

### Course Models in Teacher Training

by Mario Rinvoluti, Pilgrims, sponsored by CUP/La Nuova Italia

There are vast numbers of models you could use to plan your training course. In this talk five are presented:

#### 1. From Linguistics to Classroom Practice

This model assumes that linguistics is the main feeder-field for language teaching and that one should proceed from linguistic fact/truth/hypothesis to classroom exercise. An example of a session within this model might look like this:

work on the concepts of coherence and cohesion

a classroom exercise, perhaps done in a second foreign language, like French, in which participants have to piece together a story from the separate slips of paper they are given. The story includes a problem and they have to solve the problem. People may only read their own slips of paper - they may not write.\*

trainees are asked to prepare this sort of exercise for their classes, bearing in mind the students' language level and the concepts of cohesion and coherence.

The problem with this model is that there are plenty of areas in which the linguists are happy to have had their insights and have not bothered to think applications through seriously. If we had more real applied linguists around, this model would be easier for trainers to put into practice.

## 2. The Homo Faber Model

There are a number of trainers who are convinced that making things is a powerful process for getting people to take new ideas on board. Andrew Wright, who runs British Council Nottingham course, has people spend three weeks making things, visual, auditory, written etc. His trainees leave the course staggering under the weight of materials they are taking back to try out with their classes. David Hill of the British Council in Milan also espouses this model. He feels that the artefacts created on this sort of course bring the reality of the participants' teaching situation into the classroom.

## 3. Coursebook-based Training

In this model the trainer accepts that the most useful guide to a young teacher is her coursebook teacher manual. The trainer realises that the voice of the teacher manual is the voice the teacher hears each day over several years has powerful results. The trainer tries to offer ideas that revolve around the coursebook, supplement it, go beyond it, question it, but use it as bedrock.

One great advantage of this model is that once a teacher has taught a book through each page, each picture, each exercise will have a strong feeling of the group she worked with. What the trainer has to offer is thus perceived within the frame of memories of a real group, rather than in a vague abstract way.

## 4. The Creativity Model

My colleagues at Pilgrims, Judy Baker and Peter Grundy, ask people who come on two-week refresher courses to forget completely about their classes and their problems. In the first week Peter and Judy ban all reference to the participants' teaching situation back home. They deluge them with a thrilling mass of new exercises, which they are invited to enjoy as human beings and language learners.

Only in the second week are they allowed to start 'yes, but-ting'. The idea here is to offer participants a new base line, a new vision, a new set of expectations. In some cases the model succeeds brilliantly.

##### 5. In Teacher Sensitisation Model

You could see teacher training as the last step in a very long process of learning how to behave in a classroom. The process starts on the first day a primary school when a person is six. The process continues for roughly 15,000 hours until the person gets his/her maturity. And on through University. A one-hundred-hour TT course is a very small last step in the process. In the face of the above, there are trainers who believe that the only real task of a training course is to sensitise the trainee to her own behaviour, projections, hidden agendas and hidden models. They feel that to work superficially at the level of information transfer and modelling of classroom behaviours will have little or no lasting effect.

Teacher sensitisation is certainly at the core of the work of Bernard Dufeu in the University of Mainz. To get a better idea of his work you could read his article on training work in Issue 2 of The Teacher Trainer, 1986 Pilgrims, Canterbury.

Ephraim Weintraub, who works in Jerusalem, spends the first part of his year-long training course getting the trainees to make the teacher models they carry round inside them clear and explicit. He is as worried about the hero/ine teachers as about the demons. If you over-admire a model from the past and try to fit yourself into this mould you may seriously distort your own potential.

As was pointed out by a colleague in the group at Sorrento, this model requires that the trainer should have minimum therapy skills. Maybe this is the next step in the training of trainers?

\* Here is an example of a problem story:

A man went into a book shop and stole a book he'd written.

The next day the author took the book back to the book shop.

He told the assistant that he really didn't like the book.

He asked for his money back.

The assistant promptly refunded the money.

Meanwhile the shop detective recognised the author he had failed to catch the previous day. He arrested him.

When the author's case came to court, he said he was not guilty for two reasons!

He had written the book, so it was his.

He may have taken the book from the shop, but he did bring it back.

The magistrate said that the author was about 10 per cent right, and so he fined him 10 per cent less than he would normally.

The problem is this: Was the judgement a good one? Why or why not?

### Solution

The magistrate's reason for thinking the author was 10 per cent right was that he reckoned the author owned 10 per cent of the value of the book, his royalty.

But in fact, the author would eventually get this 10 per cent of the price, which he had pocketed from the book store, back from the publisher.

So the magistrate was quite wrong in his judgement.

Some students may disagree with this solution on the grounds that authors have a right to lot more than 10 per cent of the price of their books.

The Author:    Mario Rinvoluceri

I work as a teacher, writer and trainer at Pilgrims, Canterbury, UK. My most recent books are Dictation with Paul Davis, CUP, 1988 and The Q Book, Longman, 1988. My most exciting training work is with teachers of French, Spanish and German in UK. In 1987 I taught language classes for four and a half months of the year and so felt I could honestly continue as a trainer. The book I dream about writing is one of streamlined memory-enhancing exercises for students from rote-learning educational and religious traditions.

## Abstract

The direct addressees of this article are teacher trainers but the issues raised concern all language teachers. I describe the conscious aims of a role-switching teacher training exercise and follow this with an outline of the way the exercise works. This leads to a look at some of the effects the role-switching normally has on people in the trainee group. The core of the article lies in an account of some of the unforeseeable effects role-switching has had with three groups of trainees. Finally the exercise is situated within a human relations-centred view of teacher training and teaching.