Technology, Tango, and Teaching With Victor Zamora, Computer Information Systems Professor Episode 190

00:00:00 **Victor**

Knowledge base education is based on the concept that in the early years, it's all about what. Then, it's all about how and questioning and all of that. So, we have to use this as a tool so that the students will have a higher level of learning because we are no longer concerned about what, we're now concerned about why.

00:00:26 **David**

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00:00:33 **Tania**

And I'm Tania Anders. And we are your hosts on this journey through the heart and soul of our institution.

00:00:39 **David**

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00:00:58 **Tania**

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00:01:09 **David**

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00:01:20 **Tania**

Welcome to the Mt. SAC Podcast.

00:01:26 **Voiceover**

Hi, and welcome back to the Mt. SAC Podcast. In this episode, we are going to hear from the newly retired Victor Zamora, a former IT professor at Mt. SAC. We'll learn more about his time here, his teaching style, and so much more. Enjoy.

00:01:45 **David**

And you just retired?

00:01:46 **Victor**

Yeah.

00:01:46 **David**

Professor, what was your emphasis? What were you doing?

00:01:48 **Victor**

It was, computer information systems, but I was more into the open source concept, web programming, eventually cloud computing, virtualization, and dabbling in any technology that would help teaching.

00:02:03 **Victor**

So, that's basically why from the very beginning, one of the things that I had to do was take a few more courses in order to start teaching here in 1998 as a full-time, one of the things I did was to figure out what is this thing called online learning.

00:02:23 **Victor**

And it's amazing that that was just a technology. A lot of people were also freaking out at that time, what does this mean? And so, learning that we created a number of courses and we started teaching, I mean, as many faculty as we can to get on board. So, that's how I probably got to meet a lot of faculty at that point in time.

00:02:45 **David**

Okay. Well , let's go back even further. So, you graduated from college degree and , where-

00:02:53 **Victor**

Well, it's very interesting. I immigrated here on June 12th, 1971. Just to be clear, also, I retired on June 12th, 2023. So, as a Filipino, that's Independence Day. It has many layers and meanings.

00:03:07 **Victor**

But in any case , coming here and I finally finished my degree in economics at Cal State LA. As a consequence, foolishly, I immediately got married without any job. So, I was forced to get any job I can get. And I started working for Atlantic Richfield ARCO, and I was going to be a sales merchandiser.

00:03:30 **Victor**

And my father, you would be foolish not to take it, for the mere fact that it paid more. It had an expense account, and , it was lucrative. And he said, it's an oil company, you can do anything once you have your foot in the door. And he was right for so many years. Almost every other year I would be doing something new.

00:03:52 **Victor**

So, by 1976, I was, part of a systems development, which cost millions, believe it or not, at that point in time. What happened with that project was that's when I started learning about computers. Not that I did not take any computer programming, which interestingly enough I did, but I never knew I would be using it in any sense.

00:04:15 **David**

When was this, your first computers?

00:04:17 **Victor**

I would have to say maybe 1969. Yeah.

00:04:21 **David**

So, what was the-

00:04:22 **Victor**

It's an existing language. It's called Fortran, formerly translation. So, mathematicians would probably know about it, and it's still a very useful language. Every language is useful. Human language is useful in any form. So, it is with computers.

00:04:38 **Victor**

So, the systems that we were developing use COBOL, which still exists to a large degree. It's just hidden under layers of other languages. So, you don't even know that's underneath. It's just the human body or the human brain. They're just layers of complexity. Until you get to the more complex.

00:04:57 **Victor**

So, the same thing with computers. You have very basic concepts, and then you just keep on building on top of it. So, right now, that's where we are. We're getting into a level wherein computers will now be using AI, and we will have computers that would be almost like humans. And that's a challenge.

00:05:19 **David**

Quite a difference from 1969.

00:05:21 **Victor**

Yeah, I never imagined that it would be such that we would be at that level. However, I was a science fiction reader. And so, actually that's what kept my mind very open to anything and everything. If you read Robert Heinlein, you would be surprised as to all the concepts that he opened up. And you're just going to be shocked by the conditions that he would write about. And then you say, well, why not? It's just how it happens.

00:05:53 **Victor**

So, when I was working, it was just a case wherein why not? That was more or less what I was doing. I was very open to anything that was asked of me. And I think that is what propelled me to the level where I am at, because I can be challenged with anything and I'll put my mind to it and plainly do it, eventually.

