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Unlocking Students' Potential and Building Rapport: How to Integrate Elements of Coaching and NLP into Translator Training

In today's world, it seems that everyone could benefit from having an occasional coaching session, teachers in particular. This is because they need continuous growth to effectively inspire and motivate their students. In an era where the Internet provides unlimited access to information, schools and teachers are no longer the primary sources of knowledge. Contrary to what a lot of people still tend to believe, the transfer of knowledge and information is no longer the predominant function of schools and other educational institutions.

This paper explores the roles that schools, institutes of higher education and teachers should fulfill in the rapidly changing, technology-driven world. It briefly introduces selected concepts related to coaching and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), offering practical suggestions for integrating them into translation classrooms with a view to enhancing the process of both teaching and learning. The goal is also to encourage teachers to consider the psychological aspects of being a student – a translation trainee – as well as to view themselves not solely as educators, but also as coaches who strive to bring out the best in their students.

Coaching and NLP provide a valuable range of methods that can help academic professionals and students alike achieve their career objectives while enhancing their well-being and performance. These techniques address important issues like goal-setting and stress management, offering teachers the support they need to thrive in their roles. In the long run, the advantages reach beyond the individual, benefiting students and universities, and contributing to a more vibrant and successful academic environment.

Key words: *coaching, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), translation teaching, translator training.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Coaching and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) are still relatively new concepts in Poland, frequently met with skepticism and doubt from those who are unfamiliar with them or only have a vague understanding of what they entail. Some people continue to view these fields in a negative way, dismissing them as courses of "positive thinking" or even a sort of "brainwashing" practice. However, this paper a i m s to demonstrate that the elements of both coaching and neuro-linguistic programming can be highly valuable when working with students and fostering one's personal development as a teacher.

Coaching can be understood as a process of "unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them – a facilitation approach" [11, p. 3]. "The role of the coach is not to guide, direct or instruct, but rather to 'facilitate' the client towards their own discoveries, insights and goals" [4, p. 121].

However, there are more definitions of coaching that could be found in literature. Definitions of coaching as viewed from different perspectives are provided by, among others: Kilburg, 2000; Palmer, Stubbs & Whybrow 2003; Brook 2009; Kimsee-House et al. 2011; Passmore and Fillery-Travis 2011. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, coaching will be understood as a process of guiding an individual through a process of change, assisting them in defining specific goals (whether personal or professional), as well as supporting them in accomplishing those goals. The fundamental idea behind coaching is that everyone has talents, strengths, as well as untapped potential that, when activated, can help them reach any goal they set for themselves. The main role of a coach is to assist the individual in discovering and unlocking these internal resources necessary to achieve this goal. A coach acts as an engaged partner in the process of the client's development, stimulating them with relevant open-ended questions, actively listening to them, and helping them to clarify their objectives. It might be argued that all these elements are inherent in any teacher's job, as well as in numerous other professions.

Teaching is undoubtedly a profession that requires lifelong learning. A lot of academic educators constitute both research and teaching staff, and this dual function entails a range of responsibilities. On the one hand, they need to constantly update and broaden their knowledge, conduct academic research, engage in research projects, present their findings at conferences, publish articles in their field of specialization, as well as pursue further academic qualifications. On the other hand, they are also expected to educate, inspire, and motivate students, influencing their attitudes and behaviours. The range of responsibilities and tasks faced by any academic teacher is, therefore, very broad and they all seem equally important. In each of these areas, educators can benefit from applying elements of coaching and NLP

principles to obtain the best outcomes. However, prior to introducing the advantages of using these elements in education, it is important to explain what NLP is.

Neuro-linguistic programming, frequently abbreviated to NLP, is a method that was first developed in the United States in the 1970s by two scholars: Richard Bandler – a computer scientist, and John Grinder – a psychologist. It is an interdisciplinary field that combines elements of several fields: psychology, cybernetics, systems theory and neurobiology. The term "neuro-linguistic programming" is composed of 3 elements [7, p. 26]:

– "neuro" – it refers to thought patterns constituting the rational aspect of people's strategies. Individuals experience the world through senses and this sensory information is processed and stored in their minds with the help of their preferred representation system, whether visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or a combination of these;

– "linguistic" – this element pertains to how individuals use language, both in their internal dialogue, and in interactions with others. NLP makes people aware of the language patterns they use and shows how these patterns affect them and others;

– "programming" – this word refers to the strategies that individuals use in order to make decisions, solve problems, learn, evaluate their actions and achieve the desired results in all areas of their personal and professional life.

