Practical Implementation of *Life-Coaching* Approaches in College and University

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[Abstract] This article demonstrates how coaching aligns with the needs of language students and how coaching can be integrated into the teaching process across five distinct levels: course content, pedagogical tools, forms of teaching and classroom organization, in-classroom communication style, building a positive learning environment and feedback. It also summarizes the coaching elements in language teaching to present a comprehensive guide for educators. Preliminary research findings show how coaching tools and techniques not only enhance students' language acquisition but fosters students' ownership of the learning process and enhances classroom engagement.

[Keywords] language coaching, well-being coaching, life-coaching

Introduction

The main thesis of this article focuses on blending a coaching approach into the university language teaching framework with enhancing student personal growth as a central factor upon which to focus. Introducing coaching techniques into language-acquisition opens the door to a new reality for the learner, including new opportunities, new paths, and an opportunity to build up personal strength through while learning a new language. We can change our reality because paradoxically, "conscious shapes reality and reality shapes consciousness" (Zammit, p. 85). How many language educators have pondered these aspects of helping students learn a foreign language while also enhancing student personal growth? Educators recognize that it is important for students to go beyond simply mastering language competencies, "but to be prepared for real life, where they need to be the source of their decisions and actions" (Shmelev, 2022, p.3). However, language teachers have a legitimate question as to what coaching tools can be used and how to bring this change about.

There is a global trend today, acknowledged by advanced educators, businessmen, celebrities, and sports champions, which is yet underrepresented in contemporary high-school and university classrooms, and the name of the trend is *coaching*. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the term originally denoted "a large kind of four-wheeled, covered carriage," from French *coche* (16c.), from German *kotsche*, and from Hungarian *kocsi (szekér)*. Coaching acquired its modern-related meaning "instructor/trainer" in 1830s, as it was used at Oxford University as slang for a private tutor who "carries" a student through an exam (Mc Daniel, 2019).

Ever since coaching has become a "buzzword"[1] in sports and business world, and it has become increasingly popular as an innovative development tool. Wise and Sundstrom, in *Power of Coaching*, quote Madeline Hunter who observed, "even champions have coaches" (Wise, Sunsdrom, 2020, p. 1). According to Shmelev, coaching in its contemporary sense is now one of

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[1] Coaching is referred to as a "buzzword" in John Whitmore's introduction to his book *Coaching for Performance* (Whitmore, 2005, p. 1)

the most widely used methods of developing "soft skills and self-skills" (Shmelev, 2022, p. 4). As Michael Williams et al. note, "coaching has grown exponentially over the past decade" (Williams et al., 2024, p. 17). The authors also reference Zhou's data, highlighting that the coaching industry has expanded by 62% since 2019, with global revenue rising approximately 54% to over $4.5 billion.

Additionally, Williams estimates that there are now more than twenty distinct types of coaching. Coaches themselves are creatively extending their services into various spheres of professional, recreational, and personal life. Life coaching, parenting coaching, beauty coaching, outdoor camping coaching, and more are just a few of the many focus areas available for those seeking guidance. Moreover, as much as these fields sound specific, coaches go great lengths to connect their areas to the coaches' self-growth and development, understanding themselves, working with others and appreciating others' skills and help. An effective coach offers much more than just teaching a specific skillset. For example, outdoor camping and mountain-climbing travel companies position themselves nowadays as "outdoor travel coaches." They don't just promote wilderness adventures; they also provide a chance for customers to tap into their inner resilience, uncover a form of shared strength and support, which, in turn, can lead to personal transformation. Dancing coaches will help customers link the bodily moves with the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. Cooking coaches are passionate about helping people to come together through cooking and sharing food, and to ultimately create life-time memories through crafting food. If cooking, dancing, and camping are viewed as life-transforming, developmental coaching activities today, wouldn't this be true about the language classroom?

Introducing Coaching Techniques into the Language Classroom

The authors of this article believe that a language classroom is an ideal environment for integrating coaching as this setting combines inspiring topics like travel, culture, and music, which promote goal-setting and motivation, with more challenging subjects such as diversity and human rights, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving. Additionally, effective education encourages student self-reflection through personal discussions, builds empathy and active listening skills, and cultivates leadership by guiding them to develop the skills to lead themselves and others.