00:06:18 **David**

So, in 1969, you started to learn a little bit about computers. And then what was the switch or how did you end up, I guess, teaching CIS? I mean, you're doing one thing and now you're spark ... clearly you're reading some sci-fi and sparking your imagination and interests. Was there a switch or was there something where you made a turn in your career?

00:06:42 **Victor**

Well, it's a long drawn process. So, as I said, from 1976, we were developing a computer system. At that point in time, it took about two or three years to do something like that implemented. And then the funny thing is, after we implemented, after one or two years, we said, "Oh, this sucks." And we actually canceled the system million dollars down the drain. But it was not for naught because the people involved learned something.

00:07:08 **David**

Like all failures you learn .

00:07:11 **Victor**

Exactly. And that's one of the things I always tell my students, failure is not a hindrance. It's actually a propellant for you to know more about what happened and how to do it better next time.

00:07:23 **Victor**

So, by early 80s, I got a job with another department within the ARCO Petroleum Products Division. This was in product supply, which means we take care of logistics. So, we transfer product from a refinery or any source all the way to the terminal.

00:07:40 **Victor**

And so, my primary job is actually to look and study about this logistical problems. But one of the things that my supervisor and I eventually said, "Hey, there's a new toy called personal computers, and wouldn't it be nice if we have this toy in our office?" And so, of course, we didn't sell that toy to management as a toy, but as a tool, which we know we could use.

00:08:11 **Victor**

Even at that point in time, there were rudimentary type word processing spreadsheets and all of that. And we knew it is going to be useful. The problem is, nobody knows how to do this. So, of course, when you don't know what to do with it, you call the experts. And who do you call? You call IBM, you call Novell .

00:08:32 **Victor**

Obviously being an oil company, we had the resources to do that. And it doesn't matter how much we are going to spend, if we can justify expenditure, then they would go for it. And so, as a consequence, we put in personal computers in all of our desk for our department. And of course, the mainframe IT department said, "We're not going to touch that, that's your problem."

00:08:55 **Victor**

And I said , "Thank you very much because we prefer this problem. We like this problem." And so, eventually we found out that it's not useful to have a personal computer, and then you have to share data, and you have to put it in a floppy disk and exchange it with another floppy disk.

00:09:12 **Victor**

But then after a while, then all the files are disjointed because they're not in sync. So, eventually we are thinking, what do we do with this? And then we start learning, oh, there are servers. So, we implement and put in network and network. We put in a server with a humongous, humongous 80 megabytes of storage.

00:09:35 **Victor**

But that was enough for us to share data within the department. And then, I don't know how we got wind of the fact that you could actually access this data from home. And believe it or not, this was almost 1990. We knew there was this concept called the internet. Well, actually before the internet, there was also the concept called modems.

00:09:59 **Victor**

And so, you could actually put a modem at home, we would put a modem also on the server, and our users could actually access the data after work. And the reason for that is sometimes they need to have the data because they will be called in the middle of the night by a terminal and say, "Hey, where's the product? We need it right now."

00:10:18 **Victor**

So, they have to figure out what's happening. So, we were able to create this kind of system wherein you would dial in, put in your user ID and password. It cuts off in, how would you call it? Connection, because it will have to call the number that you're supposed to be in.

00:10:35 **Victor**

So, it was only about half a year ago that I realized we had second level authentication even at that point in time. What happened is, there's this one particular guy who actually I work with him who we actually entered the company at the same time. He was also a sales merchandiser, but we diverged in our path. But eventually, we met.

00:10:57 **Victor**

He would call me once in a while from home and said, I have a problem. And I said, what's the problem? And he would say, "Talk to my wife." And I'm talking to this woman. And she would explain to me the problem, and then I would give her two or three alternatives and she'll say, "That sounds very good, thank you very much." Click. And this would happen many times.

00:11:22 **Victor**

Eventually, in 1994, I was told that I would be laid off because I became too expensive. They actually replaced me with a cheaper version. But in any case, this guy asked me, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Well, I'm sick and tired of corporate life," because of this thing about the 1980s concept that you're going to reduce workforce in order to get more profits so that you could stuff your pocket with more money. I'm talking about the CEOs and so, so much against that.

