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Monsieur Jourdain is the main character in Molière's comedy-ballet « The Middle Class Gentleman/Bourgeois gentilhomme », staged for the first time on 14 October 1670. In the play, M. Jourdain is a rich tradesman who constantly tries to imitate both the lifestyle and behaviour of the aristocracy. Determined to acquire upper class manners, he orders a new suit that better reflects his new status and begins learning to fence, dance, play music and use philosophy, all of which he considers vital to prove he is truly a gentleman.

Being a gentleman is the height of happiness for M. Jourdain and he would sacrifice, in his own words, two fingers to achieve his ambition. In Act 11, scene 1V, Monsieur Jourdain learns to his amazement during an exchange with his philosophy teacher that he has been speaking in prose for many years without realising it:

« By my faith! I have been speaking in prose for more than forty years without knowing it and I am much obliged to you for having taught me that. » Extrapolating from this, Monsieur Jourdain personifies someone who does an activity without even knowing it exists.

SPEAKING IN PROSE WITHOUT BEING AWARE OF IT Meaning: *Be successful in an activity without being aware of the fact, by chance and without planning to be. What does that bring to mind?* Let's look at the text again and adapt it to training: *Mr « super participant » is the main character in « The Gentleman Trainer », a play dealing with non formal education, staged for the first time... (supply the date). In this puckish comedy, M. « super participant » is played by the trainee who tries to imitate the behaviour and lifestyle of the trainers, who represent the aristocrats in this particular society. He too is determined to acquire upper class manners. He too decides to order a new suit that better reflects his new status and throws himself in learning as much as he can about pedagogical tools, methods and techniques, body language, technology and oral communication, all of which he considers to be vital to the much desired status as a trainer. Being a trainer represents the height of happiness for Mr. « super participant » and he too is prepared to sacrifice two fingers to attain such happiness. In Act II, scene IV of this play, Mr J (aka « super participant ») learns to his amazement during an exchange with his trainer that he has been using pedagogy for a long time without realising it: « By my faith! I have been using pedagogy for over ... (choose a number) years without knowing it and I am much obliged to you for having taught me that. »*

USING PEDAGOGY WITHOUT REALISING IT - Meaning: *Be successful in a workshop, a lesson, without knowing it, by chance and without planning to be.* Did you know that in Antiquity, a teacher was a slave who accompanied a child to school and carried his books and who was also responsible for making him recite his lessons and do his homework? Did you know that the term « pedagogy » was first employed in 1495 and that the French Academy (l'Académie française) has approved its use since 1762? So, « super participant », you who dreams of joining the trainer caste, are you prepared to become a slave and to admit that everything actually started a long time ago, long before you arrived on the planet?

For a « super trainee » to become a trainer - or try to do so -, wouldn't he have to come into contact with « super trainers »? What do they look like? How simple it would be if we could just write a description or say that a trainer's role consists in - and write a list.

Wouldn't it be more accurate to say that a super trainer should be aware of - or work on being aware of - where he is, what he's doing, why he's doing it, when he needs to do it, for whom and how? Does he derive his theory from what he does or base what he does on his theory? Is the super trainer the one who has developed a special style?

Is it the person who can find his way through the maze of schools of thought and pedagogical trends? Groupwork (1920), social constructivism (1934) and motivation, objective-based pedagogy (1935): P.P.O., archetypal pedagogy, programmed instruction (Skinner, 1958), documentary pedagogy (1958), explicit pedagogy (1960), PNL, institutional pedagogy (1963), differentiated pedagogy (1963), problem solving pedagogy (1969): P.R.S., mental management pedagogy (1980), spiral pedagogy, cooperative pedagogy...

The list goes on and on...

or does the « super trainer » use this or that pedagogical method without realising it, just as Monsieur Jourdain used prose without knowing it? If that is the case, then we need to stand up and shout:

Wake up trainers! What do you really know?! Where is your theory-based methodology?

Here's a test: Let's look at a project based on a book of 7 folk tales that relate the adventures and antics of Till, a mischievous fictional character from Northern German popular literature who is always getting into hot water.

Let's take one of the stories:

The tale of Till and the Bishop of Nuremberg

or how Till became a ventriloquist

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✘ [2] On his return from Florence, Till was pleased with all the tricks he had learnt and decided that from now on he would earn his living as a fairground tumbler.

He travelled from town to town with his new companions, who were all gypsies.

One evening, as he was passing a caravan, he spied an old gypsy, who was trying to light a candle to light his home.

Till knocked on the door. Tap! Tap! « Come in! », cried the old man.

« Can I be of help? » asked Till. The old man replied that he was indeed in need of a helping hand.

And so Till became the old man's friend. And, as one keeps no secrets from one's friends, the old man shared his wonderful secret with Till. He owned a magic automaton, a machine that was capable of moving and speaking alone. Till's new friend had invented a wonderful toy and, thanks to his talent as a ventriloquist, he was able to lend his voice to the machine. He was happy to teach his new and mischievous friend how to do it too.

