

Exploring the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: Identifying structures through experiences

Iain Lightfoot

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Oxford Brookes University, Faculty of Business

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Abstract

This research paper explores the events containing insight within coaching sessions in order to identify structures and mechanisms through the lived experiences of coaches and clients. There does not appear to be currently much information to draw upon in terms of understanding the mechanisms of coaching sessions. This thesis provides an understanding of the events containing insight and the structure within to assist coaching that recognises these significant occurrences. The thesis also provides a foundation for future researchers to gain an understanding of a coaching session and to assist them to add to the research. With a critical realist epistemological underpinning, the ontological approach and method of analysis is based upon a relativist phenomenological approach. This provides an understanding of the experience of both coach and client in-session, and as such provides a gateway to discover the structures of actuality in the main coaching event at the moment of insight manifestation.

This research suggests that at the moment of insight there is a coming together of coach and client in terms of physiological response and suggest that coaches should trust their instincts when in a coaching conversation, especially when they intuitively ‘feel’ that an insight moment is about to occur. The results suggest that the client’s verbal reflections occur after the coach has deepened the understanding by providing an example from their own or other’s experience. Before and after the moment of insight is a pause. After the moment of insight, both coach and client share a moment of validation of the coaching.

The findings also provide a number of secondary contributions that suggest that perhaps coaching training could move towards an understanding that perhaps coaches should be experts in their own professional field, as well as experts of the coaching process.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

A Personal Experience of Insight

Insight moments in coaching are fascinating. When working with clients, it is these crucial moments of discovery that can be the catalyst for positive long-term sustainable change. From my own experiences, I suggest that positive results and outcomes appear to be noticeably attached to these events. These observations have led me to study this fascinating and crucial field, to inform talking therapies. Through increasing an understanding of the phenomenon of insight, both my own professional practice and the coaching industry could become more effective into the future.

In my previous career I had been a military leader, a manager, a confidante and the head of department of what I considered to be an elite team of engineers tasked with the delivery of military capability on operations. From early on in my tenure, I understood that I was an individual who had a firm humanistic coaching focus and a solid, unwavering, belief in my team. I sought to improve the output and well-being of my team no matter where we were or what we were doing in the wider context. Indeed, I was someone who continuously participated in and insisted upon continuous professional development; but like many others I had my flaws, no doubt arising from my military training. Almost blindly, I accepted that coaching was a technique that worked and accepted contemporary ideas of process and techniques at face value. It was during these sessions that I began to notice a pattern. Some points within the coaching sessions seemed to be more important to the outcome; they certainly felt this way. At first I did not understand the significance and what it really meant, or indeed what to do following such an event other than use my intuition; after all, I was doing the same things as always, although tailored to the unique individuals I was coaching. This awareness turned into a small amount of research; I noticed that there were academic researchers who were looking into this area. From this point onwards, I discovered that what was happening in my sessions appeared to be 'normal'. Although I now had an awareness of the phenomena of coaching moments and insight, it took a number of years before my own rather extraordinary and significant moment happened within a coaching session.

Here I was, many years into my second career as a hypnotherapist and I found myself sitting quietly opposite a client, contemplating my next line of questioning. The client, unknowingly, was contradicting herself repeatedly in answering my focused coaching questions. After asking permission to pose rather a challenging question, I simply suggested that she was providing many

contradictions. I summarised and paraphrased them back to her. There was an awkward silence, and I almost saw her manifesting rather than thinking about her answer: call it a dawning realisation. In this moment, I realised that an extraordinary event had taken place. I believe that I saw her completely understand the dilemma of her presenting issue; hearing what she had previously said and knowing deeply what she had now learned, she completely understood what to do next. Witnessing such an important moment in someone's life was both humbling and (professionally) very satisfying. What I witnessed happening in a single moment convinced me once again that an event such as this is extremely important. I asked myself, "if I knew more about these events, could I perhaps assist more clients to have these unique breakthrough moments in their learning?" From that point onwards, I decided to explore the events containing insight within coaching sessions. It was to become an epic journey into learning, not only increasing my understanding of coaching events, process and insight, but also learning more about who I was authentically and my own paradigms. It was to become the single most tumultuous and epic journey I have ever embarked upon.

Current Coaching Research around Insight

In researching insight, defined by Constable and Kiefer (2010, p.32) as a 'moment of transformation', Kets de Vries's (2013) research paper is the study most directly related to this research project. He suggests that there are four stages of insight manifestation: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Yet, although he covers a lot of background, from the intrigue around the neuroscience experimentation through to the types of change that people may experience, his paper stops short of identifying the detail at a more in-depth sessional level. In discussing the creation of the 'good hour', the kinds of exchange that make tipping points more likely (i.e. when all the coaching, learning and understanding comes together), he is expressing a wider view from his empirical experience as a leadership coach. His view is more holistic, that preparation and incubation may take substantial time to conclude before illumination occurs. There are no time frames provided. His view is more from the social constructionist perspective, which leaves questions to be considered in terms of structure and mechanisms of the moment. To do this, research needs to be conducted on a more focused micro-level.

Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact size of the current coaching market and industry, Stahl (2016) writing for Forbes online, the global media company, suggests the figure to be currently around \$1B yearly. This amount is set to rise: academia still maintains that coaching is continuing to enjoy growth in both the industry's size and in developing an academic understanding of the coaching phenomenon (Passmore, 2007, Smith, 2017, Linley, 2006). This understanding is driven by the industry's aspiration to provision greater knowledge of the Return on Investment (ROI). Perhaps

academia should now move on from concreting the belief that coaching works (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2014, Linley, 2006). Academic research has to date been led by an individual desire to understand, to provide further learning, and to prove the potential enhancement of coaching skills in the professional context, while coaching itself has moved toward more successful client outcomes (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, p.72).

As understanding of the coaching phenomena continues to grow, research has been concentrated on the areas of outcomes, skills and practice rather than an exploration of the coaching session itself (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, p.452). This coaching session or interaction is termed by Fillery-Travis and Cox as the ‘coaching waterline ... the point at which the current consciousness of the client and coach come together and interact’ (2014, p.452). They liken the coaching interaction to that of an iceberg, with the observable above the surface (i.e. the context, behaviours and outcomes), whilst the submerged contains the unobservable (i.e. emotions, beliefs and consciousness, including experiences). At the waterline is the coming together of these two regions. Fillery-Travis and Cox point toward a significant requirement for research within this area to expand the understanding of what happens in the instance of the interaction, thus leading to greater coaching effectiveness through application of the learning.

The coaching waterline has been further explained (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, p.453) and a number of suggested coaching behaviours have been suggested on a continuum between linguistically poor through to linguistically rich. Due to the lack of research information in these areas, it is these features that are suggested as potential areas for future research focus. This research could then make coaching more effective due to the increased understanding of waterline activities. This research project did not seek to further understanding of the waterline activities, but rather what happened at the waterline when coach and client experience the phenomenon of a moment of insight. My aim is to provide the coaching industry with an understanding of the events that contain insight within coaching sessions, so as to identify the structure of the event. It was necessary to embrace the challenge of researching at the waterline, as an area that has been mentioned as ‘anathema to the researcher ... obtrusive ... time-consuming’ (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, p.454).

Due to the suggestion of a lack of information at the coaching waterline, it appears that there is a greater and deeper lack of understanding as to the view of the structures and processes, the mechanisms and characteristics of what happens in the actuality of a coaching session. From this, there is a question how the coaching industry understands how to train or teach the students of coaching about what occurs and what should be done in the coaching moment. From Amazon to

academic libraries, there is a plethora of books and papers explaining the attributes, process and techniques, the ROI and the successes of coaching. Yet from the literature there is a fragmented approach to how all these attributes come together to provide events containing insight. If insight within coaching is key to successful coaching outcomes, then there is an assumption that coaches and the wider coaching industry could be more effective with identifying and understanding where and how insight is manifested, yet this area is lacking in research. Whilst there is a growing body of evidence that explains the phenomenon of coaching from a number of different perspectives and fields, there still appears to be no research that brings this together.

In this coaching research project, I bound researching insight within an event within a coaching session. This study does not follow the wider time-line of insight generation, but identifies 'what happened' in the actuality of the instance of insight at the waterline, to identify structure and mechanisms in the moment.

Research Rationale

There are a number of considerations in terms of why this research is important to the coaching industry and potentially wider talking therapies, such as my own hypnotherapeutic practice. With a greater understanding of the phenomenon of insight, coach training may begin to highlight what is needed to allow insight moments to manifest, i.e. a development of deeper client understanding and greater motivations, providing new directions and motivation for the coach. Whilst the research aim is to take the understanding around the phenomena of insight forward, it is important to note that this thesis represents a move toward a greater understanding at the moment, not about how insight is created. It is bounded by, and seek answers as to what happens in, the region of the moment. As I have moved from positivist military engineer to the hypnotherapy vocation, I have found that my own understanding of the philosophy of knowledge has changed. Perhaps the mechanisms of hypnosis and the inter-subjectivity of working with clients has pulled me uniquely towards this new way of being. The methodological approach, of post-positivism and constructivism, i.e. the synergising of critical realism and phenomenology (Budd, Hill and Shannon, 2010, and Budd, 2012) used in this exploration is methodologically unique in coaching research and by applying this infrequently utilised approach to wider social research, I am demonstrating a new way of researching for future professional coaching practitioner/researchers. As a critical realist I am seeking causality (structure), yet having an ontological view of constructivism that knowledge is gained through empirical experiences. The title of this research project reflects this methodological stance. Based upon this rationale, my aim in conducting this research project is to:

Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experiences.

The more focused and specific research objectives of this DCM project are:

1. To critically review and evaluate the literature of insight, coaching sessions and events; to discover what knowledge is already known as an aid to discuss the findings from the research phase of this project.
2. To explore the phenomenon of insight from the perspectives of both coach and client; to understand the different perspectives and experiences of the insight event within the coaching session in order to discover the themes that can give rise to understanding causality and mechanisms of the phenomenon.
3. To provide a comprehensive synthesis and evaluation of the complete data set; to provide a full understanding of what has occurred during the coaching session; and to move coaching further toward providing a concept of what coaching is and how coaching works.
4. To contribute to the wider field of coaching knowledge and practice by providing a deeper understanding of the holistic coaching session and 'coaching waterline' activities from the perspective of both coach and client.

In fulfilling these objectives, I provide statements which show how insight moments within sessions were experienced which could point towards how insight is generated by the coach/client dyad in the future. I seek to generate discussion and thought about how coaches approach their sessions with insight manifestation in mind.

Research Strategy

This research project and the phenomenon it was designed to study were approached from a critical realist epistemological and relativist ontological understanding of the world. During this journey I have synergised critical realism and social construction and interpretivism. This approach is described further in the chapter guide and to a much greater depth of explanation within Chapter 3. The project is approached from both theoretical and practical positions, as is consistent with a professional doctorate. The research journey began with understanding my own positioning in terms of the world and how knowledge is identified in terms of my own ontological and epistemological positioning.

To begin, there was a comprehensive design and planning phase; data was gathered via semi-structured interview and coaching sessions were recorded, all whilst the literature was being

reviewed; following a transcription of the coach and client individual narratives, the sessions were also transcribed. Analysis was conducted using a phenomenological descriptive method and themes identified. Once an understanding of the structure of the wider coaching sessions was gained, the descriptions were used to ascertain what was happening within the moment of insight. To aid the post-analysis discussion, the literature was reintroduced to guide and validate findings and to ascertain its value to the contribution of knowledge and practice. Further details of the research and design phase can be found in chapter 3.

A Personal Thesis – Managing Polyvocality

As a reader progresses through a research thesis, there are distinctive ‘voices’ contained within, and certainly a number that I present. The voices are those of myself as the researcher, the participants and those whose thoughts have been captured within the literature (Thody, 2006). Where apt in the paper, I present their voices, but predominantly it is my voice that leads and is heard. There is a significant application of first person dialogue in terms of my own personal projection in a number of chapters. I do, however, use the third person in others and indeed a mixture in some places. This thesis and the overall research project signify a personal journey: I have chosen to provide an honest overview of my learning experience and it is my desire for the reader to experience my authentic ownership of this research and wider thesis; my full acceptance of responsibility. The narrative style is unique and drifts from the accepted academic style. In keeping with the nature of talking therapies, I have chosen to push boundaries and make the reading more personal. On occasion, academic papers can be difficult to read and understand. In my own thesis I chose to write in a manner which would allow both academic and practitioner to further their understanding of how this thesis contributes to knowledge and practice.

The reader subsequently arrives at a critical review of the literature in chapter 2 in which I step back, letting the authors’ voices be heard. Chapter 3 uses both the first and third person narrative voice in order to explain the methods used in the research and analysis. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are phenomenologically descriptive and both first and third person and the voices of the respondents are heard. Finally, in the discussion and conclusions chapter (Chapter 7), I place myself in an elevated position as I discuss and draw on current thinking, before presenting the conclusions I drew from the research.

Inspired by Thody (2006), McNiff (2008), Quinlan (2013) and Hayot (2014), who have challenged the rules of writing in the social sciences, it was my intention to illustrate the way that I felt that this project was owned by me, yet allowing the multitude of other voices to be heard. In my practice I use

professional intuition and logic to assist and guide me in my work with clients and I find this helps me towards significant breakthroughs. I have moved away from the conventional purist techniques of coaching in therapy, which is when a coach leaves themselves at the door. This thesis is written utilising my own approach. The subject of intuition is an important component in generating positive breakthroughs (see Chapter 2). I deem this approach to be both authentic and genuine. It demonstrates a greater understanding of my own reflexivity and attitude to this thesis. My thoughts are congruent with the concept of the professional doctorate and my own underpinning critical realist ontology: The Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring, grounded in academic thinking and research while being ensconced in the experiences of the empirical world.

Thesis Chapter Guide

I now provide an overview of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2 is an exploration of the current literature surrounding insight and, coaching sessions. In this chapter I have chosen to predominantly bind the research within the coaching literature. Defining this boundary was an easier choice when studying the literature around coaching sessions, but when considering insight it was necessary to briefly step outside the coaching world to consider expert voices that I felt were of importance to this project. The chapter starts by considering the coaching session from structure, definitions, duration, context and, processes and techniques.

When examining events, I chose to define what an event is from outside the coaching world before turning to the largest body of research available, which is by the Ashridge Coaching Centre (ACC), the well-known body of research on coaching moments. I conduct a micro-meta-analysis of the important work and critically assess the information in terms of relevance and importance to this research project.

Any construction should be built upon a solid foundation. **Chapter 3** provides a detailed account of the overall approach in terms of my own epistemology, theoretical perspective and methods used.

This qualitative research project was approached from the perspective of critical realism and used descriptive phenomenology as an analysis technique. As such, it is firmly inductive in nature, as one would expect from phenomenology. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Husserlian empiricism is entrenched within critical realism and allows for an authentic project using these methods and methodological combinations. It is necessary to understand my ontological and epistemological positioning in order to further understand how I have navigated the entire project from data collection

and analysis through to the discussion and finally the conclusions. During this period of intense personal journey, I have become aware of my own significant internal paradigm shift, from positivist to the right of post-positivism and the way in which the project was taken forward, i.e. interpretivism within the empirical sphere of critical realism.

This chapter explains the process behind data collection, from the selection of the six research participant dyads through to the design of the semi-structured interviews. I also consider my own reflexivity and ethics throughout this project.

Chapters 4 and 5 are dedicated to the descriptive phenomenological analysis of the experience of both client and coach in the coaching session. Overall, ten questions are asked to identify the event containing insight within the whole coaching session, or the most significant insight event. From this I explore what led to the moment, what happened before and just after. Also investigated were physiological responses and how this moment affected the coaching and individual clients. As is usual in phenomenology, the chapters are given over to the identification of themes and evidence to support the analysis. At the end of the chapters I provide a descriptive narrative that can be used to describe the clients' (Chapter 4) and the coaches' (Chapter 5) experiences, as well as the insight event (Chapter 6).

Chapter 6 provides two key outputs crucial to the contribution to knowledge. Having made transcripts of the recorded coaching sessions, I provide a 'picture' of an event containing insight in each session. Borrowing from the techniques employed by the Ashridge Coaching Centre, modifying a phenomenological approach and using coding suggested in the handbook of coaching (Fillery-Travis and Cox 2014, p.453), I provide a graphic representation of six coaching sessions; these were then used to provide an overall session description, similar to the descriptive narrative output required by phenomenology. Having realised the graphical session, the narratives of both client and coach experience were overlaid, through using the key themes. From this, an overall combined sessional model was produced and a discovery made; I term this conceptual model 'the coaching mirror'.

Chapter 7 offers a deeper discussion of the results and the conclusion of the project. I highlight the findings. The results in brief are the combination of the models to show what happens at the moment of insight; the construction of a new model, 'the coaching mirror'; and narrative descriptions of the coaches' and clients' experience of their sessions and the event containing insight. This chapter also provided a section to highlight the limitations of the research and a number of areas for future research.

Concluding Position

This research project began with my personal experience, witnessing a significant moment of insight. My passion and desire to explore what occurred in this moment led to the writing of this thesis. The thesis chapters provide an account of the research journey from concept through to conclusion. The primary aims are to inform both academic knowledge and practice; yet, a project such as this is aimed at developing the researcher through a journey into understanding the self, which I suggest is as important as the overarching intention. You will read about my change as an individual in identifying my own epistemic views and the ontological approach for this project. This, for me, is as important as the results that have been identified and the conclusions in Chapter 7.

There are four main contributions to coaching arising from this project:

1. A synthesised narrative statement that considers the clients' perspectives on their sessions.
2. A synthesised narrative statement that considers the coaches' perspectives on their sessions.
3. A synthesised graphic representation of the coaching sessions, equivalent to the narrative statement usually expected from phenomenology.
4. An integrated and combined conceptual representation from the fusion of the above outputs, seeking to provide a holistic overview of the coaching session contributing to practice and knowledge.

It is these four outputs that contribute to coaching knowledge and academic literature. As is consistent with a critical realist stance, this is an understanding of an historic moment in time: an individual descriptive account of historic events that shows what happened at those individual moments. The aim is to add to the body of knowledge, practice and theory to provide a deeper understanding. Due to the lack of knowledge in this area, there is a clear opportunity for further research projects to research the same phenomena using differing approaches and methods in order to validate or add to this thesis.

The thesis will now continue in Chapter 2, where I review and critique the current literature around insight and coaching sessions. I will also define the concept of an event. This review will inform the discussions at Chapter 7 when the results of the analysis chapters (4, 5 and 6) are considered in line with this current thinking.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter starts with an explanation of the rationale behind the process of searching and reviewing the current literature related to my title, ‘Exploring the **events** that lead to **insight** within **coaching sessions**’. The greater part of the chapter then provides a detailed analysis of the literature surrounding coaching session, events, and insight. The majority of the literature is within the coaching sphere, although there is on occasion literature taken from wider areas e.g. event theory and wider insight.

Starting with the research question, three key concepts emerged. Although these identified terms became the main areas for the literature search; identified as ‘events, insight and coaching sessions’ alternative search strings such as coaching moments; awareness; coaching assignments etc. were also identified. These terms were also searched for in the literature review. Using the main key terms, a search of the main academic libraries and databases included the International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring, Brookes RADAR, Ethos at the British Library, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Sage, EBSCO etc. for journals and reference books. These database searches located a number of research papers. In addition, the well-known snowball method was used; however, I found this provided information that highlighted older, less relevant work. Deciding to stay in the coaching literature proved challenging, because, whilst growing, it still does not have the breadth and depth of other, longer-researched subject areas. I remained bounded as tightly as possible to coaching to ensure continuity of relevance to this project. In the case of understanding event theory and neuroscience, it was necessary to research outside e.g. Jung-Beeman et al. and Neilsen et al.’s work on the neurology of insight.

The first section in the chapter considers the term ‘insight’. This was a difficult term to define. I look at seminal thinking in this area and provide my own working definition. Following this, I consider what an event is and develop a definition. The chapter finishes by presenting research concerned with identifying the coaching session. There is a significant lack of understanding in this area (Fillery-Travis and Cox 2014). I bring together information from a number of case studies and papers. Having researched extensively, there is little academic thinking to draw upon and so considering case studies as the obvious way to begin to understand this phenomena. Finally, a closing position is presented that talks about the gap in knowledge and my thoughts about what should be researched. A conceptual framework of the literature review is provided in Figure 2.1

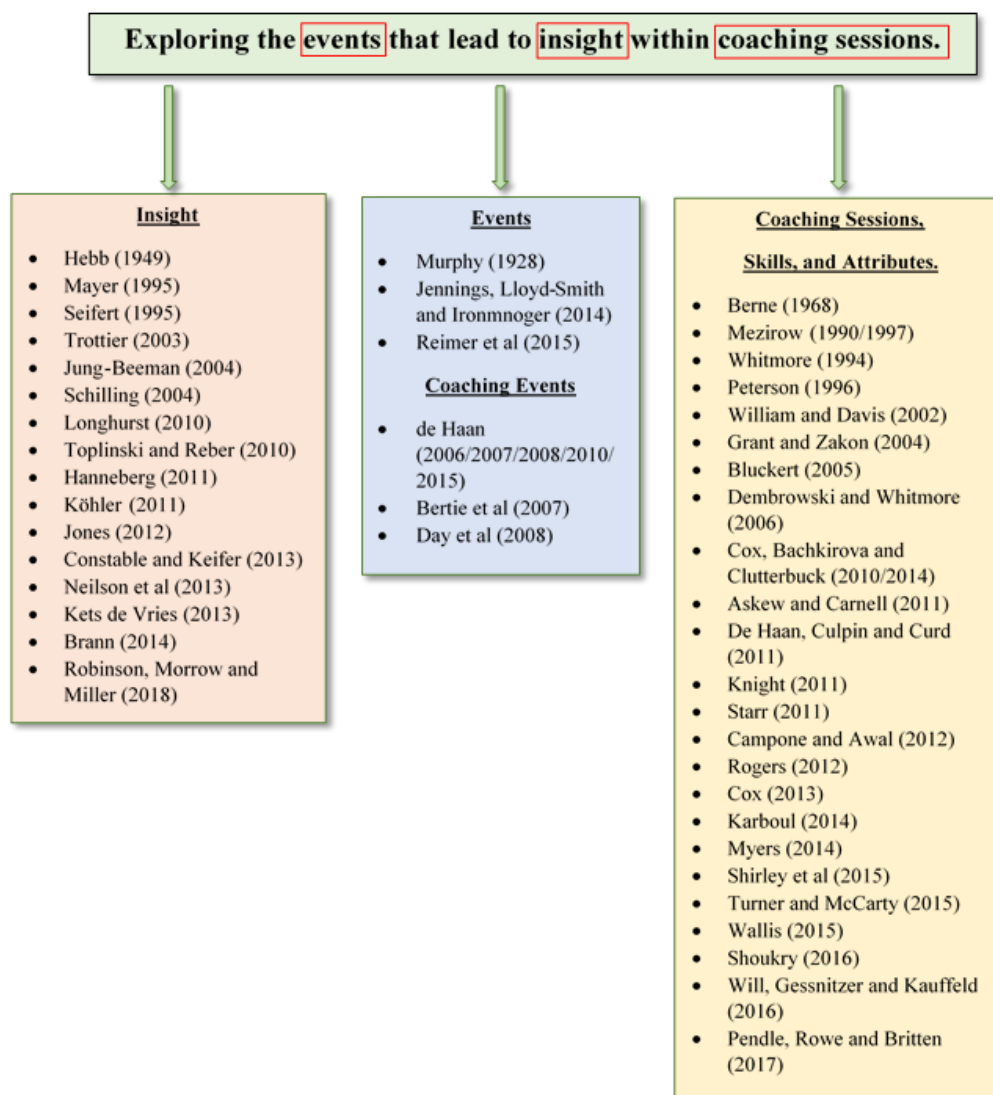


Figure 2.1: Literature Review Conceptual Framework

This literature review differs from the more traditional structure and method of writing. I chose to present the literature in a thematic fashion, structured and organised by topic before then further concentrating on more specific areas within the literature. I decided that providing that the review remained faithful to fulfilling the objectives of a literature review, a systematic approach to structure would assist my intended audience to follow the journey through the narrative in a more distinct way. Baker (2016) suggests that a traditional approach can be confusing and sometimes conflicting due to the volume of available papers. A critique can be ‘biased due to the authors unsystematic approach’ (2016, p.267), and may be overly descriptive rather than inform the research project. However, this traditional method does naturally engage and immerse the researcher in the subject under review. I elected to continue with the structure which felt authentic to the way I organised the data, myself, and my audience.

Insight

Providing and working towards moments of insight for clients is important to the coach, ‘to encourage clients to acknowledge their creativity and find their own solutions’ (Bluckert, 2005, p.91), yet coaches may not know how or when to recognise these moments. There are so many terms that may be used to describe moments of insight, realisations or self-discovery in coaching e.g. ‘Tipping Points’ (Kets de Vries, 2013), ‘Magic Moments’ (Prelock, 2013), ‘pivotal moments’ (MacLennan, 2015) or ‘Aha Moments’ (Constable and Kiefer, 2013, Jones 2012, Longhurst, 2010) and even ‘Tadah’ moments (Robinson, Morrow and Miller, 2018). These researchers report an event within which there appears to be an increase in understanding that may create change in the client. Thus the most obvious questions are: what is insight? How do we recognise insight? How do we promote insight? These questions are also posed by Trottier (2003, p.2). Answers continue to prove elusive (Schilling, 2004, p.2; Trottier, 2003, p.2) despite decades of research in and across many institutions and fields of research. There are many terms to define insight, and therefore for coaching and this research project one must begin by attempting a satisfactorily clear definition of what the phenomenon of insight is.

Due to the emergence of so many terms, one may wonder if all the researchers actually describe the same phenomenon. Indeed, it has been suggested that the term ‘insight’ is ‘considered meaningless’ by some (Tottier, 2003, p.3). This could indicate that people experience insight differently and therefore it is difficult to define. Schilling (2004, p.5) brings together a number of definitions for consideration, which I have explored further.

‘Insight is essentially the phase sequence itself’ (Hebb, 1949, p.164)

This definition certainly needs to be read in context. Hebb doesn’t arrive at a single suggestion of what insight actually is. He acknowledges that insight may well be a ‘sudden change in behaviour’ (Hebb, 1949, p.162) but argues that intellect and trial and error may influence what appears to be insight. He explains that defining insight as a separate term is difficult due to its inherent relationship with other postulates. In his definition, he proposes that the term phase sequence relates to the ‘anticipatory adjusting behaviour to an obstacle before the obstacle is reached’ (Hebb, 1949, p.164).

‘Insight ... shows itself to be principally determined by optical apprehension of the situation’ (Köhler, 1925, p.219); ‘complete methods of solution’ (Köhler, 1925, p.217).

Köhler arrived at this conclusion having studied chimpanzees’ behaviour and levels of intelligence. He suggests that chimpanzees stand out from the animal world because they exhibit ‘human-esque’ behaviour. Chimpanzees approached problems by standing back, examining the situation, visualising

a solution and then put in that plan into action. Already there are correlations between Köhler's work and that of Hebb (1949), in terms of adjusting behaviour prior to success.

'[A] sudden move from a state of not knowing how to solve a problem to a state of knowing how to solve it' (Robinson, Morrow and Miller, 2018)

Robinson, Morrow and Miller postulate that an individual moves from the unknown to understanding, suddenly bypassing the usual process of cognition: arranging the thought patterns and visually available information; reframing the problem/barriers; overcoming the unknown block; understanding the solution due to a similar experience; and having the confidence to drive motivation from new altered perspectives. This understanding, driven by experience, is something Hebb also argues is a component of insight. Thus far, I consider insight to be learning how to achieve particular goals which previously seemed unachievable.

'Insight may occur from the relatively mundane to the immensely profound ... relying on past failure indices [and/or] opportunistic assimilation of new information' (Seifert et al. 1995, p.71 and 119).

Seifert et al. suggest that there are a set number of steps that the individual takes in order to arrive at the moment of insight. They go some way to explain Mayer's (1995) observations. The researchers all agree that moments of insight can look magical, but actually it's more likely that an individual goes through a process: preparing the mind, bringing past experience into awareness, correctly considering it and hence realising the benefits of life experience. Additionally, Seifert et al. postulate that there is an incubation phase where the mind puts all these things together before, finally, the moment of insight occurs. Seifert et al. state that insight differs in terms of the magnitude of importance, similar to how events were categorised by Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger (2014). There emerges an exception to the thinking around insight. There are a separate discussions on a particular facet of insight that is, the 'Aha' moment.

A sudden moment of insight is often termed as an epiphany, 'aha' or 'eureka!' moment. This is a moment of intense discovery, insight and 'sudden realisation, [and] a shift in the way you see something, the peak moment when you wake up to something new in your mind' (Toplinski and Reber, 2010, p.402). This phenomenon is often termed a 'paradigm shift' (Longhurst, 2010, p.281) as it is considered to be a 'moment of transformation' (Constable and Kiefer, 2013, p.32). An encounter with a true paradigm shift or 'aha' moment is differentiated from realisations by a number of factors (Longhurst, 2010): the intensity and depth of the discovery, sometimes too deep to express in words but felt nevertheless (Constable and Kiefer, 2013, p.33); the certainty and conviction and therefore the belief in the discovery; a physiological response to the discovery of feelings such as

surprise, satisfaction, pleasure or relief (Constable and Kiefer, 2013, p.28). Haneberg describes the ‘aha’ moment as a ‘jolt of inspiration’ (2011, p.30). Kets de Vries (2013, p.157) provides a possible explanation as to why the ‘aha’ moment may be accompanied by deep feelings:

Transformational experiences are very closely related to basic physiological processes derived from our Palaeolithic heritage ... when we find ourselves in [similar] situations we feel exhilarated, more alive, full of energy and ready to take on any challenge.

The reason for this feeling could well be the older part of our brains, as Kets de Vries suggests. Brann (2014, p.34) believes it to be so, suggesting that the amygdala communicates with the hypothalamus to activate the production of adrenaline (Brann, 2014, p.34). The amygdala and hypothalamus are a part of the oldest section of the human brain, the limbic system. This system is responsible for our emotional life and the formation of memories from experiences. Neurological research, albeit contentious, strengthens the idea that a large physiological surge of emotion follows an important realisation or moment of discovery. Robinson, Morrow and Miller suggest that it is the older part of the mind, or as they term it, ‘the instinct brain’ (2018, p.4) that provides this response and hence a surge of ‘internal electricity’ as the solution appears from the subconscious, however; they did not find this strong emotion at the moment of insight (2018, p.9) in their research. Perhaps the insight in their research wasn’t of the magnitude to be termed ‘aha’; indeed, the participants may not have not been seeking such a moment. The suddenness of the insight surprised Schilling (2004, p.6) as she stated that the ‘unexpectedness of the solution’ provides an air of an almost miraculous and magical manifestation, which of course resonates with Seifert et al.’s (1995) work. Schilling (2004) agrees that the provision of past deep experiences can provide links to an insight. The work of Seifert has certainly driven Schilling in her development of the ‘small world model’ (2004, p.4), which states that the mind uses certain fragments of information in order to link problem and solution together, but once found, one can have that epiphany moment i.e. something akin to Sherlock Holmes with a magnifying glass, searching for clues to piece together a sequence of events. The terms emotion and feelings are used and substituted throughout the literature leading to a question asking if there is a difference between the two terms. Frosh suggests that ‘emotion comes first; [and that] the feeling is the process of perceiving and naming it’ (2011, p.14). What he is stating is that feelings are explainable once an individual can make sense of an emotion based upon their frames of reference.

In all the above cases, although there are different ways of thinking and fundamental discord, there is enough correlation to begin to understand what insight is. Insight is a moment, a period when a person has a *moment of realisation of **how** their particular quandary **will** be solved*. Schilling

postulates that insight could be the most powerful mechanism driving people toward understanding (2004, p.3). Perhaps an 'aha' moment is a more descriptive term, which naturally leads one to ask how insight and 'aha events may be encouraged.

What may lead to insight?

With a definition posed, the review returns to the coaching literature to understand how researchers suggest that insight and/or 'aha' moments are created, triggered or realised in coaching. The coach is charged with driving both the process and session and providing a stimulus or trigger. Hanneberg, (2011, p.30) suggests that the client 'experiences a catalyst' i.e. a movement toward insight. There is a degree of belief that this special moment is created through the positive relationship between coach and client (de Haan, 2010a and 2010b) in terms of 'posture' (MacLennan, 2015, p.44), 'curiosity' (Hanneberg, 2011, p.29), and 'crystallisation' (Kets de Vrie, 2013, p.161). Whatever the term, it is at this moment that increased awareness, insight, realisation and discovery manifests. Insight may manifest as a sudden knowing, like 'a bolt from the blue', suggesting a major change event (Kets de Vries, 2013, p.155), or in a gradual, linear fashion (Kets de Vries, 2013, p.154). Thus, 'aha' moments differ, but the client always becomes aware of something very important having happened.

During a coaching session, an 'aha' moment, like a critical moment, 'can never be guaranteed' (Longhurst, 2010, p.248; de Haan et al. 2010b). As to their frequency, Kets De Vries suggests that such moments do not occur often (2013, p.158) and indeed I turn back to de Haan (2010b, p.30), who identified that 53% of clients report having achieved 'positive outcomes relating to an increase in insight' with some experiencing emotions 'such as elation or relief' (2010b, p.28). In a later study by Robinson, Morrow and Miller (2018, p.8), insight events occurred in 93% of cases when linked to goal progress, but in 56% of cases coaching was linked to behavioural change, a figure closer to that reported by de Haan. Additionally, coaches sometimes report that critical moments were 'unexpected and unforeseen' but the ACC do not ever mention an 'aha' moment in their body of research. I suspect that this is down to the interpretation of the ACC's thoughts about the 'aha' phenomenon and its existence, a wider interpretation alluded to by Trottier (2003, p.2).

In the later section on the coaching session, I made a point about the context, structure and process of coaching, and within the second section I have identified and discussed how significant events containing insight may well emerge through the process of mainstream 'normal' coaching. However, a number of researchers have written specifically about how to influence and encourage 'aha' moments. These may well be 'new thoughts' (Constable and Kiefer, 2013) triggered from the subconscious. Jones (2012, p.19), disagrees, stating that 'nobody can have a truly new idea – all we

do is combine existing factors or notions, gained by observations or the remarks of others' and that new thoughts are due to the individuals' prior experiences, correlating with Seifert et al.'s (1995) theories. Jones continues, first describing a 'single big [Aha] idea' (Jones, 2012, p.28) and secondly stating that there may be a 'number of relevant smaller ideas' which are 'borne on you gradually' (2012, p.62) over time. He takes the view that an 'aha' moment is born out of creativity, hence the deeper subconscious, putting forward the idea of an inner voice that guides us, as the 'inner daemon' (2012, p.89), analogous to that which Socrates claimed was his guide. The following are factors believed to encourage the insight moment.