00:11:53 **Victor**

But in any case, he said, "What are you going to do?" And I have no idea, but I said, "When I was younger, I thought about teaching." And lo and behold, next day the wife calls and she says, "Hey Victor, I heard you want to teach." And I said, "Yes. Who told you that?" "Andy did." And I said, "Okay." And she said, I'm Anita Millspaugh, I'm the department chair of the Computer Information Systems here at Mt. San Antonio College."

00:12:22 **Victor**

And she said, "Would you like to teach for us?" I said, "What?" I said, "I have no idea about teaching." And she says, "That's fine, we'll take care of that. But what we need is what, you know." I said, "But I'm not prepared." And she says , "Okay, let's make a deal. I'll give you one assignment." I was supposed to be officially laid off on January 30th, 1995 or thereabouts. And then I started teaching here January 16 , two more weeks before I actually left the company.

00:12:54 **Victor**

And so, I started teaching, and I said, after a few weeks, I said, "Huh, this is not bad." But the problem is the pay because it was an adjunct position. And so, long story short, I became a freeway flyer. I started teaching for Rio Hondo, I started teaching for Fullerton College and Mt . SAC.

00:13:16 **Victor**

And I was teaching the same field, computer information systems, and I was creating systems, and I was implementing servers and all of that, for example, for Rio Hondo. And so, along the way, I'm acquiring knowledge just because the work required it. And in a way, I look at my career as one wherein I was given technology and was asked to implement and use it, and trying to find the best use of all of those things.

00:13:47 **Victor**

So, by 1998, an opening came up and I was hired as full-time. And so, at that point in time, I had to take 12 more units about something. And I said, "Hey, how about ... I don't know why I learned about online learning, but I did. And so, when I came back, there's a chemistry professor, her name's Terri Beam . So, more or less we became the Bobbsey Twins of online learning at Mt. SAC

00:14:12 **Victor**

Meaning say, we started creating classes and courses so that professors can start learning about it. So again, I'm supposed to be a professor, but then it's more like we're enthralled by new technology. Since this is new technology, we said, "How could we use it for teaching? Is online learning going to be something that we need to do?" And so, we decided, yes, we could do it, but how do we do it?

00:14:42 **Victor**

So, on our own, Terri and I and a whole slew of other professors, we had to learn on our own and then figure out what's the best possible way to implement it. A lot of people started taking our courses and implementing online courses.

00:14:59 **Victor**

And so, I actually went for it, but then quickly realized that there's so many things still lacking. There's still a lot of technologies that are not available. Not that we knew that they're going to come. But we knew there's something very impersonal about just the concept of podcasting. Like what we're doing now, recording it, editing it, and then presenting it to the students so that they can hear it at home. And I said, that's a lot of work.

00:15:28 **David**

Did Mt. SAC finance the research for this or what?

00:15:31 **Victor**

Yeah.

00:15:31 **David**

So, you had to present this to them and I'm sure that was a sell job. You had to sell them on this idea.

00:15:37 **Victor**

Yeah. Remember I was a sales merchandiser.

00:15:40 **David**

Okay. Yeah.

00:15:40 **Victor**

So, it was always a sales job. As I said, I like toys or tools, I'm sorry. Not toys .

00:15:48 **David**

We'll call them toys. They're toys.

00:15:50 **Victor**

No, no, no. I say that in jest because that's actually what it is. You have to look at things from the fun side rather than a very serious side. Otherwise it's like a chore. It's not fun. It's more like, I'm opening up something for Christmas. Lo and behold, we have online learning.

00:16:08 **Victor**

Yes. Professional development at Mt. SAC has been very proactive, even at that time. And we had people in that place wherein if we utter or say something and I knew I have to put on my sales merchandiser job or hat, they'd buy it because they knew there was something to it.

00:16:28 **Victor**

Now is it practical? And the funny thing was, I was the first one to withdraw from this concept of I have to create a podcast. I mean, that's a lot of work. You know that. It's not simple. You have somebody here at the other booth who is monitoring and everything, but then I had to do this at home.

00:16:50 **Victor**

We actually bought some headphones and microphones and all of that, and we actually distributed to professors, and I've forgotten now the technology that we used . But immediately I said, no, I don't think I like full online courses because I feel at the very end that a professor and a student, it's an actual personal interpersonal, and I don't know what to say.

