

Dear post-week-end People,

I hope you had a restful and full time over the past two days doing those things that appeal to you in the context of this weird archipelago to which you have ventured in search of language renewal.

I wonder if you are aware of the quality of language that you use when speaking English inwardly? How rich is the vocabulary of your inner monologue and dialogue? Does your inner talk change in anyway as you switch out of MT and into English. Do you have, maybe, mixed language inner talk? (Hamlet was not mad in speaking to himself and the literary device of dramatic monologue is based on what we do all the time.....I guess, too, the Greek Chorus is a sort of pluralised, we-ified inner voice.)

The "sorting-into-two groups" exercise of last Monday and the Friday "what do we do next week" exercise are both devices for subverting the absolute monarchy of the classroom.

In both cases vital executive decisions were taken by you, and not by Ann and me. On any TT course, where leaders temporarily abdicate their absolute monarchic rights and put themselves below the salt for a brief period, it behoves the TT tutors to notice the breath-taking political nature of the decision by an absolute monarch in going on a "monarchy" course. It is in the light of these thoughts that I look forward to the ~~the~~ Italian-Finnish presentation on Swedish differentiation and autonomy in secondary schools. (I hold the belief that schools will naturally reflect the culture of the wider community)

On my last course (How to teach very advanced students), end of course feedback included the regret that they had not been given a day-by-day outline. Three people would have liked this.)

These three came from a culture where people find uncertainty hard to cope with and where the potential terror the future holds is "tamed" by planning. In this sort of culture the "de-fanging" of the hostile potential of the future allows people to then concentrate on the here and now.

uncertainty

As I teacher I personally welcome the unexpected, the new, the unsettling. I was, in a way, very grateful to M [redacted] and B [redacted] for being willing to express their fiercely and groundedly negative feelings towards Waldorf education as they did last Wednesday afternoon. They raised the emotional temperature for me and for everybody else ~~on~~ the group. It is in this state of emotional involvement and warm-up that unconscious language acquisition actually happens.

I normally try to avoid mapping out the future on a course and want to retain the freedom to react to what comes up in the group. How could I foresee just how deeply involved some of us would get in the Friday am discussion of education for the blind. I will remember M [redacted]'s NO to a suggestion of H [redacted]'s.....no pissing around there, aping UK-ish softening!

←This said, M [redacted], it is worth pointing out that had H [redacted] been an Englishman, unused to German directness, he would have reeled at the bullet-like strength of your utterance and might have wondered how he had offended you. Softening is not merely an odd bit of English eccentricity. It is as much part of English as using the correct first person pronoun is part of speaking Japanese. (There are several, ranging from the

Emperor's "I" to much more humble ones)

However, in my role as Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet I would like to present you with a very tentative "plan" for next week. (Most plans, I feel are nothing more than hubris, and are really hopeful fantasies, based in inadequate present knowledge)

Monday 1st period:

Warm-up

Book exchange

Reports on weird mags

Mario letter

Report on New Scientists.....

2nd period:

S■■■■ on various ways English is enhanced/mangled North of the Border.

Maybe a wee vocab exercise

Tuesday:

1st period

L■■■■ will be your Tuesday guest. She will also do some language work with you.

2nd period

Either: S■■■■ works with you or I do short language exercises with you; + Mario letter.

→ it will be
me,
not Simon

Wednesday: Visit to Beckett Pub - follow-up in Pilgs teaching centre. Meet in Keynes reception area at 8.50 am . Walk down shortcut.

Thursday:

1st Period: Book exchange; Mario letter

Discussion of Swedish school system with special reference to democracy and autonomy.

Teaching remedial English to Dutch adults

2nd period: Guest speakers: A■■■ and Mario in discussion with both groups doing the hoary note-taking exercise.

In last half hour: " My favourite three exercises from this course"

You pair off with the folk from next door and have a techniques feed-across.

Friday: 1st Period

Class system in UK context

A brief look at the Steiner view of four Humours

2nd Period:

Guest speaker: An American in Paris.

45 minutes of a quick presentation of half a dozen useful lower level

teaching techniques.

Friday pm: Sending ourselves home in a sensible transitional state of mind and heart

- Evaluation of course a) for self and to self
- b) to the group + teacher
- c) to the administration

Looks like a proper clear emploi du temps, doesn't it. But who knows what may transpire? There could be a group "storm" on, say, Tuesday and we might ~~we might~~ want to change everything.

This coming week I need to get round to one-to-oneing with the people I have not yet talked to privately.

You see how dangerous a week-end can be? It has the effect of seriously lengthening the teacher-letter-to-the-class!

Warmly yours,

Mario



→ and me to Reykavik, Iceland

HUMANIZING LANGUAGE TEACHING