Contemporary language students differ from those of the 'industrial era,' as they embrace greater autonomy and prioritization of practical communication skills due to exposure to technology, AI, globalized communication, and a culture of instant feedback and social connection. They are shaped by emotional intelligence, early social pressures, and the expectation of immediate recognition in a highly interconnected, digital world.

Prensky's (2001) concept of "digital natives" stresses that unlike industrial-era students who were satisfied with traditional, lecture-based learning-- modern language students expect interactive, technology enhanced experiences that involve multimedia, instant feedback, and digital tools for language acquisition (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). In exploring the promises and challenges of AI as a transformative force in language learning, Jusak Patty highlights how AI offers significant advantages—such as personalized guidance, interactive engagement, and progress tracking—that can serve as valuable tools for both learners and teachers. However, it also brings concerns about reduced human interaction, potential effects on learner autonomy, and the changing role of language teachers (Patty, 2024, p.642). Studies also show that contemporary students tend to prefer more autonomy in their learning, as opposed to the top-down, teacher-directed approaches common in the industrial era (Benson, 2011). This shift has led to increased interest in self-paced, personalized learning methods, including mobile-assisted language learning

(MALL) and online platforms that allow learners to progress at their own rate and on their own terms (Benson, 2011). Research also indicates that modern language students value practical, communicative language skills over rote memorization and grammar drills, which were more common in industrial-era education (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Today's students often bring a heightened sense of multicultural awareness and value cross-cultural communication, a shift driven by globalization (Kramsch, 2013). Modern educational research also shows that contemporary students benefit from collaborative learning environments, such as pair work and group projects (Vygotsky, 1978; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). This contrasts with the more isolated, competitive approach to learning that characterized the industrial era.

These studies collectively suggest that contemporary students require modern, up-to-date teaching methods and we believe contemporary language educators genuinely aim to provide the best learning environment for their students. However, many educators were trained in traditional, teacher-focused methods, or find that the cultural context of their country pushes them toward a top-down teaching style. This approach is reflected in the persistence of traditional methods in academic language teaching environments. Key reasons for this include institutional expectations, exam-focused curricula, insufficient time allocation, and large class sizes (Al-Issa, 2005; Kirkgoz, 2009). Additionally, some teachers' longstanding beliefs and attitudes favor directive approaches as they are perceived to be more efficient for covering a lot of material (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Teachers also face challenges in adopting interactive methods like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) due to insufficient training, limited resources, and dependence on local teaching context that position teachers as authoritative figures (Li & Walsh, 2011).

Contemporary Types of Language Coaching

Contemporary language coaching is still an emerging field, therefore literature on the subject is scarce. However, interest in language coaching is growing, and recent publications and research show a variety of perspectives, the most distinctive among them can be grouped into the following four categories: Pure language coaching (Kovacs, 2022); Neurolinguistic language coaching (Paling, 2022); Language coaching outside the classroom (Barber, 2014); and Instructional coaching for teachers (Wise, Sundstrom, 2011)

Pure Language Coaching

Kovacs maintains that a language educator can blend language coaching with traditional methods of teaching a language or provide pure language coaching. Pure language coaching is "a series of face-to-face motivating sessions, which involve assessment of the learner's real need and will to adapt the further language learning path to the learner's feelings, awareness, beliefs" (Kovacs, 2022, p. 21). This type of language coaching can involve a variety of forms that cater to different aspects of language learning and preparation for real-life events. It is commonly applied in areas such as language proficiency development, exam or job interview preparation, business event language coaching, accent reduction, and cultural or travel coaching.

This commercially successful contemporary form of coaching is highly individualized and primarily targeted at corporate workers, managers, and CEOs. While some aspects of individualized language coaching are integrated into contemporary coursebooks (e.g., exercises at the end of each unit encouraging self-reflection on newly acquired vocabulary, challenges faced, and actions for improvement), it is less applicable to the curriculum context of large groups of college and university students on a regular basis—unless a dedicated language coaching position is introduced within the institution.

