

Case reports

Analysis of the literacy practices of entering and graduating students from a higher education institution: case report

Análise das práticas de letramento de ingressantes e concluintes de uma instituição de ensino superior: estudo de caso

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Trabalho realizado na Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná – UTP – Curitiba (PR), Brasil.

Conflict of interest: non-existent

Received on: April 12, 2016

Accepted on: May 09, 2016

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to characterize and analyze the quality of the practices and the level of literacy, as well as the possibilities of texts reading and comprehension, present in the daily academic and extra academic life of entering and graduating students from a Brazilian university. The sample consisted of 392 participants: 218 entering and 174 graduating students from Bachelor's and Licentiate's degree courses of a Brazilian university. Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire with open and objective questions, which was consisted of questions about personal information and school life of each student; data on reading and writing practices on the academics everyday life and a practical reading test, developed and adapted from the National Functional Literacy. For the analysis, it was adopted the qualitative and quantitative approach. It was observed that although the texts presented belong to primary genres, students got incorrect answers and not conducive to the education level in which they are enrolled. It follows that, from the analyzed students, the majority of both entering and graduating ones perform the second literacy level, which shows that the gaps regarding the literacy practices derived from the basic education still prevail in higher education.

Keywords: Reading; Writing; Literacy; Higher Education

RESUMO

O presente estudo visa caracterizar e analisar a qualidade das práticas e o nível de letramento, bem como as possibilidades de leitura e compreensão de textos, presentes no cotidiano acadêmico e extra-acadêmico de estudantes ingressantes e concluintes de uma universidade brasileira. A amostra foi constituída por 392 participantes: 218 ingressantes e 174 concluintes provenientes de cursos de Bacharelado e de Licenciatura de uma universidade brasileira. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de um questionário com questões abertas e objetivas, no qual continham perguntas referentes a informações pessoais e da vida escolar de cada estudante; dados sobre as práticas de leitura e escrita no cotidiano dos universitários e um teste prático de leitura, elaborado e adaptado a partir do Indicador Nacional de Alfabetismo Funcional. Para a análise, adotou-se a abordagem quali-quantitativa. Foi possível observar que, embora os textos apresentados pertencessem a gêneros primários, os estudantes apresentaram respostas incorretas e não condizentes ao nível de escolaridade no qual se encontram matriculados. Conclui-se que dos sujeitos avaliados, a maioria tanto de ingressantes quanto de concluintes apresenta o nível 2 de alfabetismo, o que demonstra que as defasagens com relação as práticas de letramento oriundas da educação básica ainda prevalecem na educação superior.–

Descritores: Leitura; Escrita; Letramento; Educação Superior

INTRODUCTION

The concern and the quest for solutions to the issue of functional illiteracy in Brazil have driven research^{1,2} at all educational levels. One of these studies mentions the National Indicator of National Literacy - INAF, which, in the last 10 years, has shown through tests and questionnaires applied in residences that a large part of the population has had shallow knowledge of reading, writing and numbers, and hence difficulties in understanding texts, calculations and logical reasoning².

Others studies^{3,4} have shown that Brazil still has readers and writers who present difficulties in interpretation and textual production of secondary genres. These studies also show that the implementation of a literacy work from the practice of various genres, among the population that is within and outside the academic environment, is a prerequisite for people to have an improvement in their quality of life.

According to a survey⁵ conducted in 2010, the experience in the use of certain genres is essential for a successful verbal interaction. Another study⁶ mentions that the difficulties in reading and writing presented by entering students in higher education are often a result of previous history socio-educational problems, as evidenced from the new demands of reading and writing present in the university environment.