'People can be catalysts' Haneberg (2011)

Identifying that it is the coach who drives the client towards 'aha' moments, Haneberg suggests that there are four key conditions (2011, pp.30-31), as follows:

1. **Curiosity.** The more one seeks to understand what the client is attempting to explain, the more one begins to ask the right questions. A mixture of open-ended questions and the desire to delve into the subject are necessary, as these questions begin to drive the client towards new ways of learning and thinking.
2. **Pro-activeness.** Taking the lead is an important facet of the coach's task. A disinterested coach will fail to drive sessions and be content to let the client talk until they come to a natural break. Unless there is energy in the conversation, new questions and understanding, the coaching will become stale.
3. **Observant.** An awareness of the wider context of the client will allow the coach to introduce a different interpretation of the current situation. This in turn should provide a catalyst for the client's thoughts, opinions and feelings to emerge.
4. **Courage.** The coaching relationship is unique. Whilst in the session, the coach is there to challenge the client in terms of the way they think. Being authentic enough and professional enough to ask the right difficult question may be the only way in which clients will be challenged enough to drive changing their thoughts and opinions.

'Aha' moments 'favour the prepared mind' Kets de Vries (2013, p.159)

In studying 'tipping points', Kets de Vries provides a conceptual framework for the creation of 'aha' moments (2013, p.161), theorizing four stages.

1. **Preparation.** In this phase, all the relevant information is gathered. This could be personal information, information of a professional performance-related nature, useful in understanding the reasoning behind the change journey. I feel that the preparation phase is very similar to the reality phase of GROW, described later. Constable and Kiefer (2013) state

that preparation is key, 'a clear headed and calm state of mind ... not fixating on the issue' (2013, p.57).

2. **Incubation.** Knowing the current situation can allow the subconscious mind to begin to process all this information and piece it together. In some cases it may well be about accepting a situation and becoming more motivated and prepared to move on. In this phase we begin to identify with the motivation to make these changes in a fusion of the options and will phases of GROW. This period of incubation is something Constable and Keifer (2013, p.55) would agree with. They suggest that by thinking of the issue and allowing the subconscious mind time to process, a creative solution will appear, especially if there is a deadline in mind.
3. **Illumination.** At this point, all the information has been gathered and all the processing has been subconsciously completed. A moment of insight, realisation and knowing come together to provide change. This change is about leaving past paradigms and beliefs and starting to move towards a new way of doing things.
4. **Verification.** The reflective stage is an important facet of the change process. Once we reach the point of verifying our new behaviour, we have already moved in terms of our internal mechanisms and frames of reference.

Perhaps the identification with the GROW model is too simplistic for me to quote here. Kets de Vries writes from his experience as a leadership coach working with one particular client. He states that 'coaching often wakens old Demons, reminding clients of past traumas [and] unhappy situations' (2013, p.153), which is perhaps why he draws on therapeutic literature.

'Right brain thinking' (Constable and Keifer, 2013; Jones, 2012; Jung-Beeman et al. 2004; Longhurst, 2010; Nielson et al. 2013)

To provide a comprehensive set of factors that may encourage 'aha' moments, it is necessary to introduce a widely-reported concept of insight being borne out of creativity (Jones, 2012, pp.84-85). People long believed in the concept of left- and right-brain dominant thinking, with one side responsible for logic and the other for creativity, and that because of this, individuals were more or less skilled in creative or logical activities. Recently, Neilson et al. (2013) have provided evidence contradicting this theory, although acknowledging that language usage tended to be 'left' and processing language 'right'. Jung-Beeman et al. (2003), having conducted experimentation at the moment of insight, posit that at the moment of sudden awareness, there is an increase in neural activity in the right-hand (RH) anterior superior temporal gyrus (aSTG). This area is responsible for semantic integration, i.e. processing of language alongside internalised information. This conclusion supports

the concept that metaphor may well drive ‘aha’ moments and significant moments of insight (de Haan, 2010b; Longhurst, 2010).

Although insight occurs in the client, as has been stated in number of times it is down to the coach to facilitate the phenomenon (de Haan, Culpin and Curd, 2011). Constable and Keifer (2013, pp.82-84) say that listening for these new thoughts is also crucial: ‘insight listening is not unlike the experience of watching a good movie for the first time. We enjoy the movie because we allow ourselves to drop our thinking and get carried off into the plot’. They suggest that we get so absorbed into the moment and conversation that we simply become part of the conversation on a different level: we aren’t just processing, but feeling, and as we feel our intuition takes over. Usually in coaching, we would allow the client to finish saying what is they want to say and explain. This is where insight listening differs, once again suggested that one should interrupt the client and ask for a fresh perspectives on the reflection (2013, p.114). These new thoughts come from the internalised feelings, memories and frames of reference. New thoughts, some of which may well be 80% irrelevant to the situation, should still be encouraged (Jones, 2012, p.21) because 20% of the new perspectives and thoughts are absolutely worth exploring. Jones, an expert in the area of innovation and invention, has provided a number of examples where famous ‘aha’ moments occur during the most mundane activities (2012, pp.83-85). What is being suggested here is that when the conscious mind takes more of a rest, the subconscious mind becomes more active in order to solve a problem.

‘Life’s thumbprint: the impact of significant life events on coaches and their coaching’ Campone and Awal (2012)

Campone and Awal examine successful coaching practice from a different perspective. They suggest that the student coach can be taught the requisite skills of coaching, attributes and techniques, and the knowledge of a process. Yet they suggest that a major positive influence on the coaching session is the coach’s personal experiences. In my own coaching training in 2008 it was quite clear that a coach needed to be purist in their approach, leaving themselves at the door and perhaps even grounding themselves before the session. Yet, my own experience is that people seek a coach who has experience in what they seek. This is identified by researchers who conclude that coaches learn from ‘both the positive and disappointing experiences life experiences’ (2012, p.34) and this ‘leads to the development of empathy’ (2012, p.31)

Coach training may focus on the technical knowledge of the field: skills, processes, coach behaviours; ethical standards and business practices. Coach education broadens the knowledge domains to encompass the personal, theoretical, cognitive and affective aspects of knowledge through didactic,

experiential and reflective practices. An integrative and comprehensive coach education can provide practitioners with a means of engaging in reflective dialogue with past and current experiences. (2012, p.34)

Although not explicit in suggesting that empathy and the sharing of experiences that can lead to greater client insights, this is my interpretation of this paper and suggests that understanding what may generate or aid insight is crucial to an effective coach practitioner.

Events

Life experience is ‘continuous in nature’; however, one can identify that this apparent continuous nature could also be thought of and considered as a series of discrete, segmented events (Reimer et al. 2015, p.1375; Campone and Awal, 2012). Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger (2014, p.3) provide greater clarity and detail, suggesting that people reside in a ‘world full of activity’ (2014, p.7) and that this activity or social influence has consequences for people, either as individuals or as a group. They propose that some events have a start and finish time, while others have no time duration. The example they cite is a death in the family, which they say has no time duration. Although I understand their point, as a critical realist I would say that there is an actual event with a start and finish time. The consequences of this event act on the social level for a time until the effect seemingly diminishes. I accept that the influence may well last beyond the witnessed event time, albeit it with a decreasing influence. Their second example is that of a wedding, where clearly there is a start and finish time (i.e. the ceremony) and consequence of that event (the joining in matrimony of two individuals). Yet when one considers their paper further, it could be argued that such an event is an extremely complex concept, meaning different things to individuals in society, i.e. due to individual construction and perception coupled with internal frames of reference. Murphy (1928, p.576) considers scientific events from a philosophical position. He suggests that two opposing views: that the very phenomena of an event has been created by natural science as a way of explaining when ‘something happened at a given time’; and the view that happenings occur during time i.e. it is ‘the occurrence of space-time, which is the event in its essential constitution’ (1928, p.577). He suggests in this that events happen and humans simply come across them. Thus, some events may well occur but go unnoticed. Yet, whilst this view may be true of nature and reality, this does not provide any bridge to the social world and therefore bring meaning to the social level. For social interactions within coaching sessions, this suggests that differing insight events may occur, including those containing insight, yet they only become an ‘event’ when one becomes aware of their importance, a conclusion that Murphy concurs with: ‘An object is public in its conditions, not in its isolated nature. Its happening is its objectivity’ (1928, p.585).

Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger (2014) identify the differing importance of events, from those which affect the wider, global, social world to smaller events that go almost unnoticed. Could it be that insight moments may be similar? By this, I suggest that there could be smaller, almost unrecognisable events brought about by the influence of the coach, while significant events occur, driven by greater awareness of experiences and the exploration of these. Events are the building blocks that influence one's life experience, discrete moments with a start and finish that can influence beyond the observed. This is applied to the coaching domain, where I speculate that coaching events influence further the overall coaching assignment and the actuality of life experience post-session. I suggest that some events may go by unnoticed, while others may appear more significant to the individual/client and have more meaning and long-term influence.

Before further consideration of the exploration of events specifically within coaching, I consider it important to explain why I theorise that all events are important. Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger explain (2014, p.10), reproduced here in Fig. 2.2, that 'we are faced with decisions and consequences that are probably irrevocable ... we [constantly] encounter a situation demanding 2 or perhaps more directions for the future.' In their paper they admit that their model is a simplification of reality. They provide the formula stating that $X_{n+1} = R X_n (1 - X_n)$ whilst **X is the number of decisions and R is in the range 2.7 to 4**. It shows that every decision is amplified and quickly intensifies into more directions, which then can propel one in many differing directions. Similarly, coaching seeks to explore possibilities before they are enacted [REALITY and Options in GROW], offering information and risk reduction on the path a client may choose to take.

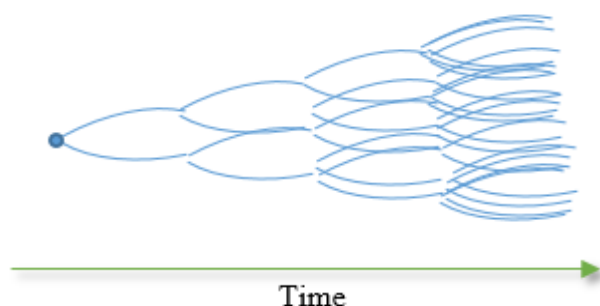


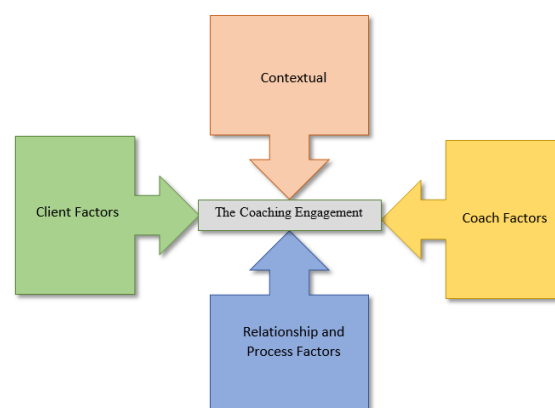
Figure: 2.2: Model of decision making (adapted from Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger, 2014, p.10)

In this section I have provided a definition of an event and begun to understand how an event can have an effect long-term or indeed go unnoticed. Events are the building blocks of lived experience, existing in all strata of life: the real, the actual and the empirical. How do events manifest in coaching? The Ashridge Centre for Coaching has been leading research around an exploration of critical moments in coaching, those events which clients and coaches have identified as significant. A moment is a specific point with an event that has been identified. One now turns to this research to develop an understanding of those critical moments.

The Coaching Session

This section considers the context of the ‘coaching session’. After a number of years of research into coaching, there is a growing body of research into the effects of coaching, yet there still appears to be a lack of academic and empirical understanding of what happens in the coaching session. This view is echoed by Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014), Karboul (2014) and most recently by Shirley et al. (2015). This observation firstly provides an identification of a gap in knowledge and literature, but consequently there is a difficulty in painting a holistic picture of our understanding and definition of coaching sessions.

With this lack of understanding, there is a reliance upon a smaller number of academic texts and the need to expand the research boundaries to include some of the practitioner texts, based upon their expert empirical experience as coaches, adding value to the study. Due to the shortfall in information, the search was widened to include explanations and descriptions of generic ‘therapy’ sessions, which was equally unsuccessful. I will therefore concentrate on coaching literature. My aim in this section is to provide an academic view of the context of a ‘session’, and then an overview of what skills and attributes are considered to be brought by the coach and of the coaching process itself. I was guided towards the inherent influences in coaching by the thinking of Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014), who ‘highlight the theoretical foundations of coaching [to] develop a structural analysis of



the coaching assignment' (2014, p.139). Together they suggest an overview of the how the coaching package combines (Figure 2.). This provided a first glimpse of the considerations and influences around the coaching alliance and what structures and process it may contain.

Figure 2.3: Structure of the coaching engagement (adapted from Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck 2014, p.142)

From this foundation, it is necessary to now move towards defining and discovering more about the context of the coaching session.

Definition and Session Length

There have been many academic studies of the process of coaching and a number of studies that consider the discrete component parts of coaching, e.g. the coaching relationship and wider coaching behaviours. As leading researchers into 'Critical Moments', it was de Haan and the ACC who were able to provide theoretical underpinnings. Yet, definitions of a coaching session and much basic information is somewhat absent. I begin with the suggestion that the basic unit of research is the 'event' that occurs within coaching conversations (de Haan, 2010b). The ACC draws upon and adapts the study of 'events' from psychotherapy (de Haan, 2010b). They acknowledge that identified moments may well stem from 'many years of a personal coaching journey' (de Haan, 2008b, p.108) and in the many papers they have contributed to, the research remains bounded and resists referring to the 'coaching session', instead seeking to concentrate on the relationship that has emerged from the data. There is little discussion of the wider session or context.

Cox (2013, p.281) provides a straightforward definition of the term coaching session. She also separates the overall coaching package from the term 'session':

- a. Session – term used to refer to the individual coaching meeting.
- b. Coaching assignment – used to describe a complete set of coaching sessions with one client.
- c. Coaching alliance – the dyad of both coach and client in session.

Peterson (1996) refers to coaching sessions as an agreed, discrete number of occasions: a scheduled amount of time dedicated to coaching with an agreed client issue. He then further categorises coaching sessions into three domains, suggesting that session length is dictated by a number of variables, but predominantly driven by the intensity of the coaching intervention (see Table 2.1). However, how does the coach begin to understand how intense the sessions need to be? One assumes that Peterson uses his experience and professional judgement to arrive at an optimal session length, but this is not made explicit.

	Targeted	Intensive	Executive
Participant Attributes	Clear sense of objectives	Change is evident but clients may not be fully aware of how or be motivated toward change.	Clients initiate coaching with clear goals in mind.
Session Frequency and Length	4/5 half day sessions over 3-4 months	5-6 full day sessions over 6-9 months	1-2 hours on a regular schedule. Agreed during what is termed as the ‘contracting stage’ see Williams, Edgerton and Palmer (2010, p.45)
Scope of Content	Focus is upon building of skills	Focus is on achieving success in changing roles	Provides options and solutions towards implementation of effective actions

Table 2.1: Coaching Variables affecting session length, adapted from Peterson (1996, p.84)

The article was written from Peterson’s perspective as a director of a management consultancy, and perhaps this offers an explanation as to why sessions appear to be tailored to length (and presumably the fee), depending perhaps upon his recommendation of coaching intensity. Notwithstanding this, what is more crucial to this thesis is that he suggests that sessions last from one or two hours through to a whole working day. The importance of the right session length and the frequency of executive coaching, as viewed by Peterson, is also alluded to by Williams, Edgerton and Palmer (2010 and Cox, 2013) when applied to the wider coaching domain. Having considered Peterson, Williams, Edgerton and Palmer (2010) and Cox (2013), Grant and Zackon (2004), Karboul (2014) they suggest that sessions vary and can last between thirty minutes to two hours, and can fluctuate from 6-12 sessions over a 4-12 month period. The exact duration of each session and the number and frequency of the overall coaching assignment currently appears to be decided upon by the coach.

Location

The coaching session can be conducted in one location, or it could be held in a number of locations, regularly spanning thousands of miles or taking place via telephone or videoconference (Grant and Zackon, 2004, p.1). A coachable moment is defined as a brief coaching opportunity in the workplace, and according to workplace coaches Turner and McCarthy (2015, p.7), a coachable moment can take place ‘travelling in a vehicle or walking across campus or over coffee’. They suggest that in their study, most participants stated that coaching moments arose in neutral and informal locations away from the manager’s office: ‘ambience is important’ (2015, p.7). Turner and McCarthy suggest that being in a neutral location adds to coaching effectiveness by relaxing the client in from what Shoukry (2016, p.15) would determine as an emancipatory atmosphere which is not influenced by the work

context (a context that may reduce the freedom of the client's thoughts). This ad-hoc approach to coaching seems suitable in the context of workplace coaching, but it leaves the question regarding the physical location of other non-work based coaching during one-to-one sessions. Turning to a popular text, Starr (2011, p.189) suggests that in her practice as a coaching consultant there are a number of considerations for coaching's geographic setting. Coaches may consider such things as (2011, p.189) 'lighting, privacy, geographic location, comfort, availability of refreshments, aids to spontaneity, flip-charts, white board etc.' yet she stops short of providing case studies that present examples. However, there is an argument for a far stricter and a more disciplined management of the physical environment.

Askew and Carnell (2011, p.109) are very clear on their specific requirements; being a professional coach means that the environment is one which precludes interruptions, with no disruptions to the coaching process. This extends to the provision of refreshments, implying that this would distract the coach from their focus on the client or imply a relationship. This approach consequently restricts the development of the power dynamic around the therapeutic relationship as considered by Berne in his seminal works (1964, pp.128-142). Peterson provides a case study that clearly shows that he engages in the coaching session the moment that he greets his client, but the main bulk of the session takes place in his client's office (1996, p.81). Although this was a contracting meeting, later in the text he states that '[they held] a formal review meeting with her boss, in tandem with the fourth coaching session thus suggesting that the coaching was conducted on site'. This case study provides another contrasting perspective on location, at least in terms of executive coaching interventions. But what of other types of coaching? Williams and Davies (2002) suggest that therapists are most likely to be offering life coaching as a part of therapy, thus suggesting that the therapy room is used a coaching location, akin to Starr's suggestions. However, there is evidence that the clinical therapy room approach has the potential to inhibit the effectiveness of coaching.

Pendle, Rowe and Britten (2017) coached a number of clients who were 'accessing mental health services' (2017, p.79) whilst participating in a coaching programme. This coaching was located on campus at the University of York and we gain an insight into informality as the clients and coach were 'wandering around' (2017, p.85). In the findings there was a suggested 'tension between the formal and informal' (2017, p.84), highlighting a conflict between the expectations of the client and the reality of the coaching. One view is that it was felt that coaching was more professional (2017, p.83), whilst another view might be that the coaching relationship felt like that between friends (2017, p.84). Clearly, some preferred the clinical and formal setting whilst others preferred informality. There is a partial correlation to the research from executive coaching, in that both the coach and

clients were students, and therefore in their own spaces. Pendle, Rowe and Britten, however, state that ‘the university environment provided a helpful setting for this [coaching] to occur in that it is a location that simultaneously encourages an atmosphere of informality whilst having clear expectations around appropriate behaviour’ (2017, p.89). Clearly this is at odds with Askew and Carnell’s (2011) view of the need for a formal environment.

There does not seem to be focused research considering where the correct coaching location may be from the perspective of the client. The current research is taken predominantly from the perspective of the coach/researcher and it appears that there is no single right answer as to where or what the correct location for a coaching session may be. Wherever the location, formal or informal, it currently appears to be the decision of the coach, who may or may not be fully considering the wishes, needs or constraints of the client. These expectations should be met in order to provide a context that will allow the coaching process to flourish.

Session Structure

Whitmore states (1994, p.38) that management should adopt a coaching approach as a part of their managing culture and inherent way of working, evidenced by Peterson’s (1996) practice of executive coaching in the workplace, thus realising coaching moments at ad hoc and at pre-arranged times either ‘formal or informal’ as has been posited (Whitmore 1994, p.38). Concentrating on one-to-one sessions, how does a coach know how to structure or even commence the session? In his seminal book, Whitmore (1994, p.39) suggests that there is a sequence of phases to be considered throughout the session, which he terms GROW (Goal Reality Options Will). This mnemonic has been provided for coaches to follow in sequence in order to funnel the coaching conversation. Since then, coaching has matured and research has led us away from a number of models based upon GROW, all of which can be found in texts or online (e.g. OSCAR, OSKAR, PRACTICE; the list continues to expand). In my opinion, these acronyms are simply based upon GROW and offer little variety in thinking. In this section we review how Askew and Carnell (2011, p.26) have adapted the GROW model in the development of their perspective surrounding transformative coaching and their coaching cycle model, and how Cox (2013) has developed the experiential coaching cycle, before reviewing a structure provided by Starr (2011).

As coaching is continuing to benefit from growing academic research, and I would argue that it is therefore being better understood, one arrives at the inference (Cox, 2013 and Askew and Carnell, 2011) that a coaching session is cyclical. Askew and Carnell posit that the coaching conversation contains four discrete stages (2011, p.5):

1. Exploration – Exploring the situation with the client.
2. Learning – Identifying new insights and understandings from the explorations.
3. Actions for change – Taking the learning forward and examining what the next steps are.
4. Meta-Learning – Standing back and considering the learning itself by reflecting, comparing and understanding how this has differed from the initial explorations.

These stages have been identified and developed by adapting GROW to include aspects of Transformative Learning theory. Askew and Carnell suggest that ‘underpinning [coaching assignments] ... is an implicit theory of learning’ (2011, p.22) and how learning manifests. They acknowledge that learning that ‘involves change’ is their predilection. Transformative learning theory is complex and has a significant body of knowledge to draw from. Although transformative learning was developed (key leaders in this field were Freire, Kitchenham, Kuhn, Habermas, Mezirow, and Taylor) in relation to adult learning, they acknowledge this (2011, p.23) and adapt this theory to the coaching context. One can certainly understand why transformative learning could be argued to underpin coaching theory. Transformation is said to occur when a person’s beliefs are challenged and inner perspectives altered. It is these structural shifts that are driven by self-discovery leading to transformation of how one ‘thinks or acts’ (Mezirow, 1997, pp.5-6). The foundation of their proposition is that they subscribe to Mezirow’s views (1990) that critical reflection can provide perspective changes in our thinking, behaviours and inner perspectives. We now turn to Cox’s (2013) theory. She also subscribes to the idea that learning theory underpins coaching theory.

Cox (2013) features frequently in this review due to the specific focus of her recent work in this area and the distinct dearth of other works to draw from. She is able to bring together significant academic thinking in order for one to move closer to an understanding of the structure of a coaching session. She states that her model of the coaching session draws from ‘the experience of the client, experiential learning, intuition, focusing, phenomenology, critical reflection, rationality, tacit understanding but also from neuro-science’ (Cox, 2013, p.5). Cox explains that there are transitional spaces between segments that demand ‘dialogue and support from the coach’ (2013, p.5). Although this review seeks to build a picture of the coaching session structure, it appears to be an inevitability that there is a need to determine if the structure of the session is actually a discussion of the wider process (assignment) of coaching. Certainly this will be discussed later in this chapter, but also will be briefly touched upon in this part of the section as the coaching cycle is reviewed further.

To move towards a greater understanding of the structure, I introduce Cox’s model (2013, p.5, Fig 1.1). There are three reflective spaces joined by transitional spokes. These reflective spaces allow

the client to critically consider their current paradigms based upon their experience before allowing themselves to continue to reflect beyond the session – this also further supports the view that coaching assignments extend beyond the bounds of the session. The three spokes then join the reflective phases, which allow the client to become increasingly critical, from ‘feelings ... moving towards a more critical stance ... testing ideas and making changes’ (Cox 2013, p.6). The above examples of structure are based on academic thinking, and to understand what may be happening in actuality, we now turn to a practitioner-based view of the coaching session.

The construction of a coaching session, according to Starr (2011), should be considered a path (2011, p.154). While she believes there to be five discrete stages, one might not take them in order necessarily:

1. Establish conversation – creation of the coaching context.
2. Identify the goal or topic of the coaching session.
3. Surface understanding/insight – allowing the known to surface and refining outcomes.
4. Shape agreements/conclusions – discover the options and build motivation.
5. Completion – summarise and agree the next steps.

The practitioner view is identifiable with that of Whitmore’s (1994) GROW model but with a slight amendment. Whitmore (1994) produced a model that has been adapted and widely used in coaching for a number of decades and may well be the foundation for the coaching structure. Yet Cox, and Askew and Carnell have introduced an important argument, that coaching sessions are more than following a step-by-step method to achieve a coaching goal, but rather a journey underpinned by critical reflection and learning theory. The coaching session structure appears not to be a journey forward as Whitmore (1994) intended, but has become a process that allows the client and coach to progress less linearly. Therefore, it is important to consider the process of coaching to deliver an overall understanding of the session. What do we currently understand happens within a coaching session?

Coaching Practice

Although there perhaps is a notion concerning the time when a coaching assignment commences and closes, this research will consider the process bounded within the actuality of the coaching session. As per the earlier discussion, having moved towards a better understanding of the coaching structure, the question remains as to what transpires within that construct. It could be argued that the process appears to be a synthesis of technique, communication and learning. Experience will be discussed later in this chapter when we consider the coaching moment. We will then also deliberate on how the

coaching experience may affect the relationship, that collaborative partnership (Knight 2011, p.18), between coach and client and indeed the coaching session itself (de Haan, 2007, 2008, 2010a, 2010b and 2015; de Haan et al. 2006 and 2011).

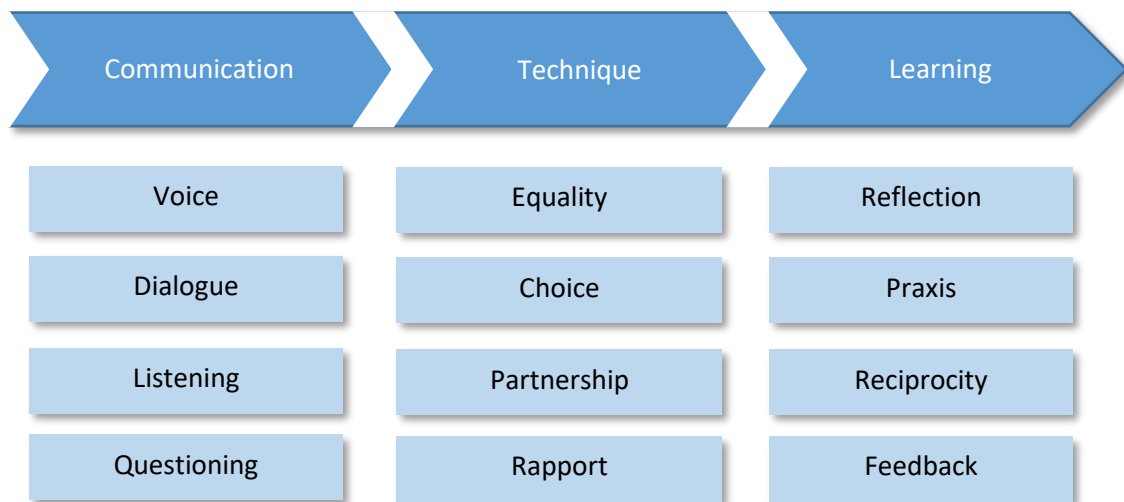


Figure 2.4: Principles and Actions of Coaches, adapted from Knight (2011)

Both academic writer and practitioner will list different attributes. As can be seen in Fig 2.4, there are a number of ‘principles’ and ‘actions’ that Knight (2011) suggests ‘good coaches’ have and do. These have been added to and grouped graphically for ease of review. In the handbook of coaching (2014), Fillery-Travis and Cox provide more direction on what interactions take place at the ‘coaching waterline’. The suggestion is that interactions vary along a linguistic continuum from poor to rich (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, p.453).

Whilst a number of researchers have identified and written about the attributes of coaching, Fillery-Travis and Cox argue that activities at the ‘coaching waterline’ (2014, p.453) remain somewhat absent from the body of knowledge. They state ‘we need to find out more about how and when coaches use questions as well as their influence on the client; we need to explore how the coach listens and how reflection and thinking are encouraged’ (2014, p.453). There is a great need to research this gap area, (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, p.452); however, in coaching there appears to be even less academic research on what exists at the moment of insight that occurs at the ‘waterline’, as Fillery-Travis and Cox state (2014). It seems that only de Haan and the ACC have begun to research this area, but ‘stop short of exploring it in detail’ (2014, p.452).

Whilst we have briefly discussed the attributes of coaching, there are other important considerations. Firstly, the coaching session is a series of transactions between coach and client and thus there is

another aspect of process to be considered: the psychological level of the exchanges (Berne, 1964). Secondly, the coach and client's individual ontologies should be explored. Myers (2014, pp.389-390) concludes that both parties experience and make meaning of the process in their own unique ways and that coaches need to be mindful of the 'client's frame of reference', thus lending weight to Carnell and Askew's (2011) adoption of transformational learning. With an already acknowledged lack of information to review, Cox (2013) is utilised to explore hidden elements of the coaching process.

Cox (2013) suggests that the cyclical, experiential model is the 'fundamental process which underpins all coaching' (2013, p.3). Through the break-down of this model and its segmented areas, greater understanding is gained. Cox writes about a number of reflective experiences and transitional periods; touching experience; becoming critical; and integrating. The cycle is considered to be linear: that is, a session will commence with the reflection of experience before any integration of the learning into the client's frame of reference. One consideration is that the learning may not be based upon that of the client, but the coach. Experiences are drawn from the client, but often it is the coach that offers experiences of their own or others, which are then considered. Thus, if we accept this view then inside session the model suggests the integration of understanding.

The '*Reflective Experience*' is the basis of the cycle, continually informing both coach and client about the current situation. The pre-reflection explores the 'lived experience' (Cox, 2013, p.11) and allows deeper consideration. At this juncture, Cox brings into her writing the notion of feelings, together with both memory and consciousness. She is proposing that our recall of lived experiences is the sum of our sensory immersion i.e. that we feel our experience, alongside one's, often fragmented, recall. Yet she suggests there is another human aspect to an experience: consciousness. Firstly, that of the conscious 'contents of the ongoing experience' (2013, p.13) and 'one's explicit [conscious] awareness of the contents of the experience' (2013, p.13). This would appear to suggest the actuality of the experience that when one recalls other experiences can then be used to inform future action. The 'three main constituents therefore [are] ... Proto (pre-reflective); Core (reflecting on experience); [and] Autobiographical (Post-reflective)' (2013, p.13).

This is what Myers (2014) and Askew and Carnell (2011) consider to be a person's individual particular frame of reference, i.e. our internal reference frame based upon the sum of our experiences. I consider that the moment of transition from pre-reflective to conscious awareness has the potential to be a moment of insight, realisation, learning or understanding, considering that Cox acknowledges that some experiences are not consciously known. I assume that this includes the experiences raised

by the coach during the session (discussed later in this chapter). We now consider the process from Cox's (2013) research perspective:

When recounting personal experiences, a narrative is formed (Cox, 2013, p.28). This narrative is not a clear or completely full representation of any recalled memories. These representations are subject to distortions due to elapsed time and sensory impact (Heider, 1988). Heider suggests being mindful of the 'Roshomon' effect due to the perceptions of the individual. The Roshomon Conjecture or Roshomon effect is the name given to the disparate recollections between people reporting the same experience, named after the 1950s film *Roshomon*. The recalled narrative is not merely a story, Cox suggests, but 'an ordering of events that gives meaning to aspects of their [the client's] lives' (2013, p.41) and experiences. It would appear that this recalling of experiences are also cloaked with a complexity of articulation i.e. the client asking themselves a number of internal questions e.g. what is the expectation of the coach? Do I trust the coach? How have I understood the experience? How am I applying it in the future? How do I wish the coach to view me, how do I represent myself? What do I remember happened? How did I feel? Cox (2013, pp.32-35) highlights two dangers of recalling this narrative: the fixed (disassociation of the clients from the experience) and the frozen (experiences that clients are trapped by). Coaches should be aware of the need to listen to 'understand the story and why the client is telling it' (2013, p.41) coupled with these internal questions. Coaches have to listen for distortions in the narrative coupled with potential new constructions due to the coaching alliance, but also listen out for 'breaches in the narrative' (Cox, 2013, p.36). The breaches in the 'normative narrative script' are suggested as the reason coaching is sought (Cox, 2013, p.36). Once experiences are recalled, the coach may add to this, creating a joint inter-subjectivity before then moving towards understanding (of these experiences).

Listening is said to be one of the key underlying skills needed by coaches (Will, Gessnitzer and Kaufeld, 2016, p.63). From the perspective of a practitioner, Starr (2011, p.76) has written about four increasingly deepening levels of listening. She starts with Cosmetic (a person may simply look like they are listening and responding accordingly); Conversational (the more usual type of listening exchange two or more people become engaged in); Active (focused on the client's words); and Deep (more focus on the client than the self). It is active listening and deep listening that coaches must utilise (Starr, 2011, p.78). Yet there would seem to be more to listening than simply focusing and recording what a client says. Cox (2013), provides an integrative model of listening. While accepting that the differing levels of listening would appear to be useful, she suggests that 'listening in coaching should follow a hermeneutic paradigm ... allowing for openness and authenticity ... combined with active listening' (Cox, 2013, p.57). Coaches benefit from listening from within and also listening

externally to the client, in a combination of active listening and authentic listening: active listening in terms of reflecting back to confirm understanding; and authentic listening in terms of making new constructed sense of the narrative.

At the time of her writing it appeared that there was no academic research to provide thinking or models of how to form questions correctly in coaching. Wallis addresses this, which is explored in the next paragraph. Cox made the point that ‘questioning could be the key component in the coaching process’ (2013, p.120). Coaching questions should be simple: according to Starr they should have a purpose and be influencing without controlling (2011, p.89). By using questions, the coach is seeking to expand the narrative. Questions can take many forms, i.e. open, closed, leading et cetera (Cox, 2013; Starr 2011). There are, according to Cox, two reasons for questions. Firstly, from the coach’s perspective ‘[to ask] questions that satisfy the alliance [the reason for coaching]’ and secondly, from the perspective of the client ‘to generate answers that satisfy themselves’ (Cox, 2013, p.159). How does one know what the right question is and how to ask it? I now turn to Wallis (2015) who currently leads academic research in term of coaching questions.

Wallis (2015) causes one to reconsider Cox’s earlier statement that questions could be the most important component of the coaching process. Undoubtedly an important factor, Wallis makes the point that ‘questions are a key tool available to coaches that help them to help their clients’ (2015, p.155), thus intimating that questions, whilst important, may not be the most important factor in the process. In the formation of questions there are many complex factors at play, from the experiences of the coach and client, the joint construction of meaning in the moment through to the education and perception of the coach’s role in the alliance (2015, p.155). An important note to practitioners and researchers is that Wallis (2015, p.155) also comments on the importance of the coaching contract ‘in setting and agreeing guiderails ... establishing question boundaries and direction’. One of Wallis’s key findings from the research was that of the coach prefacing a question. Prefaces are often used to ‘prepare [the client] for a question that may have an increased level of challenge or to be clear about the authority to refrain from providing a response’ (2015, p.156). Wallis postulates that other possibilities for prefacing may well be to reduce the ‘discomfort at the topic or level of challenge’ or perhaps to ‘seek permission’ (2015, p.156). An important detail for this particular research project is what could happen at the moment of insight due to posing a question. This was discussed when considering insight manifestation.