Neurolinguistic Language Coaching
This method was elaborated upon by Rachel Paling and includes using the findings from the field of neuroscience to assist the brain learn languages more efficiently. Palling offers the rationale behind neurolinguistic coaching approach in language education by demonstrating how 'social pain' (anxiety, fear, uncertainty, embarrassment, etc.) experienced by language students in the context of, for example, delivering a presentation in a foreign language, is linked to the activation of brain regions responsible for physical pain. This, in turn, triggers the 'fight or flight' body response and impairs the regions responsible for "conscious and rational" thought flow required at the moment of presenting (Paling, 2022, p. 20). To avoid and override these mechanisms of survival, Paling develops and compiles a set of learning models and principles a language coach can use to nurture a supportive yet motivational learning environment. These include:

- Nurturing a 'perfect learning state' aligned with the ideal predominant brainwaves in the learning environment through the IMAGES learning model (Intention, Attention, Generation, Emotions, Spacing). A language coach should "constantly aim for a learner to be in a continuous state of calm… together with positive emotions…" (Paling, 2022, p. 26). The principle of "chunking the language down", i.e., the language is constantly disassembled into smaller pieces to be built up again in the process of continuous goal setting and goal-accomplishment.
- The art of coaching conversation. Paling maintains: "The predominance of quiet, brain-friendly coaching conversations, in a non-directive and non-demonstrative style, will always ensure an extremely calm and tranquil limbic system" (Paling, 2022, p. 90).

Neuro-language coaching offers several opportunities to customize the language learning process to the needs of a particular student from a holistic perspective. Also, it has the potential to enrich the skillset of a language teacher related to the in-class communication style. However, this is a specific niche in language education which requires extensive training to acquire the related qualifications and competencies. Moreover, to be integrated into the framework of large college/university language classrooms, the neurolinguistic approach needs more research as well as language educator's time and commitment compared to traditional language teaching methods.

Language Coaching outside the Classroom
Another modern version of independent language coaching was engineered by Barber and Foord. In their book, *From English Teacher to Learner Coach*, the authors state, "This book helps you to give your teaching a coaching twist, which in turn gets your students practicing more outside class and getting more out of what they do in class with you" (Barber, Foord, 2014). In a nutshell, this guide provides a set of practical tasks for the language teacher and coach to share with the students to self-organize their English language learning and practice outside the classroom.

Instructional Coaching
In *Power of Coaching. Teachers and Teaching,* Wise and Sundstrom[2] stress the crucial role of instructional coaching for teachers as it fosters continuous improvement of teachers' well-being, growth-oriented mindset, and reflective practices on the methodology of teaching (Wise, Sundstrom, 2011). The authors provide effective models for instructional coaches to clarify the

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[2] In *Power of Coaching: Teachers and Teaching,* Wise and Sundstrom explore the art of coaching, offering insights and universal tools designed to empower teachers and their students across various disciplines—tools that can be readily adapted and applied by language educators as well.

work in instructional improvement from the perspective of WHAT should be taught (standards, curriculum, strategies, etc.), and HOW (how we, as teachers, plan, communicate, engage, engage, pace, etc.). The overall purpose of instructional coaching is summarized as "to support teachers in continuous improvement and personal growth, no matter the teacher's level of experience or expertise. Through coaching conversations that emphasize intentionality and reflective thinking, a coach elicits a teacher's vision for change…" (Wise, Sundstrom, 2011, p. 33).

The practical section of the book contains research-based decisive teaching practices and communicative strategies which contrast with the directive 'chalk and talk'/ 'drill and kill' approach to collaborative learning approach rooted in the coaching paradigm. These coaching techniques are discussed in detail in the in-class communication styles section of the book. Some international coaching organizations offer instructional language coaching for teachers as a certification program, which potentially can be a valuable investment in a teacher's career. However, it is essential to select a reputable institution with guaranteed quality and credibility to provide certification.

To summarize the major language coaching approaches, the works of Kovacs, Barber, Paling, and Wise—spanning pure language coaching, neurolinguistic coaching, coaching outside the classroom, and instructional coaching—demonstrate how coaching elements can be effectively integrated into the language learning and teaching process. This study acknowledges and advances the approaches mentioned above through transforming the language classroom into a self-growth coaching environment *without striving any valuable time or other resources off the content coverage requirements,* which is a limitation of some of the approaches outlined above are subject to. The authors will now examine the question, what if we aligned language-related goals with students' broader aspirations and provided motivation and support by smoothly integrating some elements of this approach into the teaching process? This way, the language coaching tools take not only focus on enhancing language acquisition but whole wellbeing development as well.