Literacy, however, is not only related to academic practice, but also the most varied activities of daily living. Therefore, it is emphasized that literacy is crucial both in the sphere of everyday life (habits and basic ways for life in society), as to the appropriation of non-daily production of human existence (science, poetry, art, politics). In a literate society, therefore, the conquest of citizenship, in its wider sense, demands the reading and writing area, in other words, a level of full literacy, since it is privileged in this way, individuals will be able to own the information and knowledge produced by humanity. Thus, in the dialectic of appropriation and production of meanings, in the various spheres of existence, the citizen is constituted as capable of postures and critical attitudes of the society's demands⁷.

Taking into consideration these issues, this study aims to characterize and analyze the practices of literacy, the possibilities of texts reading and comprehension used in day-to-day of a population of entering and graduating students from a Brazilian university, and also check the literacy level of the group studied and its possible impacts on the formation of a critical citizen, responsive and responsible.

CASE REPORT

It is worth mentioning that this study was submitted to the analysis of the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) and the Institutional Research Advisory Committee (ICSC) from a University of the State of Paulo and approved by the protocol No. 1063/12.

The sample consisted of 392 students of higher education from a private university in Brazil, among them: 218 entering students of the first year distributed among the first and second semester and 174 graduating ones. These students were part of the Bachelor's and Licentiate's degree courses, namely, Pedagogy, Languages, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Philosophy, Arts and Visual Arts.

To select the research participants the following inclusion criteria were adopted: a) to be a university student and be enrolled in the first year or the last academic year; b) attend Bachelor's or Licentiate's degree courses.

The procedural formalities for the research: 1) request to the Rector of the University, permission for the research; 2) contact with the college students, in the classroom, for clarification and invitation to participate as research subjects; 3) signature by adhering to the research, the free and informed consent agreement; 4) fill, by consenting students, a questionnaire composed of open and closed questions and participation in a practical reading test.

The questions from the questionnaire were initially based on personal data such as age, education level, family level of education, school life, time to studies, work and admission mode at the university. In addition, questions have been prepared for the use of reading and writing in everyday life, that is, in the spheres related to the domestic scope, labor, leisure, education, religion and citizen participation.

The material used for the practice of reading assessment was developed and adapted from the National Functional Literacy⁸, which was composed of questions involving the reading and interpretation of everyday texts, - primary genres: notes, news, posters, films scripts on TV and fables.

It is worth clarifying that although the research was conducted in an academic environment, the test used was composed of primary genres, as it did not have the purpose of evaluating the content or skills established in the curriculum of each course, but check the literacy level of the participants in various social practices of literacy, including the opinion of the participants

themselves about their abilities and difficulties with reading and writing.

Among the tasks performed, there were from the simplest which required location of a single clearly identifiable item of information in the text, to more complex tasks which required the location of more than one item in longer texts as well as the comparison between more than a text or parts of the text and inferences from the textual information.

Each student answered to the questionnaire and the individual practical test and there was no interference of the researcher in the responses.

The current study, field and transversal, adopted a quantitative approach, in order to employ a statistical tool of empirical research.

For quantitative analysis, it was used as a support the Sphinx tool which allows the development of the survey instrument, the collection of responses and consolidated data analysis. The test used in the data analysis was Qui-Square, symbolized by χ^2 , at the 0.05 significance level (5%). This is a nonparametric test that evaluates the association between qualitative variables; it does not depend on population parameters such as mean and variance, and it is used to check how

often a particular observed event in a sample deviates significantly or not from the frequency with which it is expected. In this sample we used the confidence level (CL) of 95% and a sampling error of 3.8%.

RESULTS

Regarding the characteristics of the sample it was considered the following aspects: gender, age, type of high school (public or private), admission mode into higher education, family schooling, work and family income; as shown in Table 1.

Table 2 presents the data for the locations where participants learned to read and write.

Regarding the literacy practices from the population studied, the data have pointed out that the majority of this population has demonstrated interest in reading (85.71%) and writing (74.49%), as shown in table 3.

Table 4 shows the reading and writing habits, considering the places where usually reading and writing skills are required.

When asked about the materials most used for reading and writing, entering and graduating students showed similar responses (Table 5).

