

Chapter 6:

Coaching UPSIDE DOWN

1. PERSONALIZATION
1. START WITH AN IDEA FOR A PERSONALIZED STORY
2. COACH INDIVIDUAL SKILLS BASED ON EACH PERSON'S PREFERENCES

(SEE TYPICAL TECHNIQUES / ON WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE COACHED?)

Remember this?

This thought drove me completely out of my mind.

The coach's job is to facilitate. The coach's job is to allow the teacher's natural genius to explode.

Then, the coach's job is to show that teacher how to coach someone else to find his or her own internal genius.

As coaches, the more we talk, the more difficult it is for a teacher to find his or her internal voice. We should be providing teachers with resources such as story content and personalized information about students, and then allowing his or her creativity to spark on its own.

A teacher should never leave a coaching session or even a workshop feeling like someone else is more talented or more capable. Once you quiet your own mind and become fully present with your students, you will step into the magic, too.

Here's the secret that good language teachers know: There is nothing magic about a book. There is nothing magic about the languages we teach. It's all just words. There is, though, magic in the combination of imagination and people that, when mixed together, bring

*books to life, bring languages to life and bring kids to life.
TPRS® is a renewable energy source we can all run on.
-Karen Rowan*

*Remember that a person's name is to that
person the sweetest and most important sound
in any language.*

-Dale Carnegie

GETTING STARTED

Personalization exercise 1:

Introduce yourself to 3 people. Find out what book they are currently reading. You have 120 seconds.

(Alternative... find out how many pets they have ever had. Find out one favorite sport or activity.)

After 120 seconds say: Sit down, please, and close your eyes. Please raise your hand if you remember the names of the 3 people you just talked to.

Flash this slide on the screen:

Remember that a person's name is to that person the most important sound in any language. – Dale Carnegie

This day will not be about practicing teaching content better. What we are teaching is not as important as who we are teaching.

Personalization exercise 2:

Introduce yourself to one other person. Find out his or her name. =) Ask this one question: If you had to be trapped in an elevator for 24 hours with any one celebrity, whom would you choose? You have 120 seconds.

Please sit down. Did anyone hear a really good answer?

(Let a few people report each other's answers.

On your index card, write the name of the person with whom you spoke and their answer.

Personalization exercise #3

Get into groups of 4, but stay with the "your celebrity" partner. Ideally, these groups will be set up according to the group directions, so taking an inventory of languages at this point is advisable.

In your groups get this information from each person in the group. Add it to your index cards. You should now have 3 total cards.

1. If I had to eat 3 meals a day for a month at the same restaurant, I would choose to eat at.....

2. What are you afraid of? What are you afraid of that it makes no sense to be afraid of?

Call on people to share interesting responses they heard in their group. Stop and elaborate on interesting ideas and ask more questions so that the group has some small pieces of information about a few people.

Personalization exercise #4

Answer these questions for yourself on your fourth card.

Name:

Who is your favorite musician?

What is your favorite band?

Which is your favorite TV show?

Who is your favorite celebrity / athlete / academic?

Where is your favorite place to go on the weekend?

What is your favorite restaurant?

What is your favorite food?

What time do you go to bed?

What time do you get up?

Which superpower do you wish you had?

My secret (crush, animal I wish I had)

When someone is about to talk to or about you while creating a story, please hand him or her this card about yourself.

Personalization Activity:
BRAINSTORMING A STORY

1. Look around and decide on one person to use as an example. Think of something you know about that person.
2. Write it down. (everyone writes down one thing)
3. Share your “secret” (nothing that truly shouldn’t be shared, please)

Person 1 shares one piece of information.

Ask the class.... Think about it....and then write it down, but don’t say it. These things can be real or made up. They’re better if they are made up.

What DON’T we know?

- A. Who?
- B. What?
- C. Where?
- D. When?
- E. Which?
- F. How?
- G. How much?
- H. How many?
- I. Why?