Therefore, NLP can be understood as a journey of self-discovery and self-development, as well as a way to bring out the best in oneself and others. It also involves the study of excellent communication – both with oneself, and with others. Hence, both coaching and NLP are applicable in numerous fields, including business, therapy, counseling, and education.

2. COACHING AND NLP IN TRANSLATION CLASSROOM

At the TED conference in May 2013, in his speech entitled "Teachers Need Real Feedback", Bill Gates stated that nowadays everyone needs a coach, and teachers in particular. This is because teachers require continuous development to effectively inspire their students. This idea seems particularly relevant today since one could argue that schools as educational institutions no longer have the influence they used to. In the age of the Internet and unlimited access to information, schools are no longer the primary source of knowledge, and the young generations are becoming increasingly demanding, requiring that the information they receive is both relevant and accurate. Therefore, contrary to a widely held belief, the traditional role of schools and institutes of higher education – transferring knowledge and information – is no longer their most important function. Today, the key responsibilities of both schools and educators are: to teach effective verbal and non-verbal communication, promote independent

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Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**.   **2025**. Випуск/Issue **101**

and critical thinking, help students develop problem-solving skills and creativity, as well as discover their talents and strengths, and foster an environment where these talents can be developed and where learning opportunities are found in every situation. With academic knowledge now easily accessible through books, scientific publications and the Internet, contemporary students need something more. They need inspiration and motivation to learn, guidance in discovering their passions and support in pursuing their interests. They need teachers who would believe in them and would encourage and support them in their journey toward achieving their goals. In essence, they need teachers who would also be their mentors and coaches.

As noted by Żylińska [12, p. 40], the most effective education system is one that considers neurobiological factors and embraces students' innate aptitudes and abilities, capitalizing on their natural curiosity, individual talents and internal motivation. This approach ensures brain-friendly teaching and learning, which is the principal aim of neurodidactics. The concept of brain-friendly teaching and learning was also extensively explored by Spitzer in his book *Lernen: Gehirnforschung und die Schule des Lebens* (2002) (English translation: *Learning: The Human Brain and the School of Life*, Polish translation: *Jak uczy się mózg*). In his work, Spitzer examines the learning process from the perspectives of neurobiology, psychology and pedagogy, providing compelling evidence from recent brain research. He convincingly argues that practical conclusions can be drawn from these studies to enhance the teaching process at all levels of education.

2.1 Effective communication – it is impossible not to communicate

Communication is an interaction between at least two people, where each individual is both the sender and the receiver of specific signals, which can be verbal or nonverbal. As observed by O'Connor and Seymour [5, p. 38], people communicate not only through words and sounds, but also through their entire bodies. Even in silence and stillness, individuals still convey information. This aligns with one of the principles of NLP, which states that it is impossible not to communicate. Research shows that in a speech delivered to a group of people, 55% of the impact comes from body language (i.e. posture, gestures and eye contact), 38% of the effect is determined by the tone of voice, and only 7% is based on the content of the speech [5, p. 38]. Effective communication occurs when there is a connection between people, involving their bodies, gestures, and words. In the language of NLP literature, this connection is called "rapport", which involves adapting to another person's body language, tone of voice, and verbal language. Subtly imitating these cues helps to establish rapport, create mutual trust, understanding, and successful communication.

