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 Naviglio
 Università della Valle d'Aosta-Université de
 la Vallée d'Aoste

a cura di Antonio Calvani

Short interview



Mario Rinvoluceri*

1. Are you in favour of any specific approach to language teaching?

The most commonsensical way of teaching students is to have them at the centre of everything that happens in the language classroom.

I agree with Paulo Freire that the texts in a language class should relate closely to, or arise out of, the learners' own experience. I agree with Carl Rogers that a teacher should have **unconditional** positive regard for each student. I agree with Caleb Gattegno that teaching is to be subordinated to learning and that learners know more than teachers realise and that they know more than they themselves realise. I agree with Bernard Dufeu that L2 language expression is valuable for learning in so far as it stems from a **real** desire to communicate. All in all, I belong to the very broad church of humanistic language teaching.

2. What is the best advice you would give language teachers?

I am leary of giving advice, feeling it to be one of the least useful aspects of a parental state of mind. May I, instead, ask a putative teacher half a dozen questions about her last lesson:

- What was your preparation like? (By "preparation" I understand anything you thought, dreamed or did in the period between the previous lesson and your last lesson. "Preparation" could include reactive thoughts while jogging, reading, thinking retrospectively and into the future, creating self-awareness about half buried emotions, marking students texts, writing a lesson plan fantasy).

- What sort of rhythm did the lesson have for the student group, for individual students and for you?

- What sympathies and antipathies did you experience towards individual students, groups of learners, the whole class?

- What obstacles did you encounter during this lesson?

- What large or small **unexpected** things happened during this hour?

This kind of lesson analysis derives from the thought of Rudolph Steiner and I learnt it from Waldorf school colleagues.

3. What do you find most important in teaching adolescents and teenagers?

- Energy

- A sense of wonderment at the complicated stage of life these people are living through.

- Ability to lead the class with a variety of different rhythms.

- Full awareness that the learners have **bodies** and, at this age, cannot be kept nailed to their seats for 60minutes. A full and rich use of relevant drama techniques.

4. What do you think about integrating ICT into language learning?

I find this question absurd and out-of-date as all our students live in an ICT state of mind. Should humans drink water? Yes, they should!

Some examples:- It is natural to ask students to do collaborative creative writing in the computer room rather than in a computer less classroom.

- If students have produced their own work on your interactive white board It is natural to email what they have created to each of them.

- If you are teaching Italian to foreigners ask your students to find out some of the collocational differences between MATTINO (6million occurrences) and MATTINA (24 million occurrences) by googling each of the words.

5. You have a strong interest in Neuro-Linguistic- Programming. What makes NLP important for language teachers.

I use NLP in three clearly distinct ways:

- N.L.P helps me control my inner states in ways which are personally and professionally useful. I tend to anger easily and NLP techniques often allow me to quell or side-step such dysfunctional emotion.

- N.L.P knowledge is invaluable in dealing with students, colleagues or bosses whom I find to be "difficult" people. "Difficult" is in inverted commas as they are rendered difficult by the way I see, hear and feel them.

- N.L.P offers me a waterfall of sensitive, and beautiful exercises to use with my students.

I have enjoyed hasarding answers to your questions.

Thank you for this interview

Per informazioni sui corsi di NLP organizzati dai Pilgrims:

<http://teachers.pilgrims.co.uk/teachers/info/tnp.asp?ID=32&AID>

Segnaliamo anche un'intervista di Paolo Torresan del febbraio 2005 a Mario Rinvolucri nel supplemento alla rivista ITALS a cura di Paolo E. Balboni:

http://venus.unive.it/italslab/modules.php?op=modload&name=ezcms&file=index&menu=79&page_id=150

* **Mario Rinvolucri** opera nel campo dell'insegnamento della lingua inglese da oltre 30 anni - gli ultimi 26 anni con i Pilgrims ed è una tra le figure più rappresentative dell'approccio umanistico-affettivo, da lui tradotto con originalità nella pratica e nella ricerca dell'insegnamento dell'inglese L2/LS. Rinvolucri è anche editor della rivista on line Humanising Language Teaching. <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/> Ha scritto diversi resource books per docenti editi dalla Oxford University Press. Segnaliamo il suo software per l'apprendimento della lingua, Mind Game e il suo ultimo libro Multiple Intelligences in EFL scritto in collaborazione con Herbert Puchta.

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