5. Everyone should make up some information about the original fact to answer the questions we don’t know.

6. Share the made up facts (don’t piggy back off of someone else’s – write them down first and then share several of them.) When there are ideas of a story that come from all of those separate ideas, the person

who is writing the story will write down the best of the ideas to use in a story.

7. Move on to another “secret” and then make up “facts” to flesh it out.

Example:

Fact: Carrie went to La Loma restaurant last night and the waiter was making eyes at her.

What don’t we know?

Made up information:

The waiter serenaded her with “Besame mucho.”

Carrie didn’t talk to the waiter because she’s secretly in love with him.

Carrie’s husband was there in disguise and saw him and hit him.

The waiter recognized her from Dancing with the Stars and wanted her autograph.

But the waiter didn’t speak Spanish, and Carrie doesn’t speak English.

Purpose of the exercise --- to learn how starting from basic facts and making up details can build an “on your feet” story.

Use that person as the example person when demonstrating circling.

Target vocabulary: enjoys / likes to.... (disfruta de)

1. Carrie... what do you enjoy?

When Carrie shares, hold her card and any information we already know about her.

Demonstrate “Circling”

Carrie, do you enjoy _____

Class, does Carrie enjoy _____.

Does Carrie enjoy ____ or does Carrie enjoy _____.

Carrie does not enjoy _____, Carrie enjoys _____.

Groups practice replicating demo. Talk to the person to your right. Ask for their card. Because we have some information we have ideas regarding where to guide the story.

Second demo:

Add question words:

What does Carrie enjoy more?

Where does Carrie enjoy _____?

Practice the following skills in order. When each person has practiced one skill, move on to the next skill.

- a) setting a slow enough pace
- b) Asking questions without question words
- c) using the negative
- d)comprehension checks of pacesetter students.)
- e) parking on all of the question words (introduce 1 at a time)
- f. Coach the “pause” after question words here)
- e) Parking on one question word to dig for secrets

Continue to add personalization activities throughout the practice of the skills.

Last half hour to an hour OR over lunch: Open discussion, questions, general support

A very important note about who the authority is:

Because we are coaching for what it really looks like in a personalized classroom, the actor in the story is always the authority on the answers to the questions. If the class says that Carrie enjoys dancing, the teacher then asks Carrie if she enjoys dancing. If she says no, the teacher says, “Carrie, what DO you enjoy?” Carrie says... biking. The story changes to accommodate what is interesting to Carrie.

A note about the pacesetter: Also referred to as the “barometer” student. Give the group three signs, an “I don’t understand” sign (my favorite is one fist hitting the opposite palm) and a “slow down” sign. GOOD comprehension checks guarantee the success of the pacesetter.

A note about what to coach: If the person being coached is only ready for basic questioning, guide him/her through that. If the person being coached is proficient at basic skills already, move on and start adding skills ONE AT A TIME. Advanced teachers can be coached with actors. Still keep sessions short. A teacher is done being coached when s/he is successful at the ONE THING. Let the person being coached get in the groove a little before giving feedback --- and then only on one thing. Point to the question words on the wall or have her teach with the sheet in her hands. If a teacher bombs, don't let her stop. Stand behind her and feed her the script in English and have her translate on the spot until she gets the feel for it. Do not let someone who is failing sit down unless there is no other choice. Then make sure to get her back up later. Post the "Typical Techniques" form on the wall along with other posters and have participants write on an index card what they would like to be coached on. Feel free to alter that form based on available time, what you are good at coaching and the level of the group.

Setting up a coaching room

Supplies: Sticky butcher paper (Post it or Office Depot or Office Max).

Markers. Crayola markers. Paper and pen for note-taking. It is also helpful to bring the materials each person teaches from.

Walls

Post coaching posters on the walls at each station. Each station should be able to see a Rules poster, a Question Words poster, a Question word poster for parking and have at least one blank sheet of paper. There should be pile of markers near the posters and there should also be some indication of who is coaching each time. Whatever prop or hat or ribbon is given to the coach functions as a "talking stick." (Posters are listed at the end of this chapter.)