One sad day, the old man died. Before he passed away, he asked Till to look after both his creation and his parrot.

A short time after, while Till was performing with his wonderful new automaton in the town of Nuremberg, a portly bishop, accompanied by his personal bodyguards, stopped in front of Till's stand.

✘ [3] Addressing himself to the machine, he asked what the future held for him.

The machine came to life, creaked and rumbled, before finally answering.

« Very soon, and without avarice, you will be made Archbishop and then Pope, but not without loosening the purse strings ». The automaton stretched out its hand towards the bishop, who placed a gold coin in it. He then asked Till how much his automaton was worth.

Till was surprised by the question, but immediately saw an opportunity to make his fortune and asked for 500 gold coins.

The bishop burst out laughing and told him that if he wanted to, he could use other methods to get what he wanted. With that, his bodyguards moved forward menacingly.

Till realised he was in trouble but decided to fight for his rights.

Here's what he said to the bishop:

« My Lord, I will accept whatever you decide the machine is worth, but allow me to give you some

advice.

 [4]

This machine can bring you glory and fortune, but there are two conditions that must be respected, namely to tell it all your secrets and to swear to never open it! »

With that, he promised the bishop that the machine would be delivered very quickly.

In the meantime, Till taught his parrot to listen and remember everything he heard and to repeat it verbatim when he heard the keyword « steed ».

Then he placed the parrot inside the machine with enough food and water to survive for some time

Once the machine had been delivered, the delighted bishop immediately wanted to show it off to all his friends. Till reminded him that first he had to tell it all his secrets to ensure that the machine became accustomed to its new owner.

And so, for 3 days and 3 nights, the bishop told the machine all his secrets: what he really thought of both his friends and enemies, without forgetting anything or anyone.

Then, proud as punch, he invited everyone he knew to come and see his new toy. Till was able to slip into the room.

The bishop walked up to the machine and ordered it to answer his questions – but nothing happened, the automaton remained silent! He began again – but still nothing!

The crowd was beginning to titter, when Till, from the back of the room, shouted « Steed »!

The machine immediately came to life and began talking, talking, talking ... and one by one the guests began to change colour as they listened to all the insulting things the bishop had said about them.

The bishop, covered in shame, threw himself on the machine, opened it up and the parrot escaped. Till had got his revenge as all the guests were leaving and cursing the bishop as they went on their way.

And when the bishop came looking for Till to kill him, our hero was already far away, looking for new adventures.

What do we see straightaway? The obvious answer is a text and some drawings. Let's be more precise: a printed text, old style typography and graphics. Anything else? The text relates a folk tale that happened in the past and the 4 illustrations are all in different styles. What does that tell us?

- That a framework had to be created
- That a hero was defined along with the other characters
- A story was then written
- Illustrations were made
- The layout of the page had to be decided on
- The story was edited and printed

- Different people contributed to the final result (as indicated by the different graphic styles)...

So, who were they, how many people were involved and how was it done?

80 children aged between 10 and 14 and 8 adults, including two professional graphic artists, using a specific graphic technique (pencil and eraser), and story writing workshops using 3 different techniques (card games, role-playing and a dedicated computer software package), computer aided publication and printing.

Which pedagogical method do you think was used?

- Objective based pedagogy
- Institutional pedagogy
- Pedagogy based on the rationalisation of the educational act
- Active pedagogy
- Experimental trial and error pedagogy
- Non directive pedagogy
- Project pedagogy
- Any other pedagogical style you think suitable...

And the answer is: a bit of Freinet, a dash of Piaget, Freud, Rogers, Illich, a soupçon of Montessori, Dewey, Kilpatrick, Neill, Steiner-Waldorf.... and now try and identify who goes with the styles cited above and find what country they come from! The ultimate molecular cuisine for the classroom!

Objectives were set, both general and operational, by both the educational team and the children; the pedagogical act was approved and refined by all those involved; there were individual and group moments of discovery and a lot of experimentation that was sometimes directed but not always; and it all took place in an institutional framework that made it possible to provide the actors involved with the « keys » to their own learning process!

There were moments when no one knew which method was being used but it really didn't matter as everyone knew what he or she had to do and what was expected of him or her within this invented micro society!

Starting from the position that the predominant preoccupation of mankind when confronting his environment is to survive and not to learn, it follows that when survival is guaranteed, mankind can begin to look for other satisfaction linked to the need to be accepted and respected, to be shown in a positive light and to develop freely and enjoy liberty.

Learning and training are means to reach these ends and every type of situation can contribute to learning as soon as the appropriate means and pedagogical methods are put into place. So whenever you are finding it difficult to identify exactly which method you are using, remember Monsieur Jourdain!

Having said that, a compass is always useful to ensure you arrive at your destination and knowing your point of departure facilitates the process greatly!

So, dear trainers, I can but encourage you to define your objectives carefully, based on a needs analysis, then choose your pedagogical method or methods, adapt it or them to your target group as needs be along with the techniques used, know thyself as the saying goes... and you'll be surprised at how much easier your job is!

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