

Neurolanguage Coaching® Process



Compilation of Rachel's articles
2012-2020

"Neurolanguage Coaching® is the efficient and fast transfer of language knowledge and skills from the Language Coach to the Language Coachee with sustainable effects facilitated by brain based coaching, coaching principles and neuroscience"

®Rachel Paling, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

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In 2008 I founded the company Efficient Language Coaching and in 2012 I crystallised the approach and method Neurolanguage Coaching. These articles are testimonials of parts of my journey, recording and writing about the development and process of Neurolanguage, bringing insights into what the process is about and my observations along the way. I have created this compilation to bring these articles together so that the reader can witness the journey through these past years.



5 GOOD REASONS CLEVER COMPANIES ARE COTTONING ON TO LANGUAGE EXCELLENCE

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Clever companies are starting to cotton on! The global phenomena is not going away!

The world is continuously getting smaller and businesses are increasingly breaking out beyond borders; even the smallest of provincial companies now understand the importance of speaking languages. But it does not stop there: LANGUAGES mean much, much more than that. Language Excellence signifies embracing cultural differences, diversity and inclusion par excellence and a deeper, more meaningful degree of communication and comprehension among employees and management.

And the truth is that global companies start to realize the need for their employees to be linguistically equipped and understand that having linguistically efficient staff will also have a positive impact on their business, improving world image, possibly even cinching more deals and definitely ensuring client service standards so that client loyalty increases. About 18 months ago, I had a shocking experience when I called an airline HQ in Europe and speaking in English asked to speak to my contact partner. Can you believe that the telephonist retorted to me in Italian saying “non parlo inglese, deve parlare in italiano.....” – I was absolutely shocked! Luckily, I DO speak Italian and then asked to speak to him in Italian. I could not help think what a bad image that brought to this international Airline!

But clever companies now know that there are 5 essential benefits stemming from Language Excellence :

1. REAFFIRMS GLOBAL PRESENCE AND POTENTIALLY INCREASES BUSINESS

Global presence signifies multi-lingual knowledge and companies that recognize and encourage language skills and provide the right language training to hone language skills greatly benefit from the knock-on effect of expansion and increasing worldwide business. Companies now are understanding the importance of the right approach to language learning: language should be coached beyond language into cultural comprehension and impacting communication. From neuroscience, companies now understand that each brain is unique; each brain is different and pushing people into large learning groups and paying “dumping prices” are no longer acceptably efficient ways of language training. In addition, global HR now recognize that linguistically competent employees should reflect and consider the best suited language services for their company and not process driven administrative staff who have no clue about learning languages and no experience of speaking languages themselves! Ultimately, companies just drain money away on ineffective learning. Clever companies appreciate that they are accustomed to paying thousands for business consultants and therefore are prepared to pay higher prices for “language consultants”, “language trouble shooters” and “language coaches”. Brain-friendly neurolanguage coaching® (trademark in the name of RM Paling) is often used as an approach that embraces how the brain potentially learns best; how the learning can be extremely focused and how language goes beyond simply understanding words, but into that deeper comprehension of cultural and communicative aspects that ensure doing business worldwide with certainty and greater sensitivity.

2. IMPROVES CORPORATE IMAGE

Companies that demonstrate daily through their executives and staff a rich variety of spoken languages constantly prove themselves as international players, who can PLAY anywhere worldwide and can consistently prove to their clients that “the client matters”. We all know how it feels when we are in a foreign country with a problem and suddenly someone speaks our language! That cultural sensitivity and respect is something that makes some companies stand out from others and makes them one cut above the rest

3. DEMONSTRATES SUPERIOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CULTURE

Companies that also demonstrate Linguistic Excellence through diversity and a strong inclusion culture foster respect for all nationalities, as well as recognition and appreciation for diverse customs, beliefs and cultural behaviours. Certain companies lay great emphasis on their internationality and embrace the positive aspects of this dimension to actually promote the company, brand and products to the maximum. And the more global that we all become, the more we, the clients, “like” this depth of comprehension and ultimately compassion.

4. INCREASES COMPANY CREATIVITY THROUGH VARIED CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Some companies have embraced their diversity and internationality by recognizing the cultural skills of the different nationalities. For example, Italian flair and design with German engineering and technology. Clever companies know how to tap into the particular skills that each culture excels in and take this one step beyond by combining and implementing those strengths to create excellent products, processes and services. Frequent cross-cultural brainstorming takes place to ensure creativity flow and innovation, so that global players stay one step ahead at all times.

