

To Alan Pulverniss

Dear Alan,

You may well have despaired of my MATSDA piece. If too late for this issue, then maybe you could hold it over for the next. It is not particularly time-dependent. If it is too late in an eternal sense, let me know!

I also enclose a few lines on my part in the publishing round table,

Mario

biodata: Mario edits **Humanising Language Teaching**, the Pilgrims web'zine for teachers which you will find at < [www. hltnag.co.uk](http://www.hltnag.co.uk) >.

His two books out with ETpDelta in 2002 were **Humanising Your Coursebook** and **Using Mother Tongue**, the latter co-written with Sheelagh Deller.

Mario is a founder member of the Pilgrims teacher network.

### **The intra-personal Intelligence- Did we forget it?**

by Mario Rinvoluceri, Pilgrims.

In this session at the Matsda Leeds Conference in January 2002 my aim was not only to speak about the intra-personal, introspective intelligence in intellectual and technical terms but also to get participants to be with themselves in quiet meditative ways and to fully experience their own inner intelligence.

The session opened with a Schultzian relaxation which I learnt from the work of Bernard Dufeu in *Language Psychodramaturgy* ( see *Teaching Myself*, OUP, 1994)

I asked people to put books and papers down and to sit upright on their chairs, with both feet on the ground and their hands on their thighs. I asked people who were happy to do so to shut their eyes.

The text of the relaxation went like this:

*I notice my breathing but I don't change it*

*My left hand is on my left leg.*

*I notice the contact between my hand and the material covering my leg.*

*I notice the points of contact between my hand and the material.*

*My hand is warm and heavy.....heavy and warm*

*Yes, my hand is heavy and warm, warm and heavy.....*

Is this working on physical awareness as a gateway to Intrapersonal

Intelligence. These are different. This Schultzian exercise should <sup>(modal voice!!!)</sup> not be sollied by anything cognitive (your 80 year plan should include 20 years as a neophyte

in a central Caucasian monastery!!!)

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*I pay attention to the places where my forearm touches my body  
I notice all the points of contact... ..*

*I realize that my whole arm is heavy and warm, warm and heavy, very heavy, very warm....*

*And I notice my breathing and notice any differences from before.....  
Above my body, high above my body, my head is clear and bright, bright and clear....*

The relaxation continues with similar suggestive comments being made about the left foot and leg, then the right hand and arm and, finally the right foot and leg.

Any realistic teacher knows that much more language can be taken on board and retained when a person is relaxed than when they are in a state of tension. Both language acquisition and learning happen more powerfully when body and mind are open and undefensive.

During the relaxation exercise people were aware of those round them but the words they heard led them through their own body, through their own awarenesses of their body, through their own proprioceptive thoughts. There are few more powerful ways of inviting people to enter the area of their own intra-personal intelligence.

### **An Intra-personal Dictation**

I suggested to the participants that there are some language exercises that, like a relaxation activity, can be purely internal without leading to any outward communication. I told them that the dictation I was going to give them would not have them exchanging experiences afterwards. Everything would take place within the bounds of their own thinking and feeling.

Here is the dictation:

*What was the process of my deciding to come to the Matsda Conference in Leeds?*

*What were my feelings on the way here?*

*What were my personal wishes for this conference?*

*What are my self-management techniques as this Conference gets under way?*

*How do I normally feel as we draw to the end of the proceedings?*

*And on the way home?*

*What proves to me, after a conference, that I have benefited from it?*

The participants were then asked to write half a page about their mental process during the dictation. The writing was to be seen by no one but them.

*Intra-personal dictations* are a seriously useful tool as they allow the teacher to raise issues that she does not want openly discussed but that she wants the class to know she is aware of. A secondary teacher at the start of the school year finds she has five students in her class who failed this subject last year and are "repeating" the year. She gives the class a dictation that deals with the possible feelings of both the "repeaters" and the main body of students.

A teacher trainer walks into an FE staff room in UK for a Friday afternoon inset session and senses some ambiguous and or hostile feelings. He gives the group a dictation that acknowledges some of these feelings. Because there is no feedback afterwards, it is possible to give such a dictation even with the "bosses" present.

A teacher is told that she and her class have suddenly been allocated a new room that is less good than the old one. She gives the group an intra-personal dictation that raises some of the issues and some of the possible feelings.

