

Coaching for English learning

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Abstract

There is a question every English teacher should think about. Does the current English teaching system or the patterns meet the requirements of the vibrant, dynamic era that we are living in? The present era demands that a person should think in a creative, innovative, and independent way and has excellent interpersonal and communicative skills.

Teachers of English often make great efforts to focus students on the target language so that they have all the tools they need to use the language effectively in their lives. English teachers spend hours preparing lessons, finding creative ways of introducing different aspects of the language through new materials, and so on.

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Introduction

Coaching has recently become a buzzword used by English language teachers or trainers on their websites. Indeed, many freelance teachers or trainers now refer to themselves as 'coaches' Given the prospects of the AI being employed widely in teaching and training in the future, coaching for language learning is a good option. Coaching for English learning does not involve direct teaching, but rather facilitates learning processes and skill development. (LSRW, listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Main part

In the way to achieve language acquisition, coaching is divided into two aspects: coaching for a learning process and coaching for language skills (Cho,2018).

English teacher and trainer Shanthi Streat, who the latest British Council teacher award, argues that teachers need to use coaching techniques and shares her views on the topic:

"This has led me to wonder if teachers should spend time coaching their students to become 'autonomous' and take charge of their learning. Admittedly this is challenging in most classroom environments where the opportunity for individual attention is limited. But I've come to believe that coaching should form a vital part of any one-to-one language course".

Before mostly as a learner I needed someone to help me organize and shape my English learning process. I just did not know how and where to start and what to pay the greatest attention to. And I could see that many of my peers felt the same way, too. In my experience, our teachers at school could not find it possible to work one-on-one with certain learners.

But, now I can say, in both the learning process and skills development, learners need someone more knowledgeable and experienced to guide them on the way to language acquisition.

During the course, I got to learn how to organize specific skill development exercises, be it reading or writing. The topic of teaching principles was full of insights. The principles, if followed, provide a good roadmap for language teaching.

In the chapter on coaching for facilitating the English learning process, we learned how to conduct a coaching session based on the GROW model. The acronym GROW, which stands for goal, reality, options, and will, will come with four stages with various session questions for each of them. Task-based lesson based on the TTC model contains three stages: coaching, training, and teaching.

Each stage of the GROW model has the basic question as follows:

G – What do you want?

R – Where are you now?

O – What could you do?

W – What will you do?

The two most important skills for a coach are the ability to ask good questions and the ability to listen effectively.

It is not advised to ask closed questions that call for a yes or no answer (such as "Did that cause a problem?"). Instead, ask open ones, like "What effect did that have?" Be prepared with a list of questions for each stage of the GROW process.

Use active listening skills and let your "client" do most of the talking. Remember that silence provides valuable thinking time: you don't always have to fill the silence with the next question.

Sir John Whitmore, who first published GROW in his book *Coaching for Performance* 1992, Sir John makes it clear that the key to GROW is to spend sufficient time exploring "G" and then move flexibly through the sequence according to your intuition, including revisiting the goal if needed.

Because it is simple and focused on actions and outcomes, GROW model is universally popular and is recognized as the most widespread coaching model in the world.

Reading is an inseparable part of life in and outside school. Most of us receive and retain the biggest chunk of our daily information by reading. So, making reading a priority and a lifelong activity for learners is important. There are the principles and strategies to achieve this that we discussed in the course.

When learners have a purpose in reading an English text, they better understand and engage in the given text. And also, the relevance of the material is of big Importance. There are ten strategies that teachers can apply to their specific reading techniques.

In the category of silent reading, there are extensive and intensive reading techniques. I would highly recommend and teach extensive reading techniques by choosing good material with engaging content and reading it without overanalyzing it. Finding reading material that is relevant, motivating, and interesting for students is of crucial importance.

It is important to find authentic material suitable for the level of learners. Nuttall (1996) gave three criteria for choosing reading texts for students: Suitability of the content, exploitability, and readability.

In assigning a reading task, dividing the activity into the stages of pre-, while and post-reading types makes the task easier and clearer.