5. PROMOTES CLOSER STAFF APPRECIATION AND RESPECT

Ultimately, companies that foster diversity, internationality and inclusion culture understand that executives and employees from different cultures need to understand and appreciate each other. These companies frequently invest in team building which focuses on cultural discovery and implementation of policies that reflect respect and promote team strengths. Translanguaging becomes habit among the employees and hearing and speaking many languages are just daily business. Multi-language conversations are encouraged. These companies also understand the neuroscience of culture and how social and emotional pain can affect employee relations and they are aware that constant imparting of knowledge regarding the brain and how the brain reacts is an absolute “must” to enable and facilitate better relations and deeper appreciation at all times to ensure greater cooperation and generate greater compassion among all. And compassion in the sense of going beyond empathy: the neuroscience of compassion demonstrates how the brain goes beyond empathy, which is when our mirror neurons and vagus nerve “react” to others’ feelings or behaviours. Compassion goes beyond “reacting”; it means we sense and we “act” to actually help others and extend our hand to pull each other out into solutions and actions.

More and more of the global players and even those companies who now wish to, little by little become international and potentially springboard into global, follow the above consistently, ever reflecting their Language Excellence!

If you are a company in need of a Language Excellence Policy, contact me and I will be happy to carry out a “Language, Culture and Communication Diagnostics”.

Rachel Marie Paling – Creator of Neurolanguage Coaching – the new approach to promote Corporate Language Excellence.

7 THINGS THAT NEUROLANGUAGE COACHES DO THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

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1. A Neurolanguage Coach is certified and accredited by a training course that is accredited by the International Coach Federation, and knows how to connect the coaching ethics and standards, competences, models, goal and action setting as well as coaching models to the language learning process
2. In addition, a Neurolanguage Coach delivers constant brain-friendly coaching conversations, through their own awareness of how the “fight or flight” state may be triggered when learning a language. In addition, an NL Coach also recognizes social and emotional pain and xenoglossophobia, the fear and anxiety of speaking foreign languages and can expertly coach learners around those triggers.
3. A Neurolanguage Coach is constantly bringing awareness about the brain into the learning process; neuroplasticity; neurogenesis; the thinking and performing brain; how the brain learns through association; different learning styles; the learning journey; the learning plateau; spaced-out learning; the limbic system; emotional and social pain and never loses his/her own curiosity to learn more and more about the brain and bring this “brain-based” information to the learner whenever possible.
4. A Neurolanguage Coach is always fully conscious of the cost-effectiveness of the process and manages the process and is accountable and at the same time gets the learner to take ownership and responsibility for the learning, so that there is a constant connection to results and goal achievement and a constant review of progress.
5. A Neurolanguage Coach knows how to coach languages without books and knows how to deliver expert brain friendly coaching conversations around any grammatical area, transforming grammar into extremely interesting, live, interactive, real and personal conversations, which constantly lead the learner to “aha” moments.
6. A Neurolanguage Coach understands the importance of connecting native to target language wherever possible and “disconnecting” wherever there are false friends, assisting the learner to create bridges to enhance memory retention and create new neural networks whenever totally new information is being learnt. The NL Coach constantly provokes those associations and bridges and knows that in fact researchers have shown that it helps the brain if it can reuse characteristics of our mother tongue when learning a new language.
7. A Neurolanguage Coach knows how to help a learner connect with inner motivation so much and keeps the learner motivated throughout the learning process, encouraging the learner to really become an independent learner and tap into his/her own learning resources to assist the learner to achieve a potentially faster and effective learning process.

HOW DID NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING® DEVELOP?

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Over the last fifteen years there has been a definite trend towards “language coaching” and Neurolanguage coaching actually goes one step beyond this with the introduction of the principles of neuroscience pervading the learning process.

So what is Neurolanguage Coaching? It is in fact an approach that introduces the following into the language learning process:

- life coaching and the principles and tools from coaching that can be incorporated from life coaching
- this encompasses the ethics and competencies of being a coach of the International Coaching Federation
- principles from neuroscience and in particular how the brain learns; neuroplasticity and neurogenesis; the impacts that a teacher/educator can have on the learner’s limbic system and how to coach our learners whenever their limbic systems are under a threat response
- how the brain learns through association and how to provoke connections from native to target language
- comprehending the thinking brain and the performing brain and the brain’s learning journey
- a clear goal and action setting process where the goals are coming from the learner and not from the teacher
- a definite structure to the language learning process, based on a step by step build up of language
- a clear goal review process to enable a subjective measurement of progress and success
- the ability to deliver any grammar topic through coaching conversations that allow the learner to learn grammar in a brain-friendly and non-threatening (to limbic system) manner.

