From Facilitator to Learning Coach: A Historical, Pedagogical, and Islamic Educational Perspective on English Language Teaching

Ade Suhendra[1], Darul Ilmi[1], Fitri Yanti[1]

[1]Universitas Islam Negeri Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia

✉20225007@mhs.uinbukittinggi.ac.id *

Abstract

The transformation of teachers' roles from facilitators to learning coaches has become a pedagogical necessity in the era of globalization, particularly in English language teaching, which demands autonomous learning, metacognition, and 21st-century competencies. This article examines the shift through three lenses: the historical foundations of Islamic education, contemporary learning theories, and empirical findings from recent research (2017–2023). Using a systematic literature review, the study synthesizes evidence on the effectiveness of educational coaching and assesses its conceptual alignment with the Islamic conception of teachers *mu'allim, murabbi,* and *muaddib.* Findings indicate that learning coaching not only enhances instructional practice and students' self-regulated learning (SRL) but also aligns with the core values and aims of Islamic education. The study proposes an integrative framework combining pedagogical, linguistic, character-based, and spiritual dimensions for English language learning in Islamic educational settings.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of global challenges requires learners not only to master content knowledge but also to develop 21st-century competencies such as autonomy, critical thinking, and foreign-language literacy. Consequently, the teacher's role is no longer limited to delivering information but has evolved from facilitator to learning coach a guide who supports students in planning, regulating, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning processes (Foster, 2018; Handa et al., 2023; Muhsinin et al., 2025; Porter, 2021).

Within Islamic educational traditions, teachers are viewed holistically as *mu'allim* (knowledge transmitter), *murabbi* (moral and character educator), and *muaddib* (cultivator of adab). Such perspectives emphasize that learning involves intellectual, moral, and spiritual transformation. Thus, the shift toward learning coaching is not merely a pedagogical adaptation but a return to the foundational values of Islamic education (Baroud et al., 2025; Dewi, 2021; Goker, 2021; Motto, 2021).

This article aims to: i) review empirical evidence on coaching effectiveness in teaching and learning, ii) analyze the conceptual compatibility of learning coaching

with Islamic educational principles, iii) propose an integrated learning-coach model for English language learning in Islamic schools.

Instructional Coaching and the Modern Teacher Role

Empirical evidence shows that instructional coaching particularly ongoing, individualized support surpasses traditional professional development methods such as workshops or seminars. A meta-analysis of 60 randomized or quasi-experimental studies found that coaching significantly improves instructional practice (effect size ≈0.49 SD) and moderately improves student achievement (≈0.18 SD) (Kraft et al., 2018).

Further studies indicate that practice opportunities and feedback, rather than modeling alone, are the strongest predictors of successful implementation and improved student outcomes (Reddy et al., 2022). Coaching also increases teacher self-efficacy, classroom management effectiveness, and student engagement (Walsh et al., 2020). Thus, instructional coaching represents a sustainable, context-embedded, and high-impact strategy aligned with the evolving pedagogical needs of contemporary education.

Coaching in Language Learning and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

English language learning requires continuous practice, strategy use, and reflection elements that align closely with SRL. Research into mobile-assisted language learning and coaching indicates that structured support enhances students' collaborative and self-regulation skills beyond classroom boundaries (Viberg & Kukulska-Hulme, 2021).

Adaptive scaffolding research also demonstrates that metacognitive prompts and coaching-like supports help learners develop SRL habits in open-ended environments (Munshi et al., 2022). Recent innovations suggest that large language models, when supervised by teachers acting as coaches, can enhance formative feedback and strengthen SRL (Steinert et al., 2023). Thus, learning coaching is pedagogically suitable for modern English language classrooms, especially in digital-rich environments.

