



## **Dr. Dave Filipović-Carter**

**Director (Facilitator & Trainer),  
Education-Training Ltd**

**- School of Law**

### **Alumnus Profile**

Dr. Dave Filipović-Carter graduated in 2000 with a PhD in public international law, looking at the concept of statehood, and in particular state failure. Despite acknowledging that “as an undergraduate I actually hated law” he describes attending a lecture after a year as a sabbatical officer as the moment that changed. “I found it fascinating, because international law is so philosophical, whether it exists or not, whether it has any power or not.” Despite this interest, it would prove to be the experience of the PhD, rather than the PhD itself, that would guide his future career in education and training.

After an undergraduate degree in Exeter, an MA in Kent and a year of working, Dave decided to try to get back into academia: “I applied all over the place to see where I could get a decent supervisor and a decent scholarship.” Southampton offered him both. It was mid-way into his PhD that he started to question whether it had been the right decision. He now acknowledges that “fundamentally I’m not cut out to be a researcher.” In addition to these doubts, his supervisor left late into his first year, to take up a position at the LSE. “I didn’t have the skills or the knowledge to get what I needed out of her”, he explains. Crucially for Dave, this experience proved invaluable to his future career: “The large reason why I do the job I do now is because of the experience I had.”

But his time at Southampton is still a happy memory. From his second year onwards he worked as a warden at Glen Eyre. “As well as being financially very important, it was fabulous. There were about forty sub-wardens at Glen Eyre doing PhDs in one form or another. It was just really great having dinner every night with people who are going through the same sort of stuff as you are.” Dave describes it as “a really great support

environment” which encouraged him to continue with his research, despite at times contemplating abandoning it. “The big thing I always take from the whole thing was the fact that I actually survived and completed it”.

After graduating, Dave went to work in Bulgaria. “When I finished I actually had no idea what I was going to do. I’d seen an advert in *The Guardian* for an organisation which supports teaching of social sciences in Eastern Europe.” Run by an American charity, his work involved teaching law to undergraduate students, while at the same time trying to support the reform of teaching at his host university. “I’m fascinated by the educational process more than education.” He recalls that “it was a totally insane thing to be doing, but it was the making of me.”

After a year in Bulgaria he spent three years running training programmes for academics across Central and Eastern Europe, working for the same charity. “When I look back at my career, training and developing people have been one of the themes that run through it”. He then went to work in Serbia, where he met his future wife on a training course. “I spent two more years in Serbia doing volunteer NGO work, and coming back increasingly to the UK to do odd bits of training. Over the course of the two years I built up enough of a network that I could come back and set up the company”. Education-Training Ltd has now been up and running for four years and works closely with universities. “I design and deliver training courses primarily for PhD students, postdocs and supervisors all around Europe.”

For Dave, his time at Southampton was invaluable: “if I hadn’t done the research I couldn’t do what I’m doing now.” His work is varied, and involves travelling around the UK leading training courses, working from home building training programmes, and also teaching for the Open University, where he is also pursuing an MA in online distance education. Running his own company, his eye is constantly on developing new work, and he believes that distant learning will emerge as a “significantly increasing growth area”.

Dave firmly believes a PhD “opens a lot of doors” and “gives you credibility”; “a British university PhD gives you great standing in the world”. He offers the following advice to research students currently studying at Southampton: “steer your research to serve what it is you want to achieve, because it is such a flexible beast and you can shape it. But you need to do that steering”. And of course “enjoy it”.

**Written by:**

Sebastian Buckle

History PhD Candidate

University of Southampton