

If I Could Be Teacher Again

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Tres Cantos, March 2008**

In July of the last year I commemorated the 45th anniversary of the teaching of my first class, taught to a student, resident of my village, which had to prepare for the exams in September, because he had failed Greek and Latin subjects. During these nine decades, I worked in varying intensity, directly or indirectly, the classrooms, teacher's tables and platforms dedicated to education, education, teaching and youth guidance, and adults in night time.

I think therefore I am entitled, perhaps the obligation to summarize this journey in a few notes of reflection and evaluation, as a memory or balance of my working life, now I start the retirement stage. I say obligation, because if I help, at least one novel in teaching duties, to avoid committing the same mistakes and learn from the mistakes of the others, my advice would have been very helpful, and the new teacher could have advanced a long way towards the achievement of wisdom.

I will recapitulate, as an inventory, a pattern of behavior (the order of the same is not intended to have a special meaning), as a flexible and comprehensive framework, which would run my didactic teaching resume, if I were permitted to start, about forty five years ago. It's a mental game or recreation of the impossible that only is available, somehow, to appease my guilty conscience, that stings when I remember what I did wrong, especially when I think what could I have done and did not. We know that no one has the power to change the past, only oblivion and the chimerical dream of serving balm to the pain of the evil done and before the penalty of the lost time.

First pattern.

I will fail less students, or even better, I will not fail anyone who wants to learn something.

I failed few students (except those who did not merit more than enough to reach the approved). But if I start over, I will banish forever the failure in grades or qualifications. And would not do it because of boasting of "youth", ie to ingratiate myself with those who are dominated by the laziness, or those who do not give importance to the constant discipline, or who show no interest whatsoever is the work. I will approve all students who attend to class, do their exercises or activities, and show willingness to learn. The argument to defend my position is quite simple: whoever *attends class, study* (some - little-study not coming to class), *who study, learn* (certain privileged people learn with no need of being in the *classroom*), *who learn, knows* (here exceptions can not fit : we know what we learn) *and who knows, approves* (or should be approved.) Therefore, there must be a general approvation. Anyone who wants a higher grade, should make more efforts, and that grade will be given. I will ever encourage competition in early ages. The young people are distinguished by their generosity and solidarity.

They have enough vitality and good mood. They are the custodians of the most precious treasure, which is the infinite possibilities that lie ahead of them. They are rich in time, they don't feel the worry or anguish of their absence or scarcity. A young, is the antithesis of parsimony, distrust or fear. He doesn't look at his partner as the opponent that will take away an hypothetical job , a meager scholarship or a lucrative business. the young people who study in our high schools have not drawn nor on his forehead nor in his soul, scars caused by the deception, betrayals and letdowns that adults receive during the years. What motives exist for parents and teachers to activate an unnatural competitiveness, the outrageous opposition , or the obsessed race , in order to achieve the best grades, even with the danger of becoming selfish and having lack of solidarity with their partners?

Second pattern

I would hear more, much more, to students and colleagues.

I realize now that I've lived long enough locked in my tower, as a distrustful and cocky wren. I have suffered acute deafness for too long. Big mistake! While one keeps the spirit dull, he wastes precious time; he wastes frequently large opportunities to enrich his mind, to grow in knowledge and learn new ways to solve problems, to name only a few losses.

The fellow teachers know more than what we think. It is shown that each individual tends to be more than remarkable in their subject or speciality. I've lived "near", but not always "connected" to intelligent persons that I had the luck to meet. I've often ignored the advice of the philosopher: "If you're wise, join the wise and you will learn something." What can students teach, even if they ignore what they should learn?

Someone could ask. Students give us the most important lessons we can imagine. It is obvious that they know far less of the subject than the teacher. However, even in the field of our own speciality, they help us recognize the life in the street and the movement of new flows of activity that prevail in the society. If we ignore the subject, there is an uncountable number of times where our students teach us and are masters of master.

The age permits no exception or grants a pardon. Upon entering the first day of each school year, an evidence dazzles us: the students in high school start with at the age of twelve years we have one more year on us. Therefore, year after year, until the distance is offensive and almost huge: teachers who are 50-52 years older than their students (for example, a student of 1^o of the ESO is 12, and his teacher may have 64). It doesn't matter the interest and effort that we waste keeping up being updated, it is obvious that any student of the ESO, that fail many subjects, give us hundreds of laps about the turns and expressions of the language, new computer applications, the possibilities in the audiovisual world, the approach and handling of conflictive situations, solutions to problems on the street and the family, and so on many other topics ...

