



Ben: Hello there IELTS students. In this episode, we're going to listen to Icaro from the south of Brazil and he's going to tell us a bit about his story; how he passed, the challenges he had, and the score he's got and where he's going. So, first of all, welcome to the podcast, Icaro.

Icaro: Thank you, Ben. It's nice to be here.

Ben: Excellent. So, could you just give us a quick introduction like tell us where you're from, why you decided to take IELTS, and where you intend to go?

Icaro: Yeah. I'm from Brazil, of course in the south part of Brazil in Curitiba City and because Brazil is facing a very hard economic crisis, I decided to move to Canada. Firstly, I was trying to immigrate to Quebec, but as I needed to learn French-- advance at French, I decided for the express entry program which I needed some score in the IELTS. So, that is the reason I took the test.



Ben: Got you. Okay. And you chose Canada-- you chose that over Australia and the UK instead of the U.S.? How did you choose Canada or why did you choose Canada?

Icaro: So, the main reason behind this is Canada is looking for-- how I should say-- qualified workers and I have a master's degree which it was really hard to achieve. So, I was looking for a place which this diploma would count, you know. If I go to Australia, U.S. or even UK, they won't count that. I would need you to study again the whole thing and Canada was easy in this part.

Ben: Right. Yeah. It's so frustrating that. It's like when you study so many years in your own country and then the other country-- your target country won't accept it. It's infuriating I imagine.

Icaro: Yeah, yeah. It's really frustrating, but I think Canada is an awesome country. I never been there but I have some friends who moved there so and they are very happy.



Ben: Yeah, yeah. I've got a few friends from the UK actually who moved to Toronto or Toronto as they say and they haven't looked back actually. They're more than more than happy. So, just going back to your IELTS, just going back to the preparation, how were you preparing for the exam beforehand?

Icaro: Yeah. Let me start-- two years ago, I took academic module and my score was okay. It was an overall band of 7, but I wasn't-- I just did that to know how my English was and in the beginning of this year in April, of course I started studying for IELTS in a school here in Curitiba. And that wasn't good for me because my score wasn't good. It was overall band of 6.

Ben: Oh, wow!

Icaro: Yeah. So, I started looking up online and I found you. I look it up on Spotify. And as I travel a lot driving, I downloaded a lot of your podcast and I was listening to it. So, the second



time I took the test was with your help only with the podcasts. I improved my score, but that wasn't enough.

Ben: Got you.

Icaro: So, I decided to buy your course online for as you talked about preparation and repetition is the mother of all learning.

Ben: Absolutely. Wow! Yes, that's fantastic. I'm glad you remembered that. Well, that's awesome. Can I just interrupt you and ask you what happened in the course that you took in-- what was the name of your city again?

Icaro: Curitiba.

Ben: Curitiba. That's it. Curitiba. How was the class conducted there? What happened?



Icaro: Yeah. The class was conducted I think like an average way where the teachers told us ah, the writing is a recipe and you just need to follow the recipe. The speaking you just need to answer whatever comes to our mind and lie our ass off. Something like that.

Ben: Okay. Cool.

Icaro: And sorry for all the vocabulary.

Ben: No worries. I think you just made a new episode like a new category. It doesn't matter. I think we'll be able to slip through the iTunes. Anyway, so in the course-- I mean in the Curitiba class it wasn't going to plan. You weren't that impressed.

Icaro: It wasn't because everybody who was studying in that class needed an overall band, but I needed 8 in listening and at least 7 in the other tests-- in writing, speaking, and reading you know. So, listening is all about training. You need to do a lot of mock tests, right?



Ben: Totally.

Icaro: But I was struggling with writing and speaking because reading I think if you know English, reading is a piece of cake. You just need to read the thing, understand the test and do the exam, right?

Ben: Yeah, yeah.

Icaro: But with your tips which I found mostly in the writing module; the C2 template and everything, my God! It opened my mind and it didn't only help me with the IELTS. I think it will help me in my future in Canada because right now I can write good essays and write an email properly, you know.

Ben: Ah, that's fantastic. Yeah. I mean this is like one of the benefits of preparing for IELTS. If you prepare right and you're aiming high, then you are going to or you should if the course is



good, you should be improving your writing just on a general level as a byproduct, you know. As sort of like a secondary benefit and with good writing, it makes such a big difference when you're applying for jobs, when you're communicating with your colleagues at work. So, yeah. I totally agree with you there.

Icaro: Yeah. And the feedback I was given by Nadine was fantastic. She told me everything I needed to correct myself and I think that was the key point for achieve 7.5 in writing.

Ben: Wow. 7.5 that's great. That's really well done, Icaro. That's fantastic. So, what was your biggest challenge? Oh, by the way, it's Helen sorry Ellen who corrects the essays. She's the American woman and then there's Nadine who's in the Philippines and she does the email response. So, it was Ellen that you was talking to, but it doesn't matter.

Icaro: I didn't know. Yeah.



Ben: It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, but I'll pass on the comments to both Nadine and Ellen as well. So, don't worry about that. So, what was your biggest challenge before actually taking the course?

Icaro: Focusing I think because you know my previous score in speaking was 6. In my opinion, it is impossible to learn English in one month. So, how did I improve two points? My current score is 8. The IELTS confidence and how the confidence module really helped me to be sure of my spoken language. I know I'm not native, but I know it can be understood and I know that my speaking is about 7. And all the tips I found there were essential to that. So, it's not all about just preparation. It's all about the confidence I was given with the course.