Table 1. Characterization of the study participants students

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender						
Female	150	68,81	110	63,22	260	66,33
Male	68	31,19	64	36,78	132	33,67
Age group						
18 to 24 years old	128	58,72	100	57,47	228	58,16
Kind of school						
Public	180	82,57	136	78,16	316	80,61
Entrance form						
Vestibular	198	90,83	161	92,53	359	91,58
Family schooling						
Complete High School	161	36,93	139	39,64	300	38,27
Work						
Yes	148	67,89	131	75,29	279	71,17
Working with teaching						
No	189	86,70	131	75,29	320	81,63
Family income						
1 to 3 minimum wages	118	54,13	71	40,80	189	48,21

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 2. Places where students learned to read and write

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading						
At school	165	75,69	130	74,71	295	75,25
At home	38	17,43	26	14,94	64	16,33
No answer	15	6,88	18	10,34	33	8,42
Total	218	100	174	100	392	100
Writing						
At school	180	82,57	140	80,46	320	81,63
At home	30	13,76	21	12,07	51	13,01
No answer	8	3,67	13	7,47	21	5,36
Total	218	100	174	100	392	100

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 3. Participants who have interest in reading and writing

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading						
Yes	194	88,99	142	81,62	336	85,71
No	23	10,55	30	17,24	53	13,52
No answer	1	0,46	2	1,5	3	0,77
Total	218	100	174	100	392	100
Writing						
Yes	167	76,61	125	71,84	292	74,49
No	50	22,94	47	27,01	97	24,74
No answer	1	0,46	2	1,15	3	0,77
Total	218	100	174	100	392	100

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 4. Places where students usually read and write

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading						
School	65	15,38	69	20,41	134	17,61
Work	51	12,06	46	13,61	97	12,75
Home	167	38,48	120	35,50	287	37,71
Church	16	3,78	9	2,66	25	3,29
Clinics	8	1,89	6	1,78	14	1,84
Others	9	2,13	6	1,78	15	1,97
No answer	2	0,47	2	0,59	4	0,53
Writing						
School	140	27,08	125	31,02	265	28,80
Work	93	17,98	75	18,61	168	18,26
Home	143	27,66	99	24,56	242	26,30
Church	11	2,13	7	1,74	18	1,97
Others	2	0,39	6	1,49	8	0,87
No answer	2	0,39	3	0,74	5	0,54

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 5. Materials that students commonly usually read and write

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading						
Newspaper	53	10,47	44	11,36	97	10,86
Magazine	95	18,77	78	20,16	173	19,37
Books	144	28,46	116	29,97	260	29,12
Religious books	47	9,29	28	7,24	75	8,40
Virtual media	155	30,63	114	29,46	269	30,12
Others	10	1,98	5	1,29	15	1,68
No answer	2	0,40	2	0,52	4	0,45
Writing						
Note	61	14,98	34	11,37	95	13,46
Academic Works	123	30,22	119	39,80	242	34,28
Shopping lists	43	10,57	30	10,03	73	10,34
Virtual media	161	39,56	108	36,12	269	38,10
Others	16	3,93	2	0,67	18	2,55
No answer	3	0,74	6	2,01	9	1,27

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 6 shows the reading and writing materials most used by entering and graduating students in their daily activities at home and at work.

Table 7 shows the amount of correct answers of the practical tests of reading.

Regarding the group literacy level studied, it was found from the analysis of data interpretation tests that the majority of participants (entering and graduating students) show the literacy level 2 or rudimentary literacy, as evidenced in Table 8.

Statistical analysis with Qui-squared test concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in the literacy level among entering and graduating students.

They have also made some crosses that relate the level of literacy to household income and gender, according to INAF⁸ searches.

In Table 9, it is possible to notice the relationship between the level of literacy and family income.

In this research it was verified that there is a significant correlation among the level of literacy and household income, as there was a proportion of participants who had lower wages among those with lower levels of literacy.

