



JOSÉ OLAVO DE AMORIM

NR: You are a long-standing member of BRAZ-TESOL and have served on the Board. What are the advantages of belonging to BRAZ-TESOL or any teachers' association?

JOA: Belonging to BRAZ-TESOL, TESOL, IATEFL, is undoubtedly a great investment in yourself and in your professional development and growth. You become connected to a large community of teachers dedicated to English language teaching. That creates opportunities to learn from and interact with teachers from all over. You receive newsletters that keep you updated with the latest research and materials, reviews of the latest publications in the field, quite useful classroom tips. On top of that, you keep your association strong. By keeping it strong, you keep your profession visible and problems can be handled together as well as solutions can be found in a more consistent way. New benefits to members are very often added to meet their needs and interests. Attending seminars, workshops, conventions definitely enlarges professional horizons and encourages participants to renew their commitment to a stronger profession.

NR: What medium-to long-term goals would you suggest for BRAZ-TESOL?

JOA: BRAZ-TESOL should create a school of continuing

education for English teachers in Brazil. It is understood that it is not that simple, but partnership with federal and state universities as well as with prestigious private colleges could be thought of.

Attending conferences is for sure of great help, but teachers need more time to sit down, read, study, do research, and become more qualified to face the challenges of a language that evolves continuously. Also, BRAZ-TESOL should engage in setting up standards for English teachers' education in the country, aligned with international standards. Knowing a language does not necessarily qualify its speaker to teach that language, so certification would be of tremendous importance. Many professions require a certificate to practice besides the college diploma. BRAZ-TESOL should work in that direction.

NR: In our context as teachers who have been willing volunteers, how can we stimulate younger people to do the same?

JOA: Being a volunteer is paying back what has been given to us and what life has provided us with. No one should be forced to engage in volunteerism, but as teachers we should help raise students' awareness. Becoming a volunteer brings great personal rewards. You will feel a sense of pride when you have successfully helped someone overcome a



time of difficulty, which can be a physical illness, or mental or emotional distress. Many people will surely appreciate the care and concern that you show towards them. Helping another person is an act of compassion and kindness and will give you a tremendous sense of fulfillment. Volunteering is a much more meaningful experience, taking you further out of your comfort zone.

NR: Does *Colegio Bandeirantes* encourage young people to do voluntary work? If so how?

JOA: We do encourage students, particularly the older ones, to do voluntary work by creating opportunities in some extracurricular projects. To illustrate, a handful of students have engaged in regular visits to patients in local hospitals and clinics. Students often campaign to collect used books / second-hand clothes to be donated to institutions they select. Students might engage in those activities for a number of reasons, ranging from a desire to learn new skills, have fun or make a difference. Some are completely devoted to the cause, while others wish to do their bit where they can.

NR: With all your experience teaching in private schools, what do you feel is the future for teaching large groups (20+)? Will it have to change through technology?

JOA: I would first ask whether there is an ideal number of students in class. If so, what is that ideal number and what makes that number ideal? Answers may vary depending

upon the reality a professional has faced, assuming that the number of students in class is the only key factor to promote successful learning. Teaching large groups calls for teacher's creativity, effective approaches, suitable materials for the age group, technological resources made available in the classroom, and an adequate class load. I would also stress the needed support from the school administration. English as a foreign language has to be viewed as an essential component in the students' development and not as mere curricular component only, and hence that support is vital.

NR: What's the effect of International English (or World English) on the teaching of English in Brazil?

JOA: We have been able to use materials from different sources, which expose students to varieties of English. There is no material prevailing over another. That gives the learners a great opportunity to listen to various accents, intonation, speed, ellipsis, etc.... prompting them to communicate with people from all over. Brazilian teachers of English need to become more and more aware of this reality.

NR: You have been involved in English language teaching at secondary schools for many years now. What are some of the most significant changes you have experienced during this time in terms of how English is taught and the role of the teacher? Where do we stand nowadays and how do you think this specific segment might change in the future?

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