

C Bk course Day 3

Dear Folk,

I am writing this to you just before our supper meeting. ( Supper and dinner are both middle and upper class words for the evening meal.....useful for you to be aware of the other words for these meals.

I am still immersed in today, Tuesday. I loved the way we ended the session at 3.30 with a cascade of spontaneous offerings about correctness, language as a river, language seeming to be eroding, and the search for an authority to back our judgments as teachers.

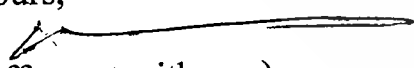
In my landscape work this morning I hoped for mysterious rain and it felt that by this afternoon this rain had fallen on/in our group and that there was a new feeling and spirit in our group. We seemed lighter, in a good, way, more jocular, more friendly and ready to take more risks. I began to feel in full honeymoon period.

( this is the first phase a good group goes through, normally)  
I also have a feeling that, as is natural, the tutorials are gaining in depth. Hurray....for now.... things are hunky-dory. Of course I am aware that group weather can change and not just in England!

I would seriously suggest you have a peek at the Cambridge Grammar of English, written by two outstanding ( not keys!) but corpus linguists Ron Carter and Mike McCarthy. The area they treat most in depth is the whole area of oral English and its rather special grammar, though there is also a good section on academic English and its much simpler structures. I warmly recommend this book to you as it summarises and brings together 15 years' work in scattered articles and books.

I have a sense that there a lot of people in our group who have a lot to teach each other. If you would like to present ways in which you work with the coursebook of which you are proud of, please let me know and we will fix a time for you to lead the group.

Warmly yours,

  
Mario ( off to eat with you)

Ps: I wonder if the you come across the **Lernen durch lehren** movement? It is a radicallly different way of dealing with the C Bk.

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday

Dear back-from-London Folk,

Hope you had a good week-end despite the vagaries of the weather. My Saturday was spent largely with Pilgrims colleagues, some of whom I have known for thirty years (met Cinzia in 1975 and Christine in 1974). Have written three books with Christine. These friendships are part of what makes these Hilltop courses work well, the unity of the faculty group.

Yesterday was Cambridge. Sophie, my wife, needed to see an old friend who is perhaps on the verge of death, while I had lunch with a mate who came down from King's Lynn. He took a train across the flat, flat country of the Fenlands. S and I then went to a party thrown by my first two children's primary school head master. We have known Ken for the past 40 years.

As you can see, I have been taking some nostalgic trips down memory lane.

I hope you have come back refreshed and ready for a week in which we achieve much more than we managed last week. It is OK that you spent some of the week-end re-learning Italian!!!! You will feel linguistically rested. We can do more this week 'cos we to some extent know each other and also because some of you are now nearer to BEING in English. Linguam latinam habeo, sed in lingua illa non SUM. When you speak a living language you can either HAVE it, or you can, to some degree, BE in it. Does this distinction make any sense to you? It is one that I find very helpful.

Do you have slugs in your garden in Italy? With this weather my garden is crawling with them. They eat anything green, even attacking robust, healthy young cabbages. Fortunately they do seem to go for tomato plant leaves.

Warmly yours,

Mario

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

Dear Everybody,

Behind the scenes there has been a lot of activity trying to get you the chance to visit a primary school. My current information is that these visits will take place tomorrow. I will tell you more once I am informed myself.

I wonder what you feel about lesson preparation? And here are a few questions to set you thinking: When do you prepare?

Is your preparation mental, physical, emotional, relational?  
How much of your preparation is actually thinking back to  
previous classes?

Has your way of preparing changed as you have got older?

This morning my preparation came over me as I took my early morning walk. When I got home all I had to do was somehow get the stuff down on paper. As I walked I did not actively prepare.....you guys came into my awareness, sort of floated into my conscious mind, and then ideas and scenarios for today's work jostled around in my head shouting "Use us.... We want to be used!" It was a very odd procedure and I certainly cannot say that I was the captain of these thoughts or that I was on the bridge steering a clear course across the sea of possibilities. They were imposing themselves on me.

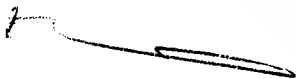
**Please turn to a partner and tell her about the many ways in which you prepare your classes.**

Have you thought about using this "letter to the class" technique for enriching your pupils' Italian vocabulary? Do you realise the power of the letter from the teacher for small children? The teacher is a seriously important second mother and so text from her will have the oomph of the maternal voice. You can use your letter to present new thoughts in any of the subjects you teach. You can use your letter to revise stuff taught earlier. You can use your letter to express your own feelings and reflections. All this in mother tongue.