Table 6. Materials used for reading and writing at work and at home

	Entering		Graduating		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Reading at work	Documents and standards	64	29,36	52	29,89	116	29,59
	Customer information	41	18,81	42	24,13	83	21,02
	Memos / Messages	64	29,35	29	16,67	93	23,73
	Preparing activities	35	16,06	20	11,49	55	14,03
	Entertainment / magazines, newspapers, virtual media	19	8,72	38	21,84	57	14,54
	Others	14	6,42	5	2,87	19	4,85
	No answer	7	3,21	13	7,47	20	5,10
Reading at home	Books	52	23,86	67	38,50	119	30,36
	School work	66	30,28	83	47,70	149	38,01
	Advertising leaflets	34	15,59	9	5,17	43	10,97
	Newspapers, magazines	63	28,90	27	15,52	90	22,96
	Virtual media	121	55,50	88	50,57	209	53,06
	Religious books	17	7,80	15	8,62	32	8,16
	Others	6	2,75	8	4,60	14	3,57
No answer	2	0,92	2	1,15	4	1,02	
Writing at work	Filling documents	56	25,69	41	23,56	97	24,74
	Customer notes	36	16,51	18	10,34	54	13,78
	Reports	39	17,89	40	22,99	79	20,15
	Messages	29	13,30	15	8,62	44	11,22
	Work notes	73	33,49	41	23,56	114	29,08
	Preparing lessons	46	21,10	28	16,09	74	18,88
	Others	5	2,29	14	8,05	19	4,85
No answer	14	6,42	14	8,05	28	7,14	
Writing at home	School work	93	42,66	78	44,83	171	43,63
	Shopping list	29	13,30	23	13,22	52	13,27
	Virtual media	59	27,06	52	29,89	111	28,32
	Filling checks and documents	11	5,05	9	5,17	20	5,10
	Dairy	04	1,83	3	1,72	7	1,79
	Song lyrics	06	2,75	1	0,57	7	1,79
	Others	12	5,50	10	5,75	22	5,61
No answer	66	30,28	60	34,48	126	32,14	

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 7. Hits index of practical reading tests

	Entering		Graduating		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poster						
Question 1	130	59,63	104	59,77	234	59,70
Question 2	214	98,17	169	97,13	383	97,70
Newspaper text						
Question 1	200	91,74	166	95,40	366	93,37
Question 2	216	99,08	172	98,85	388	99,00
Question 3	216	99,08	172	98,85	388	99,00
Question 4	197	90,37	157	90,25	354	90,31
Note						
Question 1	209	95,87	169	97,13	378	96,43
Question 2	178	81,65	142	81,61	320	81,63
Question 3	209	95,87	171	98,28	380	96,94
Question 4	191	87,61	150	86,21	341	86,98
Fable						
Question 1	194	88,99	154	88,51	348	88,78
Question 2	192	88,07	137	78,74	329	83,92
News						
Question 1	197	90,37	165	95,08	362	92,35
Question 2	77	35,32	74	42,53	151	38,52
Films Script						
Question 1	150	68,81	123	70,69	273	69,64
Question 2	165	75,69	147	84,48	312	79,60

Note: n = number; % = percentile

Table 8. Description of the participants in relation to literacy level

	Entering		Graduating		Total		P
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Illiteracy	1	0,46	1	0,57	2	0,51	0,3796
Literacy Level 1 (Rudimentary)	9	4,13	4	2,30	13	3,32	
Literacy Level 2 (Basic)	184	84,40	139	79,89	323	82,40	
Literacy Level 3 (Full)	24	11,01	30	17,24	54	13,78	
Total	218	100	174	100	392	100	

Note: p-value \leq 0,05 (Qui-squared Test)**Table 9.** Participants regarding literacy level and family income