00:17:15 **Victor**

You need to have a connection. And it's so hard to connect through a monitor, regardless of what you say, there's something to be said that I can look at every pair of eyes in the classroom. And if I can see a glisten in one of those pairs, then I know I'm connecting.

00:17:34 **Victor**

If not, then I'm doing something wrong. But can you do that online? You cannot. Not even a snort. Not even a whimper. You don't hear that because they're normally turned off. And sometimes that's necessary because they're in a home that's very noisy.

00:17:53 **Victor**

So, teaching online is a challenge, but however, there is a need for it. So, eventually, I determined that we can do half and half. A good amount of it could be presented online. A good portion has to be done face-to-face.

00:18:10 **Victor**

And so, through the years I was acquiring concepts and ways of teaching. And towards the end I hear this concept about flipped classroom. The concept there is that you present to the students in the first week, all the chapters that they have to read in order to take care of all the learning objectives that you are supposed to do for that week.

00:18:33 **Victor**

And so, I actually, by the way, way way back in 1996 or 1997, most of my courses already have web presence, meaning to say, my courses actually, if you go online, you'll find it. We'll have all the weekly topics, learning objectives, readings, assignments, quizzes, all of that, even grades.

00:19:02 **Victor**

The worst thing we did was to use the last four digits of social security number. My point is, even as early as that, I was already thinking that if I have online presence, then the student do not need to email me or even talk to me. I will just say it's there. So, if there's something else that you don't have or cannot see, then obviously talk to me.

00:19:26 **Victor**

Through all of these years it was a case wherein technology enabled me to teach better, but then obviously you have to study the technology and its limitations and figure out where and how to use it. You cannot just blanketly take anything and do something about it. You have to go in and withdraw, go in and withdraw.

00:19:49 **Victor**

And this is a concept that you have to be testing and trying and then eventually settle for something. And I think from my perspective, throughout my career, it is a case wherein I have a new toy and I'll play with it and use it and see how it could be proper implementation tool for anything that I do.

00:20:11 **Victor**

Even when I was working for ARCO, I would use a spreadsheet to do what I have to do manually for a week because I looked at the piece of paper that I was creating. I said, "Hey, this is a worksheet." And so, slowly but surely I would be putting in the numbers and putting in formulas eventually to get what I want.

00:20:32 **Victor**

So, I reduced the work that I had to do from five days of manual labor with a calculator, these old calculators. And I would do it in one and a half days. But the reason it takes one and a half days has nothing to do with anything except that it is Professor Victor one finger approach to the keypad.

00:20:56 **Victor**

So, I would type 1, 2, 3, with one finger. So, input was very slow. So, one and a half days was input. And there was one point wherein, I'll press a button and it will calculate everything, but it'll take like 20 minutes. So, I'll have to go out for coffee and come back. Then I push another button to print it. And now at that time, it's a dot matrix. It goes ... and another 20 minutes. So, I have to take another cup of coffee.

00:21:27 **Victor**

Now my problem is I cannot tell my manager that I'm done. I always tell my students, now I have to pretend I'm busy for three and a half days. Okay, they're not paying me more because I'm doing more. I'm actually doing more because I'm still studying technology. How do I make one and a half days, one half day?

00:21:46 **Victor**

I mean, I'm that crazy wherein I'm always trying to figure out what is better and better and better. So, I'm not afraid of any technology. Actually, I welcome it. It's probably my personality that dictates this. Even up to now, you were asking me before we entered , "What do you do now?" I said, "I still keep reading."

00:22:07 **Victor**

And it's such a joy that I'm reading and looking at new technology and thinking how could I implement it? And that's the problem, there's nowhere to implement it because I'm retired.

00:22:18 **David**

Well, I would imagine that anyone who is taking your classes would be interested in technology. And-

00:22:24 **Victor**

Yes.

00:22:24 **David**

Did they get the concepts immediately? You're introducing concepts that they weren't familiar with yet. I imagine initially there might've been like, "Well, what is it ? What are you teaching this ? What is it ?"

00:22:34 **Victor**

In most cases, in a community college students are self-selective. So, for most part, computer information systems is a very specialized thing. It's not like English or History, whatever that you have to take. So, it's an elective to a certain degree.

