

Your favourite website:

I think it has to be YouTube. There's everything there from my favourite psychologists, such as Albert Ellis, giving talks and lectures to alternative comedy series like Garth Marengi's Darkplace to recipes for chapli kebabs and video fail compilations of my fellow human beings falling over. Marvellous!

A book you would recommend (fictional or ELT):

I haven't had a lot of success with my recommendations recently, in general. So I've stopped making them. This is probably not a permanent state of affairs and I may start up again in the future. The next two ELT related books that *I'd* like to read are something on writing by Ken Hyland and a book by Julian Edge on reflective practice - that's where I'm at anyway.

Something you'd never throw away:

I don't have to worry about throwing things away or not throwing them away because I lose everything anyway. Even buying my tickets to get up to Oviedo was a nightmare. I tried to pay with my card but then the secure payment system sent me an online code that I had to cross reference on a plastic card they gave me years ago, printed with a grid of numbers, to give me my final security access number. I couldn't find the card.

Photos! Old photos of my grandparents and my parents when they were young. I treasure those. I've recently been making more use of those in class as well. That'll be in a future talk. TESOL Spain 2020 or 2021, perhaps.

Who or what inspires you?

I think in terms of ELT, it's more or less everybody now. Being connected up to the TEFL/TESOL network of teachers, trainers and speakers keeps me ticking over. There are a few people I listen to as well - like Robin Walker, Paul Seligson - who are 10 or 15 years down the line from me and who've given me pointers, put me on to stuff, gee'd me up or helped calm me down when I've got a bit ahead of myself.

In terms of my teenage teaching, a lot of my inspiration comes from inside the classroom - from analysing teacher and student responses and exchanges - and from fields beyond ELT such as writing on behaviour, rhetoric, ethics or power. For my YL teaching, I tend to draw much more on what people around me are doing. There are a couple of presenters, Andrea Littlewood and Ana Demitroff whose primary sessions I always take ideas away from. I also have some colleagues in Russia, Ray Carleni, Ana Bykova and their staff doing some very exciting work with immersion courses for VYL's.

For my adult teaching, I have drawn much more on the traditional canon of ELT literature. I've recently moved house from a village outside of Seville into the dead centre of town and as I was preparing my boxes, I realised just how many stacks of articles I'd amassed on both the DELTA and MA - all of them with mad circlings, underlinings and asterisks. All those ideas from other people have become compacted and integrated into my current thinking - so much so that it's easy to take it all for granted, or to forget that it's other people's work that lifts us up.

The funniest email you've ever sent:

I got this email in 2005 from an unknown sender.

Dear Roland: (and yes, he really did use two dots here)

Your dad said that you would help take pictures of the pieces of furniture that are in my warehouse in Makati. Thank you very much for doing that for me! I really don't need a professional to do it though, because all my contact in San Francisco needs is to see what the piece looks like so that he can give me advice as to how the piece should be shaped, if they need to be shaped at all.

Thanks a million,
Steve

Whenever I get a mail using my surname as a first name (which I appreciate it could be) I know that something's slightly awry. Anyway, I replied:

Dear Steve,

I'm thinking of doing the shoot with a Leica 7000 and knocking the pieces out against a yellow ochre background - give it a turn of the century look. Amanda's coming down for the shoot (she's the blond one) and we should be able to get her draped over one or two of the pieces - set it all off a bit.

Roland

He then started to fret a little bit and I got the following reply:

Dear Roland:

Please remember that I only need the pictures to show my contact in San Francisco, so that he can guide me as to how I proceed with the pieces. The really nice pictures can come later when I know more about how to set up a catalogue. I have to really keep in mind that I have to keep the costs down, because I already have a lot of money tied up in the pieces already.

Thanks a million for everything.

Take care,

Steve

I wanted to carry on and troll him (though I wasn't familiar with the term then) a little bit more but it felt SO naughty. My next email explained to him he needed a different Roland but I did have so much fun with that brief exchange.

Your favourite lesson:

I really enjoy any lesson where I manage to shut up long enough for my students to get some solid language practice in and where I have sufficient strength of mind and power of concentration to listen to them and feed something back that will be useful. If there's time still for me to see students actually using that feedback (corrections, input language items) then that's the cherry on the cake.

Your favourite bit about your talk:

All of it. I can say that without hesitation. The talk's called *Bob's your Uncle! Troubleshooting for teens*. I first gave it in May of last year and have been on the road with it quite a lot since then. This will be the eleventh time I've given the session. Anything in it that wasn't quite up to the rest of the material, or that I felt might be taking the audience or myself off on a tangent has long since been dropped.

A lesson you've learnt while teaching:

Especially when teaching young learners or teens, we can *choose* how we react, from moment to moment, from task to task and from lesson to lesson. And as we explore those choices, more choices open up.

Look forward to seeing you all at the conference.

Have a safe journey up, across, down or over.