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"The one who teaches learns twice" [Greek proverb]

On cooking...

Teaching someone how to cook is an experience that aims to bring people closer together. It is not just the forwarding of a recipe. As my mother always used to say to me, "...cooking is not just an everyday activity. It is a ritual. A ritual during which you re-enact the sweet and sour realities of life. The stories that you carry within are being transformed and put inside your cooking, so that you will never forget about them."

Alana and I met on a Monday morning. I was going to teach her how to make a traditional Greek appetizer, the Tiropita (cheese pie). Since the kitchen is a place where all senses are involved, we decided to prepare the dish simultaneously, in a mirror-like way. It was a "look, make and learn" situation, so immensely different from the "follow the recipe" one.

The most important part of the recipe is to prepare the dough. Learning how to do that is imperative in the domain of the Greek cuisine, since it comprises the "infrastructure" of many other dishes. The preparation of the dough involved mixing flour, water, oil and salt with bare hands. It is a rather messy thing to do but Alana's experience in sculpture proved to be an asset.

We were talking throughout the "lesson" about the process and about possible variations. But behind all that, there were our stories speaking, stories from our own cultural background. The amazing thing is that at the same time we had our senses deeply involved in the preparation. In the end I was very pleased because Alana seemed to have a good grasp of what she had experienced, and she seemed so eager to experiment by herself in the future.

On weblogging...

Thanks to Jordi I found out about a whole new world in the www domain that I was completely unaware of. The world of "blogging". A "blog", that is weB LOG, is basically a journal that is available on the web. It is a kind of a personal website, very easy to create and maintain by people with little or no computational/technical background. On that journal, one can keep an open diary of things that he/she wishes to share online with other people. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger."

Jordi basically navigated me on-line through the most popular websites* that offer this feature and explained to me the basic vocabulary. He also showed me his own blogs (he has many actually) so that to give me a more "tangible" idea.

I could describe this experience as an introductory lesson to weblogging. The idea of learning something completely new was exciting but I also wish that I had the chance to follow a step-by-step way with my teacher and create my own weblog. I will definitely try to do it by myself, but the feeling of certainty that even the presence of the teacher gives you is irreplaceable.

• <http://www.blogger.com/start> • <http://www.movabletype.org/> •
<http://www.typepad.com/> • <https://www.squarespace.com/> •
<http://www.bloglines.com/> • <http://www.wbloggar.com/> • <http://www.e-learningcentre.co.uk/guide2elearning/2-10/index.htm>

On teaching and learning...

In order to be able to communicate the experience of teaching and/or learning (how to...) we need to create an axis of reference upon which we will organize the whole process. The axis is

surrounded by a sea of information so it is imperative to create on it "docks" through which the other travelers on that sea will approach us.

A custom teaching method, when it is initially thought of, is linear. All the key elements of the teaching process, the "conveyors" of knowledge, are placed thoughtfully on the referential axis, ready to unfold themselves one after the other. This linearity though may as well proved to be an impediment, for it may hinder the interaction between teacher/learner and therefore minimize the possibility of in-depth analysis and comprehension from both parts, and especially from the part of the learner. Therefore the one in the teaching position should think forward and render the axis visible to the learner as well as capable of accepting and handling intervals in the teaching process. These intervals will be the moments of interaction between teacher/learner. The teacher will also use those intervals in order to trigger the learner to re-act in the event that the learner is in passive mode throughout the process.

[I am so sorry for the late response but a rather annoying stomach disorder put me away from things for a while]