Language Coach Activities in the Work Community

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1

Identify the needs

What kinds of language support needs are there in the work community? What do you want to develop and why?

Goal: A shared understanding of where language support is needed and why.

2

Commit together

Why is this important?

Goal: A shared will and permission to act.

3

Appoint language coaches

Who could act as a language coach in the work community?

Goal: An appointed language coach or language coach team.

4

Agree on goals and support

How does the language coach offer concrete support for the language learner at work?

Goal: A shared goal for learning and the means through which the goal is achieved.

5

Learn and develop together

What do you learn and how do you develop the activity together?

Goal: The activity develops and becomes part of the everyday life in the work community.

Implemented as part of the Diverse Working Life in Lapland group project, co-funded by the European Union.
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1

Identify the needs

Start by pausing for a moment to look at everyday work.

- Discuss together:
  - what kinds of practices supporting language learning you already have
  - in which work situations language is needed (instructions, orientation, interaction, customer contacts)
  - when and in which situations language-related challenges become visible or make work less smooth
- It would be good to involve the entire work community in the discussion, including international professionals
- Listen to experiences without judgment – the purpose is not to look for problems, but to understand the real need.

Goal: A shared understanding of where language support is needed and why.

2

Commit together

Language coach activities are successful when they are a shared matter. Acting as a language coach is based on the desire to guide and help. Everyone can participate according to their own readiness and may, if they so wish, acquire more competence.

- Discuss in the work community:
  - why supporting language is important specifically for us
  - what each person can do in their own work to increase language awareness
- Ensure the support of supervisors:
  - the activity is a permitted and desired part of the work
  - language coach activities are part of the work and working time

Goal: A shared will and permission to act.

3

Appoint language support coaches

Choose the person or persons who want to act as supporters of language learning. Discuss openly who would like to act as a language coach.

- A language coach
  - can be any employee who wants to guide and promote language learning
  - can be one person or several people
  - is not a Finnish language teacher
  - encourages, clarifies, supports and is involved in different work situations
  - can strengthen their own competence by familiarising themselves with language-aware guidance

Goal: An appointed language coach or a language coach team.

4

Agree on goals and support

Decide together what you want to achieve and how the support is visible in everyday work.

- Set a goal, for example:
  - more active use of the Finnish language at work
  - learning key vocabulary
  - clearer work instructions
- Agree together with those being guided
  - in which situations the language coach provides support (orientation, work tasks, breaks)
  - how guidance and support are carried out (by asking, explaining, modelling)
- Set a small, clear goal at first. You can expand the goal at a later stage.

Goal: A shared goal for learning and the means through which the goal is achieved.

5

Learn and develop together

The activity is not evaluated; instead, it offers an opportunity to learn together.

- Pause regularly (for example monthly) and discuss:
  - how the activity feels
  - what has worked well
  - what could be changed or done differently
- Listen especially to:
  - the experiences of language learners
  - the views of the language coaches
- Give and ask for feedback with a low threshold.

Goal: The activity develops and becomes part of the everyday life in the work community.

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