

Dear three-quarters of the way through the course people,

I am well aware that each of us is on his or her own course and that therefore it is goofy to expect my own impressions to be similar to or parallel to other people's. (you remember how different the pictures we each created on listening to the pike story last Friday were?)

For me yesterday passed in a sort of trance and I felt that suddenly , after plenty of storming here and there in the group, there seemed to be a considerable degree of harmony. I felt this in the speaking work in the first period and then again when the 12 of us did that five stage writing exercise. In the first period a physical indicator of harmony seemed to be the type of sound we produced as we spoke in small groups and pairs. Another indicator that we have maybe, as a group, now reached a post-storm level of mutual acceptance is the way that sub-groups have demanded more time for certain activities. In the first period the teachers of adults group made clear they needed more time for the review of Monday's work and it was clear I had to give them this. They were demanding enough independence to work seriously.

(I am well aware that there may be people in the group who do not agree at all with the above analysis- they may still be storming inside or they may never have felt any need to storm. If one feels outside a harmony it can be very aggravating)

Many working groups go through versions of these phases:

- HONEYMOON: best behaviour, trying to be mature and accepting of others, trying not to be too strongly whatever ones nationality is etc.... giving the trainer the benefit of the doubt, forgetting the nagging feeling of " Oh, she speaks English so much better than me"
- STORMING : enough is enough, I need to be myself and express my real feelings- to hell with these "nice" colleagues and the bloody trainer. Cost what may, I must express what I feel.
- NORMING, new working order: after the storm everybody has adjusted their position and it is possible to be much more real with people within a new modus vivendi. So it's fine to tell the trainer when I think he's got it wrong etc.....

The first Monday and Tuesday seemed pretty honeymoony to me. M's first session on Wednesday seemed to have some lightning in the air and thunder sounded when E decided to sit out of the eye-movement work last Wednesday afternoon. She was actually expressing feelings that some others shared. She was brave enough to speak out. There was high voltage around on Friday afternoon when it so happened that Simon lightning conducted it (the "task" level context was work on Silent Way.) In retrospect I suspect I organised the 40 strong story-telling on Friday morning to deny our group "storming space". With the learners there we had to sort of behave. This kind of tactic is very silly, from an animation point of view, as group storming is , in many groups, a perfectly natural and necessary process. Can seem scary to the group leader , though.

Whether my analysis is right or not remains to be seen. We may be in a lull between two storms. We may be in a firm post-storm period. Maybe we have "normed", made up our new implicit rules. If I take the lightness and warmth that I perceived in the faces of B, M and one or two others then it feels to me like a new, improved modus vivendi.

The hand-out accompanying this letter is taken from a book by Bernard Dufeu and was done into English by Marie-Pierre.

Can you please look through the two pages and tick those features in B's parallel lists that are to be found in your teaching. When you have done this individually can you compare your tickings with those of a couple of people near you, please.

Mario.

S (aged 5): 'I don't want to, E !'
E (2): 'But why do you don't, S ?'
S: 'I just do!'