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American Education in the Eyes of a Spanish Woman: Dr. Wilhelmsen

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October 4, 2016 1 PM University of Dallas
Dr. Alexandra Wilhelmsen

1. MQ: I'll just press that. Um.. so yeah then one of the questions is kind of what got you into
2. teaching?, but, I guess...
3. AW: All my life I wanted to be a teacher.
4. MQ: mhmm..
5. AW: I remember as a little girl, uh, I would play pretending I was a teacher.
6. MQ: oh really?
7. AW: yeah. And when I grew up, uh, well you know I was ten years old when my family
8. moved to Spain, and uh in Spain everyone, all the little girls my age, 10, 11, 12, went through
9. a phase where they either wanted to be a nurse or they wanted to be a nun. And neither of
10. those two ever occurred to me.
11. MQ: ha ha
12. AW: I was always going to be a teacher. HA. You know..
13. MQ: yeah... that's awesome.
14. AW: yeah
15. MQ: that's awesome.
16. AW: And as I said to you, uh, my sisters and I are the fourth generation of teachers in our
17. family.
18. MQ: so it's been, yeah,
19. AW: yeah.
20. MQ: I'm just going to write that down. So it's been a long time coming?
21. AW: yeah.
22. MQ: yes, um, so then, like you said, you started here, but then you moved to Spain?
23. AW: yes. I was born in California and I was ten years old.
24. MQ: mhmm
25. AW: I had just finished the fourth grade when we moved to Spain.
26. MQ: mhmm
27. AW: and our family lived in Spain, uh, for eight years.
28. MQ: okay.
29. AW: So I went through the Spanish system of education during that whole time. Two of the
30. years, I was in boarding school in Rome, but it was a Spanish boarding school and so we
31. were still going through the Spanish system of education.
32. MQ: Mhmm.
33. AW: Then, um, mm, I uh, I was eager to get ahead and so I enrolled in college and I was
34. one year at the University of Navarra, where my father was teaching, in Pamplona, and I did
35. two years' worth of studies in one year.
36. MQ: wow
37. AW: in other words, I was enrolled in about thirty credits each semester
38. MQ: mhmm
39. AW: um, instead of 15
40. MQ: wow ha ha
41. AW: So when we returned to uh, America, my father came to teach at UD, I came to UD, I
42. transferred in as an 18-year-old junior.

43. MQ: wow.
44. AW: yeah.
45. MQ: that's remarkable
46. AW: So I had the experience of both the American system and the Spanish System.
47. MQ: mhmm. So then when you graduated from here, did you graduate with?
48. AW: I graduated with a double major
49. MQ: okay
50. AW: in uh Spanish and uh in... in political thought, politics, and then I went on to study
51. history in graduate school.
52. MQ: and did you go to graduate school here in...
53. AW: I got my master's degree at Rice
54. MQ: okay
55. AW: where they gave me a fantastic fellowship, and then I went back to the University of
56. Navarra for my doctorate.
57. MQ: oh, oh okay.
58. AW: in Spanish history
59. MQ: Oh, wow
60. AW: At Rice, I um, I focused on the Middle Ages.
61. MQ: okay.
62. AW: uh, and I did as much Spanish, ehh, medieval history as I could. And then, for the
63. Doctorate, I focused on the nineteenth century.
64. MQ: okay. So more recent things.
65. AW: yeah.
66. MQ: Mhmm, okay, well very nice. Um, so then another one of my questions, which you
67. already answered, is when did you decide to become a teacher? Um, so then, how long
68. after, when you got your Doctorate, did you come back to?
69. AW: one week
70. MQ: one week?
71. MQ and AW: ha ha ha
72. AW: I got my Doctorate in August of '71 and I started teaching here on Labor Day,
73. September 1, we used to always start on Labor Day.
74. MQ: mhmm
75. AW: of '71.
76. MQ: wow. That's awesome.
77. AW: but you know what, uh, I guess I never said I'm going to be a teacher, although it
78. should have been obvious because I was always interested in it.
79. MQ: mhmm
80. AW: but I remember when I was a senior, and I was here in Irving, and my Father was
81. driving his little Volkswagen, and we were talking and he said 'Now, what you need to do is
82. find a good husband and get married.'
83. MQ: mhmm
84. AW: and I said "no. I'm going to graduate school."
85. MQ and AW: ha ha ha
86. AW: 'and we'll worry about the husband later. I'm going to graduate school!' 'Oh!'
87. MQ: ha ha ha, it never even occurred to him, yeah, ha ha

88. AW: somehow, absent minded father, professor, hadn't realized that, uh, this girl who was
89. always pretending to be a teacher when she was a little girl, and had grown up with him,
90. MQ: mhmm
91. AW: you know, as, as a mentor
92. MQ: mhmm
93. AW: uh, naturally was going to become a university professor.
94. MQ: was going to follow in his footsteps, yeah.
95. AW: yeah, because in his generation, there weren't very many women who were university
96. professors.
97. MQ: mhmm,
98. AW: so, you know it's much more common today. When I started teaching at UD, there
99. were very few women...
100. MQ: mhmm
101. AW: who were University Professors
102. MQ: mhmm
103. AW: so it it somehow, it, that, it just didn't, hadn't dawned on him.
104. MQ: mhmm wasn't even in the spectrum
105. AW: No.
106. MQ: mhmm. So then when you started, were you, would you say after, as you saw the
107. time come by, would you say more women teachers...
108. AW: At UD,
109. MQ: at UD
110. AW: well UD is making a, has been making in the last five years, a big effort to, to hire
111. women
112. MQ: mhmm
113. AW: and so if you look around, you'll see that most of the female teachers at UD are pretty
114. young.
115. MQ: mhmm, yes definitely
116. AW: UD's been making... And, in the past, the only places where we've had a good
117. number of women have been in the Language Department, in the Education Department,
118. and in the English department.
119. MQ: mhmm, definitely.
120. AW: right
121. MQ: Yeah, that's where all of my classes I've experienced them
122. AW: and that, I mean there've been a few, we've had a few in sciences, you know, but not
123. very many.
124. MQ: mhmm
125. AW: uh, so that, yeah, UD's making an effort to bring uh, to bring in more women
126. MQ: mhmm. Well that's good
127. AW: yeah
128. MQ: that's good. We've got a good example ha ha, yes. Um, so then, kind of along that
129. line, what, do you know, have you noticed some of the biggest changes, that you've
130. noticed in education, not necessarily just with women?
131. AW: well, in education, uh I get the impression that in the United States, that uh in
132. education in the United States, there are fads.
133. MQ: mhmm

134. AW: and they last about 20 years. Um, I remember when I started teaching, there was a
135. fad, well I, I've seen several fads, in language teaching, one was that you could just absorb
136. language.
137. MQ: mhmm
138. AW: without studying. Which I thought was a bunch of bologna.
139. MQ: haha
140. AW: you could absorb grammar, uh without, uh, studying it. You can absorb it if you go to
141. another country, and people are speaking another language, but you don't absorb it here.
142. MQ: mhmm
143. AW: without...
144. MQ: some kind of..
145. AW: studying pretty hard, you know. But that was one, but uh, another one is, um, trying
146. to get, trying to make a distinction between things that are in textbooks and things that
147. are, come from real life.
148. MQ: mhmm
149. AW: you know. For an example, there is a tendency nowadays to say, well it's better to
150. read an article from a newspaper than to read something written for a textbook.
151. MQ: mhmm
152. AW: well that's another fad. You know. Um. They're, they're different pedagogies, you
153. know some people love to have students memorize things
154. MQ: mhmm
155. AW: I never liked memorizing uh when I grew up, in Spain. uh, Trying to memorize the
156. Litany of our Lady in Latin was a big deal.
157. MQ: ha ha ha
158. AW: you know and memorizing poems, oh my God. Uh, that was not my forte, and I
159. promised myself when I become a teacher I will never make anybody memorize anything.
160. MQ: mhmm
161. AW: you know, they need to learn grammar, but uh, I'm not going to make them
162. memorize anything extra
163. MQ: mhmm
164. AW: you know, uh, some people think movies are fabulous, that's not a big, um, fad, I
165. think, or it's at least very popular to use movies, especially for language teaching to get
166. students to see foreign film.
167. MQ: mhmm
168. AW: um, I've never done it, but I think it's good and a lot of professors love to do that, I'm
169. just not a movie person very much. But a lot of professors do it and then they have
170. students, you know, write reports, or come to class and talk about the, uh, the movies,
171. MQ: mhmm
172. AW: and um, of course movies are fiction and a lot of the language teachers are literature
173. teachers
174. MQ: mhmm
175. AW: and so they have important themes that they can do, but it's never been my forte.
176. Another one is acting.
177. MQ: mhmm
178. AW: Have you ever been asked to act in a play? Have you ever read skits in class?
179. MQ: mhmm