It appears that some questions have a shelf-life and are never verbalised: time or the verbal reflections move on. Wallis agrees with both Cox and Starr that questions can have many purposes e.g. To check

understanding, recap, reflect, explore, set the scene, or build rapport and trust (Cox, 2013, p.119; Starr, 2011, p.91; Wallis, 2015, p.157). Questions, according to the research, can manifest from either a conscious or subconscious construct (Wallis, 2015, p.157), but conscious questions were more prevalent at the start and close of individual sessions. Conscious questions were deemed to be ‘positive and necessary’ whilst more subconscious questioning ‘seemed to add a positive element of mystery and wonder’ and provide the client with a light ‘somatic response’ (Wallis, 2015, p.157). Whilst it is not in the remit of this review to ascertain what the right or most effective question may be, it is important to appreciate that the state of the relationship impacts questioning, whilst questioning has the potential to cause a change in the coach-client dynamic, in some cases causing ruptures in the relationship (Wallis, 2015, p.158). This was identified as due to the posing of questions that were uncomfortable for the client. This is considered in more depth later in the chapter when considering de Haan et al.’s research into significant moments within coaching. Based upon the correlating evidence from the differing sources (academic, academic/practitioner and expert coach), the literature suggests that questions hold the key to understanding how insight is generated in coaching sessions. Moving back to the process of coaching and Cox’s research, we have a greater understanding of structure, reflection, of listening, and questioning. One now seeks to bring the overall process together.

Cox talks about the attributes of a coach’s individual awareness of both mindfulness and presence i.e. being aware and present in the moment and giving 100% to the client. The key aspect now, to conclude this particular review of process according to Cox (2013), is to consider how the coaching process is brought together. Indeed, Cox talks about integrating the experience (2013, p.138). What she appears to propose is that, through integration of the experience, which is the reason for the coaching, the client then turns the manifestation of reflective learnings and ‘tacit knowledge’ (Cox, 2013, p.143) into useful change. Whilst acknowledging Mezirow’s influence on transformative learning, Cox provides four discrete ‘manifestations of transfer’ (2013, p.142) that she states are in relation to experience and cognitive awareness. The four levels of manifestation of transfer are:

1. **Rote application** – the output from training. This would produce an almost intuitive response and change due to repetition of the learning i.e. new techniques.
2. **Skilled application** – having produced a deep understanding of situations that are familiar to the client and therefore can alter outcomes through noticing questions and patterns.
3. **Intuition** – although a difficult phenomenon to define, Cox believes that this is ‘knowing without knowing why’, similar to having a sense of the validity of a judgement.
4. **Sense making/Insight** – the application of learning is very logical and fact based, involving gathering data to be able to make an informed decision.

Finally, Cox states that the last phase of integration (understanding how the transfer could well occur) is based upon the exploration of planning, setting goals and understanding the options. I believe that this is somewhat similar to the W of the GROW model (Whitmore, 1994, p.39). I consider that GROW remains a useful guide for coaches, but it would appear sensible to consider a deeper reflective practice in the session. Spending time on reflections can bring subconscious knowledge of experience and one's frames of reference to the fore, and then a deeper understanding of the situation can ensue. A coach may then be able to ask the right question in order for the client to take a step towards success. We have now moved further toward an understanding of what a coaching session may look like, according to three sources (academic, practitioner and researcher/practitioner). Coaching is an apparently seamless series of steps i.e. the experiential coaching cycle and G-R-O-W. One must consider how to identify these discrete segments before one could ascertain if any may specifically contain insight.

Coaching Moments

The ACC has led research into an area termed the 'critical coaching moment' (de Haan, 2006, p.3), defined as 'a sudden shift or interruption to a coaching conversation – one that feels significant and urgent, exciting or disturbing' (Bertie et al. 2007, p.1). The ACC aim has been to 'analyse the nature of critical moments' (de Haan, 2006, p.3) to learn what 'leads to change as a result of coaching' (de Haan et al. 2006, p.5). Over the years the group has collected a significant amount of data and can speak with confidence on their findings, which have been corroborated by later research (de Haan, 2010a, 2010b and 2015). From the earlier understanding of what an event is, the ACC has been focused upon researching the impact and influence upon both client and coach of specific events leading up to that critical moment. In this section, we will consider what the ACC discovered about events. Some of their findings have more relevance in the later section, which covers insight and intuition, and will be discussed there.

There is a relevance to this project in understanding the ACC's research. However, whilst this project seeks to explore the events that contain insight, it does not aim to understand how those coaching moments affect the coaching relationship. There is a particular question about the significance of the timeframe of the research. The questions were posed post-coaching session and the research gathering was stated to be as long as four years (de Haan et al. 2006, 2008a). These concerns merely suggest caution; the research continues to inform understanding from the event perspective.

I doubt therefore I coach: critical moments in coaching practice (de Haan, 2008a)

The overriding conclusion from this paper is about the doubts inexperienced coaches tend to experience. These doubts are endemic from the start through to breakthrough moments. From the analysis it appears that there is a multitude of internal questioning in terms of the process, the client, the outcome, the self and the boundaries of the assignment. In his conclusion, de Haan suggests that the critical moment and the manifestation of doubt appear to be connected and that critical moments are important in reaching breakthroughs in coaching. It is these breakthroughs, he states, that make a better overall coaching experience. This conclusion strengthens the argument for manifestation of insight moments. Are these doubts linked to inexperience? In his later research he suggests that this is indeed the case.

I struggle and emerge: critical moments of experienced coaches (de Haan, 2008b)

In this paper de Haan researches a more experienced participant: those that have experienced as a minimum, eight years of coaching practice. There is certainly a continuation of the theme of doubts in the same areas as above, yet the more experienced coaches have a degree of certainty and their reflections on the moment are termed anxieties. When comparing the synthesis of the two papers it would appear that there is a greater amount of reflexivity from the coaches, as one might expect, guiding experienced therapists through the critical moment. In terms of exploring the literature, de Haan's overview informs this project further:

1. *Managing the key conditions.* The most relevant to this research is the example where the coach and client were clearly in the wrong context and once this was corrected, the coaching conversation began to flow. This appears to resonate with the earlier section that gave an overview of the coaching session. Coaches need to be aware of the correct foundations being in place prior to coaching.
2. *Deepening.* Here we get an insight into the working process of the coaching session and the events in that session. The deepening of the coaching session was perceived to be achieved by continuing to pose questions, then summarising and mirroring, providing feedback and exploring key points. Deepening may also be achieved by understanding feelings and developing further the trust and rapport in the coaching relationship.
3. *Handling.* Discussion of the doubts and anxieties that may emerge.

This paper provides deeper insight into what happens within a coaching session and potential themes that appear to occur within coaching sessions. I fully acknowledge that there is more additional information to be gleaned from an analysis, but there does appear to be a limitation in the research, because without more in-depth research and more focused research this is, I suggest, impossible to ascertain from a recording due to the internalised nature of thinking and considerations.

Critical moments of clients of coaching: Towards a 'client model' of executive coaching (de Haan et al. 2010b)

Having conducted studies of coaches, from the less experienced to the more experienced, the natural direction for continuing research was to understand critical moments with clients of experienced coaches. From the research, one discovers that clients report very different observations of critical moments. Firstly, clients concentrate on their moments of realisation, which occur less often than the reported critical moments of coaches. It appears that clients are not particularly interested in the overall process, but rather the content is what they wish to reflect upon. This is after all the reason for their coaching (i.e. the deepening mentioned earlier). One of the key findings from this report is that breakthrough moments are not necessarily what a client requires from coaching and creating support networks may well be adequate for the coaching outcome. This impacts this research because there may be clients and participants seeking support rather than answers to internal questions. This suggests that learning and insight is not necessarily always what the client seeks. In terms of understanding coaching events, I take from this paper and observation that when coaching is done well, client doesn't notice the relationship, type of question or the context of the session, but rather the topic of conversation, the content, exploration and what it means to them. This provides an indicator as to what may be found in coaching events.

Critical moments of clients and coaches: a direct comparison study (de Haan et al. 2010a)

One of the recommendations of the ACC research when looking at the clients of coaching was to consider a direct comparison study. The results of such study show that in just over half the cases, both coach and client report the same critical moment and verbal explanations apparently use similar language to describe the critical moments. De Haan et al. use the correlation they discover to refute the 'Roshomon Conjecture' (de Haan and Nieß, 2015, p.12). However, there is, I suggest, a lack of evidence to reject the Roshomon effect based upon 50% of a sample. Additionally, the moment was inter-subjective and actively jointly created, while the Roshomon effect is about multiple people witnessing an event. In terms of this research, I would expect perhaps 50% of clients to identify the same insight moment and events.

A critical moment is considered important in respect of coaching outcomes (de Haan, 2008, p.14). These events are (de Haan, 2008, p.13) reported as 'breakthrough moments', 'unexpected significant moments which drive a coach within themselves to bring new and different questioning for the client, often leading to breakthroughs, but sometimes causing ruptures in the relationship' (Day et al. 2006, p.214). In all their conclusions, the ACC believes that 'the more critical moments, the better the

coaching ... and the more potential breakthrough moments [in the coaching outcome]’ (de Haan, 2008, p.14). One must remember that while clients can gain ‘realisations, emerging insight, and reflection’ (de Haan, 2010a, p.125) and ‘new perspectives on their issues’ (de Haan, 2010a, p.30), often supporting a client is satisfactory as a coaching outcome (de Haan, 2010b). Whilst one now understands what could happen in a significant coaching event, we now ought to have a greater understanding of insight in order to be able to recognise it in the gathered datasets.

Closing Position and Gap in Knowledge

There appears to be no literature that considers the congruence of a whole coaching session and ascertains what this looks like. In this chapter I have visited a number of papers and case studies and pulled together a full snapshot of understanding. It seems that there is no clear answer as to how long a typical coaching session will or should last, nor as to the location of the coaching session or the structure or process of coaching. These decisions are predominantly made by the coach, guided by their internal experience. However, as de Haan et al. have found, no matter how experienced a coach, doubts and anxieties still remain, especially at the most significant times in the session and assignment. One almost feels that training produces coaches in their own image. Academics, and practitioners are giving a confused message regarding the process of coaching. An expert practitioner may well have no structure for a coaching session other than GROW in mind, and they may or may not achieve moments of insight, although it is accepted that insight perhaps isn’t the holy grail of coaching after all and that effective support may well be enough to achieve a successful outcome. In the academic world there is a lot more theory surrounding the structure of a coaching session and researchers suggest that coaching should follow transformative and reflective learning models in order to be effective.

I have argued that there is a need to understand that the quality of the coach-client relationship, open-ended and ever deepening yet challenging questions, coupled with a comprehensive knowledge of the background to the client and trust in one’s intuition all act as a positive foundation for the coaching experience. If an assumption is made that coaches are attempting to provide as many moments of insight for their clients as possible, and to make those moments of insight as significant as possible, then perhaps coaching should begin to understand that there are additional considerations within the coaching context to encourage these significant insight events. Metaphor and creative thinking alongside preparation of the mind can assist coaches to become catalysts. Preparing a client’s mind for a moment of insight means they ought to take a fresh look at the phenomenon. Are we just trying too hard in-session?

In terms of a gap in knowledge, this literature review has identified that little is known about coaching sessions at the ‘coaching waterline’ and certainly not the events within a session i.e. those discrete building blocks. The closest research has come to exploring the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions is in work conducted by the ACC. However, this research considers significant moments as identified by the coaches and clients and appears not to explore the actuality inside the events in terms of what the event looks like. The ACC continues to consider coaching in terms of relationship and the significant moment.

From the literature, it appears that all coaching sessions have an unknown number of discrete events that make up a coaching session, giving the impression of fluidity. It appears that some are more important to the client than others, yet one wonders which of these key events have insight residing within them. If a coach was able to identify more moments of insight, potentially the client could be taken by the coach in a new direction; or the session might simply become more effective.

Following the review of literature, I conceptualise how an insight moment resides in a coaching assignments in Fig 2.5. It also shows my thinking regarding the key search terms.

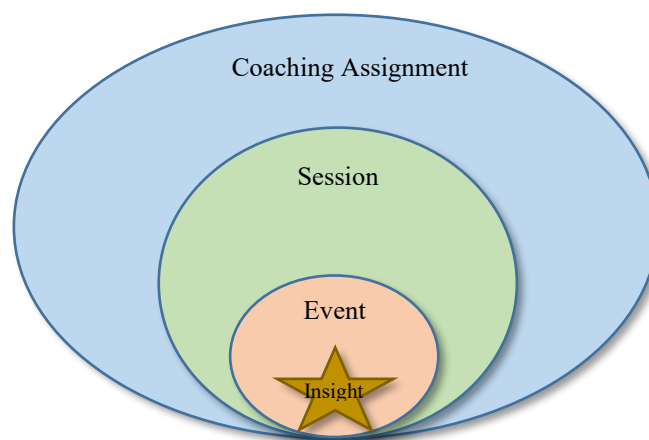


Figure 2.5: Conceptualisation of where insight may possibly fit into a coaching assignment

This research project will seek to identify the most significant insight events in coaching sessions according to the coach and client and allow them to identify and ascertain their feelings and thoughts as to what triggered that event and the ‘so what’ of the event. What are the structures and mechanisms which could be acting at the empirical level? From there, each of those significant events will be analysed in order to ascertain what happened within the events and to identify any similarities. The next chapter considers my philosophical stance and the methodology behind how the data was collected and analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will explain the methodology behind the data-gathering and analysis in this project; it will rationalise the approach within a structure suggested by Crotty (1998). Designing a research project that aims to answer the most in-depth questions of nature and the social world is both challenging and daunting. Crotty (1998) proposes four areas to consider prior to commencing a research project (1998, p.3): ‘methods; methodology; theoretical perspective; [and] epistemology’, shown in Fig. 3.1 below.

Figure

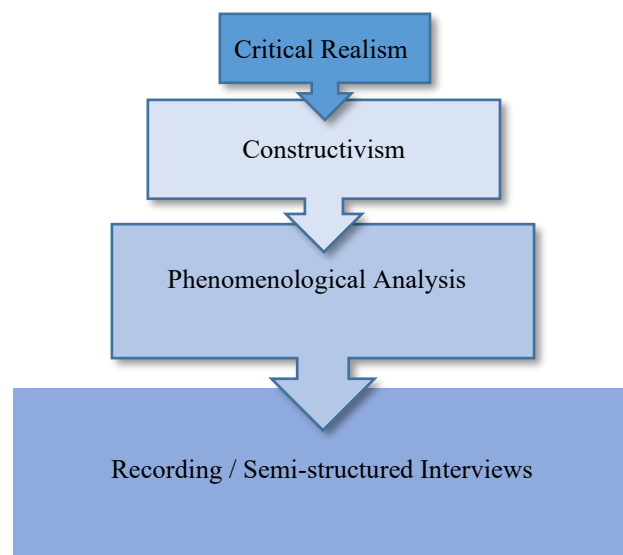


Figure 3.1: The methodological approach, adapted from (Crotty, 1998, p.4)

Collis and Hussey (2009) agree with Crotty (1998, p.85) that it is of critical importance to ‘make a choice about the paradigm you will adopt at an early stage’. As such, I made a choice in both methodology and research methods based upon my own epistemology and ontology. They are positing that it is important to understand what I believe and what I consider to be the nature of reality. This understanding of my own individual paradigm and belief system affects how the research project moved forward and how I envisaged an authentic collection of data and subsequent movement toward knowledge. This comprehension provided me with an understanding in how I interacted with the data. However, when starting to construct a research proposal, as Crotty (1998, p.13) suggests, it is not easy to simply follow ‘arrows from left to right’, or in terms of Fig. 3.1, top to bottom, when considering epistemological and methodological approaches. The starting position of this project was for me to consider what my research project was. What did I wish to understand? From this

consideration I asked and specifically sought to understand, as suggested by Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler, (2006, p.27) what really the research was aiming to discover. What was it really that I sought to understand and learn that was not available in the current literature? From answering these questions, the fuller aim and objectives of the research appeared (outlined in Chapter 1). Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2006, p.27) state that '[only] researchable questions can be answered through the systematic collection of data'. I can understand that in terms of deductive and positivist objective projects, this statement appears crucial. Yet, in subjective research, having a meticulously-explored and well-considered aim provides an equally solid foundation on which to build a successful subjective, inductive, project. Subsequently, further questions of how the research would be conducted emerged. In social science research (Cohen et al. 2007, p.3), it is suggested that there is an additional problem inherent with the discovery of knowledge. This supplementary difficulty (Cohen et al. 2007, pp.18-19) exists because researching within the social (empirical level) world is complex, due to the differing facets of human agency and systems, perceptions and experiences. This social science research project is also subject to this unique individual human complexity. Once the research aims became clear, exploring events that lead to insight in coaching sessions; identifying structures through experience, the journey toward understanding the epistemic belief and the ontology of my own position appeared to be paradoxical, explained later in this chapter. This confusion led to extreme paradigm shifts occurring naturally with the provocation of thought that constructing doctoral research brings.

At the beginning of a research project, the academic has a number of important considerations about the design of the undertaking. As Crotty (1998, p.10) suggests, there are two main questions:

1. What methods and methodologies will be employed?
2. How do we justify this choice?

To answer these questions, as you read through the chapter, I discuss the method, methodology and the theoretical underpinning coupled alongside my own ontological and epistemological positioning. Yet, whilst there is an aspect of authenticity required there is also an academic argument in the selection and choice of appropriate method i.e. that it is the research question that primarily informs the methodology alongside personal fidelity towards knowledge (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler, 2006, p.27):

***“Exploring the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions:
Identifying structures through experiences.”***

As can be seen, the addition of ‘structures’ highlights a critical realist understanding whilst the term ‘experiences’ is identified with phenomenology.

Authors whose work has informed this research project have also been informed through an inductive, constructionist stance e.g. de Hann et al (2006) narrative, qualitative, meaning; Day et al (2008), rich, descriptive, meaning through experiences; de Haan and Neiß (2015), thematic; Kets de Vries (2013), case study; Cox (2013), pragmatism but underpinned by phenomenology and constructionism, experiences explored with reflection and critical thinking. I follow this example by using phenomenology and constructivism underpinned by a post-positivist stance.

My background as an engineer initially saw me with a more positivistic view, that knowledge can be discovered through logic, objective evidence and mathematics. However, during the course of the modules of the DCM taught units, I realised that a severe shift was occurring as I began to pose deeper questions about myself. Having taken substantial time to reflect and settle, I sensed the extensive change that accompanied the learning and development journey. This complex research project was approached from the stance of social-construction ontology while having a critical-realist epistemological perspective at its core foundation. This synergy, although initially appearing to be contrasting, is explained later in the chapter. The reader may ask how I moved to the right of the continuum (Fig. 3.2) and why perhaps pragmatism wasn’t adopted. Firstly, in my previous studies, I was researching principles and phenomena that were explained, appropriately, through a positivist approach. As I moved into researching the social world, through my own personal development, I learned and understood more about myself. I concluded that we all have a unique view of the world and truths that we believe, due to the interpretations of our lives and experiences.

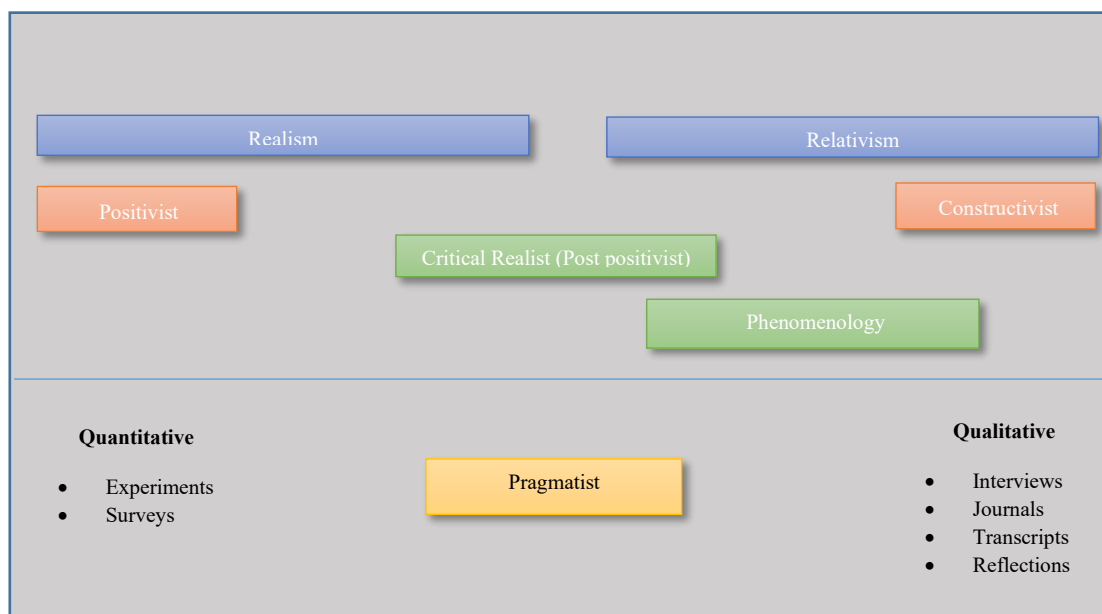


Figure 3.2: The Research Continuum

I suggest that that no two people are the same or that hold exactly the same views, but I believe that a joint view can be crafted. It is my view that there appears to be a deeper truth, a reality that would exist separately of my, or other, views, which would exist wholly independently of human perception and involvement. From this moment, I knew that I was critical-realist, but also maintained my own interpretivist/constructivist view.

There are a number of assumptions, summarised in table 3.1, within this research project, adapted from Collis and Hussey (2009, pp.58-59).

Assumption	Philosophical Value
Ontology	There is one natural reality. Yet this actuality is identified through subjective meaning by individual and social influences.
Epistemology	The researcher accepts an amount of interaction with the subject being studied, and although any influence is consciously kept to a minimum, there is nevertheless a subconscious effect on the outcome.
Axiological	It is acknowledged that there are conscious and subconscious biases introduced due to the inherent nature of empirical interpretation of results from research.
Rhetorical	On relevant occasions, first-person terms will be introduced to the project.
Methodological	The discovery of knowledge is inductive due to its qualitative nature
Research attributes	This research will utilise a small sample, have strong validity and yet would be difficult to repeat due to the complexity of social research

Table 3.1: Research assumptions adapted from Collis and Hussey (2009 pg58)

In Chapter 2, the current literature around coaching sessions, insight and events was explored and will be used in the analysis as a theoretical framework. In this chapter, based upon a foundation of

Critical Realism and using empiricism, i.e. descriptive phenomenological analysis, I provide further explanation of my identified paradigms and philosophical perspective, as represented in Figur. 3.3 below:

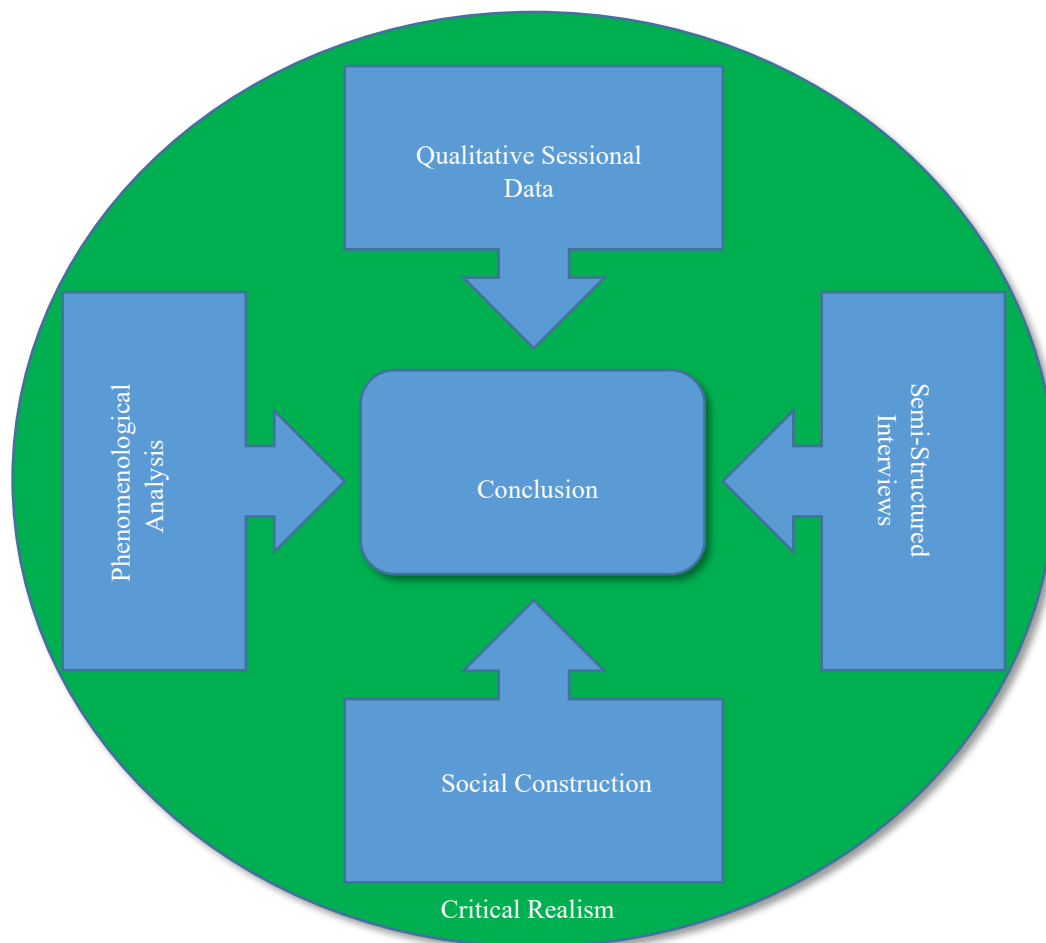


Figure 3.3: The researcher's paradigm

In addition, I rationalise the selection of an appropriate methodology and methods of research, in order to furnish a level of understanding throughout the data gathering, analysis leading to my conclusions. An overall view of the research strategy is in Fig 3.4.

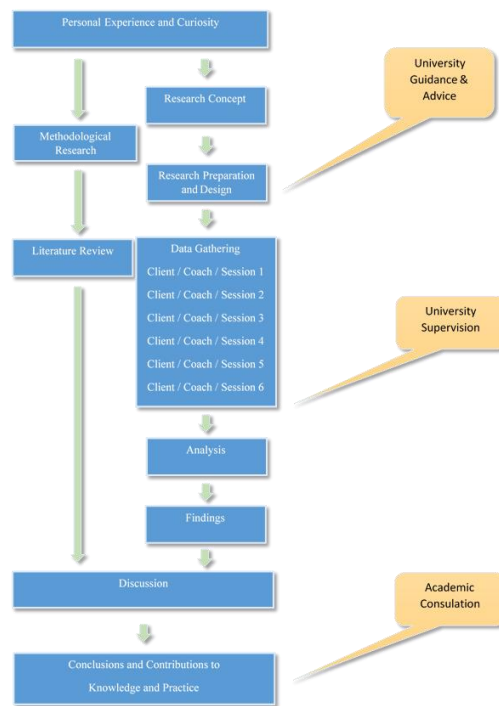


Figure 3.4: An overall view of the research strategy

Ontological and Epistemological Positioning

This research was approached from a position of critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008) and social construction (Hood, 2016), using phenomenological analysis (Rieners, 2012) as outlined later in the chapter. I look to Cohen et al. (2007, p.6), who posit that there is an objective and positivist position that seeks to provide a causal relationship between variables, or patterns in phenomena in the natural world, and ‘that research is systematic and controlled ... personal belief has to have a reality check against objective, empirical facts and tests’ and specifically, ‘the world exists ... there is a universal law of society and human conduct within it’ (2007, pp.7-10). Yet the phenomenon studied within this project was that of coaching, raising questions of how research can be controlled and systematic. For this reason, many believe that social research resides outside of this scientific belief. The other main paradigm is interpretivism (Collis and Hussey, 2009, pp.57-58; Cohen et al. 2007, p.7) and the ‘assumption that social reality is in our minds and is subjective’. As a critical realist, I suggest that subjective research is valid due to the complexities of the human mind; and whilst there appears to be a significant case for causality in the natural world, humans continue to understand this through observation and embracing individual subjective experience. Having an awareness of the human social world (O’Gorman and Macintosh 2015, p.57) provides sufficient validation of the need to approach research differently to the objective way of researching the natural sciences because people interpret the world uniquely, ‘shaping their own reality’.

Although there is an individual reality, Cohen et al. (2007, p.19) posit that ‘an individual’s behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference; understanding an individual’s perception of the world around has to come from the inside’. This is a major criticism of social research, that there is a bias in the research due to the researcher’s position in that research. Understanding the subject of reflexivity and my position in the research was important. By understanding that my presence would have an effect upon the validity of the outcome of this research, as Cummings (2013, p.225) writes, ‘deepening reflexivity and exposing its difficulties ... involves viewing the phenomena through a nuanced lens of self-awareness and social, cultural and political consciousness’. I addressed this through reflexive considerations, limiting the effect on the subject during my participation in data collection.

It was crucial that there was a maintenance of authenticity that would allow the research and later analysis to be coherent and have a consistent thread through the project. With so many approaches to conduct the project, data collection and analysis from auto-ethnography to discourse analysis available, none seemed suitable to my research question. An interpretivist stance offered a resolution to the problem of seeking to understand ‘social phenomena’ (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015, p.65). In terms of critical realism, it is wholly acceptable to take human experience to seek causality. Therefore, descriptive phenomenology was adopted.

The Tenets of Critical Realism as the Core Foundation

As stated, critical realism has been adopted as the theoretical underpinning of this research because of the researcher’s epistemic views around how knowledge appears: that there is an abstract truth hidden because of perception. It is critical that there is a congruence in the method of data-gathering and in the later analysis that stays true to the ontological and epistemological positioning. Critical realism has a number of underlying core tenets that guide the researcher.

The human mind is indeed complex within the biology of the human being, and yet for all its complexity, what makes it amazing also makes it fallible, due to its conscious existence, the ability to interpret events. This is what Bhaskar (2015, p.16) suggests, as the concept of achieving freedom from the dialectic, and the acceptance of a deeper level or reality separate from the mind. This is where the philosophy of critical realism begins to make sense in an explanation of the philosophy regarding the social world. Clark, MacIntyre and Cruickshank (2007) introduce the ways in which critical realist research can uncover mechanisms through understanding the philosophy. Clark (2015) goes much farther to explain critical realism in a research context, stating that people inherently seek simplicity. This approach is endemic in everyday life, from restaurants to car maintenance: people desire an instruction set whereby if they follow

the steps and detail correctly in order to get the results they desire. He continues to explain that this wouldn't be enough to solve some of the most complicated problems that humans face, such as sending satellites into orbit or curing diseases. In these complicated challenges, he states that researchers make calculations based upon assumptions, prior experience and knowledge, complicated mathematical formula and careful control conditions to overcome the barriers to successful outcomes. Yet when the results aren't as expected, the complicated solutions tend to become even more complicated. He posits that the world transcends simple step-by-step instructions and goes beyond complicated mathematics and controlled experimentation, because in the human world, everything is driven by complex social interfaces. It is this social complexity that provides the rationale behind the 'why': why social interactions are unable to be solved primarily by utilising positivist research methods. Returning to Bhaskar, the father of critical realism, 'no return to positivism is possible' (2008, p.xxix), thus meaning that once there is an acceptance of the complexity of social dimensions, a changed position to the right of positivism will be adopted: post-positivism. The case has been made for the eschewal of positivist research techniques to answer the posed social research question. Specifically, when the capacity to determine a causal relationship measuring independent and dependant variables (Gorski, 2013) proves to be beyond reach, or feels uncomfortable, researchers seek an alternative approach. Yet there is a valid argument, Denzin writes (2004), which suggests that the social scientist seeks to complicate their own research methods in order to justify and validate critical realism, in order to make it appear rigorous, along with descriptive approaches. Denzin suggests that this justification is necessary to provide understanding that whilst a researcher could replicate research, and on occasion results may be similar, identical results couldn't be faithfully achieved. Bhaskar posits, through understanding one's self-beliefs in the world, one can seek to research a phenomenon within it; thus, providing that this approach is not withheld from the reader, the empirically gathered knowledge then becomes valid and credible.

As critical realism assumes its post-positivist position, it is crucial that there is well-defined understanding of the deeper nature of the theory in order to apply it to qualitative research:

Reality is assumed to exist but only imperfectly apprehensible because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of the phenomena ... reality must be subjected to the widest possible critical examination to facilitate apprehending reality as closely as possible (but never perfectly). (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.110)

The positioning of critical-realism is due to how Bhaskar posits that knowledge can be gained. He is critical of both positivism and constructivism because of what he calls 'the epistemic fallacy' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.5), that is the understanding and belief that knowledge can be gained either due to causality in positivism or through constructions in discourse. Instead, he suggests that a multitude of research

techniques and methodologies can be used to assist the researcher to get closer to a reality or real level (Fletcher, 2016, p.2) without fully knowing true reality.

Bhaskar (2008) suggests that reality (Fig. 3.5) answers the question of fallacy if stratified into three levels. Firstly, there is the empirical level, where the world can be mostly witnessed but is always ‘mediated through the filter of human experience and interpretation’; secondly, there is an actual level, where events occur outside human observation; and finally the real. It is here that ‘causal mechanisms’ exist (Fletcher, 2016, p.3).

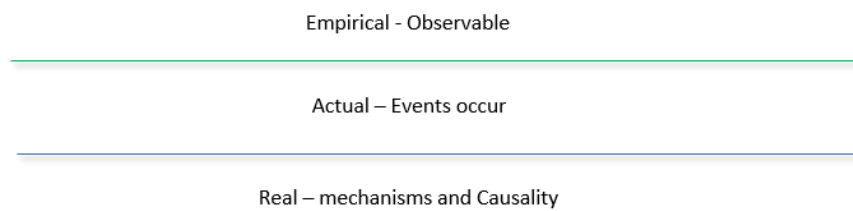


Figure 3.51: The Stratified Levels of Reality suggested by Bhaskar, 2008

When reflecting research philosophies and the multitude of differing paradigms, Bhaskar bridges the gap between the left and right of the philosophical continuum (Fig. 3.2). This positioning is post-positive and termed critical because of the tenets Bhaskar puts forward (stratification and the empirical fallacy). This is that realism has to be critical due to the level of social stratification that idealist natural science struggles to research. Yet, this positioning is not pragmatism, nor is it an approach close to pragmatism. Pragmatists would argue that it is the research question that is the most important ‘determinant of the epistemology, ontology and axiology’ (Saunders et al. 2009, p.109); therefore methodology is selected based upon the researcher’s understanding of what may answer the question most effectively. This is Bhaskar’s argument against traditionalism (hard-line objective researchers). Causal mechanisms have a high probability of existence; however, it is unlikely that we could know them fully due to the empirical. However, Bhaskar argues that this should not stop us seeking them and understanding more about why something has occurred (on the actual level) that brings us ever closer to the real. In order to understand how this particular research project is aligned with Bhaskar’s philosophical approach to epistemological understanding, one must see how the project and critical realism are integrated. A conceptualisation is shown at Fig 3.6 below.

