

## APRENDICES | T1: E5 Gladys Marquisio

### Desgrabación corregida - Inglés

Link: [Aprendices IT1| Episodio 5: Gladys Marquisio](#)

#### INTRO

One of the most important things a teacher can do is to see where the student is tending towards.

And so to be able to make the cultural mediation needed to encourage his potential.

Those interests for things outside the school may be the key to ignite the passion for this thing we call knowledge.

#### PREVIA

No one had done my face before.

Never in your life? Ever?

No, no.

Oh my, what an honor.

Really good.

We'll talk about Gladys, so...

Ol' Gladys.

Ol' Gladys.

Like my students say: Aunt Gladys.

Welcome.

Thank you.

Hello. Long time, no see.

Hi, how are you?

Come on in, friend.

Excuse me. Hi.

Well, there. I think I found the spot.

## CHARLA

I'm a woman, I'm Uruguayan, mother to Erick, teacher, and I'm in permanent construction. I don't know. I'm in permanent construction.

Here and now I tell you I'm a woman, Uruguayan, mother to Erick because my life is pierced by a maternity that came to me in a wonderful way, and I'm also a teacher, where I feel a fulfilled woman.

I'm also Richard's wife, who is also a professor. So my life is defined by learning. Learning as a mother, learning at home, living with my husband who is a Physics professor, and I'm a teacher as well.

So that's how I define myself here and now, but I feel I'm in construction. Being a teacher, I discover myself unlearning things all the time. So, for me, defining myself is a question mark... But yes, that.

### **When do you recall thinking "Wow, I'm here and I'm all that as well?" When does it start to appear?**

Should I be absolutely honest? I'm in my best moment. Right now.

I think I'm managing to unite, perhaps, due to things coming up and the way I feel regarding my job, my family, my friends... I'm becoming aware of the journey it was to get here.

Well, it's like water, you know? Water runs and runs and it has its own path, and if it hits a wall it finds a way, right? That's allowing things to flow.

I think there were times in my life when I wasn't water and I hit the wall, I hit the wall again and again, and so the water rots.

But when you figure out the way and you try something new, when you become aware of that, that's when you become aware like I am right now. Life flows in a different way and you're one with your feelings.

That has to do with allowing yourself to do things that go in a direction others aren't expecting, and it also has to do with life putting walls before you. And you don't have to hit them, you have to say: "Well, I'll find my way out of this".

I've found refuge in my profession, plenty of pleasure and a desire to keep learning and keep being myself.

My students often tell me: "I like your lessons because you're the way you are. You don't pretend to be someone else", and I think I wasn't like that a while ago.

### **I keep thinking of those walls, those first walls, that you hit while you came flowing. Do you remember those first moments or those first walls?**

I suppose one's teenage years is where the first walls come up. A few walls rise up. Because childhood is... I was raised in the country, and I lived until I was a teenager in an area called Las Violetas. And in adolescence walls come up in terms of relating with others, in terms of love, in terms of what are you going to do with your life. Those are the walls that rise up. Then...

Afterwards, throughout my life, thinking more about adulthood, I did have difficult moments when life seems to tell you: "No, you're not going to make it this way". And I refer to very strong matters, like maternity, for instance.

And at one point you go: "Well, but I'm gonna try..." Being a mother the way that I am is a wonderful thing. It was a wall at first, but it's a bridge now. It's a bridge.

### **How were those first life experiences in the country? In that school? Which were the first hints that something different was happening?**

Well, I was raised in a Las Violetas, an area of vineyards. It's called Las Violetas, as is the ravine. I have to go back there. I feel really good every time I go there.

Well, we had grapes there, and vineyards. So, in order to send the grapes to the market, besides cutting them very early, around 6 AM, we had a place in my house's patio in which we would gather the boxes with the grapes. And in the middle there was another box, and then you had small boxes where you classified the muscatel you'd send to the market to sell. Which is the type of grape you buy in the marketplace.

So, basically, the grapes would be cleansed. Sitting on a box with a little cushion, this could take hours, you would go at it with a pair of scissors, removing the rotten or ripe or dry grains, and that is what is known as cleaning grapes.

And since grapes are... the bunch is so fragile, and the juice pours out, you had to put paper underneath.

My father discovered that a famous newspaper segment of the time, the Sábado Show supplement, fit the bunches to perfection. So you didn't have to bother to cut the paper.

So he'd buy the Saturday newspaper, not to read it, but only to have a bunch of paper for the grape pan.

So I spent my time cleaning grapes, imagine that. They'd make me wake up at 6:30 in the morning in the summer, it wasn't... I'm talking about my teenage years, right? So I wasn't very enthusiastic about the idea of working in the country.

It was while I cleaned the grapes that my eyes started focusing on the newspaper. That's when I started seeing other things. And in particular, a column by Jorge Abbondanza talking about movies, titled "To the Beat of Memories".

I loved watching television. I'd only been to the movies once in my life, to watch "Cantinflas, the Street Sweeper" in Las Piedras, so my eyes were fixed on the column and I went: "Stop, Dad, stop". So whenever Sábado Show arrived, I'd remove the "To the Beat of Memories" column and I'd read it. That bit of paper didn't end up in the marketplace.