180. AW: well I hated it when I was, the one time I was forced to be an actor
181. MQ: haha
182. AW: I was in boarding school in Rome, the Spanish school in Rome, and I had to play the
183. King in one of the Golden Age plays, simply because I was taller than everybody else.
184. MQ: oh no...
185. AW: and I swore, never will I make anybody do a skit
186. MQ: mhmm
187. AW: in any classes when I grow up and become a teacher.
188. MQ: ha ha ha
189. AW: and I never have in 45 years, nobody's ever been put through that. But, for some
190. teachers, they love to do it.
191. MQ: mhmm
192. AW: and the fact is, it tends to be good experience. I, what I did do for many years when
193. other Spanish teachers were putting on plays, not the little in-class skits, but you know, the
194. real plays
195. MQ: mhmm
196. AW: um, was, um I would help the students who, the actors, I would help them go over
197. their lines over and over to get their accents.
198. MQ: ooooh
199. AW: to improve their accents.
200. MQ: mhmm
201. AW: and I was very happy to do that, and I would organize the receptions, but um, forcing
202. students to, to be actors, No, that was not my style.
203. MQ: mhmm
204. AW: but some people, you know, it works well.
205. MQ: mhmm, yeah.
206. AW: So these, so these are different methodologies, plus some fads that have come and
207. gone.
208. MQ: mhmm
209. AW: over the years
210. MQ: mhmm
211. AW: I think language teaching is very, the languages are very susceptible to fads, because
212. they're so, you know it, they're so labor intensive.
213. MQ: mhmm
214. AW: learning a foreign language without going to the country where they speak that
215. language is so labor intensive, that people are always hoping they can find some magical
216. way
217. MQ: to make it
218. AW: to make it easy
219. MQ: mhmm
220. AW: you know,
221. MQ: mhmm
222. AW: so there are lots of uh fads. I mean, just think of the textbooks that Americans have
223. now, the language textbooks are very expensive.
224. MQ: mhmm
225. AW: and they have lots of glossy pictures and they also have all of these internet materials,

226. MQ: mhmm
227. AW: that go with it and make them very, very expensive. I grew up with little tiny
228. little...do I have any books here or did I finally take them home when we moved? I think I
229. took them home. I still had a couple of my textbooks from high school... little tiny, little
230. tiny, books with no glossy pictures,
231. MQ: mhmm
232. AW: you know, uh, cute little drawings, but so simple.
233. MQ: mhmm
234. AW: by comparison, and so cheap.
235. MQ: yeah, that's the main goal.
236. AW: by comparison to what uh is, required of students today.
237. MQ: mhmm
238. AW: I think there is a lot of hoopla and a lot of extra stuff that is not needed
239. MQ: mhmm, definitely. Yeah, well because another one of my questions is, how have you
240. adapted your teaching methods, but I guess by your books that you write...
241. AW: Well um, I continue to not do skits, and not have people memorize and that kind of
242. thing. On the other hand, um, recently we were asked in the languages to come up with
243. common things that we all do, and so we all agreed that we would have in the
244. intermediate 2 class that you're in, we would have an oral, uh, part. And I said okay, I'll
245. have the students give an oral presentation
246. MQ: mhmm
247. AW: at the end of the semester. You know, so, and I had done that some, way back in the
248. 70's, and so uh, I said that I'll do that so that we have some commonality
249. MQ: mhmm
250. AW: you know,
251. MQ: yeah. Yeah, that's good, that's good.
252. AW: I don't really love oral presentations because the students have to listen to other
253. students
254. MQ: mhmm
255. AW: and other students don't have good accents or they don't speak well
256. MQ: mhmm
257. AW: and so there's the class listening to somebody talk, who's not talking in good Spanish
258. MQ: mhmm
259. AW: Personally, I don't like it. On the other hand, I mean, uh I don't think it's good for the
260. majority of students, but it's very good for the one who's speaking
261. MQ: who gets to practice.
262. AW: yeah, to get that practice, yeah
263. MQ: you know, so everybody wanted it, so I said okay, fine, we'll go along with that, we'll
264. do it. So now, I forgot you're not in the intermediate class, um, so that's what we do now.
265. We um, we have a written composition and we have an oral presentation.
266. MQ: okay. Okay.
267. AW: so that's adapting to, you know, to what other people want.
268. MQ: mhmm, mhmm, yes, definitely. Um, also along those lines, have you noticed any
269. testing methods that work better than others?
270. AW: well, I always want students to write.
271. MQ: mhmm

272. AW: not circle the right answer.
273. MQ: mhmm
274. AW: and that in general, up until very recently, that was almost a norm at UD.
275. MQ: mhmm
276. AW: that we don't give these tests where you just circle the right answer, that we actually
277. make people write.
278. MQ: mhmm
279. AW: now when I grew up in Spain, we had a lot of oral exams. And oral exams are not
280. common at all at UD
281. MQ: mmm
282. AW: uh, there's some language teachers who have a few oral exams, uh, but in general,
283. they're not common.
284. MQ: mhmm. Not used as much. And would you, have you ever tried the um, like circle the
285. blanks, or fill in the blanks, or circle the answer.
286. AW: No.
287. MQ: no. you've never tried it. So it's always just been
288. AW: no to me that's too mickey mousey.
289. MQ: mhmm
290. AW: ha ha ha
291. MQ: Well, well I know, I just
292. AW: you know.
293. MQ: mhmm
294. AW: my father was a philosophy teacher. There wasn't a whole lot to be, to circle
295. MQ: to circle
296. AW and MQ: ha ha ha
297. AW: you know, people had to write essays
298. MQ: exactly
299. AW: and uh, in Spain we wrote essays, or we had oral exams, we had a lot of oral exams in
300. Spain
301. MQ: mhmm
302. AW: and I was always the last one because my last name starts with W.
303. MQ: oooh ha ha
304. AW: we would go alphabetically
305. MQ: go alphabetically
306. AW: so by the time it was, for for, it was my turn to get up, you know, there might have
307. been one person with a Z after me, but I didn't have much of an audience.
308. MQ: mhmm
309. AW: which meant I didn't probably, didn't get as nervous. But the people whose last
310. names started with A or B, they had the whole class.
311. MQ: to everyone to speak to
312. AW: yeah
313. MQ: mhmm
314. AW: yeah.
315. MQ: Yes, and that always complicates things as well. Mhmm. Um, how would you say that
316. you see the role of a teacher in the lives of your students? Do you see them more as just
317. relaying information or helping them grow to become a better person?