As I work with you, who all teach primary, I have an aching feeling of what I missed from 1945 to 1953 by not going to primary school. It is as though there is a chapter missing from the book of my life. An odd feeling.

Warmly yours,

Mario



mario@pilgrims.co.uk

Second Monday

Dear <sup>after</sup> post-week-end People,

I hope you have had a relaxing week-end despite the worry over the health of the colleague from next door and the shocking way in which the NHS (National Health Service) has coped or not coped with her. By Saturday night Chaz and Mrs Tsin were tearing their hair out and in Chaz's case this is hard as he is seriously bald!

I also hope that the new time table will fit in better with your body clock rhythms. I have brought in some new cushions to make your siesta a bit more comfortable. I personally have mixed feelings about the change in schedule, though <sup>nap</sup> <sup>spanish</sup> (after lunch) Cynthia and I initiated <sup>begin</sup> it, as I feel that really visiting a foreign country and really penetrating its culture includes the obligation of fitting in with its bodyclock rhythms. When I am in Spain I have to eat in the evening at 10.00 pm even if I am <sup>very hungry</sup> ravenous at 7.00pm. When I am in Korea I need to start enjoying Kimchi (sour cabbage) for breakfast. When I am in East Asia for three weeks there will be 21 days of sticky steamed rice and this is the reality of the place. OK, at night I can lay my head on the pillow and ream of <sup>half-giantic and prodigious</sup> ginormous potatoes (the staple food, with bread, in this archipelago called the British Isles) <sup>main / central basic</sup> <sup>many islands together a group of islands</sup>

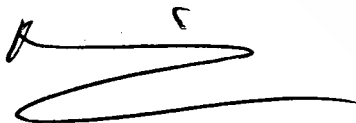
The shape of today will depend partly on <sup>staple diet</sup> exactly what you have been able to do over the week-end with the various teaching techniques books I have lent you. My hope is that part of today will have us looking at and experimenting with techniques from the books that have appealed to you.

I am determined to press ahead with the effort to help you to listen in ways that help you expand your grasp of the primary form of English, the spoken word.

We should be able to do double the work we did last week as now we are beginning to know each other better and you should be fully over the shock to the body that jet-lag is.

Warmly yours,,

Mario



Dear Chen Xudong,

I am very pleased to learn from your letter that you have a firm grasp on the techniques we have done in class. Techniques are important, but even more important is the state of heart and mind behind them.

I would love to hear from you in, say late October, to learn what techniques you have found work well in your classes. Please write [mario@pilgrims.co.uk](mailto:mario@pilgrims.co.uk).

Warmly yours,

A handwritten signature consisting of a stylized, cursive letter 'M' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Dear Mr Ye,

I am thrilled that you will be sharing things you have learnt on this course with your colleagues. It has been my lifework to try to offer bright, intelligent teaching ideas to as many teachers as possible. In your country there are 2 million teachers of English.

I wish you a happy return to your students,

Warmly yours,




Dear Mrs Wei,

Your letter makes clear just how great a teacher's responsibility is. She must teach her subject, in our case English, but in reality she is also teaching herself to the students.

Do you realise how important you are to your students? You are a serious role model, a kind of second mother.

Enjoy the power and satisfaction that teaching brings.

Warmly yours,



Dear Mr Hu,

Your letter makes clear to me just how important the visits to London and Cambridge were. Before you wrote to me I had not realised this.

It is natural for you to want to see the sights and monuments of the culture you are teaching to young Chinese people.

I have really enjoyed your presence in the group and your company.

Warmly yours,

Marie



Dear Mrs Jin,

I think you are right to feel that there are thousands of good, lively exercises and that the important thing is the teacher's attitude, her way of perceiving and interacting with the students.

I hope these short 15 days we have been together are the first step in a much longer and deeper training relationship between us lot in Pilgrims and colleagues in Hubei.

Warmly yours,

Furio

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Friday August 24

Dear Yang Keping,

"Perhaps I may create some new

games to teach English better." This is the


best line in your letter to me. You have got  
the message. Teacher creativity is central.

Student creativity is central. If you

create, your students will create, too.

I will remember your father  
and his vegetable plot for many months  
to come. He is a Dad to be proud of.

Warmly yours,



Dear Tie Hua,

It is impossible to visit everything in Beijing in a couple of days. You cannot see the whole of UK in two week-ends.

Key words in your letter are don't smother motivate and stand back

I hope you meet your 2007-2008 students with renewed vigour and love,

Warmly yours,