Nearly 200 language teachers worldwide have taken the Neurolanguage coaching course to become a and accredited Neurolanguage Coach (ICF CCE accreditation). Some of their testimonies talk of a life changing experience. <http://www.languagecoachingcertification.com/language-coaching/testimonials>

The impact on language learners is evident. Most lose the fear to speak and often forget that they are speaking in another language, as they are in a relaxed and trustworthy learning environment. They connect more quickly to the target language as the coach is constantly guiding those connections. They are much more focused on their goals as they take more ownership and responsibility for goals that they personally have set and learners have much more awareness as to how they learn, as we know from the neuroscience that no two brains are the same and we assist our learner to understand more about how the brain learns.

HOW NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING® WAS BORN?

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When I first arrived in Germany in Autumn 2003, I arrived to work with a language school to do “language coaching”. It was the first time I had heard about language coaching and when I asked what it was, the owner said “follow the client, adapt yourself and see what he needs” and that was it. No, other explanation! Well, this raised questions in my mind, as you can imagine!

At the same time as I was offered the job in Germany, I was also offered a visiting lecturer position at the University of Verona Law Faculty teaching Legal English. So you can imagine, split between Germany and Italy for a span of 7 years and split between teaching adults in one to one or small groups in business and legal English through “language coaching” and teaching university students in masses. The questions in me continued and I decided in those years to additionally take on my own extra personal development in coaching. I learnt to be a coach through Results Coaching System, Dr David Rock’s method of brain-based coaching and little by little it became clear to me that “language coaching” indeed has to be more than just “following the client”!

Little by little the crystalization of the Neurolanguage Coaching® approach and method developed and with it the Certification as such, available for language teachers worldwide. The whole method and approach is about embracing the principles, models and tools as well as the ethics and competences from the coaching world, together with the structure and management of coaching engagements. But the added dimension to the Neurolanguage Coaching® approach is the neuroscience of learning that we, as Neurolanguage Coaches, have learnt and are able to transmit to our coachees, who are our learners. And the beauty of this approach is that it is a framework that can adapt to any language, not only English.

With this new Neurolanguage Coaching certification we are now approaching our 700th Neurolanguage Coach in the world and as such wish to distinguish ourselves for our language expertise, our coaching training and our title as neuroeducators.

These accredited and certified neurolanguage coaches are the first in the world. They are language teachers with teaching qualifications or with 2 years or more proven teaching experience, that have undertaken coaching training and in addition training regarding the latest neuroscience of learning and how this applies to the language learning process. They are trained to become “par excellence” transferors of language knowledge to their coachee, with the understanding that all brains are different and no two brains are the same. They have developed empathy and presence as a coach and transmit the language learning in such a way as to engage the “performing brain” and move the learner away from the “thinking brain”. They are the new “neuroeducators” of language, who know exactly how to apply the neuroscientific findings of today into the learning process. They have a definite structure for the coaching engagement which is adjusted, adapted and tailor-made to the coachee, allowing the coachee to take ownership and commit to the process.



As the Neurolanguage Coaching® process is much more efficient than the traditional way of conveying languages, the process itself costs less than the language teaching of normal language schools. This is because the NLC process actually means that the learner potentially learns faster; learns in a spiral progressive manner and also becomes aware him/herself exactly how he/she learns the language better, thus shortening the learning process and actually hardwiring the learning so that it is more sustainable.

CELEBRATING OVER 200 NEUROLANGUAGE COACHES® WORLDWIDE

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I am absolutely thrilled to say that we have just overtaken the 200 mark and in fact 202 language teachers worldwide have taken or are currently taking the ELC Language Coaching Certification course. I'm extremely grateful to all of these people for their desire to be different and to stand out in the language teaching world as certified and accredited Neurolanguage coaches.

Having worked with language teachers worldwide over the last four years, I can really sense that most are now really looking for a different way to approach the language learning process. Most of these teachers intuitively are understanding that learning a language can in fact trigger the fight or flight response in a learner and if this is the case the learning process will not be efficient or effective. To me, this is the absolute key to not only learning languages, but to everything we do in life. When we really understand the reasons for our survival mechanism to kick in at any time, whether simply introducing ourselves to a new group of people or the fear of flying, we can then understand our own reactions, rationalise them and most importantly learn how to deal with them.

The traditional methods of teaching and learning languages are also now curious how “coaching” is in fact penetrating the traditional delivery and more and more teachers are talking about coaching techniques coming into the learning process. Neurolanguage Coaches actually goes one step further, because we not only introduce the principles of coaching, we also introduce the principles of neuroscience, fully understanding in very simple terms how the brain reacts, functions and learns. One of the most incredible things to remember is that every single brain is different, so we, as coaches, have to be extremely sensitive to the fact that every person potentially learns and reacts in different ways. The ability to increase our empathy, coach our learner spontaneously at any time for any issues that arise and to constantly be the facilitator, soundboard and “provocateur” of language connections are all potentially the core acquired skills of the 200 Neurolanguage coaches worldwide.

