

## Case 1, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

### Case:

- 4 learners in a group with one coach
- 20 sessions of 1,5 hours
- Coach and learners already knew each other from a language course
- Language level of all learners was under A2. All had (very) limited study skills. Background information learners:
  - Learner 1: 58 years old, Nepalese, 13 years in The Netherlands, no school in Nepal, little reading and writing in Nepalese. Learned to read and write in Dutch up to level A2 as an adult.
  - Learner 2: 62 years old, Turkish, primary school in Turkey, in Netherlands for 40 years, Turkish
  - Learner 3: 43 years old, Eritrese, 4 years of school in Eritrea, reading and writing Tigrinya, 22 years in The Netherlands.
  - Learner 4: 48 years old, Pakistani, for a long time in The Netherlands, reading and writing in Urdu.
- The coaching sessions were offered to the learners after they finished their last, more traditional L2 course – the municipality offers a limited amount of years of education. The learners happily accepted the offer.

**Background of coach:** Trained (and paid) as a teacher Dutch L2.

**What was the coach asked to do?** To help the learners develop their autonomous learning skills by using coaching techniques and using their own learning goals.

**Coach training:** Half a day training, with a bit of theory on autonomous learning and role play to train their coaching skills. Coaches in the training received the Dutch *Manual for coaches*, in which some theoretical background and tips and tricks for coaching.

During the pilot the project team kept in touch with the coach to support her.

**Pilot site:** Private, professional adult education provider, mainly focused on migrants and basic skills.

### Findings:

For both learners and coach the pilot was a learning process. The coach developed her coaching skills during the 20 sessions, learning to leave 'the action' more to the learners.

For the learners the opportunity to talk to each other and have attention from the coach seemed to be the most valuable aspect of the sessions at first. It was difficult for the coach to focus on learning goals, not to mention learning strategies. Notably; the learners did not come to the lessons or the coachings sessions because of a specific literacy or language issue blocking their functioning in daily life.

In the middle of the pilot the coach expressed the feeling that it was difficult for the learners to deal with the abstract concept of *learning goals* and *learning strategies*. The project provided her with so called 'help cards', with which the learners might have a more concrete idea of what they were asked to think about and take actions for. That seems to have worked. The last 8 sessions were definitely more about learning and individual learning goals.

The coach expressed that she found it hard to coach learners with such limited language and study skills.

Nevertheless, three of the four learners showed progress in awareness, self confidence and autonomous learning actions.

### Lessons learned

- The approach can help learners developing awareness of themselves as responsible for their own learning, self confidence and autonomous learning actions.
- Language level should probably be at least A2 (especially when learners have limited learning skills).
- The coach needs a learning period for developing coaching skills just as much as learners have to learn to learn autonomously. Moreover, a coach training with only one session of half a day, seems not to be enough in the first place.
- It looks like it would be helpful if the learners have concrete 'problems' in daily life due to limited basis skills (being literacy, numeracy, digital, and/or language skills) as a motivation to learn.
- Coaching from the start, discovering the daily life situation the learner wants to improve and needs language for, might be able to help even low study and languages skilled learners to formulate their learning goal in functional terms more easily that with the assistance of help cards.