

A transition to Language Coach

Interview with Gareth Jones, English teacher, United Kingdom



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

I worked in the Finance industry for 5-6 years before qualifying as a TEFL teacher in 2005. After just one year teaching following the methodology I'd been taught, I realized that that way of teaching wasn't very effective, particularly for lower levels. Inspired by how I'd learned the key components of Spanish using the Michel Thomas Method, I looked at how I could apply those principles to teaching English. Over the course of the following years, I developed a way of teaching which broke the language down into small, manageable chunks which, when delivered simply and clearly in a logical order, enabled students and clients to learn much more effectively and much more quickly. However, I felt that the system I was using was better suited to lower-level learners and I wanted to find a way to take those who

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How did you find the course?

I found the course fascinating. From the coaching style of questioning to allow clients to get the own insights into the language to increased knowledge about how the brain worked, I was captivated for three days straight.

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Which highlights or insights did you gain from the LCC?

How to manage conversations to allow clients to have "a-ha" moments. Knowledge about how the brain works. The power of motivation, and how to help increase that motivation in those who feel "forced" to learn English. Being extremely aware of the language I used as a coach.

"I found I was guiding clients towards discovering the answer rather than explaining it to them directly"

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

With clients with an intermediate + level, I noticed I was guiding them towards discovering the answer rather than explaining it to them directly. Sometimes it was – and still is – difficult to break ingrained habits and I occasionally find myself teaching rather than coaching. But the more I get used to it, the less that happens.

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

I'm able to help my girlfriend a little better with her work-related problems. Previously, I didn't know what "advice" to give her as I didn't understand her job, industry, company, etc. But now if she needs, I simply ask her questions which can (hopefully) guide her towards finding a solution.

"Now, I 'm able to market myself as a Neurolanguage Coach, differentiating myself from teachers"

How has your professional development after the course?

As each day goes by I feel more like a coach rather than a teacher. I feel more and more confident talking about topics related to neuroscience although I could read more around this area. While I always believed – and my students always told me – that I was a very good teacher, it wasn't easy to transmit this to potential clients and sell myself accordingly. Now, I 'm able to market myself as a Neurolanguage Coach, differentiating myself from teachers and allowing me to charge more appropriate fees for my services.

"Setting the goals together motivates the client more and starts the course off on a positive note"

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

While I always carried out a thorough Needs Analysis, I designed the course with the information I obtained. Now both the client and I agree what the objectives will be, how we'll work towards them, and when we'll carry out an evaluation. A document confirming the

goals makes it clear to both coach and coachee what we're going to work on and how, and the coachee knows why we've set these goals. I believe this motivates the client more and starts the course off on a positive note. In terms of imparting the language, instead of "teaching" it how I used to, I start by finding out what the client knows and doesn't know, allowing him or her to become aware of any language gap, which I then attempt to fill through coaching questions and getting the client to have their own insights. I've found this to be very effective. Regular evaluations on specific and measureable goals also allows the client to see their progress and the coach to find out how the client is finding the sessions.

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How would you describe the impact you are now having as a language coach on your learners?

Integrating coaching techniques into my way of imparting the language has added another string to my bow and has made me a more complete language "trainer". I feel I'm now able to help higher-level learners more effectively. While I always felt course planning was a strength of mine, involving the client in the process and providing them with documentation related to the Goals and Actions has made the course setup and structure clearer and more professional.

Is there any additional information that you would like to add?

Just that I feel more confident with more belief in the services I'm able to offer.

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