

# Teacher Interview

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REECE MARTIN

# Some Background

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The teachers I chose are both actually my grandparents, Karen and Roger Martin. They both have been teaching for a very long time and have been part of the reason I myself have decided that I would like to go into teaching.



# Roger Martin

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Roger began teaching in Australia in 1963 and worked for a year in a all boys Technical school for grades 7 to 11 in suburban Melbourne (Watsonia). The school was mostly full of special needs and other children with behavioral problems.

He came to Canada in 1967 and quickly got a part time job in North York at Sir Sandford Fleming S.S and within a few months became a full time job.

This is the school where my grandparents met!



# Now for the questions!

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Question #1 – Why did you chose to go into the teaching field?

Karen – “My mother made the decision. I was a legal secretary for Imperial Oil Limited in Calgary and did not get home very often. My mother saw an ad for Crestwood Secondary School in Peterborough and thought I should apply. In my absence, she went to the “interview” with my grad portrait and degree and Principal Watt hired me in absentia!!!”

Roger – “Teaching was considered very highly in our family, I had an Uncle who was Principal of a one-roomed school. My Mother (who died when I was 4) was a Kindergarten specialist and my older sister followed her footsteps. Ironically it was my Dad who encouraged me to stay in school. He had had to leave school after Grade 8 because his parents couldn't afford to send him to the nearest high school 35 miles away. By contrast, when I graduated high school it was possible for me to get a bursary covering tuition and board on condition that I teach for 3 years in the State of Victoria.. This was a period in history when there was a huge shortage of teachers (the Baby Boom had arrived) .”

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## #2. What level did you teach? (i.e. Highschool, public school etc.)

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Karen – “High school for 6 years, followed by a 2-year maternity leave following birth of Greg. Started part-time at Sheridan College, Faculty of Business which led to full-time teaching at Sheridan. I was Chair of the Office Administration Department, Faculty of Business. I then (after 20 years at Sheridan) went back to high school teaching for 5 years.”

Roger – “Apart from my one year of integration as Vice Principal in K-5 school all of my experience was in High Schools.”

### #3. What subjects have you taught throughout your career? What were some of your favorites if there are more than one?

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Karen – “Business education subjects mostly with a stint teaching Grade 10 English. Favourite Business subjects included Interpersonal Communication, business writing, accounting. I actually enjoyed all subjects including computer programming at the Grade 10 level!”

Roger – “I taught English, Drama, Creative Writing, Geography, Social Studies and History. English and Geography were my favourites.”

#4. What were some of the most challenging things you have encountered throughout your teaching career? (i.e. difficult students, impossible curriculum, etc.)

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Karen – “Two most difficult situations included dealing with a layoff situation at Sheridan because I had the least seniority in my department (I was Chair at the time but had worked 10 years as a Contract professor – not full time. This period was followed by 10 years full-time). I started one of my later high school positions in October when teachers were working “to rule.” All subjects were new to me; we were required to teach 4 different subjects (no spares) and couldn’t get into school any earlier than 15 minutes to the bell and had to leave 15 minutes after last class. ”

Roger – “One of the most challenging things was to teach a brand new program e.g. Drama without a lot of experience or knowledge.. My first year experience was pretty gruelling –I lacked knowledge and experience for getting the most out of students with learning disabilities.”

# #5. Describe your philosophy of teaching

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Karen – “Do what I can to get each student to understand topic and to succeed.”

Roger – “My philosophy of teaching is to create environments in which students are given problems to solve, and are required to design questions that will get them to a solution. Active learning as opposed to passive learning, engages students in valuable exploratory talk to identify a problem by defining and questioning it.”



## #6. Describe a time when a student really got what you were hoping they would. An “Ah HA” moment

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Karen – “Grade 10 math student could not/would not do assigned homework supplied by teacher who was absent . I was “on call” for this class, which was noisy and disinterested in math assignment. I requested students who did understand assignment to see me and asked them to help small groups understand. They agreed. I sat with each of the groups (now quiet) and asked each student to explain it to me (I knew nothing of this). They worked to the end of the class. When they left, they thanked me and that particular Grade 10 student told me he learned more math that day than in the whole semester! He did do his homework.”

Roger – “I was teaching The Stone Angel by Margaret Laurence. One of my students began to question the symbolism of the marble angel and eventually connected it to Hagar and her rigidity of opinion. She engaged the rest of the class to find instances of the connection and to demonstrate what “Stone” and “Angel” could mean – separate and together. It was a great “Ah Hah” moment - and extended everyone’s understanding .”

# Conclusion & Reflection

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