	Illiteracy		Rudimentary		Basic		Full		Total		P
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1 to 3 minimum wages	0	0,00	7	3,70	162	85,71	20	10,58	189	100	*0,0344
3 to 6 minimum wages	1	0,84	4	3,36	95	79,83	19	15,97	119	100	
7 to 10 minimum wages	0	0,00	1	1,89	39	73,58	13	24,53	53	100	
10 to 15 minimum wages	0	0,00	0	0,00	5	71,43	2	28,57	7	100	
+ than 15 minimum wages	0	0,00	0	0,00	4	100	0	0,00	4	100	
No answer	1	5,00	1	5,00	18	90	0	0,00	20	100	

Note: p-value \leq 0,05 (Qui-squared Test)

Table 10. Distribution of participants on the literacy level and gender

	Illiteracy		Rudimentary		Basic		Full		Total		P
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Male	1	0,76	7	5,30	103	78,03	21	15,91	132	100	0,1004
Female	1	0,38	6	2,31	220	84,62	33	12,69	260	100	
Total	2	0,51	13	3,32	323	82,40	54	13,78	392	100	

Note: p-value \leq 0,05 (Qui-squared Test)

Table 10 presents the data of literacy level in relation to gender.

According to the data outlined, there was no significant difference between men and women as concerns the level of literacy, because according to the statistical test (chi-square) p-value was greater than 0.05, which means, both males and females showed similar levels of literacy (table 10).

DISCUSSION

From the characterization of the participants from the study (Table 1) it was possible to notice that the pattern of youth seeking the Licentiate's degree courses are mostly female gendered, prevalence aged between 18 and 24 years old, with family income between 1 and 3 minimum wages, public school graduates who enrolled in higher education through the entrance exam. These findings are correspondent with other studies showing that many students of less favored layers of population, see in higher education a possibility for social mobility^{9,10}.

It is possible to correlate the fact that many of these students are women to the changes in society due to the consolidation of the capitalist system in the 19th century. These changes have produced changes in the production system and in the female labor organization¹¹. Therefore, women who previously worked at home and did not attend higher education started to work in other functions and from that, other new education levels were demanded. This new organization of work, notably of women, made it possible that they complemented family income and also changed their expectations regarding personal and professional fulfillment, acquiring greater financial independence and promoting changes in family relationships^{10,11}.

Although data demonstrates that most students are between 18 and 24, studies^{12,13} confirm that only 19% of this age group has access to higher education and that there is a repressed demand of about 25 million young people who did not have the opportunity to join this level of education.

The sample of this study consists of young people coming from public education who are attending evening classes in the private education system. The results of the census of INEP (2010) also show that the demand for evening courses has increased considerably and the percentage of enrollment in the private university system is 72% for the evening period, once students can work to finance their studies.¹⁴

The results of this sample showed that most participants overcame their parents in what concerns the time spent in school. According to this study, only 8% of parents of entering and graduating students own higher education; only 38% of parents have completed high school and over 50% presented as level of education incomplete Secondary education, complete and incomplete Elementary. Thus, it is possible to observe a probable parents' effort to find strategies so that children can overcome them, and a children's effort to overcome previous generations and escape from what would be considered their natural destination¹⁵, highlighting the crucial role of educational institutions and the value that the popular layers grant to these institutions.

Such fact seems to represent, as already discussed in another study¹⁶, an overcoming of everydayness in which they live, fed by the ideology that through access to higher levels of education, some social problems can be solved including promoting a change of social class.¹⁷

It can be inferred also that the choice for Licentiate's degree courses is due to the teaching occupation represent for this segment of society, the possibility of immediate work, or even before the completion of graduation; and also because the degree courses have mostly a low cost, and are offered in the evening¹⁸.

