

End-of-course-ish letter Dec 13th 2001

Dear Everybody Upstairs,

I have really liked this course for a number of reasons.

1. A lot of my work is sprinting- I have to work on NLP in EFL for a six-hour day in X or Y place. Hello.... Goodbye.
In the summer we run fortnight-long, very intensive courses and again it is Hello Goodbye.

With you I have had the chance to work with you each a day over a month. The intense luxury of longer contact..... (Sure... with your classes you have a whole year L'unico che posso dire è : Beati Voi".

2. I have enjoyed this course because, when we have done language work, I have been able to appreciate the considerable depth and breadth of your command of English and have really felt in the company of people on a permanent search for more language. As a language learner myself, I have really enjoyed your linguistic company. I feel that you have worked excellently in the language area, even though you will not be able to properly evaluate what has gone on sub-consciously, until some 3 to 6 weeks have elapsed. Naturally, some of you may have experienced a feeling that your language was going down the spout during the course. This feeling of destabilisation is nasty but can be useful in opening you up to new stuff.

3. There have been moments of "flow" and joy that I have really enjoyed: the discussion some of you had with E..., the bereavement counsellor in Faversham, in my living room (not lounge, not drawing room). I felt there was great energy in some people as we worked on the UK class system last Friday..... I greatly enjoyed and learnt a lot from my one-to-one half hour with M..... I could pick out a lot more good times.

When I think of things that I have learnt from the course there are several:

- A. I feel we should have divided you on the first Monday into two groups: Group X , which would have done a mixture of practical methodology and language. and Group Y which would have focussed solely on language.

Not everybody sees the presentation and doing of new exercises as being
a) useful, b) stimulating c) connected to a well-worked out, routinised reality in classrooms back home.

- B. I feel I would have done deeper, more useful and more productive work had I seen a lot more of one group than the other, had Sheelagh and I divided the mornings in a 3 to 1 ratio, rather than a 2 to 2 ratio. I took me nearly three sessions to learn the upstairs names, which is laughably slow. I wasn't secure with all of them until the second Monday morning. (I worked first with Room 12)

C. I think I have learnt better than I have ever realised before, how strong the beliefs we carry from university are. How both admirable and awful they can be. I have noticed this in some people, not in everybody. The university is hugely psychologically powerful.

This is my last letter to you guys so let me wish you a smooth journey back, smooth as a malt whisky, and also a very Happy New Year.

Warmly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mario', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mario.

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Humanizing Language Teaching