

TESOL Statement on Racial Injustice and Inequality

Alexandria, VA – (1 June 2020) Over the last week, we at TESOL International Association have joined with the rest of the world in our feelings of sadness, disgust, and anger at the senseless killing of George Floyd. With this most recent incident of police brutality involving a person of color in the United States, it seems undeniable that while the fear and pain caused by one epidemic has upended our lives, another equally menacing epidemic of racism continues to tear apart our communities and threaten the ideals of freedom, peace, and prosperity to which we so tirelessly aspire.

Sadly, this is not the first, nor likely the last time, that TESOL International Association will issue a statement of indignation in the face of social and racial injustice. Founded in 1966, TESOL was born during uncertain and turbulent times, with violence and unrest that mirrored emotions and actions visible in the streets of many of our cities today. And despite great progress toward equality and tolerance over the past five decades, the abhorrent acts of violence that continue to be inflicted upon members of communities of color make clear that as a society and as individuals, we have much work to do in order to truly achieve equality and justice for all.

As a professional association of language educators, TESOL's vision is to be the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. We can achieve this only by exemplifying our core values, including our commitment to equity, diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals' language rights.

When systemic racism challenges the safety and well-being of any group within our society, we must join together to denounce it with all our collective strength and resolve. As language educators, we are all too familiar with the effects of trauma and violence on the ability to learn and thrive. Colleagues of color, their families, their friends, and their students continue to be harmed by racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. Now is the time to come together and demand that this injustice finally stops.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" It is with Dr. King's words that we urge our TESOL members and Affiliates to join us in taking a stand against racial and social injustice, whether in your own words or by peaceful actions, each time we bear witness to such atrocities. Not only will our communities be stronger for the bold actions we take today as TESOL professionals, but our children will benefit and learn from them tomorrow. Until that time, let us all make sure that our thoughts, words, and actions contribute in some way to justice and equality for all.

Deborah Short



TESOL President, on behalf of the TESOL Board of
Directors

Rosa Aronson



Interim Executive Director, on behalf of the TESOL
Staff