318. AW: well, the first thing that we do is to relay information. But we also are trying to help
319. the students think, and speak, and write.
320. MQ: mhmm
321. AW: and so I got, I correct a lot of compositions and I have students write term papers and
322. I direct senior theses and all of those things help people write.
323. MQ: mhmm
324. AW: and of course you can't write well unless you think clearly
325. MQ: mhmm
326. AW: and I taught Western Civ. for thirteen years, um, besides teaching in the upper division
327. history courses and I always had the same method.
328. MQ: mhmm
329. AW: of exams. I had seven identifications, 10 points each, and one essay for 30 points.
330. MQ: mhmm
331. AW: and the identifications, there were three lines and I told the students don't write a
332. fourth line because I stop reading at the end of the third line. So if I put there,
333. Charlemagne, or I put *Las Cantigas de Santa María*, you need to define what that is, tell
334. me if it's a book, tell me if it's the name of a battle, tell me if it's a ruler, a saint. When did
335. that person live or when was that book written. What type of a book is it. Think of the
336. most important facts
337. MQ: mhmm
338. AW: that you can put on three lines and I've had students come back over the years and
339. tell me that was so helpful to them
340. MQ: mhmm
341. AW: to learn how to go straight to the point
342. MQ: mhmm!
343. AW: you know to help them with their thinking. So I think that's important. In terms of
344. moral development it's not the job of a university professor
345. MQ: mhmm
346. AW: although it's crystal clear that I have a Catholic point of view and I try to convey that
347. in my classes but um it's not the job of a university professor to be that personal with a
348. student
349. MQ: mhmm. Yeah, that makes sense.
350. AW: You know, we're a Catholic University, we're not a seminary.
351. MQ: mhmm, mhmm.
352. AW: you know
353. MQ: exactly. Come here to learn things. Um how important would you say is motivating
354. students in your job, um do you find that students have a natural, at this level, have a
355. natural tendency to motivate themselves pretty well?
356. AW: well I try to motivate students, um, frequently especially in the the Intermediate
357. Spanish class where they have lots of exams
358. MQ: mhmm
359. AW: and usually almost everybody does poorly on their first one
360. MQ: mhmm
361. AW: so then they get the second one and they go up a little. Or they go up a lot, and then
362. I write at the top "okay, so you made a 75, can you make an 85 next time?"
363. MQ: mhmm

364. AW: you know, that type of thing. And I think it helps. I can tell when somebody is a good
365. student but just blew this first exam because he didn't know what to expect
366. MQ: mhmm
367. AW: or he didn't really realize how hard he had to study
368. MQ: mhmm
369. AW: but you kinda can tell
370. MQ: mhmm
371. AW: and so I encourage in that way. Um, I try to get students enthusiastic about the topics.
372. I mean, you tell me I'm a success or not
373. MQ & AW: ha ha ha
374. AW: you know.
375. MQ: mhmm. Ha yes, I would say...
376. AW: but basically you know you don't come to college especially if it's a financial burden,
377. as it is for most students, you know most of our students are not from, come from families
378. that are multi-millionaires, you don't come unless you have some willingness to study.
379. MQ: mhmm
380. AW: already.
381. MQ: mhmm
382. AW: you know
383. MQ: some inclination on your own
384. AW: yeah
385. MQ: so why else would you ...
386. AW: I mean if you're taking out a loan and you working in the summer in order to go to
387. college, then you're probably not going to blow it
388. MQ: yeahh hah
389. AW: you probably don't need a whole lot of encouragement.
390. MQ: mhmm
391. AW: on the other hand, when things go really bad and people are considering dropping
392. out. That's where I can be helpful
393. MQ: mhmm
394. AW: you know, I've encouraged so many people to stay in hang in here don't throw in the
395. towel, it's hard to come back uh and have the humility to make lower grades because
396. you're in the midst of a crisis, or somebody is sick in your family
397. MQ: mhmm
398. AW: "hang in here even if you don't make A's" has been my message.
399. MQ: mhmm
400. AW: and that I think I've been able to influence a good number of students
401. MQ: mhmm. Yeah, that definitely plays a big role.
402. AW: yeah
403. MQ: yeah, cause then I had a question what kind of strategies so that's really..
404. AW: yeah
405. MQ: useful
406. AW: you know, in in and I always tell students we don't grade, at least I don't grade, the
407. effort you put into things, I'm not passing judgment on you,
408. MQ: mhmm

409. AW: I'm grading what you wrote on the exam. So if you do poorly because you're under a
410. lot of stress, I probably won't know about it
411. MQ: mhmm
412. AW: uh, and you have to have the humility to say "okay, I can't put my best foot forward
413. right now because I'm under a lot of stress, because there are all these crazy things
414. happening, but I just have to learn with the B or a C until things get a little better
415. MQ: mhmm
416. AW: You know and that's uh, that's I I try to uh, I try to encourage students when I realize
417. there is something going on like that
418. MQ: mhmm
419. AW: that is making them consider dropping out, uh, and I think I've been successful over
420. the years
421. MQ: mhmm
422. AW; in helping a good number of students
423. MQ: yes. definitely, because so, even I've noticed myself that when things go on you don't
424. always get the grade you want
425. AW: no
426. MQ: and it's...
427. AW: or somebody's having to work 30 hours a week, or I mean we've got in one of our
428. classes, the class that you're in, we've got a student whose mother is about to die, Keenan,
429. you know his mother has uh cancer, a uh very advanced stage of cancer
430. MQ: mhmm
431. AW: and uh he seems to be handling it very well, but you know things happen like that
432. yesterday I had a student in here talking about, um oh yeah, for a different course and he
433. was talking about his classes and it came up in conversation that his father's dead.
434. MQ: mhmm
435. AW: this is a freshman.
436. MQ: mhmm
437. AW: you know, so ehm, we have another one, Nicolette, she had a parent who was very
438. sick in the last year or two.
439. MQ: mhmm
440. AW: I think. You know and so things happen.
441. MQ: mhmm
442. AW: and students need to be encouraged to stay in school even if they're not making A+'s
443. MQ: mhmm, yes
444. AW: in my opinion
445. MQ: no, I can totally see that. Um, so kind of shifting gears a little bit, how do you view the
446. importance of foreign language acquisition in student's lives.
447. AW: well, uh um, it used to be said in England that anybody who wanted to go into politics
448. should major in classics
449. MQ: oh, okay.
450. AW: because learning Greek and learning Latin and learning the grammar
451. MQ: mhmm
452. AW: teaches people to think clearly
453. MQ: mhmm

454. AW: helps people to memorize, helps people to write, so you can look for the practical side
455. of languages if you want, but to me, and a lot of people emphasize the importance of
456. reading things in the original and not in translation, but to me it just opens up new worlds.
457. MQ: mhmm
458. AW: you know
459. MQ: mhmm
460. AW: now it's true more and more people are learning English; English is taking the place of
461. French as the international language; the language of business; the language of diplomacy.
462. But that doesn't mean we English speakers shouldn't learn foreign languages.
463. MQ: mhmm
464. AW: you know.
465. MQ: well yeah, that's just like you were saying, going to different countries
466. AW: mhmm mhmm
467. MQ: it just changes everything. Really opens your eyes a lot
468. AW: and there is nothing like seeing things and experiencing them yourself. Sure, we can
469. get on the internet and look at pictures of almost anything nowadays
470. MQ: ha ha yea
471. AW: we can read articles, we can look at documentaries, but there's nothing like going and
472. seeing it for yourself.
473. MQ: mhmm
474. AW: I'll give you one example: um, in the fall of 79 I taught Western Civ. on the Rome
475. campus. So and and in those days it was all 6 credits of western civ
476. MQ: oh wow.
477. AW: of western civ in Rome.
478. MQ: in one semester
479. AW: yeah, very intensive. So I spent the summer rewriting my lectures on ancient Greece
480. and Rome
481. MQ: mhmm
482. AW: so that I would have you know really what I thought were top notch lectures.
483. MQ: ha ha
484. AW: okay, so I was imbued in ancient Greece and well of course I had lived in Rome for
485. four semesters as I told you as a student, but I had never been to Greece. So I was very
486. enthusiastic about going on the 10 days to Greece
487. MQ: mhmm
488. AW: and um Mr. Professor Navinsky was a fabulous guide. Well in Greece I realized things
489. I had never realized about the ancient Greeks. For an example: their buildings were tiny
490. compared to the roman buildings
491. MQ: mhmm
492. AW: Well I had never stopped to think about that, Rome being a great imperial mm power
493. built huge buildings in the city of Rome
494. MQ: ha ha
495. AW: whereas the little tiny city states in Greece built little buildings
496. MQ: mhmm
497. AW: and more than that even, the place they chose to build their temples and their
498. important buildings, they always picked a place from which there's a gorgeous view.
499. MQ: mhmm

