

In the Hot Seat: 5 Questions for Angeline Fischer



1. What made you decide to become an English teacher?

It just seemed to be a natural choice. My education is in economics and business, and as a Canadian, my mother tongue is English. After working for multinationals such as Daimler and KPMG in the auditing and controlling field, I wanted to have more flexibility once my son was born. With the world becoming more and more connected, I figured there would be a demand for someone with my profile who had attended meetings, trade fairs and conferences in real business situations. Also, there was the appeal of being my own boss.

2. What do you enjoy about the teaching profession?

It is very inspiring work. For me it is all about people and communication. I get to meet lots of interesting people who are connecting to other countries and cultures. As a teacher, I witness students gaining confidence, improving their language skills and learning to be leaders. I am also inspired to see many forward thinking companies, who not only see English as a relevant skill, but truly want to invest in their workforce. They actively use English training as a strategy to attract and retain employees.

3. Describe one difficulty you've had in the teaching profession and how you solved it.

What frustrates me the most is that the terminology which is used by "insiders" is not readily understood by the public. Often when I tell people that I am teaching Business English they do not associate it with language learning, telephoning skills, making presentations, learning cultural competence etc. Instead, I receive the response "oh, so you do translation work." I try to clarify by providing an example of the type of projects I work on. For instance, I trained staff to give company tours in English and greet their international visitors appropriately. Also, I now have a network which I can call upon if a new client needs translation work done.

4. What do you do to motivate yourself?

For me it is all about balance. If I am staying physically fit, getting enough sleep and discovering new things, I am motivated. Also, a great motivator is meeting up with other teachers and hearing from their experiences, learning about new methods and sharing information. The seminars and workshops that ELTAS provide me with a really good venue for this.

5. What would you like to read in the ELTAS newsletter?

I like the ELTAS newsletter and the new online version has the advantage of the links section: That way we can click to hand-outs, videos etc. This in my eyes is a real plus. In particular I like to read the articles. A nice idea might be to have a profile of each member of the current board (with a picture), so that new members can orient themselves more easily. Also, I think that articles from local members would put a real face on who we are. Recently, I was talking to one of our members who has been teaching for over 30 years on the changes in ESL teaching. Perhaps that would be a good topic. Another theme could be classroom management tips, for those who teach younger students.