

Mid-course Friday, ( or , in Portuguese, "sixth day", sexta feira )

Dear Everybody,

I have found the one-to-one sessions very interesting because they seem not to be part of your educational tradition/ past experience. I have come to this tentative conclusion after noticing that each person seems a bit ( Ju ■, can I borrow this useful softener?) thrown at the start of the session. "so here we are... why are we here?" The answer "well, we are here to talk about whatever you want to talk about", rather than clarifying things seems to deepen the fog, if anything.

Ok, Mario, when you confuse the participants you are working with, notice the really interesting feedback they are offering. You might realise, my friend, that your deep model for much learning is the one-on-one ( Us English) situation. In your case you did not go to school until you were 13, so the whole of your primary education was in one-to-ones with either your Mum or your Dad, especially the latter.

All your work during the three short years at Oxford ( 9 terms of 8 weeks each ) was focused around two tutorials a week. You read one literary text and half a dozen works of criticism, hashed together an essay. The tutor read it there and then in the tutorial and would ~~then~~ often shred it for you. It was unkind teaching, but in a way, very strengthening.

For you, Mario, the one teacher, one student model is the central learning situation. But in this group you are dealing with highly socialised people who have almost always learned in a group or entirely on their own. Yes, ok, I am surmising this, hypothesising, I do not know for sure.

What has happened in the tutorial <sup>5</sup> this far?

One person told me about how the course was affecting her and what has been going on in her head for the past few days. The dialogue was intense and moving, at least for me and I guess for her too.

One person engaged me in a serious conversation and wanted to discretely find out a bit more about me. We touched on one or two topics of central concern to her but then did not pursue them.. maybe there was no contract to do that.

One person gave me a brilliant picture of her classroom and her current concerns with those students. She also agreed to be interviewed on how her BA essay writing seems to have put her off writing for good. This interview then to be published in Humanising Language Teaching, the Pilgrims web,zine. It will go in the " trainee voices" section.

In the one-to one situation you determine the direction we go in. The time is yours to use for what you want.

These tutorials can be used to attack me, to work on phonology, to do literature reviews in a particular sub-field, to discuss a general problem, to discuss a technical problem eg. "How can I get Thai speakers to pronounce the ends of words, especially consonant clusters?" etc.....

What you guys have taught me is that the tutorial is a very narrow, culturally specific, way of teaching.

Mario.