

A Life to be Celebrated The Lively Days of Muska Mosston

He was born in Haifa, Israel, and migrated to the United States after receiving his teaching diploma in Tel-Aviv. He spent time doing his bachelors and masters degrees at City College, New-York, finishing in 1954. In 1982 Temple University awarded him a doctorate in education. Long before this, however, he enthusiastically embraced the cause of teacher education. From 1963 to 1970 he was chair of Rutgers Physical Education Department and, after a short stint at East Stroudsburg State College (1970-1972), he hit the road. As an evangelical proponent of pedagogical enlightenment in the form of his Spectrum of Teaching Styles, his influence was universal and pervasive. He ranged the globe advocating teaching styles from command to discovery. He was interested in promoting the growth of responsible individual decision making in the learning process. He was irrepressible and effervescent and occasionally abrasive. Some people criticized him for his single-mindedness in promoting his Spectrum. Those critics, however, had never promoted anything as good or as constructive in moving us along the continuum of better teaching. His critics failed to understand the importance of focus, of following an idea to its logical conclusion, of leaving a model that has favorably influenced teacher education in all parts of the globe. He fell out with the leaders of the national associations around 1970, but he returned to the fold a few years later and continued his contribution as Director of the federally funded Center on Teaching in New Jersey from 1972 to 1980. An intensely emotional and personable man, he had two sons and one daughter and continued his interest in the family which expanded over his final years. His work with Sara Ashword added a research component to his Spectrum, elevating the status and credibility of an already important pedagogical model. His original text published in 1966 went through many editions and changes to the expanded fourth edition published by McMillan in 1994. It remains as his enduring life's work for us mortals who to remain to ponder over. In his later years he conducted over five hundred workshops in thirty six states and provinces of North America and twenty three countries around the world. He received awards from the New Jersey Association of English Teachers (1967) and the University of Jyväskylä in 1979 and 1984. He spoke six languages and engaged in hobbies ranging from music to distance swimming to backpacking. He was nominated by several colleagues for the IOC President's Prize. As this award can not be awarded posthumously he can not receive the honor, but his application was very seriously reviewed by the committee. His death was sudden and unexpected. Many, many people will wish honor this great pedagogue. On behalf of the membership of AIESEP, and especially the board of directors, I record AIESEP's appreciation for this man's life and work. I am equally certain that Muska would want us to tip a glass and salute him in celebration for a lively, insightful sixty seven years. We salute him.

John Cheffers, President of AIESEP

From a letter sent to the Secretary General by Dr. Sara Ashworth

«The Spectrum of Teaching Styles, it was Muska's brilliance that conceived the notion, initial structure and details of a universal and unified model of teaching. The Spectrum elicits a different "thinking process" about the act of and implications to teaching. Such a contribution will not fade. In time his contributions to teaching will be recognized as an educational paradigm shift.

Establishing The Spectrum as a fundamental theory and agent for conceptual change in pedagogy will continue because of the many colleagues who are implementing and expanding Muska's original ideas. Muska's pride was in the power of his work to contribute to the development of children. Muska loved humanity. He loved humanity more than his own professional rank, title, position, or momentary recognition. Muska was authentic! Such was his charm and his stubbornness! Those who experienced Muska always walked away with a story ... He always gave us something to talk about, think about, and remember! Perhaps, the greatest tribute of his humanity is that we feel enriched when we remember both Muska and his ideas.»