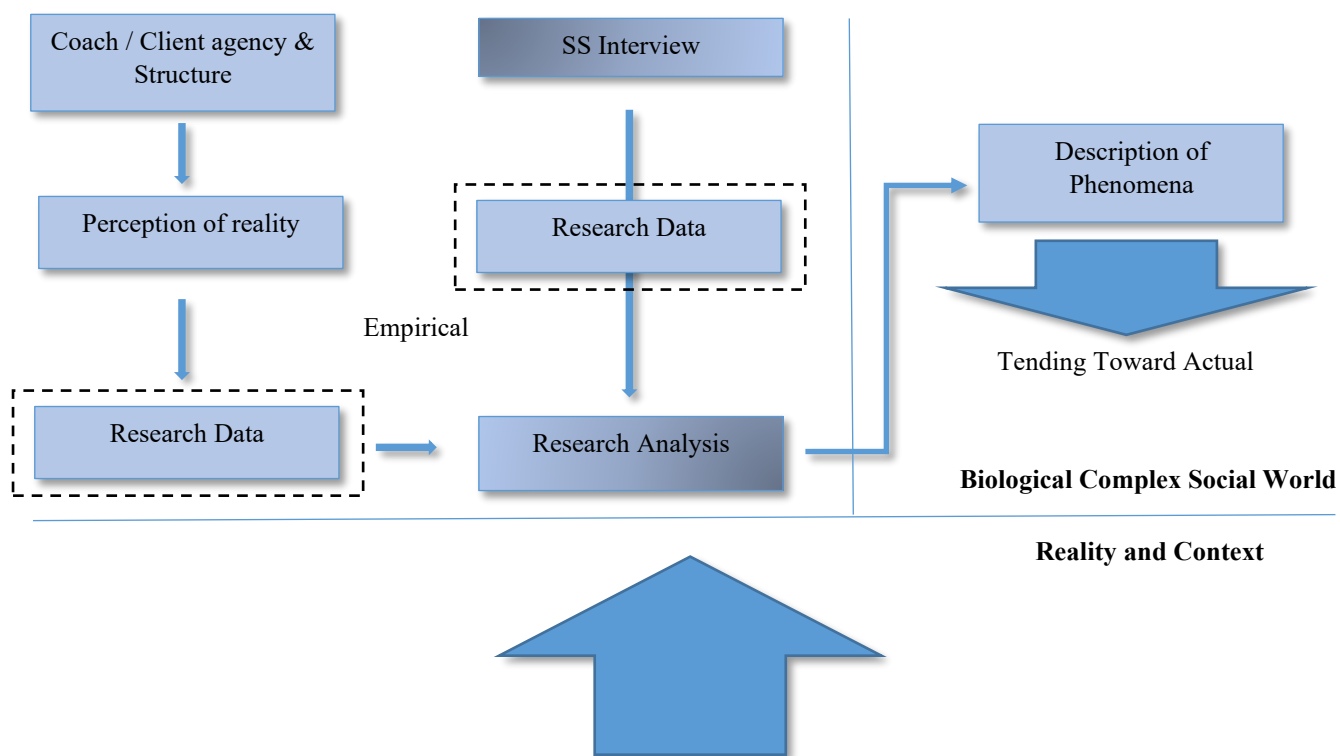


Figure 3.6: Integration of CR into the research project

As can be seen in Fig. 3.6, this conceptualisation shows how the research data is collected and where the data sits in terms of Bhaskar's levels of stratified reality. The research outcome was an inductive process and the descriptions of the phenomena appeared rather than were deduced. As a researcher, I distanced myself (bracketing) from the objective identification of the data to preserve purity, to allow an objective transcription, prior to a descriptive identification of the themes or tendencies, termed demi-regularities in critical realism (Fletcher, 2016). I explain how phenomenology and critical realism synergise to provide a way to identify mechanisms experienced at the empirical level (Budd, 2012).

Although adopting a philosophical approach provides a solid foundation for the researcher to approach their research, it is not as simple as merely choosing an epistemological lens. As mentioned earlier, there has to be a congruency running like a thread through the whole project. As McLachlan and Garcia identify, critical realism is becoming 'increasingly common and popular within qualitative research' (2015, p.197) because of 'its ostensible (and workable) centre ground between two opposing poles of the philosophical spectrum'. To remain authentic within the methodological approach, one has to continually consider this foundation in every aspect, thought and stage. This reflective practice will thus help to ensure the credibility of the research and ensure a level of methodological consistency. McLachlan and Garcia (2015) provide a narrative view of their struggles with authenticity, discovering a tension with their critical realist stance that moved them towards social constructionism, which,

although acceptable within the methodology, highlights the importance of reflexivity. I also recognised a tension as I considered the differing analysis techniques, discussed later in this chapter.

Methodological Approach

The overall research question suggested a subjective analytical methodology and technique. My own epistemic views and beliefs also drove the research project toward its qualitative nature. Examining events that contain insight in coaching sessions pointed clearly to a small number of descriptive accounts, rich in content and with the clear potential to assist the coaching world to further its understanding of the nature of the essence of the profession. The selection of a clear, yet authentic methodology is, I propose, a continuing paradox for many researchers because there are so many approaches that could fit, and many which could appear to fit whilst being unsuitable. I naturally adopt a critical realist stance, and while this philosophical underpinning could suggest a number of approaches and a valid answer to the question, I was aware of the need to gather data from the empirical level. One methodology was particularly suited to providing an understanding of the experience of the coaching session. I wanted to understand the client and coaches perception of the experience of coaching, which pointed to interpretative phenomenological analysis, yet there were questions regarding the suitability and compatibility with critical realism. Any approach needed to be best suited, and able to transcend the stratified levels of reality, which is difficult to achieve. I explain this synergy later in the chapter. The method used was a descriptive phenomenological analysis.

There are a number of differing philosophical approaches to phenomenology, with the key thinking emanating from Germany. Some of the key thinkers in this area are Hegel (1770-1831), Husserl (1859-1938) and Heidegger (1889-1976) with their theories being further developed by other philosophers e.g. Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. Hegel brought forward his ideas of consciousness, self-consciousness and agency, which led to deeper considerations and thinking about knowledge and especially epistemics (Cherniak and Heckman, 1974). Husserl (2006) continued to develop phenomenology, moving on from the ideas of epistemics to ontological questions of being. Husserl puts forward his thinking about suspending objectivity and the natural world to concentrate on the essence of the lived experience (*epoché*). It is this aspect of his thinking that I draw on in this project. Finally, another key thinker is Heidegger. Whilst initially working alongside Husserl, the advent of the Second World War saw controversy due to Heidegger's differing political views (Farias, 1989). This led to a declining, fractured relationship with Husserl due to the anti-Semitic movement during this period and ultimately the differing directions of philosophical beliefs. Heidegger (1994) is best known for his thinking around interpretative phenomenology and un-concealment, the way in which objects appear. He is also known

and criticised for his belief in nihilism, the belief of being free from both religion and moral principles (Löwith, 1995).

Husserl's initial concept was driven by his desire to examine human experience and 'how one might accurately come to know one's own experience of an experienced phenomena' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.11). He suggested that through deep reflection, and examining experience one can explore and make greater sense and therefore deepen one's understanding. Husserl was particularly interested with the identification of the very essence of individual experience (Priest, 2002, p.51). As with all academic thinking, there are a number of reasonable counter-arguments to Husserl's approach to understanding. Can the essence of human experience really be identified, especially from group research? Can an interpreted, rather than constructed, reality be accurately represented as truth, considering that a part of the philosophy is about the nature of the experience for the individual?

The approach of phenomenology matches the critical realist and left-of-centre philosophical positioning of this research. All participants' data is equally important and represents their understanding of their particular experience, whilst a descriptive derivation of emergent themes informs the reader of the phenomenon. This clearly fits with the stratified nature of our reality and the tenet that clarifies that critical realism doesn't seek to explain how to replicate a phenomenon's occurrence, but rather to answer the question of what that person experienced, at that time, in that particular context.

Before describing the actual method utilised, it is important to note that phenomenology as an approach is growing in popularity. Crotty (1996) criticises researchers who focus heavily upon the human experience rather than the disposition of the phenomena being researched. While he acknowledges that the approach is valid, for a reader to fully make a judgement upon the credibility of the results, he states that one must be clear about using this approach, to demonstrate their particular strand of phenomenology and clearly demonstrate their distinct processes of data analysis. This of course is an important statement that strengthens the need to be open about underpinnings and also contributes to the trustworthiness of the research.

Phenomenological Critical Realism (PCR)

Within science, Bhaskar suggests that there is a 'concealed anthropomorphism' (2008, p.5), arguing that the social experience has a greater significance within science and the pursuit of knowledge. The social experience, he argues, is important because people are not merely docile users of knowledge; knowledge is itself a social artefact and knowledge, once produced, acts independently of people. In this Bhaskar is providing the foundations of his argument for the idea of a stratified reality. This

stratified reality is objective and yet ‘antecedently established knowledge’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.6) is utilised in the social dimension to construct new knowledge, which, as a consequence then identifies new mechanisms and structures, thus conforming the idea of a stratified reality. This idea that not only objectivity but also that knowledge is generated socially and then exists independently of people, gives way to the idea of mechanisms and structures underlying the social world, discoverable by the social world and producing the ‘flux of phenomena of the world’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.6).

Bhaskar therefore is stating that by accepting science, the phenomena of the world must consist of ‘enduring and transfactually active mechanisms’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9) which manifest due to the agency of human kind and ‘intentional actions’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.9). The question remains as to how knowledge (social structures and mechanisms) can be identified and discovered within this social domain.

When considering discovery of knowledge in the social world, there is a question as to the relationship of social knowledge in terms of the stratified levels. Initially, it is answered by considering the existence of two differing sides to knowledge (Bhaskar, 2008): the social world and the natural world, which is not wholly dependent on human interests. Bhaskar brings these together by considering that the ‘objects of knowledge [are the] structures and mechanisms’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.15) that generate the very phenomena in which social interactions produce knowledge. He terms this transcendental realism. What distinguishes this from empirical realism is that there is an acceptance that the natural world exists independently of the social world, although acknowledging and accepting the empirical account of being, or indeed existentialism. Critical realism doesn’t so much reject the empirical realist but accept that the social domain is an important way that knowledge can be identified and there add to the thinking. The difference is the way that transcendental realism accepts that there is a nature independent of the lived experience. Yet, the only way that people can witness the real is through the empirical level and through perceiving events on the actual level e.g. watching the setting sun brings together all of the levels of critical realism. Bhaskar states that science uses ‘experience as a test for theory’ (Bhaskar, 2008, p.48). This is typically the deductive hypothesis testing, common in the realist approach. Yet Bhaskar states, ‘it is important to stress that I am not saying that experiences are less real than events, or events less real than structures’ (2008, p.49) i.e. the experiences of people are a part of the world, and there exists an empirical level that has the potential to provide access to the events and structures and mechanisms of the actual and real levels of knowledge. What begins to emerge is the thought that the inductive identification of knowledge is discovered through identifying the differing perceptual experiences of people; in essence, the opposite of the more realist and positivist approach to discovery. This is the argument for critical realism in overcoming the ‘epistemic

fallacy' in that the complexity and intentionality of human social existence can identify causality and add to knowledge: 'men are not passive spectators of a given world, but active agents in a complex one' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.107). An individual experience is not sufficient to provide evidence of causality (Bhaskar, 2008, p.178); however, mass individual, and intersubjective, experience is said to be analysable. It is an important consideration that there is a difference, in that using a phenomenological analysis to identify knowledge should not be interpreted as a description but as the identification of the process and structure of the interaction on this empirical level e.g. Joanne moved the briefcase from the floor onto the table. This could be interpreted as a description of an event. Critical realists would presume that there has been a trigger, a decision and that this has caused a movement through human involvement. The briefcase has moved by a distance and height. That there was a force that lifted it and that the weight of the briefcase is acting upon the table. It may also presume that there could be something in the briefcase. The difference is that, although the above is descriptive, it doesn't suggest the human experience, i.e. how the handle felt, how heavy it was, how the person felt about the moving and why they moved it, what they hope to accomplish from this movement, etc. This subtle yet significant difference in philosophical underpinning is 'explanatory and not simply descriptive' (Bhaskar, 2008, p.177). Yet what output, what form should discovered knowledge take?

In his understanding of what critical realism proposes for discovered knowledge or 'developed science', Bhaskar (2008, p.183) suggests that knowledge can be applied to change processes and/or theories. Hence, a satisfactory form of knowledge taken to show structures is that of a theoretical model, a way of showing causality and mechanisms. In specifically conducting research of social phenomenon, Danermark et al. (1997, p.5) suggest that as 'a mechanism becomes an event, when experienced, it becomes an empirical fact'. I interpret Bhaskar as suggesting that within the critical realist attitude, the gathering and analysis of data from the social world in order to find structure is entirely possible and in fact logical, through the use of phenomenological investigation. As Harper suggests, this critical realist, social constructionism position is 'ontologically realist but epistemologically relativist' (2011, p.8). Thus, agreeing with the critical realist's position of stratification to bridge the epistemic fallacy whilst considering the generation of knowledge is supported by human social interactions and interpretations.

Although critical and constructivist approaches have been traditionally viewed as separate, Hood argues that using a pluralist approach can provide a 'more comprehensive picture of the topic under investigation' (2016, p.172). He also states that providing that there is a 'clear and convincing' justification (2016, p.173), there are many more constructivist tools available to the critical realist

researcher. Niglas (2004, figure 2) shows an overlap between post-positivism and phenomenology. Critical realism provides an answer to ‘the epistemic fallacy’ as described earlier, bridging the gap between the left and right of the research continuum. In research, critical realists state that there can be a truth uncovered by positivist research or conversely argued to be identified through constructivist research. I propose, along with others (Danermark et al. 1997, Plant, 2001, Fade, 2004, Budd, Hill and Shannon 2010, Budd 2012, Söderström, 2013, Rizwan, 2014, and Hood, 2016) that there is an overlap in the continuum between the descriptive nature of lived experience and the empirical level of critical realism. Budd (2012) argues that by using an approach of phenomenological critical realism, a researcher can ‘understand within the directedness of conscious toward things as they exist within the nature, structure and working of the consciousness itself’ (2012, p.80). He, along with Hill and Shannon, provide a clearer reasoning in their 2010 paper: ‘PCR is a sound and practically applicable means of avoiding the trap of positive or objectivist enquiry...intentionally using intersubjectivity’ (2010, p.283). I propose that they are suggesting that researchers are inherently interpretivist. To clarify this thinking, every paper or transcript that is read is subject to interpretation. Is any research ‘pure’?

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Mechanisms	*		
Events	*	*	
Experiences	*	*	*

Table 3.2: Bhaskar's Three Domains (Bhaskar 2008 p.2 table 0.1)

As can be seen in table 3.2, the domain of the empirical, or experienced, exists within the three strata. It is this connection between the lived experience and the empirical that allows CR and phenomenology to combine in philosophical synergy. To date, the combination of a CR underpinning ontology and the use of phenomenology as an epistemological approach appears not to be ‘mainstream’ yet there is a growing argument for this combined methodology. In research, phenomenology is more usually used to explore the essence of the lived experiences of individuals. Husserl (2006, p.2) begins by stating that each individual usually begins with the word ‘I’, as an indication that each of us sees the world as something different. Husserl then explains that each of us has had different life ‘experiences, perceptions, memories, expectations, fantasies, feelings, wishes and violations...capabilities and skills etc.’ (2006, p.2), i.e. life and its experiences is a very personal journey. Yet, any researcher seeking to understand the lived experience of another has to accept a difficulty in that the researched phenomena is always discovered with a degree of inter-subjectivity, or a joint construction.

What limits Husserl's phenomenology is not the understanding of the constitutive nature of intentionality, but the mechanisms by which research programs can be established and conducted. Enter Critical Realism. (Budd, 2012, p.73)

In his consideration of the empirical level, Bhaskar (2008, p.259) is clear: 'The intentionality of praxis is shown in the capacity to transform the world ... this is the starting point of all the major transcendental arguments that critical realism has employed.' Thus deliberate decisions and influences can have an effect on the reality of the world and therefore cannot be ignored. For this reason, phenomenological critical realism can provide a glimpse toward the real but in effect only the actual, due to the level where humanity socially resides and performs: 'the real and the actual come to a fuller existence in the experience of the individuals and societies that incorporates the real word' (Budd, 2012, p.78).

However, there is a limitation of phenomenology in terms of description. The end product of phenomenology is normally a rich and thick description of the lived experience. Critical realism could not accept this because of the need to reach the actual and identify the events that could give way to the mechanisms and structures of the real. There is a need from the critical realist perspective to identify a 'so what' from the narrative, an acknowledgment that events happen and occur due to a deeper reason or 'casual power' (Danermark, 1997, p.198). You will see in Chapter 6 how the descriptions have been used to inform me of the events, and to construct an image, of the actual. In summary, phenomenology and CR fit together due to their exploration of the empirical social level to allow the researcher to understand the events of the actual.

Examination situates the understanding within the directedness of conscious toward things as they exist and within the nature, structure and working of consciousness itself. (Budd 2012, p.80)

When considering PCR, 'the commitment is directed towards a critical consideration of the way reality, or nature, is disguised by the prevailing belief that society and nature are independent rather than interdependent' (Plant, 2001, p.6). Critical realists are described as 'dogmatic' (Warren, 1965, p.47) in their assumptions. That is, critical realists can have the view of 'functional realism'. Furthermore, it is time to 'combine critical realistic relevance ... with a constructive concern for possibilities ... to acknowledge the mores of accepted modes of analysis [and] the contributions of those whose systems of reference are at least somewhat different from their own' (Warren, 1965, p.50).

Method of Phenomenological Data Analysis

Having identified that phenomenology would be the elected vehicle to deliver the examination of the events containing insight in coaching sessions, it was important to understand how the data would be analysed. Passmore and Townsend's (2012) IPA study of coaching in a blue-light environment provided a powerful pointer as to where one could learn the techniques. Yet, IPA, due to its nature of understanding 'being in the world' rather than 'knowing the world' (Reiners, 2012, p.1) suggested that the Husserlian empirical descriptive phenomenological approach appears correct. I follow Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) suggested iterative steps whilst mindful of the need for description of being rather than the participant's interpretation of the experience. As a subjective researcher/practitioner, I appreciate Passmore and Townsends (2012, p.791) view that 'analysis is a personal process' and that analysis techniques are not fully prescriptive, but rather guidelines (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.53). This may appear to suggest 'anything goes' but does not take away from a justified, sensible process.

The process of analysis in this project had six discrete, iterative phases and follows Smith, Flowers and Larkin's guidance (2009, pp.79-107). These six phases were repeated for each of the three data areas – Coach, Client and Session:

1. *Reading and re-reading.* Once the interviews were concluded, they were immediately transcribed. Following transcription, the data was printed in hard copy and read and informal notes taken. All questions/answers were separated and placed into individual tables where the notes were recorded. The main aim of this phase was to achieve an immersion into the world of the participants. This reading and re-reading allowed me to begin to identify/understand potential event boundaries. To understand where events may begin and end i.e. where questions, experiences or topic changes occur etc.
2. *Initial identification and noting of concepts.* The aim of this part of the process was to become more aware of the participant and how they communicate during the session, to become familiar with the client or coach's interactions. I then began to develop a narrative whilst identifying the descriptive (what was happening), linguistic (language used) and conceptual (what else was really happening, what was meant but not said) components of the data. These questions led to greater depth in the analysis, leading to consideration of concepts not apparent in the initial reading.
3. *Identification and development of themes.* Once I felt the noting of concepts was exhausted, I then searched the narratives for emergent themes, using the initial notes.

4. *Identification of cross themes.* This phase began to allow an overall understanding of similarity between participants. Whilst reviewing the revealed themes, I was looking for relationships in terms of opposites, similarities, similar concepts, frequencies of a theme. Each theme was considered against the others in search of whatever relationship may be present.
5. *Repeat with the next interview.* The data set comprises six interviews for the coach, client and session. All steps were repeated.
6. *Searching for patterns across data set.* This final stage combined the entire data set for correlation and similarities. Thus, a full examination of the events containing insight in coaching sessions has been made on which to report.

In phenomenological research and analysis, the output is a descriptive passage that nominally fits all iterations of the phenomena being researched. My intention was to follow this and produce an overall concluding descriptive account of the nature and essence of the phenomenon through the identification of correlating emergent themes across data sets. It is these emergent themes that provide an understanding of how the dyad experiences life at the empirical level of critical realist stratification, which fits with the critical realism method as highlighted by Fletcher (2016). Abduction and retroduction are terms used in critical realism. Abduction describes ‘the re-description of empirical data’ and retroduction helps ‘to identify the necessary contextual condition for casual mechanisms’ (Fletcher, 2016, p.8).

Data Collection and Selection of Research Participants

When designing any research project, one of the most difficult and frequent questions posed Baker and Edwards (2012) and certainly one of my own questions was ‘how much data should be collected to provide you with sufficient material to analyse?’ (2012, p.3). The authors reached out to other researchers to answer this common question. They brought together fourteen ‘expert voices’ (2012, p.42). However, they do little to provide a definitive answer to this question; instead they point the researcher toward ‘epistemological and methodological questions about the nature and purpose of the research’ (2012, p. 42). They conclude (2012, p.42) that the number of participants in any project is wholly dependent upon the question and the research method used. In some cases, one participant could be enough to answer the question. In his phenomenological research, Husserl was seeking to understand the essence of individual experience (Priest, 2002, p.51) and a single participant was sufficient to bring a large amount of data to explain lived experience. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012, p.364) state that there is ‘no rule regarding how many participants should be included’ and they offer instead guidance in terms of the depth the researcher wishes to achieve. I turned to other phenomenological experts for guidance. As a leading expert in the

field, and someone whom numerous researchers cite (e.g. Passmore, Priest, Hefferon, Gil-Rodriguez, Pietkiewicz) Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that ten data sets are usually recorded and broken into bite-sized chunks for detailed analysis, which is sufficient at this level of research. I was originally mirroring this using five client and coach dyads; however, the pilot data collection provided important data, which I decided to include. Phenomenology would argue for sufficient data to show the essence of experience i.e. one, whilst critical realism asks for greater numbers to show causality i.e. more than one. There had to be a realistic limit to the numbers and therefore following previous examples was deemed acceptable. My aim was to record and capture the coaching session while subsequently using semi-structured interviews with both coach and client to capture their empirical lived experiences (Table 3.3):

Research Mechanism	Approach	Research Output
6x audio recordings of coaching sessions	Qualitative	Session data capturing the coaching events containing insight
6x semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, with coaches	Qualitative	Identifying coach's perception of any coaching insight and identification of the events for further examination
6x semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, with clients	Qualitative	Identifying client's perception of any coaching insight and identification of the events for further examination

Table 3.3: Research design and numbers of participants.

Coaching sessions led by skills and performance coaches (volunteers from my own network groups on social media i.e. LinkedIn) were held in their usual locations, to allow for the context of the session to be included in the analysis at a later period. Recording the sessions in their natural locations reduced any contextual influence from the researcher (Longhurst, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.154) and captured data that was raw and authentic. After the session, both coach and client were interviewed in order to identify perceived moments of insight. Initially, the design was to obtain 'hot' feedback; however, reality differed due to the time a client had available.

Having made repeated calls for volunteers via social media, there was a small number of volunteers. Most of these volunteers, whilst appearing interested in participation, were unable to do so due to the client's wishes to be excluded from the research. In order to boost the pool of participants available to this research project, my own network of coaches was approached. The issue of this research project was that a complete dyad that was needed. This meant that I sought both coach and client. In addition, coaching is a commercial activity and therefore subject often to a sponsor, a third party who provides payment for the services of the coach and therefore has a say in the coaching session. For reasons known

to themselves, the majority of third party sponsors did not wish their employees to take part in research (I felt that it was often easier to decline the request without considering it deeply). The required number of dyads, however, was found and data gathered successfully. See table 3.4 for participant information.

Participant	Coach/Client	Male/Female	Experience (of coaching)	Role
#1	Coach	Female	>15yrs	Executive Coach
#2	Coach	Male	>5yrs	Manager/Coach
#3	Coach	Female	>5yrs	Executive Coach
#4	Coach	Female	>5yrs	Executive/Education Coach
#5	Coach	Male	>5yrs	Manager/Coach
#6	Coach	Female	>10yrs	Executive Coach
#1	Client	Male	Y	Programme Manager
#2	Client	Male	Y	Postgraduate
#3	Client	Female	Y	Senior Leader
#4	Client	Male	N	Educational Leadership
#5	Client	Female	N	Team Supervisor
#6	Client	Female	Y	Senior Leader

Table 3.4: Research participant information

It was necessary to have trust and rapport in place as the foundations of effective coaching, (Starr, 2011, p.52). This meant that each dyad needed to have built that rapport in advance. The coaching sessions were audio recorded in order to add to the depth of the research. In a number of studies, data is purely taken from the participants. However, to provide a depth and richness of the essence of the phenomenon, I also chose to analyse the sessional event containing insight. These events were identified through subsequent semi-structured interviews. Coaching sessions of normal duration (up to 90 mins) were held in their normal coaching context (Longhurst, 2010) to aid the generation of insight, and lessen any potential contextual influence (e.g. distractions or efficacy) from the researcher (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.154). As soon as was practical, post-session, both coach and client were separately (due to ethical and reflexive practice discussed in the next sections) interviewed in order to identify events containing insight. As can be seen in the analysis, this wasn't always possible. Real world activities meant that on occasion coach and client had to partake in other engagements. The subsequent interviews, although forecast to last up to 20 minutes each, lasted up to 15 minutes. Only one data collection per dyad was to be conducted, thus ensuring that there is no unethical effect on the coaching outcomes in subsequent sessions, i.e. the client nor coach thinking about the forthcoming interview questions during that session. Post data collection, the raw data/recordings were stored securely and transcribed ready to commence the analysis phase. Data would be stored until the end of the project i.e. until publication of the thesis.

Pilot Study

As in most research-gathering activities, the collection phase began with a rigorous data collection pilot. Firstly, this was to identify those emergent issues that could be identified ahead of the main data collection phase and so provide a degree of clarity and understanding by the participant, thus ensuring that a question was valid and reliable (Saunders, 2009). This allowed me to alter and amend the questions before the start of the main data-gathering. This was of the highest importance, because ethically, and also as a critical part of my design, the participants would only be interviewed once in order to limit any influence on subsequent coaching sessions, as described earlier. In addition, I also wished to limit any undue further reflection, memory distortions, deletions or generalisations (Molden 2010, p.108). Secondly, the pilot was conducted to increase research confidence. My skill-set increased having had the experience ahead of the main data collection. Thirdly, I needed to assess the validity of the semi-structured interview (Saunders, 2009, p.372; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.58). Usually in quantitative studies, assessing internal validity describes the degree to which variables have an effect upon one another; in this research, validity assess the degree to which one's questions and answers affect the data set: 'flaws in the design' as Saunders explains (2009, p.412). The discrete phases of the semi-structured interviews were driven by the outline given (Flanagan, 1954). The wording, layout and flow of the questions was further directed by the need to identify the phenomenon of insight; I was therefore guided again by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.59). All questions were open and based upon 'clean' language as discussed earlier. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 4.

In order to assess the validity of the interview, I completed the checks advised by Saunders (2009, pp.372, 373, 384 and 394; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.60). The pilot dyad were asked relevant questions to check the following:

1. The nature of the questions. Did any questions seem confusing or ambiguous? Were they valid? Were they open-ended? Did they remain 'clean' whilst accepting that a certain amount of probing may be necessary?
2. How long did the interview take to complete?
3. Did the nature of the semi-structured format ensure that as a coach I remained bracketed? The term 'bracketed' is used when a researcher has expertise in the field of research. It is necessary for the researcher to remove that knowledge, for the time being, from the data-gathering exercise and give sole focus to the participant.
4. Was the pre-explanation satisfactory? Did I ask for the right permissions, to continue, to record and did I thank them at the end?

This pilot was deemed successful and I decided to use the pilot data in my analysis as I did not want to lose any information about insight. As a result, no changes were made to the semi-structured interview format. The responses appeared to be consistent with what I was reading in the literature and coupled with the difficulty in enrolling participants, this inclusion was a logical decision.

Issues of Reflexivity and Ethics

One of the considerations of research design is to understand the way in which you, as a researcher, effect the phenomenon you are researching. The outcome is that affected data can be skewed, suggesting artificial/alterd and inaccurate outcomes. Somekh (2011, p.4) suggests that 'reflexivity, not recipes [the methodology], is the hallmark of the good social science researcher'. As a researcher, I aimed to collect accurate raw data sufficient to answer my research question free as much as practical from any influence. During the collection phase, I continually remained aware of my beliefs in the stratified nature of reality and my philosophical underpinning foundation of critical realism. That is, the real and actual levels of knowledge differed due to empirical/social perceptions. It was the real level, the social influence of the self on the project, which must be taken into account in order to provide the most credible research outcome i.e. my own reflexivity as a critical realist researcher.

In order to reduce my influence i.e. bracket myself (Rodemeyer, 2003, p.146), I had to remain aware of the research question, ethics, philosophy and techniques to gain sufficient bias-free data. Simmons (2011 p.42) provide a guiding framework as follows:

1. **Power.** What is the perceived power in the relationships between the researcher, the coach and the client?
2. **Social.** What is the social positioning of the researcher, the coach and the client? For example, this could be in the context of cultural, gender, ethnicity, et cetera.
3. **Value.** Does the data have any commercial value? Could the data be used as leverage or can the data be used against the coach or client subsequently?
4. **Trust.** Having agreed to participate in the research, does the client have anything to hide? Is the dyad trying to please the researcher or attempting to manipulate the data in order to gain favour?
5. **Meaning.** Operating at the empirical level means that every question and statement will have a different perception and meaning to everyone in the research group.
6. **Interpretation.** Does everyone share the same meaning, and interpretation? In order to provide this meaning, has the data been skewed?

7. **Uncertainty.** It may be that with differing interpretations, one definitive understanding may be difficult to ascertain.

In order to protect the participants, rigorous ethical reflexivity and considerations were considered: a thorough and 'honest, open deliberation of the issues and possible consequences was recorded so that the outcome is morally and ethically defensible to all' (Simmons, 2011, p.57). This application was approved by Oxford Brookes University ethics committee. In order to ensure that participants remained anonymous I was able to offer complete confidentiality, unless harm to human life would occur. Anonymity thus ensured, a number of considerations were satisfied; one of my reflections, however, was to consider if ethical reflexivity can ever be separated from research reflexivity.

As a researcher, following a critical realist underpinning, I chose to have as little impact (bracketing) on the data and source (i.e. the coach and client) as was practicable. I posit that it is extremely difficult to have a null impact in subjective data-gathering activities, merely by the agreement of a participant to be included in the research, thus changing the phenomenon. However, the following were ways that any individual impressions on the research were reduced:

1. To place a voice recorder in situ and allowing the dyad to switch it off at any time should it begin to interfere, e.g. be distracting to the coaching session.
2. To ask the questions from the semi-structured interview, only expanding to assist in the client's understanding of the question i.e. to ensure depth.
3. To restrict the use of the dyad to a one-time only participation to avoid thought over the subsequent interview session.

During the data-gathering phase, it was important to the outcome to attempt to eliminate any joint construction of reality. This meant that I was not to create any further understanding of their coaching experience nor critique the coaching, as this may have altered the outcomes and potentially damaged the relationship with the coach. Thus, my role in the sessions was that of a bracketed researcher and never from the perspective of a coach.

Reliability and Validity: Research Worthy of a Reviewer's Trust?

Every serious researcher seeks to produce results that are accurate, credible and that add value to the body of knowledge. Fundamentally, the questions of reliability (ability to replicate, and consistency) and validity (accuracy) are taken from natural science where research outcomes are presented as accurate and replicable. Saunders et al. remark that validity 'is essentially a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure' (2009, p.133). When one translates

this to subjective research, the instrument becomes the researcher. Where data is generated in the social domain, inevitably there becomes a need to provide evidence of validity and rigour; one can, however, get lost in the myriad of differing types of validity. Does this suggest that a subjective researcher should list every type of validity definition and seek to satisfy the reviewer that every form of invalidity (Saunders, 2009) has been reduced as much as possible? Is every piece of subjective research invalid (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) because their research cannot be replicated due to the unique nature and circumstances around the capture of that data? In phenomenology, should one seek to conduct analysis by committee due to its descriptive nature?

Instead, there emerges another way in which the social science researcher can provide validity. What the researcher seeks in subjective research is to ‘differentiate, good from bad research’ (Golafshani, 2003, p.602). Through my admission of a degree of tension and my own analytical interpretations, we can move forward and redefine what is meant by good research. Indeed, ‘reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigor and quality’ (Golfashani, 2003, p.604; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In order to provide the reviewer with trustworthy results and an assurance of quality and academic rigour, the following considerations have been formulated in Table 3.5.

Consideration	Remarks
Analysis (Applicability)	The analysis would be conducted twofold. Firstly, using acknowledged phenomenological analysis techniques and transcription standards, thus ensuring quality was maintained. Secondly, the data from the semi-structured interviews would not be translated into the researcher’s world view.
Context (Consistency and Truth)	The coaching was conducted in its natural location, thus ensuring that researcher’s influence was minimised to the presence of the voice recorder.
Hypothesis (Inductive and Truth)	The researcher approached the data with initial thoughts on the outcome, and yet at the beginning of the research gathering phase subsequently accepted the results would inductively manifest.
Process of Research (Consistency)	The research process was replicated for each set of data collected. Some subsequent interviews took place over the phone rather than one-to-one, made necessary by the circumstances of the real world. Some subsequent interviews took longer to conduct due to the participants’ commitments and therefore there is an acceptance that the memory, human fallibility, or reflection could have influenced the data.
Research Tool (Neutrality and Truth)	The researcher was aware that it was he who was gathering data. This skew and bias was minimised due to a recording that captured the data and was subsequently analysed.
Researcher’s Presence (Neutrality and bias)	The researcher had a presence within the research, eliminated in the creation of the main data, and as interviewer in subsequent interviews, aiming to be as honest and yet authentic, as reflective and reflexive as possible to provide trustworthiness.

Table 3.5: Quality considerations, adapted from Saunders et al. (2009 p.134) and Lincoln and Guba (1985 p.290)

In order to test the validity of the data, to provide a greater amount of trust and hence a more defensible position (Golfashani, 2003), triangulation from differing sources is recommended. In this research project the aim is to examine the events that contain insight in coaching session. There are three differing data sources being analysed using the approach of phenomenology: the coach interview; the

client interview; and the session event containing insight. By identifying the significant moment of insight, correlated from both the coach and client interviews, one becomes more certain of having detected the correct coaching event. In using phenomenology in order to analyse the coaching event and then the semi-structured interviews of both coach and client to understand what was happening from their perspectives, one achieves a degree of triangulation within the data sets. The data succeeds in gaining a defensible degree of credibility, quality, and trustworthiness and therefore brings value to the wider body of knowledge.

Concluding Position

This project was approached initially using Crotty's (1998) structure (Figure 2.1). One has sought to become immersed in the posed research question. Using a foundation of critical realism, utilising descriptive phenomenological empiricism with semi-structured interviews and recordings as methods, I intuitively engaged myself in what I consider to be an authentic project in an ethically sound and initially bracketed fashion, but allowing my own empirical knowledge to be utilised during the analysis.

Although I accept that this project may not be endorsed by objective researchers (those to the left of the of the research continuum), I present my argument for my phenomenological analysis based clearly on my ontological and epistemological beliefs about the world I reside in.

In the realm of phenomenological research, there is a clear understanding of the flexible and personal approach to data-gathering and analysis of phenomena. I have, in this chapter of the thesis, provided my view and justifications as to why the project was designed as it was and progressed the way it did. From my thoughts about the nature and depth of social and natural reality to the numbers of participants to the guidelines surrounding the process of analysis to the context of the research, I have provided sections that informs the reviewer of a rigorous process of reflexivity, reflection, ethics and honesty. My aim was to provide and increase the degree of trustworthiness of this research and analysis and to continually assure a high standard of quality. There is, I feel, the highest degree of synergy between my critical-realist foundations and my descriptive phenomenological approach to data analysis, fused together to examine the events containing insight within coaching sessions.

