



by Mark Taylor

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# When we could be diving for pearls... Letting go as a trainer – how and when is it possible?

## Puff the tragic dragon Where should we be doing these things?

«Marker» is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in training and hoping to encourage debate, questions and the quest for flow.

### ▶ When we could be diving for pearls... Letting go as a trainer - how and when is it possible?

Working a lot on the key competence «learning to learn» brings up a lot of fairly intense challenges. Very noticeable in the observation of our practice recently has been a growing tendency amongst facilitators and trainers to say «we have to learn to let it go» – by this we mean that we have to integrate into the way we work the fact that it REALLY is the learner who makes the decisions about what and how to learn. At some point it is the learner who decides which direction to take and they must trainer/facilitator has little choice happily and wish the participant [An expression coming from wil-translated as «you're on your own, that...»] This also means getting per trainers» who have to make the «real» conclusions at the end of each session for their participants! We are really at the beginning of realising the many consequences of operationalising a learning to learn philosophy. It is tough as a trainer to know when we reach the limits of accompanying learners on their way; and we need to share much more about our thoughts and experiences here.

“we have to learn to let it go”

then go their own way. The but to accept that development well with a hearty «YO YO MF!» derness medicine and could be my friend» or something like away from being what I call «su-

### ▶ Puff the tragic dragon

Life is just a series of breaks in between cigarettes... (The thought is not original but, sadly, I cannot find a reference to the person who came up with it first). Translated into training practice, this means every time you manage to convince participants to go away and occupy themselves in a working group, the trainer can nip outside and enjoy a cigarette or two in the wind/rain/snow/sun. And when its coffee break time, then it is also time to join the smoking group and meet in the wind/rain/snow/sun. What fun they (seem to) have and what conversations! Some non-smoking people even complain that such smoking groups have more influence over events because they are better networkers. For over two years now I have been a man without a lighter, a man without cigarettes as I don't need them any more. But, you can still find me quite often standing with the smoking group in the wind/rain/snow/sun – or I might miss something!



## Where should we be doing these things?

Deciding on a location for a training course is not always a neutral thing. And sometimes you don't have much choice and this can lead to surprising results. Do you try to find a venue which has a direct connection to the theme of the course? For instance, an old warehouse, renovated by an NGO working with inner city youth would seem to be ideal for bringing people together who work on a programme for exactly that target group. Not for everybody: there was no soap and shampoo in the showers (!) and one person complained of bread crumbs and chewing gum on their mattress... Or how about finding yourself in an organic «bio farm» well outside one of the capital cities when the theme of your course is about European institutions? Some countries have a real shortage of reasonably-priced educational centres, so organisers are forced to look for alternative venues for bringing people together. And this can mean that you find yourself wearing a bracelet which gives you access to all corners of a 5-star hotel including working groups next to the palm trees and the swimming pool, because that's the most economically viable option available! Funny old world, isn't it?



I was wondering what are our «clicks» and «treats» in training for (for instance) European Citizenship? Or in participation do we need clicks and treats to get up the famous ladder?

### ► We are working on the concept

Language colours the way we see the world, gives us the means to describe what we see and experience to others. Translation from one language into another can bring unexpected difficulties and this was brought home to me with great force with this example: I was discussing the difference between «evaluation» and «assessment» with a German language native speaker. An interesting conversation turned white hot for me when he said «actually we don't have a direct translation for 'assessment' in the sense you mean. And you'll see that most languages use a word which looks like 'evaluation' to cover a lot of things». Have a look in the Cedefop glossary referenced below, it is worth it!

### And lastly

Thank you for writing and reminding me that Coyote is now over ten years old. Who would have thought it? Still looking for the Seville oranges. Next time we look more closely into the pataphysics of blue-eyed peas and the search for a pillow-shaped keyboard for late-night writers continues.



### Sounds, words, inspirations



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- The Hundred in the Hands (2010): *Dressed in Dresden & Undressed in Dresden*, Warp Records

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