00:22:49 **Victor**

So yes, most students who come to my class have some idea of what we're going to be teaching, but in some cases, because I was always very forward or very ahead of the curve. So, I'd be teaching Linux an operating system, and students will say, "What is it?"

00:23:06 **Victor**

And then of course, word spreads when they start learning that, Linux, that's in a way, at this point in time, is the great grandfather of Android, which most phones are at this point in time. It's also the operating system that operates almost all the server farms that you can ever think of. And also all the super top 500 supercomputers use Linux.

00:23:28 **Victor**

So, even as far back as in the mid 1990s, I already saw this is going to happen, but not to the extent that it has happened. I thought, I would love dearly to have Linux on my desktop because I hate Windows. Because at that time it was just crappy at that point in time.

00:23:46 **Victor**

So, the whole point is the students that I have already have some idea of what we're teaching or what we're offering, but there will be a few that they wander in as if they were lost. And then they sit down and then all of a sudden they're enthralled by it. And they said, okay, I'll stay.

00:24:02 **Victor**

So, I was teaching also web programming, and at that point in time, late 1990s, early 2000s, the web was coming into the fore. And therefore people are saying, "Hey, how do you create webpages?" Well, I created webpages actually creating HTML tags, literally using Notepad to do that.

00:24:21 **Victor**

So, I go into the very basics. I created courses in Linux. I created courses in web programming. So, maybe in total I would've created 10 or 12 courses in our department. And the last set would be , cloud computing. Because 2008, 2009, we started thinking about virtualization, and virtualization at that point in time was nowhere to be found on the radar for most people.

00:24:47 **Victor**

But I don't know why. Again, I read about it. And one of the things I started thinking is, "Hmm, can we do it here?" Long story short, Computer Information Systems department in the other building next door has 10 classrooms, and all of those computers are virtualized, meaning to say, they turn on the computer and it contacts mama computer, the server farm and says, "Professor, so-and-so is going to be teaching this particular course. So, we're going to turn on this computer and we're going to put all the software that he needs."

00:25:24 **Victor**

So, that set of classrooms is already programmed to do that. At 10 o'clock, somebody comes in and he or she will have software and hardware that she needs. So, one of the things that I heard was because of the pandemic, that system, the virtualization system that we have actually kind of saved Mt. SAC because now all of our workers have to go home.

00:25:49 **Victor**

And so, now they contact that server farm and they would have in their computer whatever they need. And by the way, that server farm was created by a student of mine, I mean a student of CIS , but-

00:26:03 **David**

Hey, be proud.

00:26:05 **Victor**

Yeah. I'm very proud. And his name by the way is Mark Conrad . He's now the lab supervisor in the business division in our lab group.

00:26:14 **Victor**

In any case , I approach him. And at that time, we had what you call Vatia grants. So, I'd get like 20, 30,000 a year to do something about it. And so I said, "How would you like to work on this project?" I said, "Yes." And I said, "You just have to research what this thing is and how we can do it."

00:26:34 **Victor**

So I said, "At the end of one year, I want a working model. If you need a computer, you need something software, just let me know." And I had the money through Vatia. So, by the end of the year, he had a working model. And I said, "That's good. That's nice. It looks promising." So, I said, "How'd you like to work for another year?" And when I say work, I hire him for the most number of hours. And I don't bother him because I trusted him. He was a very mature, responsible person.

00:27:07 **Victor**

So I said, I know he's working on it, I don't have to check on him. And lo and behold, he does deliver because that's what it's all about. You present a set of requirements and deliverables, and if he succeeds, then you say, well done. I don't care how much time you spent on it, I'll pay you this much.

00:27:27 **Victor**

So, in any case , I said, "You have another challenge. I want you to build the biggest server farm or system that you can have. And we'd like to implement it for as many rooms that we can." And I don't know if you have seen the row buildings. How far have you been outside?

00:27:47 **David**

Not much.

00:27:48 **Victor**

Okay. Okay.

00:27:49 **David**

I'm new to this area.

00:27:49 **Victor**

So, okay, so 10 years ago where the new student union building is, there were what you call the row buildings. And those row buildings were World War II vintage . This was a hospital, I don't know if you know that.