How can you explain any subject, without knowing anything about what is happening on the street? The challenge for any educator is to know, honestly and without reservations, what students think of teachers, their explanations, of their behavior and what is most important, know what they speak of, what interests them, what moves them, what aspirations and expectations they maintain, what problems they are concerned with, what toil and what tire them up.

Third pattern.

I would work collaboratively and in teams, and would promote the work of the students in groups.

This pattern is very linked to the previous one. For a false and ridiculous urge to smarty that we hide, and do not acknowledge to others, failures, weaknesses, what we lack to know and learn. If teachers work in cooperative plan, it would lead to far more synergy, since we have the same colleagues and students, and the fruits will be more noticeable. History explains well that the fatigue is more manageable and lighter load, if they are shared. Now that I have free time, I devote some time to read the Larousse dictionary, which they say is an effective drug against Alzheimer's. Do not attempt to learn it by heart, as an idle parrot, but linking data, dates, principles, names. If I start again, I would learn it in a relationa way, among other positive consequences, it makes you humble, to be aware and accept that you know nothing or very little, even own specialty. The root cause of working together is, first, the recognition of one's shortcomings and gaps and, secondly, the humble attitude of the need to help and collaboration with others. Who presume to know everything, and does not recognize its limitations, look for a shortcut to make a fool on many occasions.

The components of a faculty and the student group in the classroom are as choirs or theater, in which no one is indispensable, but all are necessary, so that the work is displayed successfully. If they cope together with problems, it is logical and natural to find solutions faster. Education and training of youth should be the teamwork paradigm, composed of parents, teachers and the students themselves.

Fourth pattern.

I would enjoy more with the small details and positive, pleasant situations, jokes and pranks in general with lighthearted moments that give us the coexistence of many years.

I missed the humor, and willingness to laugh in earnest, and often of myself. I showed a long face and a frown, too often. I left easily mastered by the outburst, the scolding and correcting unfocused and poorly directed. Many lost moments suppressed laughter, many smiles aborted many lovely words unspoken, many ballads not sung ...! The inquisitorial gesture, the "Mayesto" stretched, the shearing verb sullen gaze, show weakness and fear. The teacher's authority must be moral, and everything else will follow. It is not about to win, but to convince (achieving the objectives with the others). Impose coerce, and often exhibit the logic of force leads to failure and frustration. If I were permitted to start over, I would promote and exquisite good humor in the classroom; banish laughter loud and vacuous; require the recitation of poems, recitation of pleasant reading, the theater-forum, the serene and refined singing, and many other activities that cause happiness and an attitude of gratitude for the gifts that life and society has given us. The plant of humor must be watered with a spirit of gratitude to all who contribute to the welfare of students and teachers. Millions of children and young people currently do not have a 10 percent of the means, resources and opportunities that our students enjoy.

Fifth pattern

.I devoted entirely to the task of learning, to continue learning to be more of a person and being an example for students.

I would practice what I have so often repeated to my students: learn is a matter of doing a little effort, arming of a small dose of perseverance and patience, and follow a fairly simple methodology. All the people who come to prominence in the world of science, literature, arts, or sports, have worked, have maintained their perseverance, and have acted in accordance with the method that their teachers taught them. I would live a situation of Correspondence to have the privilege to learn and know at all times. The real juvenilization lies in the possibility and implementation of a continuous learning and lasting process. How many careers offer the so wonderful opportunity to review and deepen the knowledge and new theories, principles and facts, to experience new and alternative solutions, project and devise exciting possibilities? I therefore devoted in body and soul without rest or respite, to the task of teaching-learning, dialectically and inclusive way. Someone said that is easier to teach what you need to learn, and one learns easier what he needs to teach.

***Sixth pattern.* I would focus on few targets and core activities; I would be less dispersed. In other words, I would cover less and pull more.**

Pretending to be at all, and in the latest, it is paid dearly. Experience all the new things that other theoretical speculate, without being contrasted with the times and enough resources, especially when it comes to teaching and learning people, it is a complete recklessness.

