referring to changes in the environment and possible actions to reverse them.
	Intercultural awareness	Finding out how different communities relate to nature and comparing them with local customs.
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Listening to and expressing opinions on different examples of cultural items (e.g.: music, films, plays) or famous people.
	Written comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing appreciations of cultural items and descriptions of famous people.
	Linguistic awareness	Reflecting on how different types of language contribute to constructing an image of people or cultural items.
	Intercultural awareness	Comparing different aesthetic manifestations and how they are appreciated in different communities.

Year 9		
Thematic units	**Subject knowledge**	**Abilities**
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in discussions typical of academic environments (e.g.: presentations, debates).
	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing academic and scientific texts, with a view to establishing the reliability of information available on the internet.
	Linguistic awareness	Reflecting on how the conventions of academic style regulate what counts as legitimate knowledge.
	Intercultural awareness	Understanding how people in different communities use technological resources to find, produce, share and publish information.
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in discussions about patterns of consumption in different regions of the world.
	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Reading and producing advertising texts (e.g.: advertisements, posters, signs, brochures).
	Linguistic awareness	Critical analysis of the context in which advertising texts are produced and received.
	Intercultural awareness	Understanding the role of the English language in identifying material and cultural products consumers. .
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Taking part in discussions to express social and ethical views at work.
	Oral comprehension and communication practice	Reading and writing opinions on the work/leisure ratio in the surroundings.
	Linguistic awareness	Understanding how language can promote inclusion or exclusion at work.
	Intercultural awareness	Reflecting on how the world of work is constructed in different cultures.

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