Actually, it is difficult to assess the level of students' understanding of the given material, but there are some types of open responses from the students' side that show how well they understood the material. Some of them are: answering questions about the text, transferring that is a student gives an oral summary of the reading material, condensing, extending, conversing, and so on.

By supporting children to read in their leisure time at every age, parents can help to ensure that children are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in later life. (Tefera Tadesse, Michigan State University)

In the class on coaching for teaching writing, I came across and learned very good techniques and strategies for myself both as a learner and a potential teacher in the future. There are some patterns and techniques that good writers use, some of which are focusing on the main idea, planning, brainstorming, revision, and so on. In writing process is as important as the final product, so choosing and following the right process is vital for well-organized, clear writing.

Writing is a whole process through which students should be led. And the stages of the process should lead to a clear, well-organized, articulate piece of writing.

Teachers should encourage learners to read and observe authentic English materials, as reading helps a lot to improve their writing.

Phases of a writing process are important as they help to polish and filter the final product, be it an essay, a composition, etc. They are pre-writing, the first draft, commenting, the second draft, the third draft, post-writing, and evaluation.

Brainstorming, which is done in the first stage, lets students produce as many ideas as possible.

While students are writing, teachers are expected to act as guides and facilitators, and when the final work is handed in, they should be a judge and an evaluator.

The thing that I did not think about before is that writing is not a solitary activity, but rather it is

learned and done quite effectively with other learners.

Being a recent graduate from my university in Uzbekistan and a current student in TESOL, I can still remember how I felt and thought about English learning and teaching in my early years of studying. So, my own experience helps me to deal with my potential learners in the classroom.

Writing, like speaking, involves deep brain activity and feels a lot more difficult than the other language skills. Especially, in standardized test systems, like IELTS or TOEFL or any others, the writing part is the most challenging one. I know a lot of guys who scored high marks in listening and reading, but lower scores in writing.

The best way to improve my writing for me was to practice with simpler topics and with short sentences. Then, gradually learners can increase the content complexity and length of the work.

As a teacher, I would encourage my students to write as much as possible and use a variety of language structures and styles. As the input should happen first, reading extensively is the thing I recommend to learners. Practice is crucial to competency in writing.

On top of that, with the knowledge and understanding that I acquired in the TESOL course, I think I will be able to plan and carry out a good lesson. Although it does not happen with a big start, gradually by employing the techniques and strategies I will polish my teaching style and establish a good relationship with students. Actually, learning how to teach is an ongoing process, I am going to focus both on myself and my students and make the right conclusions.

The areas I think I will need to improve are quite many. As coaching requires a lot of knowledge and experience, it takes quite a lot of time and practice to be a coach. In fact, teaching learners tangible bits and pieces of a language is rather easy than directing them through the right learning process. That asks for deep knowledge and observation from the side of a coach.

And one of the challenges I will face is finding the balance in terms of time while working with my students. As the classroom time is limited and there is usually planned content to cover, it will be a bit difficult to deal with unexpected situations or cater to the specific needs of some learners. The next issue is showing myself as a facilitator and a coach, not an all-knowing, dominant teacher. However, in my experience, I have seen that some students take the teacher for granted and do not behave properly if given a bit more freedom and choices. So, being able to know how to assess the classroom situation and conduct a productive and well-organized lesson is the result of practice and deep observation.

Conclusion

It is worthwhile to put effort into coaching for teacher development in schools, but in order to do it properly, coaching participants and school administrators must pay close attention to every little aspect of the practice and goal. By doing this, they can open up new possibilities for the exchange of ideas and improve awareness of the function of professional knowledge in teachers' daily practices. One could think of coaching as assisted self-work.

When it comes to their profession and how it affects students, teachers who receive effective coaching are encouraged to be more thoughtful, expressive, exploratory, and metacognitive.

To have the greatest impact, coaching requires support and enough funding, and school leaders must establish a strategy that is suitable for both the needs of the school community and the needs of the individual.

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