I regularly have touch base conversations with my Neurolanguage coaches and I am always thrilled to hear how much they are impacting and really helping their learners. Only yesterday one of them was telling me how she had totally transformed a group of three and their attitude towards grammar. She explained that a normal session of one hour actually ran on for 2 ½ hours without any of them realising it and with all three participants engaged and happily interacting in their brain friendly dialogue relating to certain grammar topics. That is one of the secrets of this approach, to really get the learner so engaged, so motivated and so committed that in fact they totally forget they are speaking the target language as they are so focused on the subject of the conversation.



Another coach, last week, was also telling me that she tried the technique and the approach with a 12-year-old and she was absolutely amazed at how this little girl positively reacted and responded to her and how much both of them really enjoyed their session. So, this approach is not only for adults but also can be used with fantastic transformations regarding how children learn languages.

I am honoured and delighted to have worked with over 200 language teachers worldwide and I do know that together our desire is to bring more language learning into the world through an extremely brain friendly coaching approach and systematic method. We all recognise the need for more and more people to be interacting in different languages, as the world and business becomes increasingly globalised. In addition, we all recognise the absolute necessity for children to learn more languages and to normalise language learning from a brain perspective, so that we have bilingual and trilingual children worldwide.

I welcome all language teachers who are interested in creating and making this difference to contact me and join this growing network of like-minded intuitive Neurolanguage Coaches and in addition, language schools who wish to introduce this new approach to be able to offer not only the standard normal teaching approach, but a new approach which is tailor-made to the client, specialised and extremely focused.

NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING® FOR BUSINESS – HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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MORE CLARITY IN THE MARKET

Nowadays when it comes to language training in companies, there appears to be great confusion. Companies receive offers from all levels of teaching, training, coaching and it is difficult for them to distinguish what is being offered and what is the quality and effectiveness of the offer. Most companies due to cost-cutting programs are accepting the cheapest offers without realizing that in fact the cheapest may in fact be the most expensive in the long run, due to the inefficiency in the learning process.

Language teaching ranges from teachers with no qualifications; people with language teaching qualifications and teachers with specialized qualifications like ESP or business orientated specializations.

In addition, nowadays there are language coaches, who may or may not have a coaching qualification and may or may not have a teaching qualification and may or may not have years of experience as a language teacher. The question is whether a company is actually checking the experience, quality and qualifications of the teaching offer.

NEUROLANGUAGE COACHES

And now, over the last two years, there are accredited and certified neurolanguage coaches. The first in the world. These are language teachers with qualifications or with 2-5 years or more proven teaching experience, that have undertaken coaching training and in addition training regarding the latest neuroscience of learning and how this applies to the language learning process. These are trained to become “par excellence” transferors of language knowledge to their coachee, with the understanding that all brains are different and no two brains are the same. They have developed empathy and presence as a coach and transmit the language learning in such a way as to engage the “performing brain” and move the learner away from the “thinking brain”. They are the new “neuroeducators” of language, who know exactly how to apply the neuroscientific findings of today into the learning process. They have a definite structure for the coaching engagement which is adjusted, adapted and tailor-made to the coachee, slowing the coachee to take ownership and commit to the process.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

As the Neurolanguage Coaching process is potentially much more efficient than the traditional way of conveying languages, the process itself could end up costing less than the cheapest of offers. This is because the NLC process actually means that the learner learns faster, learns in a spiral progressive manner and also becomes aware him/herself exactly how he/she learns the language better, thus potentially shortening the learning process and actually hardwiring the learning so that it is more sustainable.

CLARITY BETWEEN COACHING, LANGUAGE COACHING AND NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING®

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In the autumn of 2018, the IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference took place in IASI, Romania; the perfect opportunity for teachers, trainers, coaches and educators to convene, share information and network. This year, for the first time, the organising committee came up with the brilliant idea of a “Coaching Strand”, consisting of panel discussions, fly on the wall coaching, and individual coaching and networking opportunities, all under the umbrella term coaching. I was delighted to take part in one of the panel discussions, as well as Demonstrate a coaching situation relating to language issues and also to offer individual coaching. It was a fantastic experience.

For me, what this coaching strand has really highlighted is the current confusion in the language market relating to coaching and language coaching and it was wonderful to bring this into discussion with other types of “coaches”.

