

A transition to Language Coach

Interview with Diane Jackson, Cambridge English speaking examiner, Education director, Content creator and Teacher trainer, Malaysia



“Taking the course was phenomenal”

Can you describe your professional career before taking the language coaching certification (LCC)?

I've been a pre-school principal, primary school teacher and H.O.D. Cambridge English speaking examiner, Education director, Content creator and Teacher trainer.

How did you find the course?

In my years of teaching, I have always prioritised empowering the learner, and this LCC course did exactly that for me.

Taking the course was phenomenal. Every aspect of it reinforced and cemented my strongly held beliefs and attitude towards teaching and learning. Delivery of the course by Rachel was perfect, not only in her obvious mastery of the knowledge she shared, but her delivery was on point. From the sharing of complex issues to the measured way in which she spoke and the calm tone of her voice, I felt safe and at ease as she took our little group on excursions into the inner workings of the brain.

These helped me better understand the triggers and effects of the powerful, and potentially debilitating, amygdala! In fact I enjoyed the (overall) course so much, I would look forward to every session with great anticipation, and now find myself fondly missing the online sessions and hearing Rachel's warm, reassuring voice. I am quietly pleased that Rachel's surname, when pronounced with a short vowel 'a' translated from Malay into English, means 'the most', because that's what she is 😊.

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Which highlights or insights did you gain from the LCC?

I really appreciated the melding of coaching practices with neuroscience. The two are woven together in a natural way that surrounds the coachee with a sense of really being understood (not so much academically, but personally, emotionally). I believe this is a vitally important element that sets neurolanguage coaching apart from other

approaches. That sense of security, empathy and connection, promotes open and active communication which significantly increases motivation and expedites learning. Whilst I have always taught this way instinctively, I became acutely aware of how brain-based learning could be enhanced by proper coaching techniques. The structured methods and delivery of language coaching are both organised and organic, leaving me convinced that this method is ideal for coachees to overcome their learning blocks and develop a better self-perception in terms of their own capability, capacity to learn, and self-motivation. When coachees feel the coach is invested in them, they begin to invest in themselves.

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What was the immediate impact on your way of teaching after taking the course?

In my role as a teacher trainer and mentor, I have become more confident of my instinctive leanings which focused on recognising the learner as an individual with his or her own unique make up; personality, emotional maturity etc. The idea of student autonomy and giving students ownership of their learning is a pretty novel concept in Malaysia and until then I had had little to no real ‘backing’ upon which I could, proverbially, hang my beliefs. Taking the course thus cemented these ideas and helped me to convince trainee teachers to think differently about their work as educators, and see their students in a new, more positive

light. For both new and veteran teachers, the process was more easily embraced once they thought about themselves as students and compared ways in which they interacted with their students.

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Were there any impacts on your personal life during or after the course?

A deeper understanding of neuroscience has helped me make personal connections between my own mental blocks, and preferred learning styles which now gives me greater confidence to assist and motivate others.

How was your professional development after the course?

I continue to develop teaching and learning materials, I am now working towards a Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) qualification (as I have no teaching qualification to speak of), I will be training and assessing groups of Malaysian teachers who will deliver intensive English classes to students in China this year, I have met with Prof. Sugata Mitra (SOLEs & School in the Cloud) with a view to creating a training course on Self Organised Learning Environment, I deliver seminars around South East Asia for a world leader in English language assessment.

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How has the course changed the way you deliver a language course?

Unfortunately I am sorry to say I have yet to actually function fully as a neurolanguage coach. Do come back to me on this!

Is there any additional information that you would like to add?

In April I am organising a meet up with Malaysian coaches, Clarence and Debbie, with the intention of brainstorming ways in which we can support one another in promoting language coaching and one another. I would also like to encourage more teachers to sit in on one of Rachel’s introductory webinars and consequently step into the LCC course.

I am inordinately grateful for the training and knowledge I have gained through the course. I do intend to actually implement and make full use of it all as a neurolanguage coach, however I am still being carried by the tide of necessity which I trust will carry me to the stability of the shore in the not-too-distant future 😊.

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