

A transition to Language Coach



Interview with Daphne Klimmek, Language Teacher, Germany

“My biggest takeaway was that building a bridge between neuroscience and the principles of coaching practice, can make language learning more effective, enjoyable and motivating for all those involved”

Can you describe your professional career before taking the language coaching certification (LCC)?

My professional life began when I graduated from Manchester University with, what was then viewed as a revolutionary ‘Bachelor in Nursing’ 40 years ago! After moving to Germany, I immediately became an extremely motivated language learner, which enabled me to find employment. As a clinical specialist, I saw how the nature of the relationship between nurse and patient could affect prognoses and long-term outcomes. As a language learner, I discovered the importance of motivation and the need to overcome intrinsic fear of speaking another language, while life-long-learning, personal and social development have always been key passions which stood me in good stead when I worked as community development volunteer for 5 years in crisis ridden Indonesia in the late 1990s. After returning to Germany, it was clear that I wanted to continue working with people, so I took the plunge and dived into

the world of language teaching, initially completing the CELTA and acquiring a Masters in Education (Applied Linguistics). For the last 12 years, I have observed myself and my learners on shared journeys of language-learning-and-teaching; every course and workshop I have attended, giving me a new insight and perspective on this dynamic process. More recently, I found myself thinking about the roles of teachers, trainers and coaches and so completed an ICF accredited training programme for a Certificate in Professional Coaching Practise. The next logical step was to discover how coaching and language training overlap, which led me to the ELC website, the LCC and a new learning adventure!

How did you find the course?

The course resonated with me on many levels, given my professional and personal experience. New insights acquired during the course were complemented by the feeling of “yes – that is what I have always thought but never articulated!”. The programme was action-packed and included a lot of information, so I was grateful that I already knew something about coaching processes and already had experience as a language teacher.

“I am beginning to see how actively applying coaching techniques helps to motivate and give autonomy to the learner”

Which highlights or insights did you gain from the LCC?

My biggest takeaway was that building a bridge between neuroscience and the principles of coaching practice, can make language learning more effective, enjoyable and motivating for all those involved. In fact, there are many parallels to the nurse-patient relationship I mentioned earlier. Rachel’s demonstrations helped the penny drop in an exciting and helpful manner, and finally blew away any reservations I may have had.

What was the immediate impact on your way of teaching after taking the course?

It is perhaps too soon to say, but I am beginning to see how actively applying coaching techniques helps to motivate and give autonomy to the learner. Although, I have always been aware of the importance of creating a ‘safe space’ for leaning and have already been offering needs-oriented individualised language training, I am more focused and excited about finding the learner’s ‘pain’ and working together on a plan of action.

Were there any impacts on your personal life during or after the course?

It has been liberating to have my instinctive and personal style to language teaching endorsed. At an age when many of my peers talk about retiring, I have the confidence to start marketing myself and my new business.

“I am looking forward to officially calling myself a language coach, learning more about the neuroscience of learning and how coaching provides a positive and impactful learning experience for clients”

How would you describe your professional development after the course?

I would say it is too soon to say. I am looking forward to officially calling myself a language coach, learning more about the neuroscience of learning and how coaching provides a positive and impactful learning experience for clients.

How has the course changed the way you deliver a language course?

The client is the complete focus of my attention. Instead of collaborating with a patient to create a care plan, (as I did with patients all those years ago), I will always be considering the coachee’s desired outcome; working in partnership to identify the plan of action and providing the scaffolding (to quote Vygotsky) required.

Is there any additional comment you would like to add?

Although there are no background reading requirements for the course, I was very grateful for all the recommended materials, books and links Rachel provided.

May 2020



Language[®]
Coaching
Certification
