

I met Alan Bundy for the first time as the teacher of a class on automated reasoning at the University of Edinburgh in 1993. His passion for the subject and his patience with the students profoundly impressed me from the first-day. In particular, his teaching motto “If you don’t understand something, then I have to try harder and explain it better.” demonstrated that for him teaching was like an adventure he embarked on together with his students. It was in fact the first time that I as a student felt being taken seriously by a teacher.

Greatly motivated and inspired by his class, I started independent undergraduate research in his group. It was my first research experience and it opened my eyes to how much fun research can be. Alan’s researcher’s bible demystified the doctoral study and research process, and it led me to believe that I one day could in fact earn a Ph.D. too. Encouraged by him, I continued research on automated reasoning in Germany and when I finally decided to pursue graduate school in the U.S.A., Alan was again very supportive.

Today, I earned my Ph.D. and I am a professor in Computer Science myself - it is fair to say that without my Edinburgh experience I would not be where I am today. And when I teach a class or discuss research with a student or colleague, then I always keep in mind Alan’s motto: if they don’t quite understand what I am talking about, then I need to look for better explanations. I may not always succeed, but it is always worth a try.

Brigitte Pientka