

Dear Week 2 Folk,

You remember S█'s talk to us about Whitstable last Tuesday. I bumped in to another guy from Whitstable while queuing in my local post office on Saturday. He got talking to me about house prices there and said "I got a mate who's an estate agent- he keeps talking about DFL people, a DFL sale, the DFL problem etc.." He then explained that DFL stands for "down from London". (In UK English London and other majorly important places are "up" while "down" indicates "away from important places. A student goes up to Oxford. London people talk about "down in the countryside". The up train from Canterbury East is the train to London: the down train is the one from London)

It's fine for me to notice language things at the week-end but this happens in class too. I catch myself monitoring how French or English Marie Anne's pronunciation is, especially of words like "France", and "French". I catch myself trying to decipher whether a H█ tune in English derives more from Greenlandic or from Danish. I catch myself wonder how trilled the "r's" produced by G█ and P█ turn out to be.

In Room 7 I am meant to be working on MI and language teaching techniques, not on your language, its felicities, its gaps, its brilliances.

But these thoughts lead me to the whole question of the way a teacher manages her/his observation and the internal filters that give shape to such observation.

It is clearly ^{*}otiose for me to focus my observational attention on your language triumphs and shortfalls. This is not our agenda.

It is clearly valuable for me to monitor how psychologically close to or distant from each member of the group I feel, as these feelings within the group leader get transmitted sub-consciously to the participants. This sort of observation also allows me to take both internal and external corrective action.

Listening to voice and watching body language is a professional must. I must pay attention to the "how" of the words as well as their "what". (you remember the little exercises we did on Monday afternoon around voice?)

On Friday morning I did a scan round the group for colour coordination in clothing. Is this relevant observation? What does it tell me that I can act on? It might be useful if I were a novelist to notice L█'s deep brown+ maroon/purple and to notice Joyce's dark colours and etc.... Was this maybe observation time wrongly spent?

Watching the way people physically write does tell you something about them, I think. Seems relevant to watch.

Enough of my ramblings: how do you focus your observation work in your own classes?

Please turn to a neighbour or two and explain what you do with your attention in your own classes.

Warmly yours,

Mario



* otiose = idle, extra, useless

I feel energised I feel full of life. I realise that conflict is useful + normal. I am not sad at belonging to my side, to my group to my community. I felt the strength of my side and I appreciated their power. Very exhilarating. Very strong very clear.