Integrating Coaching Principles into The Classroom

The science of coaching can enrich the language classroom with personalized support, accountability, constructive feedback, guidance, and encouragement, empowering learners to unlock their potential, reach their goals, and lead more fulfilling lives. In his book *High Performance Coaching Techniques*, McDaniel quotes John Whitmore to provide one of the most progressive definitions of coaching today: unlocking people's position to maximize their own performance (McDaniel, 2017, p. 5). The International Coaches Union (ICU)[3] views coaching as support from a coach aimed at achieving the coachee's goal by activating their internal potential and resources.

Some essential coaching principles listed below are relevant to this study, as they specifically emphasize the learner's responsibility, subjectivity, and agency: John Whitmore clearly defines the goal of coaching, stating that "the underlying intent of every coaching interaction is to build the coachee's self-belief, for them to realize that 'their success is due to their own efforts'" (Whitmore, 2009, p. 18).

In traditional coaching, the coachee independently finds solutions, taking full responsibility for their actions, while the coach provides a supportive environment. The coach assumes a neutral and attentive observer role, maintaining a balance between frustration and support, and applying effective coaching models such as GROW, SCORE, etc. (Shmelev, 2023, p. 21). The techniques

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[3] Coach Union. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved December 30, 2024, from
https://www.coachunion.org/about.html

applied by coaches encourage active information processing along with the setting of goal-oriented and reflective questions, which promotes process-oriented support for learners (Shmelev, p. 22). The teacher with basic coaching skills organizes the learning process in a way that allows the student to independently understand the tasks and generate their own solutions (Shmelev, 22).

The coaching principles and major takeaways outlined above provide a broader picture of coaching as a science, yet for the sake of simplicity and clarity, this article summarizes the fundamentals of coaching methodology into three core points. With an understanding of these, a teacher with basic coaching training can seamlessly integrate 'well-being and life-coaching' elements into the language classroom. The essential coaching methods are as follows:

- Active listening. According to ICU standards, "[Active listening is an…] ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression" (International Coaching Union, n.d.).
- Goal-oriented or model-based questions (such as those based on models like GROW.
- Specific feedback (for example, using the "Hamburger" model: What went well? What could be improved (areas for growth)? Overall, what was good?) (Shmelev, p. 25).

The basic coaching methods and principles discussed in this segment extend into various elements that can be applied in the language classroom across five levels (e.g., content, techniques; see the practical section below) to enhance and modernize language educators' teaching approaches in today's classrooms.

Implement Coaching into the Language Teaching Process

Coaching techniques can be integrated into the language teaching process at different levels including, course content (introducing self-growth, motivational, well-being content from world-renowned authors and coaches (books, articles, TED-talks, etc.); pedagogical tools and techniques (coaching models, e.g., GROW, OSCAR, for various types of activities); instructional formats (project-based, independent/teamwork); In-classroom communication dynamics (non-directive teaching style, more open-ended questions, etc.); and cultivation of a positive learning environment and sense of belonging. Each of these will be examined briefly below.

Course Content

The main focus of this article is to provide tangible coaching tools for teachers which integrate smoothly into language teaching while enhancing student learning and *without* losing valuable time. In this regard, of the five techniques listed above, the course content approach is the only technique requiring extra time to be added to the class framework. The content of the language teaching process can be thoroughly enriched with the introduction of self-growth, motivational and well-being materials such as books, articles, TED-talks, etc., from world-renowned authors and coaches. While this content is not specifically designed for language learning, it can be adapted to the language level of the students and smoothly interwoven with the content and various topics of the language coursebook. Examples include Sir Ken Robinson's TED talk on creativity, Brene Brown's work on vulnerability, Simon Sinek's insights on purpose and leadership, *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, etc.

Technically, the introduction of this content varies from just using a quote from such materials for group discussion, to an in-depth reading/listening/video-watching activity, followed by the development of an introspective action-plan development, role-play, essay writing, etc. The

full list of materials with adjusted lesson plans and exercises are provided in the *Learning English through Self-Transformation Coaching Workbook. A Visual Guide to Teaching English to Unlock your and Students' Potential* by Yauheniya and Garry McDaniel, which is in the final stages of development.

