

A very long time ago in the Teacher Trainer we had a spoof page. I loved it. It was iconoclastic and poked fun at our terminology and habits and more excessive theories. Unfortunately the world of ELT Teacher Training seems to have got more serious these days and it is very rare that someone sends me a humorous article to edit! But here from the funny old days is one ..... from Chris Sion.

## Zen and the art of classroom management

by *Chris Sion*

Having devised 'English for Special Purposes' programmes on subjects as diverse as hospital administration and sandpaper I was scarcely surprised when I was approached to set up a special course for Zen Masters.

Planning the first day's activities came in a flash of inspiration. The students would need to learn Roman letters – the first activity would be to "Re-write the alphabet".

This would be followed by a group dynamics exercise in which the class would be told to "Agree on an object and then describe the differences". The day would close with a memory training session. "Tell your partner a joke you can't remember".

Having got off to a good start, my next task would be to bring the course to a satisfactory conclusion.

To warm the group up, the second (and final) day would begin with something physical: "List and then move all the parts of the body in the correct order". This would be followed by something to tax the intellect: "Do the Rubik cube backwards".

The course would finish with an activity involving the whole person, a humanistic exercise in personal growth: "Role-play yourself".

A deep gong sounded at 9 o'clock as I opened the door and entered the room. Four hundred meditating Masters were sitting round the table, close but not touching, quiet and unshuffled.

I looked at the group apprehensively and uttered the one Japanese word I know in a gesture to put them at their ease. "Sayonara!" I proclaimed loudly, "Sayonara!"

The four hundred faces simultaneously lit up with the deep glow of recognition and insight. They knew I understood! I was one of them!

"Goodbye!" they chorused, "Goodbye!" and as mysteriously as they had arrived they silently departed, leaving me alone with my lesson.