Changing your mind is wise, but being a proselyte unconditionally many of which are issued or heard, it is for senseless and vain people. It would be more prudent, therefore, when applying theories and teaching models in the classroom. Doubtless, the teachers have an story like Ulysses, between Scylla and Charybdis in many situations, and not always easy to succeed in the art of teaching in the classroom. In a word, we must try to keep what is good, but without excesses or crazy things. I can not resist saying something about traveling. They were always my weakness and my dream. Without even having read the Odyssey, he sensed that life is a trip created and sustained of dreams. No doubt my love of geography helped in this path. I regret having not applied the message of Machado "I have walked many paths, / I have opened many paths, / I sailed a hundred seas, / and moored in a hundred banks. " Should I have traveled less? Maybe. As the Tao says: the sage knows without traveling '(and the fool not even traveling learns, "I say.) However, while not proven otherwise, traveling, the enlightened way of the wise, remains a healthy and instructive exercise. It is compatible traveling, seeing, meeting new people and landscapes, with the essential stillness and quiet reflection. Learn why and how we travel, have clear objectives to achieve, walk calmly and responsive, can be some of the key for a lifelong learning and productivity

Seventh pattern.

I would trust more in people, and therefore in students. If any doubt appears, I would always trust the principle of presumption of innocence and favouring the weakest.

The suspicion or mistrust damage to the student, too often, when conflict or tense situations arise. If I could get the privilege of reviving, I would be a teacher with good intentions at all times. Bad thoughts against students must be turned away as if they were dangerous temptations. No progress is granted having bad intentions- Likewise, we must never be jealous or envious, as the poet said. The distrust and envy are companions easy to enter with, but stubborn and obstinate to leave. What is gained with the mistrust? Very little. Of course it is not being reckless or naive. The trust is based on the Justice applied the principle of equanimity and forbearance.

Eighth pattern.

I would be more attentive to differences and take into account the diversity of talent that everyone possesses, with preference manifested by those who have less.

I always rebelled against the injustice to suspend certain students because, "as he has already failed five subjects, I will fail him in mine too because he has a very dubious grade, and so studied in depth. This suspense added that the student did not expect him much damage will never forget. I came to mind those cowboys fights in the Wild West, where the fallen and helpless still gets kicked and spit for free.

Moreover, each has a unique and an unrepeatable existence, and consequently, possesses unique skills, qualities and abilities, almost divine. Discover and develop would be the major task of the teacher. I would promote the interest, motivation, by the originality of each student in the appropriate scope and bet with him and his family, to help in such challenge.

Ninth pattern.

I would appreciate with equity my mission and lead with a healthy pride in my profession and job as a teacher.

Fortunately that belongs to the past, (nowadays students do not know it just in literature) the saying "Having more hunger than a schoolmaster." This saying, defines in a full and fair way the cultural level of the society that repeat it. However, it is well known that a teacher's work is somewhat disparaged and undervalued. People with a Scratch-cultural level, but with strong purchasing power, looking over our shoulders, and sometimes with some compassion, to the teachers of their children. Those who barely stand their children during a weekend, and allow them to stop up with video-games and movies, incomprehensibly criticize teachers because they enjoy many days of vacation and a holiday. Even discussing the salary earned by a teacher, when the whole widely accepted (or envy) the profit margin, excessive in many cases, of other professionals and businessmen. It is a value and a recognition symptom given to education in a country. The citizens who do not appreciate what their teachers have taught are judged. No wonder, then, to convey to their children the little appreciation and disdain for the teacher.

In sin they will penance as the child learns to be ungrateful and short practitioner the advice and teachings of their own parents. There is no question of being a pedant and believe to be the wisest, because I am a teacher who studied one or two university courses, or have passed the chair to dictate and teach. Quite simply this is what I am: a teacher, an artist and a teacher. If our students do not tell us as a fan of bullfights "so you fight, master," something is failing. Please call us master with the same emotion and sincerity that the bullfighters, is that we have not gotten the proper valuation. Of course, we must fight to get it, we have to deserve it.

Tenth pattern. **It would be less permissive in the fundamental and less demanding in the secondary.**

Without any doubt, I have sinned in permissive or soft way to situations that should be corrected vigorously and without hesitation. to confuse true tolerance, respect for others, the achievement of basic rules, because of permissiveness reckless and senseless, does not lead to anything positive in any field, and less in teaching young people. The lack of coexistence and classroom behavior (eg repeatedly be untimely and without a motive, they speak without permission, laugh, disturb others, laugh at teacher or classmates, meet with rebuffs, and all without protest therefore not participataing in work, not doing homework, interrupt untimely, improperly sit ... and do worse things, there is no need to list) **they should not be allowed.** And if the parents and the society through television debates and opinions agree, it will pay dearly. The classroom is the laboratory where, appart from teaching and learning to know-know and know-how, has to teach know-be and behave. It is therefore a forum where the values and behaviors are put into practice, where we must give opportunities needed with the mistakes and failures, but fair and thorough.

