



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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Brazil Informational Report

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TESL 539

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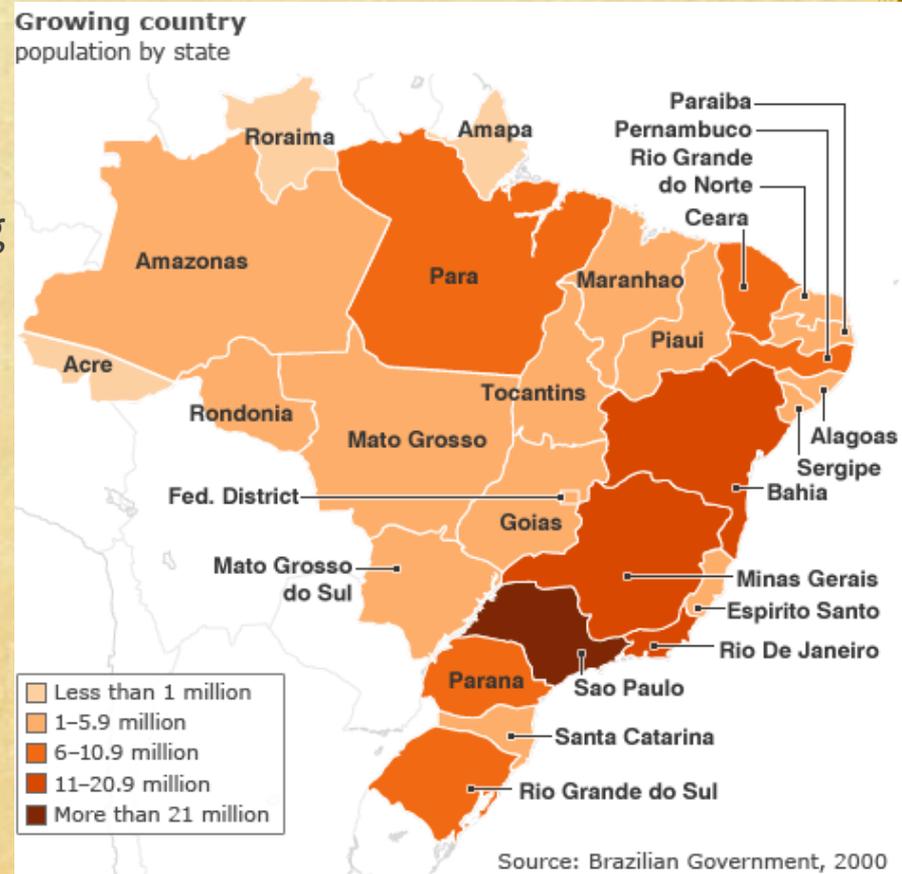
Location

- ◆ Largest country in South America and fifth largest country in the world (3,286,478 sq. mi.)
- ◆ Borders all South American countries besides Chile and Ecuador
- ◆ Borders Atlantic Ocean on the east
- ◆ Diverse geography and climate