The next three chapters will provide a detailed descriptive phenomenological analysis, following the method guidelines described above.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis – Client’s Session

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the process and thinking during the phenomenological analysis of the clients’ responses to the semi-structured interview. Chapter 4 considers the clients’ understanding of the coaching session and identification of the moments of insight during that session. The analysis followed the process highlighted in the previous chapter. The aim was to contribute to the exploration of the events containing insight within coaching sessions. To close the chapter I have tendered an overall descriptive contribution, which is the expected output of the phenomenological analysis.

As one can ascertain from the literature review, an event contains a start and finish. The interview questions in the data collection phase followed this logic and also explored how coaching insight affected the remainder of the session and the individual participants. In order to produce a ‘picture’ of the precise event containing insight, it was necessary to analyse the data according to the posed questions.

1. Which moments in the coaching were most significant? Identification of the moment of insight in the session according to the participant’s perception.
2. What led to this discovery? Identification of the mechanisms that have influenced the moment’s manifestation.
3. What happened just before this discovery? An expansion of detail.
4. What happened just after the discovery? Exploration of what happened just after the moment.
5. At the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery? To understand how the participant felt about this insight.
6. How does this moment compare to other moments of discovery? For me to understand how the client views the session in terms of other moments of insight.
7. What happens now because of the discovery? How does this insight affect the individual in the moment?
8. How did the moment of discovery affect the coaching?
9. Are there any other implications of the discovery? An opportunity for the participant to expand on any identified points.

10. How do you conclude that the discovery has changed you? An opportunity to learn how events containing insight in coaching have affected the individual moving forward.

These questions can be shown in terms of where they reside in the client's perception of time-line below in Fig. 4.1:

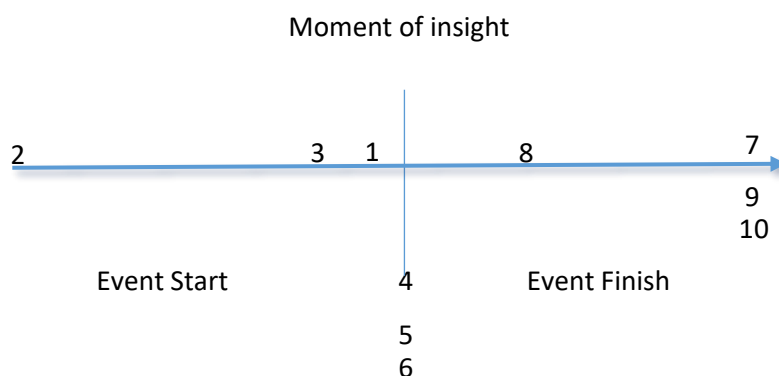


Figure 4.1: The posed questions in the context of a timeline

The process of discovery, utilising phenomenology as a methodology, has guidelines that steer the analyst. It becomes quickly apparent that there is no right or wrong way to conduct this process. From this realisation I took away the need to use my intuition and feel that I was at the correct place to identify themes and that sufficient depth of analysis had been gained. From the initial observations and considerations, reading and re-reading, there came a time when notes had to be made and themes identified. It occurred to me that one could spend an inordinate amount of time reading and attempting to gain new depth from the transcripts. I can only say that I became somewhat scared of the writing and of the results – one's internal narrative and those incessant internal questions: *have I spent enough time? Was I identifying the right themes? Was this new knowledge? Was I answering the question?* After reflecting on this, I felt that these were normal questions, manifesting because I had a responsibility to the participants and the wider coaching world to discover a useful 'truth' from the sessions.

Significant Observations

During the analysis and when gathering the emergent themes together, it became apparent that the themes relating to the before, during and after the moment were often answered at different times by the client. This is a part of the analysis process; however, it was satisfying to see this occur naturally. The questions, when considered together as a congruent whole, build a picture of the factors leading to and the experience at the moment. During the analysis, I have ensured that themes that cross-relate

to answers have been acknowledged. All coaching took place in their usual locations, both face-to-face and over the phone. Some occurred in coffee shops, others at the work environment and some at home via Skype.

Emergent Themes of the Client

Each question posed has been analysed individually and then considered as a group. Under the question posed is a description of what the question was hoping to elicit from the participant. Under this is a detailed matrix showing which clients these themes originated from, displayed in the form of an asterisk symbol versus client numbers in this chapter, coach numbers in chapter 5 and session number in chapter 6.

Which moments in the coaching were most significant?

This question was aimed to assist me with identifying the exact moment of insight in the coaching session. This would accurately determine the event within the sessional data to investigate, as well as helping the client to consider and describe their moment.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Momentary realisation	*	*	*	*	*	*
Personal issue	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pressure	*	*	*	*	*	*
Recognition of having the answer	*	*		*		*
Taking responsibility	*	*		*		*
Triggered by the coach	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.1: Which moments in the coaching were most significant? Emergent themes

When I began the analysis, I expected to find that there would be a mixture of personal and professional questions that needed answering or indeed goals to attain. What emerged was an overriding theme that every client had a significant moment tied to a personal issue that they needed answers to.

(Client 1 is considering job change and Client 2 considers an approach to their project – they do not have responses to directly quote).

“...talking about fear of failure and I, I actually had not realized before that was an issue for me...”
Client 3

“...need to delegate more and trust people...” Client 4

“...I realized what he said to me and how it made me feel...” Client 5

“...[what] I would like to maybe spend my next section of my career doing, so knowing where my heart lies and where my skill sets are...” Client 6

There is an observation here that a moment of realisation occurred in every instance, yet I am aware that it has been stated that moments such as these don't always occur (Longhurst, 2010, de Haan et al. 2010b, Kets de Vries, 2013). Why was it that a moment of realisation ostensibly occurred in every session? It could be simply coincidence; or indeed it might suggest that realisations do occur throughout a session and some are more meaningful than others, thus presenting a further question. Could it be that these 'aha' moments are either moments of insight or realisations that have a larger and more significant consequence or effect? From this point I look at the moments of realisation themselves to understand them more from the client's perspective.

“...I suddenly I realised. It was just ah... it was ah that's right. OK yeah I see what you are saying now, right I get it, I understand...” Client 1

“...his solution, that was a real significant... moment to me...” Client 2

“...So yeah. There was quite a lightbulb moment here...” Client 3

“...I realised that I... I was probably more the problem and the solution...” Client 4

“...towards the end of the session I realized I obviously had 'cause he knew I tried to help him...” Client 5

“...the realization of actually going OK, you know what it is...” Client 6

There appear to be differing levels of magnitude or weight at the moment of the realisation. For example, clients use words like 'significant' or 'lightbulb' or 'realised'. With Client 3 there seems to be the greatest depth of descriptive terminology and therefore depth of the moment, in that the client used the description 'lightbulb moment'. From Client 2 there is a sense of the significance of the moment when a solution to the issue came. From Client 1, there is a sense of dawning of learning and a level of excitement and comprehension from the use of 'Ah'. With the remaining clients, it appears that their moments of realisation seem to be of a lesser of impact, yet this of course is a subjective

view and unique to the individual participant. In the literature, there are a number of descriptions and terms to describe these significant moments of learning, such awareness, realisations or insight. Yet, only Jones (2012) and Seifert et al. (1995) identify with the ‘big’ ‘aha’ moment and suggest that smaller realisations may occur. The significance of the insight moments to the individual clients does seem to be highly subjective due to the nature of the individual’s unique perception. Perhaps in the future researchers may consider the application of a quantitative analysis project in order to conduct further research in this area. During the analysis phase, it is imperative that the researcher truly understands the data. Having data from client and coach has helped to understand the context behind the session, which assists in understanding what is being said. In my analysis I have identified that each client was placing themselves under pressure to find an answer to their specific problems, which faithfully follows Kets de Vries’s (2013) research in terms of pressure building before ‘tipping’ over at the moment of illumination.

We turn now to another theme commented upon by five out of six participants, which is that the coach has been declared as instrumental in assisting in the generation of these moments. It was surprising that the majority of the clients felt that they hadn’t arrived at their moment simply autonomously, and on a number of instances one should consider the amount of influence the coach has on leading a client to their moment:

“...I realized that Coach 1 had structured it in such a way that I was, that I was aware I was being coached...” Client 1

“...he offered me a solution...” Client 2

“...it was the fact that, Coach 3 said something...” Client 3

“...it didn’t hit me until I was telling Coach 5 about it...” Client 5

“...it gives you something to want of a better phrase, focus upon otherwise you know it’s just a chat with a friend. To me that’s a big difference with a coach or a chat from a friend...” Client 6

We are now approaching an understanding of how the moment was triggered, agreeing with Haneberg’s (2011) view that the coach provides a trigger, following which the client experiences a feeling that the coach has acted as a catalyst. There is a significant amount of research on the effectiveness of coaching (outside the scope of this research project), yet in terms of validation for coaching, the sense of having the coach directly implicated in their role of generating insight is hugely

positive. We also learn that the coaching relationship changes as a result of the insight moment, an aspect of the moment that the ACC and de Haan et al. have specifically concentrated upon in their research. They talk about how feelings of doubts in the coach and the client's new understanding can contribute to the change in relationship. At this point, the next two emergent themes, responsibility and understanding, may well contribute to this change in relationship.

In the same four cases the client appears to have realised that they had the answer to their questions and they take personal responsibility:

“...I realized that I answered my own questions...” Client 1

“...I was going to manage the problem...” Client 2

“...I was probably more the problem and the solution...” Client 4

“...I have kind of come to realize and this is only a shift from the here and now to where I want to be...” Client 6

The language certainly stands out in these clients in terms of their use of ‘I’ and of their declarations that they have their own answers. I observe that these statements reflect the time immediately post-moment and that the moment of insight appears to become highly ‘fertile ground’. The coach could well capitalise upon the moment in order to build motivation, drive, confidence et cetera. Only Cox (2013) suggests that the coaching session now moves into an integration phase to understand how the transfer of learning can now be applied, i.e. the final part of Whitmore’s (1994) GROW model.

What led to this discovery?

This question identified what the clients considered to be the catalysts and triggers for their moment of insight. The incubation period may occur prior to the session, so this question seeks to understand more about the event that directly preceded the moment of insight within the coaching session.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Focused questioning	*	*	*	*	*	*
Triggered by the Coach	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.2: What led to this discovery? Emergent themes.

The client's answers to the first and second questions overlap in terms of answering what led to the discovery. As can be seen in Table 4.2, the key themes overwhelmingly are that the insight was triggered by the coach and that this was achieved by focused questioning around the specific subject area:

"...suddenly found myself answering my own questions..." Client 1

"...A lot of interrogating questions...very focused..." Client 2

"...she would keep on asking the same question..." Client 3

"...I think talking through the root cause..." Client 4

"...I was telling Coach 5 about it..." Client 5

"...it gives you something...to focus upon otherwise you know it's just a chat with a friend. To me that's a big difference with a coach..." Client 6

It is clear that there is a lot of focus on the specific area that the client wishes to change. What resonates from the literature is the suggestion from Cox (2013) that questions are, from a client's perspective, designed to pursue solutions. From the participants' responses in this research it appears that focused, challenging questions to the point of saturation have led to moments of insight.

What happened just before this discovery?

This question is also placed in the time domain before the moment of insight and asks indirectly about what led to the moment in order to saturate the client's thinking around the question. In answering this question, every participant began to answer in a much more focused way about what happened to them, which was an interesting observation. It was a distinct change, almost as if the focus suddenly shifted. In these answers we begin to understand more about how the moment is affecting the clients.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Physiological feeling	*	*				
Factors coming together	*		*			

Table 4.3: What happened just before this discovery? Emergent themes.

Earlier, section, I stated that Client 3 appears to have the most profound moment, followed by Clients 1 and 2 in that order. For this question, it was these participants that continued to provide data, whilst the remaining clients continued to talk about previous answers. Without knowing that the next question was to address physiological questions, both Clients 1 and 2 talked about how they felt. We see a contrast of feelings, perhaps neutral and negative:

“...my mind and body paused and then I thought...and I literally went ‘ah’...” Client 1

“...it was kind of deep feeling...thinking how bad it...how bad it could be...” Client 2

In this theme from Clients 1 and 3, I believe that we now get a glimpse of what happens at the moment when insight occurs. They describe a feeling of parts coming together, which is what Seifert (1995) suggests, as factors come together in order to create a moment of insight:

“...it was almost as if I could feel those Tetris blocks just 'ding ding ding ding ding' into place...” Client 1

“...it just felt like there was a number of like small little things that ultimately came together at that point...” Client 3

The ‘Tetris blocks’ metaphor is particularly useful in understanding how the client experienced the moment. I understand this to be the right shapes snapping into the correct location without the need for any manipulation from the player (client). The feelings described by the participants are explored later in this chapter.

What happened just after the discovery?

If we consider the literature, the moment of insight represents the changing from one state to another, a structural shift (Mezirow, 1997), from pre-reflection to conscious awareness (Cox, 2013), frame of reference (Myers 2014, Askew and Carnell 2011), and breakthrough (de Haan, 2008). We now seek to understand what happens immediately after that change.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Desire to continue to reflect	*		*	*		*
Positivity and relief	*	*		*	*	*

Table 4.4: What happened just after the discovery? Emergent themes

As can be seen from the quotes below, one of the themes is that the majority of the participants felt that once they had the learning, they thought/felt that they needed to continue to consider and reflect upon the insights that they are suddenly faced with. As Cox (2013) suggests, coaching now enters a different phase: the integrating phase, where the dyad now examines and explores how to use the information and understand what it means. Perhaps this is where Whitemore's GROW model fails, in that he has accepted the solution and the coaching is deemed successful, whereas Cox (2013) has understood that this is simply another iteration of the exploration, hence an experiential learning cycle.

"...that's good, I don't want to lose that, so get it down and then keep exploring it so I got a definitive answer..." Client 1

"I went away with a lot to think about. And it was very, very thought provoking and something that did stay with me and I have spent time thinking and contemplating" Client 3

"...A huge period of reflection really...kind of made me start thinking, about other things..." Client 4

"...think about it in a different way..." Client 6

One of the observations that I make here is an emergent theme of relief and positivity. There is a shift and change in the feelings in the clients that can be harnessed by the coach in order to build momentum and increase the good feelings around the change of state. These physiological feelings are discussed in the next question set.

At the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery?

There has been a lot written about the physiological association with learning and the emotions that follow the moments of insight. The findings confirm the importance of the connection between insight and a physical feeling. The majority of the clients in this project also reported this manifestation of physical response at the time of learning.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Positivity and relief	*	*		*	*	
No physical response			*			*

Table 4.5: At the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery? Emergent themes.

In the literature review, Kets de Vries (2013) suggested that our response to these moments of learning derives from our ‘Palaeolithic heritage’ and that we may feel exhilarated. Brann suggested that it was the adrenalin production associated with the communication between amygdala and hypothalamus that caused the surge of emotions. Whatever the reason, the findings suggest that the brain experiences a ‘feel-good’ sentiment at the moment of insight. The participants describe this feeling thus:

“...it was a feeling of warmth and... It was strange, it was like, it was like that sensation of reward... that you're just going to reward yourself...” Client 1

“...I felt like it was a weight lifted off my shoulders...” Client 2

“...I finally got to the top of the...the cycle and realized that it was a good thing...” Client 4

“...A relief really...” Client 5

During the analysis and the cross correlation of themes, Client 3, whom I identified as having had the most significant moment, failed to experience a physiological response, as did Client 6. They do, however, comment and knowing the wider context I, like them, feel that this could well be due to their career roles and similarities in this that they both share.

“I don’t think that would be accurate for me to say there was a physiological response but there was definitely, you know, a mental... [response] but then that’s how I am... where I am on stuff...” Client 3

“This is always interesting because it is one of the responses I have managed to switch off from my current career...the idea that we to feel something it’s quite unusual...” Client 6

I again turn to Client 1 for his excellent use of metaphor in order to describe his feelings:

“If I’ve had a hard week at work and it’s that first sip of scotch on a Friday evening eight o’clock, whatever it might be, you know, it’s that sort of... this is that sort of feeling of reward...” Client 1

During the data collection, I decided to ask more questions than strictly necessary in order to fully explore and saturate the events containing insight. Specifically, there are five remaining questions that explore the comparison of the moment to other significant moments the client may have

experienced and I also took the opportunity to seek to understand how the moment changed the client and the coaching. This indicates how the magnitude of the moment may have affected both client and session.

How does this moment compare to other moments of discovery?

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Depth of the insight	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.6: How does this moment compare to other moments of discovery? Emergent themes.

For Client 1, it is personal awareness that they rank above the professional knowledge, in terms of comparison. They suggest that it means more, a deeper feeling of knowing.

“...that's work, brilliant, okay, good, fine, let's move on, and I think the professional knowledge is one thing and then but the personal knowledge is... is a leap above, it means more...” Client 1

Longhurst (2010) differentiates these more significant moments too in terms of depth of insight and moments that are often too deep to express in words as Constable and Kiefer (2013) state, due to the change, transformation or shift in paradigm being about belief and certainty. The remainder of the participants appear to clearly fall into this bracket based upon their descriptions:

“...it was more of a changing of your life, the purpose...” Client 2

“...I think it was all about sort of depth of the impact...” Client 3

“...the detail that I went into... it's a quite unique moment...” Client 4

“...talk[ing] seriously about things...it's sort of gives you more a feeling of what's going on...” Client 5

“...almost the difference for me was where it was going instead of carrying on...” Client 6

What happens now because of the discovery?

The question was asked so that I could understand the next event in the coaching sequence, yet the clients began looking longer into the future, almost as if they had what they needed and now needed to implement changes. However, post-insight, the coaching now potentially moves into the

integrating phase of Cox's (2013) experiential cycle, based upon Kolb (1984) i.e. exploration around how the client envisages using their new learning. Once the client has experienced a moment of insight, I posit that this could be the ideal time to continue to build and explore in order to really cement the learning from the event within the coaching session. This certainly matches the W of Whitmore's (1994) GROW model.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Clarity & motivation	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.7: What happens now because of the discovery? Emergent themes.

As mentioned, Constable and Kiefer (2013) have suggested that deeper moments of insight are based around belief and certainty concerning the solving of their individual quandary. It appears that every participant has experienced this knowing and clarity:

“My thought processes are far more clear. Before we had the session, I had a mass of jumbled unstructured thoughts and lots of things to share and discuss, now I'm walking away with a... with a clear structured process as to how I'm going to carry things forward in this particular area, how certain am I going to approach things anyway...” Client 1

“...think about things in a more logical process...” Client 2

“...it's about...objectively analysing how this has been holding me back...actually acting on the discovery...” Client 3

“...my thinking...going forward...” Client 4

“...it just made me more relaxed about things...” Client 5

“[I] made the decision based on sensible options and what I feel I should be doing” Client 6

In terms of the dialogue, only Client 3 suggests that they have more learning around this insight to do. Client 1 appears to be the most certain of the way ahead, whilst the others seem to be content with their learning. I know from the context is that Client 3 approaches coaching in order to have these moments of insight, before breaking away to do their own internal reflections about their learning.

How did the moment of discovery affect the coaching?

This question was aimed at exploring the next and subsequent events in the coaching. Did it lead to other moments? Did the coaching improve? This question was asked for me to understand more about the conclusions from the ACC and de Haan et al.'s research into significant moments. They specifically seek to understand the changes in coaching as a result of moments such as these.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Increased respect for the coaching	*	*	*	*	*	

Table 4.8: How did the moment of discovery affect the coaching? Emergent themes.

De Haan et al. (2008a) conclude that clients do not always experience significant moments and that being supported is often sufficient. Clearly this is at odds with the participants' experience in this research project. I concede that this is a small sample, yet I did not expect all the clients to report a significant moment. From the later research of de Haan et al. (2010a) we now learn that 'breakthrough moments' (2008, p.14) can occasionally cause ruptures in the coaching relationship. In terms of the participants here, five out of six reported an increased level of respect for the coach and coaching, and no ruptures were apparent:

"...I think that Coach 1 is a really good coach. It's what [the coach] does." Client 1

"...changed the outlook of the interview to a more positive, and it allowed me to be a bit more creative..." Client 2

"I was already very happy being coached with Coach 3 and probably even more so now that its acknowledged that [they] has got skills and ability to get this, to make this happen for me, got my confidence in Coach 3 as a coach has increased significantly, its already high confidence and confidence in it the coaching process as well..." Client 3

"I think it opened me up a little [...] to looking at things in a different way..." Client 4

"...it just made it easier to talk to him..." Client 5

Although Client 6 did not make any direct comments towards the coach and coaching when asked, they did allude to a continuing positive relationship with the coach. However, when one reads the transcript back, the client predominantly concentrates upon the content of the session. When asked about the significant moments in the coaching Client 6 said:

“So I find with *Coach 6* her ability to sort of kind of go this is what I am hearing...” Client 6

I interpret this as a clear endorsement of the skills of coach 6 and continuing belief in the coaching process.

Are there any other implications of the discovery?

This question was designed to continue to explore and saturate the participant’s understanding as is recommended in phenomenological research, and to gather any final useful data. During the analysis it became apparent that the data mimicked the response from the earlier question about ‘What happens now because of the discovery?’ There are of course indications of clarity and motivation in the words they have used, but all of the participants spoke about a changed mind-set moving forward.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Changed mind-set	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.9: Are there any other implications of the discovery? Emergent themes.

Each client spoke about doing something differently, alluding to thinking about the way they have been behaving and how this will change in the future, almost as if they are doing an internal comparison of the change:

“...how I take it forward, in terms of preparation and stuff...it's given me a different way of approaching my thinking” Client 1

“...it change[d] the way you think about and the way you can find answers...trying to find the quickest solution, but this discovery has made me think of how a quicker way of finding a solution isn't the best way...” Client 2

“I am going to check myself in terms of how I conduct myself professionally but also on a more personal level as well...If it hadn’t changed me then it wouldn’t have stayed with me, and wouldn’t have remained with me and it wouldn’t be something that I’m actually reflecting on and how I am going to incorporate that discovery into affecting, affect my life and how I moved forward...” Client 3

“...challenge the way I currently do things and perceive thing...” Client 4

“I’ll be a lot calmer when trying to help people... I just think it made me more aware of what I have been doing...” Client 5

“...you suddenly realize that sometimes...if I feel [I’m] going down certain tried and tested paths...actually, you know, stopping myself...” Client 6

These statements and my observation as to what occurred are further supported by Köhler (1925), Hebb (1949) and Mayer (1995) shown in the earlier literature review. Here I bring together separate thinking about post-insight activity. I consider that once insight occurs, there is a period in which the individual is able to reflect and understand/visualise what they have been doing and then what they will do differently as a result, almost as if they sense and ‘see’ their success.

How do you conclude that the discovery has changed you?

I decided to ask this final question as a way of understanding how the participants have changed, yet based upon the above question and the observations and thinking behind it, it now appears fortuitous as the clients’ answers support my analytical deduction above.

Theme	Client 1	Client 2	Client 3	Client 4	Client 5	Client 6
Motivated/Empowered	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 4.10: How do you conclude that the discovery has changed you? Emergent themes.

When I read about insight, the thinking was all based on what leads to it. Only Kets de Vries (2013) provides an understanding that there is a stabilising phase where clients seek to verify their change. Cox (2013) alludes to there being an integrating phase where clients explore how they are going to implement the changes following the learning and insight, driven by reflective learning. What has not yet been suggested is that there is a need to understand who the clients have become. In Chapter 2 I talked about a frame of reference that everybody internally encompasses and that transformations change this as a result of the significant moments, critical incidents et cetera. It is perhaps an obvious observation that the clients now feel motivated and empowered:

“I feel a little like, quite a lot more actually, a lot more... prepared, maybe... prepared and empowered...” Client 1

“...thinking of lots of different solutions and weighing out the best one, and then going for it...” Client 2

“I’m confident that it’s only a matter of time before I can say well, this is what I did with that discovery with that information and this is the effect, the impact, the difference that it has made...” Client 3

“I’ll be able to start, sort of go over things and try to work out what are the problems and the barriers are...” Client 4

“...makes you think, well, don’t hold back...” Client 5

“...you know you can’t just, you know have this moment, when you think yeah I suddenly get this this and not do anything about it...” Client 6

The ‘so what’ of insight moments in coaching appears to be empowerment and preparedness to achieve their goals.

Closing Position

The aim of this chapter was to provide the reader with a high-level overview of the results of the analysis conducted on the responses gained from the six clients. I asked ten questions in a semi-structured interview format in order to explore the events that contain insight in coaching sessions. Their responses were formed into themes, and extracts taken from their interview transcripts were provided to evidence those themes. Overall the themes that were identified are now brought together in order to provide a descriptive passage (below), which concentrates on the actuality of what happened rather than the individual experiences. It is noted that the journey towards insight moments begins at some unknown time in the past, deemed to be the incubation period and I suggest it is almost impossible to ascertain when this starting point might be. There appear to be four stages to an insight event: pre-moment, the actuality of insight, immediately post-moment and afterwards:

The clients faced an amount of pressure to solve a personal issue, seeking an answer that had hitherto proved elusive. The dyad was engaged in a focused exploration of their question. The clients suddenly realised that they had the answers inside themselves and that it was their responsibility to solve their issues. At this moment, a number of factors came together and the clients felt a deep sense of relief, with this realisation and an insight into how they would solve their problem. Increasingly becoming more positive, there was a strong desire to continue to reflect upon this new clarity to understand the direction they could now follow. The clients were left feeling motivated and empowered with a changed mind-set. The clients left their session with an increased respect for coaching.

As discussed in the literature review, following other thinking in this field, I state below what insight is defined as:

Insight refers to a person having a moment of realisation of how a particular quandary could be solved

Based upon this research, my definition appears accurate. There will be more discussion about the above statements in Chapter 6. However, I now choose to consider the events containing insight within coaching from the perspective of the coach. This allows additional analysis of the identified themes.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis – Coach’s Session

Introduction

This chapter, like the preceding chapter, provides an overview of the process and thinking during the phenomenological analysis of the coaches’ responses to the semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 now considers the coach’s understanding of the coaching session and identification of the moments of insight during that session. As before, this analysis followed the process highlighted in the previous chapters. The aim was to contribute to the fullest exploration of the events containing insight within coaching sessions. As before, my closing position at the chapter’s end contains an overall descriptive contribution, which is the expected output of the analysis.

The interview questions were the same questions as posed to the clients, allowing me to make a direct comparison with the clients’ perspective. The questions were designed to elicit an understanding of how the coach felt or how the coach experienced moments of insight and learning. Each participant concentrated on their perception of the client’s moment of insight and only towards the end of the interview did they begin to consider themselves. I found this surprising, as I had consider prior to the data collection that they would have talked about the moment from their own perspective. On reflection, this allowed me to correlate any cross themes and therefore I consider the data to be of increased value in understanding the moment, from the perspective of coaching outcome. The posed questions are identical to those in the previous chapter (see the opening section of Chapter 4). These questions are shown below in context of where they reside in the coach’s perception of the event in terms of time-line below in Fig 5.1:

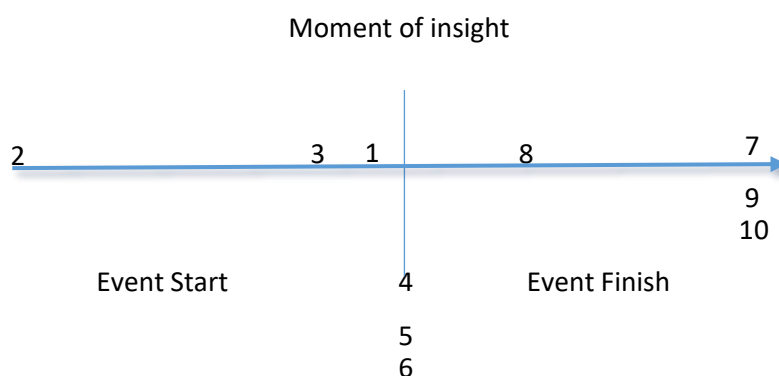


Figure 5.12: The posed questions in the context of a timeline

Emergent Themes of the Coach

Which moments in the coaching were most significant?

The aim of this question was twofold: identifying where the moment of insight in the coaching session occurred, and understanding it from the coach's perspective. Additionally, this is a question about correlation in the moment of insight and whether the accounts match.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Coach was the catalyst	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 5.1: Which moments in the coaching were most significant? Emergent themes

Each coach identified the moment that the client described in their interviews as being most significant, whereas de Haan et al. (2010a) suggested that this was only the case in 50% of the dyads they researched. My presumption here is that this is due to the time difference between coaching and data collection in the ACC's research, thus implying a limitation of their study methodology. The identified theme is concerned with the coach assisting the client's vision of the solution to their quandary. I refer to the apt title of Haneberg's (2011) paper as the results allude to the coach being the catalyst for the moment of insight.

"...there was a job title difference, so actually he was already operating at that level..." Coach 1

"I'm always doing the work to make him consider...actually that it was a good topic, and particularly for him..." Coach 2

"...we were just talking a little bit about her fear of failure and she said her biggest assumption around that is she is actually going to fail... she paused at that moment [as if] to say, 'yeah that's it, you know'...I said to her...you know Mandela had that quote, something like 'I either win or I learn'...she said, 'I love that'..." Coach 3

"...it was the moment that he said, that's a really good question...it meant he wasn't able to answer immediately, which meant I was tapping into some different thinking for him..." Coach 4

"...it was the highlight because she smiled... I said 'What could you do?'...then she smiled and realized..." Coach 5

"I think when she realized that the only person stopping her...I think [I] asked a question..." Coach 6

In each case above, these were the comments and approaches of the coach that triggered the moment of insight for the client. Considered in context of the session, I clearly see that the coaches had view of the solution before the client. In some cases they were aware of this and led the client to the moment through asking the right question, providing personal stories or case studies (or indeed in one case, providing a solution). These all follow the four stages as posited by Hanneberg (2011) and discussed in Chapter 2: curiosity, pro-activeness, observance and courage. I presume that people are catalysts for insight, and that the coach does need to immerse themselves in the session and listen for the new thinking as stated by Constable and Keifer (2013). Thus it appears that the coaches use their intuition to provide that nudge towards and over the tipping point (Kets de Vries, 2013).

What led to this discovery?

This question now seeks to saturate the coach's understanding of the coach's belief as to what led to the moment of insight. What did the coaches consider to be the triggers for their client's moment of insight?

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Openness/Honesty		*	*		*	
Comment	*	*	*	*	*	*
Space to talk				*		*

Table 5.2: What led to this discovery? Emergent themes

I have no doubt that all of the identified themes are simply the beginning of what led to the moment. What is frustrating is the limitations of the data and this research, in that I am unable to ascertain what factors actually influenced the moment. Perhaps another study could follow a coach and client dyad from initial contact through to close of contract, thus capturing all the moments in the coaching assignment. Whilst I acknowledge there are likely to be more factors even in this event (for example the strength of the client/coach relationship), I am utilising the data available to ascertain what led to the insight moments. The first theme is honesty and openness:

“He was quite open about it right at the very start...” Coach 2

“...the trust and the respect...also her willingness you know to hit pause and reflect...” Coach 3

“...reflecting on the coaching session was the biggest moment, a lightbulb moment that both of us were getting...” Coach 5

Without this aspect, no real exploration or deepening (de Haan, 2008b) of the issues can take place (Askew and Carnell, 2011), and the coaching alliance (Cox, 2013, fig 2.1) isn't balanced or effective. This then validates the importance of the coaching relationship. As we discovered with the first question, the coach triggered the moment through an intuitive understanding of what the client needed:

"I think we were discussing few different aspects..." Coach 1

"...it was almost an off-the-cuff comment..." Coach 2

"...like I said the Mandela quote and that prompted the discovery..." Coach 3

"When I shifted the conversation to other people..." Coach 4

"It was just talking about [...]...and I just asked..." Coach 5

"I think helping her to keep coming back to the focus of what she wants to focus on...I gave another example of a different client I have worked with, that I think then helped her..." Coach 6

Although from the quotes I can see that the coaches were leading the client towards the moment, there are a number of things this breaks down into. Firstly, three coaches offered a quotation or gave their own personal insight, whilst the remainder continued to focus on the issue. This is supported by the final theme of giving the client space to consider their issue:

"I just let him talk through things at length..." Coach 4

"I think allowing her to talk..." Coach 6

All the above are consistent with the interactions suggested by Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014). From the two initial questions I consider that it is clearly the more linguistically rich interactions that have been the direct catalysts for insight, whilst the linguistically poorer interactions have (importantly) supported the moment. I feel that there is evidence here to support an argument that I made in the literature review regarding Cox's (2013, p.120) statement that 'questioning could be the key component in the coaching process' and Wallis's (2015) inference that questioning was one tool of many in the coach's toolbox. In light of the research, I feel that questions, whilst important, are not

the key component. However, linguistically rich dialogue can lead directly to the moment of insight. In the next question we continue to saturate and explore what happened just before the discovery.

What happened just before this discovery?

This question is positioned just before the moment of insight for the client. It can be seen in Table 5.3 **Error! Reference source not found.** that there are three coaches missing from the themes, because no new information was provided.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Awareness of the moment		*	*		*	
Coach's remark		*	*			

Table 5.3: What happened just before this discovery? Emergent themes.

The three coaches quoted below recognised the significant moment in the coaching. Coach 2 and 5 saw this development while Coach 3 made a decision to elevate the client's learning to drive that moment. Considering that I believe Client 3 had the biggest moment of insight, this could be an important revelation at this stage.

“... [a] comment again that sort of exploded...” Coach 2

“...something that sparks another level of thinking...” Coach 3

“...that's when it started to kick in...” Coach 5

The coach, recognising the opportunity and driving the client's moment, shows the importance of Cox's (2013) need to authentically listen and Jones's (2012) suggestion that one must listen to the client's remarks. Whilst all the coaches did 'push' their clients over the tipping point, were they consciously aware that the moment was about to occur? Certainly Coach 2 wasn't aware of having driven their client forward:

“...it was almost an off-the-cuff comment...” Coach 2

The remaining three statements below show a conscious decision to share a quote and direct feedback from their own experience.

“I've shared some reflections or a thought, like I said the Mandela quote and that prompted the discovery...” Coach 3

“If you did for him like you did for me [statement made by the coach to the client]...”

Coach 5

“I was recalling another client I’d worked with that had been in a similar situation and I offered that, here’s a story, so just helping somebody to sort of catalyse their thinking by giving them another example...” Coach 6

I feel it is a personal experience, intuitively shared, that has driven the moment of insight.

What happened just after the discovery?

After the moment of insight, from the perspective of the coach, the ACC reports (de Haan, 2008a and 2008b) that after breakthrough moments, there can be a tendency for doubts and anxieties to emerge in both unexperienced and experienced coaches.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Affirmations	*		*		*	
Physiological change	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 5.4: What happened just after the discovery? Emergent themes

The first theme was that of affirmations. Given the importance of the insight, both Clients 1 and 3 take notes in order to capture the learning and also both state their wish to reflect on it at a later stage. This is confirmed by Coaches 1 and 3. We also learn from Coach 3 that Client 3 journals, providing an indicator that perhaps she is practised in reflective learning.