00:28:00 **Victor**

But in any case, one of the row building's building 17, the other one's building 18 CIS had classrooms there. And I said, "I want this implemented to as many classrooms as you can get." So, I said, "There's no limit. Sky's the limit. Just give me the number, just give me the number." And I said, "I'd like you to give me this number in so many months." And so, after I did that, I went to the dean and I said, "I'm working on a project." And she says, "I heard."

00:28:29 **David**

Word gets round.

00:28:30 **Victor**

Word gets around. So, I said, "Okay, so you know I need money." And she says , "I know." I said, "Are you prepared?" And she says, "I will try." So, after six or eight months, Mark comes back and he says, "Mr. Zamora," remember this is like 2009, 2010 or thereabouts. He says, "I need $300,000." I said, "Fine. Let me get it ." So, I went to the dean and I said, "I need $300,000." And she says, "I have 260." And I said, "Sold."

00:29:03 **David**

Wow. Hard bargain.

00:29:04 **Victor**

Yeah. It was not even a bargaining deal. So, I go rush to Mark and said, "Okay, you have 260, it's March. So, don't worry about the 14,000. Look at your budget, figure out what you can delay for six months." Because in July we have new what money? New budget. So, I know I'm going to get 40 or more, actually, but I didn't tell him that.

00:29:25 **Victor**

But he said , "Okay, fine Mr. Zamora." And so, a long story short, they implement it and then every year thereafter, because the business division now has reduced cost because they don't need to put in new computers every time.

00:29:41 **Victor**

So, instead of five years, three to five years of personal computing, you only need , mini computers, which are going to cost you less, but then they're going to last you 10 years. So, this is something that I already knew. So, obviously the division would understand this guy i s saving us money. And therefore it's okay to build the server farm. So, eventually the server farm grew to the degree that we now have it.

00:30:09 **David**

Yeah. It's amazing. I mean, you've probably saved millions of dollars to the school because of being ahead of the curve.

00:30:15 **Victor**

It's too bad I'm not the CEO.

00:30:17 **David**

That's right. I thought you didn't like CEOs. So, now we have ChatGPT cutting ahead. Okay, what do you think of this? Especially for students who kind of foaming at the like "Oh, okay, now I can do reports." And is this a good technology? I know it's extremely powerful and useful tool that can be used for good and for bad and for all that. But where do you stand on this technology now? And where's it going?

00:30:46 **Victor**

I like the fact that you mentioned the fact it's a tool.

00:30:49 **David**

It's a toy or a tool? What? It's both.

00:30:51 **Victor**

Underneath my soul, it's a toy. Outside when I'm selling. It's a tool. So, tools are a tool. It's the intent and use that makes it good or evil. So, a hammer on a head of a nail is good. A hammer on a head of a human is bad. That's as simple as I can give it to you.

00:31:14 **Victor**

So, AI, all of this technology that we have, any technology, it could be good or bad. It's the intent and the use. So, as I said, again, what does it provide? It provides easy answers. So, I ask at home, I just ask the question and my toys will answer me. And will give me the data that I need.

00:31:36 **Victor**

Now you're going to say, is this going to be bad for education? Yes and no again, it's the way you use it. So, in the f lip classroom model that I was sort o f t alking about earlier, one of the last things I do for the week is I ask the students to ask a question or two that he or she f eels was not answered by all t heir readings and by all their assignments, by all their quizzes, by all the things that I told them to do on their own for the first week.

00:32:07 **Victor**

I want them to ask that question, any question. And two or three years ago, I decided that's a good deal because what I'm going to do is when they come back to the classroom, I'm going to form groups of threes and fours, and I will have them answer the question of each one. And cooperatively. And three or four heads is better than one.

00:32:30 **Victor**

So, right or wrong, whatever the answers , it is a process wherein they're going to discuss among themselves whether the answer is right or wrong. So, I said, okay, let's flip this thing now with ChatGPT and AI and all of these technologies, why don't I ask the student to ask ChatGPT the answer? And then , I would have them come back to the classroom and say, what is your question? I mean, now the person is standing in front of the class, no computers, no nothing.

00:33:04 **Victor**

And I'll say, okay, what did ChatGPT tell you is the answer? Now I will ask the question, well, do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Defend it. Could you make it better?

00:33:19 **Victor**

So, the concept here is to use the tool to have the student get the answers that probably is correct, but the student has to defend why it's right or wrong. And even if it's right , you have to say why it's right, not because it said so. You have to tell me what is the principle or the concept behind the fact that this answer is right. Okay?