COACHING

So, what is coaching? Originally, in the 1800s, a coach was a tutor. Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, the word and the concept was imported into the world of sports. Over the last 20 years, we have seen how coaching has and is penetrating all walks of life and perhaps we could say that coaching is now a type of “meta-profession”, which can combine with different disciplines to assist “clients” to develop personally or professionally, overcome hurdles, tap into unknown potential, achieve amazing goals or in other words, to achieve success or solutions relating to the discipline or question at hand.

There is no one perfect definition of coaching, in fact there are many definitions and coaching in itself is largely an un-regulated profession. However, there are some professional associations which are working towards developing training standards, as well as a body of ethics and standards for members to follow. The four main internationally recognised bodies are the International Coach Federation (ICF), the Association for Coaching (AC), the international Association of Coaching (IAC) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

In addition, there may be cultural differences relating to the term “coach”, which may also lead to further confusion as to what a coach really is. When I began my own personal quest to understand the differences between teacher and coach in Germany 15 years ago and researching heavily on this topic, I was shocked to realise that the German perspective and expectation of a qualified coach involved training which even tripped into the realms of psychology – an extremely far cry from the US and UK comprehension of this term. This was further exacerbated when even Wikipedia in its definition of “Coaching” on the English page totally and utterly transformed when you look at the German version of that page. For me 15 years ago, this explained the hostility and may I add “rather unpleasant attacks” I received from certain purchasing managers in German companies.

For the general understanding of the term coach relating to life coaching or business coaching and perhaps more from the US perspective, the ICF competences give certain guidelines to coaching, which is not about giving advice or telling people what to do, but is based on attending to the client and the agenda and not the coach's agenda, (ICF competence 5,1), hearing the client's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and what is not possible (ICF competence 5,2), encouraging, accepting, exploring and reinforcing the client expression (5,5), integrating and building on the client's ideas and suggestions (5,6), allowing the client to vent or clear the situation without judgement or attachment (5,7), helping the clients to discover for themselves new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods etc that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important for him or her (ICF 8,4).

In a nutshell, the coach is not there to deliver psychotherapy or therapy, nor to be a mentor or an adviser. That is, I would suggest, the generally accepted understanding of the life coach or business coach. Now, a business coach or professional coach may in fact possess certain expertise in a particular area and in this respect both coach and coachee may benefit and tap into such expertise to facilitate beneficial input into that particular coaching agreement.

So far, we can already witness that within the meta-profession coaching, there are different interpretations and expectations as to what this really means, so I do believe that when we talk about the term "language coaching", we really need to have the clarity and understanding ourselves, as language professionals, to be able to firstly explain to our clients what this is and secondly allow our clients to decide whether this is in fact, the exact service they are looking for.

LANGUAGE COACHING

For me, personally, language coaching necessarily has to do with some aspect of "language". If I take the term Nutrition Coach, my understanding is that the coach has the expertise and niche relating to nutrition and the aspects of coaching will relate to style, delivery, maybe even tools and models of coaching. So, in my humble opinion, a language coach is, as an analogy, an expert in a language or languages who then delivers this expertise through "coaching" and has received adequate training and development and is in fact a "qualified or accredited or certified coach". Could we then say that, in the pure sense of the term, a Language Coach is "a language educator, expert or professional in the field of language knowledge transfer, who utilizes coaching as the vehicle to transfer that knowledge, encompassing coaching models, tools, principles, ethics, and practices to create a different delivery to the traditional "language teaching style.""

Nowadays, in the language market, there are many coaches delivering "coaching" in a target language. In other words, professional business coaches or highly experienced business trainers are delivering coaching sessions with the focus and attention on coaching clients around certain personal or business related questions, issues or goals in a target language. For me, this goes beyond simple language coaching and I do think we as professionals should always ask ourselves the question "what is the focus and attention of my session with this client and what are the results my client wishes to obtain from the session?". When I can honestly answer this question by saying

language improvement, then we are in language coaching. If the answer to the question is, for example, to improve time management, to resolve team conflicts or something similar, then may I suggest that we are in the realms of “coaching”. However, what if my client says, “Actually, I have a conflict within my team and I would like to discuss this in English because my team is a multicultural team and I will in fact have to resolve this conflict with them in English”.

Here, there may be a grey area because in fact, the first focus appears to be language improvement in practice, however during the discussions there may be that added bonus of the client exploring through coaching conversations, the solution to this dilemma. So, once again, as language professionals, we need to understand what it is that we are doing: is it language coaching or is it coaching in a target language and an even stronger argument for this need to clarify lies within the pricing of the “session” as each service may command a different price.

NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING®

One of the reasons that I actually created the method and approach called Neurolanguage Coaching was to bring a “crystallised definition and structure” to the general term of language coaching, but with the added extra of neuroscience and how the brain functions, learns and reacts. I personally began with this quest in the year 2000, when I was first introduced to the concept of language coaching in Germany. Neurolanguage Coaching is focused on and ever related to the learning, improvement or enhancement of a language that is being learnt, practised or utilised by the coachee. It encompasses all that we have said relating to the world of coaching: coaching models, tools, structure, practices, philosophies and in addition the ethics and standards of the International Coach Federation. This is because the training course to become a Neurolanguage Coach is in fact accredited by the International Coach Federation. In addition, Neurolanguage Coaches are trained in the practical application of neuroscientific principles, relating to how the brain learns, functions and reacts, in particular in relation to emotional triggers when learning a language, drawing Krashen’s affective filter into the scientific evidence arena.

Therefore, there is even a difference between “language coaching” and Neurolanguage Coaching. Language coaching per se does NOT normally draw upon the neuroscience and how the brain functions and learns.

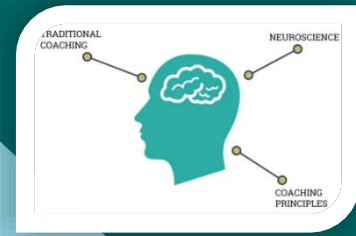
CONCLUSION

I do hope that this article conveys the potential differences which the interpretation of coaching is now presenting us with. Starting with the term “coaching” and what that implies, then language coaching and coaching in a target language and finally, the difference between language coaching and Neurolanguage Coaching.

I welcome comments from my fellow coaching professionals as well as language coaching professionals and do hope that between us we can bring the clarity and focus for our clients, who, ultimately, are the ones paying for our services and the ones who really need the focus and attention of our expertise in the area that each and every one of them require. In the end, the agreement relating to our services lies in the hands of our clients and the more that we can explain the differences, the more they will understand and be able to choose the right service for them!

THE ROLE OF NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING® IN THE CORPORATE WORLD

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As the world becomes more globalized; as business becomes more and more cross border; as technology becomes more and more sophisticated allowing for wider geographical trade areas, the more necessary it becomes to understand how to communicate not only on a language level but also on a humanistic level.

Most companies today know that they are fighting within international arenas and most companies today expect their top executives and leaders to have a certain command over languages – in particular to have a certain level of English. The problems that “language knowledge” can provoke are huge. If we look at the article by Tsedal Neeley from Harvard University[1] (HBS Cases: Overcoming Englishization) on the psychological effects of language on corporations we see that top expertise can often be undermined or replaced by personnel with better language expertise causing frustration among executives and causing companies to lose key employees due to language issues. The question with all the cost cutting programmes that companies are currently undergoing, also means that many companies are no longer assisting employees to further their language knowledge, even when knowing that some employees are key and pivotal to negotiations, meetings and discussions in different languages and key employees are left to fend for themselves often left feeling inadequate and under-skilled in their language expertise. These feelings often mean that employees are more and more in a “threat state” which potentially means that their limbic system is continually in overdrive, forcing stress levels and adrenaline levels to rise and thus causing essential brain areas to become blocked: mainly the pre-frontal cortex and the hippocampus which are the two main areas of the brain that are needed for focus, attention and generation of short term memories and recovery of long term memories. This in turn signifies that employees under these circumstances are not able to work to the best of their potential and the vicious circle for the company keeps going round and round: underperforming individuals = loss of business.

So how can companies ensure employees perform to their best abilities in an international arena and therefore pull in more business, better business and secure or maintain existing business?

One of the basic and most simple tips for a company is to “normalize” languages. What do we mean with “normalize”? We now know that the brain loves to work in an automatic perceptive state; think about your drive to work this morning. Can you remember your drive to work? Were you thinking about something else while you were driving? This is the brain functioning in automatic. Driving is a habit for the brain; it can perform this without having to think about each action – it is operating in an “unconscious competence” mode. If you like the brain has achieved a degree of mastery status with regard to driving. This in fact is the secret to everything we do in life. Make anything you do into a habit and the brain will go into its preferred mode: automatic. So the key question is – what can a company do to make “speaking languages a habit”?