Regarding the reading and writing practices in the everyday life of the studied population (Table 2), the present study revealed that most of the participants learned to read and write in school, given that this institution still represents in contemporary societies, the place where the reading and writing skills are

acquired. Furthermore, often times facing the reality of the lower classes, the school represents the only place in charge of literacy and one of the main institutions along with the family, responsible for the transmission of cultural capital, contributing to the maintenance and perpetuation of social structure¹⁹; structure which has always been committed to the interests of the dominant classes and guided in the neoliberal ideals, contributing to the maintenance of the existing social structure²⁰. The school is still considered the most traditional place for the activities of literacy, often mistaken and used as a synonym for literacy and with the main function to provide the individuals conditions to improve in reading and writing skills, that involve reading skills aloud, textual production, answers to questions orally or in writing, conducting research and analogies. However, in general, in school these events are planned and controlled often contrasting with the social use of writing, which involves different knowledge of a community according to their interests, intentions, objectives and goals^{21,22}.

In the present study, it was found that participants like to read and write, and moreover, reading is used in different contexts, as presupposes the ideology approach for multiple literacies²³ (Table 3). These data are in agreement with a research^{8,24}, which states that Brazilians read and like to read, though not always read what is appreciated by schools and their culture. Such research also shows that there is a direct relationship between education and taste for reading; thus, the higher the level of education, the greater the love of reading.

According to data obtained in the interviews, it was also observed that the locations in which both entering and graduating students more read and write are at home, at work and at school (Table 4). In addition, in Table 5, it was made explicit that the reading and writing materials commonly used by the population studied are primary genres, which are present in everyday life and that have direct relation to the most immediate and spontaneous contexts such as the virtual media, books, magazines, newspapers, religious books, notes and shopping lists. However, these students mentioned that they also use the secondary genres in domestic contexts and work (Table 6). Although this research was to analyze the use that such students make of primary genres, it is worth noting that the use of secondary genres requires a more elaborate discourse, both in reading and writing, which is the genre preferentially required in the university environment. There were cited

as reading materials and writing of this genre, scientific articles, reviews, reports, virtual media, academic works and the production of documents.

Reading and writing habits revealed by the study participants, both entering and graduating students, are very similar, once they have the same order of preference and also quite similar percentages indexes. It can be inferred that this similarity is related to the age of the samples that focuses between 18 and 24 years old (58.16%), plus a percentage of (21.68%) up to 30 years old.

It was noticed that, in general, the reading habits of the participants in this study corroborate with the INAF results⁸ which made reference to textbooks as one of the materials used, followed by the novel and the technical books, as well as reading magazines and newspapers.

The virtual media, quite emphasized in this study (Tables 5 and 6), with its technological apparatus is constituted as a new reading and writing area, which allows individuals new ways to access information, new cognitive processes and new ways of reading and writing. This new area is called digital literacy, which requires the ability to construct meaning from texts that employ more than a linguistic mode, in other words, the use of texts that mix words, pictorial elements and sound on the same surface. It also includes the ability to locate, to filter and critically evaluate information electronically available²⁵. Therefore, it is clear that most of the researched sample makes use of different digital genres, depending on the environment in which they are produced; allowing interaction between interlocutors in real time and also the use of informal terms as in oral communication contributing to individual literacy²⁶.

Regarding the reading test involving different genres commonly used in everyday life (Table 7), such as posters, newspapers, notes, fables, news and movies script; participants were supposed to answer interpretation questions. Due to the characteristic of the material, there was no need for large inferences or further critical thinking. Observing the answers from participants it was found that there was a high rate of correct answers for the answers that were explicit in the text which did not require the participant to make inferences as the following genres: poster, newspaper and note. In the news genre, the second question presented a high error rate, because the answer was not explicit in the text and there need to be made an inference in order to reach the answer. In the genre