The People of Brazil

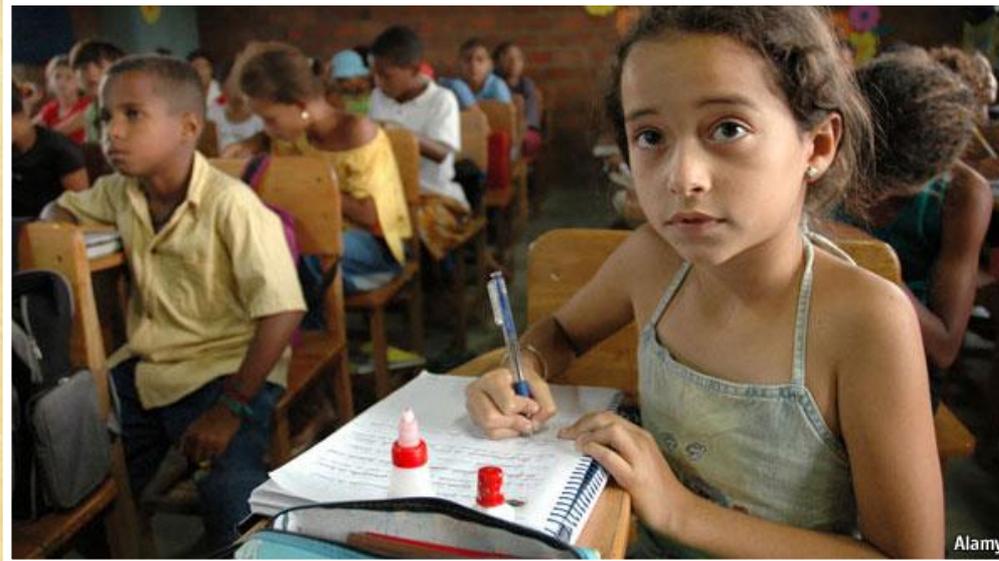
- ♦ **Population:** 205,716,890 (est. 2012)
- ♦ **Literacy Rate:** male - 88.4%
female - 88.8%
 - ♦ Illiteracy rate is ten times greater among poor, rises by age- group, and is highest among indigenous groups and blacks
- ♦ **Average Years of Schooling Completed:** 14 years
- ♦ **Official Language:** Portuguese (most widely spoken)
Other languages: Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, English, and a large number of minor Amerindian languages
- ♦ **Poverty:** 26% of population living below poverty line (est. 2008)



Important Political Info

- ◆ Since gaining independence from Portugal in 1889, Brazil has had many different governments and is currently a federal republic
- ◆ Country is plagued by political instability
 - ◆ Since 1950, only one elected president has completed his term
 - ◆ Government is often viewed as corrupt and only advocates for needs of wealthy
 - ◆ Government policies have led to create a large gap between the wealthy and rural and urban poor, black Brazilians, and indigenous communities
- ◆ Deforestation and building of roads through the Amazon region has displaced many indigenous people
- ◆ Brazil is considered an economic power in Latin America and is emerging as a world power

Education in Brazil

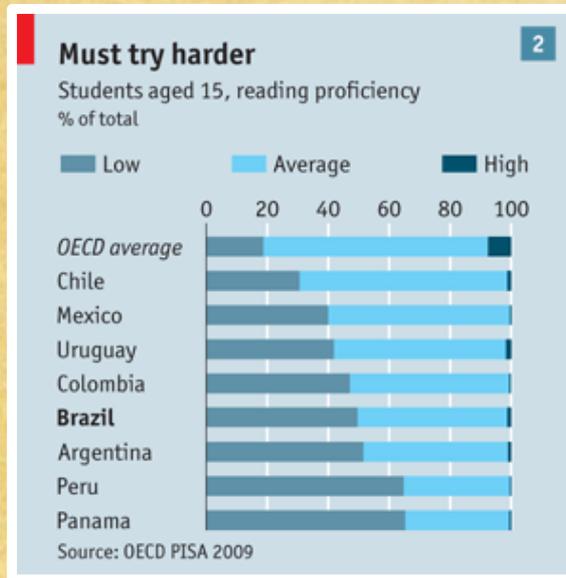


- ♦ Educational policies are inconsistent because state and local governments are not required to follow national policies
- ♦ Government allocates money to public schools but money does not always reach its destination because of corruption
- ♦ There are rural areas where schools are nonexistent and children have to travel by bus to another town to attend school
- ♦ Most children attend public schools because families do not have enough money to send their children to private schools

Students in Brazil

Students

- ◆ Enrollment is at 90% but less than half of those who enter first grade complete eight grades
- ◆ 15-year-olds' reading skills were ranked 49th out of 56 countries on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Math and science scores were even worse



Teachers

- ◆ Teachers are poorly educated and often do not have familiarity with the subjects they teach at the elementary level
- ◆ Do not receive training in subject matter or teaching skills
- ◆ Nearly half of teachers in São Paulo failed to reach state standards for a permanent contract
- ◆ Absenteeism among teachers is a large problem
- ◆ The government is working to improve quality of teachers with new programs and incentives throughout Brazil

