

Dear Everybody,

I got really excited yesterday evening in my thing on culture when I managed to do a good Tessa Woodward loop input. I suggested that there were some cultures which are step-by-step ones and others where it is felt good to be doing two or more things simultaneously.

I asked the group to draw the ground-plan of their flat/house and at the SAME TIME I told them three little stories about how people from step-by-step cultures clash with people from simultaneous cultures. I wonder how the members of our group who were there fared? Which task did you do best? Did you think you were doing one task badly and the other well? Roy Sprenger was told by two of his colleagues that they had not listened well—he tested them and found they had understood and retained everything! Self-perception is sometimes deceptive.

News flash: my son M [redacted] has just rung to say that his wife has just had a child—so from now on I am due great respect as a grandfather!!!! The best language I know of for talking about grand parents is Swedish in which you can be a mormor, a farfar, a farmor and a farfar. I am a farfar to this new brat.

Yippee.

End of news flash.

When you are teaching or running a training course what do you do to maintain your own equilibrium?
One thing I do is to spend half an hour a day with a trusted colleague during which we, in turn, talk to the other about our groups. The rules are that one talks and other listens with only minimum interventions. Time is divided equally. There is a strict rule of confidentiality and it is best if the listener does NOT know the group the speaker is speaking about. In this way the listener has none of her own projections and crap to deal with. She can try and live empathetically (not sympathetically) in the world of the other. I find a neutral, listening ear really very helpful and balancing after a long period spent in a group listening and observing.

I wonder what your points of focus at this point of the course are: they could include:

- Listening to new collocations (language)
- listening for oral grammar (now clearly very different from written grammar (see Mike McCarthy)
- Observing trainer behaviour/ mistakes/ lost opportunities/ excellences--- observing inadequate trainer behaviour is really useful.

- observing your own reactions to exercises and discussions
- observing yourself as an observer
- checking on your own projections onto others
- checking ways in which you and others offend agst the rules of psychological well-formedness eg:

pronoun use (Listen out for E [REDACTED] saying WE !)
mis-use of modals
hanging comparatives (eg: Our nappies are whiter)
nominalisation
shifty passives
adverbs of frequency... and a few more

- going beyond the exercises we do and inventing new ones
- using new tools to cope with now and old problems etc...
- observing your own resistance to some of the ideas and finding out new things from this action..

I could go on but it is time from good Farfars to be abed.

Good night

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Mario.