“...he then further breaks down some notes to explore a bit further at home...” Coach 1

“...she also writes notes, that’s the other thing that happens afterwards. She keeps a journal...she just says she needs to write some notes...” Coach 3

Each coach mentions a physiological change that occurs in their clients:

“...the head-nodding moment...” Coach 1

“...a more satisfied feeling...a little bit more confident...” Coach 2

“There was a very noticeable...sort of tense shoulders, talking for hour...and then, after asking the question, and he said, oh it's a really good question, well, you know, I don't know that they were asked...there was a noticeable sort of shifting [of his] shoulders...” Coach 4

“...there was a moment of silence and sort of slowing down...I’m just again thinking about this and thinking about other clients that I have worked with, when that happens, it is often there is a physiology change...I would have expected to see some sort of physiological change whether a sort of shoulders going down or just a breath or a sigh or something that indicated some change in physiology...” Coach 6

I haven’t used quotes from either Coach 3 or 5 as this is expanded upon in the next section. However, from the others quoted above, it is clear that the coaches noticed these changes in their clients, and they have noticed what the client has reported as their change state. In the case of Coach 6 and Client 6, I understand that the client has reported not experiencing a physical change, yet the coach noticed the tell-tale ‘slowing down’ of the client. Client 6 talks quickly and this slowing down was clearly noticeable. Did the lack of physiological changes in Clients 3 and 6 disturb the coaching from the coach’s perspective?

At the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery?

This question is broken down into two themes: negativity and positivity. When asked what they (the coaches) felt at the time of insight, everyone reported a physiological change.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Negativity	*	*				
Positivity			*	*	*	*

Table 5.5: At the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery? Emergent themes.

In terms of negativity, was this the doubt that the ACC reports? Client 1 began to feel uncomfortable, and later, we understand the reason is indeed the doubts that the coach feels about their own coaching: many internal questions about the way the coaching had preceded and whether they should have offered their own insight at that moment. This response is consistent with the ACC’s (de Haan 2008b) paper.

“I felt some discomfort...” Coach 1

Coach 2 has no such doubts, feeling sad that the client was seeking an opinion on something that they considered already to be the correct solution.

“...I felt, to be honest, I felt a little bit sad...” Coach 2

The other theme is that of positive feelings associated with the client’s learning:

“...a warm feeling about that I was adding some value to her...” Coach 3

“I was pleased... I was quite, I suppose, relieved that we’d got somewhere in our conversation...I felt quite relieved...” Coach 4

“I think I just smiled to her and I was glad...” Coach 5

“Phew. So, that sort of ‘I got it right’ [feeling] ...I am pleased that she has found something that is important for her...” Coach 6

These feelings are described as pleasure and relief. Is there a relationship between these feelings? Leknes (2017) suggests that this is the case and drawing from my own experience, there is pleasure, or at least a surge of satisfaction, in witnessing a client achieve a valuable change toward their goal. This may then morph into a feeling of relief that coaching has achieved this insight. The majority of coaches experienced a positive feeling post-insight.

How does this moment compare to other moments of discovery?

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Familiar		*	*	*	*	*
Unfamiliar	*					

Table 5.6: How does this moment compare to other moments of discovery? Emergent themes.

The majority of the coaches stated that they were familiar with the moment of insight, and I got the impression that my belief about the magnitude of the moment is essentially correct. I felt that Coach and Client 3 had the most significant insight moment:

“...last session, there was a real ‘ha ha’ moment...and I think today was as strong as that” Coach 3

However, what is striking is that such a moment manifested in the last session, as well as this one. This was a surprising statement and I was left considering if indeed the moment Client 3 experienced

was indeed as momentous as I had previously considered. Coaches 2, 4 and 6 also suggested that moments of insight are regularly seen in sessions:

“...you always have a moment...something generally pops up...” Coach 2

“...with other clients I think it's similar...it's a very similar pattern...” Coach 4

“...I've seen 99% of the time it is the thing. So, it then reinforces to me that my intuition is working pretty well...” Coach 6

Coach 5 suggests this is a rarer occurrence.

“...there's another big one [moment] that we had last year actually...” Coach 5

None of the coaches suggest that the various moments were the same, and so I am unable to ascertain if the other moments are indeed similar, and only able to report that moments appear to occur with a greater frequency than Kets de Vries (2013) suggests, whilst acknowledging the research of Longhurst (2010) and the ACC that does not guarantee moments of insight.

Turning to the ACC's research (de Haan 2008a and 2008b), which concludes that self-doubt and ruptures can be caused in the relationship due to critical moments, I am strongly of the opinion that this could well be the case with Coach 1:

“I have never experienced that before actually, that sort of discomfort...” Coach 1

Clearly, Client 1 achieved an exciting moment where they learnt a great deal and went away excited and energised, with direction and determination, yet Coach 1 is not as relieved, pleased or even positive as the rest of the coaches. They are left reflecting upon the moment and attempting to make sense of the way they coached and assisted the client, and how they coach in general. What would be interesting from a research perspective is learning if this was the beginning of a deep rupture that caused a split in the assignment, or if the coach came to understand themselves and their practice better through it. I feel this does strengthen the conclusions from the ACC's research.

What happens now because of the discovery?

As for the clients, this question provides an understanding of what happens to the coaching after the discovery. As stated in the previous chapter, the coaching now moves clearly into the integrating

phase of Cox's (2013) experiential cycle, based upon Kolb 1984 i.e. exploration around how the client envisages using their new learning.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Future direction of coaching		*	*	*		*
Reflection of self	*				*	

Table 5.7: What happens now because of the discovery? Emergent themes

When the coaches and clients get together for their next session, according to the data, four of the six coaches will be using the learning from this session to move forward. This appears to fully support Cox's (2013) notion that coaching is based on the experiential learning cycle:

"...the client and I will have more confidence moving forward with the topic he's chosen..." Coach 2

"I think you know, we would just go on to the next level..." Coach 3

"...ideally I'd like to follow up on that element of learning for the client..." Coach 4

"I would hope and expect that in her next conversation that I have with her that she has progressed those things..." Coach 6

I am left considering that the cycle may just go round ad infinitum and I sense that this is another validation of a strong coaching contract that underpins sound ethical coaching practice. For two coaches, this question allowed them to continue to answer a question that was posed previously and expand on their answers:

"I think actually...it's prompted me to really note the difference...there's this distinct mentoring and that... request for expertise insight? Coach 1

"I look at myself as well [in terms of] self-discovery, that I'm in the same boat as [the clients]..." Coach 5

It is evident that Coaches 1 and 5 are engaged in reflection, having their own moments of insight. It is comments such as these that suggest the coaches may not have support in how to explore these thoughts and therefore may not make the most of them. This question provides understanding of how

the coaching could move on in more general terms, but how did it affect the coaching for the remainder of the specific session?

How did the moment of discovery affect the coaching?

This question aimed to exploring the subsequent events in the coaching. Did it lead to other moments? Did the coaching improve? This question was asked for me to understand more about the conclusions from the research by the ACC and de Haan et al. into significant moments. They specifically seek to understand the changes in coaching as a result of moments such as these.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Positive influence on the coaching		*	*	*	*	*
Doubts	*					

Table 5.8: How did the moment of discovery affect the coaching? Emergent themes

In the main, the moment of insight was seen as having had a positive effect on the coaching. This manifested as providing direction, reaching a conclusion and/or gaining momentum:

“It helped to shape which direction we went towards, enabled us to explore an area a little bit more and expand on a little better...” Coach 2

“[They] don’t need to think about anything else. Early [sessions] were like – [that’s] ticked that off let’s move on...[today] that was definitely, that’s the end of the conversation. Job done. Job done...” Coach 3

“I think it changed his perspective of coaching...” Coach 4

“I think it made the coaching a bit [...] easier because we’re all on the [same] wavelength...” Coach 5

“...it is like sitting in the front seat of a car, there is the driver and the passenger and they were both looking ahead together at the route they are taking rather than somebody owning the steering wheel and driving the process. It can be interchangeable...” Coach 6

Yet, Coach 1 continues to suggest that the moment had an instant and lingering effect and they do not state how the coaching was effected by the thoughts and reflections that this moment caused. Whilst the client appears to be content, empowered and motivated, Coach 1 is struggling with their own practice:

“[It] has made me wonder if perhaps how reliant he's become on me, giving some insights and tips...”
Coach 1

When I consider the position of Coach 1 and the experiential cycle, I begin to think that allowing the cycle to turn full circle once more without having made sense of the learning from the coaches' side could well be detrimental to the coaching assignment. In Cox (2013 p.13, fig 2.1) we find that it is the coach's emotions, beliefs and values that affect the coaching alliance. I consider that unless these subconscious areas are bounded and explored in supervision, the coaching assignment is likely to be degraded as a result of doubts appearing. This is one of the conclusions arrived at by the ACC in their body of research.

Are there any other implications of the discovery?

I continue to explore the understanding of what else happens because of the discovery.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Personal reflection	*		*	*		*

Table 5.9: Are there any other implications of the discovery? Emergent themes

The majority of participants suggest that the discovery is leading them to personal reflection, which provides evidence of professional conduct and the desire to continue to learn:

“...when you reflect, like this, immediately after... it's quite interesting your own reflection on different questions that I asked. It's quite...quite interesting...” Coach 1

“...you don't need fancy coaching tools...I started off using the time to think approach...[they do not] need any tools and techniques...you know I felt [that] offering...a quote or something was enough...”
Coach 3

“I think the future conversation would be...to take it forward...” Coach 4

“You can't put [the] genie back in the bottle. Once that awareness is out there then you can't pretend it doesn't exist... in the next session that will take hopefully with [them] and myself as [their] coach to a new place of discovery...” Coach 6

Two coaches felt that there were no further implications moving forward:

“...for me...no...” Coach 2

“...I don’t think there was...” Coach 5

How do you conclude that the discovery has changed you?

This question was posed alongside the above questions on the completion of the coaching session. At this stage, I suspect that the actual answer to the question of how the discovery has changed them is as yet embryonic and fragile due to time and thoughts still to be had and the impact of the coaching yet to be fully realised. Perhaps revisiting the question at a later date could have brought a richer or more considered answer.

Theme	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Changed approach	*	*			*	*
Affirmation of coaching effect			*	*		

Table 5.10: How do you conclude that the discovery has changed you? Emergent themes

For Coach 1, the doubts that she is experiencing continue to influence her whole coaching practice:

“...it's made me stop and think about when I'm in coaching with [them] or others... how am I being stretched and challenged to think really creative, thereby helping this person...” Coach 1

Coach 2 reflects that a changed approach to the coaching session could have moved the client forward sooner, provided a moment of insight earlier and explored that more in depth so as to make more from the session.

“I think, when I’m reflecting back, he gave me a good pointer at the beginning that this was an area that he was concerned about, was the one to make him comfortable about talking about initially, maybe could have gone for it sooner, [...] and then expand it and spend more time with... with that...” Coach 2

As WE saw from the earlier questions, Coach 5 is engaged in personal reflection about their own life and what the moment of insight means to them:

“... what I learned from it is [to] give more time to others...” Coach 5

Coach 6 returns a metaphorical answer to the posed question. They liken coaching to driving a car: the coach drives for a while and when they feel that the client is able to take the wheel and it’s over

to them. Is this metaphor implying that the coaching relationship could be a similar role to that of a driving instructor, perhaps? Certainly there is an aspect of showing and explaining how the car is to be driven before allowing the learner to take over, and a growing sense of confidence in their own abilities as the client moves towards their goal. After all, what has been gleaned in the analysis, it becomes apparent that coaches are offering something of themselves in order to drive moments of insight:

“...my belief is [in] the momentum that they have to take action, so that changes me as a coach by almost like I don’t have to work quite so hard...I’m sort of taking my foot off the gas...If I didn’t believe they had those resources, I wouldn’t be so comfortable in sort of stepping back in quite the same way...but just like who is driving the car at the start. It might be that I’m driving a little bit more in terms of helping them to get some sort of insight and awareness and then once I get a sense that we’ve got to this milestone or this place in our journey...I can kind of say that ‘[it is] over to you to drive for a bit and then we will see where that gets us’. And then maybe if I have to come in later on and drive further then I will do...” Coach 6

For those coaches who have now gone beyond the reflective stage on their own ways of coaching, they provided me with an indication of what lay beyond the reflections. From Coach 3, there was an affirmation of previous thinking that keeping it simple is sometimes the best way for them. From my own experience, I tend to agree:

“That realization that simple is good, reconnected me with my fear of failure and the realization that actually it’s all great learning opportunities...” Coach 3

Once again, the conclusions from the ACC’s body of research show themselves again when Coach 4 admits to having moments of doubt in their coaching. They rationalise that their coaching works when they have moments of insight such as these:

“...an affirmation that coaching is effective and it works...whenever you have the element...of self-doubt, you know, how is this working? Is it helping somebody? Is it developing them? And you get that moment of self-discovery where somebody thinks you shifts, you changes and they get different perspectives. Yeah, it’s an affirmation that it works...” Coach 4

Closing Position

The aim of this chapter was to provide the reader with a high-level overview of the results of the analysis of the responses gained from the six coaches. There were ten questions posed in a semi-

structured interview format in order to explore the events that contain insight in coaching sessions. As previously with the clients in Chapter 4, their responses were formed into themes and extracts taken from their interview transcripts to evidence those themes. These themes are now brought together to provide a descriptive passage, based upon this research. As before, there appear to be four stages to an insight event: pre-moment, the actuality of insight, post-moment and afterwards:

The coaches were engaged in the flow of coaching when their own insight was provided to the client. This gave the client additional information to consider. Having given their clients space to think, the coaches became aware of an important moment of learning for their clients, for whom the coach's comments resonated. This learning in their clients overall had a positive effect on the coaches, who felt relieved and satisfied that they had again achieved a result. Although sometimes this familiar moment can be uncomfortable, it can bring new ideas about the direction of the next session, their own coaching skills and realisations that coaching is about continuous reflection for themselves as well as their clients.

There will be more discussion about the above statements in Chapter 6. However, I now choose to consider the sessions themselves whilst bringing in more from the relevant literature.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis – The Session

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to bring a number of constituent parts together to ascertain what has been found in this project. In the two previous chapters, I have provided an analysis of both the clients' (Chapter 4) and the coaches' (Chapter 5) thinking about the moments of insight that have manifested in the sessions. In this chapter, firstly, I am looking at the wider context of the session and focusing upon what is occurring immediately before, during and after the moment of insight. Secondly, I add these themes to the sessional constructs and provide a discussion of the combined analysis as I move towards making conclusions.

Sessional Data – A brief guide to the Analysis and Key

The aim of the research project is to explore events containing insight within coaching sessions, to then identify the mechanisms within the event. Thus, there needed to be a logical way of bringing all the data together to analyse the sessional data. I followed the process laid out in previous studies (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, and Passmore and Townsend, 2012):

1. Listening to the recordings.
2. Listening again to the recordings while reading the transcripts.
3. Identifying the moment of insight as identified by both client and coach.
4. Bracket the insight moment before and afterwards, using a descriptive stance and information identified in the analysis of the coach and client. The dyad has explained what occurred before, during and after the moment of insight. The moment is believed to have begun when the dyad answered the question "*What happened just before this discovery?*" triangulated through the question "*What led to this discovery?*" The actuality of the moment is identified through the question "*Which moments in the coaching were most significant?*" The moment is believed to have ended when the dyad begin to further reflect and explore the issue, as suggested in the analysis of the views expressed by both coach and client in response to the question, "*What happened after the moment of discovery?*" Identifying this sequence of events was aided by my own experience and intuition as a coach and researcher.
5. Each fragment of the event (paragraph, sentence or sequence) in the transcript was identified and coded, in line with Cox (2013). Although there are several additions, this allows the session to be represented graphically.

As stated above, I utilised the identified interactions within the coaching process as suggested by Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014, p.453) but also added several additional behaviours. Note that the graphical formats shown are not to exact scale, but have been constructed giving an awareness of due proportionality:

Client – Cl

Coach – Co

Advice (give) – Ad

Advice (request) – Ar

Agreement – Ag

Challenging – Ch

Feedback – F

Insight – In

Metaphor – M

Paraphrasing – P

Questions – Q

Silence – S

Summary – Su

Verbal Reflection – Vr

Session 1

The session was held in a popular high-street coffee chain, away from members of the public, with both coach and client drinking hot beverages and water. The shop was empty bar a few customers downstairs and the employees occasionally visiting the upstairs office. The session took place on a weekday evening, after working hours. In total, the session ran for 1 hour 15 minutes 47 seconds, with client and coach facing each other. The moment of insight as described and correlated by both coach and client occurs at 53:26, and lasts until 54:54 seconds into the session, a total of 1 minute 28 seconds. At the moment of insight, there is a 19-second pause, which the coach allows, with no interruptions. The assumption is that the moment occurs at some stage within this time. The sequence of events, taken from the transcript, is below.

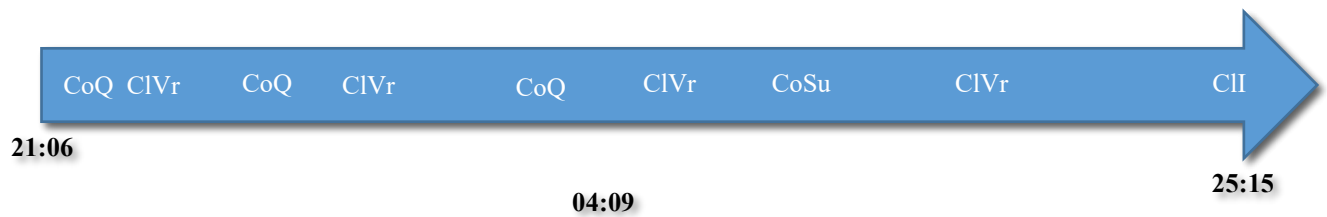


Figure 6.1: Coaching Session 1

Session 2

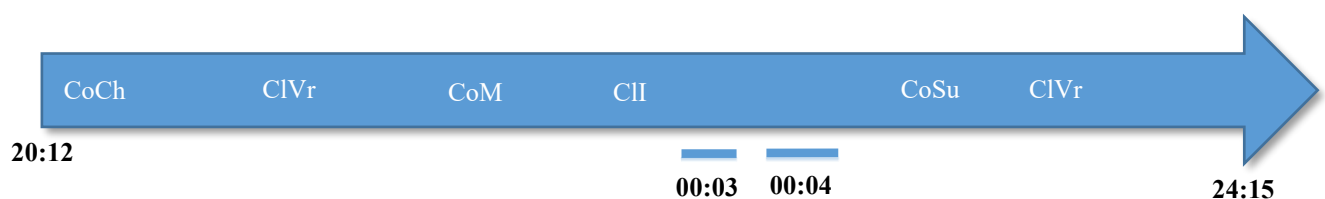
This coaching session also took place in a popular high street coffee shop, after working hours with few people about and client and coach drinking hot beverages and sitting facing each other, very slightly at an angle. In total the session ran for 25 minutes 29 seconds. The moment of insight

described and correlated by the coach and client came at 21:06 and lasted until 25:15. The results suggest that rather than a sudden epiphany, the insight appears to manifest more gradually.



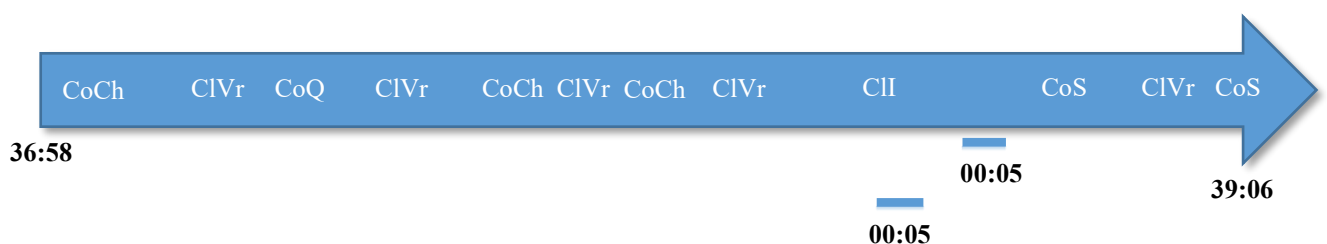
Session 3

This session was a coaching interaction using the telephone as a medium and therefore at two locations, with coach and client in their respective offices. In all, the session lasted for 1 hour 25 seconds. The session took place on a working day just before lunch. Client and coach and agree on the moment of insight. The moment starts at 20:12, lasting until 24:15 (a duration of 3:57). The moment of insight begins to manifest at around 22:18, where the client begins to recognise the insight by agreeing and stating how good the metaphor is and that it resonates with them. At 22:43 seconds the client repeats the learning, taking notes (identified in the interviews) and there are two notable pauses, of three and then four seconds.



Session 4

This session was held in the client's workplace, with the coach as a visitor. It was a face-to-face interaction during the working day, lasting 1 hour 17 minutes 12 seconds. The moment of insight was agreed by client and coach separately, from 36:58 until 39:06 (duration of 2:08). The actual moment of insight was at 37:31, and there are further pauses at 37:39 and 38:06, each of five seconds.



Session 5

This session was an internal coaching session held in the workplace. Thus, it was a face to face session held during the working day. The coach is employed by the organisation to use coaching as a management tool, but this not the sole focus of their work. This session lasted 19 minutes 4 seconds and was interrupted by the early cessation of the session. The moment of insight was identified and agreed by both coach and client, from 11:20 to 13:35 (duration of 1:45). The actual moment occurred at some stage between 11:25 and 13:03. There were pauses lasting two seconds each, and the client laughs at what might be construed from the transcript as the moment of realisation.



Figure 6.5: Coaching Session 5

Session 6

This coaching session was held over Skype and was a privately arranged session held in the early evening after the working day. In total, the session lasted 59 minutes 39 seconds. The moment of insight is much more difficult to ascertain than in the other sessions. I had to rely on the information provided by the coach, as the client's transcript provides little in the way of positive evidence. The event moment is from 25:07 to 33:07 (a duration of 8 minutes). There is a realisation at 25:08, followed by a three-second pause. From here on in, there is steady building upon reflections until the client states the unknown problem, i.e. as potentially explained by Cox (2013), the problem manifests and moves from subconscious to the conscious domain.

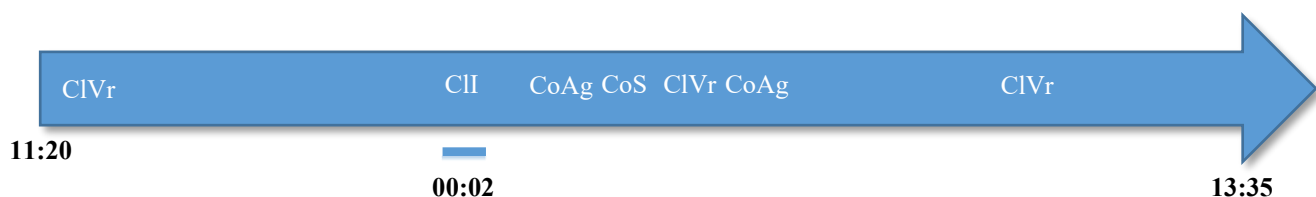


Figure 6.6: Coaching session 6

An Average Session

The sessions have been compared to one another. In accordance with the descriptive passage in phenomenology, a statement which encompasses the phenomena of all the gathered sessional data, I brought the data together and explored what an average of these sessions might look like.

Session	Duration (mins)	Insight Start (min)	Pause (seconds)	Event Duration
1	75	53	19	1:28
2	25	21	0	4:09
3	85	20	(3+4) 7	4:03
4	77	36	(5+5) 10	3:52
5	19	11	(2+2) 4	2:15
6	60	25	2	8:00

Table 6.1: Session data

Measure	Lowest	Highest	Mean
Length of Session	25:39	77:12	59:44
How far through the session insight occurs	18%	84%	46%
Length of insight event	01:28	08:00	03:30
When moment occurs during event	00:20	04:09	01:45
Total duration of pause during insight event	00:02	00:19	00:06

Table 6.2: Mean average session

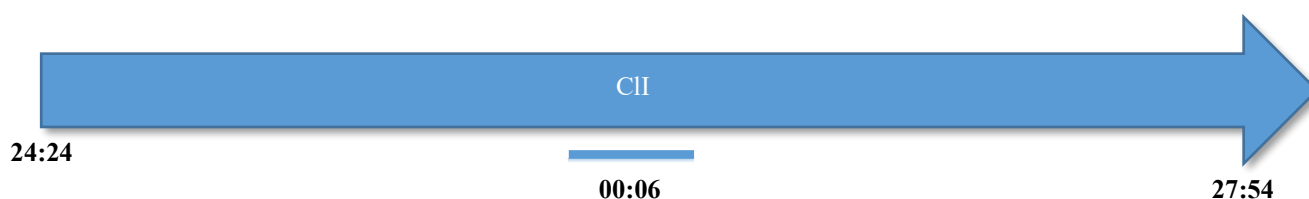


Figure 6.7: Mean Average Session

Although the figure above shows the mean average of the sessions, it doesn't account for what actually happened in any one single coaching session. I then considered the median average. Session 5 data was removed as the session ended early.

Duration (mins)	Insight Start (min)	Pause (seconds)	Event Duration
75	25	7	4:03

Table 6.3: Median session average

This median result provides a different perspective, and although provides a median average and therefore data assembled from coaching sessions, there is a limitation in that the variables come from different sessions and therefore didn't occur together in reality. In exploring the final average, the mode, there are a number of modification made i.e. rounding down the duration to the nearest quarter of an hour and the insight and duration to the nearest minute.

Duration (mins)	Insight Start (min)	Pause (seconds)	Event Duration
75	20	5	4 minutes

Table 6.4: Mode sessional average

By describing the data, I am providing a more phenomenologically authentic analysis that can be used to synergise the analyses.

The Coaching Session:

The coaching sessions lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, with the moment of insight occurring between 20 and 25 minutes into the session. This insight event lasted for around 4 minutes. Prior to the moment of insight, a pause of between two and five seconds. The moment occurred and it was followed by a similar pause of equal duration.

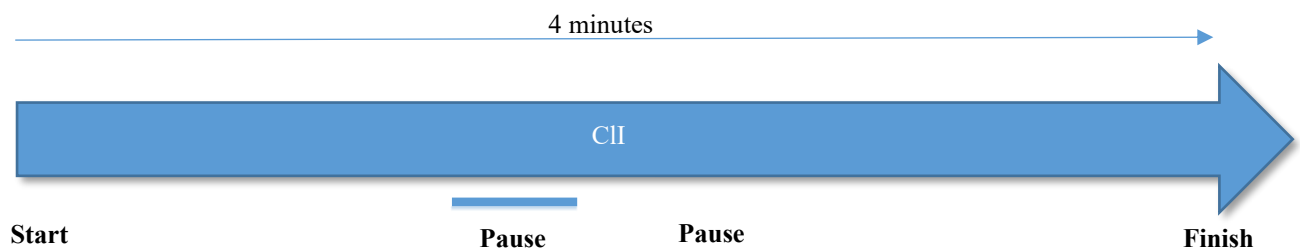


Figure 6.8: Insight event description

When exploring the coaching session, I kept in mind that the moments of manifested insight are highly likely to have begun their journey at some unknown earlier stage, as suggested by de Haan (2008, p.108). This project sought to explore the events in coaching sessions containing insight. A moment was identified in the event as the point picked out by the client. In order to provide the fullest picture of the coaching session, I now return to the concluding descriptive statements made as a result of the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Client's Experience:

The clients faced pressure to solve a personal issue, an answer to which had hitherto proved elusive. The dyad was engaged in a focused exploration of their question. The clients suddenly realised that they had the answers inside themselves and that it was their responsibility to solve their issues. At this moment, a number of factors came together and the clients felt a deep sense of relief, with the realisation and insight into how they would solve their problem. Increasingly becoming more positive, there was a strong desire to continue to reflect upon this new clarity to understand the direction they could now follow. The clients were left feeling motivated and empowered with a changed mind-set. The clients left their session with an increased respect for coaching.

The Coach's Experience:

The coaches were engaged in the flow of coaching when their own insight was provided to the client. This gave the client additional information to consider. Having given their clients space to think, the coaches became aware of an important moment of learning for their clients, for whom the coaches' comments resonated. This learning in their clients overall had a positive effect on the coaches who felt relieved and satisfied that they had again achieved a result. Although sometimes this familiar moment can be uncomfortable, it can bring new ideas about the direction of the next session, their own coaching skills and realisations that coaching is about continuous reflection for themselves as well as their clients.

Integrated Experience; an event containing insight within coaching sessions

These statements can now be added graphically to the average session in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the integrated, combined output of the analysis from different perspectives, components and constituent parts. In this combined model, the information taken from the coaches is shown above the joint space, whilst the client's information is shown below.

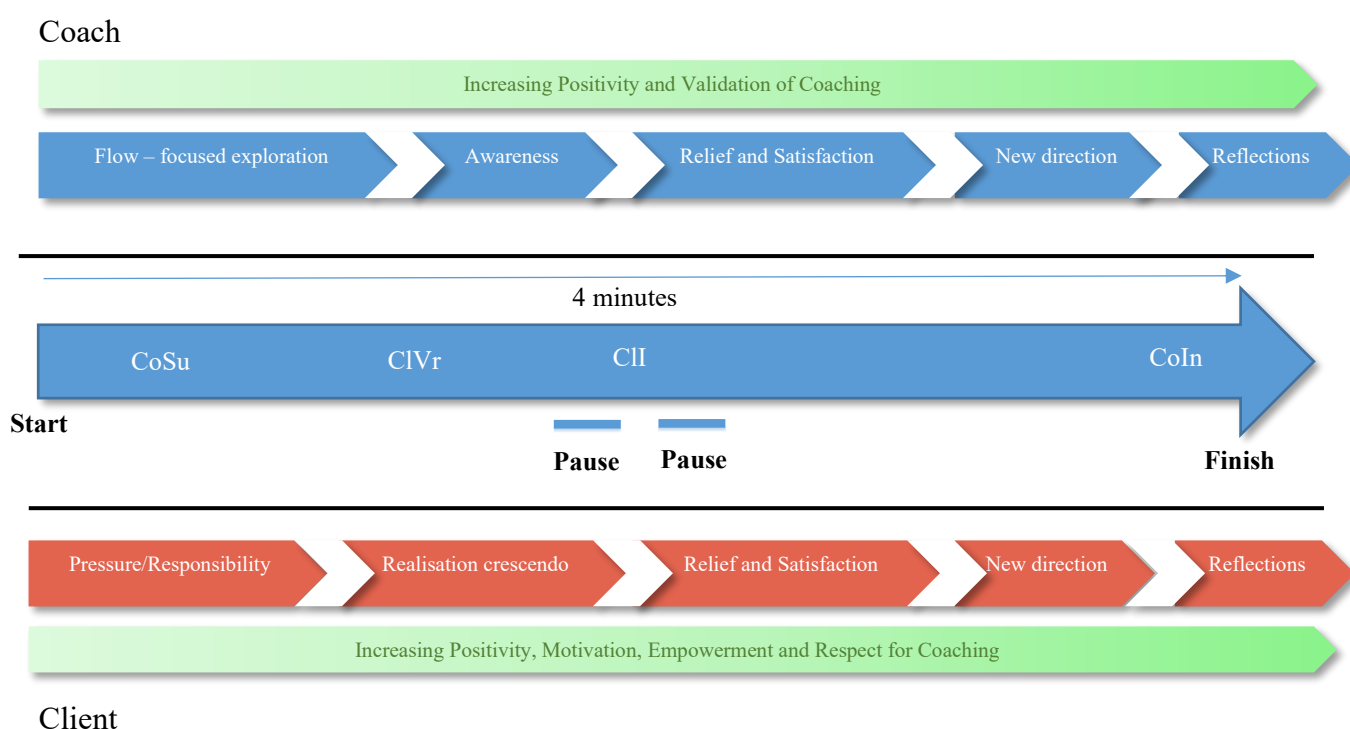


Figure 6.9: Combined Sessional Analysis – “The Coaching Mirror”.

Once the event is shown graphically, it becomes clearer and easier to interpret, and increase the understanding of what has occurred in the coaching event. Cox (2013, Fig 2.1) provides the term ‘coaching alliance’, in order to describe the fusion of coach and client in a dyad. In Fig 6.9, both coach and client areas are similar. I propose that the events in the coaching session just before and

after the insight moment are like to a mirror. In terms of my research, I am proposing the introduction of a new term, “the coaching mirror”. When gazing into the mirror, one is conscious of and expects to see a faithful reproduction; one looks and checks for change or confirmation in the image. I now suggest that in coaching, currently, the coach is unaware of viewing the client as a mirror of themselves, in terms of physiological responses.

At Figure 6.9, in the coaching event as the dyad are in flow, focused upon exploration of the question or issue presented, the mirroring process begins. As the client begins the process of realisation, so the coach begins to become aware of the approaching moment of insight. From this moment, the dyad is synchronised in their journey and in the event. Both feels satisfaction and relief, albeit for differing reasons, and then a sense of knowing, a new direction and a desire to understand more about themselves and this moment. Both coach and client are left with a feeling of increasing positivity and increased validation for the coaching process.

In terms of how this would relate to the coaching session and events leading to and just prior to the moment of insight, I believe that this has a basis in consideration of intuition: that deeper feeling that tells us that something is happening, trusting our own instincts and intuition. Trottier (2003, p.7) asked ‘how do we [coaches] recognise insight?’ The answer appears in this case to be by learning to trust your own feelings. Should you begin to recognise or become aware that the client is beginning to realise the answer to their presenting issue, then trust this instinct, continue to remain focused and allow the client space to think, continuing the verbal reflection that occurs prior to insight. There has been, since the early ancient Greek writings, an idea of an inner daemon, the most well-known of which could be said to be the inner daemon of Socrates. It was said that Apollo assigned the daemon to him, to warn when Socrates was doing something contrary to his vocation (Emmet, 1979, p.73). In more modern times, we might describe this as an inner voice/feeling that guides us. Cox (2013) makes numerous references to this intuition. I am particularly drawn to the explanation (2013, p.17) that intuition is formed of the ‘subconscious synthesis of information drawn from diverse experiences’. This thesis does not seek to explain intuition, merely to provoke thought and further exploration of the term for the reader interested in how insight may occur. I merely suggest that it appears that intuition may play an important role in recognising that an insight event is close.

Considering the model at Figure 6.9, I realised that there appears to be the creation of a joint interdependency in the session and I assume in the wider assignment. This term is not to be considered in the sense of creating a state in which the client builds a dependence upon their coach, but rather that each part of the coaching alliance is dependent on the other for the insight outcome. Whilst that

may seem a statement of the absolute obvious, it brings forth further understanding. The coaching literature considers the skills needed by a coach in order to elicit the best outcomes, yet there appears to be nothing suggested for the client. I wonder that if a client of coaching, at the contracting stage, could be provided with some guidance in how they could help themselves in terms of listening, reflecting and answering, which might allow this joint interdependency to be stronger, and achieved sooner. What has stuck in my mind since the phenomenology phase is the descriptions used by two of the participant clients when asked ‘what happened just before the discovery?’

“...it was almost as if I could feel those Tetris blocks just 'ding ding ding ding ding' into place...”

(Client 1)

“it just felt like there was a number of small little things that ultimately came together at that point...”

(Client 4)

As the event was reaching its crescendo, the insight moment manifested. The coaches’ words provided the final piece of the puzzle and slotted it into position. This project was not designed to research the origin of insight moments, but rather the events containing insight in order to identify structures, and I find that it would be unrealistic to suggest what instigated the moment of insight. However, it would be remiss of me not to comment on what could have fashioned an insight moment. Considering the client statements above, and in terms of suggesting other areas for research, I suggest that the coaching assignment is like an eco-system, by which I mean that every part of the coaching assignment and wider context plays its part in forming these moments of insight. Every aspect of the coaching sphere, including a coach’s training and ability to form relationships, their natural skill-set, their persona and life-experiences, the context in which the dyad resides, the right questions and listening, and perhaps a number of other interactions, all work together to provide a moment of insight. Many factors simply come together and create a solid foundation for good coaching practice.