Schools and Curriculum

School Level	Ages and Grades	Required?	Times Offered
Preprimary	ages 4-6	no	N/A
Fundamental	ages 7-14 grades 1-8	yes	7:30-12:30 or 1:30-6:30
Secondary	ages 15-17 grades 9-11	yes	7:30-12:30 or 1:30-6:30 or evening classes
University	ages 18 +	no	Times vary

- ♦ Schools run from February to November
- ♦ Curriculum includes math, social studies, reading, science, physical education, art, health, and preparing for work
- ♦ English is required in the curriculum but there are often not enough teachers available and classrooms are overcrowded
 - ♦ Other languages offered include Spanish, German, and Italian
- ♦ Vocational school available as an alternative to secondary school

Classrooms in Brazil



- ◆ Public schools do not receive sufficient maintenance and are sometimes maintained by local volunteers
- ◆ Classrooms typically have desks and chairs in rows
- ◆ All classrooms have blackboards and a few have some technology
- ◆ Average class size: 35 students in private schools and larger in public schools

Child Labor and La Bolsa Familia Program

- ♦ Children in rural and low income areas often cannot go to school or go to school part time in order to help support their families
 - ♦ In 1990, 18% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 were earning an income to help support their families
- ♦ Brazil's previous president , Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, worked to improve quality of education and attendance rates
- ♦ **The Bolsa Familia Program** – allows children to go to school by compensating families for their children's income with either monthly stipend or goat
 - ♦ has reached 11 million families



Click the picture above to view an audio slide show about da Silva's work to improve education in Brazil (NY Times) and below to view a preview of a documentary entitled *Child Labor in Brazil*



The Place of Education in Brazil

- ◆ Until recently, a high importance has not been placed on education
 - ◆ Brazil's former president (elected in 2003), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, only went to school until 4th grade
- ◆ Parents do not see the importance of sending children to school because of limited job opportunities for the educated
 - ◆ Need children to work to help support their families
- ◆ Teachers are respected by parents and students, despite their lack of preparation

Education Reform

“Brazil is trying to make up for lost time. While other countries were investing in education we were wasting our time here saying that education was not that important.”

-Dr. Haddad, education minister

- ♦ More than 22% of the roughly 25 million workers available to join Brazil’s work force in 2010 were not considered qualified
- ♦ Incentives to raise the importance of education among Brazilians and changes to the educational system include:
 - ♦ La Bolsa Familia Program
 - ♦ 700,000 scholarships have been given to low-income students to attend private colleges
 - ♦ More than 180 vocational schools have been opened
 - ♦ New tests to evaluate student performance are used
- ♦ It is hoped that the educational reform the country is currently undergoing will improve Brazilians’ opinion on the importance of education

Brazilian Views and Attitudes

Views of English and English Speakers

- ♦ English can be found everywhere across Brazil
 - ♦ advertisements, songs, movies, t-shirts, newspapers, etc.
- ♦ Brazilians show a preference for English by wearing clothes with English phrases and listening to American music without understanding the meaning
- ♦ English is spoken by the upper class to distinguish themselves from other classes

Views of the United States and Americans

- ♦ In 2010, a poll conducted showed that negative views of the United States had decreased from 60% in 2004 to 35%
- ♦ Both Brazil and the United States are very involved in global affairs and have had conflicts due to differences in opinion

Immigration to United States

- ◆ Since the mid-1980s, at least one million Brazilians have immigrated to the United States, Europe, and Japan
- ◆ The 1990 Census shows that there are at least 100,000 Brazilians living in the US
 - ◆ The largest communities of Brazilians are located in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts
 - ◆ California, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. also have many Brazilians choosing to settle there
- ◆ Most of the Brazilians in the US are from middle-class families and say their stay in the US is only temporary
 - ◆ Most obtain low-paying jobs as maids, housekeepers, cooks, nannies, laborers, or construction workers

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