Introducing motivational content from world-renowned writers and researchers offers numerous benefits for language learners and teachers alike. It serves as a source of inspiration, fosters self-assurance, self-care, and self-love, and promotes mindset shifts and personal development. Additionally, it facilitates goal setting and self-assessment in both life and studies, and encourages an appreciation for diverse talents, perspectives, and skills. By providing exposure to authentic language, ultimately, it enables learners to discover the deeper "why" behind each step of their language learning journey.

Pedagogical Tools and Techniques

Integrating coaching techniques enables students to facilitate their own learning, development, and performance through a set of coaching models which have proved very effective in achieving "a positive belief cycle" (Gilbert, Whittlesworth, 2009, p. 40). Among the most popular coaching models are GROW and OSCAR which can be incorporated into the thread of the language teaching process. For example, the GROW coaching model stands for **G**oals (aspirations), **R**eality (current situation), **O**ptions (strengths and resources), and **W**ill (actions and accountability). Throughout our practical implementation of this model in the language classroom, we have integrated it into a variety of content. To explain further, the following three examples illustrate the ways the GROW model was applied in various language-learning contexts.

First, students developed a personal wellness action plan (setting goals, evaluating the reality, defining possibilities, setting out the practical path, self-reflection). Second, students read a course-book-led program, (Headway Upper-Intermediate, 5th ed., "Our Plastic Earth) and worked in small groups to develop a feasible action plan based on GROW, to provide tangible solutions to the problem of plastic in the oceans. Third, the GROW model incorporates highly effective and widely applicable techniques, both for individuals and groups, to brainstorm and critically evaluate social, cultural, and personal situations or plans. One such technique is goal setting using the SMART model, which helps identify goals based on the following criteria: **S** – Specific, **M** – Measurable, **A** – Achievable, **R** – Relevant, and **T** – Time-bound. For instance, when students consider their desired language acquisition goals, they are encouraged to describe their desired outcome in specific and measurable terms, such as achieving a C1 proficiency level or securing a position with the UN translation department.

To address the **A** (Achievable and Realistic) component, students assess their current resources (e.g., time, skills, and tools) and develop a strategy to work progressively toward their goal. For the **R** (Relevant) aspect, they reflect on how their goal aligns with their values and motivations. For example, aspiring to a C1 level might reflect a desire to contribute to society by fostering better communication and providing linguistical assistance. Finally, the **T** (Time-bound) element involves creating a structured action plan with clear stages and milestones. This ensures students remain on track and can measure their progress as they work toward achieving their language proficiency or other aspirations.

Coaching models like GROW[4] and OSCAR (**o**utcome, **s**ituation, **c**hoices, **a**ctions, **r**eview),

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[4] The GROW model also incorporates another powerful technique for analyzing the realities of personal, group, or business goals: the **SWOT analysis**. This method involves evaluating **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats** to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation. For example, if a group of students is working on

and many other models can be *easily employed* in language classrooms and adjusted to any topic in the coursebook: to discuss sports, global warming, literature, and the news, etc., in the language being learned. The models can also encourage learners to explore the subject from a well-structured, in-depth approach, which can easily engage students independently in self-reflection, developing personal goals and action steps, self-evaluation, etc.), and collectively (active mini-group, group discussions and projects). Such activities trigger analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving skills while empowering students to take a larger role in their own language development.

As language coaching is also a future-oriented developmental process, many other coaching techniques involve students reflecting upon stories about their 'future successful self' in which they create their own compelling examples of what their life looks like in the future after attaining their language learning goals. Such activities include "a letter from your future self", "the story of my success", etc. These activities are substantiated by motivational theories and are rooted in positive psychology (Kovasc, 2022). Other tools we have successful utilized include 'The Personal Iceberg' technique, 'Wheel of Balance', 'Journaling', creating a 'Tree of Gratitude', 'Habit Tracker', etc. All these tools can be integrated into speaking, writing, listening, or reading activities, and adapted to topics in the language being learned.

Blending coaching tools and techniques into the canvas of the language classroom provides teachers with manageable instruments to clarify for themselves, structure into a transparent framework, and to successfully effectuate the humanistic approach to language teaching, with emphasis on cultivation of the holistic awareness and skillset which enhance areas of students far beyond language proficiency.

