

Introduction

Today I taught only one student, but felt as drained as if I'd been standing for the entire day in front of a group of 6. Admittedly I've got a stinking cold, but nevertheless I'd felt (just) well enough this morning to make my way to London. I know the sort of things that this job can throw at me, so I had to be prepared to expect anything. This time it was a barrister.

Getting to Know the Student

I know that if Iain, my student, reads this article he will be laughing at the above. He did warn me that he was not going to be a 'run of the mill' student and he was right! Fortunately he was also a very nice human being - this being a high compliment from me. We found early on that we had several things in common, including writing - although he has had reference works published, whilst I've only ever managed a few letters and a couple of articles to magazines. (Mind you, I haven't yet sent many of the things I've written to anyone in a position to publish them, so I'm not really surprised.)

During the Day

When we first met, Iain reeled off a long list of features of the word processing package which he thought would be of use to him. He said he wanted to cover these in the one day. I'd been told that he was a fast learner, but even so, I felt he was being a bit ambitious.

When told this, he opted instead to work through the various pull-down menus, asking me about any topic that caught his eye. In this way we managed to cover a lot during our time together, but not, as he had originally hoped, virtually everything the product had to offer. (Given the speed of his mental processes I can understand why he'd thought as he had.) By mid afternoon, he realized there is more to it than can be covered in a single day.

Learning

Although Iain picked things up extremely quickly, I have no way of knowing from just one day together, if he is one of the folk who can also forget things just as quickly if they are not practised soon afterwards.

Over the years I have discovered that there are 2 extremes in learning. This is one end of the scale. The other is students who learn very slowly, but very thoroughly. These people usually remember everything they've covered. (My

husband Nigel is one of these.) Most people fall somewhere between the two or are a combination of both. One thing is certain though, if people enjoy the learning experience, they learn better and more thoroughly than if it has been traumatic.

Conclusion

Before we parted company my barrister friend surprised me by asking how his learning speed compared to other students. Considering his obvious ability I was able to reassure him that he wasn't slow in learning! It was the vast scope of the package and number of things for which it could be used which had caused him to need extra tuition.

When he'd gone I staggered back to the station and home again to nurse my cold. Pass the tissues please.