However, the understanding, that is evaluating the whole situation more or less conflictive, would be a permanent attitude when it comes to acting. Perhaps the characteristics more carefully treated about the responsibility of adults may be the understanding and magnanimity that follows it. In this sense we have to tread lightly for what is secondary, incidental, unimportant for education, does not occupy a valuable time and distract us with inconsequential concerns.

Eleventh pattern:

Euthanize the works of mercy with an appropriate criteria adapted to modern times.

It would make a thorough review of those ones. I know well who are reviled and despised, among other reasons, because reading the Gospel message wrongly and selfishly has made them stale and archaic. But there they are. We can read the Chapter 25 of Matthew, to contemplate the paintings of Michelangelo about Doomsday on the Sistine Chapel, or listen to the music of the "Requiem" by Mozart (translating the Latin). There are, banging the consciences and calling to respond of the cries of the deprived ones and marginalized people living in the muck of the earth. They are increasingly numerous people who do not believe in any religion and some of them practice it quietly and compromised. The works of mercy will always be more here and beyond, above and below the legal and civic obligations required by the common welfare. The hectic and hasty life today provides us all sorts of excuses to make a detour, look away or say that the state must resolve it, since payment of taxes ... and an incredible number of reasons, when we note that the injustice, violence or the theft of some snatches the right to live dignify others. If we relate the works of mercy to the teaching, almost everyone has an obvious applicability.

In fact, teachers are required to implement many of these works, especially the so-called spiritual ones. Today's society, the more ruthless sample against children and youth, the more demanding for teachers carrying out a series of activities that, at first, summarize the antiquated works of mercy, but giving them technical and teaching names. So the teacher not only must "teach something he doesn't know "but also" teach to that on that does not want to learn "difficult task, and even a contradictory reality. It should "comfort the sad," including those who are not aware of their profound sadness. "Correcting the evildoer", including when the student does not distinguish truth from error. "Giving advice which has the need ", and also, of course, who thinks he does not need it, anyone can give good orders and make bad pieces of advice, give good advice few orders are done only by true masters only. Nor do I forget, in some cases, to practice corporal works of mercy. There are students who are in need, others have parents or family members are unemployed, or suffer many struggles to reach the end of the month, or are sick, prisoners, or are immigrant with problems. I worry to think about these ideas, and implementing them, making them compatible with the continuous struggle towards human rights. Obviously, avoid the fatua ostentation ,vacuous hypocrisy and vain superiority. The right hand should not know what the left does.

Twelfth pattern.

I would tip over to live according to the three passions that have governed the life of B. Russell.

Calmly let's read a few lines clarifying the "Why I lived." "Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the pursuit of knowledge and an unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These three passions, as strong winds, have led me hither and there, along a changing route over a deep ocean of anguish, to the edge of the despair. I sought love, first, because it leads to ecstasy, an ecstasy so large, that would have often sacrificed the rest of my existence by only a few hours of this joy. I've searched, secondly, because it relieves the loneliness, that terrible loneliness in which a trembling conscience faces the edge of the world to survey the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I searched, finally, because in the union of love I have seen in a mystical miniature, the vision of early heaven that saints and some poets have imagined.

That was what I wanted and, although it might seem too good for this human life, this is what-at last I have found

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I wanted to understand the hearts of the people. I wanted to know why the stars shine. And I tried to learn the Pythagorean power by which the number dominates the flow. In some of this I have succeeded, but not much.

Love and knowledge, to the extent that both were possible, they transported me to heaven. But pity always made me come back to earth.

The echoes of cries of pain resonate in my heart . Hungry children, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people, hateful burden for their children, and a whole world of loneliness, poverty, pain becomes a mockery of human existence. I wish to alleviate evil, but I can not, and I suffer too.

That has been my life. I've found it worthwhile and I would live it again if they offer me the opportunity "

What teacher would not be willing to sign their own lives and the lives of their students grow in line with these three passions of which we speak

B. Russell. If I were given another chance would have no doubt. I would pursuit and practice these three passions. I think it's worth it.

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