Studies have demonstrated that the stronger the motor coordination between the teacher and the student, the more likely they are to develop a friendly attitude, engage in a conversation and be involved in the communication process [3]. However, in typical classroom or lecture hall settings, where teachers often stand behind a desk in front of the students, effective communication is hindered. The desk or podium acts as a physical and mental barrier that separates the teacher from the students. Therefore, teachers should not hesitate to leave the comfort of their desks and move around the classroom, joining students while they work in pairs or groups. This helps maintain constant communication. It is also beneficial for both the teacher and students if the former actively participates in class activities, rather that solely assigning tasks and awaiting feedback. Some students tend to immediately position themselves at the back of the classroom, but a simple request at the start of the class to come closer, can foster better communication. In addition, teachers should realize that in order to establish rapport with students, students need to feel that they are important to him/her. Therefore, teachers should make an effort to learn and use students' first names. While this might be challenging at the start of the academic year, it is a worthwhile effort that enhances effective communication.

Establishing good contact right at the very beginning allows teachers to build successful relationships with students. As noted by Ready and Burton [7, p. 114], the best teachers are those who are willing to enter their students' world, which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of the subject they teach. This harmonious teacher-student relationship makes all tasks easier. In NLP, this dynamic is referred to as "pacing" and "leading" (ibidem).

Effective communication, according to NLP, also involves skillfully using different sensory modalities that students utilize to process information. These modalities are [7, p. 95]:

– visual – receiving and transmitting information though images;

– auditory – receiving and transmitting information through sounds;

– kinesthetic – receiving and transmitting information through touch, feelings, smells and tastes.

Cianciara and Uściska [1, p. 38] note that a person remembers one-tenth of the information through reading, two-tenths of the information through listening, three-tenths of the information through visual channel, seven-tenths of the information through what they simultaneously see and hear, eight-tenths through what they say themselves, and nine-tenths through what they do. Even though most people use all senses to receive and process information, they tend to favour one particular channel. Some may prefer auditory input (the so-called "auditory learners"), others favour visual stimuli ("visual learners"), and yet others respond

better to movement, touch and emotions ("kinesthetic learners"). These preferences are often reflected in the language a person uses. A perceptive teacher can identify a student's preferred sensory system based on how they speak. For instance, a visual learner might say: "I don't see what you mean", or: " I will turn a blind eye to it", an auditory learner may state: "This does not sound clear", and a kinesthetic student is likely to say: "I'm following your way of reasoning". Therefore, in order to improve communication in the classroom, teachers may try to identify students' preferred sensory systems and adjust their own language accordingly. Since each student may have a different preference, teachers should use language that incorporates all sensory systems. If teachers rely solely on one modality, only a few students will connect, while the rest may disengage. Also, in order to create a conducive learning environment and maintain contact, it helps to design activities that appeal to all sensory modalities. While visual and auditory activities are easy to implement, incorporating kinesthetic elements requires more effort. One example could be a classroom exercise where students move around, have brief discussions on an assigned topic, such as translation problems to identify in a text, solutions to brainstorm, questions to discuss, feedback to provide to each other, etc.). In order to make the activity more dynamic and enjoyable, it could be structured in a "speed-dating" format, where students discuss the topic with a partner for a set amount of time (e.g., 3-4 minutes), before switching to a new partner.

2.2 Promoting independent and critical thinking

Regardless of the subject being taught, independent and critical thinking is a skill that can always be developed and integrated into classes. In today's world, where the Internet provides virtually unlimited access to information, students often struggle to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. To address this problem, teachers may design exercises where students compare information on a particular topic from a variety of sources, and collaboratively assess what makes a source trustworthy or otherwise. This is especially relevant for evaluating online resources, such as websites, articles, dictionaries, glossaries, and other publications. Prior to that, the teacher may either provide students with reliability criteria or, alternatively, allow them to establish such criteria themselves. This type of activity may also be applied when assessing the reliability of online dictionaries and other translation tools.

2.3 Encouraging a problem-solving approach – believing that everyone has potential to achieve their goals

Rather than providing students with ready-made solutions to specific problems and requiring to apply them, it seems far more beneficial (for students and teachers alike) to allow them to first identify the problem and then brainstorm possible solutions, which

can later on be tested to determine if they produce the desired results. This approach is also advocated by Piecychna [6, pp. 195–210], who argues that a process-oriented approach to translation adopted in the classroom brings more benefits to students and is conducive to the generation of problem-solving ideas. During the translation process, challenges are likely to arise, such as finding equivalents of specialist terms which are difficult to locate in dictionaries, handling cultural elements that lack equivalents in the target culture, or translating linguistic features like proper names, neologisms, puns or allusions that may appear untranslatable. In fact, all these challenges present an excellent opportunity for the teacher to pause the class for a moment and organize a brainstorming session, encouraging all students to think together and propose different solutions. At this stage, it is important not to dismiss any ideas, but to note them down and later test their effectiveness.