Instructional Formats

Language teachers may also utilize an instructional project-based language teaching approach[5] which emphasizes *learning by doing*. Project-based English coaching classes refer to students' designing, planning, and carrying out a project in the desired language such as a creating a product, poster, research, publication, visual chart, blog, video or a presentation. To accomplish these outcomes, individual students or small mini-groups are provided with visual worksheets and guidelines for the project (from the *Learning English through Self-Transformation Workbook* mentioned above). Learners then brainstorm, design, and execute the project that produces an output and present[6] their results to the teacher and the rest of the class as a team.

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an environmental protection project, they can use SWOT analysis to brainstorm and assess the feasibility of their ideas. This structured approach not only enhances critical thinking but also encourages the use of more effective and targeted vocabulary related to the project's scope.

[5] Kasatkina-Kubyshkina et. al, in their PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: PECULIARITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION, maintain: "…there are still four elements generally considered to be common to all project-based activities/classes: a central topic from which all the activities derive and which drives the project towards a final objective; access to means of investigation to choose, collect, analyze and use information; interaction with other learners is fundamental to PBL, which provides plenty of opportunities for sharing ideas, collaborating and communicating; presence of a final product in the form of portfolios, essays, posters, presentations, reports, videos, webpages, blogs, etc. There are three distinct stages of PBL: pre-task stage, performance and presentation stages" (Kasatkina-Kubyshkina et. al, 2021).

[6] Kasatkina-Kubyshkina et al. describe the presentation stage as the culmination of project-based learning (PBL): "Culmination of project-based learning is a final presentation of learning itself. At this stage students receive nonstop feedback from teammates, their instructor, mentor, and others involved in the project. However, presentations need to be more than just an introduction to the product or learning artifact and positive emotions. To

Such activities are followed by the entire class providing feedback and additional insights to the team in the language being learned. The intent of this approach is to engage all students simultaneously as proposed by Scrivener in *Classroom Management Techniques*. Scrivener suggests "trying mini classes within one class by clumping groups of seats together in different ways to make separate islands for working subgroups", which also gives the teacher an opportunity to "offer private contact time" to each student within such a classroom organization framework (Scrivener, 2012, pp. 199 – 223).   In addition, this approach ensures all students gain recognition and the feeling of self-belonging. This, in turn, reinforces the students feeling that they are 'being part of something larger'. Every student is heard and appreciated for their unique perspective and efforts, which empowers students to express themselves more freely in a foreign language and helps to ensure that every member of the group contributes approximately the same amount of effort and work.

By implementing this approach, the language teacher facilitates the process by closely engaging with the mini-groups through coaching in-class communication style discussed below. As a result, these types of language learning projects are oriented towards meaningful topics and areas of students' lives and their interaction with each other, which, in return, fosters a more personalized and inclusive goal-oriented approach to teaching.

In-class Communication Dynamics

In *Neuro-language Coaching: Brain Friendly Language Learning,* Rachel Paling describes the language coach's communication competences as, "the art of having coaching style conversations" with learners, and then proceeds to outline some in-class communication strategies, which encourages the traditional 'directive' teacher to engage as a more engaging language coach. The strategies and tips mentioned include a non-directive teaching style, use of more open-ended questions (stop finishing students' sentences, etc.), mirroring, provoking 'aha-moments', and provoking autonomous learning paths, etc. (Paling, 2017).

Wise and Sundstrom provide a coaching resource on researched-based teaching behaviors established to have (effective behaviors) – or not have (ineffective behaviors) – "a causal connection to student learning" (Wise, Sundstrom, 2011, p. 71). Examples of effective/ineffective behaviors include uses of general praise versus specific academic praise; maintaining effective/ineffective academic pacing; the strategic use of questions requiring synthesis, and many others.

Whitmore offers a set of powerful coaching questions that language educators can seamlessly integrate into classroom communication to enhance students' agency and accountability while alleviating their fear of making mistakes. Examples of such questions include:

- What else? – This question typically 'evokes more,' just as plain silence can also encourage additional responses.
- If you knew the answer, what would it be? – Encourages students to "look beyond the blockage.
- What advice would you give to a friend in your situation?
- Imaging having a dialog with the wisest person you know or can think of. What would they tell you to do?
- What would you gain or lose by doing/saying that? (Whitmore, 2005, p. 52).

