Becoming an All-Star Language-and-Culture-Learning Coach

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Here is a checklist to help you to identify some of the attitudes, skills and areas of knowledge you already possess that are helpful to a language and culture coach, as well as areas for possible growth.

**Attitudes:** I –

__like people and want to help them succeed
__am optimistic about most people’s ability to learn a language and culture, given the right circumstances and support
__am sensitive to people’s struggles and needs
__can take some negative feedback
__am tough-minded enough to enforce policies when necessary and to push learners who need to be pushed

**Skills:**

**People skills:** I –

__am good at connecting with people and forming relationships with them
__am a good listener: both willing to listen and able to pick out significant factors from what people say, to follow up on
__am able to confront people in an appropriate way, when necessary
__am a good communicator

**Analytical, problem-solving and diagnostic skills:** I –

__can do a Needs Analysis for a particular learner
__can figure out features of a language or culture that might require special approaches
__can diagnose particular error patterns or areas of language learners need to work on
__am good at thinking of creative solutions to problems and at suggesting innovative approaches to help learners break through plateaus

**Organizational and management skills:** I –

__can help learners set reasonable and appropriate goals
__can provide an overall learning plan or help a learner to develop one
__can adapt a learning plan to individual abilities, needs and circumstances
__can help learners integrate learning from a teacher or tutor with learning from the community
__can give learners a degree of direction appropriate to them and help learners to become increasingly self-directed
__can hold learners accountable and review progress with them
__can administer assessments or help learners to assess themselves in appropriate ways

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Knowledge
Information pertinent to giving the right help at the right time: I understand the relevance of –
__the stage of learning of the learner in choosing appropriate techniques and activities
__the physical and social context of learning, including the attitudes of members of the community to their language and to learners to the way the learner approaches language learning
__the degree of self-direction the learner displays to the kind and degree of direction I give
__learner characteristics such as learning style and personality traits to how a learner will tend to go about language and culture learning

Knowledge about language and language acquisition: I –
__know something about different theories of second language acquisition and the research on which they are based
__am thoroughly familiar with at least one language proficiency scale and understand the characteristics of the performance of language learners at each level in the scale
__am familiar with a variety of language and culture learning activities and techniques, and know which ones are appropriate to different stages of learning
__understand something about curriculum design
__know important linguistic features of the group of languages being learned by the people I am coaching

Cultural Knowledge: I
__understand something about cultural values and how they differ
__am familiar with the concept of cultural “scripts” or “schemata” and how they are important to language and culture acquisition
__am familiar with the most important features of the culture the people I am coaching are dealing with

Knowledge about people and how they tick: I
__know something about personality factors that can affect language learning success
__understand something about motivation; what feeds it and what bleeds it
__know the symptoms of culture shock and the kinds of things that cause it
Language-and-Culture Growth Plan

1. These are the attitudes, skills and areas of knowledge I already possess. How can I use them more effectively?

2. These are areas in which I see a need to develop more skills and knowledge.

3. These are the areas I want to concentrate on first:

4. This is my action plan for the coming year