

# What New Language Coaches Should Know

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## Questions to Ask Your Organization

### A: Their Expectations for Learners

1. Do we have an official language policy? Where can I find it?
2. Are all members of the organization expected to develop proficiency in the language(s) of the country or region?
3. What level of proficiency are learners expected to reach? What proficiency scale is used for goals and assessments?
4. Are there different expectations for learners...
  - a. in different roles and areas of service?
  - b. in short-term and long-term service?
  - c. learning official languages and minority languages?
  - d. regarding the proficiency they need in different language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing?
5. What options does the organization give learners for how to learn the language?
  - a. Language schools?
  - b. Language resource centers?
  - c. Self-directed learning with native speakers?
  - d. A variety of options?
6. What time frame and resources are allowed to meet goals?

### B: Their Expectations of You....

1. Do you have a written Job Description?
2. What does your job entail?
3. Encourager and advisor?
4. Planner? Resource-provider?
5. Enforcer of the policy?
6. To whom are you responsible? For what?
7. To whom are the learners responsible? For what?
8. What percentage of your time are you expected to spend on language coaching?
9. What other responsibilities do you have?
10. How many learners do you have?
11. How much time are you expected to allot to each learner?
12. Can you do what is expected in the time allotted to this task? If not, what should you do?

## Questions to ask your learners

**Note:** Before you ask learners a question, ask yourself the following:

- Why do I want to know the answer to this question?
- What will I do with this information?
- How will it help me to help them?

### A: About Their Language Needs

1. What specific work or ministry tasks will they be doing?
2. What language skills will they be using most in doing these tasks?
3. What other responsibilities do they have that may affect their language learning?

### B: About Themselves

1. What is their language learning history and what is their self-image as a language learner? What is that based on?
2. What are their beliefs and attitudes about language learning and what are they based on?
3. What interests and motivates them?
4. What are their fears and hang-ups?

### Questions to Ask Yourself...

- Do I think I'm a good language learner? Do I need to be a good learner to be a good coach?
- What are my own strongly-held beliefs and attitudes about language learning? What are these based on?
- Do I expect everyone to learn the way I like to learn?
- What sorts of people might I find it most challenging to coach? Why?
- What do I communicate to others about the language and the people who speak the language?

### Ask around...

- What resources are available?
- Streaming and broadcast resources
- Libraries
- Community resources and activities
- Internet resources: articles, apps, videos, podcasts
- Language Resource People
- Independent study language courses
- Places learners can meet local people
- Organizations people can join

For More on ICCT Courses for Language Coaches

<https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/academic-centers/institute-for-cross-cultural-training/for-language-coaches>

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