500. AW: usually a view of the sea
501. MQ: mhmm
502. AW: you know and up on hills. Well the Romans didn't do that. So that Greek sensibility,
503. the fact that in almost any important Greek building you have a fabulous view
504. MQ: mhmm
505. AW: I wouldn't have learned that had I not gone there
506. MQ: mhmm
507. AW: cause I never, I had read many things by then, and I never had seen that
508. MQ: the actual,
509. AW: (unintelligible)
510. MQ: what they're looking at..
511. AW: yeah
512. MQ: while they're in these buildings
513. AW: yeah
514. MQ: that we talk about
515. AW: yeah, yeah, yeah.
516. MQ: mhmm
517. AW: so that's an example
518. MQ: yeah, definitely. That's really important. Um. Kind of, well I guess, like you said you
519. can look at anything online, but just going there is so different, um, have you noticed how
520. technology or a shift towards a more global society has changed the importance of
521. language acquisition at all?
522. AW: well I think English as English has invaded everywhere
523. MQ: mhmm
524. AW: um, probably, I mean we can find so many things on the internet now written in
525. English
526. MQ: mhmm
527. AW: uh that some people might think there's less demand for foreign languages, but
528. precisely because there is globalization people are moving and traveling more and more
529. and more
530. MQ: mhmm
531. AW: um, Americans are at a disadvantage because Americans don't know languages
532. MQ: mhmm
533. AW: I mean a lot of people in Europe grow up studying three and four languages.
534. MQ: mhmm
535. AW: you know, think of somebody from Denmark, you know
536. MQ: mhmm
537. AW: it's a tiny little country and nobody speaks Danish except the Danes
538. MQ: mhmm
539. AW: so the Danes grow up and in their school system they study German they study
540. English and they study French
541. MQ: mhmm
542. AW: you know, most of them study four of five languages,
543. MQ: mhmm
544. AW: and Americans get their two or three years of Spanish or some other language and
545. that's it

546. MQ: mhmm
547. AW: Americans are at a big disadvantage, and sometimes resent it because they don't
548. know even they don't know the language of the country where they go to
549. MQ: mhmm. I don't know if you've noticed this with students who come in, um, so some
550. students start learning, like Spanish for say, as young as kindergarten
551. AW: right
552. MQ: and they go all the way through high school and they come to college and still don't
553. know
554. AW: Well it's pathetic, and and I feel so sorry for students who say they've had five years
555. of Spanish and we put them in uh elementary two
556. MQ: mhmm
557. AW: and they and their parents are saying, you mean all that work for five years and it only
558. got you one semester
559. MQ: mhmm
560. AW: and that's the way it is
561. MQ: mhmm
562. AW: it's kind of pathetic
563. MQ: it is. And that's part of the reason I'm going into Spanish
564. AW: mhmm
565. MQ: because I want to help people, but would you say it has
566. AW: but I don't think that that means there is bad instruction, I think it means that uh, our
567. levels are so low.
568. MQ: mhmm
569. AW: in uh, American high school, I mean apparently, I never went to high school in the
570. states and I've never taught in an American high school, but I know enough about it to
571. think it's a joke.
572. MQ: mhmm
573. AW: you know, compared to the high schools in other countries
574. MQ: mhmm
575. AW: I mean people have time to belong to four or five clubs and and be involved in two
576. or three activities and have a job to boot and they still make straight A's and I'm thinking
577. well when are they studying? You know, and I see the checkers in the in the grocery stores
578. and they're there at ten o'clock at night, high school students, and I say, well don't you
579. have to study?
580. MQ: mhmm
581. AW: oh well, half an hour, that'll do it.
582. MQ: mhmm
583. AW: and that's not bad teaching, that's uh, the powers that be, uh in the education system
584. and the whole ethos of the society is just downgraded and downgraded about what's
585. expected
586. MQ: mhmm
587. AW: This is a conversation we've had many times in my family because as I've said, my
588. grandmothers, well one grandmother was um, a uh, special education teacher in uh
589. MQ: oh wow
590. AW: in uh grade school, the other one taught adult immigrants Americanization
591. MQ: ooooh

592. AW: before they became citizens
593. MQ: mhmm
594. AW: and then of course my father taught university and I teach university, so we had this
595. talk among three generations and uh the general consensus in the family was that um high
596. school got easier with each generation that went by.
597. MQ: mhmm
598. AW: in other words, you know, what my grandmother studied in high school was a lot
599. more than what my father studied and what my father studied was more than what my
600. generation studied and then commenting on the students coming up, it uh, there's the,
601. there's the, they're being required to know even less.
602. MQ: mhmm
603. AW: I mean they, they have computer skills, which of course we didn't have
604. MQ: yeah ha
605. AW: you know
606. MQ: that's definitely true. Um, would you say that has more to do with kind of the
607. Americans thinking that their way of life is kind of the one way or, cause I know that
608. there's a lot of
609. AW: no
610. MQ: ideas
611. AW: no I don't, I think it has to do with this myth that everybody should be the same
612. MQ: mhmm
613. AW: and therefore you have to downgrade...
614. MQ: when you're...
615. AW: to the lowest
616. MQ: doing well. mhmm
617. AW: yeah
618. MQ: and do you think that that's something
619. AW: there is no child should be made to feel bad because he gets F's
620. MQ: mhmm
621. AW: no child should be, uh, failed
622. MQ: mhmm
623. AW: and have to repeat a course, it's this tendency, uh, that we, that that it's been going
624. on for generations in the United States
625. MQ: mhmm, no that's definitely true
626. AW: you know
627. MQ: all spectrums of grades and differences in people and
628. AW: yeah.
629. MQ: they're afraid to look at the differences, kind of, in a good way, because
630. AW: mhmm mhmm
631. MQ: sometimes it helps in a good way
632. AW: and you know the teachers sometimes feel shackled, they have to do what they're
633. told
634. MQ: mhmm
635. AW: I think a lot of them are frustrated, very frustrated