2.4 Developing students' creativity – helping them discover their own potential and talents

I firmly believe that everyone is born with a certain level of creative potential and how it is used depends entirely on the individual. However, if this potential fails to be nurtured, it will fade away, much like any other skill, in line with the "use-it-or-lose-it" principle. Students' creativity can be truly remarkable, and it is amazing to observe how inventive they can be when provided with the right opportunities. To help them develop their creative potential, educators can introduce activities that foster out-of-the-box thinking. While translation may not initially seem like a highly creative activity, certain texts – such as advertising slogans or texts featuring wordplay, puns, and other linguistic devices – offer room for non-schematic thinking. These texts not only stimulate creative thought, but also encourage the use of humor, both of which significantly enhance the learning process. Other examples of activities aimed at promoting creativity in the classroom can be found in: VanGundy, A. 2005. *101 Activities for Teaching Creativity and Problem Solving*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer; Schmidt, K. J. 2016. *Sesje twórczej pomysłowości dla pedagogów, psychologów i trenerów grupowych*. Gliwice: Helion.

One of the best aspects of translation is the lack of a fixed "answer key". I am convinced that one factor particularly harmful to students' creativity today is the widespread use of standardized tests, especially those with closed-ended questions that allow only one correct answer. Instead of relying on such tests, teachers should be open to any answer students suggest, as long as it is linguistically correct and students can logically justify it. It is still common for first-year students, who have just graduated from secondary school, to expect an "answer key" during translation classes. They tend to believe that there is one correct version of the translation and only by providing that specific version will they be able to pass. In such cases it is the teacher's

Серія «**Іноземна філологія.Методика викладання іноземних мов**».   ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online)   143

Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**.   **2025**. Випуск/Issue **101**

role to help students realize that translation is not like mathematics, and that any translation is valid as long as it preserves the original message and is accurate in terms of language, style and format. Unfortunately, for many students accustomed to constant standardized testing, this concept is often entirely new.

Another important aspect of the learning process that significantly fosters creativity is the use of questions, especially open-ended ones that invite multiple answers. These questions encourage students to explore new solutions to problems, adopt different perspectives, and think "outside the box".

2.5 Opportunities to learn lie in every situation – there is no failure, only feedback

I believe that every situation offers a valuable lesson. One of the principles of NLP states that "there is no failure, only feedback" (this and other presuppositions of NLP can be found on the website of The Association for Neuro-Linguistic Programming: https://anlp.org/knowledge-base/presuppositions-of-nlp), and the power of this statement lies in its capacity to make individuals reframe any negative experience and turn it into something that they can learn from. The example below illustrates the strength of this idea.

A few years ago, at the end of one of my translation courses, I asked a group of students to translate two texts: one from English into Polish and the other from Polish into English. This assignment was meant to be their final task and one to be completed at home. When I reviewed the translations, I quickly realized that about half of the group had worked on the texts themselves, while the other half had simply copy-pasted the texts into an automatic translator and, without even checking the final output, they submitted the translations as their final work. After overcoming my initial frustration, I decided that instead of failing all these students, I could take a different approach. To our next class I brought the original texts and the printed copies of Google-translated ones. Without revealing that the translations were automatic, I distributed the texts to the students and asked them to work together to compare the translations with the originals, identify mistakes, and introduce the necessary corrections. I noticed that some students recognized the Google-translated texts and seemed uncomfortable, but it was not until they completed the task and discussed the errors and corrections that they truly understood how inaccurate automatic translations can be. To my surprise, this turned out to be a highly informative and valuable lesson for everyone involved: the students realized that machine translators cannot be fully trusted and always require thorough post-editing. As a teacher, I realized that even a negative and frustrating situation, rather than seen as a professional failure, could be transformed into an opportunity for both me and my students to learn something valuable.