00:33:44 **Victor**

Knowledge is not what ... knowledge base education is based on the concept that in the early years, it's all about what. Then, it's all about how and questioning and all of that. So, we have to use this as a tool so that the students will have a higher level of learning because we are no longer concerned about what, we're now concerned about why and defend it.

00:34:14 **Victor**

It's this complete process of learning. Because the challenge for our students, and this is going to be even for you and for me, even though I'm not teaching, the whole problem is technology's advancing so fast. And so, I can see in your field and in every field that we're going to be changing every five years at least.

00:34:37 **Victor**

And so, I tell my students as far back as 10 years ago, whatever I'm teaching you right now is obsolete. Because by the time you start working, there will be something new. So, what I'm trying to teach you is how to learn not the facts. The facts are in the books. That's why I don't lecture on the books.

00:34:58 **Victor**

Actually in that flipped classroom model, what happens to me is after they do all of this research and answering all of their questions, I would probably lecture only for about 30 minutes summarizing what they have said to me, not something new. It's just like I'm digesting for them what I feel they have told me.

00:35:18 **Victor**

And then saying, I think it's okay. Whatever you told me seems to be right. But I want this process to continue. And therefore, the next thing we do, because we are in computer information systems, is for about one and a half hours they're doing a lab work. They're implementing something, they're programming.

00:35:37 **Victor**

And so, that's another process wherein obviously they're doing something based on what they know. So, the same thing with ChatGPT and all of this. They're going to have more and more capabilities.

00:35:49 **Victor**

Let me paint to you something that we have never thought about. What about paradise?

00:35:54 **David**

I'm pro paradise.

00:35:56 **Victor**

Yeah. Everyone is pro paradise. In a sense, paradise on earth. AI and robotics can do everything. They can produce all the goods based on simple instructions. I want a cake, zap, like that. Just like in Star Trek, have you watch Star Trek when they want food, they just go to this machine and ask for something, out comes the food. Did you see a credit card? Did you see money?

00:36:23 **Victor**

At that point in time, money has almost no essence, no value, because everything can be done. So, what are they doing? Well, exploring new worlds. And having an adventure. Why not? Why couldn't we not be artist ? Because we now have the time. We can sing, we can dance, we can have enjoyment, we could hike. Look at the sunset, watch the stars. There's so many things that we as humans can do and not work.

00:36:55 **Victor**

That's the problem. Our economic system, our systems are built on this concept that you have to work in order to gain something. Well, why not paradise? When we were hunter gatherers, nobody told us to do this. Well, we had to because otherwise we don't eat, we die.

00:37:13 **Victor**

But based on estimates, most hunter gatherers work for two or three hours a day. They hunt every three days. Okay. And by two o'clock in the afternoon, they're sitting around and just chatting.

00:37:27 **Victor**

Now, don't get me wrong, it was hard work at that point in time. But can you imagine that? I know I'm painting a very rosy picture. And we have to change our economic systems. We have to change our political systems. We have to change so many systems. And that is our challenge to do that because we have to throw out the old systems. Because we now have a system that provides.

00:37:51 **Victor**

Obviously this is very rosy, but that is a potential. We need to prepare our students for that potential. I'll be dead. You'll be dead. 40 years from now, 50 years from now, our students are going to be in the forefront of creating this paradise. And it's very hard for us to think that.

00:38:11 **Victor**

But I think it's our obligations as professors, as mentors, especially to give them that rosy picture and anticipate the problems that they're going to encounter. Because there's going to be a lot of resistance. We're built on a dream, the American dream individualistic and all of that. We cannot be that anymore. We have to change our systems.

00:38:33 **Victor**

And it's going to be tough because it's now going to hit the core of who we are, of what we have been for a few centuries. We're a very young republic. We're a very young country compared to a lot of countries around the world, considering China.

00:38:49 **Victor**

So, my point here is this, we have to look at history. We have to look at this span of everything, the development of all these technologies and project a future. And our future is not what we see now. It's going to b e totally c hanged.

00:39:03 **Victor**

Now the problem is a lot of these things have been predicted as early as like 1940s, 1960s. But of course it never happened because we still need a lot of things. But the potential is there, especially with AI. Because at that time there was no such thing, there was no computers that can do all the things that we need.