636. MQ: mmmm. Definitely, um, so do, along those lines, do you have any, kind of advice, or
637. suggestions for future teachers, being kind of shackled by the constraints of the education
638. system
639. AW: no, I don't, I don't know, um, the ins and outs of high school teaching well enough to
640. say, but there is only one thing, and that is, when people get a degree in education, a
641. college degree in education, and they have a teaching field
642. MQ: mmmm
643. AW: if the teaching field is a foreign language, they never get enough courses
644. MQ: mmmm
645. AW: and then they have to go out and teach without enough knowledge, and they feel, of
646. course, very uncomfortable.
647. MQ: mmmm... mmmm
648. AW: so my only advice is take all the courses you can in the subject or the discipline that
649. you're going to teach
650. MQ: mmmm
651. AW: and if you want to be a Spanish teacher, then take as many Spanish courses as you
652. possibly can
653. MQ: mmmm
654. AW: uh, and usually the Spanish teachers have to know a smattering of literature, and a
655. little bit of art history and this and that, take everything that you can so that you don't
656. have to face a classroom feeling insecure
657. MQ: mmmm yes
658. AW: because that's what
659. MQ: mmmm haha
660. AW: because there is always going to be somebody who will notice
661. MQ: mmmm, and then just
662. AW: yeah
663. MQ: (unintelligible)
664. AW: yeah.
665. MQ: um, along with that, do you find any, or do you have any suggestions for university
666. level teachers as well that, things that you've noticed that work well or would help create
667. better university teachers? Um, not, it not necessarily
668. AW: well
669. MQ: any subject,
670. AW: any university teachers in America, um, are expected to do so much that's
671. extracurricular
672. MQ: mmmm
673. AW: um, there's all kinds of committees, students don't realize how many committees that
674. we are on.
675. MQ: mmmm
676. AW: the committees um, committees for rank and tenure. uh, for promotion, um,
677. committees for landscaping,
678. MQ: mmmm
679. AW: uh, there, there's a committee for everything, the committee system is supposed to
680. be the price we pay for not having dictatorship from above,
681. MQ: mmmm

682. AW: from the administrators... that's the theory, uh, but it's a huge amount of work
683. MQ: mhmm
684. AW: and then people are expected to do a lot of extracurricular things in the languages
685. MQ: mhmm
686. AW: that you put on a symposium, you put on a play, you have a reception, you do this,
687. you do that, there is just constant stuff that has to be done, and the result, and then of
688. course, in order to get tenure, people publish,
689. MQ: mhmm
690. AW: and so professors are under the gun all the time
691. MQ: mhmm
692. AW: whereas in European universities, they are expected to publish a lot, but they're not
693. expected to do all the committee work and all of the extras,
694. MQ: mhmm
695. AW: for the students
696. MQ: mhmm
697. AW: and although some people really enjoy doing those things for the students, uh, the
698. Spanish club, the French club, the German club, you know all those things take time
699. MQ: mhmm
700. AW: they take time away from preparing classes and doing research
701. MQ: mhmm. so then that could almost go back to
702. AW: and the poor schools like UD
703. MQ: mhmm
704. AW: that cannot afford to hire enough people, put a lot of burden on the professors
705. MQ: mhmm
706. AW: I mean we can't afford enough secretarial work and so basically we've all become our
707. own secretaries
708. MQ: mhmm
709. AW: you know, well, how many professions are there where the professionals don't have
710. secretarial help
711. MQ: ha ha
712. AW: you know
713. MQ: not many
714. AW: I mean you just look at a doctor,
715. MQ: mhmm
716. AW: or a lawyer, think of the staff they have
717. MQ: mhmm
718. AW: you know, so um, that, that, but that's the system,
719. MQ: mhmm
720. AW: you know, you can't criticize any one school, or anyone administration, that's the
721. system
722. MQ: mhmm, just the way that it is
723. AW: yeah.
724. AW: so yeah, all young teachers, especially the young teachers are torn between how
725. much do I do for the school, and how much do I do for my own research and my own
726. publications
727. MQ: mhmm

728. AW: and how much time do I spend preparing all these courses, you see in larger schools
729. you don't have to teach such a wide variety of courses so you can get really good at
730. teaching maybe three different courses
731. MQ: mhmm
732. AW: and no more. I mean I have a friend in Spain who teaches the history of 19th century
733. Spain and he has about three sections of it every year, and so I mean he knows 19th
734. century Spain, he knows about everybody who's writing a dissertation, what they're
735. writing it on
736. MQ: mhmm
737. AW: he knows the papers in the archives and every archive in Spain, I mean he's totally in
738. control, total top-notch expert,
739. MQ: mhmm
740. AW: you know, and he doesn't have all this busy work,
741. MQ: mhmm
742. AW: so to speak, it's a different system
743. MQ: mhmm
744. AW: but small schools are, are particularly prone to overburdening the professors, the
745. chairmen at UD are so overworked,
746. MQ: mhmm
747. AW: so much paperwork in the past few years, new federal regulations and this and that,
748. the poor chairmen at UD are doing way too much work.
749. MQ: mhmm, just to balance it all and everything
750. AW: well they just have to do it you know
751. MQ: mhmm
752. AW: and there's nobody else to do it
753. MQ: mhmm
754. AW: we can't afford uh, the help, uh to do it
755. MQ: mhmm, yeah, so I guess that could be maybe one of the next questions, I'm just, what
756. are somethings that you like or dislike about teaching?
757. AW: well I think everybody who who uh teaches loves the subjects
758. MQ: mhmm
759. AW: and loves to share uh that, that information in in that subject, and that, and we all get
760. enthusiastic about our own
761. MQ: mhmm
762. AW: uh, fields. And then uh, we like um we like helping to form students
763. MQ: mhmm
764. AW: you know
765. MQ: mhmm, help them kind of
766. AW: yeah
767. MQ: grow, in their knowledge
768. AW: right. and I think most of us like being in a catholic ambience
769. MQ: mhmm ha ha
770. AW: I had a lot of students who have come to me over the years or have written notes in
771. their final exams, or in their evaluations saying it's so nice to learn about my catholic faith
772. and the catholic church in my Spanish class
773. MQ: mhmm

774. AW: you know.
775. MQ: mhmm. It is kind of comforting to know you're surrounded by
776. AW: yeah, mhmm
777. MQ: mhmm
778. AW: and I've never had a student complain
779. MQ: mhmm
780. AW: I've never had a non-Catholic student complain
781. MQ: that it was too much or anything like that, yeah. Well I think also
782. AW: (unintelligible). This is my 46th year teaching
783. MQ: ha ha yeah, that's definitely another nice tidbit.
784. AW: yeah
785. MQ: mhmm. That it helps... um, so, kind of going back a little bit, do you see, how do you
786. see the future I guess of foreign language, um in teaching?
787. AW: well there have been some changes, uh, in recent years that we haven't talked about
788. yet, nowadays there are two things: it's expected that nowadays, that there are study
789. abroad programs
790. MQ: mhmm
791. AW: that each school has study abroad programs. That was not the case when I was a
792. student so long ago. It was a real privilege, and only very um elite schools with a big staff
793. and uh a very um well to do student body, um had study abroad programs, and UD
794. excelled when in the early 70's it started the Rome program that was open not just to
795. people of one or two majors
796. MQ: mhmm
797. AW: but everybody.
798. MQ: mhmm
799. AW: and the fact that such a large percentage of the student body, um, eh goes to Rome,
800. that was a big feather in the cap of UD. Um, many schools and many articles and surveys
801. noted that.
802. MQ: mhmm
803. AW: now it's expected also that every language have a program or two abroad.
804. MQ: mhmm
805. AW: and so um that's and and middle class students expect to study abroad, and if they're
806. language majors, they expect to study abroad more than once.
807. MQ: mhmm
808. AW: so that's one change. Um, and another change is student research. Now that it is so
809. expensive to go to college.
810. MQ: mhmm
811. AW: and so, and there's a lot of competition for the money, um, parents expect, they're
812. trying to get everything they can of course for their children and they look carefully on the
813. websites to see if you offer, um, research opportunities to undergraduate students.
814. MQ: okay.
815. AW: um, I think this is probably particularly important in the sciences
816. MQ: mhmm
817. AW: because it helps people get into graduate school and get scholarships for graduate
818. school.
819. MQ: mhmm