2.6. Logical levels of learning and change

Whatever teachers choose to do in the classroom and whichever activities they decide to introduce, they should always consider the potential benefit for the students. A common issue observed in classrooms is that many students suffer from a low self-esteem and lack of confidence, often believing they lack the necessary talents or abilities to succeed, and that certain tasks are beyond their reach. Therefore, the teacher's main role should be to help students transform these negative beliefs about themselves. All the activities mentioned in this paper aim to facilitate this change. When discussing the process of change in general, and the small changes people make in their lives in particular, NLP practitioners frequently refer to the model called "logical levels of learning and change" developed by Robert Dilts (2014). These levels are hierarchically arranged (often presented as a pyramid) and represent the different levels at which individuals operate:

1. Environment (the external conditions in which a person functions);

2. Behaviour (the actions and reactions of an individual);

3. Capability or competence (the skills and abilities that drive an individual's behaviour);

4. Beliefs and values (what a person believes in and what they deem important);

5. Identity (a person's self-concept and sense of who they are);

6. Sense of belonging (the groups with which a person identifies and feels a part of);

7. Spirituality (a person's sense of purpose or mission in life).

This hierarchy is not arbitrary. The central principle behind it is that any change introduced at a higher level will influence the lower levels, though the reverse does not always occur. For instance, if students manage to change their negative beliefs, it is likely that their competences, skills and behaviours will also change for the better. This is precisely what teaching should be about – not just transferring knowledge and information, but also, and most importantly, helping individuals to shift their limiting beliefs (some of which they may have held for a lifetime), uncover their internal potential, and effectively navigate the process of change.

2.7. Coaching and NLP as tools for a teacher's development

Teaching is often considered one of the professions most vulnerable to burnout, and academic teachers, in particular, can face numerous challenges that contribute to the feelings of stress and exhaustion. In this context, elements of coaching and NLP can be especially useful in preventing burnout. These tools can address a variety of challenges typical of the teaching profession, such as ones presented below.

2.7.1. Defining career objectives

Contrary to what some people from outside the profession may think, educating students is not the only responsibility of academic teachers. They must continually improve their professional qualifications, engage in research projects, write articles and research papers, present their research findings at academic conferences, as well as contribute to university administrative tasks. Balancing these various responsibilities can be overwhelming, leading to issues with setting priorities, time management problems or procrastination which tends to affect particularly perfectionists who want everything to be "perfect" and thus delay even simple tasks. Therefore, NLP techniques and the support of a professional coach can help teachers overcome procrastination by identifying the root causes of this behaviour and offering strategies to prioritize tasks, stay organized, and manage time effectively.

2.7.2. Managing stress in public speaking

Public speaking is an essential part of the teaching profession, and many academic teachers are required to speak in front of audiences, whether during lectures, seminars, or conferences. While some teachers thrive on the adrenaline that comes with speaking in public, others may suffer from stage fright, which can hinder their performance. Coaching and NLP offer various techniques to cope with stress, including redirecting focus from stress to the audience, visualization, reframing perception, identifying symptoms of stressful situations, as well as modifying negative attitudes and behaviours. These tools help teachers manage anxiety before and during public speaking, allowing them to perform more confidently and effectively.

2.7.3. Adopting an identity of an academic teacher

As already mentioned, the profession of an academic teacher often requires individuals to balance two major roles: educator and researcher. However, not all teachers feel equally comfortable in both areas. Some academics may excel at research work, but struggle with teaching, while others may be outstanding lecturers but less passionate about research. Of course, there are also teachers who perform almost equally well in both research and teaching.

According to Robert Dilts' "logical levels of learning and change", identity plays a crucial role in shaping one's behaviour and abilities. This means that teachers need to first identify and feel confident in their role as academic professionals, and only then can they improve their performance in both teaching and research. Techniques offered by coaching and NLP help teachers design their own professional identity, fostering a sense of purpose and self-belief, which leads to better performance in their roles.