Teacher Roles in Islamic Educational Tradition

Islamic educational philosophy views teachers not simply as transmitters of academic knowledge but as moral and spiritual guides. Classical concepts define teachers as: *Mu'allim* – provider of knowledge. *Murabbi* – shaper of character, discipline, and moral conduct. *Muaddib* – cultivator of adab and ethical behavior (Cornelius & Nagro, 2023; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2020; Schaefer & Ottley, 2022).

Traditional methods such as *halaqah, talaqqī,* and *mudhākarah* emphasize personalized interactions, ongoing supervision, reflective dialogue, and character formation processes deeply resonant with contemporary learning coaching. Hence, coaching aligns with the Islamic vision of holistic education.

METHODS

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) consisting of: Database search using Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, and EBSCO with keywords: instructional coaching, learning coach, teacher coaching, self-regulated learning, language coaching, EFL coaching, Islamic education teacher roles (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024, 2025; Firdaus et al., 2021).

Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed articles published between 2017–2023; accessible online; focusing on coaching, SRL, or English language learning. Data extraction and analysis through thematic coding, comparative analysis, and synthesis of empirical findings with Islamic educational concepts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Empirical Impact of Coaching on Instructional Quality and Learning Outcomes

The literature consistently reports strong positive effects of instructional coaching on teacher practice. Meta-analytic evidence shows substantial improvements in teaching quality and modest, yet meaningful, gains in student learning.

Key findings include:

i. Practice opportunities and feedback cycles are the most powerful coaching components (Reddy et al., 2022).

ii. Coaching enhances teacher self-efficacy, instructional fidelity, and student engagement (Walsh et al., 2020).

iii. Compared to single-session training, coaching is more effective because it is continuous, contextualized, individualized, and job-embedded.

These results affirm that learning coaching is not a pedagogical trend but an evidence-based approach to improving teaching and learning.

Relevance of Learning Coaching to English Language Learning and SRL

English language acquisition requires learners to repeatedly practice skills, monitor progress, and develop metacognitive awareness core components of SRL. Studies show that:

i. Coaching and scaffolding strengthen strategy use, learner autonomy, and collaboration (Viberg & Kukulska-Hulme, 2021).

ii. Adaptive scaffolded coaching cultivates SRL behaviors, particularly in digital learning ecosystems (Munshi et al., 2022).

iii. AI-supported formative feedback, guided by teacher-coaches, enhances SRL and learner engagement (Steinert et al., 2023).

Thus, coaching provides a strong pedagogical foundation for English language learning in the digital age.

Alignment with Islamic Educational Values

Islamic pedagogical tradition emphasizes the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The teacher is seen as a guide who nurtures faith (*īmān*), character (*akhlāq*), and wisdom (*ḥikmah*).

The characteristics of Islamic teaching personal guidance, dialogic learning, moral exemplification, and reflective practice parallel learning coaching. Therefore, learning coaching is both conceptually aligned with and a modern extension of classical Islamic educational ideals.

Proposed Integrative Learning-Coach Model (Islamic-Based)

Table 1. Proposed Integrative Learning-Coach Model

Dimension	Key Elements
Cognitive	English language skills; goal-setting; strategic learning; structured practice; progress monitoring.
Affective/Character	Responsibility, discipline, honesty, motivation, perseverance; ethics of learning.
Spiritual	Learning as worship; intention (*niyyah*); gratitude; self-reflection (*muḥāsabah*); *adab* towards teachers and knowledge.
Coaching Process	Cycles of planning, observation/practice, reflection, feedback, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

This model supports the development of linguistically competent, morally grounded, and spiritually conscious English learners.

CONCLUSION

The transformation from facilitator to learning coach represents a necessary pedagogical evolution. Empirical evidence confirms that coaching enhances instructional quality and student learning, particularly through SRL. When integrated with Islamic values *adab, akhlāq,* spiritual consciousness the learning-coach model becomes a powerful framework for English language instruction in Islamic education. Thus, Islamic-based learning coaching offers a holistic, values-driven, and evidence-based pedagogical alternative for contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

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