- Firstly, if English is imposed as a lingua franca throughout the company, the mother tongue of the country should still be respected and accepted. Meetings should become bilingual, allowing contributions in both languages and tolerance in translation and interpretation. The chairman of the meeting should allow both languages, without imposing that all should speak English. This will ensure that the not so confident speakers in English actually do get to contribute and to discuss and present their ideas. If this is not the case, the danger is that only a few will contribute and others will remain silent and thus creativity and discussion become stifled. Companies could promote self-language learning, by creating chat areas within the company where one language is spoken and practiced, as well as drop-in chat rooms where topical issues are addressed and debated allowing participants to listen and take part in such informal discussions and chats.
- Companies can engage neurolanguage coaches who are specialized in combining brain based coaching principles and tools into the language learning process. Such language coaches must have had coaching training at least or training in neurolanguage coaching which embraces principles of neuroscience and how the brain likes to learn and how to keep the brain away from a threat status, as well as traditional coaching processes such as goal setting and action setting and International Coaching Federation principles.
- When working together with neurolanguage coaches (NLCs), companies and NLCs can work out key employees' KPIs, which language could enhance. This would ensure working towards enhancing KPIs which in turn will increase employee performance and in turn enhance company performance. Take the example of Spain: currently thousands of companies and professionals in Spain are turning more and more into foreign markets for new business acquisitions and employment. This obviously means that companies MUST raise the levels of employee language knowledge and they must do it FAST. Latin countries on the whole struggle with the English language and how it is learnt and the concept of neurolanguage coaching could greatly support this transition of non-bilingual workforce to bilingual in a short time period.

WORKING WITH NEUROLANGUAGE COACHES

The whole process of neurolanguage coaching is geared towards assisting companies to keep costs down. The structure of the process is such that each step of the language learning path can be measured: ideally both in a subjective way but also in an objective way with the connection of KPIs to the language learning process. In this way companies can control the costs of courses but also measure the results; leading to a cost effective process on all sides.

I personally also offer free talks to companies about the learning process; giving presentations to executives about how the brain likes to learn, how we learn best and how to really get the motivation and the necessary impulse to learn more and more and become more comfortable in a non- mother tongue language. This in fact not only assists individuals to learn in a more effective manner but it also harmonises the employees together with the company direction regarding languages and foreign trade. Companies should see "language abilities" as something of great value and an asset to the company, as the more language diversity, the more possibilities for companies to connect, trade and work in foreign lands.

CONCLUSION

The major objective of this article was to present to companies and corporates my ideas regarding synergies of language coaching. The major key to all that we do in life whether business orientated or in a personal sphere is “communication” and how we communicate. Learning how the brain works, how the brain learns as well as applying an integral holistic approach to communication and language will not only enrich individuals in the workplace but also enhance business throughout the world, assisting cross-border relations and trade as well as bringing back a humane approach into the workplace and not just a cost-cutting exercise which ultimately leads to companies engaging cheaper services with no visible benefit, results or efficiency.

[1] <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6880.html>

TRANSFORMING LANGUAGE TEACHERS INTO LANGUAGE COACHES

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Since I started to create and deliver the Language Coaching Training course, I have had the honour of working and training with some extremely experienced language teachers. One group in Paris alone had a collective experience within the room of about 200 years. And for me, to actually witness the transformation of teacher to coach is such a great experience and to get feedback from teachers who really recognize the change in themselves is rewarding and reinforcing the value of the training that I offer.

So what is the value you are asking? What is this transformation that I am talking about? Well the first thing I would like to clarify is that we all do originate from teaching and I always acknowledge and respect the teaching process, reminding us all that we cannot ignore or leave this process behind. Language coaching is comprised of various elements and one of the most important of these elements is in fact “teaching a language” as that is our purpose and mission through the means available to us. The real question is exactly “how we deliver this learning process” and with Language Coaching the approach is absolutely distinguished through coaching principles, coaching ethics, coaching tools and processes, powerful coaching conversations around language and grammar and in “neurolanguage coaching” there is an added dimension which is the neuroscience of learning and how the brain likes to learn.

What then happens to a language teacher on this course?

INNER AWARENESS AND RAISED SENSITIVITY INTO HOW THE BRAIN LEARNS

Well, the first step of actually learning through neuroscientific evidence how the brain works and how the brain likes to learn, creates an inner awareness and sensitivity that teachers normally do not possess, mainly because teachers are not trained or taught about the impacts of teaching on the brain. Understanding how the brain works, how the limbic works actually gives teachers an enormous insight into how their teaching style or behavior with learners could have an everlasting impact – just think back to your own school days to remember the negative or positive impacts that some teachers may have had on you personally!

We now know that no two brains are the same (David Rock, Quiet Leadership) and as a teacher this means that every single learner sitting in front of us is potentially different and learns differently to the person sitting next to them. This also begs the question to rethink our whole educational systems for children, but that is perhaps a different topic for another paper.

Using techniques and coaching conversations to maintain the brain in a “happy learning state” is essential for maximum learning effects and efficient learning and this course really brings the necessary knowledge and tools together to achieve that.