2.7.4. Adopting an identity of a manager (of a department, a research project, etc.)

Just like in any company or corporation, also at a university each academic teacher has a specific career path ahead. For instance, obtaining a doctoral or postdoctoral degree allows one to reach a higher level of the academic ladder. As they progress in their careers, teachers may assume managerial roles, such as leading a research team, managing a department or overseeing seminar groups. These roles require strong managerial skills. NLP and coaching, especially managerial coaching, may provide valuable techniques to improve managerial effectiveness, build authority, set ambitious goals, delegate tasks and foster personal and professional growth. These tools help academic teachers navigate the transition into management roles, enhancing their ability to lead and inspire others.

3. CONCLUSIONS

I strongly believe that it is possible for every academic teacher to carve out their own research niche while at the same time not lose sight of the bigger picture and the students they teach on a daily basis. Research and teaching can complement each other wonderfully, and teaching, especially in today's digital era, offers valuable learning experiences.

As highlighted throughout this paper, the world has changed considerably in recent decades and this transformation goes far beyond the rise of new and sometimes disruptive technologies. People's lifestyles, work and study habits have evolved drastically too, as have the expectations of students. They are no longer content with outdated traditional models and practices. Instead, they seek an education that would prepare them for the new opportunities and challenges of the fast-changing world. Therefore, education must shift from simply transferring knowledge from teachers to students, to identifying and exploring opportunities and collaborating with students in shaping the future.

Coaching and NLP offer a powerful set of techniques that can assist academic professionals in reaching their career goals while also improving their overall well-being and effectiveness. These tools help address key challenges such as goal-setting, stress management, balancing teaching and research, and building managerial skills, offering the support needed for teachers to excel in their roles. Ultimately, the benefits extend beyond the individual teachers, positively impacting students and universities as well, fostering a more dynamic and successful educational environment.

Серія «**Іноземна філологія.Методика викладання іноземних мов**».   ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online)   145

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146 | ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online)   Вісник Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна

2025. Випуск/Issue **101**   The journal of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

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РОЗКРИТТЯ ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ СТУДЕНТІВ ТА ПОБУДОВА ВЗАЄМОРОЗУМІННЯ: ЯК ІНТЕГРУВАТИ ЕЛЕМЕНТИ КОУЧИНГУ ТА НЛП У ПІДГОТОВКУ ПЕРЕКЛАДАЧІВ

У сучасному світі здається, що кожен може користуватися сеансами коучингу, зокрема вчителі. Це пов'язано з тим, що їм необхідно постійно розвиватися, щоб ефективно надихати та мотивувати своїх учнів. В епоху, коли Інтернет надає безмежний доступ до інформації, школи та вчителі більше не є основними джерелами знань. На відміну від розповсюдженої думки, передача знань та інформації більше не є основною функцією шкіл та інших освітніх установ.

Ця стаття досліджує ролі, які повинні виконувати школи, заклади вищої освіти та вчителі у швидко змінюваному світі, орієнтованому на технології. Запропоновано короткий огляд вибраних концепцій, пов'язаних з коучингом та нейролінгвістичним програмуванням (НЛП), а також практичні поради щодо їх інтеграції у заняття з перекладу з метою покращення процесу навчання та викладання. Метою є також заохочення вчителів враховувати психологічні аспекти навчання – бути студентом, стажистом-перекладачем, а також сприймати себе не лише як викладачів, але й як коучів, які прагнуть розкрити найкраще в своїх учнях.

Коучинг та НЛП пропонують цінний спектр методів, які можуть допомогти як академічним працівникам, так і студентам досягати своїх кар'єрних цілей, покращуючи своє благополуччя та ефективність. Ці техніки вирішують важливі питання, такі як постановка цілей та управління стресом, надаючи вчителям підтримку, необхідну для успішного виконання їхніх ролей. У довгостроковій перспективі переваги виходять за межі окремої особистості, приносячи користь учням та університетам, сприяючи створенню більш динамічного та успішного академічного середовища.

Ключові слова: *коучинг, навчання перекладу, нейролінгвістичне програмування (НЛП), підготовка перекладачів.*