### **Letter to Self**

The third activity I proposed to the group went as follows:

*Please take a clean sheet of paper you can detach from your book.  
At the top write the place, the date, the day of the week and exact time now.*

*Then write "Dear" and your own name.*

*Please write a one page letter to yourself to read tonight at bedtime and don't forget to sign it.*

*No one will see your letter.*

*You can write to yourself about anything, providing it does not bore you when you read it. Please write in English.*

I guess some people in the group felt that this was a fairly loopy request. After a moment's disbelief everybody got into the task and some people seemed deeply absorbed.

I asked people to fold the letters up and put them somewhere where they would remember to read them before going to sleep that night.

Letters to self can have a very powerful effect on people. I have used them at the beginning of a short course to be opened on the last day of the course. I have asked students to write a letter to themselves on the last day of the course, and the letters were then posted to their home addresses. Secondary teachers have got students writing self-letters at the start of the Autumn term to themselves at the end of that term etc....

To write a letter to yourself in the target language is a very strong linguistic-psychological step to take. You are using the target language for intimate contact with yourself over a period of time. This is a very long way from practising a dialogue that rehearses some day buying a loaf of bread in the country where the target language is spoken and other such shallow, make-believe language behaviours.

### **Inner dialogue**

I asked the participants to write a short dialogue in which their left hand speaks to their right hand.

When writing the left hand's part people wrote with their left hand.  
When writing the right hand's part, they wrote with the right hand.

Naturally, most people found that their non-writing hand was pretty slow and clumsy at forming the letters.

At the end of this exercise I asked people to pair off and read their "hand" dialogues to each other. There was a palpable feeling of relief from some people in the room to at last, after nearly an hour wandering around inside themselves, to be invited to talk to another person. There was vigorous voice level in the room.

Clearly, not all the people who had come to this workshop were natural introverts and some of them had felt dammed up and in a way imprisoned in the workshop so far. Others in the group, though, had appreciated the time to themselves, the time to think, the time focused in and not mentally dispersed outwards. How well do the quiet types, the inward-turned types, the laconic people, how do they feel in the language class when they hear for the umpteenth time " *In this next exercise, work with a partner.....*"

### **A call to methodologists**

Howard Gardner, ( *Frames of Mind*, 1986), has done us language teachers a considerable service in high-lighting the need some people have to work in rather than out. He was writing about these needs just as we language teachers had decided that a good language class was one with minimum Teacher Talking Time and maximum Student Talking Time. We were in a mood of "salvation through pair work". The Communicative Approach was fine for the extroverts, for the people who learn best with and through other people. It is, however, not that good for the intrapersonally bright people who need their own space and who find eternally turning to a partner both tiring and upsetting.

I think there is a real need for teachers to pool all the inward-turning exercises they know and to invent some more to cope with the students who learn best looking in rather than out, and I guess there are some of these in every class.

If you have exercises of this sort why not send them to the editor of **Folio**, who could give them print publication? If you prefer an airing on the web then let me have them for **Humanising Language Teaching** < [www.hltmag.co.uk](http://www.hltmag.co.uk)>.

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### Publishing Round Table

#### Mario Rinvoluceri

My main contribution was to suggest that the future of Teacher Resource Books, which have carried so much of the innovative thinking in EFL over the past 30 years, probably lies in Web publication.

With the concentration of all UK EFL publishing into the hands of half a dozen

major houses, less and less attention will be paid to these "small books", which are seen by the big boys as a sad distraction from selling "big books" like dictionaries and coursebook.

The advantages of web publication are as follows :

- The initial capital outlay required is small
- books full of exercises are a better Web bet than books full of continuous prose.
- The cost of putting the books up on the web is tiny compared to printing and distributing traditional books, so T.RB's on the Web can be extremely cheap.
- On the Web TRBs will reach every corner of the globe, which is sadly not the case with printed TRBs at £13 a copy.
- The production process will be down to under a month, compared to well over a year for most printed TRBs.

The Disadvantages of Web publication are these:

- It is hard to persuade EFL colleagues to pay for things on the Web- If you offer EFL ideas free on the Web you may get 20,000 subscribers to your site. If you ask for modest payment, takers from among the 20,000 may be as few as 100-200.
- Many people feel that Web payments are not secure and there are reasons to think they are right.
- Many people, even young folk, are still wedded to the concept of the book as an object of huge cultural and personal worth.

This report has to be brief and there are many more pros and cons to web publication of Teachers' Resource Books.