

Case 11 – Rheda-Wiedenbrück (GER)

Case

- 3 learners in a 1 to 1 setting with one coach (one dropped out when deported)
- Up to six sessions of 30 – 70 Minutes
- Coach and learners did not know each other before.
- Background and Language level of learners:
 - L1: Between 20 and 30 years old, originated from Afghanistan, educational background is unknown. Her first language is Farsi. Reading and writing skills were not indicated as her main problem, her main problem is speaking (A2).
 - L2: In his twenties from West Africa. His main focus lies on improving his speaking abilities and learning about grammar. Reading and writing are not perceived as main problem by the learner. He wants to improve his speaking abilities.

Background of coach:

The coaches attending this pilot were trained and experienced GSL teachers. They worked for different schools since 2004. Both coaches attended a project for language courses (SPRUNQ - Sprachcoaching für berufliche Unterstützung und Qualifizierung) and were provided with an extensional coach-training. Their experiences in this field was limited to a few cases at that time.

What were the coaches asked to do?

The coaches were meant to work with the methodology, their previous work was based on. They were told to adapt this methodology for the phases and principles of the ALL-SR coaching.

Coach training: In a short training phase, the coaches have been introduced to the ALL-SR coaching methodology and its principles to make them aware of the differences between the ALL-SR coaching and the previously used SPRUNQ methods. They were told to coach with minimal directiveness as long as it appeared to be helpful to support the learner. Whenever learners would not be able to get along with the non-directive support they were allowed to be more directive. They were equipped with material, we had developed in advance to support the development of the learner's consciousness and confidence.

Pilot site: The pilot took place in a vocational school. The school offers beside a broad field of vocational subjects like structural engineering, wood engineering, health and social-service, nutritional research, domestic science, food-engineering also German as a second language courses. The two learners attended in one of those language courses and were offered to participate voluntary in the coaching program. The learners were identified by the teacher in advance. In a preparatory meeting the coach presented, what learners can expect from coaching.

Findings

In this pilot the coaches worked with two learners, achieving very different results. While one of them was getting along with the approach very well, the other learner did not profit from the support in the expected way. Both learners intended to improve their oral skills. The coach of the first session worked strictly non-directive, the following sessions were taken over by a coach who used more directive methods. In the data we could see how non-directive methodology helped to focus on the own learning behavior, while directive questions were helpful to focus on i.e. linguistic issues (See Case 11 Rheda-Wiedenbrück Research Questions

Answered). Learner (L2) developed an own learning plan. The reflection of personal resources and their organization in a learning structure (planning) appeared to be very helpful for this. The learner also profited from a more directive approach, when the coach enriched resources, like new materials.

Lessons learned

(Non-directive) Coaching (asking coaching questions, summarizing, paraphrasing) can appear to be very helpful for learners in terms of raising their awareness for their learning circumstances and recourses such as their knowledge, traits, useful materials, time and learning places.

Depending on the learner's request, the tool should be chosen. Coaching is appropriate, if a learner wants to change something in his/ her learning behavior.

It is the responsibility of both, the learner and the coach, whether non-directive coaching is successful or not.

Learners need to

- understand, what coaching is and how they can profit from reflecting on their own learning,
- show a positive attitude towards coaching,
- be at least on an A2 language level (CEF),
- be willing to make a change and to discover themselves, thus being the source for successful learning.

Coaches need to:

- have knowledge of the coaching methodology (training is needed),
- have experience with the approach, as well as they need to practice it
- show a positive attitude towards coaching,
- develop both, self-confidence as coaches and the belief, what they can achieve with the methodology, and also accept it's limitation.

Furthermore, we have learnt that non-directive coaching is helpful to discover the own learning behavior, while a more directive approach helps learners to solve their language problems through building up a consciousness for the language. We have evidence to believe that the responsibility is not likely to be taken over by the learner in the second case.