III. Rules for a successful coaching workshop

The biggest enemy of a successful coaching session is open- ended discussion. There is great value in discussion, so be sure to set aside structured time for unstructured discussion, but an entire day of valuable discussion will not leave any time for coaching. As the facilitator, remember that lecturing and discussion will not yield long term results in the classroom whereas "practice by doing" and "teaching others what you have learned" leads to nearly a 90% retention rate of the information. As the facilitator, it's your job to gently keep the group on task so that they have a high quality experience that will impact their classrooms. Through trial and error we have learned that if everyone agrees to follow the following rules, all

of the participants will feel safe and the coaching workshop will be PROFOUNDLY more effective.

RULES: (These should be posted.)

1. There is only one coach.
2. Do not correct the language accuracy of another teacher.
3. No discussion.
4. BE students... not teachers. [BE the pacesetter (barometer) student if you don't know the language.]
5. NO out-of-bounds.... The word being taught and cognates only. (Not in the classroom, just in the coaching workshop.)
6. Hard-stop vs. slow stop

Explanations:

1. There is only one coach. Don't help the teacher while she's teaching. Instead, play the role of the student. It's too intimidating to the teacher to have several people coaching her simultaneously.
2. Our language abilities vary but in this group creating an environment of extreme safety and trust is the most important component of a successful coaching workshop.
3. Designate discussion periods once everyone has had a turn, but comments during the coaching session will dissolve into discussion groups very quickly.
4. The teacher will begin by identifying the pacesetter (barometer) student in the group for the language he teaches and then will check in with the pacesetter (barometer).
5. With so many languages in such a short period of time we are not trying to learn the languages, we are trying to practice the method. Stray words in many languages divert our attention from practicing. In your classroom, however, staying in-bounds includes all of the words it can be presumed they already know from previous instruction, expanding our base.
6. This is only necessary when multiple groups are run simultaneously. Since after several turns they will not stay in synch, any instructions you might give may cause an interruption. Distinguish between - "everybody pause so I can explain one thing and then you can start again" interruptions and "you have one more minute to wrap up this turn before we go on to the next activity or take a break" kind of interruptions.

Explanations: (Explain WHY so the rules don't sound bossy --- to protect the teachers who volunteer; guarantee that being coached feels safe. The overriding objective is that: BEING COACHED MUST FEEL SAFE)

IV. Roles or jobs for each participant during coaching sessions (These should be posted.)

Pacesetter (barometer)

Rep tally-er

Teacher

Coach

Explanation:

1. The pacesetter (barometer) gives the teacher a sign every time he or she doesn't understand a word or the teacher is speaking too quickly. It is the pacesetter's job to keep the teacher speaking slowly by giving slow down signs and stop signs the way a student would. A beginning pace should be "The boy (count 1...2...) wants (count 1...2...) to eat (count 1... 2...) a hamburger."
2. The rep-tallier counts the number of times the target structure is used by the teacher and reports the number at the end of the turn. Straight circling in order will result in 14 reps. As soon as circling is done out of order, a rep count can help the teacher to know whether or not she continued to get reps while circling in a more free form manner.
3. Border Control (out-of-bounds) keeps track of words that are not cognates and not target structures to help teachers stay focused on deliberately making their speech 100% comprehensible. (Be careful that this person does not take on the role of coach.)
4. The teacher stands in front of the group, teaches the target structure in his target language and asks questions of the "class" for about 3 minutes, staying focused on the pacesetter student.
5. There is only one coach. The coach is the only person who gives feedback to the teacher either during or after the coaching session. A good coach rarely speaks, but coaches by pointing to the poster if the teacher gets lost or confused. A good coach focuses on one thing at a time. Feedback is limited to the one thing. Pace is the first and most important skill and should be established before any other skills are emphasized. The job can be rotated so that the coach gets to practice, too, but only one person can coach at a time. If the teacher gets too much coaching, she will, absolutely guaranteed, sit down. Once she sits down, the coaching session will turn into a discussion.