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reach the goal, i.e., affirm cognitive growth and learning, a teacher needs to involve and make everyone participate: the student presenting learning, the audience, the facilitator" (Kasatkina-Kubyshkina et. al, 2021).

These communication nuances nourish a supportive yet growth-oriented environment for both students and teachers, and foster trust, care, love, motivation, and other values within a language classroom. It has been our experience that a language educator might find these strategies useful and beneficial for their own professional well-being as well.

Inspirational Environment, Sense of Belonging and Hamburger Evaluation Model
Integrating coaching tools and techniques into the classroom can also equip language educators with strategies and techniques to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging among students and encourages them to be themselves. Some of these tools have been discussed in *Project-based Approach* and *In-class Communication* segments. This section provides more coaching tools crafted to boost unity and togetherness. In this context, we refer to team-coaching tools. McDaniel explains: "Team coaching instruments are explicitly related to individual coaching. The difference is as follows: in the process of team coaching, the coachee is represented by a group of people, which is considered to be an entity" (McDaniel, 2019, p. 7). McDaniel further elaborates: "Team coaching enables a team to function as more than the sum of its parts by clarifying (1) what the team is to accomplish and (2) by improving relationships both within the team and between the team and its external environment" (p. 11).

In the context of a language classroom, team coaching can support students in collaboratively making decisions crucial to the successful completion of tasks or projects. Additionally, in cases of "pure team coaching," specific coaching activities can be employed to build rapport, trust, and positivity within the group, particularly at the beginning of a semester. Each mini-group project activity can be enriched with inspirational, rapport-building team coaching exercises. For example, 'Team Crystal Ball' encourages participants to envision the groups or project's positive future and develop a list of actionable steps to achieve it. Activities such as 'Selling Snow Ploughs to Hawaiians' enhance emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and empathy, while 'Four C's of Teams' fosters unity and deeper understanding among team members. Additional exercises, like the 'Team Effectiveness Reality Check,' further promote team cohesion and effectiveness (Mc Daniel, 2019). At the same time, individual coaching exercises such as the *Wheel of Life*, *How I Spend My Time Diagram*, or *A Letter from Your Wise Future Self*, though completed individually, often inspire rich group discussions. These discussions foster critical thinking, encourage the sharing of experiences, appreciation of differences and address vulnerability in a positive and constructive manner, ultimately cultivating a sense of unity and belonging within the group.

Finally, we intentionally included the *Hamburger model* of feedback and evaluation within the I**nspirational Environment** segment, as emphasized by Whitmore: "[A coach] must think of [people] in terms of their potential, not their performance" (Whitmore, 2005, p. 13). The 'Hamburger Approach' to feedback follows a structured methodology designed to balance positive reinforcement with constructive critique. It begins with a constructive compliment, often framed as a "what worked well for you" question, symbolized as the "top bun." This is followed by the central critical feedback, represented as the "meat," typically involving questions like "What could be done better?" or "What areas need improvement?" Finally, the feedback concludes with a positive affirmation, symbolized as the "bottom bun." This might include statements like "Great job!" or, when addressing areas of critique, more encouraging remarks such as, "You've come a long way, and I'm confident you'll excel with continued effort.". This approach strives to harmonize constructive critique with encouragement, cultivating a positive and supportive atmosphere within the language classroom.

The Hamburger model aligns with this principle, fostering a supportive and motivational atmosphere in the language classroom. It minimizes the fear of making mistakes while effectively communicating areas for student growth. It is important to note that the Hamburger method, along with all the coaching techniques discussed in this article, is intended as *a recommendation* for teachers interested in incorporating coaching elements into their practice. It is not designed to replace traditional methods of evaluation but rather to complement them.

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Preliminary Research Findings
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To test the effectiveness of this approach in the language classroom, English Philology students were surveyed to gain their personal perspective and feedback. Students (n=112) completed a survey rating which approach (traditional classroom or a classroom that integrated coaching skills) was more effective in developing their skills and knowledge in 15 key competencies (see Figure 2 below) on a five-point Likert scale (1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree).