820. AW: well at UD of course we have a senior thesis, and almost all of our, not all of our
821. departments, but many many of our departments have a senior thesis. When I went
822. through the Spanish program we didn't have a senior thesis.
823. MQ: oh really?
824. AW: no, we had comps.
825. MQ: okay.
826. AW: and that was it. Uh, so, a lot of schools don't have this yet, but it's a trend
827. MQ: mhmm
828. AW: you know, and UD and our program I think looks really good. We had given up, um
829. our senior thesis in our language department, um sometime in the 80s and had instituted
830. instead a, kind of like a capstone course for majors, uh and the French, Spanish, German
831. majors took this course together
832. MQ: mhmm
833. AW: and there would be a different theme every year. Let's just take one example:
834. classical influence in the national literatures. So the Spanish, and French, and German
835. would read works of literature in their own language, in the language they were getting a
836. degree in, you know.
837. MQ: mhmm
838. AW: uh, that had classical themes or classical influence, and then they would discuss the
839. themes.
840. MQ: mhmm
841. AW: so we had that for a few years, well I was out of it because that was literature.
842. MQ: ha ha
843. AW: and so I didn't participate in that at all. And then, and it was not all that successful
844. apparently. And so uh when I became the director of the Spanish program and we
845. renovated our program, this started about ten years ago, I brought back the senior theses.
846. MQ: mhmm.
847. AW: senior projects, senior theses, Honors theses. And uh, I just think it's very good that
848. the students do the research and they have the practice in writing.
849. MQ: mhmm
850. AW: So those are two things that are, that are trends.
851. MQ: mhmm
852. AW: That I think are very good.
853. MQ: studying abroad and writing a thesis.
854. AW: doing research and writing a thesis.
855. MQ: Do you think um, looking down the road that requiring people who major in a certain
856. language, that it should be required for them to that country or do you think it should still
857. just remain an option?
858. AW: Well I don't think you can require people to do things like that unless you can help
859. them financially.
860. MQ: mhmm
861. AW: um, and I don't know. Some schools have scholarships for study abroad. Ours, we
862. don't yet, but we keep talking about how we'd like it.
863. MQ: mhmm
864. AW: you know, some scholarships to help finance studying in Ávila or whatever.
865. MQ: mhmm

866. AW: um, I can make a case either way. You know
867. MQ: mhmm
868. AW: why it would be a burden or why it should be required.
869. MQ: mhmm
870. AW: But I'll tell you one thing, I was on the Fulbright, you know what the Fulbright
871. scholarships are?
872. MQ: no, I don't.
873. AW: Fulbright was a U.S. senator and he got a program going and the United States
874. government partners with other countries.
875. MQ: mhmm
876. AW: to send Americans abroad to study for one year after they get their BA.
877. MQ: oh, okay.
878. AW: and each, the American government pays for part of the cost and then the
879. government of the host country pays for part of the cost and the students get a one-year
880. scholarship. And I was asked, I was invited to be on the board for four years that looks at
881. the applications for students wanting to go to Spain.
882. MQ: mhmm
883. AW: and um most of these students were not language majors
884. MQ: mhmm
885. AW: they were not Spanish majors, I was very amazed that they wanted to go to Spain, not
886. so much to learn about the Spanish cultural heritages as they wanted to learn about
887. current things.
888. MQ: mhmm
889. AW: immigration policies
890. MQ: oh okay
891. AW: because they wanted to be become immigration lawyers in the states or they wanted
892. to know about environmental things or city planning.
893. MQ: mhmm
894. AW: But, looking at their dossier, their CD's it was amazing to me to see how many
895. study abroad programs each of those had been to.
896. MQ: mhmm
897. AW: in many cases their schools had a campus abroad, so they had done that
898. MQ: mhmm
899. AW: and then they had done one or two others and so um, of course the Fulbright
900. wouldn't be given to somebody who had spent two years in Spain. They wouldn't give
901. them a Fulbright to go to Spain
902. MQ: to go back
903. AW: because they had, you've had enough, let's give a chance, a choice to somebody else.
904. but short, you know six weeks here um, six weeks there
905. MQ: mhmm
906. AW: these people, most of them have been abroad to two or three different programs
907. MQ: mhmm
908. AW: and I think that's because these are for people who are very good at languages, uh
909. but not necessarily language majors.
910. MQ: mhmm
911. AW: and I think that's more and more a trend. Just like more and more people travel now

912. MQ: mmmm, yeah just the accessibility
913. AW: yeah, I mean I have an uncle who is 92 and uh he he, he's of course long retired, his
914. profession is something that is dying today.
915. MQ: mmmm
916. AW: he was a travel log lecturer.
917. MQ: ooh
918. AW: so, he traveled all over Latin America and part of Africa making documentary films all
919. by himself
920. MQ: mmmm, wow
921. AW: and then he would go to an auditorium and give a lecture and show his film, or
922. sometimes he did it on TV.
923. MQ: mmmm
924. AW: Well that's a dying thing
925. MQ: mmmm
926. AW: We don't have armchair travelers, we have travelers now
927. MQ: mmmm
928. AW: you know, almost everybody in the middle class in American gets on a plane and goes
929. some place.
930. MQ: mmmm
931. AW: that wasn't that way in the 50's when he started. You know, there have been changes
932. and there's more and more travel among students
933. MQ: mmmm, yeah definitely, and I think like with UD that they help you by providing their
934. core classes in Rome.
935. AW: right.
936. MQ: because I know a lot of other schools, to do study abroad programs kind of interrupts
937. AW: yes
938. MQ: what they're studying
939. AW: yeah, that's where UD, that was the genius of UD's uh, em, of UD's Rome program
940. studying for my doctorate in Pamplona. ** when the first group went to Rome
941. MQ: oh okay
942. AW: and there were two other UD grads in Pamplona there and he had a uh Fulbright
943. scholarship and he was studying the Camino de Santiago and his wife was a uh very smart
944. graduate too. So the three of us, the three UDers
945. MQ: ha ha
946. AW: had dinner one night and we had heard about this Rome program and we said what in
947. the world is this? You know.
948. MQ: mmmm
949. AW: brand new. It was uh uh I think 1970 or maybe 69. Um, 69-70, my first year in
950. Pamplona, yeah that's when it was
951. MQ: oh yeah okay
952. AW: and that was the genius that it was not for Art history majors or Italian majors. It was
953. for everybody, including the science students. Before they got into their major they got a
954. chance, which keeps them here because of the labs.
955. MQ: mmmm
956. AW: Before getting into their major they got a chance
957. MQ: to

958. AW: to go to Rome. That was the genius of our Rome program
959. MQ: mhmm
960. AW: It was so different than most schools, and that's why such a high percentage of UDer
961. go to Rome.
962. MQ: mhmm
963. AW: which impressed a lot of universities.
964. MQ: mhmm
965. AW: Because Rome is chock-a-block full of American students
966. MQ: oh, definitely
967. AW: but most of them are studying art history
968. MQ: mhmm
969. AW: or they're studying something that has to do with Rome
970. MQ: mhmm
971. AW: you know.
972. MQ: the language or the specific culture
973. AW: Italian majors
974. MQ: mhmm, yeah definitely
975. AW: and here come UD, the biology
976. MQ: ha ha ha
977. AW: you know, the chemistry, the biology, the whatever
978. MQ: studying everything and then...
979. AW: yeah.
980. MQ: (unintelligible) into it
981. AW: see we switched the Western Civ., the western civ used to be a freshman course and
982. American civ was a sophomore course
983. MQ: ooooh
984. AW: and we switched it at UD so that they could study
985. MQ: so they could do it while they're
986. AW: European history while they're in Europe.
987. MQ: mhmm, yeah, that definitely makes a difference
988. AW: yeah.
989. MQ: to see it while you're learning it
990. AW: right.
991. MQ: in and everything
992. AW: yeah. Yeah. And I mean I love, I've always loved giving walking tours in Europe, or
- in 993. Mexico
994. MQ: mhmm
995. AW: to students who have studied, uh, or are studying about what they're seeing
996. MQ: mhmm
997. AW: that's, I've always enjoyed that. When I was in Rome I organized a lot of walking
998. tours for students in the city of Rome and then I taught at different Spanish programs in the
999. summer in Spain, you know
1000. MQ: mhmm
1001. AW: and for a while I taught graduate school, we used to have a graduate program in
1002. Spanish, and uh they had to have, they had to take history of Mexico, and history of
1003. Mexican art with me in the summer, and we spent the last ten days