V. Group arrangement

This depends on the number of people in attendance. If it's a small group, (3-6 people), work in one group. If it's a much larger group, the size of the room may determine the groups. Ideally, there should be approximately 6-10 people in each group.

To divide a large room of people into coaching groups, first have teachers of the least commonly taught languages stand. They become team captains.

Add to their groups an even number of German teachers, French teachers and Spanish teachers with the intention of having a minimum of 2 different languages and a maximum of 3 different languages in each group.

Non-ideal group 1 French & Russian teacher 1 Spanish & German teacher 2 Spanish teachers who also know French 1 German & French teacher

This group is a mess. It will be difficult to teach to the barometer, because so many of them know more than one language. With each new turn the French, German and Spanish will become more complex. The languages have too much in common.

Non ideal group 1 Japanese teacher 1 Mandarin teacher 1 Russian teacher 1 French teacher 1 Spanish teacher

Too many languages. Each turn they'll be starting at scratch with no reasonable expectation of being able to add a little bit of comprehension each time.

Non-ideal group 6 Spanish

With no pacesetter (barometer) student, the language instantly becomes elevated and unrealistic. The boredom in a coaching group with only one language is palpable.

Ideal groups: 2 Japanese 2 French 4 Spanish (who do not speak French or Japanese)

3 languages. The Japanese teachers become good pacesetter (barometer) students for the French and Spanish teachers. The non-romance language will keep the French and Spanish teachers from becoming over-confident.

Ideal group: 3 Mandarin 3 French

2 languages. Good pacesetter (barometer) students because these languages have little in common. An even number of participants allows for even turns. Begin with Mandarin to set the pace and then alternate languages.

Ideal group: 3 German 5 Spanish

2 languages that aren't too similar. No language overlap means good pacesetters (barometers). Many German teachers know a little Spanish, so watch to be sure the pacesetter is very conscientious in each language.

Non-ideal groups are still work-able. For example, a group of Japanese

teachers could get together to coach each other if they were careful to be conscientious as pacesetter students, but whenever the opportunity is present, diversify groups for an optimal coaching experience. The groups should arrange themselves in semi-circles facing the wall where the butcher paper has been hung. The person who is teaching should stand in front of the blank butcher paper and write the target vocabulary in the target language next to the English word.

POSTERS

RULES:

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JOBS

Pacesetter (barometer); Rep tally-er; Teacher; Coach

TPR STORYTELLING

1. LOW LEVEL QUESTIONS

ASK QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE THEY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT WITHOUT REPLYING IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE SO STUDENTS CAN FOCUS ALL OF THEIR ATTENTION ON ACQUIRING AND TEACHER HAVE EVEN MORE TIME TO PROVIDE CI. AVOID QUESTION WORDS.

QUESTION THAT ELICITS A YES OR NO ANSWER

QUESTION THAT ELICITS A TRUE / FALSE ANSWER

QUESTION THAT OFFERS EITHER/OR CHOICES(is her name beth or bob?)

RE-STATE THE QUESTION, BUT USE THE NEGATIVE (no her name isn't bob)

2. HIGHER LEVEL QUESTIONS (USE QUESTION WORDS)

WHO?
WHAT?
WHERE?
WHEN?
WHICH?
HOW?
WHY?

HOW MANY?
HOW MUCH?
WHAT COLOR?
WHAT TIME?
WITH WHOM?
FOR WHOM?

3. HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS / PERSONALIZATION

HOW DID HE REACT? WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM? WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?

WAS THAT THE BEST CHOICE? WHAT WERE SOME OTHER OPTIONS?
HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

The end goal is for all participants to be able to do real Story-Asking. They should have actors, compliment their actors, ask the story while it is being acted out, maintain the space, stay in the target language and continue personalizing throughout. Try not to spend so much time focusing on the skills, that participants don't gain confidence in manifesting the entire process successfully.

“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

— Haim G. Ginott