>>>>>>>> MARKER

Peace in our time? How many is enough in a team?



by Mark E. Taylor

brazavil.training@yahoo.com







Thinking about the No Hate Speech campaign and one of its recent slogans "who are you going to make peace with today?" It's a nice slogan and I wondered whether I should go out immediately and make peace? Then I remembered an experience I had last year, putting into perspective those who have been through more recent conflicts.

Strasbourg is a fine city and I love living here with its great mixture of French and German influences, its European vocation and an increasingly global mix of people. I find it an interesting and lively place. If you need a haircut there on a Monday, you have to search very carefully – most barbers take that day off as their busiest day is Saturday and they need time to recover and sharpen their scissors. Unable to go to Carlo my usual Italian, I found myself in a previously unknown establishment where the owner soon had me identified as "a British" due to my "tout petit accent" as I attempted to talk with him.

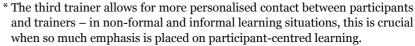
After shampooing my hair with some vigour and rather cold water, he got a towel and started to dry my hair with his knuckles (when you bend your fingers to make a fist, your knuckles are the parts of your fingers which show the most). This was rather painful and after several seconds I cried out for him to stop. He grinned. I asked him why he was doing this. His reply: "That's for the Battle of Agincourt, m'sieu!" I'm still not sure whether he meant it as a joke.

Agincourt was a battle between the French and the English back in the 15th century – 25 October 1415 to be precise. It seems that it might take some time still for peace to break out. Maybe I have to get my haircut on a Monday again soon...

How many is enough in a team?

Evaluating the successful elements of the training course we had just run, one of my colleagues sat back on her chair, breathed a contented sigh and said how happy she was to finally be able to work again in a team of three. Most of the assignments she gets these days are for working alone or, at most, in a team of two – and that with groups of sometimes over 20 participants. Cost-cutting reasons are supposed to explain what is – in my view – a growing sinister tendency.

Instead of detailing the negative effects of working with reduced teams, I asked her what was the added value of having the third trainer (or more)? An excited discussion resulted and we came up with this:



- * The third trainer is the third point of the triangle when considering any issue in the training discussions, observations, arguments and solutions can all be so much richer.
- * The third trainer allows the other two quite simply to breathe occasionally; otherwise you are always either performing or preparing there is no respite.
- * The third trainer might even bring light and joy and challenge to a duo who have already worked together...

This list of points could be read as a plea to course organisers and funders to think again about how many trainers should make up "a team". What would you add?



And finally

Thanks to those who write or give informal feedback. Next time we consider motivation and the "pataphysics of inner readiness".

Sounds, words, inspirations

Brian Eno interview Paul Morley, The Thing Is... Channel 4, 1992 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sJqMkIh_zQ accessed 20 September 2013.

Laxness Haldor (2000, original translation1966), *The fish can sing*, Vintage.

"The Idiot", Iggy Pop

Willingham Bill (2009), Fables Volume One: Legends in Exile, DC Comics.