Client’s Verbal Reflection

The integrated coaching model made it easier to view the themes in the coaching sessions. One such theme is that of the client engaging in a verbal reflection before the moment of insight occurred, which happened in five of the six sessions (all but session 3). Session 3 was different in that the client gave a verbal summary, followed by the coach’s use of a story and metaphor, and then the moment was triggered and manifested. I initially found this to be slightly confusing as session 3 was, I considered, the session with the greatest insight, according to the language used. When I considered the commonalities across all the sessions, even though the themes suggested a different alternative,

the common feature was the continued focus of the clients and coaches on the presenting issue. When I revisited the transcripts, I understood that the interruption following Client 3's verbal reflections was to expand upon the points brought into conscious awareness, which then triggered the point they made in the reflection. In terms of the five other verbal reflections, it seems that the recounting of the issues and problems, contexts and reality is driving the concurrent processing of the content within the conscious minds, whilst the language is being generated from the subconscious language areas of the mind. So in effect the process of coaching is helping the client to 'pull' information from the subconscious into the conscious realm, where it is going through additional processing, and the application of the coaching flow is to saturate the understanding of the client. Perhaps this pull of information could also be considered to be a push of information, as may be seen in the case of Client 3. This may be the theory as described by Schilling (2004).

Are these moments of insight based upon new thinking? This was certainly an area where Constable and Kiefer (2013) disagreed with Jones (2012), who considers insight to be borne from the coming together of existing factors and knowledge. In all the cases of insight identified in this project, every moment was driven partly by the coach providing a summary and giving the client space to think. The key moments contain knowledge that the coach had repeated to the client in a new way to allow them to reconsider their own thinking. In these low-level moments of insight, it would appear to be Jones (2012) whose thinking resonates with the insight moments, but that does not mean that Constable and Kiefer (2013) aren't correct that bigger 'aha' moments are considered new knowledge.

Fusion of Key Theoretical Models

In terms of bringing this inductive hypothesis back to the literature and to understand if the current knowledge could be in an agreement with my thinking, it was pertinent to revisit the key theory in Cox's (2013) experiential cycle and the shift from pre- to post-reflections, and also Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014) on coaching interactions. I suggest that we now have a greater understanding of the moment of insight, shown in Fig. 6.10.

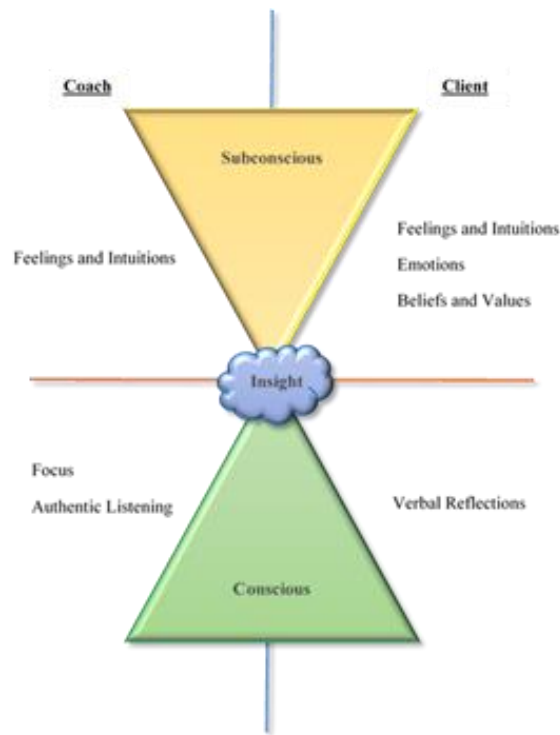


Figure 6.10: The moment of insight

Considerations

Whilst I have discussed and intimated that the attributes around coaching all form part of an ecosystem in coaching, there is still much to be considered. Peterson (1996) clearly suggests that coaching requires differing session lengths depending on the kind of coaching engagement. In the longest sessions, he recommends both half- and full-day sessions with the client. In the literature review, I suggested that, with his experience, this was an optimal time period in order to understand and enable change. Having now looked at the analysis, I find it difficult to understand how this extra time is utilised in finding moments of insight. Both Clients 1 and 3 journal and reflect between sessions. I am more now concerned that a fee may be a driver in suggesting coaching session length rather than a relationship between length and insight.

During the thesis design, as discussed in Chapter 3, I made the decision that coaching should take place in its usual location. This would provide me with data that was authentic and represented a level of reality. The majority of the interactions took place in a public location, where the conversation could have been mistaken for a social event or ‘catch up over coffee’ between colleagues. This goes against the ideas of both Askew and Carnell (2011) and Starr (2011), but falls into line with the thinking of Pendle, Rowe and Britten (2017). In any event, insight occurred and I believe that providing the client is comfortable in the location suggested by the coach, insight can manifest. I am

unable to make further comment on the effectiveness of the coaching in differing locations, but, it would be an area for further research into the future.

Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014) consider that activities at the coaching waterline remain somewhat opaque and that more data and information is needed to paint a fuller picture. In Fig. 6.9, the coach offers a summary of the conversation, discussions and focused questions from previous events. This in turn provides the trigger to the client who begins to verbally reflect upon this. At some stage it is this process of verbalisation and recognition with processing that provides clarity and the moment of insight. It appears from my analysis that once a client is verbalising their reflections leading to their moment of insight, the coach's role is, in some part, redundant, as the client reaches their insight alone; yet the coach needs to remain engaged in case there is a need to provide a further trigger via personal insight or metaphor. Active and authentic listening becomes more crucial as the session builds towards insight event.

Wider Discussion

The findings in this project suggest that there is a similarity and a coming together in the moment subsequent to an insight event in coaching. I have termed this 'the coaching mirror' due to its reflection of attributes applicable to both coach and client. In this research project, the coaches provided a summary leading the client to provide a verbal reflection, during which an insight moment occurred; at this time, both coach and client experience a correlation of internal feelings and beliefs.

Events

I begin this section with a discussion around the observations of the sessions that then can help to add to and support current thinking. Rather than being fluid, I posit that a coaching session is made up of a set series of contiguous events within which an event containing a significant moment may exist. In this research, a significant moment is the point at which a meaningful insight is manifested within the event. An event is a unique happening and I theorise it is one unit of the perceived coaching flow. No two events are the same due to the social influences acting upon them (Jennings, Lloyd-Smith and Ironmonger, 2014). The event, although having a start and finish time, then acts upon and influences the social world for an indiscriminate time period, as shown in Fig. 6.11. Coaches should be aware of how insight moments change the coaching due to this manifestation of understanding from the subconscious and how it changes the direction of coaching. This research highlights that the basic units of coaching could be events, of which a number may contain an insight moment.

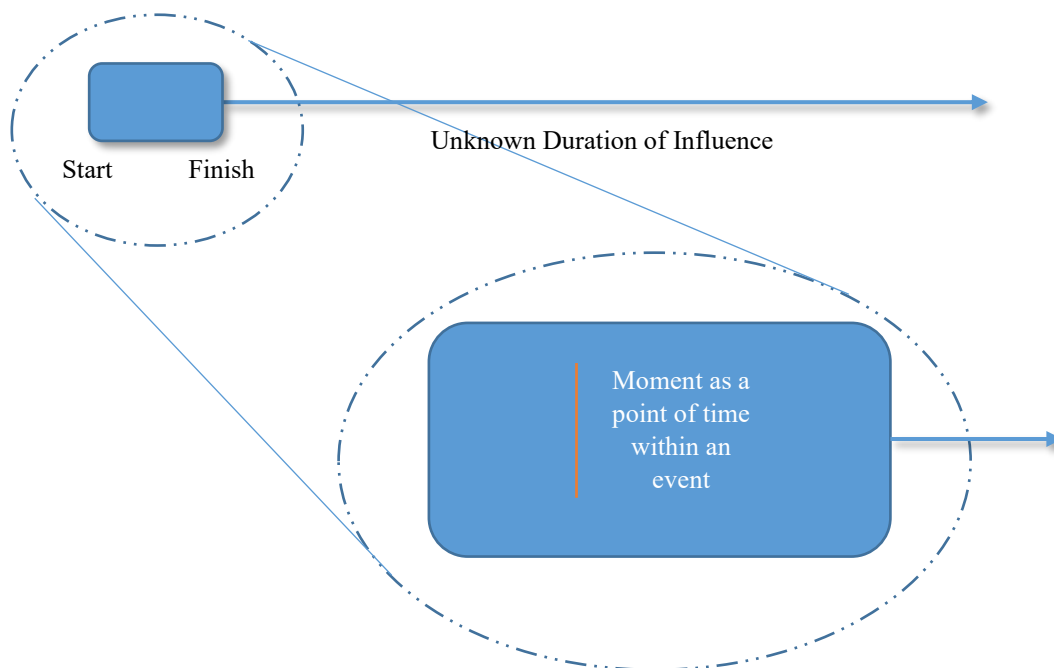


Figure 6.11: The conceptual relationship between an event and a moment with ongoing influence duration

Critical realism is able to explain this through the differing stratified levels that Bhaskar posits (see Chapter 3). The event is generated due to the mechanisms of reality and occurs at the actual level. The way in which it is experienced at the social, empirical level then has an influence and subsequent effect in the actual, and potentially changing the real. In terms of this project, it is difficult to ascertain how prior events had an effect on the manifestation of the insight moment. Yet, we understand how the event effected the near future through reflective questioning. To reframe this, coach and client were able to identify how their recent moment of insight compared to other events.

Coaching Session Duration

Whilst exploring the literature to understand the length of a typical coaching session, it appeared that coaching sessions differed in both length and frequency. The literature suggested that sessions could vary between 30-120 minutes over a period of 4-12 months that might contain 6-12 sessions. Of course in this research project the only stipulation was that the coach and client had to have previously worked together in order for rapport to be present. I identified that the coaching session lasted between 19 minutes and 1 hour 17 minutes 12 seconds. During the interview, the coach stated that the session was stopped early, and therefore I elected the removal of the time from the results. Having removed this, the next lowest time was 25:29. The remaining four sessions lasted between 59:39 and 1:17:12. Therefore, the mean length of a coaching session within this research was 59:44, which is consistent with the literature. A point to note is that coaching sessions may well be shorter, as seen in session 2 and in all only a few minutes shorter than suggested by Peterson (1996), Williams, Edgerton and Palmer (2010), Cox (2013), Grant and Zackon (2004), and Karboul (2014).

Coaching Practice

As discussed in Chapter 2, the coaching process begins before the coaching session, perhaps when the client discovers their dilemma or when they make first contact with a coach. This project did not set out to identify what triggers an insight moment or how it is brought about, but rather to identify the structures and mechanisms by an exploration of the events that contain insight in coaching sessions. The current thinking around coaching practice was identified in the literature, because during the analysis, any part of the practice may have been present in the insight event. Yet, what has been identified is a validation of Knight's (2011) suggestion that reflection, praxis, reciprocity and feedback are observable at the learning stage.

What becomes highly apparent to me is the difficulty in identifying the personal attributes and levels of skill in those discrete traits. What I mean by this is that, although it has been suggested by Knight (2011) and Cox (2013) that there are a number of skills a coach takes into the assignment and session, what we do not know is how effectively the coach is using those skills. While the coach may well be listening, are they distracted? How well are they listening? What sort of listening are they doing? For these reasons, I would suggest, it is near to impossible to ascertain the impact of those underpinning factors in this research project. As an aside, for this reason, a coach should always be self-reflecting and aware of their individual strengths and areas for improvement, constantly seeking to improve their skills and open to learning new techniques. Perhaps the more experienced and skilled the coach, the quicker and easier the insight manifestation. The sequence of events at the insight moment is:

1. Coach provides a summary.
2. Client verbally reflects.
3. A pause occurs.
4. Client insight manifests.
5. A second pause occurs.
6. Coach insight manifests.

Cox (2013), Mezirow (1990) and Myers (2014) talk about individual frames of reference and individual ontology. From the results, it appears that before the moment of insight, there is a coming together of the coach and client's frames of reference as the coach summarises and provides an experience/metaphor which shows their understanding to the client. This in turn prompts the client's internal dialogue and verbal reflections. It appears that at this coming together of joint experience, the insight moment is being brought into conscious awareness. What I found intriguing from Cox (2013) was the linear journey of pre-reflective lived experience, which passes from deep beliefs and values into the conscious realm through emotions, feelings and intuition.

All six coaches stated that they experienced a physiological response and feelings of sadness; doubt, as will be discussed later, and as is consistent with de Haan et al.'s research; and relief that they have brought understanding to their clients. From my own coaching experience, when a client makes a breakthrough I feel almost euphoric (as described also by Kets de Vries, 2013) that I am facilitating a desired change. In four of the client's experiences, a positive feeling of relief was experienced:

"I felt like it was a weight lifted off my shoulders..." **Client 2**

It was best described in metaphorical terms by Client 1:

"If I've had a hard week at work and it's that first sip of scotch on a Friday evening eight o'clock, whatever it might be, you know, it's that sort of... this is that sort of feeling of reward..." **Client 1**

However, the main point here is that the results suggest that Cox's (2013) assessment that there is a physiological response before client and coach's experiences come into conscious awareness appears to be accurate, and subsequently new directions are unveiled i.e. coach and client can then plan.

The final part of this section is the aspect of listening and questioning; active and authentic listening to the client, but also, as I suggested in Chapter 2, from within. Asking the right question could, as Cox (2013, p.120) stated 'be the key component in the coaching process'. The results provide two differing positions on this. The clients agree with Cox (2013) that focused questioning by the coach led to the discovery, yet when the coach's experience is reviewed, there is a different understanding. De Haan et al. reported this type of disjointed return. In their research, coach and clients report differing on significant moments, unlike the dyads in my research. Both coaches and clients report the same insight moment, yet how the insight manifested is reported differently, clearly at odds with the ACC research, which tends to discount the 'Roshomon Effect'. I would argue against this, due to the differing perspectives and agendas. Also to be taken into account is the length of time between conducting the research and the coaching sessions in the ACC's questions, whereas in this case, interviews were 'hot' i.e. conducted as near to the sessions as possible, in the majority (four) of the sessions straight after the sessions and in the remainder (two) within one or two weeks.

The coaches said that openness and honesty coupled with giving the clients space to talk was what led to the insight moment, yet it was also a simple comment. None of the coaches suggest that they asked the 'killer' or focused question that led to the insight. Rather, it was a comment and discussion and I get the impression that it was a conversational flow in which the coaches offered a part of their

own experience. Although listening and questioning may well be considered key components of the coaching process, the results of this project suggest that at the moment before insight, a simple conversational exchange led to the insight event in these sessions. Examples of this disconnect between the thinking of either side of the dyads at the time just before the insight moment include:

“...it was almost an off-the-cuff comment...” **Coach 2**

“A lot of interrogating questions...very focused...” **Client 2**

“I’ve shared some reflections or a thought, like I said the Mandela quote and that prompted the discovery...” **Coach 3**

“...she would keep on asking the same question...” **Client 3**

These statements also provide a view of the coaching mirror from both sides. How the coaches appear to be in a conversational flow whilst the clients appear to be in more of a pressurised condition (a clear disconnect between the two sides) prior to the coming together of their feelings and experiences, is something which isn’t described in the literature.

Coaching Moments

As described above, a moment is a point of time within an event. The ACC has been researching ‘critical moments’ since 2006. Although their research is important and relevant to this project, the two areas of research are not as closely linked as was believed when the research started. In terms of what the ACC aim to discover, they seek to understand more about significant moments in coaching and how this affects the coaching relationship. The discussion here is whether the results from the research validate the ACC’s research and how does this provide an understanding of events containing insight?

In their early research (de Haan, 2008a), it was reported that doubts often accompany those significant moments in the session, usually from more inexperienced coaches. Certainly Coach 1 experienced doubt linked to uncertainty as to how to proceed in the coaching, despite being an experienced coach:

“I felt some discomfort...I have never experienced that before actually, that sort of discomfort...”

Coach 1

The experience is strengthened by the immediate reflection that was engaged in, something which de Haan (2008b) concludes, as discussed in Chapter 5. Did this presenting issue cause a rupture in the overall coaching assignment and relationship as suggested by de Haan (2008b)? This strengthens the need for further researchers to follow clients and coaches through the whole coaching assignment:

“I think actually...it's prompted me to really note the difference...there's this distinct mentoring and that... request for expertise insight?” **Coach 1**

Yet in the other cases, there were no signs of those doubts or discomforts and overall the results found here are not consistent with the reported number of cases that the ACC suggest. This is not a surprise due to the differing methods of data-gathering and the divergent aims of the research. The last comments in this section are regarding the ACC's suggestion that the more critical moments occur in the coaching, the more potential breakthroughs there may be. In this research I asked ‘which was the most significant moment?’ (see Appendix 4). This could be considered to be a potential limitation, but I consider that I got sufficient data to answer my research question. A recommendation will be to conduct research potentially looking at all the events containing insight events and moments in a session, which could be achieved by reviewing a recorded session with both coach and client.

Insight

With the multitude of terms for and around insight, I am choosing to keep the simple label ‘insight’. When I considered the definitions in Chapter 2, it became apparent that it would be impossible to arrive at a definition, as everyone has a differing experience of these moments. For example, if I experienced a moment of learning suddenly in a session, I could term that as an extreme ‘aha’ moment or even a paradigm shift, perhaps a pivotal moment; yet another person might call the same experience an insight moment or indeed use any of the lesser descriptors, all of them perfectly valid. It is my opinion that the way that an individual experiences the moment, and the significance of the moment alters how the moment is described. As inferred in Chapter 2, a large sudden moment may be termed ‘aha’, whilst a somewhat smaller and gradual moment could be termed a ‘magic’ moment. Certainly more research should be conducted and a defining term or set of terms reflecting the differences between the sudden and gradual insight moment provided. Only one client had a sudden shift, described as “a lightbulb moment here”, but I was surprised that this was not accompanied by any other feelings, which went against all the literature. Later in the interview, the participant revealed that it had been more gradual (agreeing with Seifert, 1995) and that there were feelings attached to the moment:

“...it just felt like there was a number of like small little things that ultimately came together at that point...” **Client 3**

Therefore, the results of the research suggest that no big ‘aha’ moment was manifested, but rather a gradual change. These gradual changes are described by Client 1, again using metaphor:

“I suddenly I realised. It was just ah... it was ah that's right. Okay yeah I see what you are saying now, right I get it, I understand...it was almost as if I could feel those Tetris blocks just 'ding ding ding ding ding' into place...” **Client 1**

The moments of insight that the clients identified all featured personal understanding, momentary understanding and had an amount of pressure/stress attached. This reinforces the point that coaching is deeply personal to the individual and, according to the results of the analysis, contained insight about how the clients felt:

“...talking about fear of failure and I, I actually had not realized before that was an issue for me...”
Client 3

“I realized what he said to me and how it made me feel...” **Client 5**

“[I was thinking about what] I would like to maybe spend my next section of my career doing, so knowing where my heart lies and where my skill sets are...” **Client 6**

Additionally, at the moment of insight the clients accepted responsibility for the learning and recognised that they had the answer to the presenting issue.

“I realized that I answered my own questions...” **Client 1**

“I was going to manage the problem...” **Client 2**

“I was probably more the problem and the solution...” **Client 4**

“I have kind of come to realize and this is only a shift from the here and now to where I want to be...”
Client 6

The question that I have considered during this discussion is concerned with how insight may be defined in the coaching world. In Chapter 2, Hebb (1949), Köhler (1925), Mayer (1995), Robinson,

Morrow and Miller (2018) and Seifert et al. (1995) were discussed, and all consider that insight is concerned with the understanding of how to solve a kinaesthetic problem. Mayer (1995), Robinson, Morrow and Miller (2018) and Seifert et al. (1995) separate learning from experience into learning from an internal physiological narrative i.e. the combination of a cognitive and physical response to an external trigger, for example the coach's use of an example or metaphor. Now I will discuss the generation of the event containing the insight moments according to current thinking and consider if the results of this project tend to be similar or not.

People can be catalysts, suggested Haneberg (2011), a similar view shared by Longhurst (2010). Haneberg (2011) was suggesting that when the conditions were correct then the coach could trigger the manifestation of insight, something which has already been discussed in this chapter. However, Longhurst (2010) would argue that it is inter-subjectivity that triggers the insight moment. I agree with this thinking and my discussions above support both these points of view.

In this discussion, there is a lot of information from the literature about the creation of insight. In the four phases of creating 'tipping points' Kets de Vries (2013) suggests preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Could all these phases occur in one session? In Chapter 2, I suggested that they could, as the Reality 'R' phase of GROW is similar to the preparation phase. I can see that the event containing insight can contain the three remaining phases:

1. Incubation. By the coach asking focused questions, deepening and using all the tools and techniques open to them, the client is considering the answers subconsciously and gathering all the data and information together.
2. Illumination. The moment that the insight rises from the subconscious (Cox 2013).
3. Verification. The client's frame of references change and a new direction is identified.

From the results of my research, it appears that these four stages can indeed occur in a single session and, should a coach be aware of them, they are able to drive towards manifestation of an insight moment. This is something that, again, could be taken on by future researchers and validated.

One of the observations that I have made was to do with the use of metaphor. In the pilot study, Client 1 appeared to be using a lot of metaphors, as shown in the previous sections and chapters. While it is difficult to ascertain when the manifestation of insight began its journey, Constable and Keifer (2013), Jones (2012), Jung-Beeman et al. (2003), Longhurst (2010) and Nielson et al. (2013) all have made the connection that semantic integration may well drive 'aha' moments. Whilst I do not report metaphor use in the sessions, I suggest is that the experience of others and those summaries

and experiences given to the client by the coach prior to insight, are likely to be processed in the same aSTG areas of the brain. Hence, smaller moments of insight moments occur through the processing of language and internalised narrative in the right-hand anterior superior temporal gyrus (aSTG).

A real change in how coaching can seek insight has been made easier through this research. Previously, in chapter 2, I cited Constable and Keifer (2013, pp.82-84):

[I]nsight listening is not unlike the experience of watching a good movie for the first time. We enjoy the movie because we allow ourselves to drop our thinking and get carried off into the plot.

Yet, seeking to identify the insight moment perhaps breaks the flow of the moment. However, with the coaching mirror I suggest that when a coach begins to feel the realisation crescendo, they should trust that they are on the right track. There is one huge difference in insight listening and moving towards insight that remains to be tested, and one that was not identified in the results, which is interrupting the client. When listening for insight, interrupting and asking for fresh thoughts Constable and Keifer (2013) could well move the client toward insight, as suggested in Chapter 2. Jones (2012) proposes that 80% of thoughts are invalid to the situation and that it is the 20% that brings true meaningful insight. Perhaps future research may choose to coach in this fashion, yet there is the ethical consideration that this is an experimental way of coaching and may not be to the benefit of the client; therefore I suggest a mock coaching assignment to test this theory.

Campone and Awal (2012) have stated that coaching should move away from purist approaches and the clinical environment (Askew and Carnell 2011). My results show that coaches have a lot to offer of themselves. Clients desire the experiences of the coach:

“I realized that Coach 1 had structured it in such a way that I was, that I was aware I was being coached...” **Client 1**

“...he offered me a solution...” **Client 2**

“...it was the fact that, Coach 3 said something...” **Client 3**

This is verified by the coaches:

“I think we were discussing [a] few different aspects...” **Coach 1**

“...it was almost an off-the-cuff comment...” **Coach 2**

“I’ve shared some reflections or a thought, like I said the Mandela quote and that prompted the discovery...” **Coach 3**

“When I shifted the conversation to other people...” **Coach 4**

“It was just talking about um...and I just asked...” **Coach 5**

“I was recalling another client I’d worked with that had been in a similar situation and I offered that, here’s a story, so just helping somebody to sort of catalyse their thinking by giving them another example...” **Coach 6**

Coach 1 really acknowledges the demand from clients for personal experiences:

“I think actually...it's prompted me to really note the difference...there's this distinct mentoring and that... request for expertise [and] insight? **Coach 1**

I am closing this discussion section with a question, which will be left unanswered but generated because of this research. Perhaps in the future, researchers may choose to validate and explore this and potentially alter the face of the coaching industry:

Are the most effective coaches those subject matter experts who enter mentoring relationships and then use effective insight coaching techniques?

Closing Position

This research project was designed to explore the events containing insight to identify structures from experience. Coupled with my strong tenets based in critical realism, I sought to identify potential mechanisms toward insight manifestation. Based upon a descriptive analytical stance, I sought to explain the identified causality in the relationships within themes to understand what happened at the time of insight within the coaching sessions in this research project.

This was an important chapter in that the data was combined to show the fuller picture of sessional information and the integration of coach and client information to that picture. Using a key suggested by Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014, p.453, Figure 31.2), I added to that in order to annotate the sessional data in a graphical format. Following this analysis, I created an average session and used this as a

baseline to then add the themes from Chapters 4 and 5. This allowed me to identify some themes between sessional data sets. From here a new term was identified and suggested ('the coaching mirror'), in which it became apparent that both client and coach appeared to experience similar feelings just before the manifestation of insight. I put forward suggestions in order to consider what had been found in the literature. There were a number of more general considerations, but the most important aspect of the chapter was the fusion of key models that show what occurred at the moment of insight.

It appears that, rather than a session being fluid and flowing, sessions are constructed from a series of events that then relate to and interact with one another. Whilst this project is only focusing upon the event containing insight, the discussion and literature have shown that the event moment has an influence ongoing in the subsequent events. Its effect is due to the internalisation of the learning, i.e. changing the clients' and coaches' internal frames of reference.

The combination of all the data has enabled and provided a structure of an insight event in the coaching session:

1. Coach provides a summary.
2. Client verbally reflects.
3. A pause occurs.
4. Client insight manifests.
5. A second pause occurs.
6. Coach insight manifests.

This structure is important as it shows the direction and moments within the insight event. The research analysis also suggests that insight moments and physiological responses come together, that client and coach feel the moment as they experience it. Within the event, there appear to be three phases:

1. Incubation, produced by the coach asking focused questions and deepening the discussion;
2. Illumination i.e. the moment that the insight rises from the subconscious; and
3. Verification, as the client's frame of references change and this new direction is identified.

With these results, the next and final chapter brings together the whole thesis and concludes the research project. It will highlight the findings in this project, underline the contribution to knowledge and provide a number of directions for future research within coaching.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The aim of this research project was to *explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions, identifying structures through experiences*. In this thesis I have searched and examined the relevant literature, considered the methodology and methods employed in conducting this research project, and conducted a thorough analysis. This analysis has provided a number of contributions to knowledge, presented later in this concluding chapter. In this chapter, I provide a summary of the research, the gap in literature that it fills and present the key findings. In addition, I examine the limitations of the research project before presenting the various contributions to knowledge. The chapter will conclude with a final closing position and a personal summary of the research journey.

Summary of the Research

This research project has been approached from an epistemic position of critical realist and the ontological stance of relativism. Following the design phase, a literature review was conducted to ascertain gaps in knowledge in this area before conducting the data gathering phase prior to the analysis. In all, six dyads were studied, which provided twelve semi-structured interviews and six session recordings. Following the transcription of the data, the coach and client data was analysed, following a phenomenological approach. Having identified the insight events through the interviews and analysis, the session was then considered, following the same method to provide understanding of the insight event. The outcomes of the research are three descriptive statements that provide a summary of what happened in terms of the coach and client experience and subsequently identified the structure of the coaching session event containing insight.

Summary of the Gap in Knowledge

Little is known about the process and the reality of the structure of coaching sessions and there is no research that considers a coaching session in terms of events as the building blocks of a session and how these events interact with subsequent events. Researchers have considered insight and significant moments within coaching (Kets de Vries and the ACC), yet their research has noteworthy limitations. In the case of the ACC, the research is limited to the effect on the dyad, i.e. it is the coaching relationship and the effect on this following a critical moment that is of interest to them, whilst Kets de Vries has a more focused research remit concerning insight manifestation, but considers the macro level and stops short of considering the micro level. This research project studied coaching sessions

at the more focused micro level to explore the events containing insight, in order to identify structure through the experiences of the coach and clients of coaching. Addressing this gap in knowledge adds meaning to the claim that it has contributed to the body of knowledge.

Contribution to Knowledge

The aim of the research was to ‘explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience’. The fourth focused aim of this project was:

To contribute to the wider field of coaching knowledge and practice by providing a deeper understanding of the holistic coaching session and ‘coaching waterline’ activities from the perspective of both the coach and client; to increase understanding, inform training activities and how coaching affects the phenomenon.

This section will describe how the research has contributed to knowledge in terms of professional and practical contributions and also its methodological contribution.

Professional and Practical Contributions

In the many coaching and therapeutic contexts in which I have found myself, I always wondered what was happening in the exchange of words, in the replies and summaries, the questions and the requests for clarification that have taken place. The lady sitting opposite me who had such a paradigm shift in her thinking is unlikely to ever now know what curiosity was stirred within me during that session. This research project provides understanding from the perspective of both coach and client. Both these views have been combined with the sessional data and a model produced that provides the view of the events containing insight within coaching sessions.

As I identified, there is very little information about the holistic coaching session available to the researcher and practitioner. These coaching ‘waterline’ activities (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014) are important to the coaching industry because if you do not know what is happening inside a session, that coach cannot know if they are being effective or efficient, or how they can further develop their skills. The key findings of this research address the gap in knowledge by providing suggestions for how to improve coaching training and skills-sets; how a coach can aim for an insight event in-session; and what to watch out for. It also provides an explanation for the feelings they, and their clients, may experience during a coaching session. In addition, I identify secondary contributions by provision of a view of what a coaching session ‘looks like’ to the industry. There is also a validation of the

literature used by this research, thus adding to the body of evidence regarding what has been previously researched and identified.

Key Contributions

Having conducted an analysis of the interview data for the coach and client, a number of themes emerged from the analysis. These themes were then reduced and combined in order to provide a written descriptive narrative of the synergised themes/experiences of both coach and client separately:

Coaches' Experience:

The coaches were engaged in the flow of coaching when their own insight was provided to the client. This gave the client additional information to consider. Having given their clients space to think, the coaches became aware of an important moment of learning for their clients, for whom the coaches' comments resonated. This learning in their clients overall had a positive effect on the coaches who felt relieved and satisfied that they had again achieved a result. Although sometimes this familiar moment can be uncomfortable, it can bring new ideas about the direction of the next session, their own coaching skills and realisations that coaching is about continuous reflection for themselves as well as their clients.

This narrative statement provides an indication that, rather than being a purist coach, an expert in the process rather than the subject matter, what the results suggest is that the ability to provide additional information that a client can consider is an important part of the journey towards an insight moment. There is a proposition here, whether a coach should be a subject matter expert or a mentor alongside owning the coaching process. The answers from the client interviews and the emergence of the themes suggest that this might well be the case. Although this suggestion has emerged from the exploration, further research is needed to validate this statement. The coaches' suggestions, deepening and metaphor use give the impression that this could be the trigger of realising insight in their client's subconscious. Learning beginning to surface can then be processed in the conscious realm with the coach. The moment of learning comes with differing magnitudes of internalised feelings. It is likely that this differing psychological response to the moment of insight is the reason why coaches enjoy 'aha' moments. The client gains insight and the coach feels satisfied about the outcome, a dopamine release occurring. However the coach experiences the event, the insight moment provides a direction that the coaching can take and can provide new avenues for the assignment and strengthen both the coach's resolve and validate the coaching session and process. A coach can now enter the coaching session with growing confidence that a client is likely to have moments of learning through the session and can trust their intuitions as the moment manifests. Every time they offer a suggestion, they can

ask 'did the client pause? How did they respond? How motivated are they now? Was there a second pause? Is there now a move to explore what has been realised?' All these questions can now inform the coach that an insight moment has occurred or perhaps is going to occur. Whilst a client is unlikely to be aware of this, a coach understanding the client's perspective can also assist them to know what comes after the moment of insight.

Clients' Experience:

The clients faced pressure to solve a personal issue, an answer to which had hitherto proved elusive. The dyad was engaged in a focused exploration around their question. The clients suddenly realised that they had the answers inside themselves and that it was their responsibility to solve their issues. At this moment, a number of factors came together and the clients felt a deep sense of relief, with the realisation and insight into how they would solve their problem. Increasingly becoming more positive, there was a strong desire to continue to reflect upon this new clarity to understand the direction they could now follow. The clients were left feeling motivated and empowered with a changed mind-set. The clients left their session with an increased respect for coaching.

I found it unexpected that all the clients approached the coaching with a personal issue rather than exploring the options and solutions to work-based problems. Nevertheless, the clients began to become immersed in their sessions, exploring their questions, thoughts and options. At some time in the coaching session, the clients entered the insight event, realising that the answers to their dilemmas were emerging from inside themselves. At this time the subconscious manifestation of learning emerges into the conscious domain to be further explored in the session. Accompanied by physiological feelings, the clients then moved forward with increasing motivation for the coaching and the desire to explore further the emerged solutions and learnings. The immersion and responsibility appear to be key in the journey toward insight, hence the relief felt when answers appear. When coaches become aware that a coaching session is about to enter a state of flow, or that the client is becoming immersed in the deepening and questions, potentially the offering of a suggestion or metaphor from experience could help push the client forward to understanding.

Following the production of the narratives above, the events containing insight with the coaching sessions were analysed (identified and verified during the coach and client interviews) to produce a narrative of the coaching session. The event was considered from that of all differing averages to ascertain if a more quantitative understanding could be formulated. Although these averages provide some degree of knowing, none were suitable for use. For this reason the coaching session was described in the same synergised yet, phenomenological way:

The Coaching Session:

The coaching sessions lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, with the moment of insight occurring between 20 and 25 minutes into the session. This insight event lasted for 4 minutes. Prior to the moment of insight a pause was noted of 2-5 seconds. The moment occurred and was followed by a pause of equal duration.

The results of the three narratives have been taken and a graphical representation made. Fig. 7.1 shows the coaching sessions with the addition of the themes of coaches and clients.

