

Etp-Delta Profile Questionnaire

How did I begin as a teacher?

Athens: 1963 : I was 23 years old. I got a job with the Chambakis chain of private schools and found I had a London silver smith as my Director of Studies. I had no idea how to teach and he had no idea of how to help me. I lost half my first beginners class of tired shop-assistants within the first month. My FCE class, mainly university students, slowly taught me how to teach.

My best teaching moments.

These are numerous but what they have in common is that I suddenly discover/realise a whole new dimension to a given student/trainee. I feel a special kind of thrill, especially if the student is a person I did not at first know how to adequately appreciate.

My worst teaching moment

This "moment" lasted two weeks: a TT course at Pilgrims in the summer in the late nineties: I was in grave clinical depression and should not have even entered that classroom. I was in a state of leaden introversion, of the sort William Stryon has described so terrifyingly, and my condition affected-infected several trainees very badly. We did a telephone follow-up in the October of that year and found that some of them were still hurt-angry three months later. YUK.

The books I have found most useful

In Broughton's *Success with English* I found an essential guide to teaching, and this shortly after my very wobbly start in Athens. In 1970, in O'Neil's *Kernels Intermediate*, I found another and very different step-by-step guide to teaching.

In the books of Maley and Duff, *Drama Techniques in Language Teaching*, *Mind Matters* and *The Mind's Eye*, I found humanity, imagination and an invitation to free up my work, to think and to feel.

My most tricky teaching point

The whole morass of EFLese language "rules" that are either partial or false:

Are there only 3 conditional patterns?

How frequently does backshift occur after a past tense reporting verb?

Why is it hard to find past continuous reporting verbs in most textbooks, as in:

"She was telling me he's due in at 10.00"?

The person who influenced my teaching most

1. My father who taught me at home till I was 13. He threw books at me and screamed his frustration when I got things wrong. He was a brilliant negative teaching model.

2. Lou Spaventa and Carlos Maeztu, who came to Pilgrims from the Experiment in International Living, Brattleboro, Vermont in the late 1970's and brought us the thinking of Caleb Gattegno, Charles Curran, and Gertrude Moskowitz.

Lou and Carlos were a major influence because they fully lived what they wanted to teach us.

3. Bernard Dufeu, whose book *Teaching Myself*, is maybe the most fundamental EFL publication of the 90's. (It was barely noticed by the EFL noise-makers)

4. My writing collaborators, including James Dixey (*Well Said*), Christine Frank and Marge Berer (*Challenge to Think*) John Morgan (*Once upon a Time*), Paul Davis (*Dictation*), Peta Gray (*Letters*)..etc...

Something not many people know about me.

Every morning I do the family washing by hand in the bath. Behind this anachronistic behaviour is a belief that life is becoming more and more "out-of-body" in the rich countries of the world and that I want to stay "in-body".

My favourite class

I have been in many groups that stay in "honeymoon", groups where apparently all is sweetness and light. My most satisfying classes, those from whom I learn the most, are the groups which move from "honeymoon" into a period of turbulence, after which they settle down to a better and more realistic quality of work.

My message to new teachers

- Notice that your map is not the territory. There is no objectivity, only multiple subjectivities. (NLP)
- Work on the students. Leave them to work on the language. Only they can. (Silent Way)
- Whenever you teach English you also teach the way you are. You teach yourself. (Dufeu)

My favourite anecdote

Student: " Mario, I'm very excited; last night I 'ave a dream all in Eeenglish "

Mario: "Really? wow, fantastic!"

Student: Yes, but I no understand one word!"

English Teaching is...

- the provision of a world utility, on a par, for the middle classes, with water or electricity.
- The passion of, the humdrum job of, or the curse of approximately 5 million teachers, world-wide.

- an important plank in the policy of turning the whole world into the US's back yard, be it militarily, economically or culturally.

How would I like to be remembered as a teacher

Lorca wrote of his bull-fighting friend, Sancho Ignacio Mejias:

" The ants in your house do not know you
Because you have died for ever
In a mound of snuffed-out dogs." (El Llanto por S. Ignacio Mejias)

A question I would have liked ETP to ask me

What do you feel about language?

And the answer....

I am deeply in love with language in all its multiple aspects, musicality, grammar, ambiguity, word friendships (collocation), word shape in the ear and on the page etc..... I am amazed that *maison* in French is *ty* in Welsh, *stepi* in Albanian, *Haus* in German and *ev* in Turkish. The same and not the same. ... a *neu Bau Haus* in Berlin is very different from a slate-roofed *ty* surrounded by Welsh bracken. And yet they all mean *house*, or is it *hus*, as in *a wee hus* (Scottish). Utterly amazing, especially when you think that maths is unitary across the world, as are the computer "languages".