1004. MQ: oh wow
1005. AW: in Mexico City. And one of the great delights for me was to take students places and
1006. to see their faces light up when they saw something they'd studied.
1007. MQ: mhmm
1008. AW: about in Texas. Like going to the Museo de Antropología. And we'd walk in and
1009. they're, they're looking at something that they'd studied and they really wanted to see it.
1010. MQ: mhmm
1011. AW: and unlike many tourists, they knew what they were looking at
1012. MQ: mhmm, they knew everything
1013. AW: yeah
1014. MQ: involved
1015. AW: and that's uh, that was something that has always been very nice, um, for me as a
1016. teacher,
1017. MQ: mhmm, just one of the
1018. AW: yeah
1019. MQ: good parts of it
1020. AW: and so well now we have a program in Ávila, well of course, well I lived in Avila for
1021. years, and uh, it was started by a UD grad who married a banker from Ávila.
1022. MQ: hmm
1023. AW: Professor Suppleccha, and so sometimes I've been to Ávila visiting, uh, my sister
1024. Julianna who lives there and so I've always been happy to give a walking tour
1025. MQ: mhmm
1026. AW: to the summer students you know, uh, uh I remember one year I said, let's look at
1027. classical influence in the city of Ávila and so we did, we started off at the Roman bridge
1028. and you know, I showed them a few things
1029. MQ: mhmm
1030. AW: that's always been something I've enjoyed, and I think that's one of the advantages
1031. of studying abroad.
1032. MQ: mhmm
1033. Aw: is seeing all those things
1034. MQ: mhmm, definitely
1035. AW: experiencing them.
1036. MQ: yeah, no that's so true
1037. AW: you know,
1038. MQ: just can't even explain it
1039. AW: yeah
1040. MQ: just what you learn, mhmm. Well I don't want to take up too much of your time but
1041. is there anything else that you would like to add or, kind of
1042. AW: yeah, there is a big difference between the way I grew up in the Spanish system of
1043. education which is similar to the French and the Italian
1044. MQ: mhmm
1045. AW: and the American. We in Spain in my day, we had textbooks and we had to
1046. memorize, we had to memorize, definitions.
1047. MQ: mhmm
1048. AW: and our textbooks were very shallow, but they covered the big picture.
1049. MQ: mhmm

1050. AW: so for an example. Literature, I had world history, I mean world literature, twice.
1051. Once I was probably about ten or eleven and another time I was about fourteen or
1052. fifteen.
1053. MQ: mhmm
1054. AW: so I got a general view of Greek literature and Roman literature and then early
1055. medieval literature, da da da, from all over Europe.
1056. MQ: mhmm
1057. AW: and one or two, one or two token classes on other parts of the world.
1058. MQ: ha ha
1059. AW: one or two chapters. So I, you know, I could tell you who Homer was, I could tell
1060. you something about the Iliad, or the Odyssey when I was twelve.
1061. MQ: mhmm
1062. AW: or thirteen, you know. I knew about Aeneid, I knew about Dante, I knew what an
1063. epic poem was or what lyric poetry was. Uh, I had a broad view, mhmm, and I could
1064. define things and go straight to the point and define things
1065. MQ: mhmm
1066. AW: but I hadn't read any of those works, we got a little snippet, like that, of you know
1067. this big, of some of the works. So in America people tend to take a few things, pretty
1068. much out of context and learn them well.
1069. MQ: mhmm
1070. AW: and write a paper about them. Whereas I had an overview
1071. MQ: mhmm
1072. AW: and was introduced to a lot of things very superficially.
1073. MQ: mhmm
1074. AW: but very clearly. And I think I got the best of two worlds by going to high school
1075. under the Spanish system of education and then coming to UD.
1076. MQ: mhmm
1077. AW: you know I really think I was very very fortunate in that sense. I got the best of two
1078. worlds.
1079. MQ: mhmm
1080. AW: but I remember when I was a junior, an 18 year-old junior, I took Lit Trad. one and
1081. two, of course, because I uh, hadn't taken them. In college, I um, purposefully skipped
1082. the two semester survey of literature at the University of Avila because I knew I was
1083. going to have to take it...
1084. MQ: when you came here...
1085. AW: when I came to UD.
1086. MQ: mhmm
1087. AW: so I just skipped it. So I uh, in those days we had to write a paper every week not 4
1088. a semester. We had constant papers
1089. MQ: wow
1090. AW: the Lit Trads, and I remember my teacher, um, saying to me after a few papers, I've
1091. never seen anyone who can define things so clearly.
1092. MQ: hmm
1093. AW: I said, oh, well I guess that's because of all
1094. MQ: ha ha ha
1095. AW: all the definitions I had to memorize in high school in Spain.

1096. MQ: mhmm
1097. AW: So that gave us clear thinking.
1098. MQ: mhmm
1099. AW: plus an overview
1100. MQ: mhmm
1101. AW: you know we weren't thinking to stick our foot in it royally in any subject, at
1102. least in the humanities, you know because we got a little something
1103. MQ: mhmm, but just a little bit of
1104. AW: But we never, it wasn't a potpourri, it was very systematic, you know what the
1105. most important things as we were introduced to very clearly, but we didn't read them
1106. MQ: mhmm
1107. AW: and of course UD makes you read the real things, not memorize textbooks. UD
1108. doesn't like textbooks, it likes you to read, you know the original source
1109. MQ: mhmm
1110. AW: but those are two differences between the American system and the European
1111. system, at least in the Mediterranean, at least in southern Europe.
1112. MQ: mhmm, to just go, yeah, definitely, just be clear and concise
1113. AW: yeah
1114. MQ: get as much knowledge in, but know how to express yourself as well. Definitely
1115. AW: and then we had all those oral exams
1116. MQ: mhmm ha ha ha mhmm
1117. AW: but writing a paper about a about a novel, Now I never did that in high school.
1118. MQ: mhmm, and would you say..
1119. AW: I never read a novel in high school
1120. MQ: really? You didn't read any.
1121. AW: but I knew about a lot of novelists
1122. MQ: mhmm
1123. AW: and a lot of genres and a lot of styles and things, you know
1124. MQ: mhmm, and do you think that would help students maybe now
1125. AW: Yes, because American students tend to have a lot of knowledge about this and a
1126. little bit of knowledge about that but they can't put the big picture together
1127. MQ: mhmm
1128. AW: they don't have the big picture.
1129. MQ: mhmm
1130. AW: I remember in our first year here at UD when my father was teaching both
1131. philosophy and political philosophy, and he said you know, uh it's amazing how well UD
1132. students can talk about Aristotle's mm um *Politics*, but they can't tell you when Aristotle
1133. lived.
1134. MQ: mhmm
1135. AW: they don't, they can't put it in context.
1136. MQ: mhmm
1137. AW: you know, they can go on and on and on about details in the Iliad, but if you ask
1138. them something about Homer, or you know um Troy, Where is Troy?
1139. MQ: ha ha ha
1140. AW: no idea. You know.
1141. MQ: mhmm, they know about that specific thing.