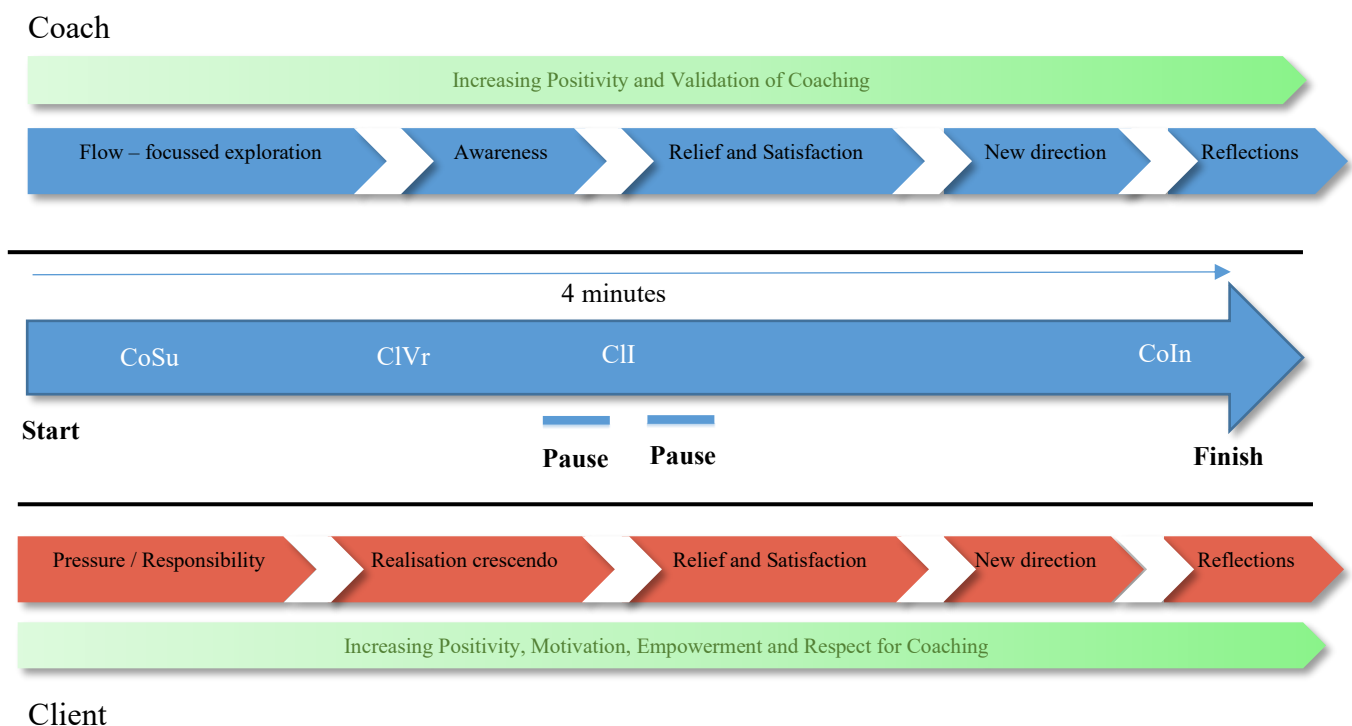


Figure 7.1: Insight event in a coaching session – 'The Coaching Mirror'

This graphical representation allows the *exploration of the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experiences*. On the outside of the model are the themes, while in the centre is the event information. I have labelled this the 'coaching mirror'. At a phenomenological and empirical level, I can describe it as two people coming together from differing directions who enter an event, mirroring each other's feelings and thoughts. Through coaching, this leads to an insight moment. Within the actual event, there appear to be three phases:

1. Incubation i.e. the first part of the event where the coach is providing information;
2. Illumination, which is the moment that the insight rises from the subconscious, bracketed by pauses; and
3. Verification, in which the coach and client's frame of references change and this new direction is identified.

From the stratified critical realist perspective, there are a number of systems at place in this event. The event contains the following actions:

1. Coach provides a summary.
2. Client verbally reflects.
3. A pause occurs.
4. Client insight manifests.
5. A repeat pause occurs.
6. Coach insight manifests.

Although the coaches are likely not realise when they are in a state of flow, the results suggest that providing a client with an own experience or reflection will provide a continued increasing momentum. When coaches ‘feel’ intuitively that a significant moment is occurring, go with the moment, build upon the momentum, and listen for those tell-tale double pauses. Listen and trust the inner physiological response. Afterwards, reflect and understand what this means to you and to the relationship.

Following the complete analysis and discussion, I have taken the literature from Cox (2013) and Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014) and constructed a model, which is a graphical representation of the moment of insight.

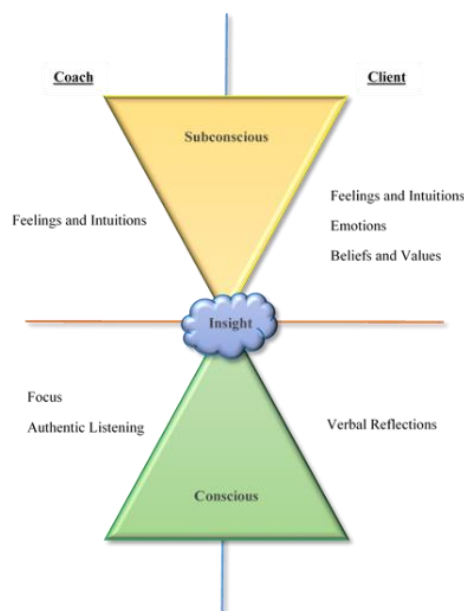


Figure 7.2: Model showing the moment of insight.

This model shows the moment of insight. As can be seen, coach and client come together and subconscious understanding manifests into the conscious awareness. At the time the coach is listening for this new information whilst the client prepares to continue to reflect. Both coach and

client experience differing physiological responses, the client could well experience a shift in paradigm.

The coaching industry could become more effective as a result of this research. A client who approaches coaching with a dilemma could be taken into an insight event far earlier and more efficiently by a coach who is an expert in both the subject area and the coaching process. Changes to coach training would need to be made to allow coaches to understand that they can take themselves into the coaching context, rather than be purist and simply a conduit for the clients own learning. Although there is an actuality in terms of underlying foundations upon which successful coaching is built, there is also an equally important experiential approach that is only now beginning to be understood.

Secondary Contributions

There are a number of secondary contributions that this project aims to offer to coaching research:

1. *Defining the term insight, event and moment within coaching.* Prior to this project, the definition of these terms was not specific within the coaching industry and a number of separate definitions were in use. I posit the following:

*'Insight is that term given to when a person has a moment of **realisation** of **how** a particular quandary could be **solved**'*

*'Events are the basic units and **building blocks** of a coaching session.'*

*'A significant **moment** in an event contains the **illumination moment** of insight'*

2. *Moving towards understanding the difficulty in defining the 'aha' moment.* In all the analysis, although each participant acknowledged a moment of significance and of learning, validated and correlated by the coaches, there was a range of descriptions which described the magnitude of the event. There is an inherent difficulty in identifying a true aha moment and there are an abundance of terms which describe an 'aha' moment. This difficulty, I suggest, will remain, due to the individuality of significance and the magnitude of perceived influence upon the client's future. This is in itself a definition:

'An 'aha' instant is a moment when an individual gains insight that they recognise as having a significant influence'

3. *A validation of a physiological response prior to experience appearing in conscious awareness* (Cox, 2013). All the clients and coaches reported having a physiological response after the insight moment. The feeling was predominantly positive, with feelings of both relief and satisfaction, yet there was also doubt, which suggests a validation of the results of the Ashridge Coaching Centre's work into critical moments.
4. *The use of metaphor and/or personal experience coupled with the processing of internal narrative could trigger for insight moments*. This continues the thinking of Constable and Keifer (2013), Jones (2012) and Jung-Beeman et al. (2003), which, although outside coaching, have provided a foundation for continued research in coaching.
5. *Theoretical contribution*. This research is positioned within Kets de Vries (2013) research into creating 'tipping points', essentially exploring the either side of the moment of insight. Additionally, this thesis and exploration considers the events/moments of significance which de Haan et al at the ACC have researched extensively.

Limitations

As with any research project, there are always limitations to be considered. Admission of limitations is an honest approach to informing the readership of areas for improvements that could not be addressed at the time. These admissions help to show the reader that there is a sense of credibility and trustworthiness in my writing. Every care has been taken in the conduct of the research, from reviewing the literature through to the analysis and discussion of findings.

The collection of data is an area where mistakes may happen. The project is designed and there is a great deal of thinking and considerations around the method of data-gathering. There is a rigorous ethical approval process to be considered, which reduces risks somewhat. However, I consider that a mistake was made in the opening question. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the first question reads, 'which moments in the coaching were the most significant?' This question followed de Haan's (2008) example in the ACC's research into critical moment research. The question suggests that there was a most significant moment, and thus could potentially be considered to be leading. However, both coach and client identified the same moment, which gives confidence that there was a significant moment of discovery. Could I have asked different questions? Were the questions the right ones to ask with hindsight? Should I have collected more data? These questions and reflections all come as lessons learnt. I believe that the questions and amount of data is sufficient to answer the research questions and satisfy the aims and objectives.

When obtaining clients' and coaches' permission to conduct recordings and interviews, it is hard to find time in busy schedules to conduct these sessions. In some cases, I was present to use my voice recorder equipment, while at other times the coach assisted by doing the recording. Follow-up calls to conduct the interviews took one or two weeks to schedule. This is a potential limitation of the research due to the possibility of memory degradation about the experience, and also due to the time the subconscious and conscious has had to reflect. This could have been morphing the understanding into something of a slightly differing experience, and thus there is a question of the accuracy of recall.

The data analysis was a descriptive phenomenological process and Chapter 6 followed the same process once the information from chapters 4 and 5 was combined, to provide an overall picture of the session (i.e. the coaching mirror). This is certainly a limitation of my thesis, in that I have chosen an interpretative methodology. In response to any questions over this technique, I would perhaps reply isn't everyone's applied method interpretative? Every paper written and every book reviewed has this built into them. I have, wherever possible in the literature review, attempted to remain objective and within the data collection activities bracketed myself as a researcher and left my own coaching until the discussions. In any case, I acknowledge this a potential limitation of the research.

In the appendices, the reader will identify that the coach and client forms have a differing research question. The title was changed post data collection to reflect the change in method whilst making more specific the aim of the research, and thus the same questions were asked as originally envisaged. Rather than being a limitation, this was done to provide complete transparency in this thesis.

Future research

My research project is unique, in the way it has used a synergy of both phenomenology and CR to answer the research question. This in itself suggests that perhaps more can be done to further and show evidence that this can become a more mainstream methodology for researchers. In terms of the research question, this is also currently unique in that it appears that there is no research that looks at events containing insight in coaching sessions. During this experimental research project, there were a number of questions raised that could not be answered by the data or that were not relevant to the thesis. These questions, I suggest, would make appropriate subjects for further doctoral research projects, adding to a body of knowledge that can take coaching understanding that next step further. I propose that researchers consider:

1. The same project using a differing methodology to ascertain if the results may be similar while acknowledging the differences in social influences. This would then assist in understanding and validating the results from the data analysis.
2. Research that follows a coach client dyad from initial contact through to the finish of the coaching assignment. This would provide a complete picture of coaching and show how and where insight may manifest.
3. An in-depth analysis of entire coaching sessions to ascertain if there are repeating patterns in terms of the events that I have discovered and labelled the 'coaching mirror'. This would enable the coaching industry to understand more about what happens within a coaching session and those 'waterline' activities.
4. An analysis of more coaching sessions to discover if insight moments exists in more events and if there is a difference in the importance and influence of the learning. By this I mean that an event has a start and a finish, yet there is an ongoing influence of the discovery on a social, conscious and subconscious level.
5. Research that considers the 'aha' moment and other insight moments, and provides a full definition that academia and practice could acknowledge.
6. Experiments to validate my findings and suggestion that Kets de Vries's (2013) four phases occur within the coaching session and map/identify the events.
7. Future research that would measure the effectiveness of coaching in the way that mentors and experts in their areas using coaching techniques may well provide the most effective coaching.

The main focus (I suggest) is to continue to build upon the research that I have conducted and to add to the picture of coaching waterline activities. Research has concentrated for too long on validating coaching as an industry and researching techniques to improve performance. Perhaps now it is time to know more about the phenomena, the actuality of the moment.

Final Concluding Position

The chapters in this thesis have explained, comprehensively, how a gap in knowledge was identified, data was collected and turned into useful information, which I suggest is highly useful to the coaching community, and findings that inform future practice and research. The analysis and findings have been discussed and show how current thinking is shaped, furthering understanding of insight events in coaching sessions.

1. To critically review and evaluate the literature of insight, coaching sessions and events; to discover what knowledge is already known as an aid to discuss the findings from the research phase of this project.

2. To explore the phenomenon of insight from the perspectives of both coach and client; to understand the different perspectives and experiences of the insight event within the coaching session in order to discover the themes that can give rise to understanding causality and the mechanisms of the phenomenon.
3. To provide a comprehensive synthesis and evaluation of the complete data set; to provide a full understanding of what has occurred during the coaching session and to move coaching further toward providing a concept of what and how coaching works.
4. To contribute to the wider field of coaching knowledge and practice by providing a deeper understanding of the holistic coaching session and ‘coaching waterline’ activities from the perspective of both coach and client; to increase understanding, inform training activities and how coaching affects the phenomenon.

In chapters 4 and 5 there has been a narrative, rich in explanation, of the lived experience of the coaching event and the moments that contain insight. This understanding was combined to allow a graphical representation to be formed and the ‘coaching mirror’ model was developed. In addition, three key models were combined to provide a model of what happens at the moment of insight, effectively validating and adding to current thinking by Cox (2013) and Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014). A number of primary and secondary contributions have been made to academia and practice.

How do I summarise this research? I suggest that insight events are always present in coaching sessions. They may not often be big ‘aha’ moments, and multiple insight events may occur. For the client, insight is important and answers the questions they seek to answer. The ‘coaching mirror’ shows that coach and client share the same physiological journey. When a coach gets into conversational flow offering examples and experiences, the client then has the manifestation of subconscious learning from the processing of these, the combination of the internal narrative with the ‘picture’ given by the coach. This manifests during the verbal reflections of by the client and the moment of insight arrives. Following this, both coach and client share the validation of coaching, the discovery of new directions and the desire to reflect and explore new options and opportunities.

Insight is a key part of the coaching session and multiple insight moments an important part of the coaching assignment. The underpinning philosophies and the attributes of the coach undoubtedly have an effect, yet it isn’t known just how much. Metaphor and the experiences of the coach appear to be more important than the right question, although the right question is key in building a picture and taking the dyad to a point where the fusion of internal narrative and experience brings the insight moment. More research is needed, but I suggest that coaches can now understand that they should

put more of their life's experience into the coaching session through stories and metaphor, allowing the incubation of understanding before the illumination and verification of the insight. Perhaps new studies may choose to follow the coach and client dyad or alliance throughout the entire coaching assignment, armed with the results of this research, to grow understanding of how insight manifestation may be increased by (or differs from) the data gathered in this research.

Personal Research Journey

The research journey has been an incredible way of life. I entered the process as a practitioner who had an understanding of objective and subjective research, but arrive now at a point as a researcher-practitioner with an understanding of the complexities of the research continuum, the multiple lenses of vision and the polyvocality of research thinking. At the beginning of this journey I went through a paradigm shift to both left and right. I could easily have settled as a pragmatist and yet what I was seeking was found in Bhaskar's critical realism.

No-one should accept the truth as spoken by anybody. Can the truth ever be known? I accept that everybody has a truth and that sometimes ontologies can be similar, but one should remain curious until a credible and trustworthy answer is forthcoming. I found myself reading and asking questions about what I was reading, wanting to know more about the rigour behind the research and then realising quickly that it was opinion. I have done my best to make this thesis credible and trustworthy by admitting my own limitations, being true to my ontology and my epistemological beliefs.

As a researcher I understand the importance of bracketing myself and taking myself away from the research so that biases aren't introduced. I have enjoyed the openness and honesty of the participants and the excitement of learning new information each time an interview was conducted. Most of all I have enjoyed the learning journey. It has been a privilege to have written this thesis and show the world of coaching the new knowledge that I wish to add. At the beginning of the journey I was naive in understanding the impact a thesis could have. Today, I fully understand that this is no more than a pebble on a beach of knowledge, but I don't feel disheartened because I know that each individual pebble is responsible for building the entire beach and without it, it is lesser than it was. My hope is that my research is well received and can alter the coaching journey for coaches and clients into the future, getting what they want from their coaching, helped along by greater understanding.

Having given this period of my life to academic research and vocational implementation, life is unlikely to be the same ever again. My journey continues and will entail continuing to build upon the conclusions and the key contributions I have brought. I expect my personal development to continue

apace and my understanding to deepen. I also have no doubt that my current and future practice will continue to benefit from the implementation of knowledge. I would like to close with a quote that I believe sums up my journey: 'Learning is not child's play; we cannot learn without pain' (Aristotle). This learning has changed my outlook forever, both in terms of my professional practice and my thoughts about accepting information without due critical consideration. There is a truth, but what is that truth other than individual or joint construction and does this show me the reality? From here my journey continues, building upon my understanding of the areas in my research.

The theory of events has opened up a whole new avenue for research. There is an opportunity in future research to begin to understand and define the building blocks of the coaching session. I had always considered life to be fluid, moving forward seamlessly. Yet one of my biggest changes is that in actuality the past no longer exists in reality, yet the future is being built in the here and now, in this very moment. Within coaching, insight events are being built in the moment, which seems so obvious yet appears not to have been considered by any coaching researchers previously. Some events are critically important while others pass almost unnoticed. If coaches can identify such moments, perhaps they can help steer their (my) clients towards insight. Providing that insight and awareness is what coaching is about.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recruitment Advertisement



Dear Coach,

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience’.”

Starting in April 2016 I will be conducting research which aims to identify the factors which lead to self-discovery within coaching moments. This is an invitation to volunteer to take part in this study. I am looking for a coach/client pair who are prepared to have one coaching session audio recorded, and to subsequently be interviewed separately about the experiences.

Who am I looking for?

The ideal coach participants will be an independent, experienced coach of greater than 100 hours coaching and who holds a coaching qualification such as the ILM's Level 5-7 Certificate, or above, it is not necessary to be a member of any coaching body. Your client also needs to be a volunteer and be an independent client, free from a third party/sponsor's contract. Both you and your client should be comfortable with the presence of audio recording equipment within one of your normal coaching sessions, which will normally be held in a private location. In addition, you would both be content to take part in an interview (also audio recorded) post-session for up to 30 minutes individually.

If you are happy to take part you will be provided with further information that you can use to gauge interest from your client. It is important that your client makes their own decision on whether to participate, and whether they decide to participate, or not, it must be made clear that their decision will have no impact on their relationship with you as their coach

What happens to my information?

No personal information is taken and responses remain anonymous. For purposes of the analysis and thesis you will both be assigned a pseudonym.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You and your client will be contributing to the coaching profession's understanding of self-discovery. By assisting the profession, the aim is for coaching to become more effective at driving clients to heightened awareness and learning. At the end of the research, should you wish to, you will receive an executive summary of the research findings, which will identify how coaches facilitate self-discovery.

Please do contact me at the email address shown below by 1 May 2016 for a participant information sheet about what participation involves for both you and your client.

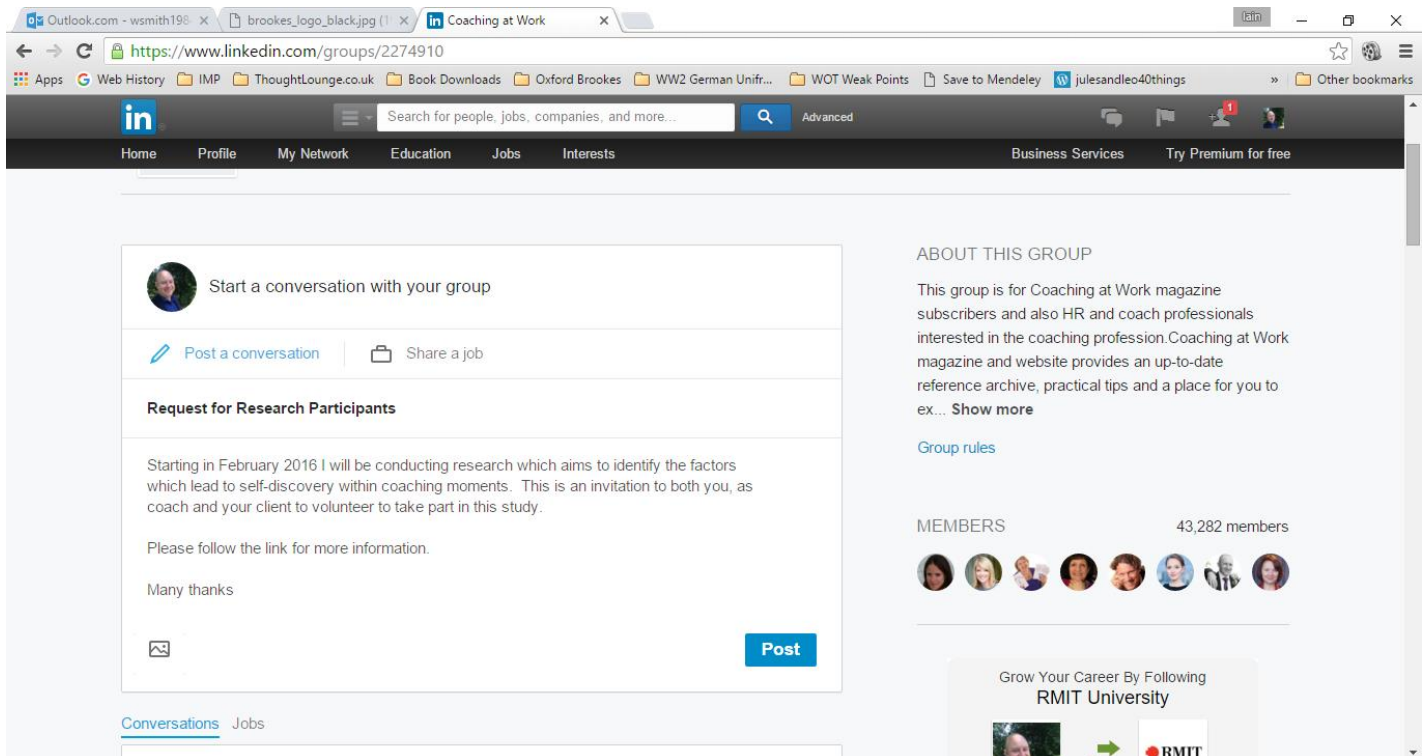
Regards,

Iain Lightfoot

14023836@brookes.ac.uk

07970977146

A draft example¹ for the UREC; How the advertisement could be advertised to LinkedIn groups. The main article will be attached to the researcher's profile and hyperlinked to this small advertisement.



Request for Research Participants – Version 2 –

Starting in April 2016 I will be conducting research which aims to identify the factors which lead to self-discovery within coaching moments. This is an invitation to both you, as coach and your client to volunteer to take part in this study. The research project is a component of the Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring program at Oxford Brookes University. If you choose to take part I will provide you with further details that you can pass on to your client, so they can independently decide whether they wish to volunteer. Please do follow the [link](#) for more information,

Many thanks

Iain Lightfoot

¹ This post was drafted only in order to be seen by the Oxford Brookes UREC as an example. I confirm that this has **NOT** and was not posted ahead of the UREC decision.

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheets

Participant Information Sheet



Dear Coaching Client,

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience.”

You are invited to take part in the research study named above. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important to understand why and how the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. ***Whether you decide to participate or not, this decision will have no effect on your relationship with your coach.***

What is the purpose of the study?

This research study aims to identify factors which lead to self-discovery in coaching. There are likely to be a small number (12) of participants, as is usual in this type of enquiry, however, it is expected that the results will be beneficial to coaches in furthering the understanding of how the use of language drives moments of self-discovery.

Why have I been invited to participate?

As a client of coaching, you will have been asked to volunteer to take part in this research following your coaches desire to participate. It is anticipated that there will be 6 pairs of coaches and coachees participating.

What does participation involve?

Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you agree to take part, an audio recording would be made of one of your usual coaching sessions, in its normal location. You will then be asked to participate in an interview directly afterwards, which will also be recorded. I estimate that the interview will take approx. 30 minutes and will explore your experience regarding any moments of self-discovery within the session. The information regarding these key moments will then be transcribed and coded for the purpose of analysis. The recording will be kept until the award of the degree and then will be erased.

What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of participation?

The benefit of participation is to make a contribution to coaching knowledge by helping coaches in the future to be more effective at leading their clients to moments of self-discovery. There is no financial reward or incentive for involvement.

The main potential drawback is the placement of a small audio recording device in the session, so you should decide if you are comfortable with its presence. In addition, there will be an extension of the normal session time in order to partake in the interview post-session. Although the researcher is an experienced coach, he is acting as a researcher and will not comment on the specifics of the coaching session itself, and the contents of your session will also remain confidential beyond the researcher. The research aims to uncover aspects of the process leading to self-discovery, rather than the content of the specific topics that were discussed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research project will form part of a thesis for the award of Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring. Additionally, the results may form a basis of conference presentations and academic articles in the future. The thesis will be available in the Oxford Brookes University library and a shortened extract of research findings and conclusions will be made available upon request for all participants.

Data protection and confidentiality.

Any audio records, memory sticks or laptops used in the field of research will be password protected and securely stored so that they comply with the Data Protection Act in the UK. On completion of the project all written data will be transferred to Oxford Brookes University and safely stored for 10 years upon the conclusion of this research.

Your involvement will be treated as per coach-client confidentially (subject to legal limitations). No personal information is collected and all data will be anonymised. Pseudonyms would be used for material used in any publications. You will be asked to sign a separate Consent Form to approve this.

Who is organising funding the research?

I am conducting (and self-funding) this research as a part-time student of the business school at Oxford Brookes University. This research is supervised by Dr Carmelina Lawton-Smith, director of studies and also by Dr Ivan Mitchell, of Oxford Brookes University. Their contact details are:

clawton-smith@brookes.ac.uk - +44 (0) 1865 488552

imitchell@brookes.ac.uk - +44 (0) 1865 488614

Who has reviewed the study?

The research activities have been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University.

The University provides advice should you have any concerns regarding this research. The chair of University research ethics committee can be contacted at ethics@brookes.ac.uk

Contact information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you require further information or would like to take part in the research please do contact me at Oxford Brookes University:

Iain Lightfoot

c/o Oxford Brookes University Business School,
Wheatley Campus, Oxford, Wheatley OX33 1HX

Email - 14023836@brookes.ac.uk

30 March 2016

Dear Coach,

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience’.”

You are invited to take part in the research study named above. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important to understand why and how the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research study aims to identify factors which lead to self-discovery in coaching. There are likely to be a small number (12) of participants, as is usual in this type of enquiry, however, it is expected that the results will be beneficial to coaches in furthering the understanding of how the use of language drives moments of self-discovery.

Why have I been invited to participate?

As a coach, you will have expressed an interest in taking part in this research following the recruitment process and met the appropriate criteria as a participant coach. It is anticipated that there will be 6 pairs of coaches and coachees participating.

What does participation involve?

Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you agree to take part, an audio recording would be made of one of your usual coaching sessions, in its normal location. You will then be asked to participate in an interview directly afterwards, which will also be recorded. I estimate that the interview will take approx. 30 minutes and will explore your experience regarding any moments of self-discovery within the session, experienced by your client. The information regarding these key moments will then be transcribed and coded for the purpose of analysis. The recording will be kept until the award of the degree and then will be erased.

What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of participation?

The benefit of participation is to make a contribution to coaching knowledge by helping coaches in the future to be more effective at leading their clients to moments of self-discovery. There is no financial reward or incentive for involvement.

The main potential drawback is the placement of a small audio recording device in the session, so you should decide if you are comfortable with its presence. In addition, there will be an extension of the normal session time in order to partake in the interview post-session. Although the researcher is an experienced coach, he is acting as a researcher and will not comment on the specifics of the coaching session itself and the contents of your session will also remain confidential beyond the researcher. The research aims to uncover aspects of the process leading to self-discovery, rather than the content of the specific topics that were discussed.

How to approach your client.

It is appreciated that whilst you may be interested in taking part in the study, it is important that your client makes an independent decision to volunteer without any coercion. If you decide to participate, you will be given a Participant Information Sheet with which to approach your client, to assess their level of interest in the project. I would ask it to be made clear to your client that should they decide to participate, or not, this decision will have no effect on their relationship with you as their coach.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research project will form part of a thesis for the award of Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring. Additionally, the results may form a basis of conference presentations and academic articles in the future. The thesis will be available in the Oxford Brookes University library and a shortened extract of research findings and conclusions will be made available upon request for all participants.

Data protection and confidentiality.

Any audio records, memory sticks or laptops used in the field of research will be password protected and securely stored so that they comply with the Data Protection Act in the UK. On completion of the project all data transferred to Oxford Brookes University will be safely stored for 10 years upon the conclusion of this research.

Your involvement will be treated as per coach-client confidentially (subject to legal limitations). No personal information is collected and all data will be anonymised. Pseudonyms would be used for material used in any publications. You will be asked to sign a separate Consent Form to approve this.

Who is organising funding the research?

I am conducting (and self-funding) this research as a part-time student of the business school at Oxford Brookes University. This research is supervised by Dr Carmelina Lawton-Smith, director of studies and also by Dr Ivan Mitchell, of Oxford Brookes University. Their contact details are:

clawton-smith@brookes.ac.uk - +44 (0) 1865 488552

imitchell@brookes.ac.uk - +44 (0) 1865 488614

Who has reviewed the study?

The research activities have been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University.

The University provides advice should you have any concerns regarding this research. The chair of University research ethics committee can be contacted at ethics@brookes.ac.uk

Contact information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you require further information or would like to take part in the research please do contact me at Oxford Brookes University:

Iain Lightfoot, c/o Oxford Brookes University Business School, Wheatley Campus, Oxford, Wheatley OX33 1HX Email - 14023836@brookes.ac.uk

30 March 2016

RESEARCH PROJECT – CLIENT’S CONSENT FORM

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience’.”

Researcher: Iain Lightfoot
Oxford Brookes University Business School,
Wheatley Campus, Oxford, Wheatley OX33 1HX

Email - 14023836@brookes.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.
4. I understand the coaching session and subsequent interview will be audio recorded.

☐☐☐☐

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. I agree that my data, gathered in this study, may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre. | ☐ | ☐ |

Name of participant (Coaching Client)	Date	Signature

I M Lightfoot

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

RESEARCH PROJECT – COACHES’ CONSENT FORM

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience’.”

Researcher: Iain Lightfoot
Oxford Brookes University Business School,
Wheatley Campus, Oxford, Wheatley OX33 1HX

Email - 14023836@brookes.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

4. I understand the coaching session and subsequent interview will be audio recorded.

☐

Yes

No

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

☐☐

6. I agree that my data, gathered in this study, may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre.

☐☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant (coach)	Date	Signature

I M Lightfoot		
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 4: Semi-Structured Interview Sheet

Post-Session Interview

“Explore the events that lead to insight within coaching sessions: identifying structures through experience.”

Pair Number:

Date:

Participant information sheet given: Coach ☐ Client ☐

Consent Form signed Coach ☐ Client ☐

*“Thank you for agreeing to talk to me about your coaching session, would you still like to go ahead with the interview? May I ask if you would like to take a break or need a drink? The questions here are designed to explore any moments of self-discovery that may have occurred within the session, that you felt were important to you; this can be new discoveries about thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs or perceptions. This interview is not coaching and there are no right or wrong answers to any questions. I will ask questions that explore discoveries, if any, and how you interpreted them, the implications of any discovery and any similarities with past discoveries. May I ask if you would you like to continue?” **Yes? Proceed. No? Thank them for their time and ask if they wish their session recording to be used? If yes? Use data. If no? Erase recording.***

1. Discovery and Exploration (cause, description and outcome of a critical incident). What were the most important moments within the session for you, can you identify them?

And which moments in the coaching were most significant?

And what led to this discovery?

And what happened just before this discovery?

And what happened just after the discovery?

2. Interpretation (participant’s feelings and perceptions, observations, facts, feelings of the situation)

And at the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery?

And how does this moment compare to other moments of discovery?

3. Implications of the discovery/important moments (actions taken during the incident).

And what happens now because of the discovery (**in your thinking**)?

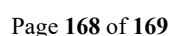
And how did the moment of discovery affect the coaching?

And are there any other implications of the discovery?

4. Conclusions and Application (changes (if any) in future thoughts/behaviour/perceptions (beliefs and values) / frames of reference / conclusions.

And how do you conclude that the discovery has changed you?

“Thank you for your help today and the difference it will make to coaching and to me personally. If you have any questions about the research – please contact me via the number and details on the participant information sheet.”

[illegible]

20170922 - Coach & Client Themes IPA - Excel

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B63 And how do you conclude that the discovery has changed you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	And which moments in the coaching were most significant?					
6	Individual source of knowledge/answer	Problem - pressure needing	Deep awareness of personal issues	awareness of having the	Moment of insight	Reflection
7	Awareness of coaching	coach offers solution	awareness of many factors	Responsibility	emembrance/coach triggers	confrontation
8	Gratitude toward coach	Solution appears	realization		inner realization	Coach's advice
9	Metaphor use	Feeling understood	Personal Focus			Personal Focus
10	Needing Answers - pressure - personal	Responsibility				Deep question answered
11	Responsibility					
12	And what led to this discovery?					
13	Individual source of knowledge/answer	Challenging Questions	Lots of focused questions	questions and exploration	coach triggered the moment	Coach's focus
14	Sudden realization (see above)	Focused Questions	Saturation of responses	of the specific issue	reflecting on the issues	inner realization (see above)
15	Internalised voice	Understanding the client	Trust in coach's abilities		exploration of the issue	personal responsibility (see above)
16	increasing trust in coach				Coach understood the client	
17	Internal voice					
18	And what happened just before this discovery?					
19	physiological pause	Feeling of work	Things came together	emergence of options	Coaching flow	Decisions to act
20	feeling of realization	Need to solve the problem	Reminders/remembrances	realization of a better way		Acceptance
21	metaphor use	trying to visualise an answer	coming together of factors	highlighted need for change		personal responsibility
22	factors coming together					
23	And what happened just after the discovery?					
24	desire to continue to explore	relief	Desire to explore insight	continued reflection	Relief	Acceptance of the situation
25	excitement, positive feeling	relaxation	Not full understanding	awareness of wider	Positive experience	Differing perspective
26	metaphor use	positivity		interaction		moving on
27	increased respect for coach					motivation
28	And at the time, what did you feel (physiological response) about this discovery?					
29	warm feeling inside	relief	cognitive reaction	negative feeling	relief	Acceptance
30	feeling of release		felt like things came together	growing positivity		relief
31	metaphor use			shift towards positivity		vulnerable
32						
33	And how does this moment compare to other moments of discovery?					
34	Important due to Personal Subject	personal change	larger moment of insight	deeper analysis	deeper focus	Focused Deeper reflection
35	Personal Priority	Greater positivity	culmination of factors	wanting to reflect further	Feeling of knowing	Incubation
36		Depth	recognition of something underlying	unique moment		Post coaching exploration
37			depth of impact	desire to continue		
38				developing		
39						
40	And what happens now because of the discovery?					
41	Clarity	changed outlook	acting on the knowledge	clarity	certainty	Change of mindset
42	Knowing	clarity		motivation	confidence	Direction
43			acknowledgment	focused on change	validation	clarity
44						puzzles one direction
45						Logical decision making
46						
47	And how did the moment of discovery affect the coaching?					
48	No change	Greater confidence	increased respect for the coach	relax	Increased belief in coach	Great honesty
49	increased respect for coach	positivity	positivity	change in perspective	increased trust	Increased trust in coaching and coach
50		client motivated	understanding of coaching	opened up to the process	more focus on the issue	feeling of certainty
51			confidence in the coach			
52						
53	And are there any other implications of the discovery?					
54	Certainty of direction	Changed mindset	self-reflection	greater reflection	Calmer	More honesty with self
55		Awareness	desire to understand	different way of being and doing	increased motivation	Change of mindset
56			belief	understanding it is a journey	Validated	more aware of the options and situation
57				continuous change		
58						
59	And how do you conclude that the discovery has changed you?					
60	New way of thinking	Measured	new way of thinking	expectation of change	More confident	Honesty
61	Empowerment	new way of thinking	greater importance	verification of coaching	Empowered	Motivated
62				new momentum to		

Client Themes Coach Themes

READY 55%