



How I Became an English Teacher

On Becoming an English Teacher by Marjorie Rosenberg

The last thing I wanted to do was teach. At least that is what I thought growing up with a mom who was a high school teacher. Although school was generally OK, the idea of spending my life in a classroom was not my dream.

From an early age (according to my parents my debut was at two and a half when I broke into a rendition of "Happy Birthday" in the middle of a crowded dining room at a Miami resort hotel) I knew that I always wanted to sing. The chance to take singing lessons came when I was fifteen and it was clear that I would major in voice in college. I loved it and took every opportunity to perform which included starting up a small opera ensemble with a friend when I moved to New York (to start to take my career seriously). By chance I found out about a music program in Graz which helped U.S. singers to break into the world of opera in Europe so I decided to try it out. After coming to Graz in 1975 and falling in love with the city I decided to come back in 1981 and start auditioning.

In order to support myself I began to look around for work. The most logical idea was to give English lessons which paid better than baby sitting or cleaning houses so I started with some private students. The biggest shock was finding out that I really knew nothing about the grammar of my native language. I had to learn it all over again from the standpoint of a person learning English as a second language. When the opportunity arrived to hold courses for adults I took that as well and found that standing in front of a (captive) audience had a lot to do with performing. This went on for a number of years: I gave lessons and classes and still kept up with music by giving concerts around Styria.

Eventually I discovered that teaching was becoming more and more important to me and that the methodology of it was quite fascinating. This began to some extent when I started to teach superlearning courses and was then encouraged by a friend to take a course in NLP. I guess the rest was to be expected. After finishing my NLP training, I became interested in learning styles and multiple intelligences as well as methods such as cooperative learning. Somewhere along the way the focus of my life also changed and teaching became the major activity.

When I look back on all of this today I see clearly what led me to the point I am now at. I teach at both the Pädagogische Akademie and the Berufsakademie in Graz and hold teacher-training seminars throughout Austria through the Pädagogisches Institut. Teacher training has also taken me around Europe to Finland, Slovenia, Germany and the U.K. as well as back to the U.S to hold seminars and courses. The next logical step was writing resource books for teachers and course books for children, which opened up a whole new creative outlet. So, after this somewhat indirect route: today I can say "I am a teacher".