



III. Teaching options

There seem to be five basic options for the teacher:

- Solo teaching
- Teaching with an assistant
- Co-teaching
- Multiple teaching
- One-to-one teaching

Solo teaching

This is good if the teacher is a good teacher, bad if the teacher is a bad teacher. It is good for the coherent exercise of distress-free, charismatic authority that can develop a workshop or series of classes creatively and dynamically. It gives scope for a person really to take charge of the unfolding dynamic of a workshop and to think awarably and consistently about what is going on and what needs to happen next. It can make for high intensity and spontaneity of growth-promoting happenings. It also provides a single secure and stable point of reference for beginners during their early anxieties.

Its disadvantage is if the teacher is distressed, shut-down, and unable to think awarably about what is going on. It provides no teacher-oriented feedback from another on what is going on, no second awareness for cross-checking about omissions, things not noticed. It offers only one model or exemplar. It can elicit heavy projections, both positive and negative and both together. It can degenerate into charismatic inflation creating too much dependency and subtle intimidation.

Teaching with an assistant

The assistant teacher is in a subordinate role. The assistant can do emergency counselling with someone in the circle when the teacher is working with someone in the middle of the group; can take the second sub-group when the class divides into two for any purpose; can introduce and demonstrate some of the simpler techniques; can be the client in teacher demonstrations; can give helpful feedback to the teacher on her teaching and on what seems to be going on in the group and with individuals; can counsel the teacher on the latter's class-triggered distress; can be a second exemplar to the class of an experienced client and counsellor; can counsel teacher and class member together when there is a heavy one-way or two-way projection; can contribute ideas about omissions and what needs to happen next; and so on.

There is a great deal to be gained from all this, especially where there is good affinity and rapport between teacher and assistant and they have co-counselled beforehand on any lurking

restimulation in the arrangement. It is also a good form of apprenticeship for would-be teachers.

Co-teaching

There are two teachers of equal status co-operating in running the class or workshop. They can divide all the main pieces of teaching between them on some prearranged basis, but with enough leeway for each to be flexible, creative and improvisatory as the developing situation requires.

If there is a very large group, much of the teaching can be done in parallel in two subgroups, one teacher with each, following a similar schedule so that everyone is covering the same ground at roughly the same time. Some things will still be done in or from the large group, with the teachers taking turns at this.

At its best this can be an inspiring example of parity, mutual awareness, complementarity, shared and alternating creativity. At its worst it can degenerate into massive one-way or two-way restimulation and resentment, with consequent deficits for the group.

Multiple teaching

There are three or four teachers of equal status, who function the same as in co-teaching, only multiplied. This method brings out strongly the anti-hierarchical, peer principle in co-counselling.

Like co-teaching only more so, it runs the risk of confusing beginners if there is any obvious cognitive dissonance between what the different teachers say and do. Where there is strong coherence among their various words and deeds, then this approach has the great merit of clearly separating off the method from any cult of personality, of idiosyncratic charisma.

One-to-one teaching

The teacher teaches just one person in a series of sessions. This makes teaching totally peer since anyone in a co-counselling community can do this. It needs to be encouraged and practised much more than is currently the case. But I would always recommend that someone who learns this way rounds it out by subsequently attending a fundamentals class or workshop, or an ongoing group, or an advanced workshop.
