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### Abstract

The deaf teacher is a professional who differs from another in the way he communicates, and the language used by these professionals is the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS). The objective: to verify the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education as well as to verify the assistive technologies that contribute to this process and the reality of these professionals. The methodology was a literature review of articles published between 2009 and 2017. Data were collected from the following databases: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and National Library of Medicine (PUBMED), using the keywords: teachers, deafness, universities, inclusion, assistive technologies and disability. The results showed that the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education occurs due to the laws that determine the appointment of deaf teaching professionals as priorities for teaching LIBRAS courses in universities, being LIBRAS an Assistive Technology (TA) for the inclusion of these professionals. However, deaf teachers showed isolation due to the difficulty of communication with other teachers, having difficulties to exchange experiences beyond the strangeness of the students, about the didactics, methodology and evaluation of the deaf teacher.

**Keyword:** Teachers. Universities. Deafness.

**Published Date:** 12/31/2019

**Page.368-373**

**Vol 7 No 12 2019**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.Vol7.Iss12.2082>

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### ABSTRACT

*The deaf teacher is a professional who differs from another in the way he communicates, and the language used by these professionals is the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS). The objective: to verify the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education as well as to verify the assistive technologies that contribute to this process and the reality of these professionals. The methodology was a literature review of articles published between 2009 and 2017. Data were collected from the following databases: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and National Library of Medicine (PUBMED), using the keywords: teachers, deafness, universities, inclusion, assistive technologies and disability. The results showed that the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education occurs due to the laws that determine the appointment of deaf teaching professionals as priorities for teaching LIBRAS courses in universities, being LIBRAS an Assistive Technology (TA) for the inclusion of these professionals. However, deaf teachers showed isolation due to the difficulty of communication with other teachers, having difficulties to exchange experiences beyond the strangeness of the students, about the didactics, methodology and evaluation of the deaf teacher.*

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### INTRODUCCION

Hearing loss is one of the most common sensory disturbances. About 10% of the adult population has some degree of hearing loss, accentuating to one third when the population is over 65 years old. Abnormalities of the ear, middle ear, and ear canal that impede the transmission of sound from the external environment to the inner ear cause hearing loss (KASPER *et al.*, 2017).

Brazilian decree number 5.296 of 2004 defines hearing impairment as bilateral, partial or total loss of 41 dB or more of hearing. There are several types and levels of hearing impairment, people with mild and moderate hearing loss are called hearing impaired, while those with severe losses (between 70 and 90 dB) and deep (above 90 dB) are considered deaf (Brazil, 2004).

According to the last census of Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in the year 2010, considering the population Brazilian residing in the country, 23.9% had at least one of these deficiencies: visual, auditory, motor and mental or intellectual. Of these, 9.7 million reported hearing

impairment (5.1%), being 2.1 million of people with severe hearing impairment; 344.200 people with deafness and 1.7 million of people with great difficulty hearing.

The LIBRAS is the first language of the deaf population, who often do not have knowledge of the language, since many are born with deafness and for these Brazilians is regarded as a second language, therefore learning is difficult for verbal and written communication (SOUZA *et al.*, 2017).

The recognition of LIBRAS as official in Brazil is one of the great achievements for the deaf community and its approval was through Law number 10.436 that marks the beginning of the conquest of rights of this population. The norm completed 15 years and despite advances, the deaf still continue to face barriers (BRAZIL, 2019).

Santos *et al.* (2017), states that the lack or even misunderstanding of people's speech can lead people with hearing impairment to feel excluded and suffer prejudice, and thus, loss of quality of life.

Through communication occur the processes of socialization that is associated with the processes of interaction and is a fundamental element of the human constitution. Social exclusion occurs due to communication barriers (Vygotsky, 2010 and Warschauer, 2006).

The National Policy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, in line with the National Human Rights Program, follows three principles: the development of joint action by the State and civil society to ensure the full integration of persons with disabilities into the socioeconomic and cultural context, thus obtaining equal opportunities in society (BRASIL, 1999).

The inclusion of people with hearing impairment favors a space for configuring social relations and where it is also possible to exercise citizenship. Subjects with hearing impairment can gain their autonomy and integrate into society (Klein, 1998).

In this context, this study aimed to verify the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education as well as to verify the assistive technologies that contribute to this inclusion.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study is a literature review that aimed to verify the inclusion of deaf teachers in higher education as well as to verify the assistive technologies that contribute to this process and also the reality of these professionals.

The literature review is part of a research project that explicitly reveals the universe of authors' scientific contributions on a specific theme (Santos and Candeloro, 2006).