POWERFUL COACHING CONVERSATIONS

The entire conversation between language coach and coachee follows a certain pattern that moves the language coach away from directive and instructional mode and into an interactive and brain-friendly mode. Some of the teachers on my course have actually commented afterwards how much they have moved away from a directive style and how they now stop themselves from taking the lead or directing and now have shifted the emphasis on the coachee, getting the coachee to lead more and take control. This in effect assists the coachee to take ownership of the whole learning process and when the coachee realizes just how much he/she is improving after a short time it really encourages and empowers the whole learning process. The impact of these conversations is amazing, not only for the coachee learner but also for the language coach him/herself. Focus and attention are increased, the brain becomes more efficient and the learning becomes faster and hardwires(long term memories) more easily.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Language coaches actually learn to listen in a two-dimensional way. Not only do they listen to content of the topic, but they also listen deeply for the grammatical flaws and mistakes. You may say that all teachers do this and you are right. However, how many of us are only half listening to what is being said and already in our minds planning what we are going to say next or trying to foresee what the learner will say next. The language coach knows exactly how the pre-frontal cortex functions and knows how to stay in the moment to enable deeper listening and then after having really listened, knows exactly what to say and how to react.

UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

On the course we also understand that the major mission of the language coach is for the coachee to reach a state of unconscious competence in the language – that is to say “mastery”. We know that the brain loves to operate in an automatic mode and understanding how the brain really hardwires memories actually helps the process of moving short term memories into long term memories. “Cells that fire together, wire together – Hebb’s Law” nicely reflects the process that we want to occur in the brain. With enough focus and attention and knowing exactly how to do that means that the language coach can “provoke, invoke and revoke” the necessary brain connections or in some cases “disconnections”.

STRUCTURE

The language coaching training offers a real structure to the sessions, which is brain friendly and focus and attention friendly. The more structure the coachee has the more efficiently the brain will learn. Some of the teachers on the course have thanked me for the solid structure given, the administration behind the structure and the availability of papers and forms to enhance that structure.

All in all, I am witnessing great transformations into language coaches. I always consider the learning process to absolutely belong to the coachee and for me personally it is essential that I take a step back and allow my coachee to be the protagonist. This also means that a certain amount of ego of the teacher has to be foregone – I always say that the process is not about ME, I am only the facilitator, the catalyst – the process is about my COACHEE’s efficient learning.

In essence teachers transforming into language coaches become:

- Aware of how the brain learns
- Aware of their own impact on the learner's brain
- Sensitive to limbic reactions of the brain
- Provocative – provoking brain connections
- Experts at powerful conversations
- Experts at active listening
- Much more empathetic
- Aware of coaching ethics and principles
- Masters in goal setting conversations and no longer directive telling coaches what to do
- Absolutely less directive and more interactive and at times more passive
- Structured and orientated towards focus and attention
- Facilitators and catalysts for brain connections to hardware.

WHAT MAKES NEUROLANGUAGE COACHING A BRAIN FRIENDLY PROCESS?

Rachel Marie Paling ©2017



One of the most frequent questions about Neurolanguage Coaching® is "what makes it a brain friendly process?"

And all teachers who train with me to become Neurolanguage Coaches take the journey through the brain to really understand step by step and in a simplified way, how the brain makes neural connections, about neuroplasticity and neurogenesis, how the brain likes to learn and how we create those long term-memories, the interaction between the conscious and the subconscious and the different parts of the brain, in particular the emotional brain and the limbic system. The more we understand about our own brains, the more we are able to assist others to understand theirs.

A few weeks ago, in one of my refresher sessions, we brainstormed as a group all the aspects that we bring into Neurolanguage Coaching which really reflect that brain friendly style that we continuously strive to deliver.

Many thanks to Jacob, Margherita, Jessie and Robert for brainstorming this with me.

- Learner-centric process
- Non-directive style
- Non-threatening – keeps emotional brain calm
- Empathetic connection
- Provoking positive emotions
- Finding out how the learner learns best
- Connects language learning to real life and personal situations
- Chunking down
- Understanding each brain is unique – no one fit for all
- Provoking constant brain connections/triggering language connections
- Providing safe learning environment

- Spacing techniques for learning
- We inform about the brain so coachee can understand self better
- Goals and actions get the coachee more focused
- Setting own goals and actions brings ownership of the learning
- Discovering real motivation as the vision for learning
- Maintaining commitment as a coach
- Positive feedback ensures right brain chemistry
- Awareness of limbic triggers and ability to coach around these at any time
- No questions that arouse defense mechanisms
- Right focus and attention ensures reinforcing of neural networks
- Pushing learner into flow to encourage performing brain
- Knowledge of social pain increases our empathy
- We bring certainty to language learning
- Coaching conversations that keep the brain in calm learning state
- Grammar delivered through calm step by step coaching conversations
- We help the learner to get language “normalised” by the brain and accepted as a “habit”.