1142. AW: they know about the story that's there, that's conveyed by Homer, but they don't
1143. know the context,
1144. MQ: mhmm
1145. AW: and they don't seem to have any curiosity about it. And he said, on the other hand
1146. they're much more profound than than students in many other places, in other countries
1147. MQ: mhmm
1148. AW: because they're looking at things in depth.
1149. MQ: mhmm
1150. AW: so in case you know you can't have everything in life.
1151. MQ: mhmm haha
1152. AW: Each system has something to offer, but it's good to know what they are
1153. MQ: mhmm
1154. AW: what their strong points and what their weak points are.
1155. MQ: mhmm and how to tie that into...
1156. AW: yeah
1157. MQ: what's best for the students. Mhmm
1158. AW: so are you hoping to become a high school teacher?
1159. MQ: I, yes, that's the plan. Mhmm that's hopefully where I'll be headed
1160. AW: mhmm
1161. MQ: I don't know about graduate school after this, but the education has, department
1162. has, um an extra year graduate program through UD
1163. AW: it's a five year program?
1164. MQ: mhmm.
1165. AW: a five-year program and you get an MA?
1166. MQ: yes.
1167. AW: oh good!
1168. MQ: yes, so I'm looking into that with financials and with family and everything.
1169. AW: and do do the scholarships go all the way to the end?
1170. MQ: Um, that's where I'm still looking into to see, to make sure
1171. AW: uh huh,
1172. MQ: I mean, because that's definitely
1173. AW: I think that would be lovely.
1174. MQ: yeah
1175. AW: because nowadays in America, there's there's this trend where you have to have
1176. more and more and more degrees and you have to have more and more and more
1177. credentials
1178. MQ: mhmm
1179. AW: and more and more and more certificates, than than you used to
1180. MQ: mhmm
1181. AW: and so that would be great if you could get the MA
1182. MQ: mhmm, yes I know that's...
1183. AW: and what do you want to teach?
1184. MQ: I want to teach Spanish actually
1185. AW: uh huh
1186. MQ: but I don't know, because I still remember my senior year of high school we did kind
1187. of a literature history

1188. AW: mhmm
1189. MQ: course
1190. AW: mhmm
1191. MQ: and that's kind of what sparked my love for Spanish
1192. AW: mhmm
1193. MQ: and so I want to look into teaching that maybe. Um, somewhere
1194. AW: um, so the more Spanish courses you take...
1195. MQ: mhmm
1196. AW: the better
1197. MQ: the better mhmm.
1198. AW: yeah
1199. MQ: mhmm
1200. AW: so that you can get up in front of a class with confidence.
1201. MQ: mhmm, yeah, that's so true, because I remember also my same teacher, she, the
1202. information that we were learning was awesome, but the way she kind of presented
1203. herself, she wasn't 100% sure all the time. And so like you said
1204. AW: and students always notice
1205. MQ: mhmm. You can tell
1206. AW: yeah
1207. MQ: mhmm
1208. AW: I remember my early years I was scared to death someone was going to ask some
1209. question
1210. MQ: ha ha. That you didn't know
1211. AW: because I was teaching such a vast array of courses. I thought, Oh my God I've
1212. worked so hard to prepare this lecture that if they start asking questions I'll be lost.
1213. MQ: mhmm
1214. AW: ha ha you know
1215. MQ: ha ha
1216. AW: that's because we started a graduate program after I had been teaching just one
1217. year and most of the graduate students were older than I was.
1218. MQ: oh wow
1219. AW: you know. And I thought oh my God I have to teach History of Mexico and I had
1220. never studied it, anything about Mexico and I had to do a History of Mexico. History of
1221. Mexican Art. And I had to do some Latin American things and I just uh cringed to think
1222. about it. Um, and you don't want to be in that position.
1223. MQ: mhmm
1224. AW: you wanna feel real confident.
1225. MQ: mhmm
1226. AW: so if you can get that MA and take more Spanish courses...
1227. MQ: mhmm
1228. AW: While you're getting that MA in education. How many courses can you take in your
1229. field in this MA program that you know of.
1230. MQ: well, specifically if I want to teach in Spanish, then I have to get most of them in
1231. Spanish because to be a high school teacher now you have to major in your field.
1232. AW: so you have to take, um, now wait a minute, we don't have five, don't you have to
1233. have 5,000 level courses

1234. MQ: yes, well that's the, like with education, it's technically an education course and you
1235. have to...
1236. AW: so in the teaching field you can have 4,000 level courses.
1237. MQ: mhmm
1238. AW: So you just take more of what we have to offer?
1239. MQ: mhmm
1240. AW: yeah yeah yeah
1241. MQ: yes.
1242. AW: that would be great.
1243. MQ: yeah yeah I'm excited
1244. AW: and of course you are gonna go spend time with your aunt in Mexico
1245. MQ: yes
1246. AW: and go to a Mexican University.
1247. MQ: I'm actually planning, talking her with right now.
1248. AW: yeah.
1249. MQ: I'm working out the logistics now.
1250. AW: I wanna see that. Cause you've got such, you've got it made in the shade.
1251. MQ: ha ha
1252. AW: such an opportunity.
1253. MQ: mhmm and she said even I could, cause she tutors also, um and so she said that I
1254. could work with some of her students, just speaking with them in English and just kind of
1255. AW: Boy, are they gonna love you.
1256. MQ: ha ha ha
1257. AW: A red head with blue eyes.
1258. MQ: ha ha
1259. AW: oh my Gosh, Moira.
1260. MQ: ha yes...
1261. AW: oh my Lord ha ha ha ha
1262. MQ: quite different. Quite different, yeah.
1263. AW: what an experience.
1264. MQ: yes
1265. AW: but she's a University professor
1266. MQ: mhmm
1267. AW: you couldn't have a better person to stay with.
1268. MQ: mhmm yeah, she's so excited about it.
1269. AW: did you say the University of Guadalajara?
1270. MQ: yes. Mhmm, yes, and so.
1271. AW: go see that center for Cristero studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara,
1272. MQ: okay.
1273. AW: Not the state school, the other one
1274. MQ: the other one. Well there's a state school, and Opus Dei one, and then there's this
1275. Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara which is a private school. They have a center for
1276. Cristero studies.
1277. MQ: wow, that would be awesome to see.
1278. AW: because there of course, so many of the Cristeros were from Guadalajara.
1279. MQ: mhmm, and how it impacted them all

1280. AW: Yeah
1281. MQ: and everything. Yeah, no, that would be awesome
1282. AW: that would be great!
1283. MQ: yeah, cause, I don't know if, well my grandmother, that's why her, why her family
1284. moved from Mexico to the United States was during that time.
1285. AW: During the
1286. MQ: yeah
1287. AW: oh I think a lot of people in Texas, uh, a lot of Hispanic people in Texas came uh,
1288. during the Mexican revolution or during the Cristero Rebellion.
1289. MQ: mmmm, yeah. And so it's always been such a special place in all of
1290. AW: of course.
1291. MQ: our family
1292. AW: of course, of course.
1293. MQ: yeah, that would be awesome.
1294. AW: okay, well I hope this
1295. MQ: thank you so much
1296. AW: I hope I didn't talk so much to where there's just a bunch of confusion
1297. MQ: no, no.
1298. AW: that you can make sense of this and use some of it, and um, ánimo
1299. MQ: yes...
1300. AW: go
1301. MQ: Thank you so much, it's been...
1302. AW: okay
1303. MQ: very useful and very helpful.
1304. AW: muy bien, señorita.
1305. MQ: I need to learn lots of your information.
1306. AW: well I hope you can use some of it.
1307. MQ: yes, I'm sure, lots of it. Alright, well thank you
1308. AW: bye bye. Te vemos mañana en clase.
1309. MQ: yes Adios, hasta luego
1310. AW: see if there's anybody else out there waiting to talk about term papers.
1311. MQ: okay.