Figure 1
Traditional/Coaching Approach Survey Results
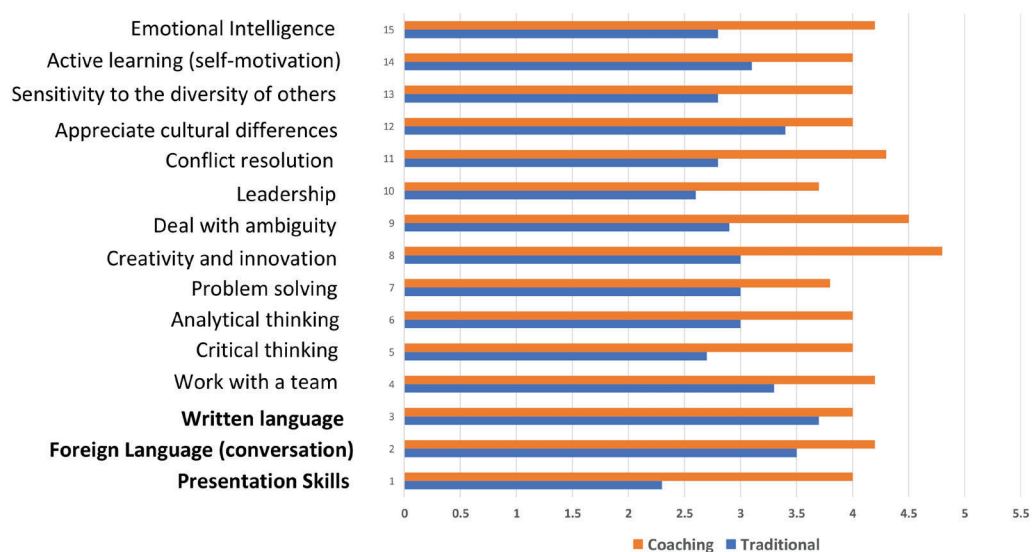
As illustrated in Figure 1, students consistently rated the coaching approach to teaching a foreign language well above that of the traditional classes they attended. This included the traditional key competencies of learning a written foreign language, conversation skills, and the ability to present themselves more effectively in public. Students shared that the coaching approach was more effective because it encouraged them to think and express themselves and listen to other students 'out-of-the-box' instead of simply relying on completing standardized questions, matching lists, recitation, and simply demonstrating understanding of vocabulary by writing sentences. In addition, students reported they felt a higher level of responsibility to learn for themselves, feel respected by the teacher, enhanced their team membership and leadership skills, and appreciate the diversity of skills and insights of their classmates. Another important outcome from this survey surfaced in written insights by students. Students consistently observed that in traditional classes, they often felt embarrassed or even castigated if they asked a question, and in which case the

teacher minimized, belittled or ignored their question. As a result, students reported being less involved in the class, avoided asking questions, and generally tried to 'stay below the radar' and avoid gaining the attention of the teacher. In the coaching-based classes, students reported feeling they were genuinely listened to, appreciated, respected and willing to express when they misunderstood something or had a question.

Finally, it is important to note that the effectiveness of a teaching approach can vary depending on individual preferences and learning styles. For example, the authors of this study also applied this approach consistently in courses such as Presentation Skills, Business Communication, Conflict Management, Management Skills and writing classes, not just grammar and integrated skills classes. In these courses, the students consistently reported they appreciated and learned more in the classes, integrating coaching skills far more than in traditional class settings.

Conclusion

The key findings of this project illustrate that well-being and life-language coaching is an effective tool that can be applied in teaching foreign languages. This approach fosters greater student 'ownership' of the learning process, motivates them to shape their personal goals in language acquisition, and to engineer the steps on the road of progress towards self-leadership and overall well-being in life as an empowered human being.

The authors of this project have integrated and implemented many well-being and success-oriented group and individual activities in the language classroom. The students were actively employing coaching models and were highly engaged in activities that facilitated language acquisition as well as self-growth, self-development exercises, mindfulness, well-being, team-building coaching projects, etc. In our classes, coaching is both a tool of teaching/learning, as well as the content (to a needed degree), and the overall demeanor of the studies. Young adults expressed positive feedback about the ample opportunities for more self-expression in the coaching environment, normally reserved for top-notch business professionals, celebrities, and sport-stars.

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