films script, although the number of errors has not been higher than the successes, the answers also required that participants made comparisons between reviews of the films. Through the answers from reading tests performed by the participants, it was possible to determine the literacy level of the same (Table 8), according to the classification of literacy levels adopted by a INAF research, which considers the hit rates in the reading test proposed as follows explained: *illiteracy - does not dominate the skills measured being the hit rate expressed this level of up to 2 hits; literacy level 1 or rudimentary - locates a simple information enunciated in a single sentence, such as an ad or magazine cover story, and the hit rate to the level varies from 3 to 9 correct answers; the literacy level 2 or basic - finds an information in short or medium texts, such as a letter or a report, even if it is necessary to make simple inferences, and the index of hits acceptable for this level varies between 10 and 15 correct answers; the full level of literacy - locates more than one item of information in longer texts, compares information included in various texts, and links between information (cause/effect, a rule/case, opinion/fact).* At the level of full literacy, the individual recognizes the textual information even if it contradicts common sense, and the hit rate acceptable for this level in this sample is specifically of 16 correct answers^{8,27}.

From the data analysis of the interpretation tests, it is possible to see that most of the participants in this study (82.40%) have the basic level of literacy and only 13.78% of them have the full level of literacy. It is emphasized that it was expected that a larger share of participants presented the full level of literacy, once surveys show that the full level should be acquired at the end of nine years of elementary school. There are even some participants who have the rudimentary level of literacy, and two participants who were classified in the illiteracy level. For the latter, a participant failed to answer the questions regarding the reading test and the other participant answered these questions incorrectly.

Statistical analysis with Chi Square test, allowed the conclusion that there are no significant differences between entering and graduating students and the level of literacy among them. These data are in agreement with a survey²⁷ which showed that only 62% of people with complete higher education were classified as having full level of literacy; 34% still had the basic level of literacy and 4% were still in the rudimentary literacy. Similar data were also evaluated in other research²⁸ which claims that 31% of college students had only the

basic level of literacy and 1% the rudimentary level of illiteracy.

When compared the level of literacy and family income, the data obtained in this study coincide with those presented in another²⁷, which show that the proportion of illiterate and the ones included in the rudimentary level of literacy decreases significantly with increasing family income, and the basic level of literacy is distributed more equitably among the different salary ranges. It was also verified in this study that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of literacy among men and women, against data from other research²⁸ that points to a slightly difference in the literacy level in favor of women, mainly concerning the higher education.

The data found in this study also corroborate to the results presented by INAF²⁸, which show an increase in the number of Brazilians with a higher education in the last decade (2000-2010). However, the INAF data collected in the same period indicates that these advances in the population education level have not matched the equivalent gains in the field of reading and writing skills.

It is emphasized that, despite the increase in the average number of Brazilians coming from different social classes managing to achieve higher education, many difficulties have been found regarding literacy. This study seems to have demonstrated that the university did not have a relevant role in what concerns literacy issues of the students regarding to a move towards the use of genres of everyday sphere, once the entering and graduating academic students showed a very similar literacy profile.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to characterize and analyze literacy practices present in the daily lives of entering and graduating students from university courses, as well as their ability to read and understand texts used daily by the Brazilian population. Participants presented as characteristic profile a higher occurrence of academic workers, coming mostly from public schools, with a family income of 1 to 3 minimum wages, average aged 24 years old and that have parents who mostly did not attend to the higher education. Majority of them work and do not have any professional activity in the teaching area. Participants also mentioned reading and writing habits of everyday life, which means, its use in home environments, work, school and also the usage in virtual media.

It can be proved that the participants of this study show difficulties with reading and writing, as some of them still presented inadequate answers in the use of primary genres; genres that, according to INAF, should already be presented domain at the end of nine years of studies, which means, at the end of elementary school II. These data confirm what has already been mentioned in national polls. Therefore, it is vital to have changes in the Brazilian educational panorama, and to make it happen it is necessary larger investments in quality training and continuing education for teachers, ensuring that they have and propagate significant experiences with a wide range of genres, acting directly in basic education so that students can reach the university with a full level of literacy.

Considering the results presented in this research, it is suggested that further studies should be developed in order to highlight aspects that were not covered during this research, such as the assessment of students' writing, so that this level of education could also be a chance to promote literacy.

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