For this research, the relevant databases were used: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and the National Library of Medicine (PUBMED). The following keywords were used to search: deaf teacher, university, inclusion, exclusion, assistive technologies and disability. This review included open-access articles from 2009 to 2017 and written in Portuguese. Restricted access and written in a language other than Portuguese were excluded.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The shortage of deaf teaching professionals: A reality in Brazil**

The shortage of deaf teaching professionals in Brazil according to Cruz and Dias (2009) is justified due to the difficult schooling of deaf students in access to education and when such access occurs, they hardly reach higher levels of education as undergraduate and postgraduate, considered an essential part of teacher training.

Even so, education can be seen as an inclusive action that gives deaf people a professional performance, inserting them in the labor market and ensuring their status as citizens participating in the social context (CRUZ and DIAS, 2009).

With a focus on the inclusion of deaf people, in 2008, the National Policy for Special Education emerges, which proposes actions to promote access, permanence and participation of students with disabilities in mainstream education up to the highest levels of higher education.

Falcão (2008) evidences that although there is a more generalized movement of inclusion of these students, the inclusive education discourse is generally restricted to the Basic Education, hindering their professional formation.

### **LIBRAS: An assistive technology for the inclusion of deaf teachers in universities**

The law nº 10.436/2002 states that the federal education system and the state, municipal and Federal District education systems guarantee the inclusion in the courses of Special Education, Speech Therapy and Teaching, in their middle and higher levels, the teaching of Brazilian Sign Language - Libras, as an integral part of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN), according to current legislation (BRASIL, 2002).

Another inclusion policy instituted in the Federal Educational Institutions was given by decree 5.626/2005, which indicated deaf people as professionals with priority in the teaching of LIBRAS courses, and the training of these professionals should be carried out in Pedagogy or higher normal course, in which LIBRAS and Portuguese written language have constituted languages of instruction, enabling bilingual training.

The teaching of LIBRAS by deaf teachers is described by Wilcox (2005) as the best way for students to know deaf culture and acquire a second language, this fact is due to the natural legitimacy that this professional has (REBOLÇAS, 2009).

### **The reality of the performance of deaf teachers in higher education**

Despite this inclusion process, there are few studies that report the presence of deaf teachers in higher education, showing that the reality of these professionals is exactly the opposite, as described by Muller (2009) in the study in which a deaf teacher of a higher education institution said that she felt isolated and lonely because of the difficulty in communicating with other teachers, both for exchange of experiences and support in formulating the subject.

In this same study, it is possible to infer that the deaf teacher perceives a strangeness on the part of students, thinking about the way they will establish bonds as well as their doubts about what the didactics, methodology and assessment will be (MULLER, 2009).

## CONCLUSION

According to the reading of the researched articles, public accessibility policies for people with disabilities in higher education exist by virtue of norms and legislation, as well as their inclusion and integration into academic life. However, they require specific linguistic and technological accessibility as required by law (BRASIL, 1999).

The first Public Policies for Educational Inclusion at the university were not aimed at the subject with disabilities who would receive this education, but at the theme involving disability.

In fact, it was through Ordinance/MEC n. 1.793/1994 that inclusion gained strength, considering the offer of the course Ethical-Political-Educational Aspects of the Normalization and Integration of Persons with Special Needs (BRASIL, 1994).

Another highlight is anchored in the Include Program that promotes full access for people with disabilities and aims to integrate these people into academic life, in order to eliminate behavioral, pedagogical, architectural and communication barriers to education.

This review also highlighted the experiences of a teacher who mentioned how isolated and lonely she is in her profession. Among the reasons listed by her, there is the low hiring of a deaf teacher, which ultimately restricts the possibility of discussion and exchange of knowledge between such professionals working in higher education.

There are reports of teachers who, feeling isolated, have desmotivation and end up impairing their involvement in academic activities. The biggest justification for this fact is due to the lack of information exchange with other teachers about events, research and others.

In this context, the researched literature reveals that LIBRAS consists of an efficient and effective assistive technology that can contribute to deaf teaching and its integration, as it is legally recognized and is its own and fundamental language to insert these professionals in dialogic processes.

However, although Libras is a benefit in the teaching-learning processes, a curricular and didactic reformulation that explores not only the image but also the “visual semiotics in everyday educational practice” is needed.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the context of higher education, inclusion should not only occur through architectural improvements or information technologies, but also through political, administrative changes and a preparation of professionals from technical and pedagogical areas in the University's daily life.

The development of the deaf requires sign language because it is their language and allows to insert a dialogical process in various social and professional manifestations, since Libras is an efficient and effective tool in higher education teaching, as prescribed by the Federal Law n. 10.436/2002, regulated by Federal Decree n. 5.626/2005.

It is important for society to adapt to the needs of people with disabilities, to share their equal spaces, to accept and respect differences.

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