**The Silent Majority……..**

**The Situation:** You have just been hired to provide training to the staff of Middle Class Middle School in Averagetown, USA. Averagetown’s population has changed over the past two years. Many Hispanic families have moved into the area and the school district’s population is now 45% Hispanic. You have been given the directive to provide a workshop to the staff on the benefits of cultural diversity, the issues that arise with language differences, and brainstorm ideas on how to better serve the Hispanic community in the schools. Your goal is to get the staff to create opportunities to get Hispanic parents more involved in school community.

You accepted this assignment with enthusiasm, seeing it as an opportunity to do some real good for society. Your one-day program includes some lecture material providing factual background on the issue, and excellent video that tackles some of the more delicate issues head-on, some discussion opportunities, a discrimination simulation exercise and an opportunity for role playing appropriate behaviors. You are 75 minutes into the first session of the day with the staff of 45 teachers, office personnel and administrators. Every open-ended question you have posed to the group has been met with absolute silence. There are no outward signs of hostility, and you are not sure whether the silence indicates disinterest, prejudice against the Hispanic community, exhaustion because of the long hours everyone is putting in, or smoldering resentment because the new contract changed health care benefits that forced many people to change doctors.

**Assignment 1:** In your group, discuss the above case study. Think of ways to get your reluctant participants to open up. Could you rephrase the questions to get the conversational ball rolling? What other strategies could you use to get the group to participate? Your primary goal is to get the group to participate in the session. Your secondary goal would be to get any peripheral problems to the surface so that they could be dealt with enabling you to get back to your primary goal of getting the group to participate in the training. Try to come up with at least three actions you could take as a trainer to accomplish that goal.

**Assignment 2:** After you have developed some strategies for getting your participants to talk out, select a volunteer to play the role of the trainer. Try to illustrate some ways a trainer could draw out a group of reluctant participants.