00:39:23 **Victor**

But this is going to happen. I wish I would live that long to see it. But I know it's going to be a tough slog because as I said, it hits the core. We as Americans, we as Westerners in a way, have a different way of looking at things. And we need to change that. We need more cooperation. We need working together that is more challenging rather than competing. Competing is easy. Working together is harder. That's really the tough part.

00:39:51 **David**

Alright, well you mentioned your adventure. So, I mean, your adventure is continuing. What do you got planned for the next 30 years? I'm sure you're going to have a foot in technology still and-

00:40:01 **Victor**

Well, in a way I never thought I'd say that. I think I'm discovering the artist in me. And sometimes it's kind of tough. I dance Argentine Tango. It's one of those things about what, 14 years ago, my wife was already into Tango and I was a Tango widower.

00:40:19 **Victor**

Every Friday night and Saturday night I don't see her, she's dancing Tango. And I said , okay, I might as well join the crowd. So, I did. Lo and behold I liked it. But I don't have the dedication that she has. But I like the concept.

00:40:34 **Victor**

Dancing Tango is really an art. It requires the two persons, a man and a woman, or a man and a man, a woman. It doesn't matter. At this day and age that's going to happen. There's a concept that dancing Tango is listening to the music, interpreting it the best you can.

00:40:52 **David**

Like computers, right?

00:40:53 **Victor**

Yeah. Yeah. So-

00:40:54 **David**

You got to work together, the parts have to work.

00:40:57 **Victor**

Correct. Programming, there's an instruction for how to create a program. And so, the same thing with dancing Tango, the music has been set. So, now the concept is how do you dance this music with this person? Because you don't only dance with your wife or your partner all the time, it's a social dance.

00:41:19 **Victor**

And so, you have to dance with as many people as you can during the night. And of course, every person presents a different challenge. It's one of those dances that I truly feel that everyone should try. But it's not for everyone. I'm telling you that.

00:41:36 **Victor**

But one of the things, it's always a learning process. Even up to now, after 14 years, I'm still learning. And believe it or not, we encounter a lot of instructors or teachers and each one has something to contribute. And so, I feel the learning process still there.

00:41:56 **Victor**

So, one of the things is because it's based on very classical pieces of music, it's like the 1930s, 1940s golden era. At a certain point in time you know depending on the conductor, what kind of style of dancing you have to do. So, those are the things that you are going to learn ever so slowly, ever so painfully.

00:42:15 **Victor**

But one of the things that I started appreciating the music and so now I kind of dabble in DJing.

00:42:25 **David**

I love it.

00:42:26 **Victor**

Yeah. So, that's just part of what I see in my life. But I don't know what else I would do. It's going to be a total waste for all the things that I know without being able to share it. So, I'm hoping that I would be able to share it even at Mt. SAC in the future in one way or another.

00:42:45 **Victor**

So, hopefully I can interject myself somewhere, share the history, share the pains, share all of this learning process and hopefully , be of use .

00:42:58 **Victor**

And so, I don't know where that would lead. One of the things I learned about life is I just let life lead me. Just like I transitioned from working in an industry and then coming to teach and of course I had no idea about teaching. And obviously you just have to learn. And so, to me, the joy was teaching, but also more joy was in the learning.

00:43:21 **Victor**

And every day I challenge in a way my students, tell me what's right or what's wrong. I don't mind. I have no problems with that.

00:43:30 **Victor**

So, I used to be sage on the stage and I became the guide on the side. I think you have known that concept. So, it's one of my learning process that made me who I am. And it would be a waste that I could not share this in any manner that I can.

00:43:49 **Victor**

So, I'm looking at the schools that I went through in the Philippines and maybe I'd share some of these things, which I did in the past. So, even here, I'd do the same. It's just a matter of when I can do it if they want it. So, it's one of those things. Hopefully I can do it.

00:44:05 **David**

Yeah. We all need to hear your voice and so , thank you so much. Please keep dancing. Promise me you'll do that.

00:44:11 **Victor**

I will. Until I'm even on a wheelchair.

00:44:14 **David**

Alright. Excellent. Well, thank you so much. This was really wonderful. I really, really appreciate it.

00:44:19 **Victor**

Well, thank you very much. Appreciate the time too.

00:44:23 **Tania**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast. And don't forget to share your favorite episodes.