So I started reading that, started reading movie reviews by Jorge Abbondanza, and discovered strange names I didn't even know how to pronounce, though I do now that I work in Cineduca and after taking film studies: Bergman, Fellini, Luchino Visconti, John Ford, John Huston, Margaret von Trotta, people like that. And I had no idea what he was talking about, but my eyes went that way.

And I remember that in high school, in a Philosophy lesson we were talking about death, and I raised my hand and said: "No, because in "The Seventh Seal"... Though I'd never seen that movie. And the teacher went: "Oh, very good!" That's when I knew: "Well, well, this works. This information pays off in high school".

And then I started devouring, devouring, devouring films, and at one point I got mad at the column because I'd recently seen the whole Star Wars saga on television, and I was utterly fascinated by the story, by "May the Force be with you", by Leia and by Darth Vader being Luke's father in the end, and well, all the things that make me a fan to this day.

And then I read Abbondanza's column, and I remember it vividly. I didn't just read it for this interview. I remember the column with Han Solo and Princess Leia, and then my eyes saw the heading: "Star Wars inaugurated a banal epoch for movies".

I was already a reader then and I knew what banal meant. And he destroyed the image I have of Star Wars. The segment was called "To the Beat of Memories", and it said auteur films were good and all good things were from the past, and Star Wars was crap. "Crap" may be too strong a word, but it had brought on a banal epoch, right?

And I told myself: "I like something banal. Me". This thing that fascinated me so much... And there I started to... I see it now. It was a cultural shock to have someone validating a certain thing, and you feeling affection for something else which I liked.

So going back to the initial question of how I'd define myself, I'd call myself a cultural omnivore, very open culturally. And I'm proud of that in that I like feeding off all culture. I don't define myself as a highbrow person. I'm someone who loves all culture, I love reading, watching... and I eat all kinds of things.

But this thing about being attracted to those columns gets me thinking about who I am today. I'm a Spanish teacher, I mean the language, and writing and reading, and I coordinate a program named Cineduca because I did film studies, though at first sight it may appear unrelated. When you picture a Spanish teacher's career it looks a certain way, but I went through different places, trying two different languages.

**Coming back to your training, and taking these two interests into account, and your anger at the column saying Star Wars was banal... Do you feel that sometimes in education we tend to rise some things up and look down on others?**

I think sometimes us teachers reproduce the models under which we were formed, not the models of the institutions themselves, but of our teachers. So there's a very self-referential tendency to go: "No, this will be done this way". That does exist and one has to unlearn it.

I think it's fundamental, really, to unlearn certain things.

Then there's the matter of my students. There I go calling them "my students" like they were mine! They get me thinking about the interests we have, the interests they have outside school, because there's a world out there, isn't there? And what I'm saying seems obvious, but the walls, and we go back to the walls, the walls of the school seem to say: "This ends here". Then knowledge... What I'm teaching you is totally different to what happens out there. For example, scholarly grammar versus vital grammar. Vital experiences, if you will.

So it's what I just told you about in my story, right? What materializes in this vision of childhood and adolescence and the grapes, is that the interests for things outside the school may be the key to ignite the passion for what we call knowledge. Do you know what I mean?

So it's great when us teachers find that out and discover what interests the students.

But not in the sense of "What do you like? What don't you like?" diagnosis you do at the beginning of the year. "What are your tastes?" No, you won't find anything there, you won't raise anything up. You have to have a real exchange with stories and the like, and maybe you spend a year with them and you still don't figure it out, and they have no obligation to tell you. It's a mixture of all kinds of things.

But when do you figure it out, when you truly figure out their interests... And "interest" is a very interesting word, because it's where I'm heading to, you know?

So, perhaps, one of the most important things a teacher can do is to see where the student is tending towards, to be able to make the cultural mediation needed to encourage his potential. And processing it as a group, too, right? Because it's not just him. And taking down those hard, structured walls, right? When I speak of rigid knowledge, I think a bit of Abbondanza's column talking about a "banal epoch". Wait, what are you telling me? There's more than one vision of life, more than one vision of the world.

This is even more true in our highly edited world, right? The world is constant editing.

So I think allowing the students to see that montage through their interests is a hard thing, but if you pull it off the lessons flow in a wonderful, wonderful way.

It took me a while to find my... I got out of high school and I didn't go to study film, because it's also a matter of access and networking and social capital. Years later, after I became a Spanish teacher, I was making milanesas with my husband and he told me: "Gladys, you really should go and study film once and for all". Back then you couldn't do it in any state university. So we made a great effort, I got a scholarship, and bam, I did my film studies.

Today I realize that the teenager who cleaned grapes in Las Violetas is now a Spanish teacher and a Cineduca coordinator. I don't know if I have Jorge Abbondanza to thank, or rather my eyes who were drawn that way, and finally a person who loves me who said: "You're headed that way".

So, thinking back to teaching, I think it's first and foremost about loving the other, loving the students, watching them and helping them go where they must. Like the water I told you about that runs a certain way. It's wonderful when that happens.

I get the feeling it has to do with being open to other ways of seeing. Taking a good look around you, you know?

It's like reading the newspaper while you clean the grapes. You go: "Oh, look what's here". Maybe being a teacher is the same thing. You think "look what's here", and you're led to wonderful places.