

What is Language Coaching?

Language coaching is a conversation-based process with a purpose to map and create optimal language acquisition or language usage-related goals. Framework is based on strategies utilizing intrinsic motivation and developing learning awareness, where both parties (coach and client) are equal partners. It is important that clients claim ownership of their own development.

Source: Gabriella Kovács ACC

Language coaching is an applied methodology incorporating coaching fundamentals into the language learning context. The role of a language coach is to support and empower the learner on their self-led learning journey. LC focuses on the learners' communication outcomes and learning processes in their professional and personal environments, instead of working with pre-defined lesson objectives.

The objective of every coaching session is to assist the learner in self reflection and critical evaluation of their language usage as well as to assist them in defining and using the tools they need to progress in their target language.

The LC approach means using certain elements and the basic framework of LC to support the language teaching or training process.

Outcomes of Applied Language Coaching

Language coaching will impact on learners' perception of themselves and their strategies as language learners, where communication is in an increasingly VUCA world.

The metacognitive awareness will grow from merely 'How should I be learning?' to acceptance and internal belief that development can and will come through reflection and individually paced transformation, which will lead to stronger commitment to plans made during a language coaching process.

Seeing abstract notions such as learning, success, failure, and development concretised will increase motivation, build confidence and lead to specific actions - action which organisations need to see their employees are initiating. So taking on an active, rather than a passive role is key.

Corporate Impact of Language Coaching

Working as members of various international organisations, clients need to have negative beliefs reframed and stress reduced, which is often created in typical business situations in the target language where stakes are high (meetings, negotiations, presentations, etc.). This is critical, monetisable. Ultimately, through working with a language coach, communication delivered by language learners will be more credible, personalised and efficient - which is what companies are looking for.

After clients go through a transformation their colleagues, superiors, team leaders, managers trust them more: give them more space and opportunity with their work and instead of feeling inferior they come

into a stronger partnership with their bosses and colleagues. They feel the increase in the responsibility that is given to them because their communication in the target language is more confident, straightforward and clear. The ROI of LC can be calculated in the minutes not frittered away by double-checking, delegating, avoiding speaking up and withholding team projects, miscommunicating key messages in the workplace.

Language Coaching Clarified

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For language professionals authenticity, wellbeing and efficiency are linked together and by adopting a coaching lens, the perception of teaching will be much more filtered through the idea of how independent a language learner/user has become, rather than the traditional notion of how much they have learned.

Instead of *How much more energy and time should I invest for my learners to reach their goals?*, you will be asking: *How far should I step back to give them time and space to think and reach their goals?* Being the you that is totally individual and wonderful as a language professional – don't let yourself get weighed down by limitations that needn't be there in the first place. Enjoy freedom in your classes and let your learners set themselves free also.

The process of LC is about the ability to adapt to the moment, connecting with learners at a deeper level with trust, compassion and a drive to collaborate on learner-led issues.

For Language Professionals

We are all aware of the fact that the environment/context language teaching and training is embedded in has dramatically changed over the past 20 years. As language professionals we have experienced this more often than we would like to admit – and it hits us hard in the language classroom, training room; when our learners seem bored, phased out during lessons, do not connect or resonate with what we are bringing to the class (regardless of the type of material, written texts, audio, video etc.). They have far less stamina to work through a course, motivation rates plummet to all time lows and there is little we can do with a traditionally teacherly, trainer-like approach to involve them and drive them towards their language learning goals.

Often learners have unrealistic goals they wish to reach – either because, let's say, there is a short time span, or they do not believe in themselves enough to accept they can actually develop much faster so may find themselves dealing with two ends of the spectrum. On the other hand, learners may actually procrastinate because they have not actually set any specific goals other than „I want to be better in this and that language”. On the other hand, they may be perfectionists with exceptionally high expectations from themselves and their teachers and neither can ever live up to standards set so high.

Communication in the target language may need restructuring, finding balances in areas traditional

language teaching does not address. This is most commonly noticeable with clients needing to communicate above B1 levels at the workplace, in international situations, thus reaching so-called plateaus.

We are indeed at the cusp of a transformational approach building on a framework brilliantly respectful of the learner – welcome to the world of language coaching, one that embraces this new area of language learning methodology *in all its forms and approaches*.

LC increases your awareness of how to approach certain situations in the classroom, training room... Deepening your knowledge and experience will make you be more competent in arriving to forward-looking decisions. Unlock potential to learner awareness and help your learners create a positive transition from feeling stuck to finding ways to reach their goals. Add focus to the structure of your lessons in a different way to accommodate for learner needs at a deeper level. Ask, instead of saying. Listen instead of handing out input.