Ben: Absolutely. Yeah I mean I totally agree with you there and what you said is like I knew that I could communicate. This is absolutely essential and I think this kind of knowledge and self-assurance comes from confidence and this is why I call the course IELTS Speaking



Confidence, but the thing is people-- and you said a very important thing. You said I know I've got an accent, but I know I can communicate and this is insanely important because a lot of people they get really hung up about their accent and it starts to become like a big issue for them inside their own minds. I was arguing with this person from the south of London and he was saying oh no, I'm speaking correct English. You're not speaking correct English. And I'm like no, you cannot say that. I mean because I'm from the north of England and we speak obviously a little bit differently and nowadays, I speak much more differently because I've been outside of the UK for a while, but I was saying look, the correct accent is the accent that can be understood. The goal of speaking is to communicate. So, the only correct accent is if you can be understood by the person listening to you. And in speaking, there's so much more. I mean the accent is related to pronunciation, but pronunciation is only 25% of your score. You could have perfect pronunciation. You could just pronounce all the words perfectly, but in the wrong order-- in the wrong grammatical order. Then it's not communication you know. Or you could even just say



grammatically coherent sentences pronounced perfectly, but if you're answering the wrong question, then it's not communication either. So, there's like so many more elements regarding communication, but students especially non-native English speakers, they get really worked up about their pronunciation. But I always say it's the communication that counts and the best way or the biggest way, the most effective way I've found of improving the communication skills is through the confidence. Yeah, I can hear the confidence in your voice now as well and you're speaking crystal clear. So, yeah. You've improved fantastically, Icaro. Well done.

Icaro: Thank you. Thank you, Ben. It was really hard, but if you really try to do it correctly, if you study every day, you don't need to study four or five years each day like you said during the course. You just need to study it every day. My God! The difference was huge.

Ben: Exactly. Yeah, this is it. I mean you can't learn a language by doing like five hours on a Sunday and then not touching it again until the next Sunday. It's much better just to do 20



minutes each morning or just like little bits here and there, but it's the frequency. It's like the habit that's really the core difference there. Yeah.

Icaro: Can I tell a little bit of the reading that I forgot?

Ben: Yeah. Go for it.

Icaro: In the reading part, of course it's just about understanding the test, but I was struggling with the true, false, and not given and all my mistakes were between false and not given. And the tips you give despite the fact that it is really simple, I could understand and I achieved 9 because of the tips you gave. So, yeah. That was fantastic as well.

Ben: And 9 in the reading, that's awesome. That is absolutely fantastic. Well done, Icaro. Well done. Yeah. The yes no true not given it can be tricky. It can be tricky, but I think if you've got



the right knowledge and you've got a high reading level like you seem to have as well, I imagine do you read a lot anyway in English?

Icaro: Yeah, yeah. I read-- I forgot the name in English-- *Game of Thrones*, of course.

Ben: Okay. Yes. Absolutely. Yeah. Well, this is another thing that I was going to say for the reading which I just mentioned on a podcast a few weeks ago that if you immerse yourself in the language, then it makes it so much easier when it comes to the reading test. You don't have to like oh my God! I have to start reading. If it's already a part of you, then it's so much easier. And the second thing which you did automatically was if you read something that's addictive and I've got friends who will read-- I just watch the series, but I've got friends who've read the books and they just don't put them down. It's just like turn pages, just page after page. And this is what you



need. You need to really immerse yourself in it. So, I guess you've got a really good vocabulary now for like dragons and dragon slaying.

Icaro: Yeah.

Ben: Sorry?

Icaro: I know almost everything about dragons. Yeah.

Ben: Yeah. That's useful in the workplace. Oh, that's fantastic though, but yeah. I mean fair enough, you are going to learn all this crazy vocabulary about fantasy worlds and all the rest of it, but that's like another byproduct. The key thing you're going to be learning is just absolute immersion and the grammar structures and you're learning without having to be consciously thinking of the language. It just becomes automatic and natural which is just one of the many benefits from immersing yourself in the actual language. It just makes it so much easier. So--



Icaro: Yeah, yeah.

Ben: Right. We're coming almost to an end there, Icaro. Do you have anything else you'd like to add before we finish? Any tips to the students? Carry on.

Icaro: Yeah, yeah. I would like to add two things. In the Speaking Part 2, I was struggling as well and the mind map is awesome. You can speak for the whole two minutes and without grumbling you know. And I would like to say everybody who is trying to achieve a higher score in IELTS even though it might sound really hard, you can improve. If you fight really hard, if you study and follow the method, everything will come good at the end. I don't know if I speak correctly, but--

Ben: No, you did. You did. I mean everything will come together at the end, so yeah. And I totally agree with you there, Icaro. It's not about-- there is a lot of effort involved and I think we



just need to get that straight. It's not like-- just to explain to the audience, it's not like Icaro was at a band 3, he took the course and then he gets a band 9 in the reading. No. Icaro put some effort in there. He put in a lot of effort and he also adopted almost like success habits, you know. Habits of success like listening to native English speakers daily, reading addictive material and reading of the lot and just full immersion and also putting in a good chunk of effort from his side as well. So, yeah. I mean absolutely congratulations to you, Icaro. So, when are you going to Canada? Have you bought your tickets yet?

Icaro: No. No. I will put my profile online tomorrow and with the score we have, I think Ontario-- we are planning to move to Ottawa. So, we are hoping that next month they will invite us and by the beginning of the next year, we will go to Ontario-- to Ottawa, sorry.



Ben: To Ottawa. Wow! Fantastic. Fantastic. That is awesome. Well, I think that's everything from my end and I'd just like to say thanks a million for doing the interview, Icaro and thank you very much.

Icaro: It's me who needs to thank. Thank you very much, man for your course and all the help.

Ben: You're welcome, buddy. You're welcome.

[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com